

**THE VALUE OF
INTERSECTIONALITY
IN UNDERSTANDING
VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND GIRLS
(VAWG) JULY 2019**



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imkaan



Imkaan is a UK-based, Black feminist organization and the only second-tier women's organization in the UK dedicated to addressing violence against Black and minoritized women and girls. The organization has nearly two decades of experience of working around issues such as domestic violence, forced marriage and 'honour-based' violence. Imkaan works intersectionally at local, national and international levels, within a clear rights-based agenda, and in partnership with a range of organizations, to improve policy and practice responses to minoritized women and girls.

This policy brief is part of a series produced by Imkaan for EU/UN Women's Programme on Ending Discrimination and Violence against Women: 'Implementing Norms, Changing Minds'. The Programme aims at ending discrimination and violence against women and girls (VAWG), with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups of women, in six Western Balkans countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo* and Serbia and Turkey.

The policy briefs have been informed by Imkaan's interviews and focus-group discussions with minoritised women's organisations across the Western Balkans and Turkey from September 2017- April 2018. The content of the policy briefs have been further refined through a capacity-building workshop delivered by Imkaan for seventeen 'by and for' activists from the region in Sarajevo, Bosnia in April 2019.

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WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

'There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives' (Lorde, 1984)

Intersectionality as an analytical tool and a method of praxis challenges the idea of 'sameness', i.e. we as women are not all navigating the same version of 'womanness' and in doing so takes into account that differently situated women encounter inequality in different ways.

"Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice." (Hill Collins, 1990:18).

The concept of intersectionality was first coined in 1989 by Black feminist activist and academic Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw. Crenshaw offered intersectionality as a tool to contextualise the specific ways African-American women were being subjected to both sex and race discrimination, and the barriers they faced when trying to seek redress around this. She argued that the existing frameworks did not recognise that Black women's experiences of inequality occurred at the intersection of racism and sexism; that the systems which had been developed to challenge sexism were constructed around white women, and that those which had been developed to challenge racism had been designed around Black men.

Since then the term 'intersectionality' has been used to understand women's experiences at the intersection of a number of simultaneous oppressions including [but not limited to] race, class, caste, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status, geographical location, religion and so on.

WHAT DOES INTERSECTIONALITY HAVE TO DO WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS?

An intersectional approach to violence against women and girls [VAWG] includes a consideration of where gender intersects with other inequalities/oppressions (sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, indigeneity, immigration status, disability) to produce unique experiences of violence. By understanding the different ways in which violence is perpetrated and experienced, an intersectional praxis can design and develop appropriate context-specific responses when addressing VAWG. It is important to note that within an intersectional framework of analysis there is no hierarchy of inequality and oppression for women i.e. women cannot be made to choose which oppression comes first or is 'higher up in the hierarchy' when they approach support services for VAWG.

Intersectional approaches to VAWG recognise that all oppressions exist simultaneously, and that categories of oppression mutually construct each other to create unique experiences of violence for women and girls. For example, for a disabled Roma woman living in the Western Balkans, her experiences of sexism, ableism, racism and poverty are compounded to produce a particular experience of violence and oppression. Policy and practice which seeks to prevent and combat VAWG that is only willing to engage with, for example, her experience of domestic violence but not sexual violence, or ableism but not racialised street harassment fails to comprehensively address violence as experienced by women and girls, and minoritised survivors in particular.

Furthermore, policy and legislation which recognises the need to support survivors of domestic violence only, for example, without also ensuring provision is available to support survivors of other forms of abuse which disproportionately affect minoritised women such as forced and early marriage, fails to recognise Article 4.3 of the Istanbul Convention. This Article obliges states to take necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence *without discrimination on any ground* such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

An intersectional approach is necessary in all areas of work relating to ending violence against women and girls. As former UN Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo notes,

‘lack of attention to intersectionality not only inhibits policymakers from assessing inequalities between women and men, but also inhibits their ability to assess how differently positioned women experience discrimination and violence. The Special Rapporteur considered how violence is contingent on women’s material conditions, individual attributes and social locations, and recommended a holistic approach that addresses systematic discrimination and marginalization’ (Manjoo, 2014).

The UN Women’s Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women (2012) recommends that national action plans should recognize that women’s experience of violence are shaped by factors such as their race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age, or disability¹. Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention specifically urges parties to “take into account and address the specific needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances”². The Explanatory Report elaborates on this, and defines persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances to include pregnant women and women with young children, persons with disabilities, including those with mental or cognitive impairments, persons living in rural or remote areas, substance abusers, prostitutes, persons of national or ethnic minority background, migrants – including undocumented migrants and refugees, gay men, lesbian women, bi-sexual

¹ UN Women (2012), "Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women," New York. p. 15

² The Istanbul Convention, Article 12, part 3.

and transgender persons as well as HIV-positive persons, homeless persons, children and the elderly³.

INTERSECTIONALITY OR MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATIONS?

Within the Western Balkans and Turkey the term ‘multiple discrimination’ is used widely to connote the varied inequalities that women face due to their multiple identities based on race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, geographical location, marital status, immigration status and so on. Although an understanding of the various oppressions that women face due to their multiple identities is important, intersectionality adds to this by insisting that these oppressions cannot be viewed within an additive framework, and that women’s experiences of inequality must be contextualised within an understanding of *simultaneous, intersecting* inequalities.

Furthermore a *notional* understanding that women face multiple oppressions does not always translate into intersectional praxis. A conflation of ‘intersectionality’ with ‘multiple discriminations’ risks reducing women’s experiences of multiple axes of oppression to a simplistic addition of various inequalities. This in turn engenders an inability to assess the needs of different communities and respond accordingly.

For example, an understanding that Roma women face multiple marginalisations based on their identity [multiple discriminations] does not necessarily ensure that VAWG services respond appropriately and in context-specific ways to Roma women’s intersectional needs [intersectionality]. An intersectional understanding of the multiple marginalisations that Roma women are subject to, would lead to designing a service that *specifically* meets such reciprocally-constructed needs. Such a service would typically be designed by Roma women themselves or at the very least be designed in meaningful partnership with Roma women and would include appropriate responses to the intersecting oppressions that Roma women face. This might take several forms including longer term advocacy against structural inequalities such as denial of access to quality housing, education and health care for Roma communities, as well as attending to more immediate needs of Roma women facing violence such as providing support workers to enable Roma women to file a police complaint or providing grants for legal aid.

In order to meaningfully address violence faced by women and girls, it is critical that VAWG services understand that intersecting inequalities not only define women’s specific experiences of violence [understood as ‘multiple discrimination’] but that VAWG services need to be designed in *specific ways* so that they respond to these intersecting oppressions [understood as intersectional service delivery].

³ Explanatory report.

VALUE OF SPECIALIST 'BY AND FOR' ORGANISATIONS

Research⁴ has shown that organisations which work most efficiently and effectively in addressing the intersectionality needs of marginalised women facing violence are 'led by and for' organisations.

'Led by and for' or 'by and for' VAWG organisations are independent, specialist and dedicated services run 'by and for' the communities they seek to serve⁵. 'By and for' specialist services may be delivered by a range of equality-led organisations including organisations working with women with disabilities, women's organisations, LGBT organisations and Black and minoritised⁶ (BME) women's organisations.

These organisations are able to respond to the complex, intersecting needs of women and girls within a broader context of structural inequality. Many of these organisations have emerged from and continue to be an integral part of larger social-justice, feminist and anti-racist movements. Integral to the identity of such organisations and their staff is a grounding within social-justice movements, an ethos of collaborative working and solidarity, as well as a deep commitment to engaging with the intersecting lived-realities of women and girls facing violence. The vision, mission and ways of working of such organisations are framed by minoritised women's needs and unique experiences of oppression. Minoritised women themselves determine organisational priorities and strategic direction. Importantly, the presence of minoritised women is reflected in staffing, management and governance structures of these organisations.

'By and for' organisations are engaged in leadership and transformation which is rooted in, but goes beyond, an individual woman's journey; and individual women are able to draw on this as a source of safety, support, space and justice. For minoritised women facing violence being able to access services that understand the complexity of their lived realities and the multiple contexts within which they are marginalised enables them to disclose violence with the knowledge that they will be understood and believed. The 'led by and for' model therefore offers a uniquely empowering experience to minoritised women and girls.

⁴ Thiara, R. & Roy, S (2010) Vital Statistics: The experiences of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee women & children facing violence & abuse. London: Imkaan.

⁵ Specialist services are designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve' Voice4Change England and NAVCA Specialist Services: A Guide for Commissioners 2012, accessed online at http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/webfm_send/158 [Accessed 31 May 2019]

⁶ In this report the term 'minoritised' (rather than 'minority' or 'minority ethnic') is used to highlight that "groups and communities do not occupy the position of 'minority' by virtue of some inherent property (of their culture or religion, for example), but rather they come to acquire this position as the outcome of a socio-historical and political process" (Burman, 2005, p.533).

EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE

Daje is a specialist 'By and For' Roma women's organisation in Belgrade, Serbia. The organisation was set up in 2001 by Nada, a Roma women's activist, in response to the rape of a Roma woman in Zemun polje, North Belgrade. Over the years there had been frequent rapes and attacks on the road linking the Roma settlement with the urban parts of Zemun polje because of the poor transport linkages into the Roma communities. On this particular occasion Roma women got together and demanded better transport as well as lighting on streets, so that Roma women would move freely without fear of being attacked. Eventually they succeeded in convincing the municipality to clear a part of the forest and develop a four kilometre extension of the local bus line all the way to the Roma community. Buoyed by this success the Roma Center for Women and Children, Daje was formed.

The Centre began helping Roma families without legal documents register their children in elementary schools. It also began providing Roma boys and girls school books as an incentive to remain in education. Through this the organization gained the trust of the Roma community and began venturing into areas of health-care and family planning. They also started helping Roma families obtain important documents to prove identity and residence.

"When there were floods in our city, some women had lost everything. They didn't have a roof over their head. So we helped them procure material to rebuild their homes. At this point in time violence was not an issue that they were interested in talking about" Staff-member, Daje

In response to the floods Daje helped women rebuild their homes which not only built trust among both women and men in the Roma community but also communicated to Roma women that their lives (in their entirety) were important to the organisation. As a result of Daje responding to women's 'felt-needs', women began trusting the organisation and gradually incidents of domestic violence and early marriage started being reported to them. Thus, Daje's work on violence against women developed organically in response to women's disclosures of various kinds of violence that they were facing. All of Daje's employees are women who are survivors of violence.

"These experiences (of violence) change us. It is like a school we've all been through; a bond that forms. We recognize a woman's situation and know how to work with her. Our life experiences teach us a lot and we develop empathy..we can then share this with other women who are facing violence" Staff-member, Daje

It is the personal experiences of violence of Daje's staff members that have helped shape their understanding of the wider context of inequality and oppression, which in turn enables them to identify clearly what women need when they approach Daje for support. It follows from this that the strategies which 'by and for' organisations such as Daje use to combat VAWG are developed around Roma women's social, cultural and economic realities.

“It is important not to insist that the only solution that women have is to leave. We need to help women from within the context of the family”.

By tailoring their VAWG strategies to meet the socio-cultural contexts of the Roma women they work with, ‘by and for’ organizations like Daje are developing innovative pathways to address VAWG. Today Daje works across 156 informal Roma settlements.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE INTERSECTIONAL PRAXIS OF DAJE?

- design programmes around the practical and strategic needs and priorities of minoritised women
- ensure that VAWG programmes meet the needs of minoritised women and girls
- involve minoritised women in programme design and implementation
- situate VAWG and responses to it within larger socio-political, economic inequalities
- employ minoritised women at all levels of an organisation

EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE

KADAV (Kadınlarla Dayanışma Vakfı/ Women's Solidarity Foundation) based in Istanbul, Turkey started working with refugee women and violence towards the end of 2015. They define themselves as a 'women's safe space' and as an aid or humanitarian support organisation. The work at KADAV is driven by women's needs and the methodologies that KADAV use reflect the felt-needs of refugee women.

"We started working with Syrian women in a little room in a community centre of another organisation (Hayata Destek) in Istanbul. It was the first time a humanitarian organisation and a feminist organisation were coming together to work with refugees. Women would bring their children to the community centre and we started informally interacting with these women. It started with story-telling, cooking simple meals—through this we would begin discussing our lives in Syria, our lives here—this is how we started talking about violence" KADAV employee

KADAV then opened their own centre where they started meeting with more women and began speaking about violence. Some Syrian women from the group began working as translators with KADAV. KADAV staff started holding workshops on sexual and reproductive health, body mapping, accessing State institutions (for example-how to get an ID card) etc. As trust developed with refugee women, more women started attending the drop-in centre. KADAV also runs a kindergarten for children so that women can leave the children there and go out to run errands. Women ask for help for a number of issues; applying for ID cards, getting appointments with the health system, enrolment of children in school finding a job, write their CV's and so on. KADAV recognizes that addressing these immediate needs of women is critical to women being able to feel safe and secure and then begin to disclose violence.

In line with this 'organic' approach used by the organisation, KADAV started organising gatherings in women's homes itself. KADAV staff began to realise that many refugee women (and Turkish women too) didn't know what their rights are. As an employee from KADAV states "We can't just sit in the office and wait for women to call the hotline. The women's movement didn't start with the purpose of doing these 'projects'-it started in neighbourhoods, with consciousness raising... we need to go back to our roots." Based on these principles KADAV staff go to settlements where women were staying and organise house gathering over tea and snacks. The house gatherings usually have a group of around 10 women. Through word of mouth, the gatherings have snowballed and more women have offered their homes as a meeting place. These informal discussions build trust, intimacy and a feeling of shared experiences.

Many women come to KADAV for psychological support; to learn coping mechanisms to deal with the violence and skills to make them and their children feel safer. Women drop into KADAV for a safe space to socialise, relax and meet other women and heal emotionally. In most cases women do not want to go to the police or to the court if they are experiencing violence. Very few women want a divorce or make official complaints. KADAV operates with a 'women-first' agenda;

recognising that often just ‘being there’ is all women need. The underlying belief of the organisation is also that “if women know about their rights at some point they will try and use them”, and with this in mind KADAV supports women facing violence.

As summarised by an employee of KADAV, “We have tried to build a female safe space to show that we [Turkish and Syrians] have more similarities than differences. We all experience oppression in different ways. Some refugee women know there is a place called KADAV –it is a safe space, you can go there and just be. You don’t have to say anything, you don’t have to be anything. You can just be [yourself].”

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE INTERSECTIONAL PRAXIS OF KADAV?

personal

- examine your own power, privilege and positionality within society and in relation to the populations you are working with
- examine beliefs and biases that you hold about the populations you are working with
- leverage your privilege and resources to work in collaboration and solidarity with minoritised groups

programmatic

- ensure that minoritised women’s felt-needs determine your programme priorities; programmes and projects should be designed by minoritised women for themselves
- engage with minoritised women as ‘experts’ and ‘knowledge-holders’
- solutions to VAWG should be rooted in the social, cultural, political and economic reality of the minoritised women you are working with
- ensure that your language does not reproduce or obfuscate inequalities [eg. do you use the term ‘uneducated’ to describe certain groups of women who have historically been denied access to education?]

organisational

- employ minoritised women at all levels within your organisation; staff, managers, board members etc.
- ensure that minoritised women hold salaried positions within your organisation; there should be a proportionate/fair allocation of salaries
- ensure that you partner with minoritised women and their organisations. Ask yourself; what does an equal and meaningful partnership look like?
- create ‘space at the table’ for minoritised women; engage honestly with the discomfort that that might create for you.
- if you are committed to being an ally, are you willing to engage in the work that it takes to be an ally? i.e. ‘an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person of privilege seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group of people’⁷

OPPORTUNITIES FROM A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

CHALLENGING THE HIERARCHY OF VIOLENCE IN LEGISLATION AND POLICY

In recent years all countries of the Western Balkans (with the exception of Kosovo) have ratified the Istanbul Convention and introduced significant legislative changes and adopted comprehensive policies to combat violence against women. However policies and measures to prevent and combat VAW, including national action plans as well as protocols regulating duties of professionals and inter-institutional cooperation are focused largely on domestic violence; with other forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention being neglected. A critique of legislative frameworks around violence against women and girls across Council of Europe member states is that the primary emphasis has been placed on domestic violence compared to other forms of violence against women⁸.

“Baseline evaluation of the implementation of the Convention by State Parties carried out by GREVIO so far indicate an intriguing trend: national action plans in many countries often address gender-based violence in a title of policy documents/NAPs, but are de facto focused on domestic violence exclusively, or primarily”⁹.

Albania may be seen as an example of such an approach. Whilst the strategic aims and goals of its policy instruments often target gender-based violence as an umbrella concept encompassing all forms of VAWG, their specific outcomes remain however very much focused on domestic violence¹⁰. Other forms of VAWG, such as forced marriage, forced abortion, sexual violence¹¹ including rape and sexual harassment, have not been prioritised in the design and implementation of policies.

The first measures which Albania adopted to combat violence against women were those concerning violence in the domestic unit. In particular, since the enactment of Law No. 9669/2006 “On Measures against Violence in Family Relations”, efforts have targeted mostly women as members of the family, and more particularly as “spouses or cohabitating partners or former spouses or former cohabitating partners.” This invisibilises other forms of VAWG such as stalking,

⁸ See Women's Rights in Western Balkans (2019) a study commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs which analyzes legislative and policy frameworks across Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. The study finds that policies and measures to prevent and combat VAW, including national action plans as well as protocols regulating duties of professionals and inter-institutional co-operation are focused on domestic violence while other forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention are neglected.

⁹ Duhacek, D., Brankovic, B., Mirazic, M. (2019) Women's Rights in Western Balkans. Report prepared for the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (p. 49). January 2019. Available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/608852/IPOL_STU\(2019\)608852_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/608852/IPOL_STU(2019)608852_EN.pdf)

¹⁰ GREVIO (2018). GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report – Albania.

¹¹ The amended Albanian Criminal Procedure Code No.35/2017 stipulates for the first time special procedural rights of the victims of sexual violence during criminal proceedings.

sexual harassment in the workplace, online harassment, forced abortion, early/forced marriage¹² and sexual violence.

State parties can draw on the Istanbul convention which urges states to take necessary legislative or other measures to ensure the criminalisation of various forms of VAWG, beyond domestic violence, including sexual violence (Art 36), forced marriage (Art 37), stalking (Art 34), FGM (Art 38), forced abortion and forced sterilisation (Art 39). State parties should develop targeted policies that will tackle each specific form of VAWG and not only take into account the needs of general population of women victims, but also of minoritised women such as women with disabilities, Roma women, rural women, refugees and migrants, asylum seeking women, etc.

BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTERSECTING INEQUALITIES WITHIN AN EXPANDED CONTEXT OF VAWG

We need to build an understanding among donors, State institutions and mainstream VAWG organisations that VAWG can be compounded by multiple, intersecting inequalities and a broader context of social exclusion and marginalisation. Therefore tackling significant barriers such as poverty, discrimination, insecure housing, and lack of access to education, employment and health care is a necessary component of doing work on VAWG. The UN Women's Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women from 2012 recommends that national action plans should recognize that women's experience of violence is shaped by factors such as their race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age, or disability¹³. The handbook further notes that prevention-based activities can involve promoting "not only respectful relationships and gender equality, but also challenge discrimination and stereotyping based on other identity characteristics."¹⁴

Article 12 in the Istanbul Convention specifically urges parties to "take into account and address the specific needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances"¹⁵. The Explanatory Report elaborates on this, and defines persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances to include pregnant women and women with young children, persons with disabilities, including those with mental or cognitive impairments, persons living in rural or remote areas, substance abusers, prostitutes, persons of national or ethnic minority background, migrants – including undocumented migrants and refugees, gay men, lesbian women, bisexual and transgender

¹² Because in most countries children are not considered able to give legal consent, all early/ child marriages are sometimes considered forced marriages. See <https://www.unfpa.org/child-marriage-frequently-asked-questions>

¹³ UN Women (2012), "Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women," (New York 2012). p. 15

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ The Istanbul Convention, Article 12, part 3.

persons as well as HIV-positive persons, homeless persons, children and the elderly¹⁶. It is worth noting here that the focus is not on “vulnerable groups”, but rather on circumstances that makes people vulnerable, such as “social, economic and cultural processes and inequalities that are changing and shifting over time, so that indeed certain groups are ‘made’ vulnerable”¹⁷. In other words, persons are made vulnerable by circumstances. Vulnerability can thus be seen as contextual, and not an attribute of a person or a group.

Article 15 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (2005) states that parties should engage in “(i) consultation with these persons by means of appropriate procedures and, in particular, through their representative institutions, when Parties are contemplating legislation or administrative measures likely to affect them directly; (ii) Involving these persons in the preparation, implementation and assessment of national and regional development plans and programmes likely to affect them directly” (FCPNM, p. 22)

INVESTING IN SPECIALIST ‘BY AND FOR’ ORGANISATIONS

The Istanbul convention defines Specialist support services (Article 22), as those that are specialised in providing support and assistance tailored to the needs of victims of specific forms of violence against women or domestic violence and are not open to the general public (paragraph 125). Specialist services include shelters (Article 23), telephone helplines (Article 24) and support for victims of sexual violence (Article 25). Although the role of specialist services is critical to VAWG service delivery, the importance of *specialist ‘by and for’ organizations* in providing a holistic response to violence against minoritized women and girls across the Western Balkans and Turkey still needs to be recognized and acknowledged.

State governments and funders must not only recognise the need for such specialist ‘by and for’ services but also provide adequate funding for such services to exist and thrive. Recent research across the Western Balkans¹⁸ highlights the fact that essential specialist services for victims are under-developed and their sustainability is jeopardised; while funding by central or local governments is rarely provided.

Article 20 of the Istanbul convention recognizes that the large majority of specialist services are currently being offered by NGOs. Complementing this finding the explanatory report of Article 22 encourages State parties to set up or arrange for a “well-resourced specialist support sector” the aim of which is to “ensure the complex task of empowering victims through optimal support and assistance catered to their specific needs. Much of this is best ensured by *women’s organisations*

¹⁶ Explanatory report.

¹⁷ Hester and Lilley. p. 8

¹⁸ Duhacek, D., Brankovic, B., Mirazic, M. (2019) Women's Rights in Western Balkans. Report prepared for the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. January 2019. Available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/608852/IPOL_STU\(2019\)608852_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/608852/IPOL_STU(2019)608852_EN.pdf) (Accessed 07 June 2019)

and by support services provided, for example, by local authorities with specialised and experienced staff with in-depth knowledge of gender-based violence...Moreover, these services and their staff need to be able to address the different types of violence covered by the scope of this Convention and provide support to all groups of victims, including hard-to-reach groups (italics added)"¹⁹. Given that 'by and for' specialist services are experts in addressing the different types of violence minoritised women and girls are subject to, resourcing such organisations should be a key priority for State parties.

¹⁹ Article 22, Para 132. Istanbul Convention

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