



8 RESOURCES

CASE STUDY MACEDONIA / HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

Developing local Disability Action Plans as an instrument for ensuring equal treatment and life free of discrimination at a local level in Macedonia

The Republic of Macedonia (Macedonia) is a tiny country in the Balkan region situated between Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece with a population of 2 million people. Macedonia declared its independence peacefully from former Yugoslavia in 1991, but has faced internal ethnic violence and tension since then.

Macedonia applied for EU membership in 2005, and is in process of adapting its laws, institutions and policies to the requirements of the EU as well as the World Bank. This has been both a driving force as well as set back for progress, since sometimes the policies are changing only on the paper, while the concrete implementation is lacking behind. One of the reforms recently undertaken has been a decentralization process, where municipalities have been entitled increased responsibilities in line with the 2002 law on local governments. There are still several by-laws and implementation mechanisms lacking behind, especially in defining clear responsibilities between central and local level and the financial responsibilities and modalities.

During the past 5-6 years, several nationwide awareness campaigns on disability have been implemented in Macedonia. A Disability Rights Inter-party Parliamentary Lobby groups was created which are working on assessing laws and policies from a disability perspective and lobby for an anti-discrimination act, and local and central governments have become much more aware on the rights of persons with disability. Macedonia also signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities in 2007.

In such quite favorable context, to which Handicap International's regional project of Share-SEE⁸³ has contributed largely, in March 2007 a pilot project of elaborating local Disability Action Plans in four municipalities was set up. The Share-SEE project, which main aim is to support and empower the disability movement in South East Europe, has supported several DPOs at local municipality level through micro-projects and access to various capacity building trainings. Some micro projects were conditioned by having activities coordinated with the local authorities. The four municipalities selected for the pilot project all were characterized by having active local DPOs with already established link with the authorities.

First step: Organization of a training seminar for the partner DPOs on the process of defining a local DAP was provided. It specifically emphasized the important role that DPOs have during this process

83 More information on the SHARE-SEE programme can be found on the project website <http://www.share-see.org>, or on Handicap International website in South East Europe <http://hi-see.org>



Second step: Getting the approval and recognition from the local authorities to start the project. Once approved, HI signed a memorandum with each of the DPOs, and the DPOs in their turn signed the agreement with their municipalities. Each municipality delegated 2-3 representatives for joining the working group, which would be in charge of the project.

Third step: Formation of working groups. The municipality, DPOs, HI, and the private and civil sector represented each working group. In some municipalities the media was as well represented.

Fourth step: Training of the working groups members. The members of the working group passed through a 5 module training in order to have the capacities to draft a realistic and effective DAP. In parallel to the training modules, the members of the working group were scanning and evaluating the level of participation of persons with disabilities in their municipalities and the obstacles to realizing their rights.

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Module 1: Equalizing opportunities and tools against discrimination

- Human rights
- Equalizing opportunities for people with disabilities
- Discrimination and the tools against discrimination
- The role of DPOs in implementation of anti-discriminative legislation

Module 2: Mainstreaming Disability into Local Policy

- Mainstreaming disability into local policy
- Community Disability Action Plans – characteristics and preconditions
- Elements of Advocacy
- Coalition building
- Effective communication in coalitions

Module 3: Community Disability Assessment

- Structure of a community Disability Action Plan (DAP)
- Development of disability inventory lists
- Advocacy - Communication channels
- Basic on presentation skills and facilitation of meeting

Module 4: Drafting Community Disability Action Plan (DAP)

- Drafting of DAP
- Techniques for making priorities

Module 5: Financial aspects of Community Disability Action Plan

- Implementation of DAP
- Monitoring and evaluation of DAP

Fifth step: Drafting of the DAP. This process was done through the organization of various workshops, most of them financed by the municipalities.

Sixth step: Once the draft DAP was finalized, public debates were organized in order to discuss the draft and revise it based on the comments and feedback given. Parallel to the debates, some members of the working group were in charge of promoting and lobby the adoption of the plan by the municipal councils. Once the final version of the DAP was done, it was widely distributed to the representatives of institutions, organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the disability aspect. It was also published on each of the websites of the municipalities.

Seventh step: Adoption of the DAP. Among the working group it was decided that the main promoter of the DAP should be the Mayor. All 4 municipalities felt a very strong ownership of the whole process as well as the final DAP, and each of them begins with a foreword from the Mayor. This certainly facilitated the adoption of the plan later on.

By the 3rd of December 2007, the first DAP was adopted in Veles municipality, and during January-March 2008 the rest of the municipalities adopted as well the plans. Some of them have already started to implement some of the prioritized activities. The Municipality of Cair is for example installing a lift in the Municipal building.

LESSONS LEARNED

- DPOs need to have sufficient organizational capacity and resources to be able to take a pro-active role in the working group in charge of defining the DAP. They should also be aware of the representation of all groups of persons with disabilities.
- A previous link or cooperation between DPOs and local authorities facilitates largely the process.
- Disability awareness should be part of such a process, and in fact elaborating a DAP is a good opportunity to make community stakeholders aware of disability.
- The involvement of the local authority or council from the start is extremely important in order that the ownership of the DAP already partly is theirs.
- The DAP should as well have a clear and realistic finance plan, which makes it more easy to incorporate in the municipal budget.



CASE STUDY MALI / HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

Inclusive Local Development in a rural area of Mali

Handicap International (HI) is working on rural local development in Mali since the end of the nineties. The programme included as well a component of capacity building for local authorities (supported by the decentralised cooperation of the Rhône Alpes Region in France). In 2006, HI decided to introduce a disability perspective in this programme, with an approach of Inclusive Local Development. The local team of HI, who possessed very good skills in local development issues, was trained in disability and rights as well as in understanding an inclusive local development approach during 2006 and 2007 in order to have the capacity to sensitize and train partners that were mainly the local authorities.

In order to prepare for an inclusive development project, and to support the local authorities to introduce disability in their local development action plans (which is obligatory for the municipalities in Mali), two parallel activities were implemented:

1. A participatory disability assessment in eight small municipalities,
2. Disability awareness sessions for local (“Centre Conseil Communal”) and regional authorities.

PARTICIPATORY DISABILITY ASSESSMENT

The participative disability assessment was implemented during a total of 6 months, where two months were devoted to the actual survey. HI was implementing the assessment, which focused on assessing the level of participation in the community of persons with disabilities, on access to health and education of persons with disabilities, and professionals in these sectors, the situation of organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) and their capacity, and the capacity and responsibilities of local authorities. Following figures show the extent of the assessment:

- 110 persons with disabilities
- 20 DPOs
- 9 schools
- 5 health centres

Handicap International was leading the participatory assessment and defined the questionnaires to be used. It was an excellent opportunity to understand the disability context and to identify the various existing DPOs, as well as the existence or gap of services on the communities concerned.

Some of the main outcomes of the assessment revealed that a large part of the surveyed persons with disabilities felt excluded from the community, and few of them had had access to quality education. Several of the institutions providing health care, education, and basic services were considered not accessible by many of the persons interviewed. A majority had never had any contact with the local administration or authorities. The family was in general considered as being supportive and facilitating the lives among the persons interviewed during the assessment.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SESSIONS

These sessions had as aim to provide information and understanding around disability with the following message:

- The understanding of inclusive development for all (persons with disabilities, elderly persons, women, children etc.),
- Persons with disabilities are rights holders as everybody else and should have equal opportunities for development as any other citizen,
- Local elected authorities have the possibility to act on their surrounding (to sensitize citizens, donors, and other partners in development),
- Bring forward the competence of local authorities (valorise the knowledge on decentralisation and their new responsibilities to provide basic services in the community),
- Encourage a process of consultation / cooperation among the local actors,
- Persons with disabilities represent an important part of the electorate population.

Various tools were used during these awareness workshops:

- Tools for awareness on disability:
 - ▣ Disability Creation Process⁸⁴
 - ▣ The evolution of the disability approaches (medical model to social and human rights approach),
 - ▣ Women and disability, specifically disability and reproductive health.
- Human rights based approach:
 - ▣ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
 - ▣ African Decade of persons with disabilities,
 - ▣ The ILO Convention 159 on the vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities),
 - ▣ Bill relative to the protection of persons with disabilities, promoted by the FEMAPH (Malian Federation of Associations for Persons with Disabilities),
 - ▣ The National Forum of Justice of Mali.
- Local Inclusive Development

84 Fougeyrollas, P. et al. *The Quebec Classification: Disability Creation Process*, (Québec: INDCP/ CSICIDH, 1998). The Disability Creation Process is a comprehensive and holistic model of classifying disability, also called the "Quebec classification model". This model has its strength in that it promotes positive concepts and values the inputs from various disability approaches and their representatives (medical and rehabilitation professionals, service users, DPOs and service providers), and integrates the various dimensions of disability. This model can be used to increase awareness on disability, research, development of policies, and to support an inter-disciplinary team work among professionals of services etc. The document can be accessed via: <http://www.ripqh.qc.ca>



CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

After these two parallel activities, mainly implemented by the team of HI, a five days consultation and coordination workshop was organised on the topic of “Including persons with disability in the local development action plans”. 62 participants representing various stakeholders in the communities participated, from civil society, representatives of DPOs, local authorities, service professionals, media and technical experts from HI.

Day 1 and 2 – in plenary

- Identification of the obstacles, capacities, solutions to equal participation,
- Classify the main obstacles per sector.

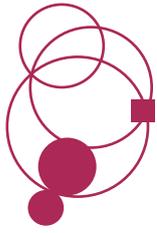
Day 3 and 4 – in working groups per sector

- Identify the main obstacles/problems
- List the obstacles/problems according to priority
- Analyse the causes of the main obstacles/problems
- Synthesis of the answers to the identified obstacles/problems
- List the answers to the problem in order of priority.

Day 5 – in working groups and in plenary

- Plan and programme activities for addressing the problems according to a 4 year action plan.

The results of the participatory assessment and the formulated development action plan served as a base to develop a project on Inclusive Local Development with the partnership of the local authorities in the city of Tombouctou and the “Cercle of Ghouma Rharous”. Apart from building and implementing inclusive local development plans, the project will have a strong component of capacity building of DPOs within the same municipalities.



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