



Psychosocial Innovation Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

BELGRADE, MARCH 2024



About PIN

PIN is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organization whose mission is to improve the promotion and protection of mental health and the realization of the Right to mental health of all citizens of Serbia.

With a team of 10 members, most being psychologists, psychotherapists under supervision and researchers, PIN advocates for a biopsychosocial and empirically based model of mental health in the community, which implies an active role of citizens, service users, experts and decision makers in creating comprehensive and sustainable support for mental health, and improving wider social circumstances which would have a beneficial effect on the mental health of citizens. Our work comprises of:

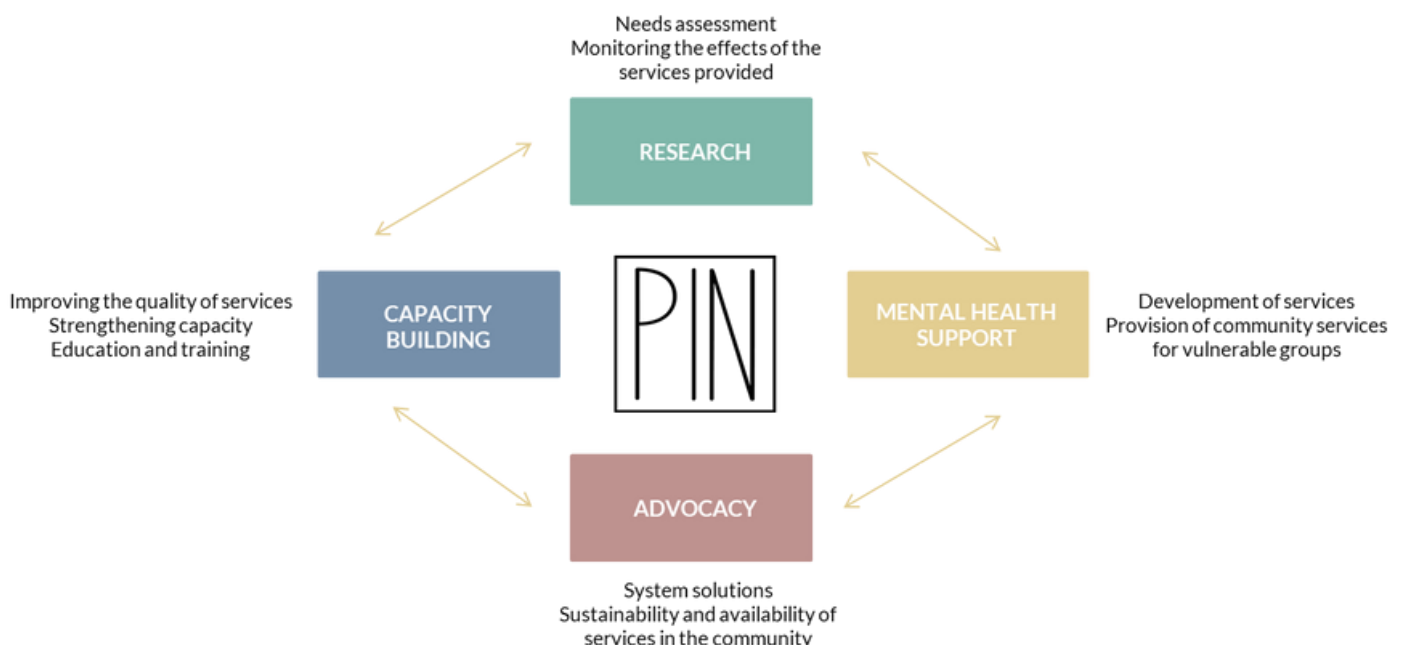
Applied research - we aim to better understand mental health needs, risks, and protective factors, as well as create data-driven, innovative practices.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services - our team of psychologists provides comprehensive mental health support, spanning individual and group counseling, psychotherapy, and psychosocial support.

Advocacy - information from research and practice drives evidence-based advocacy activities aimed at improving mental health policies and practices on a local, regional, and international level.

Education and capacity building - our team organizes educational training, workshops and events for the general public, expert communities and decision makers on various topics within our field of expertise.

OUR INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF WORK



IN 2023, WE'VE EXPANDED OUR NETWORKS...

We were formally voted and admitted to membership in Mental Health Europe after the assembly held in Tallinn in April.



Together with our partners and collaborators, we launched an informal Network to Combat Homelessness (NCH).

We applied and were formally voted for membership in the National Youth Council of Serbia, during the assembly held in November in Bajina Bašta.



Memberships | We are members of...

Co-founders





Consortium on Refugees' and Migrants' Mental Health (**CoReMH**) is an informal international network of mental health professionals founded by PIN in December 2020. CoReMH currently has 25 members from 10 countries along the transit route dedicated to improving mental health practices and policies for refugees in transit. In 2023, we conducted and published regional **research** on posttraumatic growth among refugees in transit. The complete annual CoReMH report is available at the following **[link](#)**.



Mental Health (MH) Movement is an informal network founded by Serbian CSOs working in the area of mental health (PIN, Association Prostor, Caritas Serbia, Network of Associations of Psychiatric Users "Naum" and Initiative "Za Tebe #VažnoJe"), in July 2021. The aims of the MH Movement are 1) mental health promotion, 2) improving availability and accessibility of mental health care in the community, 3) improving the position of people with psychosocial disabilities, 4) combatting stigma, and 5) advocacy for the implementation of the Program on Mental Health Protection in the Republic of Serbia (2019-2026). Annual MH Movement report will be soon available on social network profiles of MH Movement. Among other things, in 2023 we organized III Belgrade Mental Health Festival and held 1st Annual Meeting with initiative members and supporters.



NCH is a platform that brings CSOs and authorities together and serves in mainstreaming the efforts for prevention and adequately responding to homelessness on a national level. The mission of NCH is to combat discrimination, marginalization, stigmatization, and dehumanization of persons in the situation of homelessness through the provision of coordinated and integrative services to the persons in the situation of homelessness, public advocacy on the national and international level, research, and capacity-building activities. In 2023, among other activities, we participated in two Social dialogs on the topic of homelessness organized by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social dialog, co-organized a public event to mark World Homeless Day, and carried out advocacy activities as part of response to discriminatory statements and practices made by decision-makers in Serbia.

YEAR IN NUMBERS

18

Municipalities across Serbia where we carried out our activities

15

Projects in total

1283

Persons provided direct support

5

Organized public events

2

New PhD psychology candidates in our team

391 910

Unique people reached across



IN 2023, WE ASKED SOME NEW QUESTIONS...

PIN Research Team was busy in 2023 with all of the various questions and topics we wanted to explore.



In 2024 we'll continue what we started...

1. Social determinants of mental health
2. Healthy ageing
3. Civic engagement of experts in the field of mental health
4. Mental health of youth in Serbia
5. Psychosocial support in primary health care
6. Online sexual violence against children
7. ...and much more to come!



HIGHLIGHTED FINDINGS

- **Social determinants** shown to have the most prominent effect on psychological difficulties are:
 - lack of social support
 - one's previous traumatic experiences
 - female gender, younger age, lower socioeconomic status
- **Mental health experts** generally agree that their role should include **civic engagement** in their communities. Still, they don't agree on whether they can make any positive changes without decision-makers' political will.



Effectiveness of psychosocial support programs: research report



In 2023, we tested our Programs for psychological support, that is Programs for youth, for elderly and for persons in crisis.

All of the Programs proved to be effective, which means, participation in our psychosocial support programs significantly affects the improvement of mental health

YOU MIGHT'VE HEARD OR READ ABOUT OUR RESEARCH IN...

Published work

- Vukčević Marković, M., Bobić, A., & Živanović, M. (2023). The effects of traumatic experiences during transit and pushback on the mental health of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008066.2022.2163064>
- Andrić, M., Ilić, L., Ćurčić, M., & Šapić, D. (2023). *Posttraumatic Growth among Refugees in Transit: Research Report*. Consortium on refugees' and migrants' mental health [CoReMH].
- Dimoski, J., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023). *Mental Health of Service Providers Working with Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers*. Psychosocial Innovation Network.
- Dimoski, J., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023). *Mental Health and Wellbeing of Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Serbia*. Psychosocial Innovation Network.
- Dimoski, J., Gvozden, M., Manojlović, M., Stojadinović, I., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023). *Efektivnost programa psihosocijalne podrške: istraživački izveštaj*. Psychosocial Innovation Network.
- Dimoski, J., Todorović, N., Vračević, M., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023). *Depresija kod starijih osoba: zaštitni i faktori rizika*. Psychosocial Innovation Network.

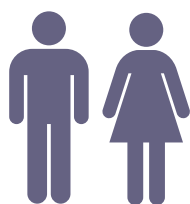
Oral presentations on scientific conferences

- Dimoski, J., Stojadinović, I., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023, October 26-28). *Predictors of psychological difficulties and professional psychological help-seeking in Serbian youth* [Oral presentation]. Current Trends in Psychology, Novi Sad, Serbia.
- Šapić, D., Dimoski, J., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023, maj 24-27). *Povezanost društvene stigme i psihičkih teškoća aktivista i aktivistkinja u Srbiji* [Usmena prezentacija]. 71. Kongres psihologa Srbije, Palić, Srbija.
- Džamonja Ignjatović, T., Petrović, D., Kosić, A., & Dimoski, J. (2023, March 31 - April 2). *Personality traits and specific attitudes as the predictors of conflict management strategies: a comparison of young people in Italy and Serbia* [Oral presentation]. 29th Empirical studies in psychology, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Dimoski, J., Milić, A., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023, March 31 - April 2). *Meaning, role and sources of hope among refugee adolescents and youth* [Oral presentation]. 29th Empirical studies in psychology, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Živanović, M., & Vukčević Marković, M. (2023, March 31 - April 2). *Conservative-liberal mindset as a driver of Covid-19 vaccination behavior*. 29th Empirical studies in psychology, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Dimoski, J., Vukčević Marković, M., & Džamonja Ignjatović, T. (2023, March 31 - April 2). *Depression in older adults: testing the behavioral model* [Oral presentation]. 29th Empirical studies in psychology, Belgrade, Serbia.

...OR AT ONE OF THE
MANY OTHER EVENTS
WHERE WE TOOK THE
OPPORTUNITY TO TALK
ABOUT OUR FINDINGS.

IN 2023, WE PROVIDED DIRECT SUPPORT TO MANY...

Our Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) team provided services to various individuals and groups at over 19 locations in 18 municipalities in Serbia.



1283 persons were provided with direct support*

In 2023, PIN provided support to:

- children and youth in local communities
- teachers and other school staff
- refugees, migrants, asylum seekers of all ages
- children without parental care
- people at risk of homelessness
- psychiatric care users
- persons in psychological crisis
- activists and human rights defenders

792 individual sessions

87 group counseling sessions

163 psychoeducational activities

6 psychological assessments for the asylum procedure

20+

different types of activities

Our activities spanned across:

- psychotherapy and psychological support
- group counseling sessions
- support groups
- peer-to-peer activities
- accompanying our clients to psychiatric examinations
- providing urgent crisis interventions
- psychoeducational workshops and training
- and so on...

**Includes number of unique persons (0 - 80+) who were provided direct psychosocial and/or psychological support. Here are not included indirect target groups (e.g. online campaigns for the public) or persons who took part in professional training, organizational support, public events, expert events, or similar events organized by the PIN team.*

IN 2023, FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH WAS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER.

Children and youth are the ones who suffer exceedingly from conflicts, inadequate mental health support, and ineffective policies. In 2023, they were the vulnerable group we worked with the most.



861 children and youth were directly supported

67 psychoeducational activities with children and youth from local population

When it comes to children and youth from refugee and migrant populations, most often we worked with those from **Ukraine, Russia, Middle East countries and Africa.**



We also aimed to **support others in working with young people.** With the support of our partners from UNFPA Serbia, we've developed a Toolkit with extensive theoretical resources on mental health, wellbeing, and healthy lifestyle habits of youth, as well as practical activities for transferring knowledge to young people.



Click to read more!

SMERNICE ZA RODITELJE

KAKO RAZGOVARATI SA DECOM O KRIZNIM SITUACIJAMA?

SMERNICE ZA ZAPOSLENE U OBRAZOVNO-VASPITNIM USTANOVAMA

KAKO PRISTUPITI UČENICIMA U KRIZNIM SITUACIJAMA?

PSIHOLOŠKE SMERNICE ZA MEDIJSKO IZVEŠTAVANJE NAKON KRIZNIH DOGAĐAJA

The shock and sheer tragedy in Belgrade, Dubona, and Malo Orašje in May last year revealed the increased need for **multi-level support** when it comes to the wellbeing of children and youth, as well as their parents and everyone who works with them.

In addition to direct support, together with colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and LIRA Lab, we developed **guidelines for responding to crises** that directly involve children and young people.

CHANGES DON'T HAPPEN BY THEMSELVES - WHICH IS WHY IN 2023 WE WERE DEDICATED TO...

WORKING WITH DECISION-MAKERS AND EXPERTS



- ... together with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social dialog, we participated in the formation of **Working team for Mental Health in Serbia**, with the first meeting took place in February 2023.
- ... we took part in the **working group for Strategy for monitoring and promoting human rights in Serbia 2023 - 2030**.
- ... we were invited to participate as guests in the **21st session of the Youth Council** at the Ministry of Tourism and Youth.

WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS

- ... we are active members of **The Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms**, through which we are involved in the Universal Periodic Review process. This year, after advocating for mental health towards international actors and embassies, we've for the first time received five recommendations specifically targeted towards mental health (advancement of legislation, community-based services, education, promotion, abolition of coercion practice, etc.).



WATCH

Review of Serbia - 43rd Session of Universal Periodic Review



READ

Matrix of UPR recommendations for Serbia from 43rd Session

- ... as part of the annual consultation process, we've participated in **the contribution to the report** on Serbia of the European Commission.
- ... after the Government of Serbia and the Ministry of Health initiative to **amend the Law on the protection of persons with mental health problems** - which is against national, international, and expert standards regarding the protection of mental health and child rights - PIN has, together with partner organizations, sent **extensive comments to the Ministry** during consultations, and **filed an appeal to the UN Special Rapporteur** on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, which the Government responded to in February 2024.



READ

Special Rapporteur report and analysis

+

READ

Government response



READ

Comments for the public and the Ministry of Health

CHANGES DON'T HAPPEN BY THEMSELVES - WHICH IS WHY IN 2023 WE ADVOCATED FOR...

LEGISLATIVE AND NORMATIVE CHANGES.

- ... the adoption of **Standards for counseling and therapeutic services** within social protection and welfare systems, a draft policy we formulated in 2022. The amenable Ministry gave a positive response after meetings and communication.
- ... the adoption of a new **Action plan for 2023 for implementing the Programme on Mental Health Protection in Serbia (2019 - 2026)**. Unfortunately, there is still no progress on the part of decision-makers.
- ... we took part in **2 public discussion processes**, for the Action plan for the period from 2023 to 2025 for the implementation of the Strategy for Youth in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023 to 2030 and the Draft law on amendments to the Law on protection of persons with mental health problems.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- ... wrote numerous **memos, press releases, and letters to decision-makers** on the status of people with mental health problems, people in the situation of homelessness, the status of the mental health protection system, etc.
- ... **presented research data** that shows the necessity of reform and advancement of the mental health system, especially when it comes to children, youth, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.
- ... designed and implemented communication campaigns and public awareness activities through various communication channels including social media, traditional media, out-of-home campaigns and similar. Our biggest campaigns in 2023 were...



One three-months-long campaign aimed at local communities in Serbia where we implemented our Psychosocial support programs with the goal of encouraging persons in need to seek support.

We implemented a national five-months-long campaign with key message "Each of us - has a right to mental health".




CAPACITY BUILDING

IN 2023, WE SUPPORTED OTHERS IN THEIR PROTECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH

We put a strong focus on building the capacities of others either through volunteering work, project activities, or independent service offers related to mental health at work.

 **180+** persons took part in our capacity building activities

3 UNIVERSITY LECTURES *Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade*

 **150+** students

OUR MAIN CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES INCLUDED...

- public, expert, and professional training, lectures, and workshops
- supervision sessions for professionals
- group and individual support programs for organizations and companies
- programs for inclusive practices for organizations and companies

IN 2023, WE WORKED WITH...



IN 2023 WE WERE GLAD TO WELCOME...

10 VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS Many thanks to Jakob, Stefan, Alissa, Maša, Matija, Jelena, Andrej, Marina, Lena, Jana i Milica

21 GUESTS AND COLLEAGUES From Portugal, Germany, Croatia, Ukraine, and Russia.

WE ALSO COUNTED SOME...

27 GUESTS LECTURES AND PANEL TALKS



16 TV OR ONLINE MEDIA APPEARANCES

9 WRITEN AUTHOR MEDIA ARTICLES

WITH MANY MORE PRESS MENTIONS...

The topic that attracted **the most media attention** during the past year and was reported on by various media outlets is the research we conducted on the role of psychologists in primary health care.

Zdravstvo
U celoj Srbiji u domovima zdravlja samo 123 psihologa

22. novembra 2023. 10:43 Z.S.



Click to read more!

Psihologa ni za lek: Samo 123 ih radi u domovima zdravlja u celoj Srbiji

DRUŠTVO |

Psiholozi su deficitarni u Srbiji: Samo 123 njih radi u domovima zdravlja u čitavoj državi



TAKE A LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THE TOPICS WE COVERED IN 2023

VREME

Reči nisu dovoljne, Vreme
Maša Vukčević Marković



Čak trećina starih pati od depresije, nedostatak novca jedan od glavnih uzroka, RTS
Jana Dimoski

N1

Psihološke smernice za medijsko izveštavanje nakon kriznih situacija, N1
Maša Vukčević Marković



Beskućništvo - deca u uličnoj situaciji i Lica u situaciji beskućništva, MLjMPDD
Irena Stanković, Isidora Živić

BLIC

Da li ste znali da i “strani plaćenici” i “domaći izdajnici” imaju psihičke teškoće?, Blic
Draga Šapić

N1

Da sam ja neko, N1
Sara Dojčinović

INSAJDER

Anksioznost, depresija i prevencija suicida, Insajder
Maša Vukčević Marković

una

Prevencija samoubistava i fenomen sa Balkana, UNA
Irena Stojadinović



Onlajn nasilje je oflajn nasilje, Share fondacija
Sara Dojčinović



Stručnjaci ukazuju na loše izmene Zakona o zaštiti lica sa mentalnim smetnjama, Al Jazeera Balkans
Irena Stojadinović

PIN DANI MENTALNOG ZDRAVLJA

27.09. - 13.10.2023.

Nauka i struka na istom
zadatku

A LOOK BACK AT OUR ANNUAL EVENT...

PIN DAYS OF MENTAL HEALTH

As part of the 3rd Belgrade Mental Health Festival, in September and October, we organized our second PIN Days of Mental Health!

230+

people visited our
events during the
PIN days



Mental health in Serbia

Policies, practices, (lived) experiences, data - we tackled various aspects of the mental health protection in Serbia

Mental health of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers

Eighth year in a row that we conduct research on this topic and organize the expert discussions.



Mental health at work

Mental health of activists and people working in civil organizations, and general factors influencing mental health in work context.

SOME OF THE THINGS WE ARE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF IN 2023...

Our partners, donors, and colleagues

In the past year, we've cooperated and partnered with many public institutions, national and international organizations, and associations, and we would like to thank them all for their unwavering support and partnership. We are looking forward to further collaboration in the upcoming years.

Recognition of our work

We are deeply grateful for the recognition we received of our work independently, and as part of MH Movement and NCH through the recognition of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialog. Mostly, we are proud of the recognition our team members get - this year, Jana Dimoski received the Josip Berger Award for best applied-research master dissertation.



Opportunities to strengthen our own capacities

We underwent training for co-creation methodology, public policies, and went on study visits to learn from colleagues in Croatia, Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Lithuania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and all across Serbia!



And most importantly, we are so appreciative of our amazing team and the time we got to spend together doing the things we love!



WITH NEW YEAR, OLD CHALLENGES DON'T GO AWAY

Despite our achievements in 2023, we must remain mindful of the numerous challenges that still demand our ongoing commitment and persistence in 2024.

- Serbia still lacks some of the **key public policy documents** that could advance mental health care in our country, mainly the Action plan for the implementation of the Program for the Protection of Mental Health in Serbia for 2019 - 2026, Standards for counseling and therapeutic services social welfare system, Law on the psychotherapy, and Law on psychological activity.
- **The Program for the Protection of Mental Health in Serbia for 2019 - 2026** is entering its last implementation phase. Without an accompanying action plan, and clearly defined budget lines, there is little possibility that we can hope the goals and measures defined by this program will be fulfilled in the next two years.
- Old problems still remain - there is **a lack of available, accessible, acceptable and good quality mental health care** in Serbia. This is especially a problem for persons from already underserved and vulnerable groups, who face many obstacles (lack of personal documents, poverty, language barriers, lack of information, discrimination...) in getting proper mental health care.
- The lack of services is in part affected by **a lack of staff in various sectors and contexts**, who could provide quality services (e.g. lack of psychologists in school or primary healthcare settings, lack of social workers and psychologists in the social welfare system...).
- **Lack of monitoring mechanism** for implementation of the Program, its effects, and outcomes, as well as overall steps for the advancement of the mental health care system in Serbia. Because of this, we lack crucial data when it comes to both the mental health status of the population in Serbia, as well as in regard to available services and resources on the local and national level.
- **Various social and political pressures**, along with exposure to violence and the **adverse economic position** of the majority of citizens, are still ubiquitous risk factors for the mental health of Serbian citizens,

Because PIN is a nonprofit organization, our work is made possible by projects, donations, and support from individuals and organizations alike. Lack of sustainable support is something we all struggle with, which is why a part of our work is done voluntarily.

**IF YOU WANT TO SUPPORT OUR
CAUSE AND WORK, AS WELL AS
CONTRIBUTE TO THE
ADVANCEMENT OF MENTAL
HEALTH FOR ALL...**

...REACH OUT TO US.



*You can contact us to find out more about how you can support
PIN's work via contact details on the next page.*



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