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IRIS Network

Case studies on innovative
social inclusion practices



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ABOUT IRIS NETWORK

What is IRIS Network?

Founded in 2012, IRIS Network is the unique regional network that brings together CSOs social service providers in SEE. The Network is based on vision of equal rights and opportunities for decent living for all. It is created to ensure the social inclusion by enabling the environment for the provision of high quality services trough support to the developmental policies focused. Also, important part of Networks' mission is to support the national members and decision makers in creation of developmental policies, lobbying and advocacy focused on ensuring access to quality services. Since 2014, IRIS Network has seven national secretariats in SEE.

IRIS in numbers





Case studies on innovative social inclusion practices

The experiences, best practices and lessons learned through the project “Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional CSO networks” are represented within Case studies on innovative social inclusion practice.

The social engagement and good cooperation between national IRIS network members in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, resulted in development of 6 national innovative case studies.

The studies are promoting inventive and sustainable solutions based on a social investment approach. Innovative models of social services are aimed to improve the system of social protection, support and integration of the most vulnerable groups, with the special focus on youth in need. The very heterogeneous group of beneficiaries also includes victims of domestic violence, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Each case study includes:

- a) Description of the innovative and sustainable example,**
- b) A qualitative assessment of the local social realities,**
- c) Means-tested analysis of the ‘clients’,**
- d) Reference to relevant EU policies and**
- e) Qualitative assessment on the up scaling potential.**

The implementation of the services, represented within the publications engaged more than 500 social workers, physiologists, doctors and other professionals of social and health protection sectors, personal assistants and volunteers on regional level. The number of final beneficiaries currently is measured in hundreds with a potential of being increased to thousands in the future. Some of extraordinary success stories could be found on the following pages.



Model of delivery of emergency social services for children and mothers exposed to immediate risks

Social Organization for the Support of the Youth – ARSIS is founding member of IRIS Network Albania. It is located in 1.500 m² drop-in social Centre that provides multidisciplinary services to children and mothers exposed to immediate harmful situations as well as their family members. The operational capacities of the Centre are strengthened through cooperation with Municipality of Tirana (provides free of charge the premises, working appliances and a minivat), the donors (cover the operational expenses and the staffing) and ARSIS (delivers the set of services to individuals in vulnerable situations).

The services are available 24 hours/day - 7 days/week and include provision of emergency accommodation and related services up to 72 hours, as well as psycho-social support towards children in contact with the law in Police stations. Three main groups of Centre's beneficiaries are the following:

- » **Children (0-18 years old)** victims or exposed to immediate harmful situations including: violence, neglect, abuse, mistreatment, trafficking, exploitation, discrimination, in street situation, in contact with the law, run-away, out of parental care;
- » **Youth:** leaving the alternative residential care; in post detention out of parental care;
- » **Women:** in particular underage pregnant and young mothers; single unsupported victims of violence or similar situations; victims of social and natural emergencies.

Through the established cooperation with the Police, the Centre insures the quality of services and protection of all beneficiaries. The most sensitive cases of joint operations are related to crimes and felonies involving children. Psychologists and social workers are engaged in such cases in 6 Police stations in Tirana. From the moment of entry into the Police station to the return back home, the children are accompanied, provided with physical support (during and after interview) and, in the specific cases, accommodated in Centre's emergency shelter. The legal advice by lawyer is also offered to children and their parents, and the Centre cooperates with the Police and Prosecution authorities in order to insure the best interests of the child.

In order to juveniles' wellbeing, ARSIS has developed disciplinary individual intervention plan, consisting of the following actions:

- » First assessment, enrolment in emergency shelter;
- » Identification of the core issues per each juvenile, the challenges and the related risk factors, undertake mitigation measures;
- » Setting up an emergent technical round-table with relevant stakeholders in place;
- » Development of individual intervention plan on each juvenile, defining tasks of the related actors during the implementation (who has to do what, when, how)

Furthermore, the sustainability of this model of intervention is insured through additional services that the Centre is offering, such as psycho/social/health/educational/legal support; civic status facilitation; coaching for employment; interaction with juveniles' family members; recreational activities, education and participation in Centre's activities; enrolment/integration on educational institutions and follow up and referral to other service providers including residential or daily care.



SUCCESS STORY

On 07 January 2015, at 02.00 a.m. the Tirana Police Station no. 2 asked for immediate psycho-social support in their premises. Mimoza T, 19 years old, mother of a 2,5 years old son was seeking protection from her violent partner Astrit (father of her son). Mimoza T's native family is originally from a remote village in the Northeast of Albania very traditional and conservative; they did not approve Mimoza's relation with Astrit. Mimoza was jobless; she and her son had nowhere to go to escape the severe domestic violence. After the initial assessment in Police premises Mimoza and her son were enrolled in the transitory accommodation and supported with multidisciplinary services.

In the immediate technical round table with the actors in place was assessed as the only mid-term available solution was the enrolment of mother and son in a residential care for women victims of domestic violence. Mimoza and her son stayed for a year in this shelter. While there ARSIS supported them simultaneously:

- » follow up with the judicial proceedings against her partner: issuance of the order of protection making sure that he stays away from her; taking in repossession her own and her son's personal belonging; clarification of details of meeting between father (Astrit) and son;
- » Vocational training: Mimoza was enrolled in a 6-months tailoring and clothing style course; In October 2015 Mimoza was facilitated to establish her employment relation next to a TV Channel. She is working there as tailor;
- » In December 2015 Mimoza T left the shelter for women victims of domestic violence. ARSIS supported her by covering her tenancy payment for 3-months. Now she has sufficient monthly income to cover the rent for a flat for herself and son;
- » Mimoza T's son is enrolled and regularly attends kindergarten.



Development of social and health services of the CSOs as a support system based on beneficiary needs - palliative care of elderly and ill persons “Ruhama” Zenica

The need of palliative care provision in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in increase, due to extension of lifetime; increased number of patients with malignant and other chronic incurable diseases; changes in family structure and social isolation of elderly and ill people. The palliative care is patient-oriented, specialised medical care for people with serious illnesses, focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain and stresses of a serious illness.

The subject of the case study is humanitarian organization Ruhama, the member of IRIS BiH network. Since the establishment in 1993, Ruhama's mission is provision of the best quality services and long term support to elderly. Up until today, Ruhama has grown into Professional Health and Palliative Care Centre, which offers 24-hour supervision and care, health and hygiene assistance to elderly and disabled persons and professional care based on humane principles. The total number of served beneficiaries is around 1.750.000.

Under the Programme “Home care” with “Health-Hygiene-Humanitarian program”, Palliative care is being conducted simultaneously in Ruhama Center, Centre for Professional Health and Palliative Care and directly in the patients' homes. Those activities are divided into three separate programs:

- » **The medical program** includes nursing, physical examinations, laboratory services, ECG machine heart control, changing catheters, changing decubitus wounds, injections and many other medical activities for 382.000 elderly people in the period of ten years.
- » **The second program consider maintenance of the patient hygiene** and within the last decade has been recorded 397.200 cases. This program includes personal hygiene of patients, such as bathing, dressing, haircut and shave, hygiene in the area where the patient resides, washing and laundry feeding and fostering patients. This program is being implemented at the Centre as well as directly in the homes of patients.
- » **The Additional program** that includes transport of patients on hemodialysis, chemotherapy or other destinations required to perform basic life functions such as administrative payments. The Additional program includes social workers visits and volunteers in order to meet the basic daily needs of the elderly people, such as: grocery shopping, paying utilities and even to establish the conversation. The Additional program also includes ‘master of the house’ and painting works. This program supports 91.380 beneficiaries.

In addition to activities of social service provision, the Mobile Teams were established and engaged more than 240 local and foreign volunteers (doctors, nurses, lawyers, social workers and other necessary staff), specially trained to provide professional support and protection of beneficiaries and sustain their dignity to the very end.



SUCCESS STORY

Two middle-aged women brought their mother from Sarajevo, 70 km away from Ruhama Centar in Zenica. They sought the assistance for her mother, who had a severe stroke, fed with feeding tube and was in a semi-conscious state. They were stressed and through tears explained what doctor said: "mother will live just one or two more weeks". Specialists from Ruhama promised to these two ladies that they will do everything in their power to help their mother, but with a touch of suspicion, because the old lady was really in a very difficult situation with all forms of long-term complications of decomposition (decubital wounds, thrombosis, pneumonia).

After standard admission procedures in Ruhama, physicians reviewed patient medical records, opened a medical card and prepared health plan for this 84 years old lady.

Every day the therapy was consisted of an adequate diet that is made for individuals who were feed on the tube. Continuously, every day medical staff in a light and calming atmosphere talked to patient even though she was in a semi-conscious state. Eventually the old woman opened her eyes first and began responding to their inquiries. Thanks to physical therapist she slowly started sitting and learning to walk again. Defectologist was also part of the medical team and tried to eliminate speech disturbances, because she had aphasia (damage of the speech center). Complete treatment, which lasted a year, has led to the health improvement of this old lady: she talked, walked up and started to react on what is happening around her and on surrounding effects.

The lady was declared as medical phenomena and a good example of Will for Life.



Suitable model of home care for elderly

Association Humanity is a member of the IRIS MK network, since its foundation in 2014. The Association is actively involved in provision of social services regarding social mobility, integration and education of elderly.

The purpose of this Case study is learning through positive examples of services for elderly in the final stages of terminal illnesses and introducing the hospice centers served as a good model for activities' conduction and services' delivering in Macedonia.

Since 2009, the Association is assisting elderly and persons in the final stages of terminal illnesses in their domestic environment.

The service of the Association Humanity started working with 37 beneficiaries, 2 doctors, 1 psychologist, 1 social worker, 2 physiotherapist, 2 nurses and 10 careers. A professional team performed its obligations 5 days a week as follows:

- » Routine medical monitoring of users (doctors and nurses did regular medical examinations of users, medical consultation).
- » Psycho - social support (re-socialization process performed by social worker and psychologist; support the elderly and their families; prepare the documentation and giving support to expressing the right of social protection).
- » Physiotherapy Services (manual massage, movement).
- » Maintenance of home (cleaning the house, washing clothes, cooking and shopping).
- » Care and assistance in the pursuit daily duties of the elderly (morning care of the elderly people, a lounge and partial toilets, feeding, stimulation of movement and socialization).

The pilot project implementation lasted for 6 months – the service for beneficiaries was volunteering based, until the funds for the engagement of staff were provided by donations from individuals and business sector.

After completion of the pilot project NGO Humanity opened an account for donations, prepared a special section on the website for donations and set up donation boxes in fees, that is meant to go to social fund and be supported free older persons in social risk and people who need the social care at home.



SUCCESS STORY

"Two years ago I could take care of myself and my son. I did all household duties. But, as time passed by, my health condition worsened – I suffer from high blood pressure and heart problems which are bothering me more and more each day", said T.L.J. at the beginning of the conversation. She was seeing her doctor on regular bases and one day he informed her on services provided by Association Humanity. She decided to contact the Association and apply for the services.

"Two days after I made a call, a doctor, social worker and psychologist came to me. They asked me about my illness and problems in daily functioning. They were so kind and I explained them everything", T.L.J. is retelling.

On the next day, while she was facing the obvious difficulties trying to finish her household duties, T.L.J. received a phone call from the staff member of the Association Humanity and heard a great news – she will be provided with personal caregiver. She was positively shocked and extremely happy; she will finally gain the necessary assistance at home.

The caregiver awarded to T.L.J. took care of her on daily bases – assisting her in cleaning the house; helping her to conduct personal hygiene; procuring medicaments, cooking, washing and shopping for her. Beside physical assistance within home maintenance, the caregiver supported her mentally through warm, friendly approach and understanding of her needs.

Furthermore, the service offered by Association Humanity is also oriented to (re)socialization of the beneficiaries – the caregiver helped T.L.J. recover the relationship with her neighbors and friends by taking walks with her and providing her company in visits to the neighborhood.

"It is very important to have someone to take care of you. I am so grateful. This means a lot to me and I will continue to use the services of Association Humanity in the future", said T.L.J.



Protection of victims of domestic violence in Kosovo

CLARD is determined in introducing innovative and sustainable solutions for the benefit of the victims of the domestic violence. A simple solution cannot be found due to highly complex issue, especially in a county like Kosovo that faces many challenges such as: high unemployment rate, unsustainable economic situation, patriarchal society etc. A total number of 11.209 cases of the domestic violence were reported in the period from 2005 to 2014 together with stakeholders. Still much larger number of cases remained unreported.

CLARD Regional Legal Clinics provided up to 90 free legal counseling and legal aid for beneficiaries, most of them cases of domestic violence. In 2015, there were 26 cases which were completed as successful in the favor of the beneficiaries.

Approximately 80 % of reported victims are female. The very first step on path of prevention is raising the public awareness, inclusion of all relevant institutions, as well as non-government organizations, media, educational programs, etc. Victims are quite often stigmatized on various levels of the social hierarchy in Kosovo. Encouraging victims to come forward is another impediment that has to be dealt with.

At this moment CLARD is offering: legal services, accompanying to the police and social services, cooperation with shelters for accommodation, medical and psychosocial services etc. The very first steps are undertaken by CLARD and our associating organizations and partners within IRIS Network, but there are any milestones yet to be reached.

Coordination Council of Domestic Violence Victims of the Municipality of Priština is officially functioning from January 2015 as an urgent response to assist the relevant institutions in order to offer services to the victims in timely manner. The Council consists of representatives from the Municipality of Priština, Centre for Social Welfare, Kosovo Police, CLARD, shelter, State Prosecutor and representatives from Health Institutions.

The Council has good results so far and can be used as a good model by other Municipalities, which are to be involved by CLARD in working groups. At the moment, CLARD is working on preparation for councils' establishment in Lipjan and Drenas municipalities.

The Constitution of Kosovo includes Articles on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including a "Program against the Domestic Violence and Action Plan" adopted in 2011, and legislation is in line with the European Union Policies and Instruments regarding the issue of the domestic violence. Kosovo has the means to fight against the domestic violence. There are highly-skilled legal experts, Coordination Councils for the victims of the domestic violence, civil society and institutions that in proper cooperation system can achieve better results.



Existing tradition of domestic violence in Kosovo makes so many women suffering and living in constant fear. Even though they realize the bitter and unfair reality is changeable, most of them are afraid of reporting the abusers and continue to suffer until maltreatment become too cruel to stand.

M.A. was brutally abused by her husband for several years of their life together. Apart of psychical abuse, she suffered physical abuse on daily basis. After her husband threatens to kill her, she got the courage and, along with her children, entered CLARD office asking for help.

After she explained her case, it was clear that she wanted to leave the house, but her financial status did not allow her to do so. CLARD employees immediately offered her legal advices; Kosovo Police was informed so the case was opened and protection order issued. The Police in coordination with Social Service provided her access to shelter where she could stay with children. She finally felt safe.

After some time spent in shelter for victims of domestic violence, M.A. received proper care and was able to regain her self-esteem and recover from trauma. Center for Social Welfare has ordered that children will stay with their mother until the divorce. Nowadays, she is able to live freely and take care of her children in optimal environment, protected from fear and violence.



National SOS line for victims of domestic violence

National SOS line for victims of domestic violence is one of the most important mechanisms which provides help and support for the victims. It is fully anonymous and confidential, 24-hours free line, which has a unique number for calls from all over the country. Service represents an urgent and effective form of assistance which strengthens and supports victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, the service contributes to a better quality of life of women and children victims of violence, through an enhanced system of protection. Coordination and functionality of services are the result of inter-service cooperation between the institutions of the system and the civil society, which contributes to a better response and positive change in the attitudes of those who are responsible for the protection of victims of violence. Operating mode of service contributes to the systematic response of all stakeholders within society regarding the issue of violence.

The establishment of National SOS helpline for victims of domestic violence as a specialized, 24-hours assistance service, is an obligation of the Montenegro state. This obligation is envisioned by international documents and national legislation such as: Action plan for achieving gender equality 2008-2012 and 2013-2017; The Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence 2011-2015; Action Plan through the Chapter 23; Law on Protection from Domestic Violence adopted in 2010 etc.

National SOS line for victims of domestic violence started to work on 1st of September 2015. The line was established and funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. A service of the National SOS line for victims of domestic violence is coordinated by NGO SOS Hotline for women and children victims of violence Nikšić which is also one of the members of the Montenegrin IRIS NETWORK



SUCCESS STORY

A 76-year-old woman called the SOS Telephone asking for help because her son in law “abused her in her own house”. In fact, the son in law abused his spouse – her daughter and on her warning not to do it, he physically assaulted the elderly lady threatening that he would kill her. She reported the incident to the police, but the inspector told her that they could not do anything because the part of the house belonged to her daughter and that she should lock herself in her room when he was aggressive and claimed “then he won’t enter certainly”. The abuser was under the influence of alcohol (2.7 units of alcohol) but police officers let him go home immediately after hearing, after which he continued with curses and threats. The client said that she has submitted the application against him several times already but that he was only once sanctioned with a fine in the amount of 250 Euros.

The volunteer of the SOS Telephone noted all data during a conversation (time of the incident, time when women reported incident to police, inspector name and description of the incident), after which she personally called the chief of police and introduced him to the case. The chief quickly gathered all the additional information which corroborated with the woman’s statement. It became clear that some omissions were made during the intervention of the police. An infringement procedure was not initiated, restraining order of 3 days was not issued even that police had right to do that, abuser wasn’t kept in custody until he was sober which had to be done keeping in mind the amount of alcohol in his blood.

In consultation with the volunteer of the SOS, the police have made a plan to support, not only the woman who asked for the help, but also her daughter. The process within competent authority was launched. Police Chief personally invited client, her daughter and her son in law for an interview, during which he strongly “warned” the abuser that he would be sent to prison if he made the slightest infraction. Encouraged by this, the daughter also reported him, so 2 process were launched (misdemeanor – violence against the woman who approached us, felony – violence against her daughter). Criminal report is in the regular procedure and misdemeanor ended with the release of the protective measures of removal of the perpetrator from the apartment for 30 days.



Holistic support to people with intellectual and mental disabilities through newly established social welfare services

Mental disorders in Serbia are one of the biggest public health problems, caused by significant level of stress in past decades, while the Ministry of Health claim that mental difficulties affect up to 400.000 people. Programme of Supported housing, recognized as the best form of care for people with intellectual disabilities, is offering effective holistic support for independent living and social integration of beneficiaries even in small communities such as Municipality of Vlasotince in Southern Serbia. The full potential of this model is based on humane and personal approach.

Great support to carrier services in Vlasotince, lead by Association SMILE, was given by following members of the IRIS Network:

- » **Association for Promotion of the Inclusion (Belgrade)** - The support came through sharing experiences and good practices and by training of professional and support staff.
- » **NGO Children's Heart (Belgrade)** - Training for professional work with persons with intellectual and mental disabilities (workers of all sectors in the community participated).
- » **NGO Duga (Ada)** – Provision of the equipment and materials and furnishing premises for the working engagement of beneficiaries (Independent living with Home Assistance service).
- » **Educational Centre (Leskovac)**, National coordinator of the IRIS network - Support came within preparation of the project proposal; the implementation of mentoring programs; the establishment of logistics services.

Supported Housing and Home Assistance services are oriented to increase the capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities for independent living and help them to participate in regular social activities. The services providers' (staff) participated in educative trainings, accredited by Ministry of labour, employment, veteran and social affairs, in order to insure the maximum level of professionalism, full protection and high quality of services for target groups of beneficiaries.

Supported Housing Service made 4 people beneficiaries, who now live in the premises of Supported housing. Two of them were moved from the Institute for the Care of Adults "Male pcelice" from Kragujevac, while the reception of two other persons from the municipality of Vlasotince and Crna Trava prevented their institutionalization.

Through the series of workshops and training for independent living, organized within the programme and lead by experts, the beneficiaries were assisted in adoption of socially acceptable habits. They became familiar with cooking, maintenance of the house and personal hygiene, money management, social rules and individual responsibility, etc.

Furthermore, 25 people intellectual disabilities from the municipality of Vlasotince are now provided with Home Assistance Service. The group of beneficiaries is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age, nationality, type and degree of disability. Mobile Service team for the integrated protection of beneficiaries is frequently visiting them all – those who are institutionalized as well as others who live in their residences / in foster families.

The results shows that continues and adequate assistance makes beneficiaries more capable for independent living and the institutionalization becomes unnecessary solution.



SUCCESS STORY

One of the beneficiaries of Centre for Social Work in the municipality of Crna Trava is G.N. from Kalna village – adult with mental disabilities, totally incapable for independent life. He lives under custody and protection of professional social workers in Centre, after long time of being left alone in very unpleasant life conditions.

After his mother death, G.N. lived in his birth place. The evaluation of his life conditions, done by Centre for Social Work, revealed that he does not have optimal conditions for a decent life. Within the report of the Centre, it was emphasized that „living conditions of beneficiary are far below the average. He lives in inadequate hygienic neglected areas; changes places of housing often – does not have a residential area“. He slept nearby stables, accompanied by cows and goats, without bed. During summers but also during very cold winters typical for this region (sometimes the temperature is lower then -20°C), he often slept between the haystacks. Furthermore, the report is showing that he was not used to take care of himself, not even in terms of basic hygiene habits. The locals used him for tough jobs, and in return they bought him cigarettes and allowed him to sleep a couple of times in their yard. As he was beneficiary of social assistance, he was irrationally spending money – did not know the value of money; did not know how to use prescribed therapy, etc.

In 2012 he was finally placed in the social care institution, but soon left the institution and returned to his old way of life.

In January 2015, he became beneficiary of the service „Supported Housing for people with intellectual and mental disabilities in Vlasotince“, provided by NGO Smile from Vlasotince. Team of experts and nurse, who provided service of supportive housing, accepted this beneficiary for the period of adjustment. In the beginning, it was necessary to invest a lot of effort into adopting hygienic habits of the beneficiary. The process of his recovery and adjustment was long and hard, but resulted in a success.

Today G.N. lives in Vlasotince with significant support of caregivers, taking long afternoon walks with his girlfriend S.J. who is living in the Institute for the Care of Adults „Male pčelice“ in Kragujevac. Both of them are using service of Supported Housing. Together they go to the store; taking care of their pet - a dog named Luna; carry out simpler housework with the support of nurses, watch TV and socialize.

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Violeta Kola, Ilir Lico, Ilda Pipero

"Model of delivery of emergency social services for children and mothers exposed to immediate risks"

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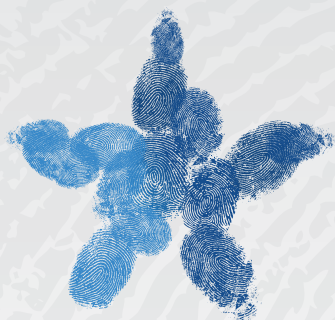
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IRIS NETWORK IS A UNIQUE REGIONAL NETWORK THAT BRINGS TOGETHER MORE THAN 160 CSOS, SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE. BASED ON VISION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECENT LIFE FOR ALL, THE NETWORK HAS BEEN CREATED TO ENSURE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND STRENGTHEN THE ROLE AND CAPACITIES OF NON-PROFIT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS THROUGHOUT SEE. MEMBERS OF THE IRIS NETWORK PROVIDE NECESSARY SOCIAL SERVICES TO OVER 10000 BENEFICIARIES DAILY.



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