

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina November 2023

NURSES OF BIH HAVE A CRUCIAL ROLE IN IMPROVING HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Nurses are key actors in providing basic health care and have the potential of significantly improving the health status of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Strengthening Nursing in BiH project focuses on supporting nurses to reach the most vulnerable groups and provide quality services, but also on protecting the interests of the nursing workforce and ensuring their recognition in the health system.

Although BiH invests significant resources into its health system, the population's health is deteriorating. The health system reform focuses on ensuring accessible and cost-effective primary healthcare services. However, in this process the education and the practice of nurses are not sufficiently addressed, which in fact hinders reform progress.

Around 19'000 nurses are employed in BiH's health care system. They are predominant in the healthcare workforce but their potentials are currently unused, especially in working with vulnerable groups who have limited access to health care. The formal education of nurses is inadequate, their competences are not clearly defined, and the licensing system for nurses is not in place.

BETTER POSITION OF NURSES, IMPERATIVE FOR SUCCESS

The project supports processes of increasing the quality of nursing service and enabling better access to these services, especially for vulnerable groups. These include the elderly, disabled, internally displaced, unemployed and uninsured persons, minorities, people living in remote areas, single mothers, young parents, children and youth. Community nursing services have been introduced and include disease prevention, health promotion and counselling, and care for patients in terminal phases of a disease and those with chronic health conditions.

Within the project the reform of the formal education of nurses is also addressed, in order to ensure that competences nurses are gaining are in line with the European standards. Additionally, it is highly important that the health authorities recognize nurses as an important resource for improving the quality, safety and efficiency of services. In order to improve the position of nurses in the health system the project works on developing standards of nursing practice and the regulation for continuous education of nurses and their licensing. The professional development of nurses' associations as key partners of the health authorities in regulating the nurses' profession and advocating for the interests of nurses is also being supported.

The project's primary target group is the nursing workforce in BiH, especially nurses active at the primary health care level. However, the major impact is on the users of health services, estimated at over 1 million people, and more importantly on over 175,000 vulnerable persons with limited access to health care services.



EXPERIENCES FROM BIJELJINA A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

Within the Health Care Centre Bijeljina 40 family medicine nurses were educated in community nursing and provided with the equipment. In only three months, these 40 community nurses provided over 900 home visits and attended to palliative patients. More than 2,000 chronic patients received an annual check-up by nurses for the first time and will continue receiving regular follow-up. In addition, health promotion activities are being organized in the community for the population. This successful pilot activity from Bijeljina municipality is rolled out to 54 other municipalities with the project's support.

SUPPORT TO THE REFORM OF NURSING IN BiH

The project idea of the Strengthening Nursing in BiH project was prepared by two entity Ministries of Health and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It was developed based on an analysis of the needs in the country and lessons learnt during implementation of the former SDC-funded Family Medicine Implementation Project in BiH.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME:
Strengthening Nursing in BiH Project

DOMAIN:
Health

THEME:
Health

LAND/REGION:
Bosnia and Herzegovina

PARTNERS:
Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH
Ministry of Health of the Federation of BiH
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska
Brcko District Department for Health and Other Services

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:
Consortium of Foundation fami (BiH) and Geneva University Hospital (Switzerland)

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
The potential of the nursing workforce is neglected within the reform of BiH's health care system. Around 19,000 nurses are employed in the health care system, however their formal education is inadequate, competences are not clearly defined and the licensing system for nurses is not in place.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
The project focuses on improving the regulatory framework for nursing, reforming the formal education of nurses, and developing the community nursing services for the nurses' care for patients at

their homes and in their communities. Special efforts are being made to reach vulnerable groups who have limited access to health care services.

TARGET GROUP:
The primary target group is the nursing workforce in BiH, especially nurses active at the primary health care level. The end beneficiaries of the project are the users of health services, i.e. whole population of BiH.

BUDGET:
15,976,250 CHF

DURATION:
01.10.2011 – 30.11.2026 (end of project)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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