

**NGO “Women’s center”
Trebinje**

**„VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A
NEW CATEGORY OF IMPOVERISHED
COMMUNITIES,,**

Research paper

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“VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, A NEW CATEGORY OF IMPOVERISHED COMMUNITIES”

Summary

This investigation demonstrated that 44% of the surveyed women-victims of domestic violence, lack permanent earnings or are without income altogether. Exposure to battering during their relationship ranged from 1 to 28 years and averaged 5, 15 years. Most frequently, in 52% of the cases, battered women endured violence for up to 3 years, while in 39% from 4 to 10 years.

The respondents cited the following reasons as most frequent obstacles for not seeking help earlier:

“impact of upbringing and community responsiveness” – 44%

“fear of partner – threats” – 41%

The fifth most frequent obstacle to seeking help earlier, for 15% of the respondents was “economic dependability”. For the group of respondents, who quoted this obstacle, violence lasted on an average for 6,7 years, before help was sought.

Among the “physical violence” group, most respondents (41%) expected to be physically protected from violence by services, which they contacted; 25% addressed their expectation for assistance during the process of divorce, while in third place, 14% of respondents anticipated help in stabilizing their relationship.

While seeking assistance, respondents most frequently expected that institutions and NGOs would provide:

- Help and support to carry out the divorce
- Assistance in stabilizing their relationship
- Physical protection from violence and/or providing shelter
- Something else

Some respondents sought help in emergency situations of violence but their long-term intentions, after obtaining physical protection, could have gone in at least three directions:

1. The type of assistance pleaded remained at the level of protection/sheltering
2. Following protection from immediate threat, entered into a counseling/therapeutic process (occasionally with their partner) and attempted to improve the relationship in the long-run (“assistance in stabilizing the relationship”)
3. After obtaining protection from direct risk, later seeks help in divorcing the partner (“help and support to conduct the divorce”).

A certain number of respondents didn’t seek aid in acute situations during their relationships, but rather in situations in which they wanted to help themselves (occasionally their partners, too), to overcome obstacles and establish their relationship on new grounds.

Most often, in 30% of cases, interventions were provided in acute cases of violence, during which respondents exclusively sought physical protection from violence. The least number of respondents (5%), was prepared to initiate the process of divorce, beside appealing for physical protection from violence.

In the group of “non-physical types of violence”, most respondents (60%) addressed services with expectations of obtaining help for stabilizing the relationship with their partner. When the respondents turned to some community-based service, according to the nature of the problem due to which she filled her appeal and according to her intentions and expectations, one or more different community-based services would become engaged. In our sample, in 41% of cases only one service was engaged, while in the remaining 59% of cases, multiple services were engaged.

Non-governmental organizations were involved in the largest number of cases (67%), partially because most of the respondents included in the survey were depicted from caseloads

belonging to NGOs, which conducted this investigation. It is important to emphasize that these NGOs are specialized in the problem of violence, therefore here, in one place the respondents could receive different types of services related to this problem, which include: psycho-social and legal counseling, providing shelter in a safe house¹, counseling and therapeutic services for themselves and their children, according to the need initializing contacts with other services needed by the respondents for resolving their problems and occasionally continuous cooperation with them until the completion of the process.

The Social welfare center was engaged in the work in 56% of cases and provided counseling services, psych-social and financial assistance, advised on routine procedures related to the divorce process (reconciliation, awarding custody,...) and participation in interventions in the field.

The police were involved in 42% of cases in the sample, through direct intervention and implementation of protective measures for the respondents. Albeit attempts of batterers to hide violent relationships from the public eye (not seldom did the victims themselves participate, for various reasons, in the cover up), a high percentage of police involvement in the incidences clearly demonstrates the seriousness of the assault incurred.

Judicial institutions were involved in 21% of cases during divorce proceedings, issuing orders of protection, fine penalties and criminal charges.

Health care facilities were involved in 4 % of cases, which is the lowest percentage in the sample.

Within the group of 278 respondents, who sought help due to battering caused by a spouse/partner, 50% decided to continue the relationship with their partner. Approximately 16% justified this decision by economic reasons (financial dependency upon the husband, lack of housing funds in case of separation, inability to secure a just division of jointly acquired property assets following the divorce, inability to find a job with which she could support herself and the children, etc.).

The respondents quoted the following reasons as the most common causes of spouse/partner related problems, which prompted them to seek help:

- Violent nature of the partner – 21%
- Alcohol – 14%
- Mutual differences – 10%.

We could only speculate the extent behind which the reasons referring to children-related emotions (“due to children”, “I lack the courage to live alone with the children”) hide economic difficulties for continuing life in a violent marriage/relationship. Also, accepting the commitment of a partner that things will be “different and better”, as a reason to continue living in an abusive relationship could in itself hide an unwillingness for independence and fear due to lack of financial resources for such a step. Additionally, the sense of insecurity that community-based institutions would guarantee at least a minimum of requirements for financial security (housing, employment or some other source of income).

We know for a fact without guessing that 46 respondents (16%) clearly stated they decided to stay in abusive marriages out of financial reasons, because they estimated that if they left they could not support themselves or their children. In 3% of the cases the respondents didn't provide an answer so we don't know the reason for their stay in a violent marriage/relationship. We can conclude that at least 16% of sampled respondents would return to a marriage from which they sought help due to abuse, without any guarantees or at least verbal assurances that the situation in the relationship would improve. In other words, at least every sixth woman returned to an abusive marriage/relationship because the community could not guarantee and provide at least minimal requirements for an independent life, a life without abuse. Currently, 80 children

¹ While working on this problem 29 respondents or 9,8% of the sampled, were accommodated in NGO-run safe houses

also live with this subgroup of respondents and are exposed to these conditions, out of which 53 are minors.

Every second sampled respondent is unemployed, while every third respondent is deprived of financial resources. Only 13% of respondents own real estate registered in their names.

We noted that 61% of respondents are pauper according to at least one defined parameter of poverty.

A comparison of the subgroups “in previous marriage” and “not in previous marriage”, conducted according to defined poverty criteria demonstrated that the group: “not in previous marriage” have:

- A significantly higher number of the most impoverished communities– poverty according to 3 and 4 parameters;
- A higher number of impoverished according to 2 parameters;
- A lower number of those lacking a single parameter of poverty.

It could be concluded that, according to poverty criteria established by us, the group of respondents who are no longer in previous marriages had more impoverished women than those in the group that remained in their previous marriages. Since these respondents stepped out of their marriage/relationship consequently to the abuse, we may conclude that in the sample examined by this research, we obtained evidence to substantiate our initial assumption that relationship abuse, as one of the factors, contributes to the increase of poverty of women and children in the society.

INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina is still governed by common law rather than legislative law since it is impossible to otherwise interpretate why is almost all the property recoded to the names of men (brothers, fathers, husbands and sons) in the book of deeds. In cases of domestic violence this is one of the ways to abuse power and apply it in order to easily control and manipulate the victim. Although domestic violence can't be linked to the economic status, place of residence, education or age, it is still possible to notice a direct link between domestic violence and the creation of a new category of the poor- women and children, victims of domestic violence.

Through the past work of women's NGOs with victims of domestic violence it was noticed that women, victims of domestic abuse are mostly left on their own after attempting to leave the abusive families, regardless of their previous financial situation. This indicates an absence of state-level programs that would provide subventions to costs of their independence for example. housing or to give them employment priority or perhaps provide them with the possibility of a fair division of property, efficiently and promptly. This is precisely why women, victims of domestic violence pinpoint financial dependency as the main reason for remaining in violent families. It is not seldom that after staying in Safe houses victims return to the abusive family because they are incapable of leading independent lives, without the help of state institutions and employment, particularly because independence would require child care. Even when they're employed, mostly because of low income on one hand and high costs on the other, they are not capable of enduring the price of independence particularly if they are deprived of support from their relatives, which is not uncommon in cases of domestic violence. When leaving the abusive family the victims are prevented from taking their personal documents much less household goods or perhaps enabling the establishments of an independent life under the same roof, because they are brutally expelled in the middle of the night or escape when violence occurs. Except for wanting to deprive them their freedom and pressuring them to return, most often they refuse to pay the foreseen alimony for children, aimed at hampering her independence and contribute to the economic exhaustion of the victim.

This investigation will demonstrate a direct link between the victim of domestic violence and poverty in the context of the creation of a new category of impoverished communities regardless of their previous statuses. The investigation, conducted for the first time in the Balkan region on this topic, is the best way to document the reports repeatedly submitted by NGOs advocating for the rights of women, through concrete examples of victims of domestic violence or conveyed by the victims themselves. The authorities or other institutions/organizations won't be able to turn a blind eye to this problem, as was the case in the past, for example with the Poverty Strategy Reduction Paper (PSRP) and its revision, in which the Action plan doesn't recognize the vulnerability of this category of women but rather generalizes their status offering solutions which to strive for. Within this investigation we shall offer solutions directed towards the development of social enterprise including: the development of social entrepreneurship and programs of support to women, victims of domestic violence by enabling them to have access to favorable credit lines and by stimulating the private sector to employ this category of people. In case of credit lines, since women don't possess property assets, the guaranty for securing the loans should be provided by the state, in some way, or perhaps the very business or property assets for which the loan is taken. Only by means of arguments, which we are able to document, can we expect to contribute to the creation of positive policies in the direction of gender responsible budgeting and "force" the authorities in BiH to begin to observe and implement Recommendations of the CEDOW Commission, which is precisely what this investigation will provide for.

The main problems lie in the patriarchal heritage deeply rooted in our heads that the power of men and their domination should be demonstrated everywhere because he is the head of the family and is privileged in all social contexts with regards to women. Although women's rights movements made progress in that direction and they managed to achieve certain human rights, the rudimentary remnants extend over states that have, to a large extent, achieved modern, democratic set-ups. However, states with accentuated patriarchal traits such as BiH, consequently have, among other things, a situation in which almost all real estate, that is, property recorded as the sole ownership of men (fathers, brothers, husbands and sons), which in the context of domestic violence means that when the woman leaves the abusive husband she is automatically left without any property because she is on the beginning of the road to prove her right to property acquired during marriage and faces a lack of state programs for support to this category as the promoter of development of social enterprise.

Even when a specific case for property division is initiated (previously), now according to the new law during divorce proceedings, the woman is intentionally exhausted both financially and emotionally, owing to the duration of the divorce process, to make her give up the proceedings and withdraw her appeal for a just division of property, which is most often the case because they succumb to tremendous pressure exerted upon their vulnerable personalities. Along with all of this their status is shaken in the society also and not only in the family because for many, divorce and child care mean loss of job due to frequent absences, for example due to child sickness or similar. If the woman is unemployed and as a single mother looks for a job, her social file will not be in her favor, on the contrary for many employers it is a burden which, of course they don't wish to assume because they are not stimulated in any way by the state to do so. Beside all of this, the batterer most frequently avoids or perhaps disobeys the court order on alimony payments even when it's ruled, which automatically imposes an additional problem for the woman. On top of this, it is not seldom that the batterer intentionally destroys household goods and personal belongings, which could eventually be taken by the woman-victim and used by her and the children.

EXAMINATION

The examination was planned and carried out from April until August 2008. The basic assumption of the examination was that **relationship abuse**, as one of the factors, **contributes to the increase of poverty in the society**.

The examination was conducted in four municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, two in both the Republika Srpska and the Federation. In each selected municipality, examinations were carried out by representatives of four non-governmental organizations, which deal with problems related to the abuse of women. These NGOs are seated in the following municipalities:

- Bijeljina: "Lara"
- Mostar: "Women in BiH"
- Trebinje: "Women's center"
- Zenica "Medica"

Criteria for selecting respondents were chosen based on their report of violent relationship abuse during the period from 2002-2007 and whether they sought help from any governmental institution (Social welfare center, police,...) or non-governmental organizations.

The aim of the examination was to obtain an insight of what later happened to respondents registered in the databases of governmental institutions or non-governmental organizations, due to the abuse incurred in the relationship (spousal or partner abuse):

- immediate cause for seeking help,
- what is the critical hope/intention/goal which they wanted to achieve at the time of requesting aid,
- what decisions are made and on what basis, during the period of direct contact with services dealing with these issues,
- what happens to these decisions once they are faced with their daily lives and what is their real life situation (at the time of conducting this examination).

Although violence appears as a problem in different contexts: within the family, outside the family, at work, etc., this study assesses the context of relationship abuse which, besides adults involved in the relationship, also affects the children that are being raised and live in this relationship.

Therefore, potential respondents addressed institutions and non-governmental institutions for help within the area of the four municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to abuse incurred in the relationship.

Results of the examination will be presented in four chapters, which follow the logic of implementing the aid-providing assistance in cases of assaults:

1. Chapter: Situation at the time the respondents sought help
2. Chapter: Decision on what to do after seeking help
3. Chapter: How do they live today
4. Chapter: Consequences of abuse

The sample was not additionally defined according to quotas of respondents with specific demographic traits, since our country lacks a valid census, which we could use as reference in creating a state-wide referential sample. The census was not conducted in the aftermath of the war following massive migrations of the population, thus current demographic data are not available.

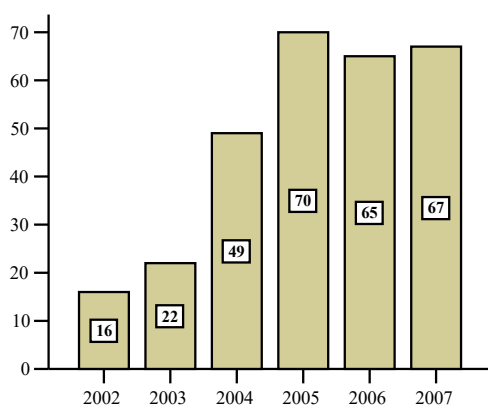
In accordance with this fact, conclusions drawn based on the obtained results represent an overview of the factual situation and must be limited to the sample of respondents assessed in this investigation.

While carrying out the field investigation, data were collected from 296 respondents, which appealed to institutions/NGOs for help due to domestic assaults from the four aforementioned municipalities, in the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

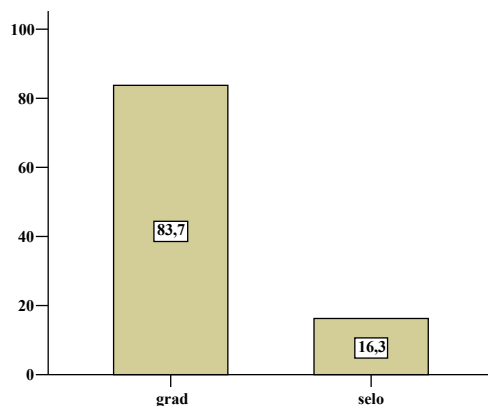
Table 1.: Areas from which the sample was created

Area	Frequency	%
Bijeljina	91	30,7
Mostar	95	32,1
Trebinje	71	24,0
Zenica	39	13,2
Total	296	100,00

Graph 1.:Sample structure according to the year when the first appeal to services was made



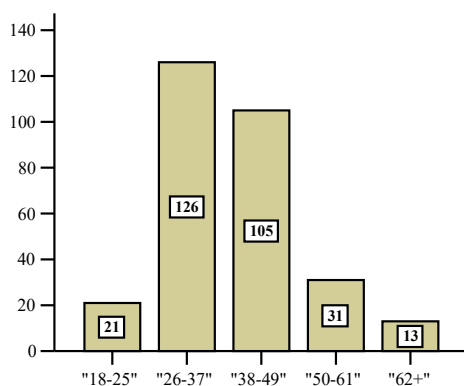
Graph 2: Sample structure according to the place of residence of the respondents (in %)



Most of the sample (83,7%) is comprised of women that live in cities. Respondents that reside in villages are represented with 16,3% of the sample. On this basis we can't conclude that violent partnerships are more widespread in towns. The fact that the respondents, registered by services providing aid to battered women, are city residents may point to the availability of these services to women living in towns, or that respondents-city residents have a less difficult decision to make when turning to services that provide help in cases of violent relationship abuse. Or perhaps, that respondents living in towns were more prepared to respond to the surveyor's call to participate in the interview.

According to the date of birth, the respondents were divided into five age groups.

Graph 3.: Sample structure according to the age groups of the respondents



The graphical presentation of the age structure shows that the majority of the sample comprises respondents aged from 26 to 49, a total of 131 or 78,1% of the sample. In the age groups of up to 50, there are a total of 152 respondents or 85,1% of the sample, which is a period – at least according to this criteria- when the respondents are capable of working. However, data indicate that within these categories of women we find large numbers of respondents without employment or those with temporary jobs.

Table 2.: Status according to the employment status of the respondents in relation to the age structure of the sample

Status according to employment-income	Age group					Total
	“18-25”	“26-37”	“38-49”	“50-61”	“62+”	
Permanent employment	3	58	48	14	1	124
Temporary jobs	6	29	17	3	0	55
Jobless	12	35	31	10	5	93
Agriculture	0	3	8	1	2	14
Pension	0	0	0	1	5	6
No data	0	1	1	2	0	4
Total	21	126	105	31	13	296

In the sample we find that in the age groups of up to 50:

- 78 respondents (or 26,4% of the sample) are jobless and have no earning and that
- 52 respondents (or 17,6% of the sample) that hold temporary jobs that is, don't have constant income.

A total of 130 respondents or 43.9% of the sample lack continuous earnings, or have none at all.

1. Situation at the time when the respondents appealed for help

Reason for requesting assistance

We asked the respondents the following question: **“What prompted you to turn for help?”** We divided the answers obtained from respondents into 13 different forms of relationship abuse: psychological, sexual and physical, abuse against children (presented in the questionnaire attached at the end of the presented results). If the respondent's answer was impossible to allocate in the established categories, we recorded the answer in the “Something else” category.

Table 1.1.: Sample structure according to reasons the respondents turned to services

Reason for seeking help	Frequency	% in the sample
Abuse of children	2	0,7
Physical abuse with other types	185	62,4
Non-physical types of abuse	84	28,4
Divorce assistance	7	2,4
Something else	18	6,1
Total	296	100,0

- **Abuse of children – 2 respondents²** in the sample listed abuse of children as the sole reason for appealing to institutions/organizations.

² In the continuation of the presentation these two respondents will be included in the “physical assault with other types” group

- **Physical abuse (with other types)³ – 185 respondents** listed one or more types of physical abuse. This category includes respondents who listed physical and one or more other forms of psychological abuses and those that listed only psychological abuse. Even when respondents quote one or more types of physical, without a single form of psychological abuse, it is difficult to imagine that abusive relationships are not accompanied by psychological abuse. If the respondent experienced or is experiencing for example: “Hitting, slapping, kicking, throwing objects “ or “locking them out of the house”, as forms of physical violence, it is difficult to imagine that they are not exposed to, for example: “threatening, yelling, exhibiting anger, breaking objects around the house” or “criticizing, ridiculing, humiliating and insulting”, as forms of psychological violence.
- **Non-physical abuse – 84 respondents**, who listed the forms of abuse that they experienced in the relationship, indicated only one or more of a total of 7 forms of psychological and/or sexual abuse, while none of them included forms of physical abuse, out of those we offered in the questionnaire.
- **Divorce assistance – 7 respondents** turned to services with a decision to divorce the marriage or leave the relationship. The goal of addressing the services was to: obtain legal aid, counseling on the psychosocial aspects of changes affecting her and the children (if applicable), which emerge through divorce, or the procedure of mediation (attempt of reconciliation) in the department of the social welfare center. These respondents didn’t specify the types and forms of abuse experienced in this marriage/relationship.
- **Something else – 18 respondents** who are no longer engaged in a marriage/relationship and who sought assistance for issues related to the realization of rights which originate from certain marital/relationship rights, which they were denied for such as: alimony rights, defining visitation rights for children/child outside her custody, rights for custody over children/child, rights regarding the division of property with the former partner. Within this group there was one case of physical abuse by the ex-husband.

We divided the respondents in the sample into two subgroups, according to their marital status at the time of their appeal to the services for help:

- “MARITAL/RELATIONSHIP ABUSE” – **278 or 93,9 %** of respondents who requested help during the marriage or relationship.
- “HELP AFTER MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIP” – **18 or 6,1 %** of respondents who sought help after the marriage/relationship ended.

Picture 1.1.: Marital status at the time of seeking help

³ 15 respondents from this group listed the abuse of the father/partner directly targeted towards the children beside the abuse which they themselves incurred: in 10 cases physical and in 5 cases sexual assault. However, at this point we wish to emphasize that the other **children**, which were not identified by the respondents as direct victims of assault, in cases of abuse in the relationship between their parents, by growing up in the atmosphere of violence, **they are always direct victims of abuse which occurs between parents**

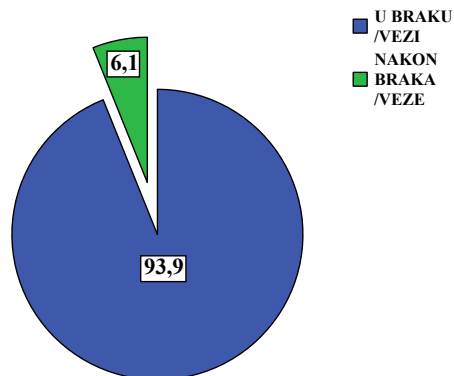


Table 1.2.: Structure of subgroups according to the reasons of seeking help

Reason for seeking help		Frequency	% in each subgroup	% in the sample
MARITAL/ RELATIONSHIP ABUSE	Physical with other types of abuse	187	67,7	63,1
	Psychological and sexual abuse	84	30,2	28,4
	Aid during divorce proceedings	7	2,5	2,4
Total		278	100,0	93,9
HELP AFTER MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP	Alimony	9	50,0	3,1
	Custody over children	3	16,7	1,0
	Visitation of children/child	2	11,1	0,7
	Property division	3	16,7	1,0
	Abuse by ex-husband	1	5,6	0,3
Total		18	100,0	6,1
TOTAL		296		100,0

Duration of abuse until the decision to appeal to services was made

We asked the respondents: “**How long did the abuse last until the time you appealed for help?**”

We grouped their answers into 4 groups:

Graph 1.2.: Duration of abuse until the decision to appeal to services (%)

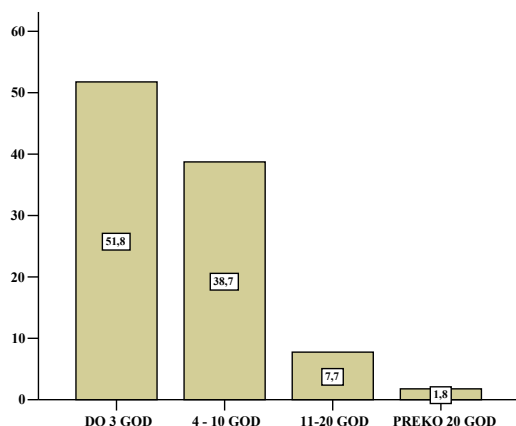


Table 1.3.: Duration of abuse until the decision to address services in subgroups of the sample

Duration of abuse until the decision to address services	MARRITAL/ RELATIONSHIP ABUSE		AID FOLLOWING MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Up to 3 years	137	49,3	10	55,6	147	49,7
4-10 years	106	38,1	4	22,2	110	37,2
11-20 years	21	7,6	1	5,6	22	7,4
More than 20 yrs	5	1,8	0	0,0	5	1,7
Did not answer	9	3,2	3	16,7	12	4,1
Total	278	100,00	18	100,0	296	100,0

Abuse, which they have experienced during the relationship lasted **from 1 to 28 years (average 5,15 years)**.

We asked the respondents: **“Why didn’t you seek help earlier?”**. The answer provided by the respondents could have contained more than one obstacle than those presented in the Table. Therefore the given results represent incidences of individual obstacles in the answers provided by the respondents.

Table 1.4.: Representation of individual obstacles that prevented respondents of seeking help earlier

Obstacles for seeking help earlier	Occurrence in answers	% of respondents which listed this obstacle
Influence of upbringing and community responsiveness	129	43,6
Fear of partner	121	40,9
Didn’t know who to turn to	75	25,3
Because of children- he	53	17,9

threatened to take them away		
Economic dependency on the partner	45	15,2
Something else	6	2,0
She thought that the problems would solve themselves	5	1,7
Didn't answer	18	6,1

The most frequent answers of the respondents to the question: “Why didn’t you seek help because of relationship abuse earlier?” were as follows:

- “Influence of upbringing and community responsiveness“ - was cited by 129 respondents or 43,6% of the sample,
- “fear of partner- threats”- was quoted by 121 respondents or 40,9% of the sample.

The fifth most quoted obstacle (either as single or multiple) for not seeking help earlier, for **45 or 15,2% of the respondents in the sample was the “economic dependency”**. Within the group of respondents who listed this obstacle, abuse lasted on the **average for 6,7 years** before help was requested, while the **dominant value** (duration which was quoted by the highest number of respondents in that group), was **5 years**, hence an above average value of the group. The reasons because of which the respondents in this group requested help were:

- physical abuse (along with other types) – 32 respondents,
- non-physical types of abuse (psychological and sexual abuse) –10 respondents
- assistance during divorce proceedings – 3 respondents

Type of help which the respondents expected from the services

We asked the respondents: “**What type of help did you request or expect, that is, what was your intention for turning for help?**”. Categories into which we divided their answers were:

- Aid and support for divorce
- Assistance in stabilizing the relationship
- Physical protection from abuse and/or shelter
- Something else

Long-term intentions of respondents who requested physical protection and received it in **acute situations** could have gone in at least three directions:

- The type of help requested remains at the level of protection/shelter
- Following protection from immediate jeopardy, commences with the process of counseling/therapy (sometimes together with the partner) and attempts to improve the relationship in the long-term(“assistance in stabilizing the relationship”)
- Following protection from immediate jeopardy, seeks aid for divorcing the partner (“aid and assistance to divorce”).

A number of respondents didn’t seek help in acute situations during the relationship, but rather in situations when they wanted to help themselves (sometimes the partner, also) in order to overcome difficulties and re-establish the relationship on new grounds.

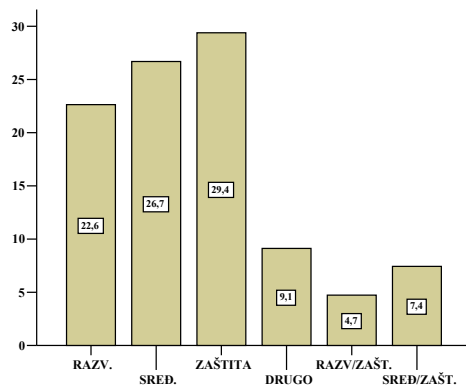
In the Table below, we shall label the different expectations from the respondents, about what they wanted the services to do:

- “**Div**” – assistance for divorce
- “**Stab**” – assistance in stabilizing the relationship
- “**Prot**” – physical protection from abuse
- “**Prot/Div**” – physical protection from abuse and aid to divorce
- “**Prot/Stab**” – physical protection from abuse and help in stabilizing the relationship

Table 1.5.: Type of assistance which the respondents expected when they turned to the services

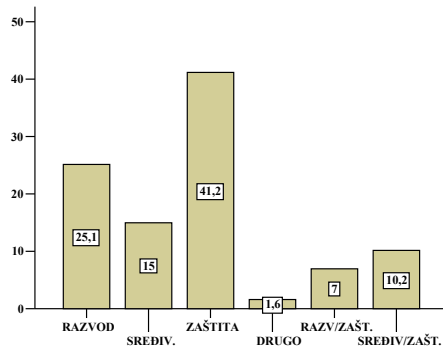
Reason for seeking help		Type of help- expectation					
		Div	Stab	Prot	Prot Div	Prot Stab	Other
MARITAL/ RELATIONSHIP ABUSE	Physical with other types of abuse	47	28	77	13	19	3
	Nonphysical types of abuse	18	50	9	1	2	4
	Aid during divorce proceedings	2	1	0	0	0	4
Total		67	79	86	11	21	11
HELP AFTER MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP	Alimony	0	0	0	0	1	8
	Custody over children	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Visitation of children/child	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Property division	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Abuse by ex-husband	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total		0	0	1	0	1	16
TOTAL (sample)		67	79	87	11	22	27
% in sample		22,6	26,7	29,4	4,7	7,4	9,1

Graph 1.3.: Representation (in %) of each of the expected types of help in the sample



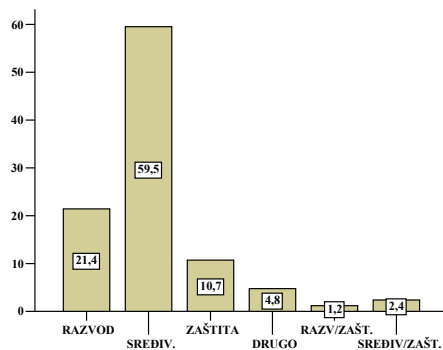
The highest number of cases (87 or 29,6%), involved interventions during emergency situations of violence during which the respondents exclusively appealed for physical protection. The least number of respondents, 14 or 4,7% were ready to initialize divorce proceedings beside requesting physical protection from violence.

Graph 1.3.: Representation (in %) of expected types of help in the group “physical abuse”



In the “physical abuse” group, most respondents (41,2%) expected physical protection from the services, 25,1% anticipated receiving help in the divorce proceedings and in third place, 15,0% of respondents expected assistance in stabilizing the relationship.

Graph 1.4.: Representation (in %) of expected types of help in the group of “non-physical types of abuse”



In the group of “non-physical types of abuse” most respondents (59,5%) turned to services with an expectation of receiving aid in stabilizing the relationship. Similar to the “physical abuse” group, 21,4% turned for help with the expectation of receiving assistance in divorce, while 10,7% requested physical protection from abuse.

In the remaining groups, assistance expected by the respondents in most cases didn’t differ from the aforementioned reasons for seeking help.

Institutions involved in delivering assistance

When the respondents addressed a community-based institution, depending on the nature of the problem due to which they sought help and according to their intentions and expectations, one or more different services would become involved in the case. In our sample, 40,5% of the cases required the involvement of one service, while multiple services were involved in the remaining 59,5% of cases.

The respondent's answers carried five different services (labeled in the Table as follows):

- police (POL),
- Social welfare center (SWC),
- A health care facility (HCF),
- Some non-governmental institution (NGO),
- Various judicial instances (JUD)

Table 1.6.: Number of cases in the sample involving particular services

Reason for seeking help		POL	SWC	HCF	NGO	JUD
MARITAL/ RELATIONSHIP ABUSE	Physical with other types of abuse	107	105	9	130	45
	Psychological and sexual abuse	9	46	2	55	8
	Aid during divorce proceedings	1	5	0	3	0
Total		117	156	11	188	53
HELP AFTER MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP	Alimony	3	4	0	7	3
	Abuse by ex-husband	1	0	0	0	1
	Property division	0	1	0	2	3
	Custody over children	2	3	0	1	1
	Visitation of children/child	0	2	0	0	0
Total		6	10	0	10	8
TOTAL		123	166	11	198	61
% of cases involving an institution		41,6	56,1	3,7	66,9	20,6

Non-governmental institutions were involved in the highest number of cases (67%), partially because most respondents within the sample were chosen from databases of NGOs that conducted this research. It is important to emphasize that these NGOs are specialized in violence-related problems therefore in a single place the respondents were able to receive various types of services connected to this problem, such as:

- Psychosocial and legal counseling

- Accommodation in a safe house⁴
- Counseling and therapeutic services for themselves and their children
- Initial contacting of other services needed by respondents in resolving their problems (as needed) and
- Continuous cooperation with the respondents until the conclusion of the procedure (as needed).

The Social welfare center was involved in 166 or 56,1% of the cases in the sample. These services included: counseling, psychosocial and financial assistance, routine procedures linked to divorce (reconciliation, determination of custody) and participation in interventions in the field.

The **police** were involved in 42% of cases in the sample, through direct interventions and execution of protective measures for the respondents. Beside the efforts of the batterer to hide violence in the relationship from the public (often did the victims themselves participate in the cover up, out of different reasons), the fact that the police were involved in the incidences in such a high percentage only witnesses the extremity of violence, which the respondents were exposed to.

Judicial institutions were involved in 61 cases or 20,6%. The conducted proceedings included divorce cases, issuance of measures of protection, felonies and criminal procedures.

Health facilities were involved in 11 cases (3,7%), which represents the smallest number of cases in the sample.

2. Decision on what to do after seeking help

After help was requested in cases of relationship abuse and necessary services delivered by institutions involved in the case, respondents usually made a decision regarding the direction in which they wished to continue the relationship and their lives. We asked the respondents: **“What did you actually do at that time?”**

Table 2.1.: Decisions made by the respondents during and following the intervention provided by the services

Adopted decision	MARRITAL/RELATIONSHIP ABUSE			Total	
	Physical abuse	Non-physical types of abuse	Aid in the divorce process	Frequency	%
Continued living with partner	87	51	1	139	50,0
Continued living separately	43	12	4	59	21,2
Initiated divorce proceedings	21	6	0	27	9,7

⁴ While working in this problem, 29 respondents (9,8% of the sample) were accommodated in safe houses managed by NGOs

Divorced	36	15	2	53	19,1
Total	187	84	7	278	100,0

In the group of 278 respondents who sought help due to relationship/marital abuse, 139 or 50,0% of them decided to continue living with their partner.

Respondents from the group “OUTSIDE/AFTER THE RELATIONSHIP” continued working on problems due to which they requested help including: 8 for obtaining alimony for children, 3 for property division, 3 for custody over the children, 2 for visitation rights for children in custody of the husband, 1 for recognizing paternity and 1 for physical protection from abuse by the ex-husband.

Circumstances affecting the decision

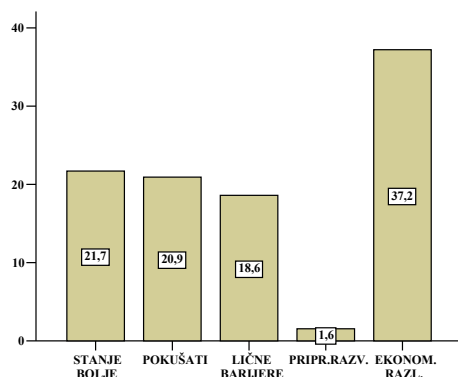
With regards to decisions made by the respondents during and after intervention of services, we asked them: **“What led to that decision?”**

The group: **“Continued living with the partner”**

A total of **139 respondents** were in this group. We divided the reasons for making the decision to continue living with the partner into several categories (Picture 2.1)

- **“situation improved” – 28 respondents or 9,4%** of the sample said that the husband accepted therapy and violence ceased after that or at the time of the appeal they had no intention of filing for divorce,
- **“another chance” – 27 respondents or 9,1% of the sample** wanted to give another try to preserve the marriage, or the husband promised that things would be different and that he would undergo therapy,
- **“personal barriers” – 24 respondents or 8,1%** of the sample listed different personal obstacles for abandoning the marriage, most frequently including: children, personal convictions towards divorce, because they were unprepared to raise the children alone, etc.
- **“preparation for divorce” – 2 respondents or 0,7%** of the sample decided to give themselves time to prepare for a future divorce,
- **“economic reasons” – 48 respondents or 16,2%** of the sample had economic reason for continuing life with their partner, the most frequent being: financial dependence upon the husband, she couldn’t afford housing in case of separation, she could not secure a just division of jointly acquired assets, she couldn’t find a job to support herself and the children, etc. Since 10 out of 139 respondents in this group omitted giving their reasons for continuing life with their partner, we could state that **at least every sixth respondent in the sample** remained living in a violent relationship only because of economic dependency on the partner.

Graph 2.1.: Reasons for the respondent’s decision to continue living with the partner (% in group “continued living with partner”)

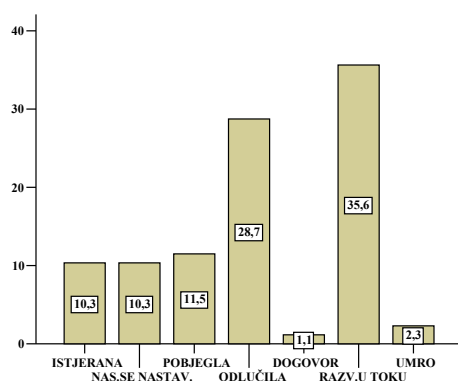


Groups: “continued living separately” and “initiated divorce proceedings”

Some respondents from these two groups continued living separately from their husbands at the time of divorce commencement, while others remained living in joint apartments/houses with their husbands. Some respondents in the sample began living separately but didn’t initiate the divorce process. Since these two groups in the sample overlap, we shall analyze them in parallel. Jointly, the group is comprised of 86 respondents or 29,1% of the entire sample:

- the group “continued living separately” comprised 59 respondents or 19,9% of the sample,
- the group “initiated the divorce process” comprised 27 respondents or 9,1% of the sample

Graph 2.2.: Reasons owing to which the respondents continued living separately/initiated divorce proceedings (% in this group)



- **“evicted”** – 9 respondents or 3,0% of the sample were forced to continue living separately because their partner evicted them from the apartment/house,
- **“abuse continued”** – 9 respondents or 3,0% of the sample decided to continue living separately because abuse, even after intervention of the services, didn’t cease,
- **“escaped”** – 10 respondents or 3,4% of the sample left their partner due to fear of violence-increase following their request for help from the services,

- **“agreement” – only 1 respondent or 0,3% of the sample** continued living separately from her partner based on a mutual agreement ,
- **“divorce in progress” – 31 respondent or 10,5% of the sample** initiated divorce proceedings following intervention of the services
- **“demise” – for 2 respondents or 0,7% of the sample** the relationship ended owing to the decease of the partner.

Group: “Divorced”

This group contained **53 respondents or 17,9%** of the sample. We asked these respondents: “How long did the divorce proceedings last?”. “What was the outcome of the issue of custody over children?”, “How was the issue of alimony resolved?” and “What was decided regarding property division?”

The divorce proceedings in this group ranged from a short separation agreement, which was completed in a single hearing (for 2 respondents) up to two years (for 2 respondents). **The average duration of the proceedings in this group was 8,4 months.**

The Table below presents allocation of **custody of children**

Table 2.2.: Decisions regarding custody in divorce proceedings

Allocation of custody	Number in subgroups
Awarded to the mother	35
Awarded to the father	2
Children separated	1
Children over 18	2
Proceeding ongoing	1
Did not have children	4
No answer	8
Total	53

In 35 cases the child/children were awarded to the mother, but with regards to **alimony payments** the findings are as follows:

- in 11 cases – the father makes regular alimony payments
- in 5 cases – the father makes untimely alimony payments
- in 7cases – the father doesn’t pay alimony

We lack information on alimony payments in 12 cases.

Table 2.3.: What decision was reached on property division during the divorce proceedings of the respondents

What was decided regarding property decision	Numbers in the subgroup
Without problems	13
Did not have joint property	17
Did not make a request	4
Procedure ongoing	6
Ban on sale of joint house	1
Not defined	1
No answer	11

Total	53
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In reference to property division, 2 respondents in this group came across specific problems during the divorce:

- During the marriage a house was built from joint funds but on a land plot belonging to the husband's family. Today she is forced to live in the same house together with her ex-husband, even after the divorce which was filled consequently to abuse, due to a sale court ban owing to complex ownership relations.
- After expelling her from the house, the husband transferred ownership rights to his relatives, therefore during the divorce process she could not achieve the right to a just division of assets.
- The husband died prior to the completion of the divorce process. Today she is in a property case against his son from his previous marriage

The stances of respondents regarding causes of their problems

Due to the fact that the basic problem of all the respondents in the sample is relationship abuse, we wanted to obtain their opinion on what brought to that problem. We asked them: **“What, in your opinion brought to the problems which you went through?”**. The question offered essay types of answers.

The respondent's answers were presented in the table and divided, according to reasons for seeking help, into three groups (the brackets contain group labels in the table):

- Physical abuse with other types
- Non-physical abuse
- Aid in the divorce process and after the marriage/relationship ended (remaining respondents in the sample)

Table 2.4.: Reasons due to which, according to the respondent's opinion, caused the problems

What brought to the problems, which you went through?	Physical types of abuse	%	Non-physical type of abuse	%	Other	% in sample
Alcohol abuse	27	14,4	15	17,8	1	14,3
His jealousy	11	5,9	5	5,9	2	6,1
His violent nature	45	24,1	14	16,7	2	20,6
His psychological problems	5	2,7	1	1,2	1	2,3
His adultery	8	4,3	2	2,4	1	3,7
Mutual differences	9	4,8	15	17,8	6	10,0
Poor communication	1	0,5	2	2,4	0	1,0
Her immaturity for marriage	2	1,1	4	4,8	0	2,0
Her illness	1	0,5	1	1,2	0	0,6
Her wrong selection of partner	5	2,7	0	0,0	1	2,0
Life problems	1	0,5	3	3,6	1	1,7
Marital crisis	1	0,5	2	2,4	0	1,0

Influence of his family	4	2,2	2	2,4	1	2,3
Doesn't know/no answer	67	35,8	18	21,4	2	29,4
Total	187	100,0	84	100,0	25	100,0

Causes: “violent nature of the partner” and “alcohol” are most frequently represented in answers of respondents that were exposed to **physical abuse** from the partner. A total of 38,5% of respondents in that group considers these two causes as origins of their problems.

Respondents that were exposed to **non-physical types of abuse** by their partners, most frequently quote “the partner’s inclination to alcohol consumption” (17,8%) and “mutual differences” (17,8%) as reasons for their problems, but also in a similar percentage: “his violent nature” (16,7%). On the whole, 52,3% of respondents in this group quote these three reasons as the origin of problems during the relationship.

In the entire sample, most often due to problems which they experienced, the respondents attribute the following causes to:

- Violent nature of the partner – 20,6%
- Alcohol – 14,3%
- Mutual differences – 10,0%

The causes of problems, cited in the respondent’s answers, can be grouped according to whom or what the cause may be attributed to- the partner, herself or impact of the community:

- 48,5% of the respondents quote causes attributed to the partner (the first 8 causes in the table),
- 11,0% of the respondents quote causes attributed to both partners (mutual difference and poor communication). These causes are represented in respondents that experienced non-physical types of abuse in their marriage/relationship,
- 4,6% of the respondents attributes the causes to themselves (her immaturity for marriage, her illness and her wrong choice of partner),
- 5,7% of the respondents attributes the causes to some external influences, processes or traits (problems in life, marital crises and the influence of his or her family
- 29,4% of the respondents or almost one third of the sample don’t have an answer to this question.

3. How they live today

In this part of the presentation of investigation results we shall focus on how the respondent lives today at the time when this research was conducted. We were interested in what they managed to do for themselves, which problems remained unresolved and what novel problems occurred while the problem of violence was being resolved.

At the beginning of the investigation we had, according to the earlier marital status of the respondents, two subgroups in the sample:

- ABUSE DURING MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIP – 278 or 93,9% of the sample
- HELP AFTER MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIP – 18 or 6,1% of the sample

Picture 3.1.: Marital status of the respondents at the time of their appeal to the services and today



Out of 278 respondents (93,9%), THAT were engaged in a marriage/relationship at the time of their appeal, currently 137 or 46,3% are married or have a relationship in the sample: in other words **every second abusive marriage/relationship was dissolved.**

Respondents who are no longer in a marriage/relationship

For respondents in this subgroup the circumstances of life have changed **after addressing institutions/organizations for help due to violence in the relationship.** There are 159 respondents in the subgroup, comprising 53% of the sample, in which the respondents are grouped according to their current marital status, as presented in the following table.

Marital status	Number of respondents	% in the sample
Divorced	73	24,7
Lives separately from the partner	45	15,2
Divorce in progress	19	6,4
Widow	5	1,7
Not married	6	2,0
Entered into a new marriage	11	3,7
Total	159	53,7

Category: “divorced”

This category comprises **73 respondents or 24,7%** of the sample. The group contains:

- 55 respondents who were married at the time of their appeal for help
- 18 respondents who were already divorced

The number of children that currently live with the respondents from this group is 103, out of which 84 are minors.

Employment: in this group 40 respondents are employed, 16 are unemployed – no income, 14 have temporary jobs and 2 generate income from agriculture. Out of a total of 30 unemployed, 25 or 8,4% of the sample are younger than 50 years of age, that is, they are at least in a period capable of working.

Eight respondents (2,7%) have real estate in their names.

Table 3,2,: Type of housing which they live in today

Type of housing	Number of respondents	% in the sample
Apartment/house owned by the husband	4	1,4
Apartment/house owned by the husband's family	1	0,3
Apartment/house owned by the respondent	5	1,7
Sub-tenant	23	7,8
Housed with her relatives	33	11,1
In temporary accommodation/safe house	6	2,0
Without an answer	1	0,3
Total	73	24,7

A total of 29 respondents or 9,8% of the sample live in expensive housing, which is a significant burden to their living standard (sub-tenancy) or is temporary and uncertain (accommodation in a safe house, reconstructed, abandoned house ("broke into an empty flat" and similar). Five respondents from this group or 1,7% of the sample lives in housing which belongs to their ex-husband or his relatives.

When asked **"Do you consider that you achieved your goal when you sought help?"**, out of 73 respondents in this group, 7 answered NO. They quoted the following reasons for this assessment:

- Reconciliation with husband by the Social welfare center was unsuccessful
- I wanted to save the marriage but didn't succeed
- "The court was biased and ruled in favor of my husband"
- Deprived of contact with the other child
- Division of property

Category: "Lives separately from the partner" and "divorce in process"

We linked these two categories of respondents in this chapter due to similarities because neither have resolved their marital statuses, therefore lack legal grounds for obtaining earnings from the previous marriage (for example alimony or the right to dispose of a part of the property which she earned during the marriage).

This group contains 64 respondents, that represent 21,6% of the sample. The group is comprised of:

- 64 respondents from the group "lives separately from the partner"
- 19 respondents from the group "divorce in process"

When did they appeal for help:

- from the current group "divorce in progress" all 19 respondents were married. They appealed to the services: **one** – 2004, **one** – 2005, **eight** –2006 and **nine** –2007

- from the current group “lives separately from the partner” 41 was married, while 4 left the marriage/relationship (in the group that appealed for help for regulating certain rights from the previous marriage/relationship as well as visitation rights, acknowledgement of fatherhood, etc).

The number of children currently living with the respondents in these two groups:

- The group “divorce in process”: 27 children out of which 22 minors,
- Group “lives separately”: 62 children out of which 52 minors.

Due to the fact that no respondents from these two groups regulated their marital status, none have the right to child support by their fathers. In previous answers from those respondents that completed the divorce process, we were able to read the fact that divorce proceedings lasted, on an average 8,4 months and that rarely were they completed quickly because the divorce was agreed

Employment: in these two group a total of 20 respondents were employed.

- In the group “lives separately from the partner” there were 16 unemployed respondents (5,4% in the sample), while 12 respondents had temporary jobs. Out of a total of 28, 27 were younger than 50 years of age that is, according to their age they were capable of working, while
- In the group “divorce in progress” 5 respondents were unemployed (1,7% of the sample), while 8 had temporary jobs. Out of a total of 13, all were aged below 50.

A total of 4 respondents had **real estate registered in their names** from the group “live separately from the partner” and 4 respondents from the group “divorce in process”, which is a total of **8 respondents (2,7% of the sample)**.

Table 3.3: Type of housing currently used by the respondent

Type of housing	Separate	Divorce in progress	Total	% in sample
Apartment/house owned by the husband	2	1	3	1,0
Apartment/house owned by the respondent	0	3	3	1,0
Sub-tenancy	14	5	19	6,4
With her family	29	10	39	13,2
Total	45	19	64	21,6

From this category of respondents, a total of 19 or 6,4% of the sample live as sub-tenants. A total of 3 or 1% live in an apartment or house belonging to the husband, while as many as 39 or 13,2% in the sample are accommodated with relatives.

When asked: “**Do you consider that you achieved your goal when you sought help?**”, the answer “**NO**” was given by:

- 11 respondents in the group “lives separately from the partner”
- 2 respondents from the group “divorce in process”

This is how the respondents answered the question: “**What kind of help did you need but didn’t receive?**”.

- The husband's agreement to alcohol treatment (2 respondents)
- To obtain custody rights over the child
- To obtain visitation rights
- For the unmarried husband to acknowledge paternity
- To protect her from the husband because she was beaten up more severely after every intervention from the police
- For the court to schedule a hearing because the husband is constantly changing addresses
- "Police protection. He is too aggressive so that even Medica nor the Social welfare center couldn't accomplish much".

Categories: "entered into a new marriage", "widow", and "unmarried"

These three categories of respondents are merged in the below presentation because their marital status in relation to their former partners is finally resolved.

This group contains **22 respondents, that represent 7,4% of the sample**. According to the current marital status the group consists of:

- 11 respondents that entered into a new marriage
- 5 respondents are widows
- 6 respondents are unmarried

When did they appeal for help:

- from the current group of "entered into a new marriage" 10 of them were married, out of this number 7 sought help due to physical abuse, 2 due to psychological and sexual abuse and 1 for to assistance in the divorce process. At that time 1 respondent was already unmarried who requested assistance in regulating her visitation right for the child born during the marriage that was already divorced.
- From the current "widow" group, 3 were married while 2 left their marriage/relationship. From the 3 which were married, 2 sought protection from physical violence, and 1 because of psychological and sexual abuse. From the 2 respondents that were unmarried: 1 requested help for alimony regulation, while 1 sought help for property division against the husband's son from his previous marriage because the husband's death occurred prior to the conclusion of the divorce proceedings.
- From the current group "unmarried" 2 sought aid to achieve their rights for alimony from the unmarried father of the child, 1 due to physical abuse and 3 because of psychological and sexual abuse by the partner.

Number of children currently living with respondents from these three groups:

- "Entered into a new marriage" group, 18 children out of which 16 are minors
- "Widows" group: 9 children out of which 2 are minors
- "Unmarried group": 3 children out of which 2 are minors

In the "unmarried" group two respondents with minors do not receive **alimony** because the child's father effuses to pay.

Employment:

- In these three groups 9 respondents are employed, while two are pensioners.

- In the group “entered into a new marriage” 3 respondents are unemployed (1,0% of the sample), while 3 have temporary jobs. All 6 respondents are under 50, which means that at this age, they are capable of working.
- In the “widow” group” one respondent is unemployed (0,3% of the sample), 1 is under 50 and has temporary jobs
- In the “unmarried” group, 2 respondents have temporary jobs and are under 50.

Property possessions registered in their names have, in these groups, a total of 2 respondents from the “widows” group and 2 respondents from the “unmarried” group – a total of **4 respondents (1,4% of the sample)**.

Table 3.4.: Type of housing used by the respondents today

Type of housing	Entered into a new marriage	Widow	Unmarried	Total	% in sample
Apartment/house owned by the husband	7	2	0	9	3,0
Apartment/house owned by the husband’s family	0	1	0	1	0,3
Apartment/house owned by the respondent	0	2	1	3	1,0
Sub-tenancy	4	0	0	4	1,4
With her family	0	0	4	4	1,4
No answer	0	0	1	1	0,3
Total	11	5	6	22	7,4

The question: “**Do you consider achieving you goal when you appealed for help?**”, was answered with “NO” by:

- 3 respondents in group “entered into a new marriage”
- 2 respondents in the “widow” group

Here are their responses to the question: “**What type of assistance did you need but didn’t receive?**”:

- “I didn’t manage to obtain custody rights for the child. Only when my husband died did I get the child”.
- “I would be embarrassed to get a divorce. I put up with it until he died ”

The respondents remained in previous marriages/relationships

In the group of 137 respondents who live in an earlier marriage/relationship there are:

- 127 respondents who made the decision to continue living with the partner during and after the interventions
- 7 that began living separately following the incident
- 2 that initiated a divorce process
- 1 that divorced (but later returned to the ex-husband and continued living with him)

Number of children that live with respondents who remained living in an earlier marriage/relationship is 218, out of which 161 are minors.

Employment: In this group 55 respondents are employed. A total of 52 respondents (17,6% of the sample) are unemployed – have no income, 15 have temporary jobs (5,1% of the sample), 12 generate income from agriculture, while 2 are pensioners. Out of a total of 67 unemployed, 56 are under 50 years of age, which makes them at least according to their age, capable of working.

Property possessions: in this group 17 respondents (5,7% of the sample) have property registered in their name

Table 3.5.: Type of housing currently used by the respondents

Type of housing	Number of respondents	% in the sample
Apartment/house owned by the husband	78	26,4
Apartment/house owned by the husband's family	28	9,4
Apartment/house owned by the respondent	2	0,7
Sub-tenancy	13	4,4
With her relatives	3	1,0
In temporary accommodation/safe house	1	0,3
Apartment co-owned with her husband	10	3,4
Without an answer	2	0,7
Total	137	46,3

Economic aspects of certain decisions within this group

A total of 127 respondents in this group decided to stay in their previous marriage/relationship, after appealing to services for help, quoted the following reasons for their decisions:

- **27 respondents (9,1% of the sample)** remained in the marriage because relations improved or they didn't intend to divorce at all,
- **26 respondents (8,8% in the sample)** remained in the marriage because of the partner's commitment that things would change, that he would accept counseling, treatment or because the marriage was a value that they didn't want to lose
- **21 respondent (7,1% in the sample)** stayed in the marriage because of children, or were not prepared for a divorce or was unprepared to live alone with the children or had no courage for this step, or was ashamed of divorcing, etc.
- **46 respondents (15,5% in the sample)** quoted economic reasons for the decision (no job, had nowhere to go, etc).

We can only assume the extent behind reasons of emotions towards children ("because of children", "I don't have the courage to live alone with the children") hide economic reasons for continuing life in a violent marriage/relationship. Also, accepting the partner's commitment that things would be "different and better" as a reason for continuing life together in an abusive relationship may hide an un-preparedness for independence as well as fear for lack of resources for this step. Additionally, insecurity that community-based institutions would guarantee at least minimal requirements for financial security (accommodation, employment or some other source of income).

What we have for a fact is the information that 46 respondents (16 %) clearly said that they decided to remain in the violent marriage out of financial reasons, because they estimated that if they stepped out of the marriage they would not be able to support themselves and the children. In 10 cases or 3,4 % the respondents didn't provide an answer so we don't know their reasons for staying in an abusive marriage/relationship. We can conclude that at least 15,5% of the respondents returned to the marriage because of which they appealed for help due to abuse, without any guarantees or at least commitments that the situation in the marriage would improve. In other words, at least every sixth woman returned back to the abusive marriage/relationship because the community could not guarantee and provide at least minimal requirements for an independent life, a life without violence. Today 80 children, out of which 53 are minors, live with this group of respondents and under these conditions.

In the group of respondents that quote economic reasons for staying in the marriage, out of 46:

- 26 are unemployed, among them 20 are younger than 50 therefore, at least from the aspect of age they are capable of working,
- educational structure of 20 unemployed respondents from this group, that are younger than 50 is as follows: 2 – lack/incomplete primary education, 9 – primary school diploma, 1 – two year high school diploma, 6- four year high school diploma, 2 without an answer.
- 43 out of 46 respondents in this group have no assets registered in their names.

We asked all the respondents the following question: **“Do you consider that your goal was achieved when you appealed for help?”**

Out of 137 respondents from this group, 18 answered “NO”, 92 “YES”, while 27 didn't answer this question.

We asked the following question to those answering “NO”: **“What type of help did you need but didn't receive?”**. In the group of respondents that remained living in an earlier marriage/relationship, **statistically** we may state that:

- 6 of them still can't receive adequate protection from the batterer,
- 8 didn't receive support for independence: housing, employment,...

When we substitute the language of statistics with the words of the respondents we obtain the following answers to the question: **“What kind of help did you need but didn't receive?”**:

- those simple, human minimal needs such as:
“for the abuse to stop” and
- the one that reflects the impasse of the situation in which they are in:
“there is no help...he isn't changing and I have nowhere to go”.

“What would you do differently today?”

We asked the respondents the following question: **“What would you attempt to do differently, if you could turn back time?”**. This was an open type of question so we grouped the answers according to their similarities.

What would you try doing differently, today?	REMAIN IN THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIP		LEAVE THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIP		SAMPLE	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group
I wouldn't marry or have a relationship with him	3	2,2	21	13,2	24	8,1
I would get to know him better prior to the marriage	7	5,1	9	5,7	16	5,4
I would try to become economically independent	6	4,4	8	5,0	14	4,7
I wouldn't marry young	2	1,5	2	1,2	4	1,4
I would have a different stance	15	10,9	10	6,3	25	8,4
I would seek help earlier	11	8,0	3	1,9	15	5,1
I would leave him earlier	1	1,5	13	8,2	15	5,1
I would re-examine the impact of (...) to previous decisions	3	2,2	4	2,6	7	2,4
I would do everything the same	1	0,7	3	1,9	4	1,4
Doesn't know/no answer	87	63,5	86	54,0	172	58,1
Total	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

Although 58,1% respondents in the sample didn't answer this question, or didn't know how to answer, from the obtained answers we could only give a rough estimation about the direction of the respondent's thoughts.

Those respondents that **remained in their previous marriage/relationship** more frequently chose answers that provide for the marriage/relationship to last but they would try it in a different way now (together 18,9% of respondents in the group):

- "My stance would be different (from the beginning)"
- "I would look for help earlier"

In answers from respondents who **did not remain in their previous marriage/relationship** instead of responses aimed at survival of the relationship, answers stressing their own well-being prevailed (together 21,4% of respondents in the subgroup):

- "I wouldn't marry /or have a relationship with him"
- "I would have left him earlier"

The third most frequent answer in this subgroup was directed at the survival of the marriage/relationship:

- "My position would have been different (from the beginning)".

Two answers which, according to their frequency in **both groups**, follow the above mentioned answers are those with long-term preventive character (considered together with a frequency of 10,1% in the sample):

- with regards to entering into a marriage/relationship – "I would have gotten to know him better prior to the marriage"
- with regards to the freedom of decision making, if the marriage/relationship starts going downhill – "I would make an effort of being financially independent".

A relatively low representation of this answer in both groups, but the only one crossing the 2% frequency threshold in the sample was:

- “Reexamine influences of conservative upbringing and family on the outcome of certain decisions”

Consequences of violence

Violence is always accompanied by an array of problems, for both the immediate victims of abuse as well as those closely linked to the batterers but also on the society on the whole. When we refer to abusive relationships, beside the partner who is the immediate victim of abuse, either directly or indirectly, the victims are children that grow up in these relationships.

The consequences of partner abuse are broken families, children split between a conflict of loyalty between parents, children that enter into their own lives with a deviated image of parenthood, with fears and mistrust towards the establishment of future relationships, health-emotional problems but also a variety of economic problems which have to be faced by the batterers, victims, as well as their children.

At the conclusions of our interview, we asked the respondents: **“What do you consider to be biggest problem today?”**. This was an open-type of question and we grouped the answers as follows:

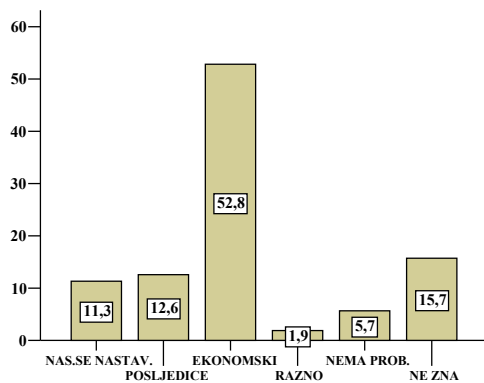
- the violence didn’t cease to exist
- consequences of the incurred abuse
- economic problems
- other

Table 4.1.: The most significant problems that the respondents must face today

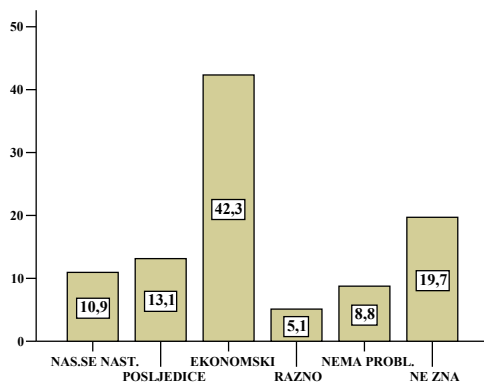
What is currently your biggest problem?	REMAINED IN THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP		LEFT THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE/ RELATIONSHIP		SAMPLE	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group
Separation from the children	-	-	12	7,5	12	4,1
The father doesn’t contact the children	-	-	4	2,5	4	1,4
The violence continues	15	10,9	2	1,3	17	5,7
G: The violence didn’t stop	15	10,9	18	11,3	33	11,1
Consequence to the health	7	5,1	9	5,7	16	5,4
Mistrust in new relationships	-	-	7	4,4	7	2,4
Fear	2	1,5	4	2,5	6	2,0
Fear that violence would be repeated	9	6,6	-	-	9	3,0
G: Consequence of abuse	18	13,1	20	12,6	38	12,8
Unemployment	27	19,7	26	16,4	53	17,9
Housing	2	1,5	9	5,7	11	3,7
Scant resources	13	9,5	15	9,4	28	9,5
Single parenthood	-	-	12	7,5	12	4,1

Alimony	-	-	2	1,3	2	0,7
Property division	1	0,7	6	3,8	7	2,4
Inability to conclude the divorce	-	-	3	1,9	3	1,0
Lack of education	1	0,7	2	1,3	3	1,0
Financial instability/uncertainty	14	10,2	9	5,7	23	7,8
G: Economic problems	58	42,3	84	52,8	142	48,0
Various	7	5,1	3	1,9	10	3,4
No problems	12	8,8	9	5,7	21	7,1
Doesn't know	27	19,7	25	15,7	52	17,6
G: Other	46	33,6	37	23,3	83	28,1
Total	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

Graph 4.1.: The biggest problems affecting respondents that didn't stay in their previous marriage (%)



Picture 4.2.: Biggest problems affecting respondents that stayed in their previous marriage (%)



Respondents from both groups must face, more or less, all the problems in similar percentage, as we grouped them in table 4.1 although their marital status gives a specific shape to these problems.

An example of problems from the group “**problems of continued violence**”:

- 15 respondents from the group of those that **remained in their marriage/relationship** but continue to face abuse, because of which they sought help earlier,
- 18 respondents from the group of those that are **no longer married** tackle different forms of violence from this group of problems: inability of contacting the children (who live with their father) and the lack of contact of the father with the child living with their mother. These forms of abuse in which partners even after the relationship ended tries to control the respondent by manipulating with their children. Respondents living outside a marriage/relationship continue to suffer provocations even physical threats from the former partner (2 respondents), which is experienced on a daily by those that are forced to live in a joint apartment/house and are unable to separate from their ex-partner.

Respondents in both groups must cope with problems of “consequences of violence” in almost an identical numbers and percentages. In this group of problems there are specifics related to their current marital status, so that:

- respondents that are no longer in previous marriages list mistrust as an obstacle to establishing new relationships,
- respondents that remained in previous marriages feel insecure about whether the violent-free status would last and constantly fear that abuse could be repeated.

Both refer to various health and psychological problems, which occurred as consequences of abuse.

Both groups are dominated by “economic problems” therefore the respondents have the most difficult time dealing with unemployment and lack of finances, ranging from no income at all, to insecure and temporary income, which cause stress and insecurity, to poverty despite having a job.

Respondents that have left their previous marriage listed particular problems specific for their marital status. The most frequently listed are: problems of single parenthood (emotional and economic aspects), alimony-related problems, problems related to the division of property and problems related to the conclusion of divorce. These respondents have a more pronounced housing problem regarding than respondents that remained in their previous marriage.

Only 21 respondent in the sample or 5,1% stated that they currently have **no problems**. In a slightly higher percentage, this group contains respondents that remained in their previous marriage – 8,8% as opposed to 7,1% of those no longer in a previous marriage.

Economic state-indicators in the sample

As we can see from the previous table and graphs, the sample of respondents who were victims of relationship abuse are dominated by financial problems.

In accordance to the goal of the examination: “**Examining how partnership abuse, as one of the factors, contributes to the increase of poverty in the society**”, we shall demonstrate certain substantiating facts.

To demonstrate indicators of the financial status of the respondents we shall assess data related to:

- property possession
- employment and earnings
- housing conditions

Employment and type of earnings obtained by the respondent

Table 4.2: Status of respondents according to employment

Employment status	Remained in previous marriage/ relationship		Left previous marriage/ relationship		Sample	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in sample
Employed before marriage	33	24,1	41	25,8	74	25,0
Employed during marriage	19	13,9	11	6,9	30	10,1
Employed during the divorce	1	0,7	24	15,1	25	8,4
Never employed	58	42,3	48	30,2	106	35,8
Left work owing to marriage	8	5,8	3	1,9	11	3,7
Didn't find a job following the divorce	0	0,0	12	7,5	12	4,1
Total	119	86,9	139	87,4	258	87,2
Didn't answer	18	13,1	20	12,6	38	12,8
TOTAL	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

As demonstrated in the table, currently 43,5% of respondents in the sample are employed (first three categories in the table), while 43,6% are unemployed. A total of 12,8% didn't answer the question. Therefore, **every second respondent in the sample is unemployed**, of which 48,1% of those still in previous marriages and 39,6% of those that left their earlier marriage.

Table 4.3.: Type of income earned by the respondents

Type of income	Remained in previous marriage/ relationship		Left previous marriage/ relationship		Sample	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in sample
No income	52	38,0	41	25,8	93	31,4
Permanent employment	55	40,1	69	43,4	124	41,9
Occasional jobs	15	10,9	40	25,2	55	18,6
Agriculture	12	8,8	2	1,3	14	4,7
Pension	2	1,5	4	2,5	6	2,0
Total	136	99,3	156	98,1	292	98,6
No answer	1	0,7	3	1,9	4	1,4
TOTAL	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

No income has been recorded for 31,4% of respondents out of which 25% are no longer in previous marriages and 38,0% of respondents stayed in earlier marriages. Therefore, **every third**

respondent in the sample has no income, out of which every fourth that left previous marriages and every second-third that remained in previous marriages.

Earnings from temporary jobs were obtained by 18,6% of respondents in the sample out of which 25,2% of respondents that are no longer in previous marriages – every fourth , 10,9% of respondents that remained in previous marriages – every ninth.

Housing conditions

Table 4.4.: Type of housing used by the respondents

Type of housing	Remained in previous marriage/ relationship		Left previous marriage/ relationship		Sample	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in sample
Housing owned by respondent	2	1,5	13	8,2	15	5,1
Housing in joint ownership	10	7,3	0	0,0	10	3,4
Housing owned by the husband	78	56,9	14	8,8	92	31,1
Housing owned by the husband's family	28	20,4	2	1,3	30	10,1
Housed with relatives	3	2,2	76	47,8	79	26,7
Sub-tenancy	13	9,5	46	28,9	59	19,9
Safe house, temporary accommodation	1	0,7	6	7	2,4	
Total	135	98,5	157	98,7	292	98,6
No answer	2	1,5	2	1,3	4	1,4
Total	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

- Only 5,1% of the respondents **has ownership** over their accommodation, most of which are no longer in their previous marriage.
- Only 3,4% of the respondents in the sample has **joint ownership of their housing** in which they live with their husbands (1/2) or 7,3% in the group of those still married – **therefore every fourteenth.**
- A total of 41,2% of respondents live in accommodation **owned by the husband or by his family**, out of which 77,3% in the group of those in their previous marriage and 10,1% in the group no longer marriage.
- A total of 26,7% of respondents in the sample **live with their relatives**, therefore every fourth . This category of housing conditions incorporate those respondents that no longer live in previous marriages: 47,8% of them- **almost every second, left their previous marriage/relationship due to abuse.**
- Currently, a total of 22,3% of respondents in the sample are **sub-tenants or have temporary accommodation (including the safe house)**. A total of 9,5% of respondents that were in an earlier marriage decided to rent housing and as many as 28,9% of those how are no longer in a previous marriage.

Ownership of real estate

In our society women still seldom accept family assets which they are entitled to according to the Law of heritage because they give the property to their brothers, according to the traditional heritage right, This is most probably one of the reasons because of which a small number of women from our sample has property ownership.

The second reason is because jointly acquired assets are frequently recorded in the deed book in the husband's name, upon the assumption that it doesn't make a difference or that "everything is ours". However, problems occur regarding division of jointly acquired property in cases of divorce occasionally speak differently.

Table 4.5.: Ownership of real estate

Real estate	Remained in previous marriage/ relationship		Left previous marriage/ relationship		Sample	
	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in group	Frequ.	% in sample
Doesn't possess real estate	113	82,5	136	85,5	249	84,1
Possesses real estate	17	12,4	20	12,6	37	12,5
Total	130	94,9	156	98,1	286	96,6
No answer	7	5,1	3	1,9	10	3,4
Total	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

In the entire sample only 12,5% of the respondents has property recoded in their name.

The table clearly shows that the respondents in both groups in almost equal percentage own or don't own property.

Poverty indicators

We shall take the same poverty indicators as we did for the indicators of economic status of respondents and data regarding:

- Property ownership
- employment and revenues
- housing conditions

Criteria

Within these indicators we established criteria according to which respondents will be divided into those we consider as pauper in this investigation.

- Within the classification "property ownership" as one of the poverty indicators, we'll take lack of property recorded in the deed books in the respondent's name, thus respondents without property will comprise the
 - "no property" group.
- Within the classification "type of earnings" as one of the poverty criteria we shall consider respondents with no earnings and allocate them to the
 - "no employment/earnings" group
 while earnings from temporary jobs will be taken as the other criteria, thus the:
 - group "lack of continuous earnings"

-Within the classification “**housing conditions**” we applied lose criteria. Housing in a space belonging to the husband or his family after leaving the marriage represents, most frequently, from the economic perspective an insecure and temporary accommodation, while emotionally it provides the possibility for violence to continue after parting from the relationship. If the respondent is married then housing is an obstacle for leaving the relationship if the need arises. Sometimes accommodation with close relatives can be insecure and of questionable duration, thus consequently an emotional burden.

Still, only those respondents that **rent housing** because it’s more expensive than other types of accommodation and respondents who live in **temporary housing** (such as abandon apartments or safe houses) can be considered, according to the classification “housing conditions” as those comprising the

- **group “no housing”**

In this way the following categories of poverty are obtained:

Pauper according to 4 criteria (lack of):

-property/employment-earnings/housing

Pauper according to 3 criteria (lack of):

- property/permanent revenues/housing

Pauper according to 2 criteria (lack of):

- property/earnings
- property/permanent earnings
- property/housing
- earnings/housing
- permanent earnings/housing

Pauper according to 1 criterion (lack of):

- employment/earnings
- permanent earnings
- housing

Table 4.3.: Poverty indicators in relation to the marital status of the respondents

Poverty indicators (the respondent lacks)	Married		Unmarried		Sample	
	Frequ.	% in group N 137	Frequ.	% in group N 159	Frequ.	% in sample
4 criteria: propert/employ-earn./housing	6	4,4	12	7,5	18	6,1
3 criteria: propert/employ.-perm earn./housing	2	1,5	14	8,8	16	5,4
2 criteria: property/employ.-earnings	41	29,9	25	15,7	66	22,3
2 criteria: property/permanent earnings	12	8,8	23	14,5	35	11,8
2 criteria: property/housing	4	2,9	24	15,1	28	9,5
2 criteria: property/housing	1	0,7	0	0,0	1	0,3
2 criteria: perm. earnings/housing	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
1 criteria: employment-earnings	4	2,9	4	2,5	8	2,7

1 criteria: permanent earnings	1	0,7	3	1,9	4	1,4
1 criteria: housing	1	0,7	2	1,3	3	1,0
Total	72	52,6	107	67,3	179	60,5
No poverty indicators	64	46,8	49	30,8	100	38,1
No info	1	0,7	3	1,9	4	1,4
TOTAL	137	100,0	159	100,0	296	100,0

We identified 179 respondents or 60,5% which were pauper for at least one defined poverty criterion.

The group of respondents **who left their previous marriage** contained a significantly higher percentage of impoverished women, according to this criterion, totaling 107 or 67,3% of their group as opposed to 68 or 49,6% of respondents that **remained in their previous marriage**.

Although the percentage of pauper respondents was high (over 50%) in both groups as well as in the entire sample, the criteria we established as indicators of poverty were fairly low. Therefore the group of respondents **who left their previous marriage** also included the category of respondents that are housed in apartments or houses owned by the ex-husband or his family, considered as a poverty indicator-free group.

The group of respondents that **remained in their previous marriages** included the poverty indicator-free respondents living in housing that belongs to the husband or his family and as such generate income from agriculture. In case they leave the marriage (we're referring to respondents who requested help due to partner abuse) they will ultimately lose housing, employment, income and according to our criteria, will be in the pauper category according to 3 and 4 criteria (depending on whether they possess property in their name or not).

Although we identified a significantly higher number of respondents in the group **that remained in their previous marriage** without employment or revenue (29,9% in their group), respondents that have **left their previous marriage** in high numbers lack permanent income (14,5% in their group) and have no housing (14,5% in their group).

We detected a larger number of **pauper respondents according to 4 and 3 criteria** in the group of respondents that **left their previous marriage** (added together 16,3% within their group), in comparison to the group of respondents **that remained in their previous marriage**; added together they make up 5,8% within the group.

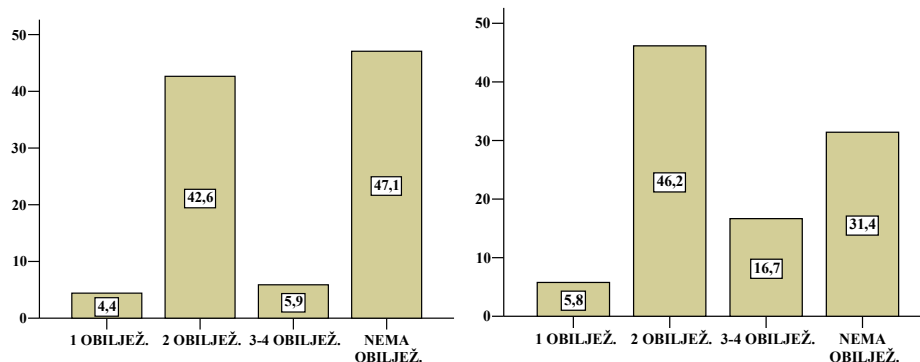
Some of the respondents who left their earlier marriage **are additionally burdened by the lack of access to their property**, which they earned together until the end of the relationship as well as **the refusal of payment or irregular payments of alimonies**.

Some of the respondents that remained in their earlier marriage are further pressed by the partner's alcoholism, which is (as presented in Table 2.5 in the second chapter) in 14,3% of the cases in the sample, a problem closely linked to violence, which they are experiencing or have experienced.

Picture 4.3.: A comparison of the subgroups "remained in previous marriage" and "left previous marriage", according to poverty indicators

- in previous marriage

-left previous marriage



A comparison of the subgroups “**in previous marriage**” and “**left previous marriage**”, according to defined poverty criteria demonstrates that the group “**left previous marriage**” contains:

- a significantly higher number of those most impoverished - pauper according to 3 and 4 criteria,
- higher number of poor according to 2 criteria
- lower number of those lacking any of the poverty criteria.

We may conclude that, according to our defined poverty criteria, within the group of those respondents who **left their previous marriage** there are more impoverished respondents than in the group of those that **remained in their previous marriage**. Since these respondents left the marriage/relationship because of abuse we can state that the examined sample substantiates our initial assumption that **partnership abuse, as one of the factors, contributes to the increase of poverty in the society**.

Legal framework for preventing domestic violence in BiH

The theoretical concept of domestic violence is the theory of power (Machiavelli, Hobbs) because it includes the assessment of power at various levels of analysis such as the society (socio- social) but also the organization and structure of personal relations. This in fact means that power is presented as both structural (established by the social structure) and inter-personal (established by the status in the group of equals). This is basis for two leading theoretical concepts according to which the phenomenon of domestic violence is explained: feminine and systemic-family⁵.

The contemporary approach to the problem of domestic violence is based on the stance that it isn't exclusively a personal problem an individual pathology but a social problem and social pathology with deep roots in the patriarchal structure of the society⁶.

International regulations

⁵ From group to team, 2001, *Contemporary theories on abuse of children in the family*, p 66, Aneta Lakic

⁶ prof dr Nevena Petrusic, Family-legal protection from domestic violence in the law of the Republic of Serbia, Bulletin No 2/2006 p 272, according to Konstatinovic, Vilic, S. Petrusic, N. “*Stances on domestic violence*” in “*Social awareness, human rights and activism of the citizens in Southern and Eastern Serbia*” OGI Nis, 2005, p 135-141

International regulation of domestic violence commenced by the adoption of the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1979⁷, the Declaration on the eliminating violence against women in 1993⁸, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995⁹, the Declaration on policies for combating violence against women in democratic Europe from 1993¹⁰, and Recommendation of the Council of Europe R (85) from 26.05.1985¹¹, and Recommendation 1450 from 03.04.2002¹², Recommendation No. 1582 from 27.09.2002¹³, Recommendation (2002) 5 from 30.04.2002¹⁴ and Recommendation 1681 from 08.10.2004¹⁵. All these documents were ratified by Bosnia and Herzegovina and are effective in both entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

State-level legislation

The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the prime state legal act proscribes the protection of all the citizens from inhumane, humiliating treatment and tormenting and the right to an adequate treatment in all criminal and civil processes. Obligations of state-level institutions and law making bodies stem from this provision to regulate and provide protection of women from abuse, which was done through entity laws on the protection from domestic violence, the Criminal code as well as the Law of gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, the family law in both entities additionally protects the family and minors.

The Law of Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides protection from violence on the basis of gender. The Law was adopted in the Parliamentary Assembly in May 2003 and published in the BiH Official Gazette No 16/03.

Article 4 of this law provides a definition of violence based on gender, harassment and sexual abuse. Abuse according to gender is defined as any act, which imposes physical, mental, sexual or economic harm as well as threatening acts, which can seriously hinder individuals to enjoy their rights and freedom on the principles of gender equality. Article 17 of the Law treats prohibition of violence and prescribes the following: every type of violence is prohibited in private or public life according to gender and the responsible authorities will undertake measures for prevention, deterrence and elimination of violence based on gender and provide protection and aid to the victims of violence.

The Law on gender equality in BiH regulates penalties, thus Article 27 carries that “whoever commits gender-based acts of violence, harassment and sexual abuse will be penalized for this criminal act with imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years”.

⁷ *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDOW)*

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw>

⁸ *Declaration on the eliminating violence against women in 1993*

[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)A.RES.48.104.En](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)A.RES.48.104.En)

⁹ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Beijing/platform/>

¹⁰ *Declaration on policies for combating violence against women in democratic Europe*,

http://www.europrefem.org/contri/2_04_en/en-gend/05en_gen.htm

¹¹ <http://www.vlada.cg.yu/gender/vijesti.php/akcija=vijesti&id=14570>

¹² <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/publikacije-dp/medjunarodni%dokumenti.pdf> *Violence against women-obstacle to development, International documents p 76*

¹³ <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/publikacije-dp/medjunarodni%dokumenti.pdf> *Violence against women-obstacle to development, International documents p 79*

¹⁴ <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/images/prevod2002-web.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.womenngo.org.yu/publikacije-dp/medjunarodni%dokumenti.pdf> *Violence against women-obstacle to development, International documents p 98*

Republic of Srpska (RS)

Among the entity laws, there are three key legal provisions aimed at preventing domestic violence and protection of victims of abuse in the Republic of Srpska: RS Criminal code, Law on protection from domestic violence and the Law on amendments to the Law on protection from domestic violence.

Domestic violence in the RS is treated as a criminal act since October 2000, at the time of adoption of the RS Criminal code. The Criminal code book, three years later at the time of judicial reform in BiH, had undergone changes and was adopted again in 2003 in form of the RS Criminal code, which is still effective.

In the RS Criminal code, Chapter 20 (“Criminal acts against marriage and family”), Article 208 defines a criminal act as: “Violence in the family and within the family unit”: “A committer of this criminal act will be considered as the person who, by threatening with violence, by rude and unscrupulous behavior jeopardizes the serenity, physical integrity and mental health of a family member or the family unit”. For this act the lawmaker foresees that the perpetrator is penalized with a fine or a jail sentence for up to two years.

If weapons or hard objects are during the act of violence “or some other object capable of harming the body or affecting the health”, the penalty is imprisonment from three months to three years. In case violence upon a family member or the family unit has lethal consequences, penalties range from two to twelve years imprisonment.

However kills a member of the family or family unit, which he abused earlier will be penalized with at least ten years of imprisonment, as proscribed by the lawmaker.

In accordance with the RS Criminal code “the family or family unit” includes ex-spouses and their children as well as the parents of former spouses.

The RS Law on protection from domestic violence was adopted December 21st, 2005. This Law provided a detailed definition of the term family, along with a more detailed definition of violence, much closer to the feminine assessment of domestic violence.

In Article 5 of the Law, the family is defined as a community of parents and children and other of its members.

In the sense of this Law, the family is comprised of:

- Spouses living in a legitimate or illegitimate marriage
- Their children (joint or from previous family units)
- Former legitimate or illegitimate spouses and their children
- Adoptive parent and adoptee
- Guardian and ward as well as other persons living currently or previously in the family unit
- Parents of current and former spouses
- Stepmother and stepfather.

The lawmaker specifies that the relations between family members should be established upon principles of humanity and mutual respect, help, devotion during which particular obligations towards the protection of children must be observed, respect for gender equality and a free will for entering into legitimate or illegitimate marriages.

According to the Law on protection of domestic violence (Article 6), domestic violence is considered “any act which imposes physical, psychological and sexual sufferings or financial damage as well as threats with these acts of lack of paying worthy attention, which seriously hinders family members from enjoying their rights and freedoms on the principles of gender equality, in both public and private spheres of life”.

Beside the fact that violence is connected to gender equality in public and private spheres, in Article 6 of the Law, possible acts of violence are assessed in 10 points:

1. Physical attack of one family member against another family member, regardless if it caused physical injury or not;
2. application of physical force that doesn't result in a direct attack or employment of psychological pressure on the integrity of a family member;
3. any other conduct of a family member that can cause or elicit risk of physical or psychological or financial loss;
4. to cause a sense of fear or personal jeopardy or attack of dignity by blackmail or verbal threat or other types of pressure;
5. serious verbal assaults, humiliation, swearing, ridiculing and other types of disturbances of a family member;
6. stalking and all other means of disturbing another family member
7. to damage or demolish joint assets or assets in possession or an attempt of doing so;
8. lack of attention and care or failure to provide help and assistance although there is an obligation for doing so according to the law or tradition, which would consequently lead to a feeling of physical, psychological or socio-economical jeopardy;
9. isolation or restriction of movement and communication with third parties
10. lack of concern and provision of basic needs.

The Law on protection of domestic violence foresees seven protective measures that can be ruled against a person who conducted any of the types of abuse. The protective measures include:

- Removal from the apartment, house or some other housing premises
- Ban on access to the victim of violence
- To secure protection of the victim of violence
- Ban on disturbance or stalking the victim of violence
- Obligation of psycho-social treatment
- Obligatory treatment from addiction and community work or volunteering for a humanitarian organization.

Beside protective measures, the Law foresees financial penalties for abusers and the highest penalty is 1500 KM.

Although the Law on protection from domestic violence in both the RS and FBiH was revolutionary in defining domestic violence as a social problem and for assuming responsibility for protecting family members from violence, as well as serious interventions by the state in the sphere of privacy; however; their implementation demonstrated numerous gaps. The lawmaker transferred obligations to institutions that didn't exist at the time of adoption of the law (funds for alimonies- to this day still not established in the Republic of Srpska), while for certain measures such as protective measures for victims of violence, neither have financial means been secured nor budgetary lines defined, thus the Law on protection from domestic violence in the RS, almost until 2007 has not even been applied.

Upon initiative of women's non-governmental organizations in the RS and with support of the RS Governmental gender center, in 2007 amendments to this Law have been initiated and at the beginning of 2008, the Law on amendments to the Law on protection of family from domestic violence has been finally adopted ("Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska 17/08). The most significant changes in the field of financing safe houses, that have envisaged the obligation of entity and municipal authorities to provide resources for this purpose (Article 7).

Also, in the Law on amendments, domestic violence is defined as heavy breach of female human rights and children's rights, while the acts that represent violence within the family unit, "upbringing of children by physical punishment and by other demeaning means" are also characterized as violence within the family.

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH)

The FBiH Law on protection of domestic violence (Official Gazette F BiH No 22/05 from 06.04.2005) became effective six months after publishing, more precisely 07.10.2005. This Law defines the term family, the term domestic violence, protection from domestic violence and the type and goal of offence sanctions for batterers.

The term family is defined in Article 5 of this Law, which states that a family consists of:

1. legitimate and illegitimate partners,
2. relatives living together,
3. guardian and ward
4. former legitimate and illegitimate partners.

The lawmaker considers that family members should restrain themselves from harming the physical and psychological integrity of the other family member particularly regarding the protection of children and of harm and discrimination based on gender and age.

The term family is defined in Article 6 of this law as follows: “violence is any act that causes physical, psychological, sexual or economic damage as well as threats for such acts or omitting to undertake obligatory action or attention that seriously obstruct family members in enjoying their rights and freedoms on the principles of equality in public and private spheres of life.

The Law on protection from domestic violence proscribes offence sanctions in forms of protective measures aimed at preventing and reducing domestic violence, removing consequences and undertaking efficient measures for reeducating the batterer and removing circumstances, which trigger new violence in the family. Protective measures can be ruled against the batterer such as: removal from the apartment, prohibition of approaching the victim of abuse, ban on disturbing the victim, securing the person exposed to violence, obligatory psychosocial treatment and obligatory treatment from addiction to alcohol.

This law contains penalty charges for officials as well as for persons that don't abide according to the ruled protective measure. Article 20 states that a penalty ranging from 1.000,00 KM to 5.000,00 KM or imprisonment of at least 50 days will be issued to an official who doesn't report acts of domestic violence to the police. Article 21 treats batterers and states that a penalty ranging from 2.000,00 KM to 10.000,00 KM will be imposed to the person who doesn't abide by the ruled protective measure.

The FBiH Criminal code (Official gazette No. 36/03) became effective July 29th, 2003 and prescribes criminal acts protecting women, minors and families from various types of violence. Article 222 of this Law treats domestic violence and carries:

- Whoever uses force, rude or inconsiderate behavior jeopardizes the peace, physical integrity or psychological health of a family member will be penalized with a fine or imprisonment for up to 1 year.
- If weapons or dangerous objects were used during the act of violence aimed at causing heavy injuries or to damage the health, the batterer will be punished with imprisonment from three months to three years.
- Whoever kills a member, who was previously battered, will be punished with imprisonment of at least 10 years or a punishment of long-term imprisonment.'

FBiH Family law (Official Gazette No. 35/05) became effective June 20, 2005. This law defines the family, marriage and legal relations within the marriage, relations between parents and children, conduct of responsible bodies and also contains important provisions protecting the rights of women and her minors. Domestic violence is regulated by Article 4 of the Law and stipulates that: “violent behavior of a married spouse is prohibited along with any other family member, while violent behavior includes any kind of damage inflicted upon physical and psychological integrity”.

Article 380 of this Law defines the procedure for protection from violent behavior within the family and states that: “the right to protection from abusive behavior is given to legitimate and

illegitimate partners and all family members; it is obligatory that protection is provided by the police, the responsible institution and the misdemeanor court.

Article 383 of the same Law defines penalties for legal entities warning them of fines ranging from 2.000,00 KM to 20.000,00 KM conditioned that:

- the batterer with violent behavior isn't removed or the one threatening with acts of violence;
- doesn't inform the care taking body on the breach of the child's rights, particularly violence, molesting, sexual harassment and neglect of the child.

The abovementioned demonstrates that the FBiH applies four laws substantiated by rulebooks for preventing domestic violence and protection of victims, adopted by the responsible ministries, based on the law (for example Rulebook on the mode and place for implementing protective measures of obligatory psychosocial treatment of the batterers in a family). Until the adoption of the Family law, the Law on domestic protection and the Law on gender equality, only the FBiH Criminal code was in force, which treated domestic violence as a criminal act in only a single article (Art 222).

Presentation of data on the work of services, which provide assistance in cases of domestic violence

Within the framework of the project: "Victims of domestic violence, a new category of impoverished communities", ministries of internal affairs, courts, social welfare centers and non-governmental institutions from four municipalities: Bijeljina, Mostar, Zenica nad Trebinje, were requested to provide information on the work of problems regarding domestic violence during the period from 2002 until 2007. We requested their opinion on problems in the work and possible suggestions for more efficient assistance to victims of violence and for alleviating its consequences on the victims and the entire society.

Police

Data on the work of the police in cases of domestic violence were obtained from the Center of Public Safety in Bijeljina, the Ministry of internal affairs Mostar, Police administration Zenica and Police station Trebinje.

MIA Mostar quote in their letter quotes that, during the observed period, the roles and obligations of the police varied with regards to domestic violence. In the beginning the work consisted of:

- record taking
- action directed at protecting the victim and measures against the batterer;
- submission of report towards other bodies and institutions responsible for this field.

Introduction of European standards additionally oblige:

- cooperation with other bodies and organizations within the local community;
- timely submission of information and participation in their work;
- implementation of protective measures ordered by the responsible court.

In this sense the work and activities of the police in cases of domestic violence currently encompass:

- recording the incident;
- field assessment for information gathering and undertaking measures;
- separation of the victim from the batterer and keeping the batterer in police premises;
- reporting to the Prosecutor
- providing legal aid

- informing the Social welfare center and directing or transporting to health care facilities if medical treatment is necessary;
- submitting a report to the responsible prosecutor and initialing the request for initiation of offense proceedings.

The Table below presents summarized data on the incidences in this field during the period from 2002-2007 in the regions in which the investigation was conducted.

Based of these data it is unjustified to derive conclusions by comparing absolute numbers in the reported cases of violence, because the Centers of public safety , Police administrations or the Ministries cover areas of different sizes. For example, the Center of public safety in Bijeljina covers the following municipalities: Bileljina, Ugljevik, Lopare, Zvornik, Milici and Vlasenica, while other data refers only to the municipality which is in their AoR.

For each area we presented results for:

- “Inter” – number of interventions
- “Misd” – number of submitted misdemeanor charges based on the numbers of completed cases. The Police administration in Zenica focused on the presentation of the number of reports which were withdrawn by the victims before they entered the court proceedings.
- “Crim” – number of criminal charges submitted based on the number of completed cases

Table: Numerical data regarding measures applied in cases of domestic violence

Year	Bijeljina			Mostar			Trebinje			Zenica ¹⁶		
	Inter	Misd	Crim	Inter	Misd	Crim	Inter	Misd	Crim	Inter	Misd	Crim
2002	36	0	36	X ¹⁷	X	X	11	0	11	X	Presented in the letter	X
2003	71	0	69	127 ¹⁷	63	10	15	0	15	X	Number of withdrawn reports presented textually	-
2004	74	0	74	142	88	46	18	0	18	71		-
2005	61	0	59	92	39	46	29	0	29	81		28
2006	89	0	87	78	27	43	34	0	34	132		-
2007	83	0	80	89	29	59	23	8	15	152		

In the report of the Ministry of internal affairs in **Mostar**, beside data presented in the Table, the number of reported cases are also given:

- 2003: 127 reported - 127 interventions
- 2004: 218 reported – 142 interventions
- 2005: 101 reported – 92 interventions
- 2006: 99 reported – 78 interventions
- 2007: 113 reported – 89 interventions

¹⁶ The Police administration submitted data referring to the period from 2004-2007 because earlier data were recorded and presented according to different methodologies-sheets and were not available to them at this time

¹⁷ In 2002 domestic violence was not treated separately but cases of domestic violence were recorded as misdemeanor charges (insulting, derogating, fights, and other).

¹⁷ In 2002 domestic violence was not treated separately but cases of domestic violence were recorded as misdemeanor charges (insulting, derogating, fights, and other).

In cases that were not accompanied by interventions, the letter quotes that the following measures were taken: “summoning the participants, providing legal aid etc”.

In data from **Zenica** the accent was placed on the number of reported cases of violence and the number of withdrawn reports by the victims:

- 2004: reported 71 – withdrawn 59
- 2005: reported 81 – withdrawn 68
- 2006: reported 132 – withdrawn 95
- 2007: reported 152 – withdrawn 134

These data point to the fact that out of the total number of reported cases of domestic violence, between 72,0% and 88,2% reports, were withdrawn by the victims when they are faced with the follow-up procedure in order for the reported case to be processed by the court. Consequently, from the total number of reported cases only 28,0% to 11,8% were forwarded to court procedure.

Reasons for such a high number of withdrawn reports in Zenica is explained by the fact that the victim is insufficiently informed about what criminal charges mean and the consequences stemming from them. Even when the victims give their statements they are frequently in doubt whether to charge the partner-batterer. Economic dependence frequently plays a significant role in this.

By analyzing data which were, for the purpose of this investigation, submitted to us by the Police from Bijeljina, Mostar, Trebinje and Zenica, we were able to follow how the treatment of domestic violence has changed from both the legal aspect and police conduct during the observed period from 2002-2007

According to the opinion of police representatives the most important factors which reduce the efficacy in resolving cases of domestic violence in favor of the victims are:

- slow resolution of requests submitted to the responsible prosecutor and judicial,
- the local community is not prepared to provide facilities for implementing measures of protection;
- all bodies responsible for the problem related to domestic violence lack a common approach of how to resolve it (level of engagement and professionalism);
- proving psychological abuse in the family;
- economic dependence of the victim on the batterer which causes the withdrawal of the report.

Social welfare center

Data for assessing the participation of the Social welfare center in the work of problems related to domestic violence were submitted by the Social welfare centers from Bijeljina, Mostar, Trebinje and Zenica.

The Social welfare centers provide the following services to victims of domestic violence:

legal aid

informing the victim on legal regulations and possibilities for assistance of other institutions

financial help

psycho-social aid (in Trebinje therapy and support groups, Zenica : therapy and counseling within the Counseling center for marriage and family) ;

assistance for obtaining medical findings (in Bijeljina);
help in accommodation in a safe house.

Databases which were filed in social welfare centers, from regions included in this investigation were not standardized. We attempted to present this lack of uniformity in the Table below. The columns carry individual activities which are in the AoR of the Social welfare center that tackle problems in relationships and violence as their possible cause.

Individual activities presented in the columns are labeled as follows:

- Directed by the police
- Directed by other institutions
- Reported on their own initiative because of divorce
- Intervened based on information of a dysfunctional family
- “something else”

Table: Numerical presentation of the center linked to problems of domestic violence

Year	Bijeljina					Mostar					Trebinje					Zenica				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2002											105 dysfunctional families					Presentation of data according to a different methodology in the next table				
2003						21 6 16 18 74														
2004						18 9 13 19 21														
2005						17 4 5 8 3														
2006						9 5 2 0 0					42 cases of domestic violence									
2007	28	12	4	30	6	3	3	2	0	1	28 cases of domestic violence									

The method of filing cases classified by professionals as problems of domestic violence in Zenica were recorded in the following manner:

Table Overview of the number of registered cases of domestic violence in the Zenica Social welfare center

Type of violence	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Childr	Adults	Childr	Adults	Childr	Adults	Childr	Adults	Childr	Adults
Physical violence	30	45	16	49	5	21	9	11	1	17
Emotional violence	19	21	12	20	0	0	12	2	52	26
Sexual abuse	2	1	0	3	0	0	9	0	2	0
Neglect	24	31	22	49	0	0	8	0	3	0
Other types of abuse	10	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0

Total	85	100	51	123	8	21	38	12	58	43
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Data obtained by the Center for counseling of marriages and family in Zenica demonstrate that in 29 families the dominant problems was the inability of controlling aggressiveness and violence in the family. In 29 cases the Ministry of internal affairs was acquainted with the problems, for 17 families a report was filed by an employee of the Center for counseling while in the rest of the cases the victim of abuse submitted the request. In 28 cases the batterers were husbands (fathers) and ex-husbands. In one case the batterer was the son. The most frequent victims of violence are the wives, or ex-wives in 26 cases, while parents were victims in one case.

Children were direct victims of domestic violence in 2 cases (of which 1 was incest), while in all the other cases the children were direct victims.

Recording domestic violence victims, as separate categories in Zenica began in 2003. Later, caseloads registered into other categories were re-registered therefore these cases will be receiving assistance over a prolonged time period. Re-registration caused an increase in the number of cases in the first two years (shown in the table).

Social welfare centers, during the observed period from 2002-2007, continuously transformed their activity with the aim of increasing the quality of help to victims of domestic violence.

- Record-keeping: victims of domestic violence have, in the past couple of years, been separated from data on dysfunctional families,
- The development of instruments for recording cases of abuse and compilation of a database (Zenica since 2003)
- Establishment of an Expert team for domestic violence (established in Bijeljina in 2007)
- Establishment of a Center for counseling for marriage and family (in Zenica since 2003)
- Contacting services that work on the same cases (in Bijeljina – sending information to police stations with abuse cases, giving proposals regarding further treatment of cases: initiating misdemeanor or criminal proceedings, ruling adequate measures for protection and collaboration with NGOs).
- Development of public awareness raising programs on problems of domestic violence (in partnership with local NGOs and other organizations and bodies),
- Projects related to primary prevention (in Trebinje: working with youth in the field of preparation for marriage and responsible parenthood, strengthening personal capacities, etc).
- Developing respective professional potentials for working with victims of domestic violence and batterers (professional educations, exchange of experiences with similar services and NGOs)

While working with women who are victims of violence, professionals from the Center assessed that the biggest obstacles to resolving problems in favor of the victims are:

- financial dependence of women on their legitimate or illegitimate partners,
- the cultural framework and stereotypes supporting violence
- absence of centers for mental health
- insufficient financial assistance- lack of budgetary lines intended to provide support to victims of violence,
- slow reaction by the judicial bodies

- inadequate punitive measures
- inadequately educated professionals for these types of problems.

Court

Bijeljina

Owing to the fact that the court didn't submit the requested data, we shall present data during the period from 2001-2004 (submitted by "Lara"), published in the Study on domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Banja Luka 2005, Organization of women and Helsinki parliament of citizens, p 127)

During the period from 2001 to 2004 before the Basic court in Bijeljina a total of 105 cases were initiated for the criminal act of "violence in the family or in the family unit", a total of 65 first instance verdicts were adopted out of which 54 were legally binding. A total of 47 suspended sentences were ordered, 5 penalties, one sentence of imprisonment and one court warning.

The Table below shows data from the Basic public prosecutor's office in Bijeljina during the period from 2001 to 2004.

	Basic prosecutor's office in Bijeljina, data on measures taken in cases of criminal acts of "violence in the family or family unit" during the period from 2001 to 2004
2001	3 reports received Charges raised against 3 persons Basic court in Bijeljina passed verdicts in 3 cases
2002	Requests for investigation against 2 persons 21 reports received against 22 persons In 20 cases charges raised against 21 persons Basic court in Bijeljina passed verdicts for 14 cases against 15 individuals
2003	34 reports received against 36 persons In 21 cases investigation requested against 22 persons In 22 cases charges raised against 23 persons In one case investigation discontinued against one person In 5 cases against 5 persons investigation ongoing In 1 case against 1 person a decision was passed for drop of charges Basic court in Bijeljina passed verdicts in 10 cases against 10 persons
2004	Received 63 requests against 65 persons In 14 cases investigations were initiated against 14 persons 47 charges were filed against 47 persons In one case a decision was passed to discontinue investigation One case against one person was passed on to another body Basic court in Bijeljina adopted verdicts in 10 cases against 10 persons

From data submitted by the Prosecutor's office it can be concluded that the number of requests increased each year together with the number of charges and verdicts regarding cases of violence in the family or the family unit.

Mostar

The Basic court in Mostar, in its letter carries that it began working according to new responsibilities from Feb 2, 2004. Since computerized databases have been introduced in 2006 earlier information is unavailable.

Before this court, a total of 69 divorce cases were concluded in 2006 while 81 case in 2007.

When domestic violence is concerned, in 2006, a total of 7 penalty cases were completed without misdemeanor cases, while 17 decisions were adopted for infringements in 2007 and 1 criminal case

Zenica

The Court from Zenica states in their letter that until 2002 domestic violence was not legally defined as a criminal offence, while during 2003, 2006 and 2007 there is lack of data for processed cases for domestic violence felonies in the Zenica-dobož Canton.

The data submitted refer to 2004 and 2005.

In 2004 one person was charged for the criminal act of domestic violence and found guilty (a suspended sentence was ruled).

In 2005 a total of 28 persons were charged out of which 27 were found guilty. Suspended sentences were ruled against 20 persons, while a sentence of 1 month imprisonment was ruled against 1 person; imprisonment for 1-3 months for 3 persons, 3-6 months for 2 persons and over 6-12 months for 2 persons (a total of 8 penitentiary sentences). Penalties were ruled in 2 cases and educational measures in 17 cases.

Trebinje

The Basic court in Trebinje submitted data on divorce proceedings and the measures passed.

In the reporting period a total of 137 divorce proceedings were conducted as follows:

- 19 in 2002
- 29 in 2003
- 17 in 2004
- 29 in 2005
- 19 in 2006
- 24 in 2007

In 2002 no measures were ruled for felonies of domestic violence.

In 2003, a total of 2 imprisonment verdicts were passed.

In 2004 there were 11 penitentiary sentences, out of which 8 suspended sentences.

In 2005 there were 40 penitentiary sentences, out of which 36 were suspended sentences and 1 measure of protection for obligatory alcoholism treatment.

In 2006, a total of 25 suspended penitentiary sentences were ruled and 1 measure of protection for obligatory treatment from alcoholism.

In 2007 a total of 18 penitentiary sentences were ruled, out of which 16 suspended sentences and 1 measure of protection for obligatory treatment from alcoholism.

A total of 97 sentences were ruled and 2 protective measures issued. With the exception of 8 cases, the victims of physical and psychological abuse were women, submitted to assaults by their husbands.

No measures of protection were ruled in accordance with the Law on protection from domestic violence. Until this law came into effect, during the offence procedure such cases were treated as disturbance of public peace and order.

Non-governmental organizations

Bijeljina

The NGO- Organization of women “Lara” doesn’t have information for 2002 and 2003. Data were submitted for 4 years and in all cases the clients directly addressed them for help. An annual breakdown of the number of recorded cases is presented below:

- 58 cases in 2004
- 79 cases in 2005
- 118 cases in 2006
- 178 cases in 2007

During the first years the activists of “Lara” provided women, victims of domestic violence with:

- information regarding their rights
- informing the police on violence (with the consent of the victims if they lacked courage to address the police)

It can be seen from the data that the number of victims of abuse turning to “Lara” for help has increased from one year to another. The number of women, seeking protection from abuse, from other municipalities is also increasing. Continuous work on raising public awareness levels regarding domestic violence, concrete help and legal aid to women who decided to leave the violent marriage, contributed to the increase in the number of clients turning to this organization for help.

“Lara” provides women with:

- information regarding their rights
- information on the obligations of institutions towards victims of abuse
- direct legal aid (request for divorce, complaints, various other requests and documents, etc).

During the first years of work the victims received charge-free court representation but today due to large numbers of clients there is no possibility for that.

Problems, which hamper the work of cases of violence include:

- most clients objects to the complex procedure of request submission because at the time when violence takes place the victim is not in a state to provide all the necessary information to the policeman.
- In some cases problems with accommodation in the safe houses occur. Earlier it was possible to arrange housing directly with the shelter but now the procedure is much more complex, which complicates the position of the victim in emergency situations.

Mostar

Caritas-Mostar a shelter for troubled women and children “Mirjam” submitted information on victims of domestic violence housed in “Mirjam” during the period from 2002-2007.

Table: Number of persons housed in Caritas shelter “Mirjam”

Year	Manner of arrival to the “Mirjam” shelter			
	Directly	Soc. Welf.	Other	Total
2002	7	4	7	18
2003	13	3	2	18
2004	12	3	3	18
2005	15	5	0	20
2006	11	5	1	17
2007	14	0	4	18

During the reporting period, the term “other” means that in 2 cases women were accommodated through “Medica” Zenica, 1 person through an Embassy, other according to recommendation from a priest, teacher and doctor. During six years (2002-2007), a total of 109 women and children- victims of domestic violence were sheltered in “Mirjam”.

The following services were provided to them:

- Temporary protected accommodation
- Psychological counseling
- Liaison for contacting other institutions
- Financial assistance
- Assistance in re-integration into the society after leaving the shelter.

Zenica

NGO “Medica” submitted information for the period from 2002-2007. Assistance to victims of domestic abuse in Zenica, beside “Medica” was provided by the Social welfare center, Legal aid center for women and the police.

Depending on the client’s needs and the nature of the case, other services and institutions were involved but also the following services offered by Medica:

- Psychological help (support, counseling, therapy)
- Housing to a shelter
- Inclusion into one of the programs for acquiring new skill (sewing, hairdressing, tapestry)
- Inclusion into the “Medica” kindergarten in which children receive assistance in learning together with preschool groups, etc.

This presentation includes only cases registered as “relationship abuse”. According to the statements of the clients certain cases were registered as “family problems” in the beginning but in the continuation of the work it turned out that they were abusive relationships.

Table: Number of clients from Zenica municipality that appealed for help due to partnership abuse

Year	Manner of arrival to Medica	Total
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	Directly	Police	Soc. Welf.	Other	
2002	42	8	5	9	64
2003	26	2	0	4	32
2004	45	2	4	5	56
2005	43	11	13	8	75
2006	26	6	3	3	38
2007	41	3	18	4	66

In the column entitled “other” the cases have been forwarded by: the SOS line, Legal aid center for women, health care facilities and other NGOs.

In the observed period, depending on the type of problem and client needs, Medica involved one or more other service or professionals in the cases.

Table: Number of “Medica” clients and other community-based services

Year	Services involved in the work of the case				
	Police	Soc. Welf.	Health care facil.	Legal aid centers	Others
2002	14	12	5	13	2
2003	5	5	2	6	0
2004	5	3	5	13	0
2005	9	17	2	15	0
2006	4	2	0	6	0
2007	7	5	3	6	1

“Others” refers to municipal services and the prosecutor’s office.

Trebinje

Since its establishment in 2002, the NGO “Women’s center” was primarily oriented to provide service to women and children victims of domestic violence. During the first two years a higher number of victims were registered in comparison to the last four reporting years, which is to be expected owing to the fact that this was the first organization to speak openly about this problem.

- In 2002 and 2003 services were extended to 87 women, victims of domestic violence and their children while in
- 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 an additional 99 women.

A certain number of women show up from one year to another because no requirements have been created to enable them to step out of the violent relationship or due to permanent consequences that violence left upon them (regardless as to whether they remained or left the abusive relationship).

The following services were provided during the reporting period:

- individual and group counseling treatments
- legal aid
- inclusion into supportive groups
- assistance in obtaining medical reports

- assistance in accommodation to safe houses (in several cases)
- inclusion into training programs
- various forms of helping children (counseling, creativity support and integration programs).

Beside direct help to women and children victims of domestic violence, different activities were continuously implemented for primary prevention such as: work with young girls and women, strengthening women's capacities, work on sensitizing the community, removing prejudices and stereotypes, etc.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the previous data we can conclude that domestic violence has been publicly discussed in our society. After years of neglect, ignorance and treatment of this issue as a private problem, abuse was finally recognized as a general social problem.

During the observed period in the caseloads of services which tackle the issue of abuse, a long way has been bridged from qualifications such as "dysfunctional families", "humiliation", "fight", "insulting" and other to calling the problem by its real name – domestic violence. Concomitantly with it, changes occurred resulting a more precise qualification of this problem in the law.

In parallel with amended formulations, considered as indicators of change, improvement in the stances of institutions and experts have also advanced in addressing domestic violence-related problems. By taking an insight into the sufferings of each individual member, experts and institutions are gradually abandoning the notion that the family is a treasure that should be preserved at any cost.

Beside databases, tracking the incidence of abuse, representatives of institutions pointed to several obstacles and problems preventing them to resolve the cases in favor of the victims. One part of the problem is of procedural and administrative nature, the other part is linked to the quality and level of education and training, while the third is related to economic problems.

Procedural and administrative problems

- **Complicated procedure for submission of request:** "at the time when violence occurs, the victim is unable to convey all the information requested by the police officer on duty"
- **Withdrawal of request after seeking help from the police**

From information on the number of withdrawn requests, submitted by representatives of Zenica police station it has become evident that the entire burden of the case is left to the victim and representatives of the law enforcement agency- the police. It is obvious that there is a **lack of clearly defined binding procedure** according to which the reported case of abuse **must be handled by a team of experts in a short timeframe** beginning from the moment of report submission and **with active participation of both partners**. The case would thereby become more understandable to both the partners and services and it would pave the way of the direction in which to continue to act and what measures need to be taken. In this respect we refer to a round-up assessment of the psychological, medical, legal and economic circumstances related to preserving the relationship.

- **Procedure for shelter accommodation** – over time the procedure became more complex owing to which it's a hindrance in cases of emergency
- **Slow reaction from judicial bodies**

Professional and efficient handling of the case immediately after the aforementioned request submission would surely reduce this problem: it would facilitate the procedure and possibly reduce the number of cases forwarded to court proceedings

- **Inadequate punishment**

When we assess data on the adopted verdicts and punishments, a question that arises is whether they are an adequate response to the needs of the victims of abuse. Punishment in forms of: penalty against the offender (taken out of the joint budget), imprisonment (following which after several months they must find a way to live together without support from professional services) and suspended sentences (without true supervision of its implementation and offer of support to the batterer to receive therapeutic treatment aimed at correcting violent behavior). These penalties without additional support of professional community-based services are probably not the right solution because the victim remains in a dilemma whether to keep silent and endure the violence in the future or to face the consequences of reporting violence without anyone's help.

Obstacles related to issues of education and competency

- **Subjects dealing with these problems don't have a synchronized stance** in resolving acute problems of domestic violence
- **Level of engagement of experts**

The work on violent cases carries numerous frustrations by professionals engaged in their work. Tighter interaction among experts of various professions, clear distribution of responsibilities and obligations in the work of each case, possibilities for data exchange and common stances and approach to their work would surely give positive results.

- **Level of professionalism**

This obstruction points to the need of continuous education and exchange of knowledge between experts of different profile working on cases of domestic violence.

- **Collection of information on psychological violence** in the family and its proof.

This is also an area, which necessitates an interdisciplinary approach of therapists, police and representatives of the law, in order to define criteria.

- **Absence of centers for mental health** and the lack of readiness of the community to provide for facilities for implementing measures of protection.

We should differentiate the lack of readiness and economical inability of a community to resolve this problem.

Problems and obstacles related to the economic side of the problem of violence

- **Economic dependence of women** by their legitimate or illegitimate partners,
- **Absence of economic resources** which would enable the victim to leave the violent relationship
- **Insufficient financial support** – the budget is deprived of financial means and measures available for reducing or alleviating economic causes and consequences of violence.

Data indicate that, out of 295 respondents who requested help from partnership abuse, 63,5% didn't intend to divorce (Table 1.5 and Picture 1.3). But still today, in this same sample, there's only 46,3% of "preserved families" (Picture 3.1); out of this "preserved" number, at least one third (15,5%), despite threat from abuse, was "preserved" by even greater poverty threatening the

victim of abuse and her children should she decide to divorce (Chapter 3 entitled “Economic aspects of certain decisions in this group”).

It is known that our country didn't resolve the issue of alimony funds intended for victims, lack of employment or subventions during employment, in most BiH municipalities there's “no secure housing” or subventions to rental payments for victims of violence who are no longer in a relationship.

Therefore, between the “family at any cost” and divorce as the only solution to end the violence, there are two areas in which changes need to be introduced in cases of violence:

- **First area:** action in the direction of more efficient and flexible measures that can support the preservation of a relationship, but of better quality and violent-free.
- **Second area:** finding more efficient decisions with which abandoning the abusive relationship would not mean accepting poverty.

From data submitted to us by the services it is obvious that in some of them, from 2005 onwards there is a decrease in the number of reported violence cases. **This fact could signalize a loss of trust of victims of domestic violence in the institutions of the system.**

Data obtained in this investigation indicates that violence in the sample, due to various reasons (Tables 1.3 and 1.4) lasted on an average 5,15 years before the victim requested help from the services. When we know how much courage is needed by the victim to decide to report violence to the services then the moment when the victim alarms the services should not easily missed.

In order to avoid taking a step backwards and start from the beginning to prevent violence of becoming a private problem of the victim inaccessible to the care of the society, we should continue to raise the level of feeling of responsibility of the community and work on the legal protection of the victim of violence. First of all, **the efficiency of measures for protection of the victim and improve the capacity of the community to amend the financial aspect related to the problem of domestic violence.'**

Conclusions and recommendations

The investigation demonstrated that with respondents, victims of domestic violence, there is a lack of awareness about:

- domestic violence being a problem that has emerged from specific patriarchal relations in the society and
- the obligation of the state to intervene in preventing this form of abuse.

Large numbers of respondents still perceive violence as “personal destiny”.

Beside the readiness of institutions to work on prevention of violence, interventions of the society are insufficient to stop violence or guarantee social security to the victims of violence.

The legal framework for preventing domestic violence is directed at interventions in cases of crises. *The legal status of victims of violence is not specifically defined thus consequently neither are state obligations for providing social integration of the victim, which directly affect domestic violence and generates a new category of poor and contributes to further impoverishment of women.*

The legal framework is lacking a preventive component and the application of law in cases of violence diminishes the preventive function of this intervention (small penalties for batterers). *The current legal practice rehabilitates batterers more than it punishes domestic violence as an extreme form of violation of human rights.*

It's necessary to:

- Work on increasing public awareness, particularly women on violence as a social problem caused by the patriarchal heritage of the society.
- Work on the removal of social stereotypes from public life which affect the reproduction of patriarchal roles, which define domestic violence as a role model of behavior
- Work on raising awareness on the impact of domestic violence on the health of the victims
- It is necessary to amend the legal framework in the field of prevention and discontinuation of violence which would strengthen the role of institutions of social care in preventing domestic violence, to define the right of victims of abuse to social and economic interventions and protection through the establishment of alimony funds and funds intended for victims. Victims of violence should receive a status of persons in need of welfare, entitled to financial support by the state.
- It is necessary to introduce a multi-sectoral approach in preventing domestic violence, which would include a synchronized record keeping of victims of violence and development of a social anamnesis for each individual victim.
- It is necessary to compile all the data into a single database on domestic violence, accessible to all the institutions involved in preventing and stopping violence.

The awareness of how much relationship abuse has a destructive effect not only towards the direct victims but also on children maturing under such circumstances, along with insight into the economic situation of these families, obliges us to undertake action together. These children take with them in their future lives certain behavioral patterns, which could, in the next generation, easily become seeds of new destroyed families and their children which will suffer just as much as they do today.

The society must react because these children today carry their current sufferings with them into their future lives and the future of our entire community.

The society must earmark necessary funds and offer legal regulations which treat relationship abuse and thereby demonstrate to women, mothers and their children that instead of choosing **violence or poverty**, it is possible to lead a **life with dignity without violence**.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire- basis for a semi-structured interview

Project holder : NGO "Women's center Trebinje"

Title of investigation: Victims of domestic violence, a new category of impoverished communities

Surveyor:

Target group:

Date _____

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS TO THE RESPONDENT

The investigation is aimed at tracking the effects of the work of services which provide various types of psych-social aid. The survey is anonymous and will be utilized for the sole purpose of the investigation. We kindly request that you carefully and honestly answer the questions asked so that the results would be genuine. We thank you for your cooperation in advance.

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE RESPONDENT

Respondent's code _____ **Place of residence** _____
Year of birth _____ **Registered since** _____ year

Education status:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. no formal education | 6. four-year high school |
| 2. incomplete eight-year education | 7. two year higher education |
| 3. eight-year primary school | 8. two year college |
| 4. semi-qualified | 9. college degree |
| 5. qualified worker | 10. other |

Occupation _____

STATE AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION

1. What led you to seek help (at the time of initial registration)?

(first allow her to explain – circle the number and then inquire about other listed types, and if she confirms – label with “X” in front of the number

1. PSYCH: Prevented meeting friends, visiting, exhibited outbursts of jealousy
2. PSYCH: Criticized, humiliated, degraded, insulted
3. PSYCH: Threatened, shouted, infuriated, threw and demolished objects around the house
4. PSYCH: Imposed his requests, expressed anger for any correction of his orders
5. PSYCH: Blackmailed with children, turned them against her
6. PSYCHO: Banned access to household funds
7. SEXUAL: Sexual abuse
8. PHYSIC: Evicted from house
9. PHYSIC: Hit, slapped, kicked, threw objects at her
10. PHYSIC: Hit, inflicted wounds, injuries, breaks
11. PHYSIC: Threatened to kill or attempted to murder
12. PHYSIC/CHILDREN: Hit and physically jeopardized the children
13. PHYSIC/CHILDREN: Sexually jeopardized the children
14. Something else: _____

2. Did you have children at that time?

1. NE
2. YES (how many?) ___ Age of the youngest ___ Age of the oldest ___

3. What kind of help did you need or expect, that is what was your intention at the time of appeal?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. divorce | 3. sheltering/protection from physical violence |
| 2. help in stabilizing the relationship | 4. other _____ |

4. How long did the violence last until the moment you were registered? ____ years

5. Why didn't you appeal for help earlier?

1. because of the children (he threatened to take them)
2. I didn't have a job (financial dependence)
3. influence of the family, prejudices (what will people say)
4. I was afraid to leave him, he threatened me
5. I didn't know who to turn to
6. something else

6. At the time you requested assistance did you receive support from your surrounding?

1. NO 2. YES (who) _____

7. When stepping into the marriage/relationship did you change your relationship with your family?

1. NE 2. YES (how) _____

8. Which institutions (at the time of registration) became involved in resolving your problem?

(How long did you maintain contact with these institutions, how long did the aid process last – estimate approximately in months/years with the description of the type of help)

Institution: Type of help: Duration:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

9. Did your initial desire/intention that you had when you turned for help, during the period of institution-assistance change?

1. NO 2. YES (How did it come about – why did the change occur?)

10. What did you actually do then?

1. Continued living with the partner (what led to this decision?)

2. began living separately (what led to this decision?)

3. filed for divorce (what happened next, in which phase is the process?)

4. Divorced

- How long did the divorce process last? _____
- How was the property division concluded? _____
- How were the custody proceedings concluded? _____

- How is the issue of alimony payment currently resolved?

5. Other

HOW DOES SHE CURRENTLY LIVE

11. What is your current marital status:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. remained in the marriage/relationship | 4 entered into a new marriage/relationship |
| 2. divorced | 5. divorce in process |
| 3. lives separated from the partner | 6. widow |
| something else – what _____ | |

12. Housing – where do you currently live?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. in the husband's house/apartment | 4. sub-tenancy |
| 2. in the house/apartment owned by the husband's family | 5. with my relatives |
| 3. in my privately-owned house/aptm | 6. in a safe house, temp. accom |
| other – what _____ | |

13. Who comprises your household?

Children/age: _____ Total number _____
(up to 3 ____, 3-7 ____, 15-19 ____, 19-26 ____)
Other members: _____ Total _____

14. Do you have children currently living with you?

1. NE
2. YES (if YES)
Are you in contact with them? ____ (YES and NO)
Are you financing assisting anyone? _____

15. Are you employed?

1. Never been employed
2. Employed continuously since before the marriage
3. Employed after marrying
4. Employed during or after the divorce
5. After marrying/giving birth a discontinued work
6. Looked for a job after the divorce but didn't succeed
7. other-what _____

16. What kind of income is generated in your household? By whom?

1. Permanent employment/with social payment of social security _____
2. Temporary jobs - legal employment _____
3. Temporary job -illegal employment _____
4. Pension _____
5. Social welfare _____
6. Support from family and friends _____
7. Private entrepreneurship _____
8. Agriculture
9. Other _____

17. Do you have property in your name?

1. NO
2. YES

18. Do you estimate that you carry out your initial intention when you appealed for help?

1. NO
2. YES
3. (If not: What kind of help would you need in order to carry out your intention?)

19. What, in your opinion led to the problems that you went through- what would you try doing differently if you could turn back time?

20. What do you currently assess to be your biggest problem?