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**“PROMOTING ACTIVE INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGED PERSONS
EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET”**

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Training needs analysis

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1 Acronyms

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
ISA – Institute for Social Activities
LEDP – Law on Employment of Disabled People
LAP – Local Action Plan
MoE – Ministry of Economy
RM – Republic of Macedonia
HIF – Health Insurance Fund
CSW – Center for Social Works
ESA – Employment Service Agency
SME – Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
MoLSA – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or MLSP
MoF – Ministry of Finance
ISWSP – Institute of social work and social policy

2 Definitions

Working age population - comprises all persons aged from 15 to 79 years;

Economic active population - comprises of the employed and unemployed persons (labour force).

Employed are all persons aged 15 – 79 who:

- During the reporting week have worked for money (in cash or in kind) or for profit at least one hour,
- During the reporting week were temporarily absent from work (because of illness; leave of absence; studies; break in the activity of the legal entity etc.), but were formally employed, were helping on family estate or in the family enterprise without pay.

Unemployed are the persons who meet the following three conditions:

- During the reporting week they did not work (according to the above-mentioned criteria),
- Have searched actively for a job or have taken concrete activities to find a job,
- Were prepared to accept work in the next two weeks that followed the reporting week.

Activity rate as participation of the labour force in the working age population aged 15 years and more;

Employment rate: as participation of the number of employed in the working age population, aged 15 years and more.

Unemployment rate as participation of the number of unemployed in the total labour force.

Vulnerable population include the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, the uninsured, low-income children, the elderly, the homeless, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), those with other chronic health conditions, including severe mental illness, and many other facing risks that are influencing their inclusion on the labor market. The vulnerability of these individuals is enhanced by race, ethnicity, age, sex, and factors such as income, insurance coverage (or lack thereof), and absence of a usual source of care.

3 INTRODUCTION

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is aiming at providing an up-to-date information and detailed analyses of the training needs of professionals working in the SWCs and in the ESA in order to enable them for establishing suitable support for the vulnerable groups of people in the process of inclusion on the labour market, following the principals of social mentoring model.

The TNA is the output of Activity 1.1 of Cluster 1: “Enhancing the Skills of Employment and Social Welfare Professionals” of the project “Promoting Active Inclusion of Disadvantaged Persons Excluded from the Labour Market”. Specifically the deliverable is addressing the Purpose 1: Improve the efficiency of employment and social services as a way of promoting the social inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups by assisting professionals from the Employment Centers and the Centers for Social Work in developing new skills as 'Mentors for Social Inclusion'.

The deliverable is consisted of the Executive summary, which highlights the most crucial elements of the TNA. The next section provides a snapshot of the Macedonian Labour market, its main stakeholders and demonstrates the essence of the need of intervention in the process of employment of vulnerable people.

In Section 4, are demonstrated the goals and the objectives of this TNA. In Section 5 and 6 is accented the main methodology used in collecting and processing the data.

The Section Recommendations and Training Needs Priorities is a conclusive structure which provides the crucial findings that will be solid base for the further project implementation.

4 Executive Summary

The Training Needs Analysis is aiming at collecting the needed information for developing the training curricula which refer to the professionals’ training from SWC and EAS in order to enhance their capacities for better implementation of the Social mentoring model in the further stages of the project.

The TNA is closely connected with the achievement of the result: The competences and skills of professionals, working closely with the target group will be greatly strengthened through an innovative training program and piloting of the Social Mentoring Model, thereby promoting efficiency in the provision of tailor made services to the target group.

With regards to the planning and developing the TNA, the main activities were:

- defining the methodology used and designing the action plan and its tools for delivering the TNA,
- desk research in order to have a clear image of the current capacity building initiatives, what has been implemented in the past and what are the main policies and measures that professionals are working on
- conducting the focus group with relevant professionals from SWC and ESA,
- conducting a series of phone interviews,
- analyzing the collected data and providing recommendations.

The main findings refer to:

- lack of collaboration and coordination among the two institutions SWCs and ESAs, in terms of providing services to their clients.

- the strengthening of SWC’s professionals skills with regards to the provision of individual counseling, support to their clients. Their main task is focused on financial allocations.

The training needs that were pointed out are the following:

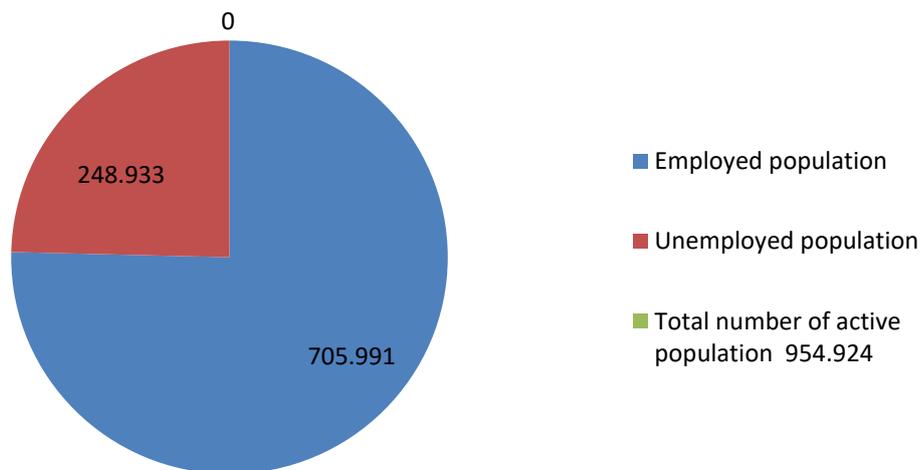
- Partnership building skills (according to the fact that they are not having regular contact with the colleagues from the Employment Agency Service and formal sharing of information is not established).
- Professional stress management.
- Establishing effective communication with their clients.

5 Labour Market Snapshot

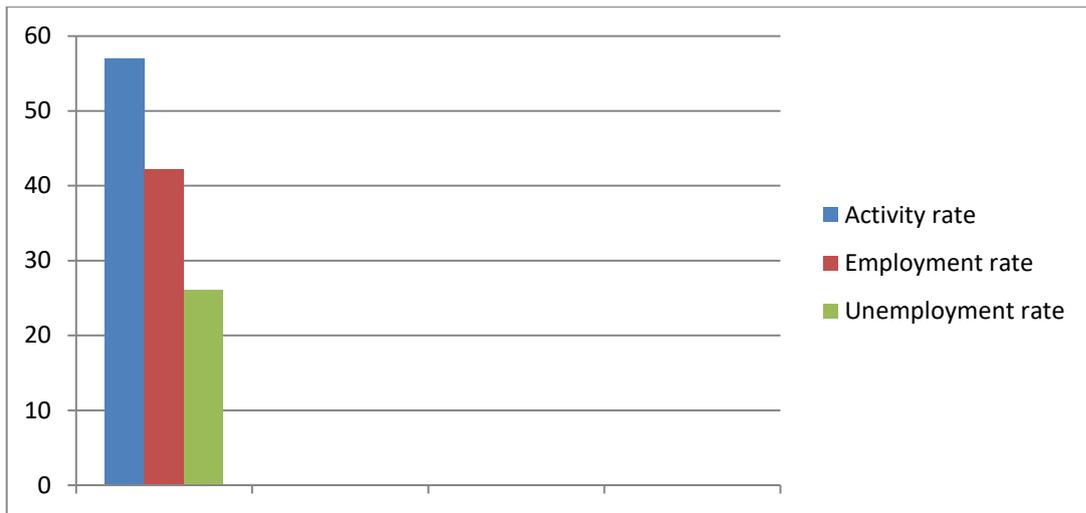
1.1 Labour Market Main Data

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, in 2015, the labour force in the Republic of Macedonia numbered 954.924 persons, of which 705.991 were employed, while 248.933 were unemployed persons.

Basic labour statistical data



The activity rate in this period was 57%, the employment rate was 42.1% while the unemployment rate was 26.1%



There is no existing data **of the employment/unemployment** rate among specific vulnerable groups but it is notable that the vulnerable people are facing with obstacles on the labour market and the employment process is harder for those groups mostly because either they are having lower educational background, or face physical disability, mental illness or are former drug users and many more differencing by the vulnerability or the social risk they are facing with.

1.2 Labour Market Legal Framework & Main Policies

The existing employment supporting measures are developed under the project “Employing Macedonia” that was announced and initiated in March 2015. This project was developed by the Ministry of social policy and labour and its main goal is to speed up the reduction of high unemployment in the country (27.3% in the first quarter of 2015) through a set of measures.

The measures are the following:

- Subventions for employers employing vulnerable groups of people.
- Self-employment program for people with disability (includes training: soft skills training, basic entrepreneurship training and business planning also includes mentorship and professional support during the administrative parts of the business establishment).
- Practical Placement for vulnerable groups (learning by doing).
- Training for deficit professions on the labour market for deaf and blind young people with the age limit till 29 years old.
- Program for Community Service work for groups that are hardly adequate for inclusion on the labor market (in order to provide simple process of learning and gradual inclusion on the labor market by part time jobs).
- Assistance in the process of employment (providing information for job offers, assistance in preparation of personal employment plan, counseling and preparation of C.V. etc).
- Services for engagement on the labor market of groups of people facing the risks of social exclusion (terrain visits by trainers, mentors etc and promoting the active measures offered by the government like self employment opportunities, training, different forms of mentoring so that the target population stays informed and expresses interest in inclusion on the labor market).

The project targets five categories of registered unemployed persons. Their employment is being encouraged by incentivizing employers with tax and/or social contribution exemptions. According to

relevant sources, the initial project effects are positive with around 2,500 persons being employed. In April 2015 the Parliament started the procedure for amending laws that are part of a broad reform to promote employment in the context of the “Employing Macedonia” project. Amendments are proposed to the Law on retirement and disability insurance, the Law on health insurance, the Law on compulsory social contributions, the Labour Law and the Law on employment and insurance in case of unemployment. The project targets five groups of unemployed. All of them are required to be registered as unemployed at least three months before the start of the measure. The first group of unemployed is people up to 35 years of age, who have previously been unemployed for at least three months. The companies hiring people from this group of unemployed are exempted from paying compulsory social insurance contributions as well as from personal income tax for a period of three years. The employer is obliged to keep the person employed one more year after the expiry of the tax/social contribution exemptions. The second group of unemployed includes persons between 35 and 50 years of age, who in the last 15 years have been unemployed for at least ten years. Companies hiring these people are exempted from paying compulsory social insurance contributions for a period of five years. The employer has to keep the person employed one more year after the expiry of the tax/social contribution exemptions. The third group of unemployed includes persons aged above 50. The fourth group of unemployed includes: unemployed parents of three and more children; unemployed single parents or members of single parent households; social assistance beneficiaries; children without parents and parental care; victims of family violence; disabled persons with certified 50% remaining capacity for work; professional soldiers; and parents of children with disabilities receiving the special child allowance. Employers of persons belonging to the third and the fourth 4 group are exempted from paying compulsory social insurance contributions for a period of five years, without any further obligations. The fifth group of unemployed is persons above 58 years of age, who have been unemployed for the last two years. Employers of persons belonging to this group are exempted from paying compulsory social insurance contributions until the persons fulfill the criteria for an old age pension. There are a number of stipulated protective mechanisms related to employers, requiring the employer:

- not to have reduced the number of employees as of 15.03.2015 (except in cases of retirement or death);
- to have a record of regular payment of salaries/contributions/taxes, with allowed late payment of two months;
- in case of firing according to the Labour Law to employ another person from the same category of unemployed.

This project has a target of 20,000 persons to be employed in one year. The first persons employed under this project started work at the beginning of May 2015. According to the governmental sources, as of 20th of June 2015 this project has employed 2,470 persons, and 1,749 companies have taken advantage of the benefits offered by the project. According to the Minister of Labour, of the total number of employed persons, 793 are young adults aged 29, 824 are aged 35, 275 are between 35 and 50 years of age, 414 are over 50, 28 persons are from vulnerable groups and 136 persons are aged over 58. Official representatives of the Union of Trade Unions as well as the Employers’ organization have welcomed this project. However, some of the employers’ representatives have indicted their doubts over the project’s effectiveness. According to them, “the companies in the country have problems related to liquidity and current maintenance, so very few of them can maintain the same number of employees and in addition employ new persons, for whom they need to secure salaries”. Outlook & Commentary: It may be expected that the new social policy project “Employing Macedonia” will have only a negligible influence, and will essentially benefit newly formed private companies.

Some of its strengths include:



- High political priority;
- Emphasis on vulnerable groups of unemployed persons, which may increase the social inclusion of these categories;
- Opening of dispersed focal points throughout the country for project promotion, which may raise awareness about employment possibilities among more disadvantaged unemployed persons.

Potential weaknesses include:

- Unclear/non transparent fiscal implications of the project;
- Exclusive focus/reliance on tax/social contribution exemptions (which may jeopardize the solvency of social insurance funds and discriminate against employers who are regular tax/social contribution payers);
- Inconsistency with other reforms undertaken (introduction of mandatory fully funded pension insurance and reduction of social contribution rates), which are based on regular 5 payments of social contributions;
- Inability of employers to guarantee jobs for a period of three to five years, as a requirement for taking up these measures.

With the implementation of the project and its successful realization will be opened up new employability opportunity for the vulnerable groups as the overall action will establish social mentoring system in SWCs and ESA. The responsible organizations for the project's implementation are KMOP and Think Finance. The project is called: "Promoting Active Inclusion of Disadvantaged Persons Excluded from the Labour Market" and will provide building the capacities of the professionals for the Social mentoring model, which is highly functional Scandinavian practice in the assistance of vulnerable groups of people and will result in speeding up the process of their inclusion on the labour market.

Promoting active inclusion of people in the weakest positions on the labour market has a long time now placed a stain on policy-makers in Macedonia. Although the unemployment rate decreased in 2014 (in the first quarter of 2016 was 26.1%, last available data by the Statistical Office), it is still high. As stressed in the National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia (p.15): *"In a similar way like in other Western Balkan countries, the labour market in the Republic of Macedonia is assessed as being insufficiently inclusive, in spite of the existing legislation in the field of working relations and equal possibilities for employment. The inclusion of vulnerable population groups, that are facing with different social risks, is remaining to be a great challenge for the state, having in mind the rather high unemployment rates of these population groups"*. Unemployment mostly hits disadvantaged persons who find themselves at the margins of the labour market and society. The population groups mostly suffering are persons with disabilities whose condition renders them fit for work; former drug and alcohol addicts; victims of domestic violence; young offenders; young people who have left school early; young people without parents and parental care (18 – 26 years of age); people living in remote and rural areas; parents of street children; single parents; beneficiaries of social assistance; homeless people; other similarly disadvantaged people. Common features among the individuals belonging to the target group are their low education level and long-term unemployment. Most of them are with incomplete primary education or with completed only primary education. Further, most of them are unemployed for a long time or employed on the black market. Their exclusion in a wider sense is 'multidimensional' and it is conditioned by the lack of security, uncertain possibilities for obtaining income and limited possibilities for real participation in the everyday life, whereas the limited accessibility to the supporting systems in the community in general, reduces their life possibilities. The consequences of

their uncertain status in the labour market and in society are more evident in the smaller urban regions and rural areas, as the labour market in these regions is limited and less flexible.

1.3 Labour Market Main Stakeholders

Ministry of Economy (MoE) has overall responsibility for the national strategies for SME development, foreign direct investment (FDI), and industrial policy, particularly through its Department for Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness of SMEs, which develops legislative acts for SMEs, provides funds for start-up centers and business incubators, supports women entrepreneurship, support of business angel network, business incubators and regional business support organizations, support to SMEs in implementation of ISO and HASSP standards etc. The Department for Industrial Policy is in charge of developing industrial policy, selecting key areas for development, providing measures for increasing competitiveness of industry, clustering, etc. MoE has been the main driver for development of the National Innovation Strategy 2012-2020 and MoE will have responsibility in enabling supportive environment for the EL strategy, especially with the help of ensuring support from business sector. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) beside other standard activities, has responsibility for implementing all programs for decreasing the degree of unemployment on the national level. In cooperation with Employment State Agency and Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship in the 17 Republic of Macedonia, MoLSA is implementing several active measures for employment (support to the employment of young people, long-term unemployed, vulnerable group, women, etc.)

Employment Service Agency (ESA) of the Republic of Macedonia is another relevant public organization that through many active measures for employment is supporting employment of vulnerable groups of people. In the frame of program for self-employment that is jointly implemented with MoLSP, UNDP and APERM, more than 4.900 start-up businesses were created in the last 5 years.

Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the main responsible institution for ensuring national budget and required finances. Representatives from MoF will ensure coordination of the state budget within different institutions involved in implementation of the EL strategy.

Social Work Centers (decentralized units of MLSP) are supposed to provide functional connection with the ESA, in order to enhance the process of labour inclusion of vulnerable groups of people.

6 TNA Implementation

6.1 Methodological Approach

6.2 TNA Action Plan

The TNA was implemented in three main phases. The **first phase** included the conducting of a desk research which demonstrated the overall employment data, taking in to consideration the main institutions that will be targeted in the project like Employment agencies and Social Work Centers. The desk research provided basic information for the capacity building initiatives that have been implemented in the last 3 years for the professionals from the SWC and EAS. Strategies, governmental priorities, EU recommendations and also some smaller initiatives were analyzed during the process. The desk research was developed by KMOP and it served as a starting point for the following research process. This phase was a preparatory phase which provided the essential

overview of the labour market in Republic of Macedonia and also overview of the main stakeholders from the social welfare system and employability processes.

The **second phase** included the planning and implementation of a Focus Group, which took place on 10th of March, 2016, with professionals from the Social Work Centers and the Employment Agency organized and facilitated by Think Finance according to the methodology provided by KMOP, in the premises of Think Finance.

The **third phase** of the analyses was phone interviews with additional professionals. The phone interviews provided reassurance for the conclusions from the previously conducted FG. The interviews were held by staff member of KMOP and the results of the interviews were identical with the results of the FG.

6.3 Desk Research Methodology

The desk research was conducted by analyzing official statistical data, publications, policies and measures, population, EU recommendations, country reports, strategies and website postings of other organizations that are/were implementing projects in correlation with the employment of vulnerable groups. The data in the initial phase was collected and afterwards analyzed especially the website content using the CARS checklist for “critical assessment” (Credibility, Accuracy, Reasonableness, and Support). The data that was valued as quality data according to the CARS checklist was included in the desk research.

6.4 Focus Group Methodology

The developing this TNA was based on the organization and conducting of a Focus group, which was decided as the most constructive method aiming at revealing the necessary detailed information and deep insight on target group’s training needs. Needless to say that when well executed, it creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing them to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers. It served the need to understand crucial issues with regards to Employment and Social Welfare professional’s training needs on competences and skills at a deeper level.

The process of implementation started with planning – a lot more planning than merely inviting a few key people to casually share their opinions about the topic in discussion. But still, taking into consideration the availability of the professionals the inviting was an ongoing process.

The implementation of the Focus group was consisted of the following phases:

- Defining the focus group target group with qualitative and quantitative criteria
- Designing the main questions
- Choosing participants
- Conducting the focus group
- Analyzing the data

6.4.1 Defining Focus Group

The initial idea was that the Focus Group should be a small group of eight (8) to fifteen (15) people. The criterion of size had to be taken into consideration in conjunction with the need that the group should be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants may be left out.

Taking in to consideration the availability of the professionals from SWC and ESA the Focus Group was conducted with 4 participants, however the findings are considered reliable.

Two are the most important key issues that were taken into consideration due to the fact that affect the focus group desired results. First, the appointment of a skilled moderator- facilitator, who led the group to an open discussion. She nurtured disclosure in an open and spontaneous format. The moderator's goal was to generate a maximum number of different ideas and opinions from the participants in the time allotted.

Second, the participants who supposed to form a multidisciplinary set of persons were chosen according to their level of experience on the field of employment and social welfare. Specifically the participants on the FG had different scope of experience which is highly significant. The participants from the SWC had experience working on different services and since the SWCs are not divided by sectors they are responsible for providing more than two services.

The ideal amount of time to set aside for the focus group is from 90 to 120 minutes. Take into account that beyond that time most groups are not productive. The conducted focus group lasted for 90 minutes.

The discussion was structured in a set of 9 questions - topics, however the discussions was free flowing. The participants were willing to share their opinion and experience which helped in the process of leading the discussions.

The main technique used was

- brainstorming: aiming at generating and collecting multiple ideas related to the scope of the group session.

6.4.2 Designing the main questions

The focus group participants were not informed about the questions in advance; they only got brief description of the topics that were discussed. The questions that were prepared were:

short and straight to the point,
unambiguously worded,
open – ended or sentence completion type,
non – threatening or embarrassing,
worded in a way that they cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” answer (use “why” and “how” instead).

The three types of questions used were:

Engagement questions: introducing participants and making them comfortable with the topic of discussion, question: *what kind of claims are you faced with when you deal with the target group?*

Exploration questions: getting to the point of the session, question: *what are the main competencies and skills an employment and social welfare professional should have?*

Exit questions: checking to see if anything was missed in the discussion, question: *is there anything else you would like to add on the key aspects the future training should include it its curriculum?*

The questions asked were the following:

1. What are the most common categories of requests/ claims of your clients/ cases you deal with?
2. What is the rate of success in terms of providing a comprehensive and viable solution to your clients'/ cases' requests?

3. According to your experience what are the skills you consider as very important for delivering your services to your clients/ cases?
4. In a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how do you grade yourself in terms of competence level towards the list of most important skills?
5. What are the existent alternatives of skills' enhancement (e.g. training, on the job training by skilled experts, personal development as an individual i.e. reading manuals and relevant material in general), public or private?
6. Do these alternatives cover the existent needs? What are the remaining gaps in terms of thematic areas?
7. Do you have any proposals on the organization of the professionals' training with regards to the informing and sensitize the potential participants for taking part in the training?
8. What are the criteria you believe as the most important for a professional to be included in the trainees group?
9. Taking into consideration the scope of this focus group do you have something else to recommend?

6.4.3 Choosing the participants and venue organization

According to the project's scope, the pool of participants was formed with the help of key individuals, the directors of the institutions and they nominated person from their institution. During the preparatory process were contacted 30 SWCs and 30 EASs, which is the total number of those institutions.

Four (4) professionals participated, 1 from the EAS and 3 from SWC:

- P. P. (SWC Ohrid)
- T. K. (SWC Kavadarci)
- Z. B. (SWC Skopje)
- B. J. (ESA Kumanovo)

Everyone has a bachelor degree and is experienced, working in the field for more than 7 years in three institutions.

They were chosen according to the following criteria:

Gender: was established a balanced mixture of women and men, two female and two male professionals.

Age: into the group were present experienced and younger professionals, three were 25-49 years and 1 was between 50-64 years.

Cliques: the participants were from different SWC and different ESA

They were informed about two possible dates. The date that their presence was agreed was 10th of March. Email confirmation was received by the participants.

The timing of the FG was scheduled in working hours as they were nominated by the directors and were released of working responsibilities for that day.

The participants were given a starting time that was 15 minutes prior to the actual start of the focus group to allow for filling out necessary paperwork, having a bite to eat, take coffee and settling in to the group. Refreshments were offered during the conduction of FG.

6.4.4 Conducting the focus group

The focus group was conducted by a team consisting of a moderator and an assistant moderator. The moderator facilitated the discussion and the assistant took notes and run the tape recorder.

The moderator was chosen by taking into consideration the following criteria - competencies:

- Can listen attentively with sensitivity and empathy.
- Is able to listen and think at the same time.
- Believes that all group participants have something to offer no matter what their education, experience, or background.
- Has adequate knowledge of the topic.
- Can keep personal views and ego out of the facilitation.
- Is someone the group can relate to but also give authority to.
- Can appropriate manage challenging group dynamics.

With regards to the assistant moderator he should do the following:

- Take notes and mind map the gathered propositions.
- Take attention of body language or other subtle but relevant clues.
- Run a tape recorder during the session.
- Relevant information from participants was collected in the beginning of the focus group during the getting to know each other part.

The moderator used a prepared script to welcome participants, remind them of the purpose of the group and also set ground rules with participants' inputs.

The moderator had the responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted. She also had the responsibility to get all participants to talk and fully explain their answers. She used the following motivating questions for discussion:

- “Can you talk about that more?”
- “Help me to understand what you mean?”
- “Can you give me an example?”

Also paraphrasing and summarize long, was used to simplify complex or ambiguous comments.

Due to the fact that the moderator holds a position of authority and perceived influence, she remained neutral, refraining from nodding/ raising eyebrows, agreeing/ disagreeing, or praising/ denigrating any comment made.

Furthermore, taking into consideration that some participants usually contribute more than the others and in order to motivate everyone, specific techniques were used. This time the following strategies were used:

- Self-appointed experts: “Thank you. What do other people think?”
- The dominator: “Let's have some other comments?”
- The shy: eye contact, smile at them.
- The participant who talks very quietly: asked to repeat their response more loudly.

As soon as the focus group was completed (after 90 minutes) the moderator expressed his appreciation to the participants for their active involvement. Afterwards the moderator and assistant moderator debrief the participants so as to ensure that most important information is recorded and also shared the crucial conclusions with the rest of the team.

6.4.5 Analyzing the data

The participants' comments in order to be understandable and useful were boiled down to essential information using a systematic and verifiable process. Specifically, each participant's comment/quote was assigned in a separate line on the record sheet, as well as each new thought or idea therein. Each line was labeled with the participant unique code number.

Excel database was used to enter each line as follows:

Compile

- 1) Within excel's workbook, one sheet per question.
- 2) Labeled three columns on each sheet:
One column for coding.
One column for the participant ID#.
One column for responses.
- 3) Every separate response or idea was entered in a separate line with participant ID attached.
The coding column was filled in during the next phase – analysis.

Analyze

- 1) When all comments have been entered, common categories or themes were looked across the entries for each question.
- 2) Once consensus has been achieved regarding the best categories for organizing the data, a number or letter was assigned to each category.
- 3) Then was assigned the number/ letter of the category that best fits to each entry on the sheet.
- 4) To group entries by the categories we have assigned to them was used the excel "sort" function.
- 5) For the entries that seemed inconsistent for their category, re-categorizing or adding another category was the best option. It may also be apparent that one or more categories can be collapsed.
- 6) The categories were arranged starting from those with the largest number of entries to those with the smallest.

Synthesize

- 1) Identified category and sub-category heading titles.
- 2) Written a short paragraph summarizing findings for each sub-category
- 3) Added significant quotes to each sub-section.

7 Tools & Techniques

7.1 Phone Interviews Methodology

The phone interviews were implemented by following the criteria set before the conducting of the focus group. Basically the same 9 questions used in the Focus Group methodology, were used with the professional from SWC. On the phone interviews the professors were consulted for their recommendations and in the same time provided a short scan of the current professional capacities of the working staff in SWC in a open, non structured form of discussion. First were selected the

relevant professionals that can give their contribution. The professors were selected by taking into consideration their regular proactive inclusion in the capacity building processes of professionals working in the social institutions.

Phone interviews were held with the following professionals:

T. Z. (SWC Skopje)

V. I. (Professor at the Institute of social work and social policy)

I. T. (Professor at ISWSP)

8 Training Needs Analysis Findings

The TNA's main findings are presented according to the following categories.

8.1 Clients Services

The most common claim of the clients and the most common service that the social workers provide is money assistance in its two forms monthly received social assistance and one time offered social assistance.

According to the opportunities of their facilities and their overload of work they are unable to provide forms of psycho-social assistance to the clients and they are not looking for that kind of support.

In the same time the present professionals have evaluated very low their success in terms of providing comprehensive and viable solutions to their clients mostly because of the previously mentioned reasons. Z.B., professional from the SWC Skopje stated an example from his experience working with homeless people: "I have been able to find an employment twice or more it happened, but it was not functional. Usually the target group that we are working with is low skilled workforce and they get low salaries, for example in the case where the man started working, his salary was 8000 denars (150 euro) and with that amount he was unable to cover basic living costs. In my field of work, those people need to have at least 150 euro only for rent because they have no basic living conditions, they are left out on the street."

8.2 Essential skills needed for delivering services

The participants emphasized that overall the professionals have the needed skills for working with the vulnerable population but still would be more functional if they have trained in the following topics: partnership building training (due to the fact that they are not having regular contact with the colleagues from the Employment Agency Service and formal sharing of information is not established.), new effective models, methods and techniques used in the developed countries, professional stress management and establishing effective communication with vulnerable clients.

One of the most interesting facts mentioned by the participants was that they are not traveling abroad; they never had any professional visits to other countries' institutions which they consider as a loss in terms of their professional growth. They have visits from professionals from abroad and they value those visits a lot.

8.3 Technical recommendations for training

The criteria of inclusion of the trainees should be based on the experience of the professionals and their motivation for inclusion should be crucial. The motivation can be noted by preparing a document, questioner or maybe the interested can write motivational letter.

The participants recommended also formation of specific teams from SWCs and ESAs for this project because otherwise the professionals would not be able to work according the responsibilities that would come out of this project.

The second idea is to include volunteers or younger team members from their institutions which would have higher benefit, learn intensively out of the regular working environment.

In order to have more motivated professionals during the implementation of the project financial motivation should be also considered for the included professionals. IN the same time in order for them to be able to work accordingly the project flow their scope of existing responsibilities should be lowered.

8.4 Other recommendations

There should be existing document with rules of conduct for the clients and any deviation of that should result with the client leaving the centre/institution with security. This suggestion has come up from the experience of the professionals working with different aggressive or angry clients.

It is highly notable that the professionals from the Social Work Centers and the Employment Agencies are lacking of coordination and mechanisms for sharing of useful information for the vulnerable groups of people. During the discussions was highlighted that the professionals are usually unaware of the specific employment opportunities that the agencies offer for their target group, vulnerable people. Z. B. (social worker from the Social Work Centre) during the discussion about current policies and practices promoted by the EAS for vulnerable groups emphasized the following: It is the first time that I hear about such employment opportunities that are offered for vulnerable groups of people and I am working in the centre for 8 years. These are very important information that could helps us in the quality of the regular assistance that we offer to the clients.

The lack of information and the overload of work that social workers are facing with is decreasing the opportunities to use their basic case management skills and provide suitable, systematical support to their clients in order to assist their further employment. The overload of work is also resulting with higher stress levels, that In some cases result with burn out, and also on daily basis doing just administrative work and focus on providing passive support to the clients, money transfers.

In general their main concern was their load of daily work; each social worker is engaged with 1.200-1.500 users per month. Hence, absence of work is difficult for them.

The conclusion of the discussion held during the focus group demonstrates that the professionals from the Social work centers are having the following training needs:

Partnership building skills (according to the fact that they are not having regular contact with the colleagues from the Employment Agency Service and formal sharing of information is not established.)

New effective models, methods and techniques used in the developed countries

Professional stress management

Establishing effective communication with their clients

Appendix

Tools Templates

Such as:

- Stakeholder's identification tool
- Excel workbook used for data analysis (empty template)
- Focus Group registration form (empty template)

| Contact Person | Organizational Position | Contact Details | | | Remarks |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------|---------|
| | | ground phone | cell phone | e-mail | |
| | | | | | |
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