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Projekat jačanja sestrinstva u Bosni i Hercegovini  
Strengthening Nursing in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project

# Strengthening Nursing in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project (ProSes) *faza 1*

## Project rationale

The changing needs of the health care population combined with the necessity of cost containment have put nursing in a pivotal role in every country's health system: scientific literature indicates that nurses are key to implement the patient-centred care model of the future. It is therefore crucial that nursing competencies, organization and practice are such that they allow the profession to effectively contribute to a country's health system.

A number of nursing related challenges that currently negatively affect the working of the nursing profession and therefore impede on health outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) were identified in collaboration with major stakeholders in BiH, including ministries/departments of health, ministries/departments of education, nursing faculties, primary and secondary health care centres, public health institutes, nursing associations and chambers, doctors, nurses and patients. A Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) sponsored context analysis by local and international experts, practical experiences gained from the Family Medicine Implementation Project, relevant country strategies as well as outputs of stakeholder visioning workshops undertaken in spring 2012 informed the conceptualisation of the Strengthening Nursing in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project (ProSes).

## Project objective

ProSes aims to make a sustainable contribution to better health outcomes in BiH by improving the quality and effectiveness of nursing services, in particular at primary health care level, and by increasing access to nursing services for vulnerable groups.

## Project beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries of the Project are the nursing workforce and associated health professionals, while the end beneficiaries (indirect beneficiaries) are the health care service users, i.e. the general population, in particular vulnerable groups who presently have limited access to healthcare services.

## Intervention areas

Areas of intervention were chosen and project activities developed based on the nursing related challenges identified in the context and stakeholder analysis undertaken prior to the project (see project rationale). These challenges can be grouped in three main areas of intervention: nursing organisation and regulation, nursing services and nursing education.

With regard to *nursing organisation, regulation and recognition*, BiH stakeholders identified the following areas for improvement:

- a well-developed and strong nurse association at state level;
- a country-wide comprehensive system for regulation and licensing of the nursing profession;
- a comprehensive system of continuous education, guaranteeing a regular update of skills and knowledge, as well as opportunities for nurse specialization.

With regard to *nursing services*, stakeholders called attention to the fact that the formerly successful concept of patronage or community health nursing has almost disappeared in BiH. As a result, social exclusion of vulnerable groups is becoming a substantial challenge for the BiH health care system.

The context analysis and stakeholder visioning workshops identified also a number of challenges related to the current *formal education* of the nursing profession. They include:

- the fact that the standard of “nurses teaching nurses”, which is internationally accepted as an optimal knowledge transfer system, is not implemented in BiH;

- the lack of systematic structured practical education in BiH educational programs;
- the fact that nurse competencies taught in educational programs are not specified, regulated and/or standardized;
- the lack of workforce planning for nurses, which could inform the target number of nurse students.

In order to achieve the project purpose of improved quality and access to nursing services, ProSes thus combines interventions in these three areas (project components):

- 1) nurse regulation and recognition;
- 2) community nursing expansion and outreach to vulnerable groups;
- 3) formal university-level nurse education.

## Project interventions

The first intervention phase focuses primarily on the first two components, but also builds the foundations for improvement of formal nurse education in the next phases.



## Component 1

### *Nurse regulation and recognition*

In order to generate increased recognition of nurses as important resources for the healthcare system and improved quality and safety of nursing care, the Project focuses on activities in five areas:

- improvement of the *nursing profession regulation*, including the development and endorsement of standards of practice, guidelines, protocols and clinical pathways, the development of a central nursing workforce database and the development of harmonized licensing regulation;
- the establishment of well-functioning *nursing chambers*, including facilitation of necessary legal revisions, logistical support to and education of chamber personnel, facilitation of partnering, cooperation and harmonization between chambers;
- strengthening of *nurse associations* in order to represent the interests of their members, including various activities aiming at organizational development;
- the creation of two *resource centers* for professional development of nurses;
- ensure access for BiH nurses to *international networks and knowledge*.

Component 1

## Component 3 – Formal university-level nurse education

Phase 1 of the Project is mainly concerned with establishing the necessary preconditions for the improvement of formal nurse education on tertiary level (targeted in phase 2 and 3), by:

- establishing a consensus definition of the *nurse competencies* which need to be taught at university level in order to address current and future health care needs and constraints, including agreement on the curricular reforms these adapted competency profiles require;
- developing strategies to build local *nurse faculty teaching expertise*, including collaborative agreements with international universities.

Component 3

## Component 2 – Community nursing expansion and outreach to vulnerable groups

In order to achieve the outcomes of expansion of community nursing services and improved outreach to vulnerable groups, the project invests in the following activities:

- the *design of community nursing services* which are congruent with international standards, address the prioritized needs of vulnerable groups in BiH and also fit local system characteristics. In order for the community nursing services to be optimally tailored to the specific needs, the project undertakes extensive research studies with the aim of identifying the vulnerable groups, the nature of their needs and the relevant system characteristics which impact the feasibility of services;
- the adaptation of *roles, training and curricula* according to the community nursing services developed, with a view of evolving towards an Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) profile in the long term;
- and the *implementation and monitoring* of these community nursing services in selected geographic areas, including piloting of financing schemes and development of a strategy for scaling up.

## Component 2

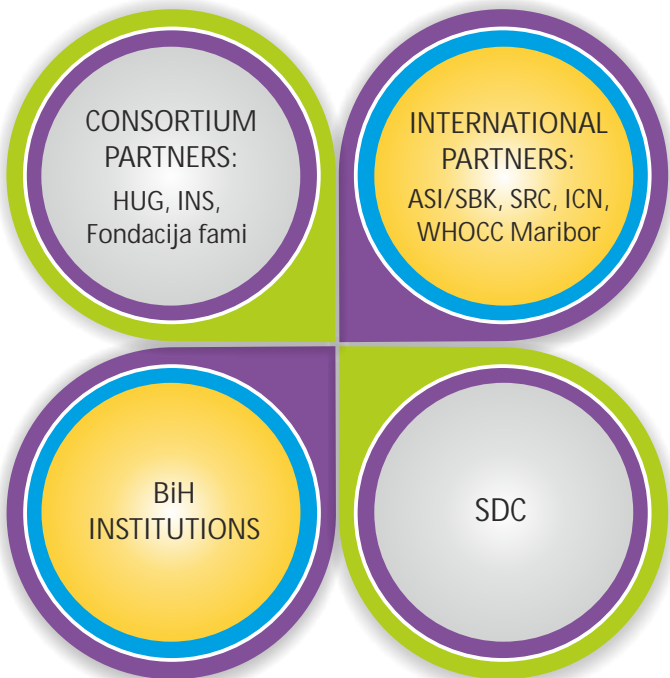


## Donor and implementing agents

ProSes is supported and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The Project is developed and implemented by a consortium of BiH and Swiss partners, consisting of: Fondacija fami (BiH), University Hospitals Geneva, Division of International and Humanitarian Medicine (HUG), and the Institute of Nursing Science of the University of Basel (INS).

Additional international nursing/technical expertise is provided by the Swiss Nursing Association (ASI/SBK), the Swiss Red Cross (SRC), WHO Collaborating Centre for Primary Health Care Nursing in Maribor (WHOCC Maribor), the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the Basel Institute on Governance. Expert support is also provided by local institutions (see intervention strategy).



## Intervention strategy

ProSes relies on the current policies and strategies of ministries of health and ministries of education and the already launched reform processes, and applies an inclusive, participatory approach from the very outset of the implementation.

The *consortium partners* primarily play a facilitating role, providing technical advice, coordination and quality control to local institutions, except for activities where sufficient local knowledge is unavailable.

Through their representatives, the *BiH partner institutions* work together in working groups in order to achieve project deliverables in each area. These partner institutions include, among others, BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, entity and cantonal ministries of health, ministries of education and other relevant ministries, nurses associations and chambers, patient associations and other civil society organizations, nursing faculties, public health institutes, health insurance funds, primary health care centres, hospitals, centres for social welfare, training centres, health care accreditation agencies, gender centres, etc.

## Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) of the Project consists of representatives of the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska (RS), Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Education and Science, RS Ministry of Education and Culture, Brčko District Health Department and the donor (SDC). The role of the SC is to provide leadership and technical assistance, and to support the implementation of the Project.

## Project coverage and duration

The project intervenes on a nation-wide basis, in both entities of BiH (Republika Srpska and Federation BiH) and Brčko District. The first intervention phase covers the period between October 2012 and September 2016.





University Hospitals of Geneva (HUG); <http://www.hug-ge.ch/>



Institut für Pflegewissenschaft  
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