

USAID MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS SUPPORT ACTIVITY (PPMG)

JANUARY 2016

INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES



Although there is no unified database, it is estimated that there are 350,000 persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They face a multitude of problems and obstacles every day. Their voices are not listened to carefully enough, which results in their exclusion from everyday social, cultural, economic and political life.

In an effort to support the addressing of problems faced by persons with disabilities, on January 29, 2016, the USAID Marginalized Populations Support Activity held a work meeting entitled Initiatives for improving the lives of persons with disabilities and their families, at the Center for Children and Youth With Developmental Disabilities in Doboj. The meeting was attended by representatives of local organizations whose activities are aimed at persons with disabilities who are also grantees of the aforementioned Activity. The goal was to

present the work of the Center for Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities as an example of good practice, identify key problems faced by persons with disabilities and their families, address those problems, and offer viable solutions in the form of adequate initiatives.

Discussions revealed that the numerous problems faced every day by persons with disabilities and their families include the following, emphasized as the most important ones by the participants: lack of enforcement of laws, strategies and policies that were adopted, professional rehabilitation, training and employment of persons with disabilities in BiH is regulated through adequate laws in both entities, but material and staff capacities for their implementation are insufficient, access to education is inadequate, access to public and residential buildings is not adapted, there is no unified database on persons with disabilities, the problem of deinstitutionalization, the status of the family, etc.



Clay artwork crafted by children at the Center for children and youth with developmental disabilities in Doboj

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Having reflected on the identified problems, the participants suggested 5 initiatives dealing with issues in education, employment, family status, capacities of organizations concerned with issues of persons with disabilities, and strategies aimed at this population group, all of which will be developed in the upcoming period.



GRANT AGREEMENTS SIGNED WITH GRANTEES -ODI

As part of the Marginalized Populations Support Activity (USAID/PPMG), grant agreements were signed in Doboj with 6 organizations from 5 local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina whose activities concern improving the lives of marginalized population groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The grants were awarded through a public call previously issued by the USAID/PPMG: Initiative to promote responsible deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities (ODI).

Grant Agreements were signed with the following organizations: Alliance of organizations for supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – SUMERO (Sarajevo),

Association of persons with cerebral palsy and dystrophy of the Bosnian Podrinje Canton (Goražde), Association of parents and friends of persons with special needs “Sunce” (Mostar), Association for supporting families, persons and communities regarding mental health issues “Zajedno” (Banja Luka), Citizen’s association “Budućnost” (Modriča) i Library for persons with visual impairment in BiH (Sarajevo).

The Alliance of organizations for supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – SUMERO will implement a project entitled Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities and support systems in the local community whose goal it is to protect the basic human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities by enabling them to have an independent and dignified life outside public institutions. The project Creating conditions for developing a support service in the Bosnian Podrinje Canton for persons with disabilities and support to deinstitutionalization, the Association of persons with cerebral palsy and dystrophy of the Bosnian Podrinje Canton will contribute to creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, provide them with social care and integrate them into the community. The Association of parents and friends of persons with special needs “Sunce”, are using the Independent Living project to help persons with disabilities in exercising their right to choose where they live and improve the quality of life in the local community with the support of assistants.





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The USAID/PPMG has also supported a project by the Association for supporting families, persons and communities regarding mental health issues “Zajedno” called Non-institutional protection of persons with mental illnesses intended to promote and strengthen non-institutional care and protection of persons with mental illnesses by improving the work of daycare centers in the community.

The initiative for developing protected housing for persons with mental disabilities, which will be implemented by the Citizens’ Association “Budućnost” will create a positive environment in 12 local communities, so as to make use of all the advantages and resources for starting a home offering protected housing, thus contributing to a more efficient and comprehensive out-patient care for people with chronic mental illnesses. USAID/PPMG has also supported a project that will be implemented by the Library for persons with visual impairments in BiH, whose goal it is to meet the basic educational needs of persons with visual impairments by publishing the “Svjetlo misli” magazine and recording audio books on CDs and distributing them to users. The total value of the six supported projects amounted to 247,500.00 BAM.

MAP OF GRANTEES CREATED

The project team of the Marginalized Populations Support Activity (USAID/PPMG) created a map of grantees. The map shows all 17 projects supported by the USAID/PPMG. The map contains the title, short description and value of each of the projects. It displays basic information on the following projects:

1. Social inclusion in the community – Providing equipment for a speech therapy room - Udruženje za pomoć djeci s posebnim potrebama Doboj (eng. Association for Children with Special Needs Doboj)
2. National Geographic Photo Camp in Sarajevo - Internews in BiH
3. Improving education quality in Glamoč Municipality – Centar za građansku suradnju Livno (eng. Center for Civic Cooperation Livno)
4. Service Center “Dajte nam šansu” Sarajevo - Association “Dajte nam šansu” Sarajevo and Association “Svjetlice” Banja Luka
5. Service Center “Dajte nam šansu” Banja Luka

- Association “Dajte nam šansu” Sarajevo and Association “Svjetlice” Banja Luka
6. Supporting sports activities for persons with disabilities for a better tomorrow – Women’s wheelchair basketball club “Bambi”
7. DI-SP – Strengthening the process of deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities and support systems in the local community – Alliance of organizations for supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina SUMERO
8. Creating conditions for developing a support service in the Bosnian Podrinje Canton for persons with disabilities and support to deinstitutionalization - Association of persons with cerebral palsy and dystrophy of the Bosnian Podrinje Canton Goražde
9. Independent living - Association “Sunce”
10. Non-institutional protection of persons with mental illnesses – Association “Zajedno” Banja Luka
11. Initiative for developing protected housing for persons with mental disabilities through small home communities - Citizens association “Budućnost”
12. Publishing the magazine “Svjetlo misli” and recording audio books on CDs - Library for persons with visual impairment in BiH
13. Youth and community – You have the right to know! - Democratic Youth Organization
14. The street is not home, it only leads there – let’s protect children’s rights – Association for promoting Roma education “Otaharin”
15. United in the fight against modern child slavery - Association “Zemlja djece u BiH”
16. Prevention in fighting human trafficking - Women’s association “Derventa”
17. Give them time instead of money - Association for addiction prevention “NARKO-NE”

**MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
THE ORGANIZATIONS,
PROJECTS AND LOCAL
COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY
ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED IS
AVAILABLE HERE:
[HTTP://PPMG.BA/BA/
GRANTOVI/PODRZALI-SMO](http://ppmg.ba/ba/grantovi/podrzali-smo)**



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DAJTE NAM ŠANSU AND THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER "SVJETLICE" CONTINUE WITH THEIR ACTIVITIES



The Center's users during an outdoor activity

The Association "Dajte nam šansu" from Sarajevo and the Children's Educational Center "Svjetlice", which was opened in September 2015 in Banja Luka, are continuing with their successful activities. The Service Centers have thus far provided a total of 5478 services, of which 3492 were provided in Sarajevo and 1986 in Banja Luka. Activities and services offered by the Service Centers to their users are: short break, outdoor activities, individual and group work led by a special needs education expert or a psychologist, transportation services for children and parents, providing information, psychological support for parents, observations of children with suspected disabilities, mobile team, help during crises, workshops for siblings, help in hiring in-class assistants and

psychomotor reeducation.

Short breaks entail individual work with the user and group work. Individual work is based on the user's needs (learning letters, numbers, developing speech, fine motor skills, toilet training, music therapy). Group work entails socialization, spending time with others and learning different life skills.

While the children/persons with disabilities are at the Center, the parents have an opportunity to spend that time on their own obligations and needs, the needs of their family, for resting, relaxing and even temporary work to supplement the family income.

During a brief break, weather permitting, users are engaged in outdoor activities. All the activities are overseen by a nurse who is in charge of preventing and managing epileptic seizures, providing first aid for minor injuries (scratches, etc.), dispensing prescribed medication and providing toilet training.

Information-related assistance is provided in person or by phone. It is intended for parents who are not informed about their rights and the rights of the child/person with disabilities. Depending on the inquiry, the social worker obtains additional information if necessary, and then informs the family about the possibilities and ways of accessing their rights.

Psychological support is primarily intended for parents/caretakers and additionally to other members of the family. Psychological support provided by experts, teaches the parent to recognize, understand and adjust their feelings. The Center believes that strengthening the parent is conducive to the strengthening of the entire family as the basic building block of the community,

who then becomes capable of dealing with everyday pressure and acts as a better partner and parent both to a child with disabilities and to a typical child. Observations are performed when there is a suspected difficulty. Since public institutions have very long waiting lists for observations, parents turn to experts at the help center. After observation, the parent is told whether or not the suspicion was justified, and provided with advice concerning their next step. For



Outdoor activities



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families unable to leave their home due to a high level of disability of the child/person, architectural obstacles, etc. the Center organizes a mobile team. The mobile teams are comprised of experts (psychologist, social worker) and trained volunteers and function in two ways: 1 - transporting users from home/school to the Service Center and/or back, and 2 - mobile teams go to the user's home.

During house visits, the team works with the parent (psychological support, providing information), and with the child/person with disabilities (individual work, socializing, fine motor skills, etc.). During the house visit, the parent is given a chance to run all the errands outside the house, which is usually not possible due to the lack of support by the family.



Group work – creative workshops

Help in hiring access (in-class) assistants entails hiring persons from adequate professions who need an internship. Pursuant to the Agreement on hiring and training interns signed with the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Sarajevo Canton, trainings are held on the premises of the Service Center by allowing them to work directly with children and persons with developmental disabilities. After completing the trainings, interns are sent into mainstream and specialized

educational institutions where they assist children with disabilities during class, and thus complete their internship prerequisite for taking the professional state exam. This provides our future experts with experience they will need in their future work, and provides additional education to members of

the community about the existence and abilities of children and persons with developmental disabilities and problems faced by families, which results in less discrimination and stigmatization in the society. One of the Center's services is psychomotor reeducation, which takes a multi-dimensional approach to working with children and adults with psychomotor disabilities, and uses movement and tonicity to achieve physical and verbal communication. The therapy program is based on the child's individual abilities, differences and possibilities, developmental needs and feelings. In addition to the aforementioned activities, the Centers organize additional ones (users' birthdays, commemorating important dates, socializing through workshops with guests). One of the additional activities is training volunteers, access assistants, experts (teachers at all levels), which directly contributes to raising awareness about the abilities of children and persons with developmental disabilities, eliminating prejudice and reducing peer violence against persons with disabilities. The activities done with young typical children create a generation with raised awareness, that will in the future understand and accept diversity.

The Service Centers organize trainings and classes for representatives of nongovernmental organizations dealing with the issues of persons with developmental disabilities, parents of children and persons with developmental disabilities and volunteers in BiH, about the organization and functioning of the Center's activities.



Individual work

Marginalized Populations Support Activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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