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Summary of the Final Report

Review of the Organizational Structure / Organizational Development Perspectives of the Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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List of Abbreviations

BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
FBIH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
MHP	Mental Health Project
OPSI	Office for Psychosocial Issues
RS	Republika Srpska
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
XY	Association XY

Executive Summary

The present review, mandated by SDC, was carried out in May and June 2013. The objective was to review the functionality of the current organizational structure of the Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In spite of an overall rather positive project outcome up to the present, a series of conflicts and difficulties had also become apparent in the project team, which could not be overcome or solved easily. Before starting the second project phase SDC decided thus evaluate the situation through an external expert.

Using a process oriented methodology the review was carried out in two steps by interviewing all stakeholders once in Sarajevo and once in Banja Luka, and carrying out two prolonged meetings/evaluative workshops with the project team. In the second team discussion findings were checked with the team, specific conflicts discussed and potentials for future change presented. Finally the existing written material and the findings of individual and collective discussions were summed up and analyzed by the consultant. SWOT analysis was applied.

The review showed very clearly, that serious problems have existed for some time in the project team, which is less the result of personal problems and much more the result of a dysfunctional and rather contradictory project structure. For the future, if nothing changes, the risk of burn out in the project team as well as the risk of important deficiencies in efficiency and efficacy in the project outputs and outcomes is seen as high.

Structural changes alongside with supportive measures are finally proposed and focus on the following:

- Clearer project leadership structures and overcoming of unnecessary confusion and dissociation between administrative and content project coordination;
- Overcoming of project staff disequilibrium between RS and Federation by taking into account structural differences between both project components;
- Augmenting number of project officers;
- Strengthening of team cohesion and coherence by stronger focus on joint professional task and clarity of team membership;
- Setting up of a coaching structure to accompany the team and contain them emotionally and relationally.

1. The Task of the Review

In the terms of reference the consultant is asked to systematically analyze and critically assess the MHP's organizational structure for needed changes in the project setup. Specifically he is asked to determine whether the existing structure is appropriate for the next project phase. If the answer is "yes" then he is supposed to propose measures which avoid conflicts in the future. If the answer is "no" then he is supposed to propose alternative project organizational structures, potential changes and job descriptions, recommend other actions and mechanisms to reinforce effective team work and to raise the awareness and understanding of the required changes in the team members and in project stakeholders.

Some of the key issues to be addressed by the review were:

- Project setup
- Agreement on objectives
- Decision making process
- Internal team dynamics
- Organizational learning

2. Methodology

Given the task it was paramount to speak with all stake holders and register their opinions. It was furthermore necessary to have collective discussions with the project team so the existence of potential conflicts between them could be directly observed.

Beyond studying the written project progress reports, project setup and job descriptions the consultant decided on a two-phase approach. At first he visited Sarajevo and afterwards Banja Luka and carried out the following activities:

1. Two collective discussions with the whole project team
2. Individual conversations with the following persons:
 - Assistant Minister of Health of the Federation, Dr Goran Cerkez
 - Assistant Minister of Health and Social Welfare of RS, Dr Milan Latinovic
 - The project manager, Darko Paranos
 - Executive director of Association XY, Emina Osmanagic; and the project accountant, Sabaheta Rizvanovic
 - Entity leader of the Federation, Dzenita Hrelja-Hasecic
 - Project officer 1 of the Federation, Selma Kukic
 - Project officer 2 of the Federation, Selma Medmedic-Dzonlic
 - Entity leader 1 of RS, Dr Biljana Lakic
 - Entity leader 2 of RS, Tatjana Popovic
 - Project officer 1 of RS, Zvezdana Stjepanovic
 - Project officer 2 of RS, Tanja Bajic

The chosen approach allowed for a development of a discussion in the project team and also for the possibility of seeing the project team interact in two different occasions and two different locations. The individual conversations allowed stakeholders to explain their opinions in a more direct way. From all of these conversations and analyzing the written material it was possible to draw rather clear and straight forward conclusions. In terms of the diagnosis of the problem by the consultant it was possible to check the conformity or unconformity of this diagnosis by the project team during the second visit.

The two conversations with the project team, the conversations with the project manager, with the manager and accountant of XY, with the project staff in the federation and with the project staff of

the RS, and with the deputy health ministers in the RS and in the Federation are summed up. The in the analytical chapter first of all the general question is discussed if the findings permit to assume there is an important problem or not. Then a SWOT analysis is carried out. Finally on the basis of all this Recommendations are given on how to solve the existing problems.

3. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the structural setup of the project is basically changed. In the future the project manager must really be the project leader and should be called "Project Director". This means that he signs the contracts of all employees, that he decides on their vacation (obviously according to the law), and that he has direct access to the accountant. It is the opinion of the consultant that the project can stay at Association XY but the roles must be redefined. The director of Association XY in this case has to be an administrative assistant or sub-director to the Project Director, and as far as this project is concerned clearly under his command.
2. The term "Entity Leader" should be abolished and replaced by "Professional Expert and Liaison Officer". Both Ministries should, as they have up to now, select and suggest these professionals but they must be confirmed by the Project Director. They are chosen according to basic criteria agreed upon with the Project Director and the donor, some of which are indicated below. Once this/these person/s is/are chosen they answer to the Project Director. The Project Director for the time of the project is their boss. The persons chosen for this task should be two for RS as up to now and two for the Federation and should be mental health experts. In the RS and in the Federation the work task is so big that the designated job percentages should be augmented, but always also reflecting the more complex situation in the administrative structure in the Federation. Therefore if possible the percentages in the RS should be 2 x 75% and in the Federation 2 x 100%. If this is not possible for financial reasons and in the RS the percentages stay at 2 x 50%, then in the Federation the percentages must be raised to 2 x 75%. Each of these four persons in the future would have two tasks:
 - a) They continue to be the key linkage to the Ministries which chose them and inform the project team regularly about their activities of liaison.
 - b) Each one of them is responsible for specific tasks, for example according to the four lines of action of the project, or if there are only three lines, then 2 might subdivide a very big line of action, and the others each take one. Obviously at some point all four of them have to work on the same project line, but it is always one of them, which has the lead.
3. It is recommended that in each sub-team the project officers are augmented. Instead of two it would be better to have four. Each one should be assigned to specific tasks within the lines of action and thus actually constructing inter-entity cooperative pairs in reference to specific

subjects. In the future the project officers must become full team members with clearly designated tasks and not just "helpers" to the Professional Experts and Liaison Officers.

4. It is recommended that the project staff in the RS receive their own project premises, with offices with more room to work in.
5. The Project Director once every two months should hold full day team meetings with the whole team either in Sarajevo or in Banja Luka. Every two weeks a two-hour skype conference should take place by the whole project team. Project reports are not only prepared by members of the team but also discussed by the full team before being sent out. Team meetings are documented. The Project Director is accountable to the Steering Committee. He is nevertheless also accountable to his team, especially in terms of obligation of information, of transparency, of facilitating regular team discussions and of taking clear decisions.
6. The Ministries link up to the project through the specialists chosen by them, but do not control the project through them. They receive information through them, but their place to monitor and control the project is in the steering committee. When they have urgent issues to discuss they do so in the steering committee or through the Project Director. They abstain from trying to give direct instructions to the members of the project they have selected. All of this is proposed not to limit the involvement of the Ministries in the project but to better differentiate between dimensions of project execution and dimensions of monitoring and control.
7. The project team for the period of one year should receive regular coaching (clinical supervision) sessions to help them deal with past issues they have not overcome yet, to help them deal with the now envisioned changes and develop a new culture of cooperation and of open and useful, but respectful discussion. This could happen in 4 full day team workshops, or in more frequent but shorter sessions. The Project Director should receive in addition his own coaching space for discussing the difficulties of directing this project (1 hour every week in the next 4 months, directly or by Skype, then every two weeks).
8. Team members should be given a chance within this new structure for 12 months. If after 12 months the Project Director still has difficulties in managing the team he should be changed. If XY cannot adapt to this situation of subordination in the next 12 months they should be changed. If team members cannot adapt to this change in the next 12 months and cannot learn a style of work based on mutual respect and cooperation they should be changed.