



## Supporting policy and organisational development in Kosovo

### Major lessons learned

Supporting an umbrella organisation and its member organisation *at the same time* initiates a process of defining needs, goals, roles and responsibilities among the organisations. Policy development can become more focused.

It takes time to facilitate the strengthening of an umbrella organisation and to support the establishment of a functioning network of disability organisations under the umbrella. One-year project horizons are too short.

To enhance ownership, all stakeholders need to be involved in a participatory fashion from the very initial phase of defining goals and designing strategies.

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### Background

Following the end of conflicts in the western part of the Balkans, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs encouraged The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) to support activities with and for people with disabilities in Kosovo.

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) supported the employment of a project manager in the Albanian disability organization Handikos, which has 25 offices and 10 activity centres in 25 districts.

The umbrella organisation was also the entry point for three Danish disability organisations to partner up with local organisations.

#### Location:

25 districts in Kosovo

#### Title in Danish:

DSI bidrag til handicapprojekt i samarbejde med organisationen Handikos, fase I og II

#### Year of implementation:

2000-2002

#### Funding:

DKK 9,7 mill (USD 1,6 mill) channelled from Danida through The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People in two phases.



Picture from: [www.electionaccess.org/Bp/Kosovo.htm](http://www.electionaccess.org/Bp/Kosovo.htm)

### Objectives of the project

1. To strengthen local disability organisations' capacity to participate in policy development
2. To support the inclusion of disability aspects into legislation, policies and programmes

### Activities included:

- Support for the employment of an organisational development consultant.
- Seminars on the establishment and organisation of new disability organisations.
- Support for the daily management of Handikos centres.
- A workshop with focus on Kosovo's new Constitution.
- General policy development seminars and workshops.
- Advocacy support on the situation of women with disabilities.
- A four days awareness creating event for parents and children with 200 disabled participants and their families.
- Workshops regarding specific diagnoses, such as muscular dystrophy, and mental health.
- Support for the procurement and distribution of assistive devices, i.e. 91 wheel chairs and 600 crutches for children and adults, 70 bathing chairs and 3,000 packages with hygiene items.
- Establishment of parents' associations, day-homes and home-visits by specialists.



## Results

Status reports from The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People list the following results:

### Development of disability policies

- The Disability Task Force has held meetings with all ministries in collaboration with Handikos, Handicap International and the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People. The meeting with the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning was covered massively by the media and the minister promised to employ a disability advisor to assist in including disability aspects in legislation and future programmes of the government. This work would be coordinated with the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Handikos developed documentation about accessibility issues and had a seminar on the topic with participants from the government.

### Organisational development of the umbrella

- A 'Visions Workshop' and an organisational analysis were carried out with support from Handicap International and other donors to support the restructuring of the organisation with regard to internal and external communication, role and function among other disability organisations, services, and income generating activities for people with disabilities.
- The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People supported the education of a Handikos staff member in NGO management.

### Partnerships with member organisations

- The Danish Association for Mental Health (Landsforeningen SIND) worked with the local organisation, Klubi Dëshira, to increase the involvement of people suffering from mental health problems in the decision making processes of the organisation and to develop

it into an NGO with a firmer basis in human rights.

- Among the activities were a seminar on the human rights and active involvement of people suffering from mental health problems. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, WHO, the UN Committee for Human Rights, psychiatrists, psychologists, national and international NGOs, people suffering from mental illnesses and their families participated.
- The Muscular Dystrophy Association of Denmark (Muskelsvindfonden) focused on family rehabilitation activities. Through home visits, people with muscular dystrophy and their families were offered advice on assistive devices and also mobilised to make their needs known within a focus group established under the project and in the wider Handikos network. It proved difficult to establish contact to the local health care system. A stronger mode of organisation established through a longer term involvement may accommodate this ambition.
- The Danish National Association LEV has supported the formal establishment of a sister organisation, Opfakkos, for parents of children with learning disabilities. It has taken time for parents to view themselves as resources, and to engage in the establishment of the local organisation, but with the right technical and economic support the parents' organisation has the potential to develop into a resource. Seminars and training has been coordinated with Handikos.

## Further Reading:

### **Comprehensive Disability Policy Framework for Kosovo**

[http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/compr\\_disability\\_policy\\_frmwrk\\_kos-yug-kos-enl-t02.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/compr_disability_policy_frmwrk_kos-yug-kos-enl-t02.pdf)

### **Handikos, Kosovo:**

Kosova Organization for the Handicapped Prishtina,  
Kosovo phone: +381 38 40834, 43 806  
e-mail: [handikos@eunet.yu](mailto:handikos@eunet.yu)

**Danish Council of  
Organisations of Disabled  
People** [www.disability.dk](http://www.disability.dk)

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