



# **Shelters in transition- problems and solutions**

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# Background

## Serbia

- country in the Balkans
- eastern European country



# Nineties in Serbia

- War
- Numerous political, economical and social problems
- Problems of violence against women and domestic violence became recognized as an important issue
- Serbian laws did not recognize domestic violence as such

# Nineties in Serbia

- NGO's realized the importance and the extent of this problem and started dealing with it
- First Shelter was founded in Belgrade
- The only financial source for these and similar activities was coming from foreign donations

# And in the 2000...


- Process of transition has started simultaneously with many other social and political changes
- Economical growth
- Changes in the law formulations and application




# Criminal and Family Law changes when it comes to domestic violence

## But in the same time...

- Foreign donors started cutting down the number of donations and changing their funding priorities for the Balkans
- The priority was shifted from donations to the civil sector to support of government institutions as such

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- Shelters, as specialized service-providers, were left out from the scope
  - Government institutions were not ready, financially nor organizationally, to take over the funding part



At the national level, Shelters were not included by law or by any other regulation or protocol in the overall system of protection of women victims of violence. Hence, they became “no man’s land”

# Problems...


- How to provide funding for sustaining the Shelter?
- How to cope with the legal issues, regulations and protocols, concerning Shelters and their function at the national level?

# Problems...

- How to include Shelters in the existing system of social services at the national level?
- How to overcome the differences between various NGO's dealing with the problem of violence against women, their programs and goals?

# From my working experience...

Permanent organizational improvements, as well as capacity building of the organization are of key importance

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- Constant education/learning
  - New ideas, new programs, new approaches
  - Working standards
  - Result base management/result oriented activities
  - Data collecting/statistics
  - Readiness to change

# Also...

- Cooperation with other organizations with similar/same goals
- Exchange experiences
- Examples of best practices/models that work
- Communities of practice

# Networking...

- Unified working standards
- Unified data collection system and data base
- Lobbying, advocacy

# Funding...

Necessity of exploring all possible funding options - at the international and national level, especially the potentials at the local community level

# Identifying “key” local stakeholders

- Government
- Institutions-police, health care providers, social services, courts
- Media
- Private sector businesses
- Other organizations with the similar/same goals

# Working together...

Is the only way to:

- Create an overall system of protection for women victims of violence on the national level
- Have Shelters included in this system
- Make their work possible for a longer period of time



**Thank you!**