

HANDIKOS
January-December
2008

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Introduction

The main Objectives of HandiKOS for the year 2008 were continuation of the service provision for children with disability especially focusing on primary physical rehabilitation and psycho social rehabilitation. Other very important objective is to further develop capacities of the staff engaged in the service provision and increase qualities with the goal to achieve recognition of those services from the Kosovo Government.

During year 2008, HandiKOS with the support of the international expert achieved to finalize the middle term strategy by determining objectives and goals for next 5 years.

CBR services:

The services were provided in 13 Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Centers.

The services provided in the CBR Centers are:

- Primary physical and psycho social rehabilitation
- Prevention of consequences as the result of disability
- Motivation and encouragement of the parents through advices related to the disability in the continues consultancy meetings organized individually or in groups. Organizing meetings of the parents whose children have the same pathology. Information sharing and increasing knowledge about the prevention of deformities, proper use of the supportive equipment for children and raising awareness of the members of the community and families.
- Motivation of the parents to support their children related to the personal autonomy
- Monitoring and supporting the work of the parents in their houses related to the fulfillment of the tasks (references) about building special chairs, orthopedic references, etc.

Primary Physical Rehabilitation – Activities

- Position and relaxing exercises
- Passive mobilization of the extremities
- Stimulation of the muscle for the head position
- Stimulation that activate mobilization in different positions
- Training for improvement of the balance in different positions: seating, standing, etc.
- Trainings for proper seating that will prevent deformities
- Trainings related to the communication, nutrition, etc.
- Demonstrations and trainings on how to build and use the special chair for children with disabilities
- Training on using different orthopedic equipments such are walkers, crotches, parallels, etc.

Psycho Social Activities

- Psycho social stimulation execute activities to improve communication, concentration, creativity of the children
- Activities related to the preparation of the children to attend schools
- Rehabilitation through art activities
- Rehabilitation through sport and recreational activities
- Promotion of the socialization
- Motivation of the parents to include their children in the education

Services provided in the HandiKOS Local offices

Identification of people with disabilities

- Method of identifying people with disabilities is direct home visit with the goal to identify the needs (their living standard, accessibility in their home, educational background, etc.), gathering relevant data's (questionnaires) for data base and presenting those data's to the relevant local institutions. Based on the specific needs of people with disabilities HandiKOS staff is focused on fulfilling those needs especially when it comes to orthopedic equipment and sanitary materials.
- HandiKOS staff is especially focused on identifying children with disabilities and include them in the CBR program with the goal to provide for them the necessary services. As mentioned above there are 549 children that are benefiting from the HandiKOS services, among them 129 children are new, children that started to receive services for the first time during year 2008. Identification is very important for the children that are not integrated in the educational system since jointly with their parents HandiKOS staff is working on cooperating with the relevant educational institutions in local level to create precondition for their integration in the schools.
- HandiKOS staff from the local level is also responsible to advice and refer people with disabilities to the relevant institutions related to the fulfillment of their rights, mostly this is related to the health, education, employment or vocational training.
- HandiKOS staff is also cooperating with other donors or institutions related to the organization of different sport or cultural events.
- During the year 2008, HandikOS staff achieved to visit on the field 632 persons with disabilities for the first time and continues visit in order to support them, 944 persons with disabilities.

Assisting people with disabilities

- HandiKOS staff is obliged to organize monthly or based on the need meetings with people with disabilities. Meetings are mainly focused on

consultancy, experience exchange or to increase knowledge of people with disabilities about their human rights and their rights as people with disability, and also the new laws that are relevant to people with disability are presented from our staff, in this kind of meetings our staff invites also relevant experts and representatives from the local institutions. Meetings are also organized related to the health issues especially related to the treatment of the consequences of disability or related to the use of the orthopedic and other supportive equipment.

- Our local offices are responsible to distribute the publications (brochures, leaflets, etc.) that are relevant for disability to the people with disability and to the representatives of the institutions.

Cooperating with relevant institutional structures

- Firstly the cooperation starts with sharing information's to the relevant local institutions about the number and situation of people with disabilities and their inclusion in the social welfare schemes. Cooperation continues with participation of our staff in the municipal meetings especially in the working groups that are creating local policies and strategies with the goal to include interests of people with disabilities. The role of local offices was also to increase awareness of the institutions especially about the problems related to the accessibility and barriers that people with disabilities are facing in their daily life.

National Disability Action Plan of the Republic of Kosovo 2009-2011

The preparation of the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities, for the years 2009 – 2011, is one of the important steps towards fulfilling this commitment. Moreover, with this plan there have been determined the fundamental principals for establishing and implementing sustainable national policies to provide the opportunities for people with disabilities to be active and independent participants in all the fields of social life in Kosovo.

The goal of preparing this plan is to improve the quality of life of People with Disabilities in Kosovo and also to fulfil the state obligations that Kosovo has in respecting the international Conventions for human rights, the rights of PWD which are among the pre-conditions for Kosovo to move forward in the process of European integration

Based on this resolution a Working Group has been established which consists of six working sub-groups for special topics: education, health, social welfare, employment, accessibility and statistics, HandikOS participated in all six groups.

The National Action Plan for People with Disabilities was promoted on the 3rd December, International day of people with disabilities.

The Italian Cooperation-Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided technical support to the drafting of the Action Plan. This Plan should be approved from the Prime-minister in June this year.

We have to mention that based in our experience with the Government until now, we have worries and doubts that this Plan will be approved and implemented as it is.

Other objectives of HandiKOS during the year 2008 were continuation of promoting the Human Rights of People with disabilities, to raise awareness of the institutions and society about the situation of PWD in Kosovo. These activities are not focused only in the national level but also in the local level, meetings with the local institutions were intensive especially when it comes to the rights of children with disabilities.

HandiKOS was especially focused on the rights for education for children with disabilities and to achieve the results in this field we were cooperating with the Ministry of education, local department for education, staff of the schools and parents of children with disabilities. Also during this process the HandiKOS staff was focused on preparing (making ready) children to be integrated in the educational system through the psycho social activities.

During this period we achieved to identify **528** children (age 5 up to 18) that are not included in the educational system, same time the results of our survey are presented to the Ministry of education and other relevant stakeholders. The results are also a new challenge for HandiKOS to work even more on the integration of children in the educational system.

Please find below more details about implemented activities during year 2008.

CBR rehabilitation of HandiKOS

The major objective of CBR activities of HandiKOS is to insure that people with disabilities are empowered to maximize their physical and mental abilities, have access to regular services and opportunities to become equal, contributing member of their communities and their societies. The CBR activities of HandiKOS are implemented through the network of HandiKOS which includes 13 Community Centers.

Community based rehabilitation (CBR) – Centers

Due to a very cold weather the CBR service provision for children with disabilities was postponed until end of January 2008.

The statistics are showing that during year 2008 there were **549 children** with disabilities that received the CBR services of HandiKOS on daily bases (including both services).

- Again based on the statistics, from January until December 2008 there were totally **28 271 sessions** with the children in the community centers of HandiKOS.

Main activities of the centers are mentioned below:

- **Primary physical rehabilitation**

Primary physical rehabilitation activities which were done during the **period (January – December 2008)** continued to be focused on prevention of orthopedic deformities with passive mobilization and relaxation, training to keep the balance, good seating position, crawling and walking by using parallels and walkers. Two workers of the centers provided Primary physical rehabilitation directly to the children in **45 minutes** sessions and also their work is focused on teaching the mothers / caretakers the activities that they will repeat at home. Only in the primary physical rehabilitation there were totally **201 children** who received total of **7 571 sessions**. Most of the children are continuing the sessions from previous year based on the program prepared by the CBR team of HandiKOS, but, there are new children that started to attend the rehabilitation, the number of the new children that are attending the services of HandiKOS starting from 2008 is **129**. The work of CBR Centers is based on the plan which is prepared by the CBR team experts and by respecting the results of the evaluation of each child which is done every 4 months jointly with parents of disabled children.

- **Psycho social activities**

During the period January - December 2008 as one of the major activities in the psycho social sessions with children was Mio-oral stimulation to improve nutrition and speech; activities related to improvement of the communication, attention, creativity of the children; prepare children to join the regular education system; promote socialization and creative activities. Psycho social activities are done individually for each child and in the group, depending from the nature of the activities. Only in psycho social activities there were **133 children** who received **5 324 sessions**.

Based on the evaluation done from the CBR team there are children who need to be present in both activities, the number of children who attended both services during this period was **215** that received total of **15 376 sessions**.

- **National CBR team**

National CBR team is composed from the Program manager, physical therapy expert, psycho therapy expert (psychologists) and trainer on CBR rehabilitation. Their main duties during this period were to manage the centers of CBR and services provided for children with disabilities. Management is focused on identifying children with disabilities that are not included in the process of rehabilitation through the staff of the CBR centers. Objective of the CBR national team during this period was to visit centers and evaluate the quality of the services, evaluate the progress of the children, evaluate the work of the CBR staff and propose when necessary new plans for improvement of the services. They are also continuously monitoring the implementation of the plans and achievements in the centers.

Experts of the National CBR team during this period directly evaluated 160 children with disabilities in 13 centers of HandiKOS. Among the above mentioned number of the children, 45 children are included for the first time in the rehabilitation program. Physical therapy expert during the field work also developed a plan of work for each center and separately for children, parents and primary physical rehabilitation workers of the CBR centers.

Psycho therapy expert (psychologist) was also focused on the evaluation of the children but focusing more on their social and psychological condition and working closely with parents of the children. The psychologist is continuously improving the social rehabilitation services by including new ideas which is resulting with the increased socialization of the children with disabilities. Also the effects of the social program are improving the understanding of the parents related to the disability especially by increasing their awareness about the abilities of their children.

- **Trainings for the CBR staff:**

During year 2008 HandiKOS CBR team achieved to organize important trainings for the CBR staff with the goal to increase their capacities and their knowledge about different categories of disability which will effect on the improved quality of the service provision: Firstly the Manager of CBR organized meetings with all CBR staff from the centers including regional managers. Meetings were focused on the work with community in local level, importance of the rehabilitation in community, procedures of evaluating the children and follow up of their improvements.

In July 2008 CBR management team organized two trainings with the CBR workers (physiotherapy expert was lecturing), one with primary physical rehabilitation workers and one separately with psycho social workers. In the first training the topics were related to the characteristics of the cerebral palsy, how to work with this children, and reduction of consequences as the result of the cerebral palsy.

The topics of the training were selected do to a fact that children that are mostly frequenting the CBR centers and receiving the services are children with syndrome down and cerebral palsy.

- Second training in July 2008 with psycho social workers was done from psycho social expert (psychologist) about children with syndrome down, how to work with these children, increasing their communication skills, preparing them to the new environment, socialization of the children and their evaluation.

-Third training organized in October 2008 was lectured by physic-doctor (expert) and the participants of the training were only primary physical rehabilitation workers of HandiKOS, in this training the topics were also about the methodology of working with children with various disabilities but mostly the trainer was focused on the new methods of working with children with cerebral palsy, the techniques of their rehabilitation and also about the exercises that they should work on continuously. To the staff of CBR was also suggested to advice parents of the children about the activities that they should at their homes.

Fourth training was organized during November 2008– the lecture was done from the psychological expert and the main topic was the treatment of the children with autism. Participants were all psycho social workers from the HandiKOS CBR centers.

Fifth training was organized in December 2008– the lecturer was much known expert and professor in the faculty of physiotherapy, the topics of the training were directly related to the CBR program especially focusing on importance of rehabilitation in community.

- **Referring**

Other important services for children with disability and their health condition is HandiKOS referral system, which evaluates their Health condition and further suggests to the professional and institutional care. Evaluation of the health and social condition of the disabled children continued during the period January - December 2008 and based on the results of evaluation children are referred to the specific health care, total number of children which were evaluated from the CBR team in all **13** centers of HandiKOS was **290**. They were referred to the:

- Educational system **43** children
- Chirurgical operation **9** children
- Orthopedic expert **52** children
- Ophthalmologist **19** children
- Neurology **23** children
- Ortho Prosthetic center – **33** children
- Special chair **6** children
- Psychiatrist – **23** children
- Speech therapist – **6** children
- Pediatrician – **6** children
- Urologist - **2** children
- Other – **78** children

Other activities implemented during this period 2008 in the CBR centers of HandiKOS were:

- **Trainings and Meetings with the parents**

The most important partners of HandiKOS on implementing the program especially related to the children are parents of children with disabilities, there for their capacity building and meetings with them are continues process. During the period January – December 2008 the HandiKOS staff organized a various meetings with parents of children with disabilities in each Center. Major number of the meetings was focused on motivation of parents of the children to follow up the process of the rehabilitation in their homes and to implement the references received from the CBR workers. The meetings are also organized for parents of the children with the same disability with the goal to share experiences and support each other on further successes of their children. Same time HandiKOS staff, organizes the individual meetings and consultations with parents of the children depending from the situation of their disability, and also are distributed guides and relevant brochures to increase their knowledge related to the treatment of specific disabilities of the children.

- **Supporting people with Spinal Cord injuries (SCI)**

HandiKOS national CBR team engaged the medical nurse in the program that supports people with spinal cord injuries. The main support is focused on teaching the people with SCI and their family members on management of pressure sores, advise the people with SCI and their families how to prevent the deformities and other complications, assists and creates the links with the medical services. This support is implemented through the home visits of people with SCI. During this period medical nurse directly visited in different places of Kosovo 32 people with SCI among them there were 4 people with tetraplegia, 14 with paraplegia, and other 14 with different diagnoses. During the visits there were urgent cases that needed professional health care there for medical nurse referred them to the health institutions to solve the complications and also to create links between people with SCI, HandiKOS and health institutions. There are 15 people with SCI that medical nurse is visiting continuously to clean their wounds and also there are new people with SCI recently injured from different accidents and diseases to whom the continues visits are necessary. The visits are also used to distribute necessary orthopedic and sanitary materials such are wheelchairs, toilet wheelchairs, anti pressure pillows, anti pressure mattresses and other materials for incontinence.

Note:

It is important to mention that the needs of people with disabilities for orthopedic and sanitarian material are increased comparing with other years in the same time unfortunately the number of the donors that supported HandiKOS with this material are decreased. Considering that for people with disabilities HandiKOS is the only organization that provides such a material and in other hand there is still missing the support from the governmental institutions in this direction, it makes HandiKos the only hope for people with disabilities to cover their most necessary needs.

However, HandiKOS during year 2008 achieved to fulfill the needs of people with disabilities with the orthopedic and other supportive equipment and materials in considerate number. Bellow we are presenting the number of equipment and materials distributed from HandiKOS during year 2008:

- Wheelchairs for adults 180
- Wheelchairs for children 19
- Walkers for children 6
- Walkers for adults 36
- Crotches (armpit, etc.) 239
- Anti decubit cushion 16
- Catheters 271
- Urinary bags 1 555
- Orthopedic bad 2

And other materials.

- **Activities in Mitrovica (North)**

During 2008 the main achievement was opening the CBR center in North part of Mitrovica, which means that also in the north part of Mitrovica, handiKOS will provide CBR services for children with disabilities. Earlier in Mitrovica we used to have only a local office, but the European commission financially supported the project to build the CBR center in north part of Mitrovica. The center is equipped to provide the CBR services including physical and social rehabilitation for children with disabilities. After the engagement of the staff, training, and finalizing other preconditions the center started to work in May 2008.

- **Women's with disabilities**

The council of women's with disabilities established with the support of the Finnish liaison office achieved to implement one project supported from the World Bank. The goal of the project was to further increase capacities of the council especially when it comes to the organizational management, gender and human rights. From this project benefited 50 women's with disabilities from all municipalities of Kosovo.