

Social Workers in Collaboration for Social Change in Eastern Neighbourhood Countries

Budget: EUR 1.079.413
Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova
Project period: August 2015 to May 2018
Cooperation Partners: Hilfswerk International (HWI)
Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW)
Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW)
Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union (AZSWPU)
Nursing Association of the Republic of Moldova (NARM)
Donors: European Union and
Austrian Development Cooperation

Target groups and Beneficiaries:

- >> 4 Social Work Associations: 40 staff members, 10.500 members and supporters
- >> 160 local CSOs active in the social field
- >> Vulnerable groups in need of social support: elderly, single mothers, children with special needs
- >> Public and private stakeholders related to social work: local municipalities, educational and health care institutions, police, religious representatives

>> Support is Good, Professional Social Work is Better <<

Project Background

In the last years many countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood region have been in the process of reforming the pension and the health insurance system, elaborating framework legislation on social insurance and social services, reviewing the role of the community and local authorities in implementing social actions by bringing them closer to the community as well as recognizing the role of civil society in social assistance. Professional social work plays an increasing role in these processes. By combining prevention, compensation and rehabilitation measures, as well as addressing needs on the community level before they worsen, it contributes to developing a cost-effective social welfare system while ensuring an immediate positive impact on the quality of lives of a country's citizens. Nonetheless, several social fields lack to this day a regulative framework and sustainable funding structures. Even though social workers have organised themselves into social work associations over the past 10 years, social work is still not a fully recognized and regulated profession in most countries. Moreover, many service providers and organisations do not have sufficient access to state-of-the-art know-how and need targeted training opportunities to effectively address the manifold social problems of their countries.

Project Goal

Contributing to the well-being of vulnerable groups, achieving greater social justice and working towards social change in all project countries, through fostering the professionalization of Social Workers and empowering local CSOs regarding social service delivery.

Key results achieved:

4

Social Work Associations strengthened as competence centers

160

local CSOs directly strengthened

15

small grants awarded

471

Association members gained

16

concepts successfully considered in policy making process

3500

direct beneficiaries and stakeholders reached



Pillar 1 Professionalization of Social Workers Associations

Goals & Results

Strengthen Associations to become centers of competence for state and non-state actors in the social field:

- >> 4 Strategic documents for Associations developed
- >> 4 Operational plans elaborated
- >> 4 Fundraising strategies in place
- >> 2 Study visits organized (Georgia and Austria)
- >> 24 days of trainings rendered: communication, IT, fundraising and advocacy/lobbying/PR
- >> Informational services for members improved: newsletter, website, social media

Strengthen the role of Associations as advocates for social reform and social justice:

- >> GASW & AASW: Concept papers on Social Work Professionalization developed
- >> GASW & AASW: Active contributions to draft Law on Social Work
- >> NARM: Concept of Inter-sectorial cooperation in provision of homecare services developed and approved by Ministry
- >> AZSWPU: Evaluation of academic social work education
- >> Regular and active multi-stakeholder dialogue on a national and regional level: 37 conferences / round tables conducted
- >> Organization of Regional Conference in Tbilisi



Pillar 2 Empowerment of local CSOs

Goals & Results

Strengthen capacities of local CSOs for improved service delivery and inter-sectorial cooperation:

- >> Database comprising 600 CSOs active in the social field and their training needs compiled
- >> 18 training days on social work and organizational development for 160 NGOs organized in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova
- >> "Social Club" for networking and knowledge exchange among social workers established in Georgia
- >> Regular regional meetings conducted with approx. 600 Associations' members
- >> 15 Small grants awarded to 24 local organisations



22

sub-regions covered





Success stories: Small Grants Component

Grants awarded: 15 grants awarded to 24 local organisations
Budget: EUR 540.000 (on average EUR 36.000 per project)
Duration: 8-10 months (06/2017-03/2018)
Component Goal: Strengthening local CSOs to contribute to family preservation / strengthening and improved service delivery to vulnerable families, through social work practice, increased community participation and inter-agency or inter-sectorial partnership

Key results achieved:

44

studies / handbooks / training modules elaborated

187

info meetings and awareness raising measures conducted

2320

direct social work beneficiaries reached

1267

stakeholders (social workers, CSOs, authorities, media, etc.) empowered

81

regional / local networks established



Armenia: National Database on alternative care options for better informed policy decisions

The Armenian NGOs "Child Protection Network" and the "Foster Parents Association" have conducted the first ever research in the field of alternative care options (foster care / kinship, guardian / adoption) for children left without parental care in Armenia. The research comprised two stages: first, standardized interviews in all Armenian provinces were conducted to identify families providing different types of alternative care. Second, over 100 in-depth interviews with different stakeholders and 15 cases studies with beneficiaries concerned were implemented with support of local service providers and regional administrations. The main results are a database of official and non-official care givers and a comprehensive overview of current gaps in alternative care, which can be used by relevant stakeholders in designing or improving local policies and referral mechanisms.

Georgia: Functioning inter-sectorial cooperation for family preservation

Living in a former shelter for IDPs under constrained and harmful conditions, a family of seven persons regularly attracted the attention of local authorities due to substance abuse, violence, and a resulting conflictual family life. The children have been taken into foster care several times, but the wish from both parents and children was to stay together as a family. Based on thorough needs assessment by social workers, a set of measures has been implemented following an inter-sectorial approach, involving various stakeholders such as state social workers and psychologists, as well as representatives of the local community, small grant beneficiary "Our Home Georgia" and another local NGO. Measures involved psycho-social counselling, training in parenting skills, improvement of living conditions, support in finding a job, resulting in a successful step-by-step process of family preservation and reintegration into local community.



Moldova: Better together - Community involvement in social work practice

In Orhei and Călărăși district of Moldova small grants beneficiary "ADPI Humanitas" initiated, after a comprehensive needs assessment of local families, a network to support the parents of children with special needs - the "School of Parents". It provides a place for the parents to exchange experience and increase their knowledge, and get support through direct social and psychological counselling by social workers. Parents feel more confident in handling their family life and learn about specialized leisure, medical and educational options for their children. The "School of Parents" holds monthly meetings with a constant participant number of 11 parents.



Success Story Azerbaijan: Strengthening the Social Workers' Association

>> AZSWPU has been established in 2009. Despite the fact that it has a professional board and staff members in the crew, our organization has never been involved in comprehensive institutional capacity building activities. Within this project, we have developed AZSWPU's Strategy and Operational plan for the next three years which helped our team to merge activities in specific directions, determine priorities and unite efforts and resources to ensure the realization of our mission - to promote and regulate the Social Work profession in Azerbaijan. New projects were developed in line with the annual operational plan. Determining strategic goals has helped us a lot to spend our resources wisely and take opportunities effectively without being too broad in our sectorial focus <<

Lamiya Rzayeva, Executive Director Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union



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