

Follow-up

28.-29.3.2018
Regional Conference on Social Work



Dear Sir/Madam,

We cordially would like to thank you for your participation and active contribution to the closing conference of our project "Social Workers in Collaboration for Social Change in Eastern Neighbourhood Countries" which took place on **28-29 March 2018** in Tbilisi.

Special thanks go to all representatives of international and national organisations, governments, state agencies, donor organisations, academia and CSOs that gave a speech or presentation on the conference topic, "**Social Workers' contribution to the improvement of social protection systems in Eastern Neighbourhood / post-Soviet countries**".

During the conference we **united the efforts of stakeholders** acting in the field of social protection and created a mutual platform to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the development of targeted social services, introduction of new family reinforcement approaches and promotion of regional and national cooperation between state authorities, CSOs and professional associations. **The conference especially highlighted social workers' contributions to the improvement of social protection systems and policies** in Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

The **project results that were presented at the conference** by Austria, Armenia, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan show that capacity reinforcement of social workers as well of service providers are a precondition for the effectiveness of social reforms and that social workers need to be fully recognized as professionals with exclusive knowledge that should be involved in all levels from policy making to direct practice. Conference participants also concluded that community-based social cooperation networks among all relevant actors from social, educational, medical, security and other fields lead to more (cost-)effective and targeted support for vulnerable groups and to a new form of social services that focus on "social support" instead of "social control" as well as on increased risk reduction and prevention. Social Workers' Associations that have emerged over the past 10 years in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova and are dedicated to promoting and regulating the social work profession and its education, have presented themselves as reliable partners for state and non-state actors to support social reform processes that have a strong voice on matters of social inclusion, social justice and human rights.

All **conference materials** (presentations, photos, video "Social Work for Social Justice", summaries of workshop sessions and round tables as well as the project leaflet with key results) have been uploaded on the websites of the local partners under the following links:

- [Georgian Association of Social Workers \(LINK FROM YOUR WEBSITE\)](#)

The conference was organized in the framework of the project "Social Workers in Collaboration for Social Change", funded by the European Union and Austrian Development Cooperation. It has been implemented by the Austrian organization "Hilfswerk International" in cooperation with the Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW), the Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW), the Azerbaijan Social Work Public Union (ASWPU) and the Nursing Association of the Republic of Moldova (NARM) in the time period August 2015 until



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May 2018. The **project focused on developing and strengthening the concept of and access to social work in the four project countries.** Thanks to the project social workers' associations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova improved their capacities to strengthen their 10.500 members as well as 160 local organizations. Furthermore, 15 small grants were awarded to 24 local CSOs in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova to contribute to improved coordinated service delivery to vulnerable families and children at risk, which reached approximately 3500 direct beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Should you have any further questions or suggestions, we kindly invite you to contact us via e-mail or phone, nino.sh@gasw.org; +995 32 2390071.

Kind regards,

Nino Shatberashvili

Chairperson Georgian Association of Social Workers



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