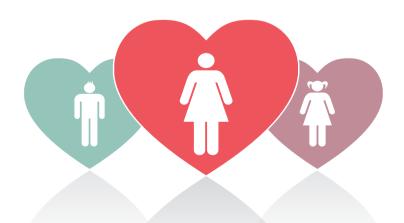






SINGLE PARTICIPATION OF SINGLE PARENTS IN SERBIA ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ANA AND VLADE DIVAC FOUNDATION





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SINGLE PARENTS IN SERBIA ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ANA AND VLADE DIVAC FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCTION

Bearing in mind the challenges faced by single parents in the field of work and employment, the Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and the Center for Dignified Work, in cooperation with the ProInsight public opinion research agency, have developed an analysis of the position of single parents in the labor market.

Low employment rate of single parents, as well as the fact that as much as 34.5 percent of families where one parent cares about one or more children is at risk of poverty¹, and that in 80 percent of such households the head of the household are women, encouraged us to put this topic high on the agenda of our activities.

The objective of the analysis we put before you is to gather information on the opportunities for access to the labor market and the causes of unemployment of parents who care for their children on their own, and to create recommendations for improving policies in this field.

The analysis was conducted on a sample that is indicative and the findings obtained represent a starting point for further research in this area, as well as guidelines for the development of adequate support services, information programs and advocacy for the adoption of new decisions, measures and services aimed at supporting the employment of single parents.

The results of the analysis are intended for decision-makers and relevant stakeholders from the public / civil / business sector who are interested in improving the conditions for gender equality in workplace and the alignment of work and parenting.

The analysis is a part of the project "Encouraging Gender Equality and Position of Single Parents in the Labor Market in Serbia" implemented by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, in partnership with the Center for Dignified Work, with the financial support of the European Union.

Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation

PROTECTION OF SINGLE PARENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Single parenting is not adequately recognized as the legal category in the Republic of Serbia. The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, in Article 66, paragraph 1, guarantees special protection to a single parent, in accordance with the law. Certain regulations also include provisions governing certain rights, situations or issues of relevance to single parents. However, there is neither a single legal definition of this term, nor of its basic manifestations. There are no generally accepted criteria on the basis of which a person could obtain this status, which in practice leads to different understandings of who is a single parent, or who is actually in this status. Thus, depending on the rights that the parent wants to achieve in a particular concrete case, the term "single parent" is interpreted differently.

Depending on the factors that lead to the emergence of a single parenthood, based on the valid regulations of the Republic of Serbia, one could speak about single parenting in the legal and factual sense. A single parent in a legal sense is a parent who single-handedly cares for a child in a situation where the other parent has passed away, or is either unknown or deprived of parental rights. Such a conclusion stems from the provision of the Family Law, according to which parental rights, inter alia, terminate with the death of parents, after the child becomes an adult (except in the situation when there are conditions for the extension of parental rights), as well with the deprivation of parental rights by a decision of the competent court. On the other hand, a single parent in a factual sense is a parent who takes care of the child in the circumstances in which the other parent lives, is not deprived of parental rights, but for some reason does not actually exercise his or her rights and duties of the parent (for example, he/she does not contact the child, does not provide support, does not participate in making important decisions about the life of the child, etc.). This group could include parents, whose single-parenthood is caused by divorce, separation, serving the sentence of imprisonment of another parent, serving a military service, the illness of another parent, his/her long stay abroad, and the like. Bearing this in mind, the legal definition of the concept of a single parent must take into account the legal treatment of parenting in our legal system, but it should not result in the neglect of those parents who, in fact, care for their children on a daily basis. Therefore, a precise legal definition is the first step in identifying and equally exercising the rights of persons who need to be recognized the status of single parents.

Single parents, in a system that does not recognize them as such, face numerous problems, such as: unresolved housing issues, unemployment, employment discrimination, work-related discrimination and work, lack of money, lack of payment for child support by the second parent, the lack of help of another parent in the process of child care, the lack of information for single parents about their rights, the absence of adequate social, institutional and non-institutional support, etc. For most of the stated and other problems that burden the single parent, the existing regulations do not contain adequate legal solutions, or, if they exist, in practice there is often no timely and complete implementation of them.

At the international level, the protection of single parents arises from the established principles of maternity and parenthood protection contained in the United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union acts, which represent a guideline but also a specific framework for the national protection system. Significant aspects of this protection are implemented through the prohibition of discrimination against the grounds of marital and family status. In addition, the international family protection standards that apply to families with one parent (single-parent families) are also of particular importance, on the basis of which various mechanisms of support to parents are implemented to adequately care for their children. Finally, the protection of single parents receives its full meaning when viewed through the prism of child protection and ensuring all the necessary conditions for its proper and complete development. Understanding the relevant international legal standards is of particular importance since the legal protection of motherhood, parenthood and family in the Republic of Serbia is also defined by the international obligations that our country has taken over through numerous international agreements that define the framework for the protection of basic human rights.

When it comes to national regulations, there are a number of laws and bylaws that directly or indirectly regulate the rights of parents in general, as well as the special rights of single parents (Law on Social Protection, Law on Financial Support to Families with Children, Family Law, Labor Law, the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, etc.). However, in the field of the protection of single parents, our legal system is far from rounded, while existing regulations are often applied selectively, erroneously, or their implementation is completely absent. The problems identified are related, inter alia, to: the absence of a legal definition of a single parent; lack of records on single parents; discrimination against women, pregnant women, families, single mothers and fathers; insufficient utilization of individual labor law institutes and lack of special protection for unofficially employed working parents; non-recognition of single parents as beneficiaries of social protection services; failure to comply with court decisions on the exercise of parental rights by another parent, the inability to exercise priority when enrolling in the kindergarten of children whose parents are not employed; the inability to provide adequate living conditions.²

² TAKEN FROM THE PUBLICATION: PROTECTION OF SINGLE PARENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA - ANALYSIS OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS, ARSIC, RELIANOVIC, PETROVIC, 2015.

EMPLOYABILITY OF SINGLE PARENTS (SR) - EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS, STATE INSTITUTIONS AND COMPANIES

- KEY FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to this topic required an insight into the thinking of three different populations. On one side of the opinion of the single parents, on the other opinion of the state bodies that come into contact with single parents in the process of work, and on the third side of the opinions of the companies that ultimately employ, among others, single parents.

POPULATION 1 – SINGLE PARENTS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: Insight needed from single parents, the way they see themselves, state institutions and companies with which they come in contact.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD: Survey with interviewing through on-line questionnaires.

SAMPLE: 120 in total, of which 60 single parents who do not work and 60 single parents who are employed.

SURVEY LENGTH: An average of 15 minutes.

TYPE OF SAMPLE: Appropriate sample of available population.

TIME FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH: 14.02.2018 - 03.03.2018

POPULATION 2 – STATE INSTITUTIONS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: Insight into their relationship to single parents. Attitudes of state institutions through a surveying of decision-makers, and direct executors in institutions.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD: "B2B" survey with interviewing through on-line questionnaires.

SAMPLE: 15 decision makers and/or direct executors. (National Employment Service, Local Self-Government, Centers for Social Work, Social Inclusion Team, and Commissioner for the Protection of Equality).

SURVEY LENGTH: An average of 10 minutes.

TYPE OF SAMPLE: Appropriate sample of available population.

TIME FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH: 27.03.2018 - 10.04.2018

POPULATION 3 - COMPANIES

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: Insight into their relationship to single parents. Attitudes toward single parents through a surveying of decision-makers, and direct executors in these institutions.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD: Survey with interviewing through on-line questionnaires.

SAMPLE: 14 decision-makers and/or direct executors.

SURVEY LENGTH: An average of 10 minutes.

TYPE OF SAMPLE: Appropriate sample of available population.

TIME FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH: 27.03.2018 – 10.04.2018

SINGLE PARENTS - KEY FINDINGS

ASSOCIATION AT THE CONCEPT

When asked what their first association is when they hear a "Single parent", slightly more than a third (36%) of the total number of respondents (employed and unemployed single parents) lists life full of difficulty, sacrifice and struggle. However, when looking within groups, this association has 75% of unemployed single parents, while only 14% say the same among those who are employed. Unemployment obviously significantly influences the experience of one's self and one's own life.



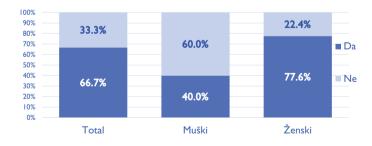
QUESTION: What do you think of first when you hear a SINGLE PARENT?

Total population, N = 120, 100% of the total population; Open question; More responses

Of all the answers, one stands out, which best frames almost all the other answers: "Juggling with multiple balls and none of them is allowed to drop", which was given by a single parent middle-aged mother, employed, with one child in the family.

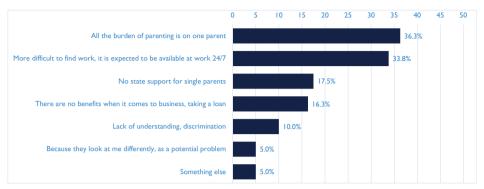
SELF-PERCEPTION

A large number (two-thirds) of the total number of those surveyed considers that they are in a worse situation than the rest of the population, with women – single parents, seeing themselves in a less favorable position compared to male single parents.



 $\label{eq:QUESTION: Do you think that as a single parent, you are in a potentially worse position for exercising certain rights than the rest of the population? \\ \textit{Total population, N} = 120, 100\% of the total population; closed Question; One reply$

Kao razlog za ovakvu autoprecepciju roditelji najčešće navode obaveze koje nameće roditeljstvo onoga koji preuzme brigu o detetu (36%) i obaveze na poslu (34%). Takođe se pominje i nedostatak pomoći države (17%), kao i nedostatak ili potpuni izostanak beneficija na radnom mestu (16%).

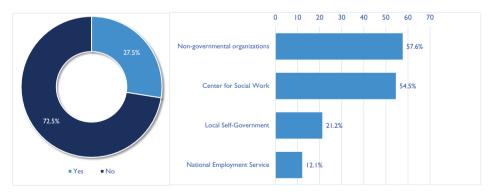


QUESTION: Do you think that as a single parent, you are in a potentially worse position for exercising certain rights than the rest of the population? Total population, N = 120, 100% of the total population; Closed Question; One reply

FAMILIARITY WITH INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

Nearly three quarters of parents (72%) are not familiar with which institutions provide assistance to single parents, while among those who are familiar non-governmental organizations (57%) and Centers for Social Work (54%) are most frequently cited. It is interesting that only 12% cite the National Employment Service as an institution for providing assistance to single parents.

The familiarity with programs intended solely for single parents is at a similar level as the familiarity with institutions - 74% of single parents surveyed are not aware that there is any program available.



QUESTION: Do you know that there are institutions that are focused on helping single parents?

Total population, N = 120, 100% of the total population; Closed Question; One reply

QUESTION: What are the institutions?

 $Total \ population, N=33, Base: those \ who \ know \ that there \ are institutions \ that \ are focused \ on \ helping \ single \ parents \ (28\% \ of the \ target \ population); Open \ question; More replies$

FAMILIARITY OF SINGLE PARENTS WITH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Most respondents were not informed about the programs for helping single parents (74%). Those who said that they were familiar with the programs indicated assistance through Local Self-Government (13%), NGOs (7%), and Center for Social Work (3%).

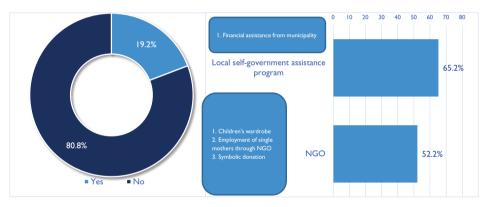


QUESTION: For which programs do you know that they are aimed exclusively at single parents?

Total population, N = 120, Base: 100% of the target population; Open question; More replies

UTILIZATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Existing programs intended solely to help single parents were used by slightly less than one-fifth of respondents (19%). Those who used it, most often did it by receiving financial assistance from the municipality (65%) or through NGOs (52%) through employment, children's wardrobe and symbolic donations.



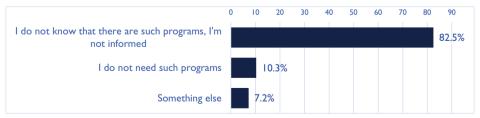
QUESTION: Have you ever used programs that were directed exclusively to single parents?

Total population, N = 120, 100% of the total population; Closed Question; One reply

 ${\it QUESTION:} \ If you used some programs for assistance to single parents, what were the programs?$

 $Total\ population,\ N=23,\ Base:\ those\ who\ used\ single\ parents\ assistance\ programs\ (19\%\ of\ the\ target\ population);\ Open\ question;\ More\ replies$

The main reason for not using the assistance program is the *lack of information* (82%).



QUESTION: If you did not use programs, what were your reasons for not using them?

 $Total \ population, N = 97, Base: those \ who \ did \ not \ use \ assistance \ programs \ (81\% \ of \ the \ target \ population); Open \ question; More \ replies$

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE POSITION OF SINGLE PARENTS

Almost half of the respondents (49%) think that the main assistance to single parents would be providing of *priority during employment*.

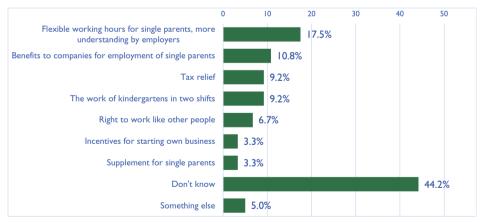
The priority in further education and retraining (27%), assistance in exercising the right to alimony (25%), and priority for enrollment in kindergarten (11%) are also listed as measures that local self-governments should undertake to improve the overall position of single parents.



QUESTION: What measures would you recommend for adoption to local self-governments and state institutions in order to improve the overall position of single parents?
Total population, N = 120, Base: 100% of the target population; Open question; More replies

PROPOSALS RELATED TO EASIER JOB FINDING BY SINGLE PARENTS

The most frequently submitted proposals by single parents who participated in the study were related, on the one hand, to the needs of parents in terms of providing flexible working hours (17%), and on the other hand for companies, granting benefits to companies employing single parents (10%), tax relief (9%),... etc.



QUESTION: What would you suggest to the legislator in order to get a better chance of finding the job by single parents?

Total population, N = 120, Base: 100% of the target population; Open question; More replies

PREFERRED INSTITUTIONS FOR USING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY SINGLE PARENTS

If in some situation, however, the assistance program would be used, single parents most often refer to NGOs (72%) as a preferred institution, then to a significantly lesser extent the local self-government (9%), the Center for Social Work (6%) and the National Employment Service (2%).



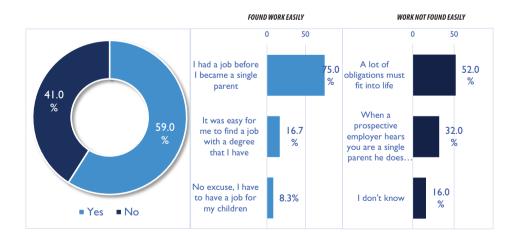
QUESTION: If in some situation you would use assistance programs for single parents, regardless of whether you used them before or not, through which institution would you like to use this program?

Total population, N = 120, Base: 100% of the target population; Closed question; More responses

EMPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS AND FINDING EMPLOYMENT

Most of the parents said that they had no problem finding a job (59%), primarily because they were already employed when they became single parents (75%) or because of the sought profession (17%).

Of those who answered that they did not easily find work, the most common reasons are difficulties in matching obligations with work (52%), and the employer's reluctance to employ single parents.



QUESTION: Was it easy for you, as an employee, to find employment, bearing in mind the family obligations of a single parent?

Total population, N = 61, EMPLOYEES 51% of the total population; Closed question: One answer

QUESTION: Can you explain to us in what sense it was EASY for you to find employment?

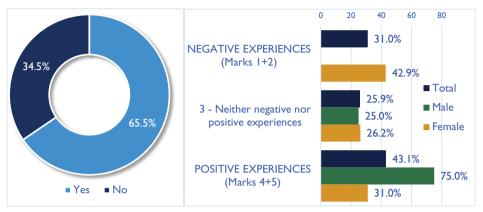
Total population, N = 36, Base: those who are employed and have easily found employment (30% of the target population); Open question; More responses

QUESTION: Can you explain to us in what sense was it DIFFICULT for you to find employment?

Total population, N = 25, Base: those who are employed and had difficulties finding employment (21% of the target population); Open question; More responses

EXPERIENCES WITH EMPLOYER AS SINGLE PARENTS

Employed single parents most commonly have positive experience with the employer (43%), while negative (31%) and neutral experiences (25%) are somewhat less frequent and approximately equally represented. What is notable is that only women reported negative experiences, while both men (75%) and women (31%) reported positive experiences. As it can be seen, men did it much more often.



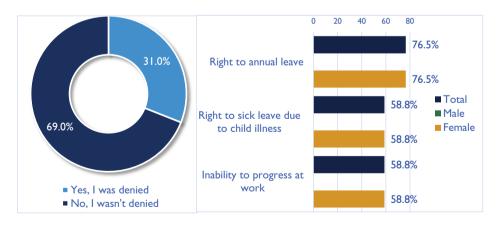
QUESTION: Did the employer know of the fact that you are a single parent?

Total population, N=61, Employees 51% of the total population; Closed question; One answer

QUESTION: What is your experience with your employer in relation to your position as a single parent? Total population, N = 61, Employees 51% of the total population; Closed question; One answer

DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO WORK

Nearly a third of the respondents (31%) said that they were denied some of the rights to work: the right to annual leave (76%), the right to sick leave due to child illness (58%), and the inability to progress at work (58%). All remarks about the denial of the right to work came from female single parents!!

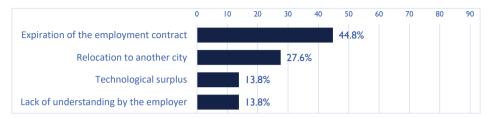


QUESTION: Have you, as an employee, been denied some rights or were given some because you are a single parent? Total population, N=61, Employees 51% of the total population; Closed question; One answer

${\it QUESTION: What right was denied to you?}$

 $Total\ population,\ N=17, Those\ who\ are\ employed\ and\ were\ denied\ some\ labor\ right\ represent\ 14\%\ of\ the\ total\ population;\ Open\ question;\ More\ responses$

In the case of currently unemployed parents, most frequently quoted reasons for unemployment are expiration of the employment contracts (45%), relocation to another city (28%), technological surplus (14%) and the lack of understanding by the employer (14%).

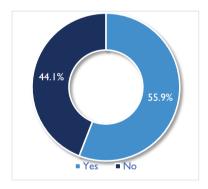


QUESTION: If you were an employee, what was the reason why become jobless? The total population, N = 29, Base: currently unemployed, but in the past had a job, 24% of the target population; Open question; More responses

It is possible to ask more questions here, for example, whether it was necessary to have all of the abovementioned terminations of the labor contract, or whether the expiry of the contract was used in order to employ a new worker who does not have an obligation of a single parent.

It could also be analyzed what was the form of lack of understanding by the employer and was it directly related to the obligations that a worker has as a single parent?

Currently all unemployed single parents who have been involved in the research are looking for a job (100%), with slightly more than half (56%) thinking that their single parent status is the reason they are not employed.



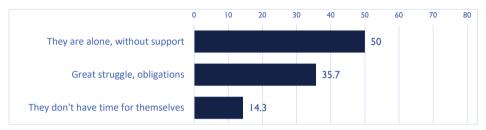
QUESTION: Are you currently trying to find a job?

Total population, N = 59, Currently unemployed 49% of the total population; Closed question; One answer

COMPANIES - KEY FINDINGS

ASSOCIATION AT THE CONCEPT OF A SINGLE PARENT

The most frequent associations for the single parent given by the workers in the companies were that the single parents were "alone and without support" (50%), it is a great struggle and obligation (36%), and they do not have time for themselves (14%).



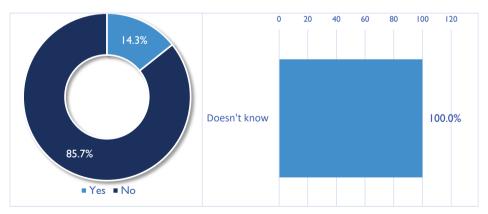
QUESTION: What do you first think of when you hear a SINGLE PARENT?

Total population, N=14, 100% of the total population; Open question; More responses

Here is a statement that sums up the relationship of an individual working in the company, according to single parents themselves: "I think how much power, money and courage it takes for a single parent to raise a child on his own."

APPLICATION OF SINGLE PARENT REGULATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

It is obvious from the answer that companies do not apply the definition of single parenting (86%), and those who say they apply do not know how to explain it (100%).



QUESTION: Are you implementing a regulation that contains the definition of SINGLE PARENTHOOD?

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: If you apply this regulation, how does it define SINGLE PARENTHOOD? Total population, N=2, 14% of the total population; one answer

SINGLE PARENT RECORDS AND RECORDING CRITERIA

Only two companies that participated in the survey (14%) state that they have a record of single parents. No specific criteria are used to keep records, except that "employees are asked to state that they live alone with children".



QUESTION: Do you have records of single parents among your employees?

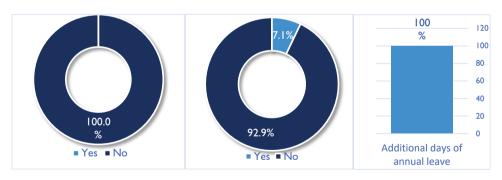
Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: If you have records on SINGLE PARENTS, according to which criteria you define SINGLE PARENTHOOD?

Total population, N = 2, 14% of the total population; one answer

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS

None of the companies that participated in the survey stated that they had a special program for parents, while only one stated that it had a program exclusively for single parents, in the form of giving additional days of annual leave.



QUESTION: Do you have certain programs intended for all parents, who are not specifically set up as a legal obligation of the employer (children's day care, cooking/washing/ironing/other services?

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: Do you have, or have had, programs and actions which are intended solely for single parents? Total population, N=14,100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: If you have programs/actions intended for SINGLE PARENTS, what are those programs/actions?

Total population, N = 1, 7% of the total population; one answer

PREPAREDNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM OF HARMONIZATION OF WORK AND PARENTHOOD

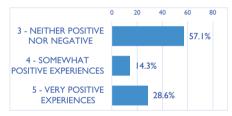
All the representatives of the companies that participated in the research expressed their wish to participate in the program of work coordination and parenting (100%).



QUESTION: Are you interested in participating in the creation of programs within the framework of your socially responsible business that would facilitate work and parenting? Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; One answer

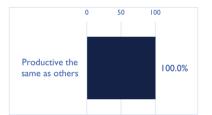
EXPERIENCE WITH EMPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS AND PERCEPTION OF PRODUCTIVITY

More than half of the participants in the research have neither positive nor negative experiences with single parents. Single parents do not differentiate themselves from other workers based on productivity. In other words, they do not see themselves as better or worse workers than others.



QUESTION: What are your experiences as an employer with your employees who are SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; One answ**er**



QUESTION: What is your opinion when it comes to the productivity of SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; One answer

FAMILIARITY WITH PROBLEMS OF SINGLE PARENTS

Companies are mostly unfamiliar with the problems of single parents working with them (79%), while those who say that they are, state obligations concerning children during working hours (67%) and obligations concerning children outside working hours (33%).



QUESTION: Do you have an insight into the problems of SINGLE PARENTS at work?

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; One answer

 ${\it QUESTION: What are the problems?}$

Total population, N = 3, 21% of the total population; One answer

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYMENT OF SINGLE PARENTS

Employees in companies most often mention reduction of contributions and tax deductions for the company due to the employment of Single Parents (71%), as desirable measures that the state could apply.

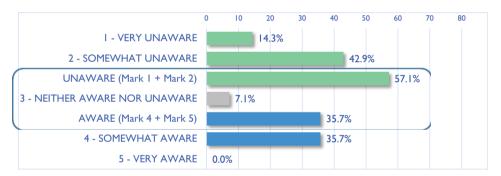


 ${\it QUESTION: What are the benefits/measures that would motivate you to employ more SINGLE\ PARENTS\ as\ an\ employer?}$

Total population, N = 14, 100% of the target population; Open question; More responses

AWARENESS OF SINGLE PARENTS ABOUT BENEFITS THEY CAN ACHIEVE

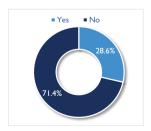
More than half of the surveyed companies think that single parents are largely uninformed in relation to all the benefits that their status provides (57%).



QUESTION: Do you think that the SINGLE PARENTS are sufficiently well versed in all the benefits (measures, services) they can achieve because of their status? Total population, N = 14, 100% of the total population; One answer

GENDER EQUALITY

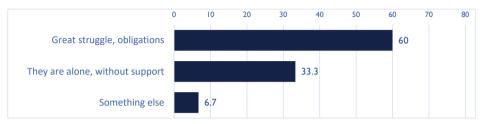
Within the surveyed sample, considerably more companies declared that they did not take into account gender equality (71%), as opposed to those that do (29%).



STATE INSTITUTIONS - KEY FINDINGS

ASSOCIATION AT THE CONCEPT OF A SINGLE PARENT

The most common associations on the words "Single parent" given by employees in state institutions were that it was a great struggle, big obligations (60%) and they were alone and without support (33%).



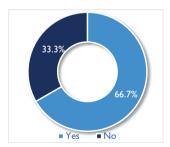
QUESTION: What do you think of first when you hear a SINGLE PARENT?

Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; Open question; More responses

We can extract here a statement that sums up the relationship of an individual working in a state institution, towards single parents: "The first thought we have when we hear a single parent is a child who grows up without the love of one parent."

POSITION OF A SINGLE PARENT

Exactly two-thirds of the total number of respondents think that Single parents are in a worse situation than the rest of the population. The main reasons for such an opinion are the problem of reconciling numerous obligations that Single parents have (60%), and an inequitable position relative to others (90%).



QUESTION: Do you think that single parents are in a potentially worse position for exercising some rights than the rest of the population?

Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; One answer

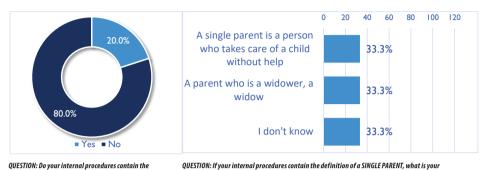


QUESTION: Why do you think that single parents are in a potentially worse position for exercising some rights, then the rest of the population?

Total population, N = 10, 67% of the total population; One answer

SINGLE PARENT DEFINITION, INTERNAL REGULATIONS AND APPLICATION

Most respondents in state institutions claim that their internal procedures do not include definition of single parenting (80%), while those who said they are applying (20%) specify different contents as a definition. Employees in the National Employment Service apply the single parent definition from the national action plan.



QUESTION: Do your internal procedures contain the definition of SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population;

Total population, N = 3, 20% of the total population; One answer

73% of employees in state institutions state that there are no regulations containing the definition of single parents, the other 27% state that they have such regulations and 75% of them state as a regulation the National Action Plan and one local self-government official just states that this is the Person who cares about the child without help.



QUESTION: Are you applying some regulation that contains a definition of the SINGLE PARENTS?

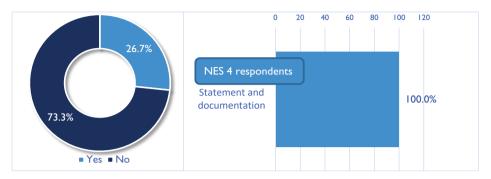
Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population;

 ${\it QUESTION:}\ If your internal\ procedures\ contain\ the\ definition\ of\ a\ SINGLE\ PARENT, what\ is\ your$

Total population, N = 4, 27% of the total population; One answer

SINGLE PARENT RECORDS

Most of the interviewees state that they do not have records of single parents (73%), while those who have these (27%) base their records on the statement of single parents and attached documentation.



QUESTION: Does your institution have a record of SINGLE PARENTS?

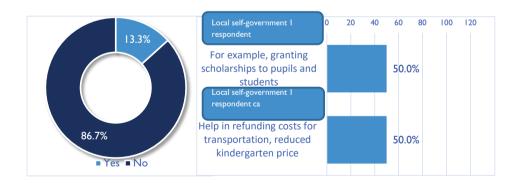
Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: If there is a record, what are the criteria for registering SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 4, 27% of the total population; one answer

SPECIAL SERVICES INTENDED FOR SINGLE PARENTS

Most respondents state that they do not have special services for single parents (87%). Those who said that they have, gave an example of providing scholarships to pupils and students, helping to refund transportation costs, reducing the cost of kindergartens (local self-government).



QUESTION: Are there special services for your SINGLE PARENTS?

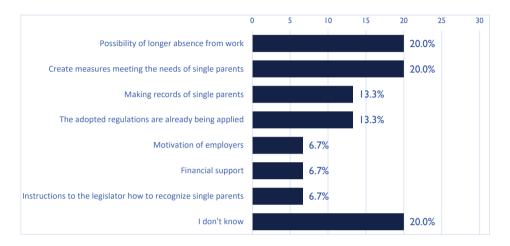
Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; one answer

QUESTION: What are those services?

Total population, N = 2, 13% of the total population; one answer

SINGLE PARENT POSITION IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Of the measures that would improve the position of single parents, employees in institutions most often state "the possibility of longer absence from work" (20%), making records of single parents (13%), applying already adopted regulations (13%), etc.

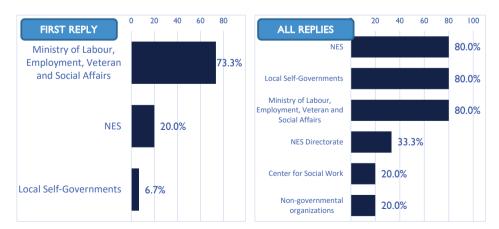


QUESTION: What do you think your institution should do first to improve the position of SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 15, 100% of the target population; Open question; More responses

CARRIERS OF SOLVING SINGLE PARENT EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (80%), the National Employment Service (80%) and the Local Self-Governments (80%) are mentioned as the bearers of solving the problem of employment of single parents. The Ministry usually appears as the first stated answer - making it clear that they have a crucial role to play in solving this problem.

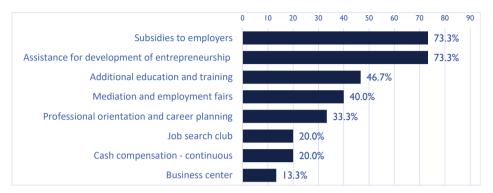


QUESTION: Of the above institutions, which one according to you, should play the greatest role in solving the problems of employing SINGLE PARENTS?

Total population, N = 15, 100% of the target population; offered answers; More responses

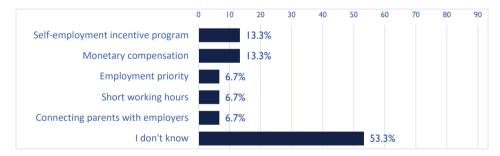
SINGLE PARENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The employees in the institutions think that among the programs referred to as possible for assistance to single parents the main ones that would contribute would be subsidies to employers (73%), assistance for development of entrepreneurship (73%) and additional education and training (47%).



QUESTION: Which of the above programs and/or services do you consider to be able to help most to SINGLE PARENTS in employment?
Total population, N = 15, 100% of the target population; Answered responses; More responses

When it comes to proposing measures with which the institutions in which they work could specifically help single parents, employees cite a self-employment incentive program (13%), monetary compensation (13%), employment priority (7%),... etc. It is characteristic with this question that slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) answered that they did not know what measures they would propose.



QUESTION: Can you suggest some measure that the institution in which you work can adopt in order to improve the employability of SINGLE PARENTS? Total population, N = 15, 100% of the target population; Answered responses

FAMILIARITY WITH THE INITIATIVE FOR ASSISTANCE TO SINGLE PARENTS

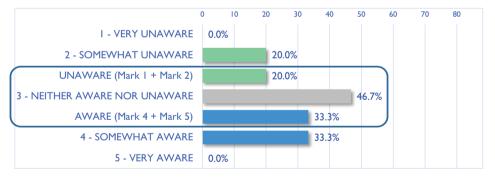
Based on the responses obtained, it can be concluded that employees in institutions that deal with single parents in different ways are not familiar with the initiative to help single parents (100%).



QUESTION: Are you aware of the existence of an initiative to introduce measures/procedures/rights specifically targeted at SINGLE PARENTS?
Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; One answer

OBSERVATION OF SINGLE PARENTS AND THEIR AWARENESS IN REGARDS TO MEASURES AND SERVICES WHICH ARE AT THEIR DISPOSAL

Single parents are most often seen by employees in relevant institutions neither as aware nor as unaware of the measures and services available to them because of their status (47%), then as somewhat aware (33%), and ultimately as somewhat unaware (20%).



QUESTION: Do you think that the SINGLE PARENTS are sufficiently well versed in all the benefits (measures, services) they can achieve because of their status? Total population, N = 15, 100% of the total population; One answer

INTEGRAL CONCLUSIONS

In all three groups of respondents (Single parents, Companies, Institutions), the term single parents causes two basic contents as an association: a *great struggle with a lot of difficulties and solitude without support*.

This reflected loneliness can be defined from two respects: as a feeling that parents have in a situation where the other parent is not present (left alone with the child), but also in regards to society that leaves single parents with insufficiently defined measures to cope with their parental rights and duties.

Both Single Parents and Institutions dealing with parenting consider that Single parents are in a potentially worse position to exercise their rights than the rest of the population. This fact that the representatives of the institutions also think the same indicates that the society has not done enough to ensure that single parents have equal conditions for raising children.

None of the three groups involved in the study showed a complete *knowledge of the definition* of the Single parent. Neither the companies, nor relevant institutions use regulations that contain the definition of Single parenthood although representatives of institutions mention the definitions in the National Action Plan as the basis for use.

Single parents are *largely uninformed about INSTITUTIONS* that are focused on providing assistance to them. Among the parents who know something, most of the institutions referred to are the Centers for Social Work, NGOs, Local Self-Governments and the National Employment Service.

The same is true for the *lack of awareness about* single parenting assistance *PROGRAMS*.

The main reason for not using programs is the fact that they do not know that such programs exist at all.

The enterprises that were surveyed, as well as the relevant Institutions, *in the majority of cases do not have special services for Single parents* (over 85%).

Most of companies and surveyed institutions (except the NES) *have no records* of Single parents. The reason for this situation lies in the fact that there are no clear criteria for defining the Single parent.

As measures to improve their position Single parents often state that they should be given *priority in employment and further education*, as well as assistance in exercising the right to alimony. Unlike the Single parents, representatives of institutions point out the *possibility of a longer absence from work* and the *creation of records* of Single parents as the most urgent measures.

Flexible working hours, benefits to companies employing single parent, as well as tax incentives, are some of the suggestions that Single parents forward to lawmakers for the purpose of easier access to work.

Benefits to companies are sent to the lawmakers as a proposal both by companies and institutions with the same goal of motivating companies to employ a larger number of Single parents.

Single parents would prefer to use the assistance programs through NGOs.

Bad experiences with employers were mostly experienced by single-parent mothers through the denial of the right to annual leave, the right to sick leave due to illness of the child and the inability to progress at work.

This information cannot be interpreted on the basis of the information gathered in this study, but it is certainly worrying that mothers were those who had a poor experience. It would be good to find out in some future project what the reason for this phenomenon is.

Employers do not see single parents as neither worse nor better workers than others.

In the case of unemployed Single parents, the reason for leaving the job is usually the *expiration of the employment contract*, moving to another city, the lack of understanding by employers, etc.

All surveyed single parents, who are currently unemployed, are currently trying to find work and more than half of them believe that the fact that they are single parents is the reason why they are unemployed.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS IN WORK FOR IMPROVING THE POSITION OF SINGLE PARENTS - RECOMNDATIONS

- 1. Precise formulation of the concept of single parent
- 2. Defining the criteria and procedures for registering single parents in Companies and Institutions
- 3. Informing Single parents about the rights they have and that they could use
- 4. Promotion of institutions and programs related to assistance to Single parents
- 5. Initiating an initiative with lawmakers:
 - To give benefits to businesses that employ Single parents
 - To give priority to Single parents in job search
 - To provide special benefits to Single parents who are employed





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