

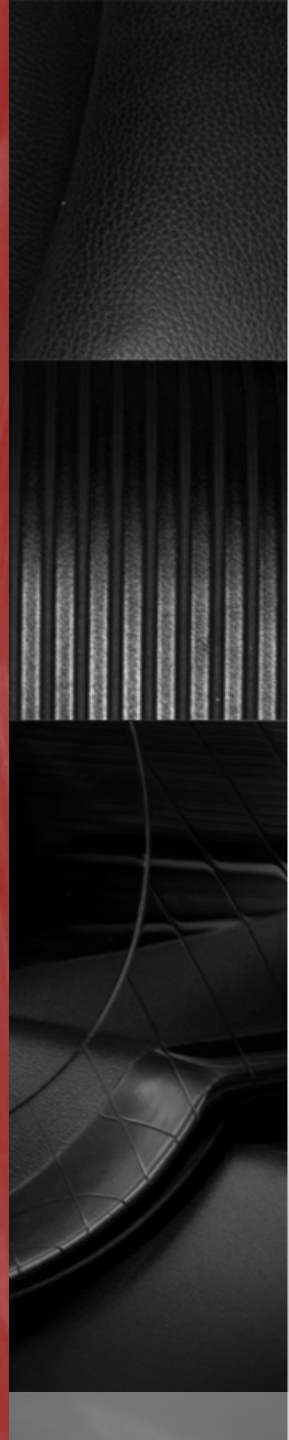
# **RESPONSE OF DAY CARE CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA TO WORK CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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## Day care Centers for children and youth with disabilities in Republic of srpska

- Services that are in the function of deinstitutionalization.
- Daily care has been associated with the catalogue of social protection rights since 2012.
- Daily care is usually defined as staying outside one's own family with different types of organized daily services. Services provided through day care should include nutrition, care, custody, health care, upbringing and education, psychosocial rehabilitation, work occupation and other necessary services (Social Protection Law , Article 51).
- Day care Centers are institutions of social protections that enable daily care of children in local communities and providing a wide range of services: food and care providing, accommodation, health care, upbringing and education, psychosocial rehabilitation, work occupation and integration.



## COVID – 19 Pandemic and the work of Day care Centers

- The proclamation of a COVID-19 pandemic bring up the changes in way of work of Day care Centers. They started to provide support to children in their own homes during the pandemic.
- How the Day care Centers worked and which activities they undertook in the new conditions is the subject of this research.
- The change in the way of work had to take place quickly and each institution had to find a way of working that was in accordance with the prescribed measures of the competent authorities in times of emergency.



## Research methodology

- The research was conducted on the entire territory of the Republic Srpska in May and June 2020
- The population consisted of all Day care Centers for children and youth with disabilities (18 in the Republic of Srpska). There are 61 local-government units in Republic of Srpska. Day care Centers exist in 18/61 local communities, according to the data of the Association of Mentally Underdeveloped Persons
- 15 Day care Centres participated in the research.
- Data in the study were collected by the test method.
- Used instrument was questionnaire which was specially created for this purpose in accordance with the objectives of the research, and respecting of all four ethical principles of social research (Bryman, 2016).
- On behalf of the day canters, the questionnaires were filled in by authorized representatives: the president of the OCD (6), the administrative worker in the Day care Centre (4), the professional worker in the Day care Centre (3) and the organization's management representative.



## Research results

- 93.33% of Day care Centers did not have an Eemergency plan. Only one DCC had this plan (Srebrenica).

Comment: Failure to have an Eemergency plan has led to spontaneous action, ad hoc response and immediate adaptation to new conditions.

- Day care Centers changed their way of working without a plan and without any decision in 40% of cases, and in the absence of a plan, 60% day care centers made special decisions that defined the way of working. In most cases (33%), the new decision was made by the their own management, the DCC management and the crisis headquarters of the local government unit (22%), crisis headquarters of the local government unit (22%) and the center for social work (11%). In one case the recommendations of the Institute of Public Health were considered a new regulation.

Comment: diversity of approach, inconsistency of practice and reliance on decisions of other bodies.



# Research results

## *Work organization of Day care Canters during the COVID-19 pandemic*

Day care Centres work organisation during the state of emergency

Work organisation	%
Suspended	14
Work on duty	20
Work organized through online platforms	54
Occasional work	6,5
Normal (without change)	6,5



# Research results

## *Organization of work with beneficiaries*

- The organization of work with beneficiaries through online platforms was more informative and referred to the sharing of information about working hours, on-call time, obtaining information about the health, the beneficiary's reaction on closing Day care Centres.
- 2/3 of Day care Centres used home visits as a way of working with beneficiaries.
- Visits to beneficiaries were used to distribute information, instructions, material assistance and other. Visits were performed by the Day care Centres staff once a month during a state of emergency in 27% of cases, and more than once in 40% of cases.



# Research results

## *Activities of Day care Centres with beneficiaries during the state of emergency*

- With no Individual plans, work with beneficiaries was in the most number of cases geared to the demands of parents who expressed the needs of the children.
- A small number of Day care Centres designed some activities for children. (development of instructions, development of appropriate educational material, video material, etc.).
- 80% of Day care Centres did not have any organized activities. They usually provided information over the phone, and the specific educational activities carried out by 20% of the Day care Centres (solving tasks from the workbooks they use in their daily work).
- They did nothing about the pandemic.



# Research results

## *Activities of Day care Centres with beneficiaries during the state of emergency*

### Parental requests and Day care Centres responses

Parents' requests Day care Centres for help	%	Day care Center activities	%
Food aid	33	Providing food	27
Hygienic products and protective equipment	20	Provision of hygienic means and protective equipment	73
Medications	7	Provision of medicines and other medical assistance	7
Transportation to a health facility	7	Help with money	20
Psychological help for children	33	Counseling for children	7
Information on the work of Day care Centers	20	Information on the work of Day care Centers	90



## Research results

*Expansion of day center activities during the COVID-19 pandemic*

- One third of the Day care Centres decided to develop other temporarily activities in accordance with local needs and their resources during the pandemic (sewing face masks).
- Some Day care Centres (14%) worked on new projects for donors, as well as projects to improve working conditions by arranging space, developing staff capacity etc.
- The largest number of activities was humanitarian, including providing assistance to beneficiaries. Day care Centres contacted a large number of organizations (municipalities, international organizations, embassies of individual countries, private companies) asking for material and financial assistance.



## Instead of a conclusion

- Day care is one of the basic forms of support for a family caring for a child with disabilities and a basic form of prevention of institutionalization of these children.
- In Republic of Srpska, only 30% of local communities have these institutions. Existing capacities are insufficient and include a small number of children in need of this type of social protection.
- **The results of the research showed that the work of Day care Centres during the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus took place spontaneously, according to their own capabilities and without the necessary support from all stakeholders.**
- State bodies, as well as civil society organizations, have not achieved the necessary strength in support to families and these institutions in order to provide professional assistance to children and their families to cope with the completely new situation in the changed working conditions.



## Instead of a conclusion

- In the new conditions, Day care Centres with their modest capacities adapted themselves and realized activities using electronic means of communication and working mostly according to the requirements of parents.
- Without Action or contingency plans, new organizational work plans and Individual plans for beneficiaries in their work, they denied them the necessary information on protection, access to resources for children, mental health care, psychosocial support, positive discipline and organization of children's lives and a house filled with customized activities.
- None of the Centers for social work has made efforts to maintain the work of Day care Centers for children sent to day care.



## Instead of a conclusion

- Responsibility of the Day care Centres in the emergencies, as well as other social and child protection services is to prepare contingency plans, to define clear childcare policies, to make them accessible to all service providers, families, local organizations and to develop procedures for addressing children's needs.
- This is a path that will significantly improve the quality of work in a pandemic and allow for a longer period to clearly define the manner and organization of work in Day care Centres during the pandemic, which certainly did not end in May 2020.
- One of the ideas is to support Day care Centers through Association of Social Workers of Republic of Srpska with professional capacities (help in developing emergency plans and support to increase of day care center capacities.)





# Thank you for your attention

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