

Project: “Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion at Local Level”

Terms of Reference

**Expert in supporting the municipality of Zivinicë
for improving the mental health of parents and children with disabilities.**

I. Project summary

The NALAS project “Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion at Local Level” addresses the insufficient institutional capacities and know-how of local government administrations and other relevant local stakeholders from the Western Balkan economies in the identification of the needs of disadvantaged groups of citizens, development of evidence-based local policies in the field of social protection and ensuring of access to local services through innovative social approaches. In addition, the project is strengthening the capacities of the Network of Association of Local Authorities in SEE to set the topic of social inclusion higher on the agenda of the network and its member associations.

The Overall Objective of the project is to support the local governments and their associations in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo* and Albania in strengthening the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups in line with the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda "Leave no one behind".

The Specific objectives are related to 1) strengthening the institutional capacities of NALAS and its member associations from the project's target economies related to the development and implementation of needs-based recommendations on social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups; 2) enhancing the capacities of the local governments necessary to improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged groups through evidence-based decision making and social approaches and 3) improving social services on municipal level regarding their responsiveness to migration and gender-sensitive needs of vulnerable groups.

Project Objective 3 focusses on the **improvement of existing social services on municipal level** in up to 14 municipalities **regarding their responsiveness to migration and gender-sensitive needs** of vulnerable groups. More specifically, the project will address constraints identified during explorative research that was conducted in December 2023. Based on these findings, the selected municipalities, supported by the project team, **developed concepts for the improvement of their social services in a gender-sensitive manner.**

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence

The municipality of Zivince as a pilot local government from Bosnia and Herzegovina developed a concept which aims to ensure a gender-transformative approach for social inclusion through psychosocial support of parents of children with disabilities, beneficiaries of the Day-care Center "Vrati mi osmijeh" (Bring back my smile). The proposed activities of the concept are related to improving the mental health of parents, especially mothers as primary caregivers, as well as, children with disabilities. This intervention contributes to a better living situation for children with disabilities and their mothers by promoting inclusion in the hairdressing sector in the City of Živinice. Through hairdressing services in the daycare center, the aim is to encourage and promote social cohesion among parents and encourage the exchange of experiences and challenges they face in caring for their children.

In this regard, NALAS is **inviting experienced experts**, to express their interest and to apply for this assignment for the provision of expert support to the municipality of Zivince in the implementation of the activities for improving the mental health of parents (especially mothers as primary caregivers) and children with disabilities.

The project "Regional Cooperation for Better Social Inclusion on Local Level" is implemented by NALAS in cooperation with GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

II. Aim and Specific Objective of the Assignment

The **overall aim** of the assignment is to ensure a gender-transformative approach in the social inclusion of parents of children with disabilities, beneficiaries of the Day-care Center in Zivince "Vrati mi osmijeh" (Bring back my smile).

The **specific objective** of this assignment is related to encouraging and promoting social cohesion among parents and providing psycho-social support through encouraging the exchange of experiences and challenges they face in caring for their children. The assignment should also contribute to a better living situation for children with disabilities and their mothers by promoting hairdressing activities in the daycare centre and thus improving inclusion and cohesion in the municipality of Živinice.

III. Justification for the proposed activities

According to the data from the Center for Social Work in Živinice, a total of 609 persons with special needs were registered, out of which 221 children (110 male, 111 female) and 588 adults (356 male, 232 female). The most common form of disability among children is multiple disabilities (45.5%), while intellectual disabilities (severe, moderate and mild) prevail among adults.

The NGO Day Care Center "Vrati mi osmijeh" works with children and adults with multiple developmental disabilities. The NGO was founded by parents of children and young people with developmental disabilities. Currently, the center serves 87 children and adults (52 men, 35 women), aged 15 to 45. The center conducts group speech therapy classes, physical therapy, pedagogical-psychological treatment, educational and creative workshops, and work-occupational therapy through manual work and sports-recreational activities for its users twice a week. The centre's activities are mainly financed through donations, projects and user fees, and the local self-government contributions from its budget.

Children and adults with disabilities face a number of barriers resulting from a lack of adapted services, prejudice and lack of community support. Discrimination is present in various areas, although they are not always aware that they are exposed to such a practice. Discrimination is often not recognized by the system, but it is still very harmful, especially when it comes to children with developmental difficulties and their families.

The mothers are more likely to take responsibility for the care of their children with disabilities. The women are still living according to traditional gender roles as mothers, homemakers and caregivers. Mothers of children with developmental disabilities are their primary caregivers and are often overwhelmed by the demands of 24-hour care, resulting in mental health issues.

The findings of social mapping conducted in 2024 in the municipality of Živinice confirmed that children with developmental disabilities need 24-hour care, and both parents are not always able to be with them due to other obligations. It is often the mother who feels exhausted from 24-hour childcare (in 72% of cases) and has sleep disorders and other (mental) health problems. These mothers, additionally, are often unemployed. Most of the mothers surveyed within the framework of social mapping in the city of Živinice (87%) stated that they do not use domestic help services, while almost 66% of them expressed the need for this type of support. Due to the care of the child and the household, mothers of children with developmental difficulties often face a lack of time or resources to focus on themselves and their own needs. The lack of support services causes them additional (social) deprivation, and due to the stress and constant pressure they face as parents of children/adults with developmental disabilities, they often feel neglected and abandoned.

There is also a need to provide hairdressing services for children with disabilities in the municipality of Zivinice. Access to hairdressing services for these children is not only a matter of physical availability of hairdressing salons, but also social inclusion and support. Existing hair salons in our community are often not equipped or adapted to the needs of children with developmental disabilities. The lack of adapted chairs, equipment and spatial solutions makes access to these services difficult or even impossible. Furthermore, the lack of education of hairdressers about inclusive approaches and specific needs of this population within the formal education system often results in a lack of understanding and empathy for this category of children and adults. Hairdressers may have prejudices or fears about how children and adults with developmental disabilities will behave in salons, which is why they refuse to provide these services. Therefore, taking care of the children's hair is left to the parents, who are not skilled as hairdressers. Mothers are usually the ones who are put in the situation of cutting their children's hair. Access to hairdressing services for this population is not only a question of practicality and maintenance of basic hygiene, but also a question of social inclusion and support. In the municipality of Zivinice a Secondary Vocational School provides classes for hairdressing services, however, no children with disabilities are involved in the regular education process. In addition, the students of the school have no interaction with their peers with disabilities which generates a gap and resistance of the future hairdressers to work with this vulnerable group in the community. Addressing these issues requires not only adapting the physical environment and training hairdressers but also promoting empathy, understanding and support in the community to ensure equal access to quality hairdressing services for all.

IV. Activities and deliverables to be supported by the Expert

	Activity Brief description of the activity	Deliverable	Timeline
A. Facilitation of identification of direct beneficiaries, their needs, and planning, as well as, ensure stakeholder commitment.			
1.	Facilitation of the process of identification and selection of 15 direct beneficiaries (parents of children with disabilities) In cooperation with the Center for Social Work, the identification of 15 direct beneficiaries, based on LNOB and an intersectional approach, with regard to gender, ethnicity, and educational aspect, with a focus on mental health status.	A list of direct beneficiaries prepared	September 2024
2.	Ensure adequate professional support (psychologist and social worker) for group and individual sessions, and workshops with direct beneficiaries. It will be	The professionals (psychologist and social worker) ensured and	September 2024

	coordinated with the Center for Social Work, Daycare Center and the municipality.	oriented for the entire set of activities and outputs	
3.	Facilitation of the process of signing of Memorandum for Cooperation with the Secondary Vocational School The MoC shall be signed by the Day Care Center, Secondary Vocational School, Municipality of Zivince and CSW.	MoC signed	September 2024
4.	Conducting an assessment of the needs of 15 direct beneficiaries and development of the program together with the professionals, based on which an activity plan with terms for working with the direct beneficiaries will be developed.	The needs of the direct beneficiaries are identified and a tailor-made action plan developed	Mid of October 2024
5.	Ensure proper conditions (room, materials, accessories) for hairdressing activities in the daycare centre. This activity will be implemented in consultation with the representatives of the Secondary Vocational School and day-care center.	Necessary conditions for hairdressing activities are in place in the day-care centre	Mid of October 2024
B. Facilitation of psycho-social sessions, gatherings, workshops, and inclusive hairdressing session for children with disabilities (October – December 2024)			
6.	Organisation and facilitation of 2 workshops for students of secondary vocational schools, majoring in hairdressing The workshops will be designed and delivered together with the professional in order to sensitize and train hairdressing program students for topics related to children with developmental disabilities, with a focus on communication skills.	1 workshop with students of secondary vocational schools delivered	October 2024
7.	Organisation and facilitation of 6 individual and 6 group sessions (both types of sessions, at least once a month) with the parents with a focus to mothers. Topics: mental health, division of parents as guardians, rights, etc. The psycho-social sessions with the direct beneficiaries will be held in the daycare center by professionals. Representatives of CMZ Health Center Živinice will be involved, too.	3 group sessions with parents delivered 3 individual sessions with parents delivered	October - December 2024
8.	Organisation and facilitation of 12 half-day gatherings (two per month) of children with developmental disabilities, their parents/mothers, and hairdressing school students and professors. The gatherings will be designed and delivered by professionals in cooperation with the day-care centre staff. Through various educational, creative and social activities, connection and trust will be established, prejudices will be broken, a sense of belonging and awareness of the importance of socially useful work will be developed. The parents will learn hairdressing skills.	6 half-day gatherings of children, parents and students	October - December 2024
9.	Organisation and facilitation of 3-parenting gathering where fathers are encouraged by sharing their life stories and experiences with other fathers to support their wives in childcare It is led by an engaged psychologist	2 parenting gatherings for fathers delivered	October - November 2024

	The gatherings will be designed and conducted together with the professionals.		
C. Facilitation of psycho-social sessions, gatherings, workshops, and inclusive hairdressing session for children with disabilities (January – March 2025)			
10.	<p>Organisation and facilitation of 6 individual and 6 group sessions (both types of sessions, at least once a month) with the parents, with a focus to mothers. Topics: mental health, division of parents as guardians, rights, etc.</p> <p>The psycho-social sessions with the direct beneficiaries will be held in the daycare center by professionals. Representatives of CMZ Health Center Živinice will be involved, too.</p> <p><i>(continuation of activity 7.)</i></p>	<p>3 group sessions with parents delivered</p> <p>3 individual sessions with parents delivered</p>	January - March 2025
11.	<p>Organisation and facilitation of 2 workshops for students of secondary vocational schools, majoring in hairdressing</p> <p>The workshops will be designed and delivered together with the professional in order to sensitize and train hairdressing program students for topics related to children with developmental disabilities, with a focus on communication skills.</p> <p><i>(continuation of activity 6.)</i></p>	1 workshop with students of secondary vocational schools delivered	February 2025
12.	<p>Organisation and facilitation of 12 half-day gatherings (two per month) of children with developmental disabilities, their parents/mothers, and hairdressing school students and professors.</p> <p>The gatherings will be designed and delivered by professionals in cooperation with the day-care centre staff. Through various educational, creative and social activities, connection and trust will be established, prejudices will be broken, a sense of belonging and awareness of the importance of socially useful work will be developed. The parents will learn hairdressing skills.</p> <p><i>(continuation of activity 8.)</i></p>	6 half-day gatherings of children, parents and students	January – March 2025
13.	<p>Organisation and facilitation of 3-parenting gathering where fathers are encouraged by sharing their life stories and experiences with other fathers to support their wives in childcare</p> <p>It is led by an engaged psychologist</p> <p>The gatherings will be designed and conducted together with the professionals.</p> <p><i>(continuation of activity 9.)</i></p>	1 parenting gathering for fathers delivered	February 2025
14.	<p>Organisation and facilitation of 10 inclusive hairdressing sessions for children with developmental disabilities and interested parents.</p> <p>The representatives from the Secondary Vocational School will skill interested parents to master the hairdressing techniques for children with disabilities. The services and skilling of parents will be provided in the daycare centre.</p> <p>The hairdressing sessions will be available twice a month in the dedicated room in the daycare centre.</p>	10 hairdressing sessions are delivered to children with disabilities. At least two parents are skilled in providing hairdressing services.	November 2024 – March 2025
15.	Preparation of Assignment Narrative Report	Assignment Narrative Report prepared	March 2025

The Expert shall ensure proper documentation (written and photo) for each of the deliverables such as action plan, report from the needs assessment, developed programme for psycho-social sessions, agendas and reports (from the delivered workshops, individual and group sessions, gatherings etc.)

In addition, the Expert should provide all necessary conditions and materials required to deliver the activities.

All the above-listed activities and delivery of the expected outputs are envisaged to take place between **15 September 2024** and **31 March 2025**.

V. Ultimate Beneficiaries of the proposed measure

At least 15 parents (mothers and fathers), eight of the parents are single mothers and fathers, will be involved in the activities.

The parents and families will be selected in cooperation with the Center for Social Work by applying the principle of multiple discrimination to identify the LNOB group, which means that preference will be given to families that face discrimination based on more than one perceived characteristic (e.g. mother of a child with a disability).

At least 5 fathers will be actively involved in the activities of the daycare center and use the offered psychosocial (self) help service.

In addition, the activities planned to be implemented within this assignment inevitably include the children with disabilities as beneficiaries of the Day-care Center in Zivinice “Vrati mi osmijeh”.

VI. Expert's Profile

The Expert is a practitioner from a non-state actor who has experience in supporting the implementation of community-based services such as day-care centers for vulnerable groups.

The Expert has experience in the conceptualization and application of the social community-based service at local level. At least one successfully established and operational daycare centre.

The Expert has knowledge and working experience in the preparation of at least 5 capacity development measures for the local level stakeholders and vulnerable groups.

The Expert has proficient knowledge and working experience of a minimum 5 years about the status and needs, challenges, trends, and opportunities for improvements, particularly in areas related to local governance.

At least 5 years of working experience in projects related to social and cultural human rights of vulnerable groups.

The Expert's working experience in the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be considered as an asset.

The Expert is fluent in the local languages necessary for the facilitation and delivery of the assignment activities.

The Expert should have a University Degree in an area relevant to the improvement of public administration and social services (e.g. social sciences, political science, public administration, pedagogy, human resource management or another relevant field).

VII. Application Procedure

Interested candidates (individuals) for the position of Expert are asked to submit a proposal, **by 12 September 2024, 16:00 (CET)**. The proposal must be submitted in the English language **by e-mail, at shehi@nals.eu and info@nals.eu with subject: Social Services Zivinice.**

Interested candidates are asked to provide:

1. **CV** in pdf format.

2. **Cover Letter** in pdf format.

Please respond to the questions in relation to the requirements provided in the section “VI. Expert’s Profile” of this ToR.

3. **Financial Offer**

The estimated maximum value for this assignment is net 5.500,00 EUR (five thousands five hundred euros).

Financial Offer shall be separately provided in pdf format by using the following table for each of the sets of the activities (A-C) and the total amount.

Set of Activities	Net amount in EUR
A. Facilitation of identification of direct beneficiaries, their needs, planning, as well as, ensure stakeholder commitment.	
B. Facilitation of psycho-social sessions, gatherings, workshops, and inclusive hairdressing session for children with disabilities (October – December 2024)	
C. Facilitation of psycho-social sessions, gatherings, workshops, and inclusive hairdressing session for children with disabilities (January – March 2025)	
TOTAL:	

The Financial Offer shall specify the **net amount** in EUR for delivery of the assignment’s activities and provision of related deliverables.

The net amount will be paid to the Expert and only personal income taxes under the Laws of North Macedonia will be calculated and paid by NALAS.

Potential expenses related to the travel and accommodation for the implementation of the assignment’s activities shall be covered by the Expert.