

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina December 2021

IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS COUNTRYWIDE



The Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the reform of mental health care services in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in order to improve the wellbeing of people with mental health problems and those at risk of developing these. The project aims to enhance social inclusion and quality of life of persons with mental health problems, increase access to and quality of the much needed care, and reduce risks of development of mental health disorders among the population in BiH.

The burden of mental disorder in BiH is considerable due to still present deep psychological scars from the war, social deprivation and difficult economic situation. In a response, the health authorities in BiH have undertaken fundamental reform of the mental health care, focusing on decentralisation of service provision from hospitals to primary health care. Today, a network of 72 Community Mental Health Centers exists in the country, employing multidisciplinary teams and providing services to the whole population of BiH. However, there are still some gaps in the system that need to be addressed to make it sustainably and effectively respond to the needs of persons with mental health disorders.

BETTER QUALITY OF SERVICES AND COMMUNITY ANTI-STIGMA PROGRAMS

The project is focusing on mental health services at the community level, improving the scope and quality of those services, and accrediting the community centers for standardized and quality care they provide. Mental health professionals are educated and enhance their skills and knowledge in occupational therapy, psychotherapy, preventive work in the community, crisis interventions, work with children, adolescents and families.

The project ensures that people with mental health problems and those at risk of developing such problems have access to a range of effective and innovative services in line with their needs. In order to decrease discrimination against people with mental health problems and raise respect for their human rights, the project works closely with different associations of mental health service users on organizing social inclusion activities in communities and develops programs for the promotion of mental health. Programs for prequalification and income generation for persons with mental health problems, such as social entrepreneurship models, are also being developed.

Over 700 mental health professionals are included in the project. Additionally, support is provided for associations and self-help groups of mental health service users in 28 municipalities. End beneficiaries of the project are around 60,000 persons with mental health disorders and their families, and around 30,000 persons at high risk of developing mental health problems, notably belonging to disadvantaged and socially excluded groups.



CONTINUOUS SUPPORT AND PROGRESS WITHIN MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN BIH

The Government of Switzerland has been supporting the reform of mental health care in BiH since 2009. With previous project's interventions significant results have been achieved.

The policy and regulatory framework for mental health care in BiH was aligned with European standards and the system for monitoring population's mental health was established. In both entities, the legal framework for protection of human rights of people with mental health problems was revised and adopted. This enables monitoring of human rights violations of patients in mental health institutions. The standards for mental health care provision were developed.

Within the Community Mental Health Centers, the quality of services has improved and the hospital referrals rate of patients has decreased by 30%. Over 2,700 persons with severe mental disorders have benefited from the introduced case management approach and 69% of them show significant recovery and improved quality of life. Furthermore, over 2,500 persons at risk have benefited from prevention programmes and 463 persons with mental health disorders from social inclusion programmes in their communities.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME:
Mental Health Project in BiH

DOMAIN:
Health

THEME:
Health

LAND/REGION:
Bosnia and Herzegovina

PARTNERS:
Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Health of the Federation of BiH
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska
Department for Health of Brcko District
Entity Public Health Institutes
Entity Agencies for Accreditation and Quality in Health
Associations of nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers
Associations of users of mental health services

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:
Institute for Population and Development (IPD), BiH

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
In BiH people with mental health problems belong to a highly disadvantaged and vulnerable group, frequently facing discrimination and social exclusion. A scope of care available to them is rather limited. Continuous and targeted education for mental health professionals is highly necessary, as well as outreach services and inclusion programs at the community level.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
Strengthen the mental health services at the community level and improve the scope and quality of services. Educate mental health professionals for provision of new and effective models of care for individuals and families. Support the health authorities in improving management of the mental health care system. Develop and implement social inclusion and anti-stigma programs.

TARGET GROUP:
700 mental health professionals and 72 Community Mental Health Centres; Associations and self-help groups of users of mental health services in 28 municipalities; health authorities and institutions; 60,000 people with mental health problems and their families, and approximately 30,000 people at risk of developing mental health problems.

COSTS:
CHF 15,325,000

DURATION:
05.06.2009 – 28.02.2023 (end of the project)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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