

## **Summary**

The object of evaluation is a two-year project "Support of the integration of the visually impaired persons in Kosovo", which took place between 2011 and 2012 (through the grant), and the project "Support of the integration of blind and partially sighted people in society II" in 2012. The second project was a public contract. The responsible party of both projects was the Czech Development Agency and the implementer in both cases was the organisation People in Need. The local partner was the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo. The ordering party of the evaluation was Czech ministry of foreign affairs. The evaluator was company Navreme Boheme, s.r.o.

Evaluated projects were built on the long-term cooperation with Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo, the Czech Embassy in Pristina and the organisation People in Need. The organisation People in Need in 2008 participated in the renovation of schools for the visually impaired members in Peja. During the same year, followed in 2010 - thanks to the Czech Embassy, the school has been supplied by new technical equipment. In 2009, it was trained 11 IT blind and visually impaired teachers, together with the members of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo; further the Czech Embassy supported the project aimed at supporting independent electoral participation.

### ***The key project activities:***

1. Established and equipped resource centers for the visually impaired in Kosovo
  - 1.1 Establishment and equipment of the resource centers, 1.2 Training for the IT trainers and reading and writing in Braille in the Resource centers [+ training by supervisors] 1.3 Training of trainers in orientation in space [+ training by supervisors]
2. People with visual disabilities in Kosovo will increase their competence to enable them to integrate into the social and cultural life
  - 2.1 Training in Information Technology 2.2 Organization of cultural and sport events, 2.3 Creating a voice synthesis in Albanian [newly added]
3. Development of a strategy to support the integration of visually impaired people into the labour market
  - 3.1 Study trip in the Czech Republic, 3.2 Research focused on opportunities in the labour market [substantively changed into the research of the target groups for the purpose of strategic formulation by the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo]
  - 3.3 Creating of a strategy for supporting the integration of visually impaired people in the labour market [substantively changed during the implementation of the strategy for the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo, for the period: 2013-2018]

### ***The most important findings and conclusions in relation to the evaluation task***

Czech participation in the region is evaluated positively, due to previous diplomatic and development activities in the Czech Republic, due to the need of the intervention in the target group, also due to the relatively low interest in this issue from the side of other organizations and due to the Czech experience in the field. The members from the Czech republic has yet technical, financial and organizational potential to apply development projects aimed at

minority of blind visually impaired persons in other partner countries of Foreign Developing Cooperation.

The project has had the positive impact on the target group, mainly thanks to the fact, that it has made a possibility to build up Resource centers which allowed the emergence of assistive technology and facilities in regional branches. Although the demand in offices wasn't covered, the only possibility of trying the facilities and technology was very important. Moreover, the regional trainers from the target group were trained. Those trainers then have obtained the certification and they have been allowed to entry into the short-paid teaching position and trained the visually impaired persons what they have just learnt. This procedure creates a major impact of the project, because it has carried strong elements of empowerment when the visually impaired people were directly involved in the project. In addition, the sport and cultural events were realized in order to increase the visits in centers by the activation of members and enhance socialization and mobility. At the same time following a study trip to the Czech Republic and the research among members in response to the new legislation of blind people it has been created a strategy of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo into 2018, as a replacement for the original strategic plan, which wouldn't bring the expected result.

**Relevance: Almost high**

The costs of the supply of the equipment and the services were overestimated and the number and range of the supplied technology and equipment moves to a minimum level in consistency with the objective to create the Resource centers, i.e. especially to train the target group. Nevertheless, we can consider a more efficient use of resources at the time when the survey of the needs and capacities of target groups and also of regional branches of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo would precede the purchase of technology and equipment of which the organisation haven't disposed.

**Efficiency: Almost high**

As in a problem of the efficiency also in the topic of the effectiveness the fundamental missing data are essential in relation to the real needs and initial situation of the target groups, especially in the area of usability of the supplied technique and the human resources in branches. On the other hand we evaluate the strategic activities and the complementary activities (e.g. foreign visit in the Czech Republic) as highly beneficial at the given time and context, although they are often only focused on institutional capacity building of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo or of its selected persons from the management. Next it is difficult to create a voice synthesis, because it has not been completely finished yet and it should be fully exploited for the duration of the project and it should be deployed across the board right now.

**Effectiveness: Almost high**

In the topic of the sustainability there exists a major systematic problem of branches of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo (as a long-term lack of capacity to implement training and other activities to non-voluntary basis). However, it is likely to succeed to retrain current teachers to teachers who will be involved into the retraining courses in relation to other projects and legislative framework. Through the other activities, including the development of the strategic documents, it has been managed to raise funds for its continuation (e.g. sport events).

**Sustainability: Almost high**

Within the projects it has been achieved positive impacts, especially within the target groups which have been involved into the education process and which have gained step by step the relationship to the IT technique and the usage of the IT technique helps to overcome barriers in accepting and transmitting information. There exists a strong relation to the coordination by a trainer and an ability to communicate independently with the technique in English (because of the lack of language support in Albanian). The path outlined in this direction, however, is a huge benefit. Among other impacts we can include better condition and verifiability of information available about the target group (due to the implementation of research) or strengthening of the position of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo thanks to the know-how and strategic anchor of their activities (following the foreign visit and strategic plan).

**Impact: Almost high**

From the cross-cutting principles of the Czech Republic FDC, there was positively evaluated in particular the good governance (through a combination of involvement of target groups in the roles of teachers and due to the access to information in the resource centers). Respect for the environment and the climate was high due to the type of activity. The project as a whole is then clearly aimed at the supporting of human rights. As problematic, however, it turns out the respect for equality between men and women, particularly in the context of participation in training. Visibility of the project was considerable, thanks to synergy with other projects of the Czech Republic FDC and activities of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo in general.

**The rate taking into account the principle:**

- **Regular (democratic) governance is evaluated: almost high.**
- **Care for the environment and climate is evaluated: almost high.**
- **Respect for people rights of beneficiaries, including equality between men and women, is evaluated: almost high.**
  - **Visibility is evaluated: rather high.**

Activities of the evaluated projects couldn't with regard to the schedule significantly respond to the new legislation, which provides services for the category of persons with loss of visual function in the range of 95% to 100%. But it is well known that the loss of visual function over 60% is the threshold that discriminates blind and visually impaired and causes psychosocial problems. In the future, it is appropriate to focus on re-categorisation of degrees of visual impairment, respectively on the change of the legislative anchoring system of support so as it will minimize the disadvantages in integrating into society for all categories of visually impaired people.

It could be concluded that the project activities were selected from the entire system of care and assistance to visually impaired persons in Kosovo randomly and it does not represent a systemic solution of problems of this minority. As a key role it turns out the role of care and prevention services for the visually impaired persons, which should run based on 3 pillars: professionalism, communication, independence.

- expertise - ensuring the access and skills in using of specific software and hardware, firstly in the school system; especially screen readers should become accessible, further the digital zoom, text editors, web browsers, social networking environments etc.; while the utilities should become the permanent property of the visually impaired

persons, allowing them not only facilitate to access to information, but subsequently to get a job.

- communication - overcoming language barriers, i.e. in particular the teaching of English and the creation of localized software, as well as increased emphasis on individual communication, especially in the social and psychological counselling.
- independence - practicing the basic disciplines of social rehabilitation of the cooking, shopping, taking care of clothes (washing, ironing), household cleaning, training signature and identifying money. This aspect so far has not been solved at all by the Czech Republic FDC projects (although it is primary), while it could be implemented with minimal cost (focused on simple aids) and would be especially beneficial for Kosovo visually impaired women.

It is also necessary to take into account that the path to integration of blind and partially sighted people into society will be long and complicated, also due to the unequal status of women and men in Kosovo with regard to the issue of ethnic groups. These aspects must be involved in the future projects.

### ***Recommendations:***

#### **A) recommendation for project themes and continuation of Foreign Development Cooperation in the sector and country**

A1) Encourage cooperation of urban and local organisations (branches) with the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo in general in creating staffing structure for providing qualified services for the visually impaired persons, including services aimed at an accredited retraining.

Addressee: MFA, Embassy of Czech republic, Czech Development Agency,  
Implementer

Reason: Currently the regional branches don't have sufficient capacity to provide skilled services to visually impaired persons; outside the project support framework, there are limited voluntary activities with low added value. In relation to building a service center of the Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People of Kosovo in general (oriented to the future, among other things, to providing of professional services for the visually impaired persons based on accredited retraining) it should therefore be supported the collaboration of regional branches and the main center of Association, and it also should be supported the building of an accessible network of quality and skilled services.

A2) Promote activities aimed at changing the law of the Blind, especially then reach re-categorisation of visually impaired persons to provide support to those who have less than 95% loss of vision

Addressee: MFA, Embassy of Czech Republic, Czech Development Agency,  
Implementer

Reason: As problematic it turns out wording of the law the Blind, which takes into account (and provides financial support) only those persons with very high percentage of vision loss. However, since 60% of loss produces a visual impairment causing psychosocial problems.

A3) Gradually create conditions for normal use of electronic assistive devices and get closer to the European Union countries' level.

Addressee: MFA, Embassy of Czech Republic, Czech Development Agency,  
Implementer

Reason: Continuously invest into activities aimed at making available the technique for a wide range of visually impaired persons - for their personal use. But interventions of this type must be based on specific identified needs of specific target groups, the objective advice shouldn't be only the next flat intervention.

A4) Focus on locally specific investigation in order to accommodate visually impaired persons into the labour market; support positive role models and examples of successful integration into the labour market.

Addressee MFA, Embassy of Czech Republic, Czech Development Agency,  
Implementer

Reason: A number of employed visually impaired people is very small, even given to the high unemployment in the country. It would be therefore appropriate to support regional branches in mapping potential application of their members in the labour market with target of supporting and making visible the positive models and examples for other community members.

## **B) recommendation for a process and system character with potentially general application in Czech republic FDC**

B5) Require a detailed input analysis of the situation for projects, not only at national level, but also at regional level; if such an analysis is not available or it can't be created due to specific requirements of the investigation, it is required the implementation of that analysis already in the initial phase of the project.

Addressee: MFA, Embassy of Czech Republic, Czech Development Agency,  
Implementer

Reason: On the example of this evaluated project, it is showed that lack of knowledge of reality in the regions can lead to a significant reduction in the effectiveness and sustainability of in normal circumstances relevant activities. The investigation of this type can also lead to identification of other problems and priority topics which are relevant for FDC. Rate of investigation is of course necessary to adapt properly to the length of the project, its objectives and the total cost of the project.