

CASE STUDY

Suitable model – care of the elderly at home in Macedonia

COUNTRY: MACEDONIA

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1. Description of the innovative and sustainable model

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.

Since 2009, the Association is assisting elderly and persons in the final stages of terminal illnesses in their domestic environment. Before first engagements in the field, the founders of the Association have participated in 10 days long study visit to Budapest, hosted by “Hungarian Hospice Foundation”, in order to improve their knowledge and skills in the area in such services provision, so to insure the highest quality of services for the beneficiaries.

The purpose of study visit was learning through positive examples of services for elderly in the final stages of terminal illnesses; hospice centers served as a good model for activities’ conduction and services’ delivering in Macedonia.

All of the experiences and the examples of good practices, adopted for Macedonian conditions, were incorporated in the pilot project related to insertion of adapted services for elderly and palliative care for people with terminal illnesses. The project, implemented by the Association Humanity, was the very first project of this kind ever implemented in Macedonia, and from the beginning it was accepted and supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

When all necessary conditions for successful implementation were obtained, the pilot project started with the selection of the persons / careers and process of their education divided into theoretical and practical part. After completion of the educational process, the second phase of the project was dedicated to selection of beneficiaries and establishing collaboration with a local government. About hundred potential beneficiaries were recognized, so the final selection was made by professional team consisting of a doctor, social worker and psychologist. The team inspected the beneficiaries in order to collect relevant information on their medical history, through the process of anamnesis.

The service of the Association Humanity started working with 37 beneficiaries, 2 doctors, 1 psychologist, 1 social worker, 2 physiotherapists, 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.

Regional roundtables, also organized within the project, brought together representatives of relevant NGOs, local government and business sector in order to establish partnership in providing home care and more services

at the local level. After meetings, the detailed analysis of the needs of elderly in Skopje was created with the support of local government. The study was presented to all the mayors of the municipalities in Skopje in order to develop local services for assistance and support the elderly. Association Humanity continued to provide services to more than 100 senior beneficiaries. The programme was supported by the Centre for Adult's Education in the twinning project and it was verified as a special education program for unemployed people who want to work with the elderly. This programme is also verified by the Ministry of Education and Science and comprises 6 modules (after revivification 4 modules) with a duration of 4 months (practical, theoretical training and on-the-job training) participants after completing the training and passing are gaining certificates for acquired professional competence for professional care for the elderly. Since 2013, 70 careers – providers of social care to the elderly at home, were certified by the institutions for social care for the elderly or were engaged in the program for community service. Also, the programme was oriented towards researching strategic objectives in terms of solving the problem of long-term unemployed active job seekers. The ultimate aims were to enable unemployed people to gain the necessary skills and become involved in the labor market and, on the other hand, to provide the required professional care to the elderly and support their longer stay at homes. This project was the first of its kind to serve as a positive example of implementation of many social services in Macedonia. Beside these activities routine medical monitoring of users was performed (doctors and nurses did regular medical control of users, medical consultation).

Action for social inclusion of the elderly – final product will be conducting legal initiators in process of improving the conditions of the elderly. As the result of the project evaluation, Association Humanity together with relevant institutions started working on preparation of the law on social enterprises. The purpose of the programme is to build entrepreneurial spirit among young people and also to train young careers. These activities will maximize the potential of young unemployed persons for starting a social business in providing social services and protecting young people from social risk and unemployment, as well as, inclusion of the other social category on the elderly who need care. Association Humanity supports the young entrepreneur in the process of preparation of social enterprise and in care provision. The process includes 30 young people who have undergone trainings for: caregivers, advocacy and lobbying, preparation business plans and familiarization with the process and importance of social enterprises.



A qualitative assessment of the local social realities.

In the process of local policies' creation, it is of high importance to involve concerned citizens in order to achieve the participatory model of policy. Strategies for social inclusion at local level should be positive example that will encourage and facilitate the access of local governments and socially for vulnerable categories of citizens in developing public partnership system empowerment and social inclusion. It will also establish a control mechanism that will guarantee the involvement and approval of the policies that are created locally by the strong involvement of socially vulnerable categories of citizens.

According to the Law on social protection, associations can provide social services in the area of social protection. Associations shall be registered in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, which is responsible for this issue.

On the other side, the Law of Associations and foundations also allows associations to provide commercial services.

Strategies adopted in Macedonia in the area of social service provision:

- » Strategy for the elderly
- » Strategy for Demographic aging
- » Strategy for improving the Law on social protection
- » A strategy for reducing poverty and social exclusion in Macedonia

Strategies clearly indicate the need of developing services for home care of the elderly as the part of strategic objectives. Association Humanity, as part of the coordination bodies of these strategies, is highlighting this segment and the need for good quality standards of services for home care. Because of limited capacity in institutions, as well as quality of service provided, services at home are more valued option when it comes to needs of the elderly. Furthermore, if subsidized by state the financial sustainability of the service is most cost-effective solution. The most important is that the senior citizens would remain longer in their own homes and it will contribute to deinstitutionalization process.

Means-tested analysis of the 'clients'

The service of the Association Humanity began working with 37 beneficiaries 3 elderly and 7 persons in the terminal stage. Following professionals were engaged services provision:

- » 1 Psychologist
- » 1 social worker
- » 2 physiotherapists
- » 2 Nurses
- » 10 Careers.

A professional team performed its obligations 5 days a week with 7 beneficiaries as follows:

- » **Routine medical care for beneficiaries.** Doctors and nurses provided regular medical care for beneficiaries, including medical advices.
- » **Psycho-social support.** Social worker and psychologist, supported the elderly and families in preparation of documentation and support in accordance to the right on social security
- » **Physiotherapy services.**
- » **Maintenance of home.** Careers cleaned beneficiaries' home, washing clothes, cooking and shopping.

SUCCESS STORY

Story of T.LJ. – beneficiary of home care service for elderly, provided by Association Humanitye

“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.LJ. 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.LJ. is retelling.

On the next day, while she was facing the obvious difficulties trying to finish her household duties, T.LJ. 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.LJ. 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.LJ. 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.LJ.



Described service is in continuous demand and its quality is representing that the needs of the beneficiaries are met and properly addressed. Services are organized to provide assistance to the elderly in every-day life: to improve their health condition, restore lost family connections, friendly and neighborly relations, ease the burden on the other members of the family who are unable to provide proper care due their everyday activities.

Reference to relevant EU policies

Statistics are showing the increase of population of elderly, as a consequence of demographic trend caused by aging population worldwide, the development of science and technology contributed to the longer life expectancy.

European Union standards in terms of care of the elderly are stipulating that each country should ensure a minimum of 3% of facilities for institutional accommodation for the elderly. Macedonia currently has capacity for institutional placement of 0.6% of the total number of elderly persons in the country. Most of the institutions for social protection of the elderly are located in the capital city and its immediate surroundings.

United Nations principle of independent living advises provision of conditions for elderly to reside as long as possible at home, or in its natural environment. According to the legislation of the Republic of Macedonia, this entails the development of daily care centers and centers for assistance at home.

Recommendations of the European Union in the area of social policy targeted at adapting the European social model, UN model and Madrid plan for active aging.





Qualitative assessment on the up scaling potential

The Association Humanity plans to open Call Centre through which beneficiaries and other elder people will seek help, support and/or advice. The services will be improved by developing special web page with all data of the personnel and other resources that will be available on the beneficiaries' request. Furthermore, procurement of ambulance vehicle will provide access and availability of service for beneficiaries in timely maneer.

Association Humanity is open for cooperation in sharing and exchanging acquired knowledge with other civil society organizations and institutions in order to improve partnerships amongst relevant stakeholders.

IRIS Network members are great resource for the cooperation. Association Humanity will seek support and cooperation for improvement of the service within it.

The exchange programme is already designed and started to relocate and to expand on the number of services providers in several municipalities in Macedonia.

References

National Strategy for the elderly

Strategy for improving the law on social protection

A strategy for reducing poverty and social exclusion in Macedonia

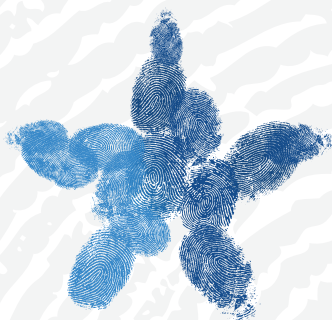
Law on Social Protection of the Republic of Macedonia

A comprehensive research and analysis of the needs and forms of care for the elderly in the City of Skopje (Association Humanity)

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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