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AUSTRIAN RED CROSS



Црвени крст Србије
Red Cross of Serbia

WITH FUNDING FROM
AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

Strengthening resilience of older persons and persons with disabilities during COVID-19 and future disasters

The project "Strengthening resilience of older persons and persons with disabilities during COVID-19 and future disasters" is a three year initiative in the region of the Western Balkans, coordinated by the Red Cross of Serbia and supported by the European Union, Austrian Development Agency and Austrian Red Cross. Started in late 2020, it connects civil society partners from Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo¹ and large civil society networks representing older persons and persons with disabilities at the level of European Union.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to strengthened resilience of older persons and persons with disabilities in the Western Balkans during COVID-19 and future disasters.

The specific objective of the project is that older persons, persons with disabilities, CSOs and grassroots organisations are better able to cope with the COVID-19 situation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo².

The project will achieve its objectives through activities separated in **four thematic areas**:

Mental health

This component aims to preserve mental health and enhance resilience of 60,000 older persons and persons with disabilities across six project sites through:

- Provision of accurate, timely and accessible information from verified trusted sources including on the epidemic, response progression and measures of protection and self-protection (e.g. elder abuse or abuse of a person with disabilities in family context) as well as individual rights;
- Provision of Psychosocial Support services to ensure preservation of mental health and building of resilience.

Relief/ Cash and Voucher Assistance

¹ "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."

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This component aims to preserve and enhance physical health and social welfare of 6000 older persons and persons with disabilities across six project sites while strengthening capacities of National Red Cross Societies to provide Cash and Voucher Assistance. The component will include:

- Relief assistance/basic needs assistance through a combination of Cash and Voucher and in kind activities based on needs, epidemiological situation, capacity and movement restrictions;
- Strengthening of cash preparedness capacities of Red Cross National Societies in the Western Balkans in order to provide sustainable CVA assistance.

Strengthening Local Communities

This component includes work on supporting and strengthening civil society organisations across the region to create local initiatives fostering social inclusion and direct support, as well as to engage with local policy makers.

- Engagement of CSOs and grassroots organisations with local level public policy and decision makers, with increased participation of older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Support provided to a variety of social inclusion activities (including direct support and services) at community level for older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Provision of support and small grants to local level microprojects (60 in total) over the period of ten months in all the project sites as to identify best practices that will further be shared and presented across the region as replicable local models.

Research/ public policy/ advocacy

This component aims to assist public policy creators in the six project sites in improving public policy in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic. It will do so through providing evidence-based recommendations of new and improved policy models taking the following steps:

- Conducting research on long term care services and provisions in the six project sites;
- Developing and disseminating recommendations on how to improve public policy and increase funding to ensure better access long term care services and provisions for older persons and persons with disabilities, with assistance of AGE Platform Europe and European Disability Forum;
- Supporting CSO networks in the six project sites in engaging in policy dialogue on improving access to rights of older persons and persons with disabilities, with focus on accessibility and provision of long term services;



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- Public advocacy activities through campaigns and other means including include press conferences, E-newsletters, websites, poster campaigns, bus campaigns or outdoor exhibitions.

Project Consortium: Red Cross of Serbia, Austrian Red Cross, Albanian Red Cross, Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontologists, Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Association for Help and Development HAJDE, Red Cross of Montenegro, Union of the Blind of Montenegro, Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, Association Humanity, Caritas Kosova³, National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia, SeConS Development Initiative, AGE Platform Europe, European Disability Forum.

Duration: 15 November 2020 – 14 November 2023

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