

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy  
Republic of Macedonia

**NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR  
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION  
2011-2021**

Skopje, 2010

This Program was prepared through a consultative process that involved the setting up of a working group comprising department heads from the Sector for Social Protection of the MLSP, Institute for Social Activities and ISWSP. Several consultative meetings and discussions were held with all relevant institutions and the non-government sector. The text of the program was prepared by Sofija Spasovska, Assistant Head of the Sector for Social Protection of the MLSP, Docent Suzana Bornarova Ph.D. and Assistant Professor Natasha Bogoevska, M.S.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	5
<b>I. ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION DOMAIN .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK .....	7
2. PHASES IN THE PAST DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION. ....	8
3. ONGOING PROCESSES (PROJECTS) .....	11
4. WEAKNESSES OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	12
5. VISION OF THE PROGRAM .....	15
<b>II. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION. ....</b>	<b>17</b>
1. STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION. ....	17
2. PROFESSIONAL WORK IN THE INSTITUTIONS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	25
3. CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, LICENSING AND STANDARDIZATION .....	29
4. STRENGTHENING OF SOCIAL PREVENTION. ....	33
5. CASH ENTITLEMENTS .....	37
6. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR INSTITUTIONALIZED CARE .....	43
7. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR DE-INSTITUTIONALIZED CARE. ....	47
<b>III. MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION. ....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>IV. FUNDING .....</b>	<b>56</b>

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**EARM** – Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia

**ACE** – Agency for Cash Entitlements

**ISS** – Institute for Social Services

**EU** – European Union

**ISA** – Institute for Social Activities

**ISWSP** – Institute for Social Work and Social Policy

**LC** – Licensing Commission

**MIA** – Ministry of Internal Affairs

**MH** – Ministry of Health

**MLSG** – Ministry of Local Self-Government

**MES** – Ministry of Education and Science

**MJ** – Ministry of Justice

**MLSP** – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

**MF** – Ministry of Finance

**IMCSW** – Inter-Municipal Center for Social Work - Skopje

**UN** – United Nations

**ISC** – Institution for Social Care

**CCE** – Center for Cash Entitlements

**CSS** – Center for Social Services

**CSW** – Center for Social Work

## INTRODUCTION

Since its independence in 1991, the Republic of Macedonia has been undertaking activities to create a modern, stable and functional system of social protection that will respond to the newly emerging needs of its beneficiaries. The system of social protection inherited from the former Yugoslavia had to adapt to the new social context and the new social problems imposed by the transition period. Namely, over this period there was an increase in unemployment, a drop in the standard of living, a reduction in the gross domestic product and an increase in the social vulnerability of many citizens that were directly affected by the transformation of the socio-economic system in the process of privatization of state-owned capital and other social events. This situation entailed a need for implementation of a series of reform processes in the area of social protection, as well as adoption of new principles and methods of work.

The principal direction for the development of the system of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia is given by basic international documents, such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Republic of Macedonia as a member of the UN also has an obligation to take into account the millennium development goals in planning its policies, and also to take into account the documents adopted at UN conferences for achievement of global social goals: The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Agenda 21 from the UN Convention on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Copenhagen Declaration and the Program for Action adopted at the World Summit on Social Development, the UN Millennium Declaration from the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly of the UN, the Johannesburg Declaration and the Implementation Plan from the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

As a member of the Council of Europe, the Republic of Macedonia shares the commitments for provision of adequate levels of social welfare protection, particularly for the most vulnerable categories of citizens. In that regard, the establishment of directions for development of social welfare protection and the implementation of reform processes is directly determined by the obligations and standards set by the European Social Charter and additional protocols.

The creation of a modern system of social protection that will respond to the challenges of these times goes hand-in-hand with the clearly set goals of the Republic of Macedonia for membership in the European Union. The process of European integration requires harmonization of the legislation in this segment, promotion of principles of good governance, and transfer of European good practices and standards. Although European experience demonstrates a wide

diversity of traditions in the field of social services, all European countries share the same vision and principles for the system of social protection in terms of funding, regulation, governance, structuring, organization and management. The Republic of Macedonia followed these guidelines in its reform processes so far, while paying due attention to the realities of socio-economic context, needs and capacities. In this regard, the country harmonizes its strategic documents with the standards set in: The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Directives 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC, 2004/113/EC which forbid discriminatory actions and promote the right to equal treatment, as well as the Strategy for Modernization of Social Protection. All strategic documents in the field of social protection are harmonized with the National Program for adoption of European Union law and the Action Plan for European Partnership.

On the basis of the above-mentioned documents, the Republic of Macedonia has focused, over the past period, on creating a stable normative framework that would ensure efficient protection of the social rights of the citizens and put into practice the constitutional commitment of the Republic of Macedonia as a social welfare state. As this is a complex subject area that cuts across multiple aspects of policy, and involves different levels and agents of service provision, the legislation includes the following regulatory acts: Law on Social Protection, Law on the Family, Law on the Protection of Children, Law on Juvenile Justice, Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination, Law on Local Self-Government, Law on Institutions, Law on Citizens' Associations and Foundations, Law on Public-Private Partnerships and Concessions, Law on General Administrative Procedure and Law on Public Servants. Over the past period, a series of strategic documents have been adopted or submitted for adoption, and these documents define some of the goals of development of social protection that were taken into account for the preparation of this program: National Action Plan for Gender Equality, National Employment Strategy - 2010, National Strategy for Protection Against Family Violence 2008-2011, Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners in the Republic of Macedonia 2008-2015, National Strategy for De-institutionalization 2008-2018, Program for Social Inclusion, Action Plan for Prevention and Coping with Sexual Abuse of Children and Pedophilia, National Housing Strategy, National Strategy for Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (revised) 2010-2018, National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia and the National Strategy for the Elderly.

All of these documents demand continuous strengthening and development of the system of social protection, and imply a need for strategic planning of future activities in this field. In this regard, pursuant to the Law on Social Protection, the Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia decided to prepare this National Program for Development of Social Protection to establish the aims, priorities and directions for development of social protection of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, using active social policy measures, for the medium term (up to 5 years ahead) and the long term (up to 10 years ahead).

# **I. ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION DOMAIN**

## **1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Social protection of the citizens is a function performed by the state in accordance with the principle of social justice. It establishes the system of social protection and enables its operation, provides the conditions and measures for social protection activities and develops forms of self-help. The principal agents of social protection are the Republic, the municipalities, the City of Skopje and the municipalities constituting the City of Skopje.

Social protection is designated as an activity in the public interest. It is defined as a system of measures, activities and policies for preventing and overcoming the basic social risks that citizens are exposed to over the course of life, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and strengthening of the individuals' capacities for their self-protection. The system is implemented through professional work in the institutions for social protection, implementation of development programs, professional development of the employees according to the needs of the beneficiaries and international standards, monitoring of phenomena and work planning, record-keeping, as well as surveillance and research in the field. In addition to the measures for social protection of citizens, the efforts of the state at preventing the onset of social risks are also seen tax policy, employment, scholarship or tuition support, housing, protection of families, health care, child care and education, and in other fields, in accordance with the law.

The central institution that conducts policymaking, strategic planning, management and regulatory supervision, particularly my inspections of the enforcement and application of laws and other regulations in the area of social protection, is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The institution for the study of social phenomena and problems and advancement of social protection activities is the Institute for Social Activities, which also supervises the professional work of the institutions for social protection and monitors other legal entities and natural persons who perform social protection activities. The system of social protection is implemented by establishing institutions for social protection (Centers for Social Work – CSW, and institutions for de-institutionalized and institutionalized social protection). CSWs are established as public institutions with public authority to conduct social protection activities. They are responsible for the administration of cash benefits and provision of social services.

The Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia enacts a National Program for Development of Social Protection that sets the goals, priorities and directions for development of social protection for the citizens, including active social policy measures, for the medium and long term. In accordance with this program, the municipalities, the City of Skopje and the municipalities constituting

the City of Skopje enact programs to meet the social protection needs of their residents. They may also, depending on their financial capacities, establish other entitlements in the area of social protection, and the scope of these entitlements could be over and above the scope of entitlements envisaged in the Law on Social Protection, and more favorable conditions for exercising these entitlements could be offered, as well as other forms of social protection.

A citizens' association registered in the registry maintained by the MLSP or a natural person holding a permit issued by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy may conduct social protection activities under the conditions, in the manner and through the procedures prescribed in the Law on Social Protection. Faith-based communities, religious groups and their associations registered in the Republic of Macedonia may assist people who need certain particular types of social protection. In addition to public institutions, private institutions for social protection may also be established under the system of social protection.

## **2. PHASES IN THE PAST DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION**

The system of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia went through three phases of development since the country's independence.

**The first stage** covering the period from 1992 to 1996 is the phase of establishment of a new system of social protection in accordance with the new constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia. In this period, as a result of the increase in the unemployment and poverty rate, the focus was on adjusting the legal regulations, incorporation of social aspects in the policies for poverty reduction and ensuring full coverage of social protection rights. In 1992, the social protection level was established in Macedonia for all citizens as the minimum level of social security for a household, and the entitlement to a supplement benefit up to the amount of the social protection level was established as a type of social welfare assistance. This entitlement to social protection was based on the Law on Social Protection that was in force at that time (originally enacted in 1978) and the Program for Socially Vulnerable Population enacted annually. In 1992 the Law on the Family was adopted; it codified the family law. In 1996 the national poverty line was established, thereby creating the prerequisite conditions for regulating social policy from a macro-economic viewpoint. The normative activities in this period were also supported by strengthening of institutional and human capacities in the CSW. The Institute for Social Activities participated in these activities by organizing continued training. This is the period of the start of cooperation with UNICEF, UNHCR and other donors.

**The second phase** of institutional development of the system covers the period 1997-2002. A new Law on Social Protection was enacted during this period (in 1997), establishing a new system of measures and services for social protection: social prevention, institutionalized protection, de-institutionalized

protection and social welfare assistance entitlements. In addition to the provisions in the Law enacted in 1997, the scope of social protection measures was expanded to cover children, through the enactment of the Law on the Protection of Children in 2000.

In this period, several projects worked on developing capacities in the institutions for social protection. In 1998, the project "Support to Capacity Building for Social Development" started, funded by the UNDP office in Skopje and implemented by the Center for Continued Education for Social Development at the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy. The main goal of the project was to strengthen the skills and capacities of the staff in the institutions for social care and related institution through delivery of several educational and training events on modern approaches and forms of professional work, by domestic and international experts. In the period from January 2002 to December 2003 the project "Capacity Building of Institutions and Development of Social Care and Protection" was implemented, funded by the EU and implemented by the European Agency for Reconstruction. The project had two components: 1) Component relating to the MLSP in two parts: policy development and strategy for organizational restructuring of the MLSP and 2) Component relating to CSW and institutions for social protection, including: institutional audit of the CSW and ISP, training and provision of equipment. The general goal of the project was to provide technical assistance to the MLSP in creating policies for social care and protection and exercise of its competences.

This phase saw the implementation of the process of de-institutionalization in the field of social protection through developing the form of day care of children with disabilities.

**The third phase**, called the reform phase, started in 2004. In this period the focus was on changes in the policy of planning and management, acceptance of modern principles of social protection, as well as a wider reorientation of the national social security schemes towards employment, meeting of the needs and social inclusion.

The most significant reforms were introduced by the amendments to the Law on Social Protection in 2004, which marked the beginning of decentralization of social protection. The measures were aimed at improving social protection services for the citizens, by developing new forms of centers for day care and temporary care for socially excluded persons, improvement of the care for children in foster families, strengthening of the capacities of biological families to care for their members with disabilities, thereby enabling the use of social services at the place where the beneficiaries reside. The amendments allowed various legal entities and natural persons, including the citizens' associations, to provide certain particular social services. All these changes were in accordance with the introduction of principles of decentralization, de-institutionalization and pluralization in the field of social protection.

During 2005 the reform process continued by amending provisions to the Law on Social Protection which prescribe an obligation for each citizen to seek to provide for his or her subsistence needs and for the needs of his or her dependents or wards. Restitution of damages from beneficiaries who have

improperly received social protection entitlements was also introduced. Also, inspection supervision was introduced for the application of the law in institutions for social protection, natural and legal persons who provide social protection services. For persons who had had the status of orphans and had been without parental care up to age 18, the state committed to their further support and assistance even after the attainment of their legal adulthood, until the age of 26. For this category of beneficiaries there is a cash entitlement, health care and housing entitlement.

The obligations for harmonization of the Law on Social Protection with the EU regulations were fulfilled by the amendments to this in early 2007. A prohibition on discrimination was normatively introduced. Provisions were added for rights to social protection for asylum seekers, persons with recognized refugee status and persons under subsidiary protection, established under the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection. These amendments to the Law on Social Protection also regulated the entitlement to a social cash benefit for citizens who are able to work but are socially insecure, which eliminated the basis for the Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia to regulate by decree the conditions, amounts, and procedure for receipt of this entitlement.

The amendments to the Law on Social Protection in 2008 introduced a new entitlement to a cash benefit for mothers who give birth to a fourth child, in accordance with the population and demographic policy of the Republic of Macedonia.

A new Law on Social Protection was enacted in June 2009, which redefined the system and organization of social protection, as well as the entitlements, funding and the procedure for receiving the social welfare protection entitlements. The levels of cash assistance entitlements are established as nominal amounts, adjusted for cost-of-living increases for the past year, as published by the State Office of Statistics, in January of the current year, thereby introducing a new system of corrections of the levels of cash assistance entitlements. In the area of social services, this regulation enables:

- further development of de-institutionalized social services with the introduction of a new entitlement to assisted autonomous living and establishment of small group homes;
- improvement of the professional work by introducing a requirement for preparation of an individualized plan for work with the beneficiary, except for beneficiaries of cash assistance;
- introduction of licensing and continued training of the professional associates;
- expanding pluralization by allowing faith-based organizations and religious groups to get involved in the provision of certain particular social services;
- continuation of the process of decentralization by allowing municipalities to introduce other social welfare entitlements, as well as connecting local programs with the National Program for Development of Social Protection;
- possibility for the Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia to enact programs for energy and utility service subsidies, conditional cash transfers and other measures.

### 3. ONGOING PROCESSES (PROJECTS)

At the time of preparation of this Program, the MLSP is involved in several activities which are of great importance for the overall improvement of the system of social protection. The most significant are the Conditional Cash Transfers Project and the SPIL project, as well as ongoing activities for introduction of licensing in the field of social protection and care.

The aim of the Conditional Cash Transfers Project (CCT), planned for finalization by 2014, is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the network of social protection in Macedonia by introducing CCT and improvements in administration, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of cash benefits. The project has the following components:

**Component 1: improvement of human capital through cash assistance:** This component will support activities of implementation of a CCT program for poor families with children of secondary-school age. This component will finance cash benefits for households – beneficiaries of welfare cash benefits whose children attend secondary school. These households will be entitled to cash benefits (conditional cash transfers) if their children are enrolled and attend at least 85 percent of the classes in the secondary education. This component will also support activities for identification, development and implementation of possible extensions of CCT in the areas of health care, labor market and other levels of education.

**Component 2: strengthening of the administration of the social protection network.** The aim of this component is to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall social protection network by:

- improvements of the information system for administration of cash benefits;
- assessment and improvement of the targeting and suitability in the social protection network;
- improving the system of records for various types of cash benefits in order to enhance administration and increase cost efficiency;
- development of the systems and mechanisms of monitoring and control of the implementation of CCT and other cash welfare benefits;
- functional analysis of the CSW in order to improve the administration in the CSW in terms of efficiency and effectiveness;
- strengthening the program management capacities of the MLSP;
- strengthening of capacities in the local level, including the CSW.

For purposes of implementing some of the envisaged activities, the Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia enacted a Program for Conditional Cash Transfers for Secondary Education for the 2010-2011 academic year.

**The Social Protection Implementation Project – SPIL**, which is scheduled for finalization in 2011, aims to improve the effectiveness and

efficiency of the pension system and the social welfare protection system. It comprises the following components:

**Component 1: administration of the pension system** – This component will support activities for improving the long-term stability of the pension system.

**Component 2: support to the program for social welfare protection** - Establishment of an integrated information system and development of communications links among the MLSP, CSW and other institutions in the framework of the system for social welfare protection, and improvement of the administering and targeting of cash benefits. This will also include defining the goals of the services offered under the primary programs for social welfare protection (social welfare assistance, unemployment benefits and child protection), analysis of the procedures for receiving the various types of benefits and the organizational structure of the programs for social welfare protection, as well as the connections among the principal agents of distribution of the benefits.

**Strengthening the System of Child Protection.** As part of the cooperation between the MLSP and UNICEF, the ISA is hosting the project „Improvement in the Standards of Care for Children in the System of Social Protection in Accordance with EU Standards“ 2009-2011. The project comprises the following components:

Component 1: Development of protocols for inter-sector cooperation in the domain of juvenile justice

Component 2: Abused children as a result of parental separation or divorce

Component 3: Resource Center for Children at Risk.

The Institute develops the Resource Center with a database that will enable continuity in indicator-based monitoring, as well as insight into the correlation between the quantitative-qualitative aspects of the phenomena, problems and needs in the system of social protection and care.

**Licensing.** In 2009 the Law on Social Protection introduced a licensing system, but its implementation is still in a start-up stage. The procedure for issuance and revocation of professional licenses will be implemented by the Licensing Commission at the Institute for Social Activities, on the basis of a general act issued by the Minister. The institute for Social Activities has prepared a Licensing Program and a Code for Professional Staff and prescribed the format of the license and the maintenance of the registry.

**Energy poverty.** In order to develop measures for reducing energy poverty among the most disadvantaged categories of citizens, the Government Cabinet of the Republic of Macedonia enacted a Program for Subsidizing Energy Consumption in July of 2010, which envisages a cash benefit for coverage of part of the costs of energy consumed by the beneficiaries of social welfare cash assistance and permanent cash assistance.

#### **4. WEAKNESSES OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Social welfare protection is an area that requires continuous adjustment and adaptation to the needs of the beneficiaries and to the capabilities of the

system and the state to implement the policies. The system of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia, despite undergoing reform in the past period, is facing some obstacles and weaknesses that are reflected in the quality of protection.

Policymaking capacities in the social protection domain in the Republic of Macedonia have been significantly strengthened since the period immediately following the independence of the country. Reform processes that intensified over the past few years, as pointed out in the previous chapter, are an indicator of progress in this domain. Nonetheless, there is still a need for improvement of policymaking capacities in order to achieve efficient, effective, sustainable and transparent planning. Namely, participation of relevant actors in policymaking should be strengthened further. The planning of measures and changes is insufficiently based on prior evaluations, analyses and studies. There is not enough investment in primary research that would supply data on the actual needs of the citizens and would constitute a basis for policy. Assessments of the situation and long-term monitoring of trends in the data is made all the more difficult by the poor data management, which is why there is no clear and detailed picture of the situation in the social protection domain in the country. The only available data is number of beneficiaries and costs, while indicators such as age, ethnic affiliation, education level, work skills and experience of the beneficiaries of cash benefits and social services are not present in the integrated database.

From the aspect of policy implementation, the key shortcoming that for years has been attracting the attention of practitioners and policymakers and has been the subject of debates, is found in the layout of the system which tends to emphasize activities by the professional services (primarily CSW) related to the processing of cash assistance beneficiaries to the detriment of provision of social care services. This is due to the fact that most of the time and activities of the professional staff at the CSW is absorbed by processing cash benefit entitlements, which is mostly a series of administrative “number-crunching” tasks. The administrative procedures for processing of entitlements are complex and they do not provide sufficient transparency and participation by the beneficiaries. The lack of modern mechanisms of record-keeping and networked databases of beneficiaries of such entitlements represent an additional difficulty for the professional staff. In practice, one can see overlap and deficits of services that the CSW is supposed to offer, which happens due to the lack of a comprehensive approach to identifying the needs of the beneficiaries, and also due to the unclear division of roles and responsibilities and absence of inter-system cooperation with the other relevant institutions and services and the haphazard approach to the supply of services. Another indicator of the seriousness of the problems being faced by the CSW is the poor staffing and equipment situation, poor human resource management, as well as insufficient and unsystematic continued education.

Particular attention should be paid to the development and promotion of prevention and social services. Social prevention, which has never been doubted and whose importance in preventing social problems has always been

recognized by the policymakers in the Republic of Macedonia, is still not sufficiently developed. It seems that the commitments to social prevention remain at the level of verbal support only, while specific implementation is still not common in practice.

As for institutionalized care in the Republic of Macedonia, there is a need to improve the quality of services, enhance the professional work with the beneficiaries and strengthen the network of institutions, with particular focus on alternative forms of care. There is an impression that the process of de-institutionalization and focusing on development of de-institutionalized forms of care is accompanied by neglect of the need to invest in institutional care, which is the last recourse and thus a necessary element of the system of social protection. Improvement of the quality of service in the institutions, humanization of living conditions, transformation of existing forms (and introduction of new forms) of institutional care with significantly more limited capacities than the existing massive institutions, are the key challenges in this domain.

In contrast to institutionalized care, de-institutionalized care has received more attention in the process of reforming the system. Many forms of services for day care and temporary care have been introduced for many categories of beneficiaries. Nonetheless, in practice the focus remains on services that target children and persons with disabilities, much less on adults and the elderly. The volume of existing services for these categories of citizens is insufficient, and thus the need remains to further develop and enrich the set of de-institutionalized services with new forms. Because of this, it is necessary to work on development of the network of social services at the local level through strengthened cooperation among relevant local institutions and organizations, on the basis of a realistic and objective assessment of the needs of the local population. Non-governmental, faith-based organizations, religious organizations and the private sector, still play a negligible role in the shaping of the local networks of social services in response to the needs of the citizens. In this regard, partnership between the public and the private sector (for-profit and not-for-profit) to improve the delivery of services, which is an option already incorporated in the provisions of the law on Social Protection, is still insufficiently applied in practice and should be further expanded and strengthened. At the same time, norms, standards and regulatory mechanisms for service providers should be completed to ensure better delivery of services.

Also, connections and cooperation among the social protection system and the education and health care systems is insufficient and inadequate. The disconnectedness between the employment and social protection sectors is especially remarkable. This situation contributes to longer durations of use of the cash assistance entitlement, increase in the number of long-term users and their further passivization, as opposed to activation and participation in the labor market, which are concepts that lately have been identified as one of the principal guidelines in development of social protection.

In view of this situation, the Program is prepared with the purpose to respond to and propose solutions for overcoming the identified deficiencies in the system of social protection in the country.

## **5. VISION OF THE PROGRAM**

### **5.1. Priority areas and principles**

Recent changes in the modern society go along the direction of promoting the taking of individual responsibility of citizens and families for their lives, development, progress and security. In this process, the community is responsible to provide the appropriate level of support to the citizens. The system of social protection as the fundamental pillar of such protection for citizens who find themselves in a position of social risk should provide a variety of services that will not only contribute to mitigation of the consequences, but offer an exit from the situation. The services should be easily accessible, available, and the citizens should be given choices to suit their needs, designed around the citizen as a user of these services. This goal could be achieved by a wide and well-developed network of service providers at the central and local level through active involvement of municipalities, non-government and faith-based organizations, as well as private initiatives.

The beneficiaries of the system of social protection are expected to strengthen their potential and the potentials of their families through the use of services. The beneficiary should participate in the process of protection and care, to undertake part of the specific activities and take responsibility for his or her own social security.

In order to face these challenges, in terms of the place and role of the beneficiary in the system of protection and care, the appropriate level of quality of the professional work in the CSW will need to be attained, as these Centers are the direct providers of social benefits and services. In the organizational and professional sense, in the past period of development of the system of social protection we see a dominant effort to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries mainly through the institutions and services in the framework of the public sector and through normative activity. The existing services are mainly aimed at identifying and overcoming the situation of persons in a position of risk, without taking into account their available potentials and resources, which contributes to creating a permanent dependency on the social protection services and social isolation and stigmatization of the beneficiaries. Hence, there is a clear need to make efforts to improve the quality of services overall, which means that they should be timely, efficient and effective, i.e. to generate the expected and desired effects.

In order to achieve improvements in the professional work, there is a need to provide services that are individualized and adapted to the specific needs of the beneficiary and family, which entails complete, coordinated and timely assessment with a high degree of participation by the family and its members, but also participation by other relevant persons from the beneficiary's environment in the assessment and planning of the required interventions. The beneficiaries need open and accessible interventions, based on suitable

assessment and a clear plan that takes into account the potentials of the family and its members, and their active involvement in the preparation and delivery of the interventions. This will improve the responsibility of the professional staff for the results of their work.

In that regard, the key and priority areas for change with the aim of advancing the system of social protection are:

- the existing structure of the system of social protection;
- the organization of work in the institutions for social protection;
- capacities in the institutions for social protection;
- cooperation and connection of the system of social protection with other relevant systems (labor market, education, health care);
- social welfare functions of the municipalities;
- approaches, forms, interventions and techniques for professional work in the institutions for social protection;
- measures, activities and forms of social welfare services provided by the state (social prevention, cash benefit entitlements, institutionalized and de-institutionalized protection);
- public-private partnership in creating and implementing social protection;
- institutions in charge of professional supervision and inspection monitoring;
- continued professional education of the professionals in the institutions for social protection;
- system of licensing and standardization.

The reform of the system of social protection is guided by several fundamental principles:

- rule of law
- openness and transparency
- responsibility and accountability
- predictability and sustainability
- continuity
- efficiency, effectiveness and economy
- availability and accessibility
- participation
- equal treatment and non-discrimination.

## **5.2. Goals of the program**

**The primary goal** of the program is development of an integrated, transparent and sustainable system of social protection to provide accessible, efficient high-quality measures and services created to fit the needs of the beneficiaries.

### **Individual goals:**

- Restructuring of the institutional layout of the system of social protection with the aim to separate the administering of cash benefit entitlements and social services.
- Internal reorganization of the institutions for social protection in order to optimally utilize the available capacities and improve professional work.
- Improvements in working with the beneficiaries with the aim of strengthening participation, involvement in planning and decision-making, strengthening and utilizing their potentials.
- Re-defining the system of cash assistance in order to improve targeting, more efficient administration and connection with other systems, primarily the employment system.
- Development of social prevention as an organized, continuous and coordinated activity at the local level.
- Strengthening of de-institutionalized protection by developing the existing services and introducing new services in accordance with the needs of the citizens, as well as improvements in provision and delivery.
- Improving the quality of services and creating conditions for reducing dependency on institutionalized care by developing alternative forms of care.
- Continuation of the already-started processes of decentralization, pluralization and de-institutionalization in the area of social welfare protection.
- Improvement of the modalities for implementation of public-private partnerships in the field of social welfare protection.
- Establishment of an organized system of management of human resources and strengthening of their capacities.

## **II. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION**

### **1. STRUCTURE OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION**

#### **1.1. Present state**

The structure of the system of social protection consists of the Ministry of Labor and Social policy (MLSP) and the network of public and private institutions for social protection. The network of public institutions for social protection consists of 30 Centers for Social Work (CSW), 11 Institutions for Social Care and

33 Day Care and Temporary Care Centers. Partial funding arrangements have been made for support of several day care centers (day care center for drug abusers in Strumica, day care center for street children in Suto Orizari, 6 day care centers for adults with disabilities). There are day care centers for the elderly in Caska and Bogomila, and the establishment of care centers for the elderly in Samokov and Bucin is underway. The system of social protection also includes registered private institutions: SOS Children's Village and two homes for the elderly.

Municipalities, the City of Skopje and the municipalities that constitute the City of Skopje may establish public entities for de-institutionalized and institutionalized care on the basis of approval procedures set forth in the Law on Social Protection, with the exception of centers for social work or reform institutions for housing of children and youth with behavioral problems. The CSW is the principal public institution for social protection with the public authority to perform activities in the field of social protection, serving the territory of one or more municipalities.

A CSW may be established if it has at least the following staff profiles: social worker, psychologist, pedagogue and legal professional. Nonetheless, in practice there are deviations from this provision. In some CSW there are insufficient numbers of staff profiles, even below the minimum prescribed by law. In such circumstances, CSW are sometimes established with insufficient number of staff, and this reflects on the quality and professionalism, primarily in working with beneficiaries of the services. Within the CSW there are multiple centers for day care or temporary care of beneficiaries.

There is no uniformity in the organizing principle of the CSW. The territorial principle and the categorization principle are often combined. The CSW in the Republic of Macedonia are mostly inter-municipal centers, which means that the staff work directly with beneficiaries from several municipalities, through several departments. The Inter-Municipal Center for Social Work (IMCSW) in Skopje has a different organization compared to other CSW in Macedonia. In this IMCSW there are a total of 16 departments, of which 7 operate by the categorization principle and the other departments operate in the municipalities that constitute the city of Skopje (Aerodrom, Butel, Kisela Voda, Gazi Baba, Cair, Centar, Karpos, Suto Orizari and Saraj) according to a territorial principle, and there are also 6 day care centers and 2 temporary care centers. There are no branch offices for provision of the social services – the clients who need such services and live anywhere on the territory of the City of Skopje are served in the same facility. This organization in the IMCSW in Skopje hampers the clients' access to social services, complicates the professional work, impairs the quality of the interactions and impedes comprehensive coverage with social services for the population from all municipalities.

The existing organizational structure in the other CSW in Macedonia, where there is no clear separation of administration of cash benefits from provision of social services, tends to result in most of the time and staff resources being devoted to administration of cash benefits. Consequently, the domain of social services that are part of the competences of CSW is being neglected,

because the employees keep switching and shifting from one department to another when there is a need to complete the administrative procedures concerning cash benefits. Cash benefits administration absorbs most of the capacity of the social workers in the CSW, so the social workers are unable to work with clients who require other types of services. On the other hand, the procedures for cash benefits have not been simplified yet, which puts the professional staff in a position of acting as administrative workers.

Another problem is the lack of information technology equipment, suitable staff, space and equipment for professional work, as well as the obsolete methodology of maintaining paper records of beneficiaries. All this reflects on the effectiveness and quality of the work of the CSW in implementing both categories of entitlements. The implementation of the SPIL project (currently in progress) should overcome this situation.

The MLSP monitors the work of the CSW and other institutions for social protections to ensure compliance with the laws; the MLSP also monitors the overall implementation of the Law on Social Protection. The Sector for Social Inspection conducts inspection monitoring of the implementation and application of the laws and other regulations in the field of social protection in the institutions for social protection and other legal and natural persons who perform social protection as a professional activity. The inspection supervision is performed by inspectors and other public servants in the Ministry who are authorized to perform inspection supervision. Any person with university-level qualification and at least three years experience in the field of social protection can be an inspector if they fulfill the general conditions stipulated in the Law on Public Servants.

The Institute for Social Activities monitors the professional work in the CSW in order to observe, follow, check, survey and improve the quality of the professional work and the efficiency of operations, as well as research and development. Monitoring by the Institute for Social Activities is done not only in the centers for social work, but also in institutions for social care and day care centers, as well as private legal and natural persons that engage in social protection activities. Pursuant to the Law on Social Protection, monitoring of the professional work involves professional staff with expertise in the areas of activity of the institution of social protection that is subject to monitoring. The professional staff who monitor the professional work cannot have professional qualifications lower than the level of professional qualifications of the workers whose work they are monitoring. Due to insufficient financial and staff resources, ISA monitoring and surveillance of the professional work is limited.

Revision of existing criteria is needed in both monitoring of professional work and in social inspection, in order to improve the efficiency and quality of the monitoring.

Despite the legal options for pluralization of the service providers in the system of social protection, participation is still not sufficient. With the enactment of the Law on Local Self-Government, the municipalities, the City of Skopje and the municipalities constituting the City of Skopje were given public competences in the field of social protection. Starting from 2004, the amendments to the Law

on Social Protection allowed the municipalities to adopt development programs for the specific social protection needs of their residents and a possibility of transfer of the founding rights of the day care and temporary care centers. The Law on Social Protection of 2009 introduced an obligation for the municipalities to prepare programs for the social protection needs of their citizens. However, except for the handover of the existing homes for the elderly, the other competences in the domain of social protection are not exercised sufficiently. Involvement of citizens' association in the system of social protection was allowed with the amendments to the Law in 2004. These amendments allowed provision of social services by citizens' associations, with partial funding support from the MLSP allocated through public solicitations for proposals. In order to ensure quality of the services provided by the citizens' associations, there are conditions and criteria that have to be fulfilled to be eligible for registration in the register of citizens' associations maintained by the MLSP. When this option was introduced, citizens' associations began providing some social services as contractors. Despite the opportunity for private initiative in the system of social protection, so far there has been interest only in private homes for the elderly.

## 1.2. Measures, implementing agents and timeframes

### Goal 1. Restructuring of the system of social protection

#### **Measures:**

- Establishment of a central Agency for Cash Entitlements (ACE) as a public institution that will undertake technical, organizational, administrative and other work concerning cash welfare benefits.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF

*Timeframe:* long term

- ACE will establish a unified technical-administrative service with regional offices (Centers for Cash Entitlements) that will be established for the territory of one or more municipalities (29 throughout Macedonia and 10 in Skopje).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, MF

*Timeframe:* long term

- Within the MLSP, the Sector for Social Protection will monitor the work of the ACE to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations, while the Sector for Social Inspection will conduct inspection monitoring.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* long term

- Transformation of the ISA into an Institute for Social Services (ISS) that will retain the existing competences only in the area of social services (competences concerning cash entitlements would be transferred to the ACE).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA

*Timeframe:* long term

- Introduction of independent monitoring into the system of social protection by establishment of a Monitoring Board of 3 members who are not employed in the system of social protection and whose work would be focused on the protection of human rights in the field of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA

*Timeframe:* long term

- Re-definition of the competences and responsibilities of the CSW to focus only on provision of social services (administering cash entitlements will be transferred to the branch offices of the ACE), appropriate reorganization of the CSW to correspond to the new competences and re-naming them into Centers for Social Services.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, CSW (CSS)

*Timeframe:* long term

- The CSW staff who administer cash entitlements would move to the ACE.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA, ACE, CSW (CSS)

*Timeframe:* long term

- Internal reorganization in the CSW for establishment of separate departments for children and adults with the aim to achieve higher specialization of the staff and improvement of the quality of services.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, CSW (CSS)

*Timeframe:* long term

- Restructuring of IMCSW Skopje by establishment of branch offices for social services in 10 municipalities operating on a territorial principle.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, IMCSW (IMCSS)

*Timeframe:* long term

- Analysis of possibilities for opening of branch offices for social services that would operate according to a territorial principle in the other larger CSW.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, IMCSW (IMCSS)

*Timeframe:* long term

- Establishment of centers for counseling, advisory work and family therapy in the IMCSW in Skopje, the larger CSW and other institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, IMCSW (IMCSS), donors

*Timeframe:* long term

- Within the MLSP, the Sector for Social Protection will monitor the work of the ISS to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations, while the Sector for Social Inspection will conduct inspection monitoring (See Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

*Implementing agents:* MLSP  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Strengthening of the administrative capacities of municipalities by establishment of departments for social protection or dedicated job positions, development of inter-municipal cooperation by establishment of joint administrative bodies and standing or ad-hoc joint task forces and commissions on social protection.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Enhancing cooperation in social protection through establishment of local councils for social prevention, employment and social services, and establishment of mechanism for their coordination and collaboration.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, CSW, NGO, EARM, business community, educational and health institutions and others.  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Expanding the list of social services provided by other providers under contracting arrangements based on public solicitations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, municipalities, non-government sector  
*Timeframe:* long term

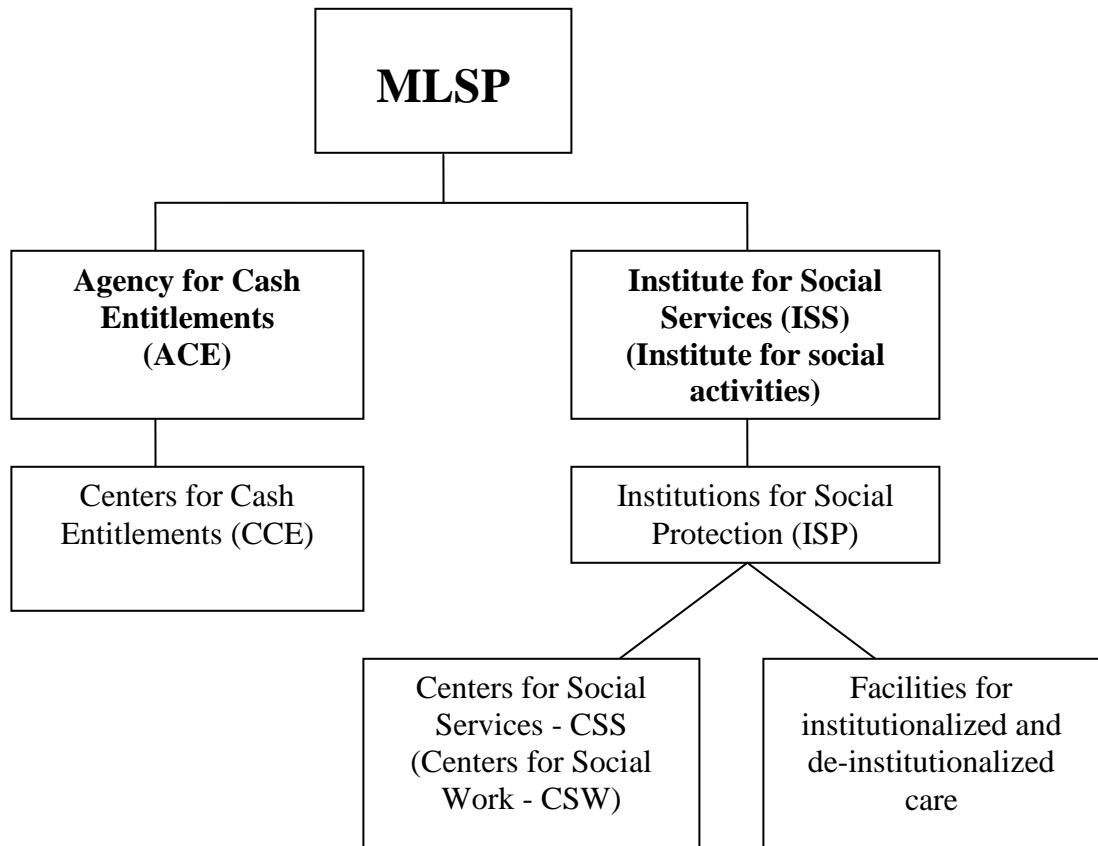
- Analysis of possibilities for contracting the provision of social services by CSW and other providers of social services on the local level.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, CSW, municipalities, non-government sector, religious and humanitarian organizations, private sector  
*Timeframe:* long term

---

<sup>1</sup> The implementing agents of the measures in this Program are institutions in their newly-designed structure of the system for social protection. Until the establishment of ACE and CCE , as well as ISS and CSS, the envisaged measures will be implemented by the institutions from the existing structure: ISA and CSW.

**Figure 1. Modified structure of the system of social protection**



## Goal 2. Improvement of the capacities of the CSW

**Measures:** Introduction of more modern, sophisticated computer systems of recordkeeping for the beneficiaries of social services and cash benefits at the CSW level, which would enable analysis, monitoring and policymaking on the basis of indicators.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ACE, CSW (CSS), World Bank (SPIL project)

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of computer network for recordkeeping and connection to the related institutions into a networked system.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ACE, EARM, ISP

*Timeframe:* long term

- Organizing education for the staff of social institutions on the use of electronic databases.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ACE, external education center, donors  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Enactment of regulations that will regulate the recordkeeping and document management as part of the professional work, as well as access to the electronic database.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ACE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improvement of the premises in the institutions for social protection, as well as the equipment and instruments, in accordance with the norms and standards for each institution.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, ACE, ISP, donors  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improvement of staffing in the institutions for social protection with appropriate profiles of employees.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Revision of the criteria for appointment of directors of ISPs and members of the governing boards of ISPs.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

### Goal 3. Strengthening of monitoring, supervision and evaluation

#### **Measures:**

- Strengthening of technical monitoring and inspection monitoring of the institutions for social protection through re-definition of the criteria for qualifications and skills of the individuals who conduct monitoring.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of an obligation for the persons responsible for monitoring to undergo continued professional development in order to improve their performance and advance their work.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction and strengthening of the method of supervision, which will contribute to better professionalization and improvement of the quality of services offered to the beneficiaries.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Implementation of regular, effective and efficient technical (professional) monitoring through strengthening of human capacities in the ISA (ISS) and education of the persons who perform technical monitoring and supervision.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ACE, ISA (ISS), ISWSP, external education center, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of internal and external evaluation of projects and programs being implemented by ISP.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, ISA (ISS), external experts

*Timeframe:* medium term

## **2. PROFESSIONAL WORK IN THE INSTITUTIONS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION**

### **2.1. Present state**

The model of professional work with individuals and families in the CSW is based on the classical medical approach of case work, rather than case management, aimed at identifying deficits or pathologies in families or family members. Intervention through case management is quite different from the practice currently applied in the CSW and the passive roles of the professional staff. At this time, key elements of this approach are missing, such as acting as a field worker in the local community, practice of multiple significant roles: manager, broker, advocate, activist etc. This way of work leads to inconsistencies in dealing with beneficiaries, and the process of professional work does not include all required stages: assessment of the needs of the client, planning and identification of resources in the community and social services that could contribute to an improvement of the situation, connecting the client with the identified resources, and (especially important) continued follow-up until the need that triggered the contact with social services is fulfilled.

The principal professional procedure is diagnostic, aimed primarily at determining the “category”, i.e. a characteristic group of beneficiaries of a particular type of assistance. The social workers use the predominantly problem-focused approach, and thus the identified problem is not considered in the more comprehensive context of the social, physical, emotional and financial situation of the individual, family and close social environment. This model is basically paternalistic, because it passivizes and stigmatizes the beneficiaries, without recognizing the strength and potential in the family and the social environment.

The dominant form of work is teamwork and work with individual family members. Group work and family therapy are much less used, and the CSW do not always have the staffing, space and technical conditions to offer them. The most often used form of work is category-team work. The team is usually multi-disciplinary, depending on the problem area, and comprises (depending on capacities) a social worker, pedagogue, psychologist, legal professional and defectologist. The most common form of teamwork is the multi-disciplinary team

made up of mostly social workers and not more than 1-2 other profiles. As needs arise, ad-hoc teams, mono-disciplinary teams and combined teams may be established. Sometimes no team coordinator is appointed, and thus there is an absence of responsibility for the interventions. This is how overlaps happen in the activities of the team members and how the teamwork gets formalized. In the 9 dispersed departments at the IMCSW in Skopje the teams are made up of social workers and one legal professional.

The predominant intervention is direct intervention in the family system and cash welfare assistance; the administering of cash benefits remains one of the most significant problems that burden the social workers from the CSW. The professional staff is not sufficiently engaged in indirect interventions, i.e. working with other individuals, small groups, agencies and local communities, on behalf of the individual or the family as the beneficiary of the services. As a result, there is little engagement from the professional staff in utilizing resources in the local community, working on changes in the environment that would have a positive impact on the client's situation, involving influential people in the process of provision of assistance, coordination of available services, representation of the client before the appropriate official bodies, as well as more significant efforts from professional staff in creative activities related to planning and development of different assistance programs. Only the minimum necessary techniques and instruments are used in the professional work, that is, those that are mandatory. There is not enough application of new, modern techniques that would significantly improve the quality of the services provided to the beneficiaries. Instead of modernization of the work process with the application of new techniques and instruments, the emphasis is still mostly on verbal discussions to get an agreement and diagnosis, rather than on planning, therapy and evaluation of the effects of interventions. The Law on Social Protection introduced an obligation to prepare plans for individual client interactions during the procedure for the exercise of social protection rights. The application of this technique still falls short of satisfactory, and it needs to be reformulated. In practice, the stage of "termination", or cessation of work with the client or family, is done by a referral, which causes loss of contact with the client who has been referred to another service institution for a suitable intervention, and the termination is seldom the result of successful completion of the interventions and fulfillment of the goals. Also, there is no follow-up, which means there is no insight into the client's situation after the end of interaction with him/her.

The quality of the professional works suffers because of the lack of suitable professional staff, primary reliance on internal human resources, mostly poor workplace conditions, as well as lack of modern equipment and premises for professional counseling, advisory work, education and therapy.

## **2.2. Measures, implementing agents and timeframes**

### **Goal 1. Improvement of the professional work**

#### ***Measures:***

- Replacement of the existing “casework” approach by a “case management” approach in the ISP.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Delivery of education on case management for all ISP staff.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE, ISWSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Enhancement of teamwork by establishment of so-called “out-of-agency” teams where the case leader is the coordinator of a team and the other team members are experts from similar relevant governmental or non-governmental organizations that could contribute to a resolution of the beneficiary’s problem situation (for example, doctors psychiatrist from an institution for person with special needs, school social worker, NGO, teacher etc).

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW, ISP, ACE, external institutions and organizations

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Strengthening of professional work with increased application of group work and family therapy as a supplement to the individual work with clients, which is the dominant practice at present.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Promotion of the practice of involvement of suitable external experts in therapy (i.e. achieving the goals agreed with the client) when needed.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Education of the professional staff and promotion of application of other indirect interventions that go beyond the routine formalized procedures that are the staple of everyday work.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE, ISWSP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improvement of the process of professional interaction with beneficiaries through consistent implementation of all stages of the procedure, especially the stages of evaluation termination and follow-up.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE, ISWSP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Enhancement of the professional work in the institutions for social protection through application of new and modern instruments and techniques suitable of each stage of the procedure, and education of the professional staff for use of such instruments and techniques.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE, ISWSP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Specification of the technique of individual client work plan of different types, depending on the category of beneficiary and the entitlements and services used. Emphasis would be placed on drafting written agreements about the use of entitlements and services, thereby contributing to: more participation by the service beneficiaries in the planning of interventions, strengthening of self-confidence among the beneficiaries, exercise of the right of equal involvement in decision-making and a higher level of responsibility of the beneficiary.

*Implementing agents:*, MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of official documents (referrals) to various institutions for the different categories of users of services, which would formalize the referral procedure, elevate responsibility, improve and simplify the work of the professional staff and facilitate clients' access to the referred services.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Drafting of a rulebook on the conditions and procedure for referral, as well as service cost coverage.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of lists of licensed providers of social services categorized by type of service, to include public and private institutions for social care, natural and legal persons, citizens' associations and other organizations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Finalizing protocols as instruments for improvement of coordination and exchange of information among all relevant actors in the system of social protection, determining the roles, forms of cooperation, referral, forms of synchronized action etc.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), ACE, relevant external institutions  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of coordinating bodies multi-sector teams for improvement of cooperation of all relevant actors in the system of social protection with the related institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MES, MH, MLSG, MIA, ISA (ISS), ACE, ISP, municipalities  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Conducting an analysis of the capabilities of the institutions for social care in the Republic of Macedonia in terms of premises, equipment and staff; the analysis should be the basis for identification of shortcomings and proposing solutions for improvement of the conditions and resources required for professional work with families, family therapy, counseling,

field visits, educational activities (vehicles, education and therapy rooms etc).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

### **3. CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, LICENSING AND STANDARDIZATION**

#### **3.1. Present state**

The state institution competent for ensuring continued education for professionals from the institutions for social protection is the Institute for Social Activities. The exercise of this competence requires regular allocation of funding, which in the past was not sufficiently provided. In circumstances where the continued education of professionals in the system of social protection had not been sustained, planned and systematic, the education delivered to the professionals has usually been organized by non-government organizations through projects, in many cases funded by international organizations and foundations, or through projects coordinated by MLSP with foreign aid. It is expected that this situation would be overcome with the introduction of a system of licensing of the professionals, and the ISA is already preparing a program for continued education. The professional staff in the institutions for social protection is required to attend continued education as part of the licensing process. In this context, particular emphasis should be placed on specialized education.

There is a need to review the differences in pay levels in proportion to the complexity of tasks associated with particular job positions (for example, department coordinator) and educational level (for example, professionals who are specialists, masters of science or doctors of philosophy). Hence, continued professional education is formally not valued within the ISP, nor does it afford opportunities for career advancement. The possibility for those professionals who have undergone multiple forms of continued education to have that acquired knowledge officially valued is currently available only through their transfers to positions requiring more responsibility or higher specialization. On the other hand, advancement of the professional work is possible and expected not only through introducing changes and improvements in the workplace, but also by promoting the need for professional development of the staff. In this regard, the Law on Social Protection should be accompanied by additional regulation of the procedure for evaluation of the professional staff in the institutions for social protection and proportional opportunities for career advancement, in accordance with the Law on Civil Servants.

The process of licensing is in the initial stage. Pursuant to the Law on Social Protection, professional staff with university-level degrees may perform professional work in the ISP, if they have a license. The Institute for Social Activities issues and revokes the licenses of the professionals in the ISP, maintains a registry of issued and revoked licenses and implements continued education of the professionals in the licensing procedure. For these tasks, the Institute for Social Activities establishes a Licensing Commission, composed of

representatives of the Institute for Social Activities, the Ministry, the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy, other relevant faculties and institutions, upon approval of the Minister. The Licensing Commission enacts a Code for Professional Staff in the Institutions for Social Protection. The costs of issuance of the license are borne by the applicant. The Minister issues a general act for more detailed regulation of the procedure for issuance, renewal, extension of validity and revocation of the licenses of professional staff working in the institutions for social protection, the amount of license issuance fees, the form and content of the license. The establishment of a Licensing Commission is underway at the ISA and work is ongoing on drafting criteria for issuance of a license and the Code for Professional Staff in the Institutions for Social Protection.

Many of the activities related to the drafting of norms and standards for the operation of ISP are completed. New norms and standards are prescribed for establishment and commencement of operation of the following institutions for social protection: home for the elderly, center for social work, center for victims of family violence, day care center for persons with impediments, day care center for street children, day care center for drug abusers, center for the homeless. A Rulebook is also enacted on the space, equipment and staff requirements, levels of assistance for autonomous assisted living in a housing unit, procedure and program for provision of the assistance.

### **3.2. Measures, implementing agents and timeframes**

#### **Goal 1. Improvement of continued professional education**

##### **Measures:**

- Increase in the budget allocations for support of continued professional education of the staff of MLSP, ACE, ISA and other ISP (congresses, conferences, seminars, debates, courses, roundtables etc).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Planning of continued professional education on the basis of a scientific analysis of the real training needs of the professional staff, as a systematic and well-planned organized activity.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), ISWSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Appropriate matching of professional staff with professional development opportunities with regard to the relevance of educational content to the work that they perform.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Organization of education events not only for acquisition of new knowledge, but also for maintenance of existing knowledge through “refreshment courses”.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring the effects of education, relevance and applicability of the acquired knowledge to the workplace, and utility of the education for improvement of practical work, through monitoring, supervision and evaluation.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Use of “training of trainers” within the institutions for social care in order to achieve economical and efficient transfer of skills and knowledge.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of a system of professional (career) advancement in the institutions for social care.

*Implementing agents:* , MLSP, ISA (ISS)  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of mechanisms for valuation of certificates and knowledge acquired by the professional staff who have gone through continued professional education.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS)  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of remuneration differentials for those professional staff members who work in more complex job positions, positions of responsibility and positions requiring post-graduate degrees (specialists, masters of science, PhD).

*Implementing agents:* , MLSP, ISA (ISS)  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of opportunities for flexible organization of the work in the institutions for social care for education purposes (shorter working hours, leave for educational purposes).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of medium-term and long-term plans and programs for development of staff at the ISC and their continued education, i.e. devoting more attention to education programming.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE, CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of plans for professional development by the ISC.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), ACE, CSW (CSS), ISP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Finding opportunities for additional funding of the educational programs for the professional staff by the ISC (for example, by establishing various kinds of funds that would collect money to cover the costs for professional education of the professional staff).

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), ACE, CSW (CSS), ISP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of a Center for Continued Professional Education that will engage in planning, monitoring and meeting the educational needs of the professional staff.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE

*Timeframe:* long term

- Improving ISC staff access to contemporary technical literature, electronic databases and electronic libraries comprising CD, audio and video materials that can be used as means for individual, group or supervised learning.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE, CSW (CSS), ISP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

## Goal 2. Development of the system of licensing and standardization

### **Measures:**

- Revising the system of licensing through establishment of an independent professional organization of staff who work in social care.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Extending the obligation to obtain a license to all professionals who perform social protection work and all service providers (institutions and organizations, natural and legal persons that engage in social care).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introducing accreditation of educational programs in the system of licensing and establishment of a body competent for accreditation of such programs.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation and accreditation of educational packages, plans and programs for education of the professional staff at the ISC, by experts or teams of experts composed of representatives of relevant institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE, ISWSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introducing, into the licensing process, a mechanism of quality control for the work of the professional staff through monitoring and evaluation of the results of their work.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), ACE

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Affirmation of general ethics principles in the work and improving standards of professional conduct, ethical and professional responsibility through preparing and introducing a Code of Practice into the system of social protection.

*Implementing agents:* ISA (ISS), ACE

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Further elaboration of norms and standards for all types of institutions for social care and all types of cash benefits and social services.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS)

*Timeframe:* medium term

## **4. STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PREVENTION**

### **4.1. Present state**

The Law on Social Protection envisages measures and activities for social prevention that aim to pre-empt the onset of social risks, provide early detection and early treatment of the citizen exposed to social risk, in order to overcome or mitigate the harmful consequences of exposure to social risk. Preventive work includes educational and counseling work, development of self-help, volunteer work with personal engagement and application of other methods suitable to the needs of the beneficiaries of social protection. The law stipulates that the annual program for social protection should include measures and funds required for social prevention.

Despite the general legal obligation to undertake measures and activities of social prevention, the overload at the Centers for Social Work with administering cash benefits and delivery of other types of social services causes preventative work to be unfairly neglected, which has far-reaching consequences. The cause for this situation is the chronic lack of funding for preventive activities and lack of secondary legislation whereby the CSW would be more specifically required to implement preventive programs.

In most of the CSW the preventive educational and counseling work is neglected. Since 2004, with the repeal of the obligation to attend pre-marriage counseling, the counseling work in the area of marriage and family was neglected. There is a need for re-activation of these activities because the experience is favorable and largely useful for the citizens. The CSW have

professional staff trained for counseling, and this potential remains unused at this time. In addition to their internal resources and expertise, the CSW could also use the resources and expertise of the private and non-governmental sector. However, an additional problem appears with their involvement in offering counseling services, as a result of the obligation for registration of the institution and fulfillment of certain standards for inclusion in the MLSP registry and performance of such activities. The Law allows natural persons to perform certain counseling activities, but in practice there are problems with establishing the qualification level of the professionals and licensing, as well as the scope of services offered and the prices at which they would be offered, which entails financial implications.

The low level of development of preventive social work is also due to the lack of clear protocols for cooperation among relevant institutions at the local level. Namely, the Law on Social Protection stipulates that preventive work is done in the CSW in cooperation with municipalities, pre-school, school, health care institutions and other public bodies, natural and legal persons and citizens' associations. Although there are informal contacts, the cooperation is not seen as mandatory and organized, i.e. it is left to the good will of the professionals. The local governments, by and large, do not have the capacities to map the main social problems in their municipalities and undertake efficient preventive measures and activities. The organizational systematizations of many municipal administrations do not envisage sectors or departments for social protection. Most municipalities do not have a single social worker on staff.

At the same time, even though cooperation between and schools is key for the preventive work, in recent years the established good practices of cooperation are being abandoned. The provision in the amendments to the Law on Elementary Education stipulating social workers on staff in the schools is a step in the right direction, but this provision is still not being implemented due to lack of funding. Also, many of the health care institutions, especially in the smaller municipalities, do not have the staff to do social prevention. All of this reduces the capabilities of the municipalities to do preventive social work. Some progress is seen in the area of cooperation with the police, especially after the adoption of the Law on Juvenile Justice, which stipulates the establishment of a State Council and municipal councils for prevention of juvenile delinquency, as well as sensitization and strengthening of the capacities of police officers to recognize human trafficking, family violence and vagrancy. Preventive work of local citizens' associations and their cooperation with the CSW is often fitful, irregular and dependent on funding from foreign donors.

## **4.2. Measures, implementing agents and time frame**

### **Goal 1. Strengthening social prevention**

#### ***Measures:***

- Introduction of social prevention as a competence of the other ISP, in addition to CSW.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Allocation of dedicated budget funds for implementation of preventive programs by the ISP.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of an obligation to plan preventive activities in the ISP as part of the annual work programs submitted to the ISA and MLSP.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of an obligation for filing annual reports on the implementation of preventive activities envisaged in the annual programs.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of a commission for review, assessment and evaluation of programs and reports, where the members will be representatives of MLSP, ISA and external members.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), external members  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of a “street social worker” staff profile.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Increased use of volunteer work for the needs of CSW and ISP.

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS), ACE, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of volunteer work in the local community in cooperation with local institutions and organizations.

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE, local institutions and organizations  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Organization of self-help groups among the beneficiaries of social protection or care (parents of children at risk, caregivers of elderly people, single parents, foster families, people with social problems etc.).

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS), ACE, ISP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improved provision of information, coordination and cooperation in the implementation of preventive programs among the CSW, ISP and local non-governmental organizations to avoid overlaps in the programs and ensure optimal utilization of available resources.

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS), ACE, ISP, local non-government organizations  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation and distribution of information materials (brochures, leaflets) on the entitlements and services available from the system of social protection.

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS), ISP, ACE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

## Goal 2. Development of counseling and advisory work

### **Measures:**

- Distinction (separation) of the counseling and advisory services in the Law on Social Protection.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Opening of counseling centers in the system of social protection (pre-marriage, marriage, for children and youth etc).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, municipalities, non-government sector  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Appointment of narrowly specialized CSW experts for counseling and advisory work.

*Implementing agents:* CSW (CSS)  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Identification of precise criteria for inclusion of natural and legal persons as providers of counseling services (funding of the services, license issues, prices of the services, service duration, referrals etc.).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISA (ISS)  
*Timeframe:* medium term

## Goal 3. Development of inter-sector cooperation in the domain of local-level prevention

### **Measures:**

- Drafting of protocols for cooperation among relevant local institutions and organizations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MIA, MES, MH, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ACE, ISP, municipalities, local institutions and organizations  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of lists of institutions for cooperation with the ISP and CSW at the local level (local government, education, health care, police, non-governmental sector).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISA (ISS), CSW (CSS), ISP, municipalities, local institutions and organizations

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of local councils for social prevention in the municipalities with members representing all relevant local actors (CSW, ISP, municipalities, schools, health care facilities, police services, non-government organizations).

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, CSW (CSS), ACE, ISP, local institutions and organizations

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of a practice of membership of representatives of CSW in the school boards.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MES, CSW (CSS), municipalities, schools

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Implementation of the legal provision for employment of social workers in the schools.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MES, MF, municipalities, schools

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of a legal option for employment of social workers in pre-school institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, municipalities, pre-schools

*Timeframe:* medium term

- More precise regulation and intensifying of the current practice of visits to schools by professional staff from the CSW for identification of students at social risk and prevention of social problems.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, CSW (CSS), schools

*Timeframe:* medium term

## **5. CASH ENTITLEMENTS**

### **5.1. Current state**

The Law on Social Protection establishes the following cash entitlements as social protection: social cash assistance; permanent cash assistance; cash assistance to persons who had a status of orphan or child without parental care by the age of 18; cash assistance to mothers who have a fourth child; cash supplement for assistance and care by another person; one-time cash assistance and in-kind assistance; wage supplement for part-time work for caregivers to children with mental or physical developmental impediments; cash assistance for social housing and health care entitlement.

The improvement of cash entitlements is of major significance for the system of social protection, because this is where most of the beneficiaries of social cash benefits are concentrated. The number of beneficiaries of social cash assistance has been over 60 thousand beneficiaries for several years, with a tendency of mild decrease in recent years - 61.813 in 2003, 67.113 in 2005, 63.882 in 2007 and 50.656 in 2009. The number of beneficiaries of permanent cash assistance hovers around 5000 beneficiaries: 5.176 in 2003, 4.871 in 2005, 5.030 in 2007 and 5.617 in 2009. A similar tendency is seen among the beneficiaries of the entitlement for assistance and care by another person, where the number varies from 19.158 in 2003, 21.544 in 2005 and 19.295 beneficiaries in 2007 and 20.925 in 2009. The proportion of cash benefits for the exercise of the cash entitlements in the Budget of Macedonia in 2009 was 1.04% for the social cash assistance, and 2% for all cash entitlements.

Due to the large allocation of budget funds for this entitlement, the reforms are aimed at better targeting and mobilizing of the beneficiaries of cash benefits. Nonetheless, despite the reforms, most of the beneficiaries, especially of social cash assistance, spend a long time in the system. The dominance of passive measures of social protection does not give sufficient motivation for undertaking activities to overcome unemployment. The system is basically paternalistic, creates dependencies and produces a large number of long-term cash beneficiaries.

A key problem is the lack of a coordinated strategic approach between the domain of employment and social protection. This situation results in a lack of specialized programs for employment aimed at beneficiaries of welfare benefits, and weaknesses in the implementation of the envisaged active employment measures in the annual programs of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia.

The Centers for Social Work, as primary institutions for administering cash benefits, operate in inadequate technical, staffing and infrastructure conditions. At the same time, the organizational structure of the CSW which does not separate cash benefits from social services makes the administration of cash benefits difficult. On one hand, the professional staff at the CSW devote most of their time to processing welfare benefits, due to the large number of beneficiaries, insufficient human resources and lack of a modern data management system, which results in neglect of the social services side. On the other hand, the expansion of the scope of social care services causes constant increases in the areas of responsibility of the CSW without prior assessment of capacities for implementation. This constant expansion of competences reflects on the quality of work in administering cash benefits.

An additional difficulty is the poor cooperation and absence of network connections with relevant institutions that should supply data on the beneficiaries of cash benefits (Cadastre, Public Revenue Office, banks). The Law on Protection of Personal Data allows data exchange if it is appropriately regulated. This has an impact on the duration of the procedure, reduced efficiency and economy, and the access to entitlements being impeded as a result of the inability to find facts.

## 5.2. Measures, implementing agents and time frame

### Goal 1. Improvement of cash entitlements

#### **Measures:**

- Renaming “cash assistance entitlements for social protection” into “social cash benefits”.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of a new cash entitlement for social protection – cash assistance for an unemployed person for purposes of caring for a child with physical or mental developmental impediments.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Changes to the cash entitlement for assistance and care from another person:
  - renaming the “cash entitlement for assistance and care from another person” into “entitlement for assistance and care from another person”
  - introduction of an option to use this entitlement as a cash payment or in the form of services (assistance in the client’s home, care in the client’s home, day care, personal assistant etc.) valued up to the amount of the cash entitlement.
  - creation of a list of service providers that offer the service component of this entitlement.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, CCE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Revision of the criteria for estimation of income (means testing) as the basis for the entitlement to permanent cash assistance.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improved targeting of cash benefits through more intensive work and mobilization of the beneficiaries, improvements in the systems of information exchange with regard to household incomes and improving conditions for field visits.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ACE, CCE, CSW (CSS), Public Revenue Office, Institute for Geodetic Works – Land Cadastre, banks  
*Timeframe:* long term

## Goal 2. Establishment of networked collaborations among the relevant institutions for administration of cash entitlements

### Measures:

- Strengthening cooperation with institutions that supply data required for the exercise of social assistance entitlements (Institute for Geodetic Works – Cadastre, Public Revenue Office, Employment Agency, courts, banks, police, inspection services etc.).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, CCE, CSW (CSS) and other relevant institutions and organizations

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Identification of appropriate mechanisms for facilitation of CSW access to databases in other relevant institutions, such as data exchange agreements.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Better provision of information to the municipalities and better utilization of opportunities for hiring/deploying beneficiaries of cash entitlements for public works, in strengthened cooperation with the CCE.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, ACE, CCE, EARM,

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of annual programs (by the municipalities, in consultation with the CCE and EARM) for public works that would involve beneficiaries of cash entitlements.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, ACE, CCE, EARM

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Enhanced coordination and mandatory exchange of data among the ACE, municipalities and EARM about beneficiaries of cash entitlements who have been involved in, or who have refused to participate in, public works.

*Implementing agents:* municipality, ACE, CCE, EARM

*Timeframe:* medium term

## Goal 3. Facilitation of the procedure application for cash entitlements

### Measures:

- Abolition of the obligation for monthly registration of beneficiaries of cash entitlements with the CCE.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Analysis of opportunities for reductions of the cost of obtaining personal identification and other documents required for cash benefits, in cooperation with the relevant institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MIA, MJ, Public Revenue Office, Institute for Geodetic Works – Land Cadastre

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improved provision of information to the beneficiaries concerning cash assistance entitlements for social protection, as well as the procedure to exercise the entitlements and appeal mechanisms (brochures, information desks, information boards).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, CCE, donors, non-government sector

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Provision of better information to the beneficiaries concerning opportunities to submit complaints to the ombudsman.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, CCE, Ombudsman, donors, non-government sector

*Timeframe:* medium term

#### **Goal 4. Strengthening of capacities for administration of cash entitlements**

##### ***Measures:***

- Organizational separation of the administering of cash benefits from the provision of social services (See Chapter 1 for more details).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE

*Timeframe:* long term

- Detailed field assessment of the existing financial, technical, staff and infrastructure capacities of the CSW in order to make an appropriate division of assets as part of the organizational separation of the CSW into CCE and CSS.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* long term

- Legal education for the social workers in the CSW (CCE) for better interpretation of relevant legislation and secondary legislation.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, external education center

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of a uniform computer database of beneficiaries of social welfare assistance.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, World Bank - SPIL

*Timeframe:* medium term

#### **Goal 5. Strengthening of collaboration and coordination between CSW**

## (CCE) and EARM (employment centers)

### **Measures:**

- Membership of a representative of CSW (ACE) in the Governing Board of the Employment Agency, so that the CSW can get involved in planning and implementation of employment policies.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, EARM

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of Local Employment Councils comprising representatives of the municipality, employers, CSW (CCE) and employment centers of the EARM. These Councils would meet at least once a month to coordinate and intensify the job-searching activities by beneficiaries of cash entitlements (primarily beneficiaries of cash entitlements who are fully able to work, but also for single parents, persons with developmental impediments, orphans and children without parental care, perpetrators of criminal offences, victims of family violence, victims of human trafficking and persons with other social problems).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, CSW (CSS), EARM, municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of an individual plan for moving from welfare benefits to employment, to be part of their file maintained on each beneficiary of cash entitlements at the CSW (CCE). The individual plan for finding employment would be prepared in collaboration with the EARM and the municipalities.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, CCE, EARM (employment centers), municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Education of CSW (CCE) and EARM (employment centers) for implementation of programs for moving clients from welfare benefits to employment.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, EARM, ISWSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Involvement of the business community, municipalities and other local actors in the implementation of programs for moving from welfare benefits to employment.

*Implementing agents:* ACE, CCE, EARM (employment centers), municipalities, business community, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Strengthening of the practice of hiring beneficiaries of cash assistance to perform public works by stronger involvement of municipalities in the implementation of public works and improvement of mechanisms for good recordkeeping and coordination.

## **6. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR INSTITUTIONALIZED CARE**

### **6.1. Current state**

According to the Law on Social Protection, institutionalized care includes acquisition of work or manufacturing skills, and accommodation (care) in an institution for social care. In the Republic of Macedonia there are eleven operating institutions for social care:

- Home for Infants and Small Children Bitola: the institution has 120 beds for children and 25 for mothers; in 2009 it accommodated 95 children.
- Home for Orphans and Children without Parental Care “11 Oktomvri” Skopje: the institution has about ten classes with a maximum of 14 children each. As of April 2010, this institution accommodated 70 wards.
- Public Institution for Children with Behavioral and Social Problems Skopje: the capacity of the institution is 90 persons, and in 2009 it accommodated 34 persons.
- PU Institute for Care, Nurture and Education of Children and Youth “Ranka Milanovic” Skopje: the capacity of the institution is 75 beneficiaries, and in 2009 the services of the Institute were used by 37 children.
- Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth Skopje: in 2009 attended by more than 54 beneficiaries with moderate to severe impediments in intellectual development. Capacity is 120 beneficiaries.
- Special institute Demir Kapija: The Institute accommodates a total of 311 beneficiaries with severe and most severe mental disabilities, cared for by 208 staff, most of whom are: care technicians, defectologists, physical therapists and nurses.
- Institute for Rehabilitation and Care “Banja Bansko”: the institution has a capacity of 65 beneficiaries, and in 2009 the services were used by 64 persons.
- Institutions for the elderly in Kumanovo, Bitola, Prilep and Skopje: The institutions Kumanovo, Bitola and Prilep operate as municipal homes for the elderly since 2004. The “Majka Tereza” department operates within the Gerontology Institute in Skopje (decentralization procedure is still not finished), with a capacity for 111 beneficiaries.
- Public Institution Center for Asylum Seekers with a capacity of 150 beds: As of December 2009 the Center for Asylum Seekers has accommodated 24 persons.

The system of social care also includes private institutions for social care, including the SOS “Children’s Village” in Skopje, where about 80 children without parental care are accommodated. With the process of pluralization of social care in the Republic of Macedonia, four private homes for the elderly were opened,

but the transformation into institutions for social care is still not finalized in these facilities.

The process of deinstitutionalization began in 2002 through implementation of a special program for preparation of about 30 children to leave the Special Institute Demir Kapija. To date, 23 children have been deinstitutionalized and placed in foster families.

The process of deinstitutionalization has been focused mostly on deinstitutionalization of persons with mental disabilities from the Special Institute Demir Kapija, primarily children. Deinstitutionalization in the other institutions for social care has not started yet. At the same time, deinstitutionalization is not accompanied by a parallel process of transformation of the institutions for social care. The conditions for care in those institutions are poor in terms of infrastructure and services. The present conditions in the institutions indicate that in most of them the capacities are not fully utilized, which suggests that they are uneconomical. The criteria for placement in an institution for social care should be further elaborated to achieve more suitable placements of beneficiaries. During the placement decision there is no comprehensive assessment of the overall living situation and available resources of the beneficiaries in order to avoid needless institutionalization.

The new Law on Social Protection in 2009 introduced two new forms of care: placement in a small group home and assisted autonomous living, which are designated in the Law as forms of de-institutionalized care, even though they have some characteristics of institutionalized care. Also, the Center for Asylum Seekers is defined in the Law as institutional care, despite the fact that it belongs in the category of temporary care institutions. Thus, there is a need for more adequate classification of social services in the system of social care.

The implementation of the new forms of care (small group home and assisted autonomous living) is in an initial stage. In collaboration with the non-government sector, 10 housing units were open and are operating for assisted autonomous living, intended for persons with mental disabilities and currently accommodating 40 persons from the Special Institute Demir Kapija. The small group home in Berovo accommodates five children without parental care.

## 6.2. Measures, implementing agents and timeframes

### Goal 1. Development and improvement of institutional care

#### **Measures:**

- Revising the criteria for classification of social services in the system of social welfare protection in accordance with their place in the continuum of social services for long-term care.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Re-defining the service “assisted autonomous living” by introducing three forms with different levels of assistance and support: protected housing

with 24-hour assistance, living with occasional assistance and assisted autonomous living.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introducing a possibility in the law for accommodation of an elderly person in a small group home and institution for assisted living.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introducing the option of placement in a care home for the same categories of beneficiaries as those eligible for placement in a foster family.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of special ward homes for care for persons with specific needs (Alzheimer patients, persons with disabilities, children with social behavior disorders).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ACE, EARM  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of halfway house, an option particularly advantageous for persons previously under institutional care.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Elaboration of the criteria for placement into the institutions for social care and consistent compliance with such criteria.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Developing of forms of institutionalized in the direction of avoiding segregation of beneficiaries with certain particular problem situations (elderly persons, persons with disabilities, orphans) and their integration into the local community.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

## Goal 2. Transformation of the institutions for social care

### **Measures:**

- Establishment of expert commissions for evaluation of the existing capabilities in the institutions for social care in terms of space, equipment and staff, establishment of price for service per beneficiary and proposing solutions for transformation of those institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, external consultant  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Transformation of the institutions with a view of replacing the massive and bulky institutions with smaller and more flexible forms of institutionalized care adapted to the specific category of beneficiaries and their individual needs.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, donors  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Humanization of the living conditions in existing institutions by improving the quality of life and creating environments that are closest to the family environment.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, donors  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Allocation of funds for renovation, provision of equipment and introduction of new program contents for sports, recreation, culture and entertainment, and socialization as part of the transformation of the institutions.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, donors  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of de-institutionalized forms of care (day care and temporary care, assistance and care in the beneficiary's home) by the institutions for social care.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Establishment of temporary accommodation (respite) centers and terminal care (hospice) centers in the institutions for the elderly.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS  
*Timeframe:* long term

- Re-training and additional education for some of the staff in the institutions for social care after the transformation and their reassignment to tasks required by the newly introduced services or to related institutions that are understaffed.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS  
*Timeframe:* long term

### **Goal 3. Intensifying and expanding the process of de-institutionalization**

- The process of de-institutionalization should be extended to other institutions for social care, in addition to the Special Institution Demir Kapija.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS  
*Timeframe:* long term

- For each institution, there should be a detailed analysis on the appropriate

directions and forms of de-institutionalization of the beneficiaries.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, external consultant

*Timeframe:* medium term

- The process of de-institutionalization should be preceded by a development of a local network of services as an alternative to institutionalized care.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, municipality, NGOs

*Timeframe:* long term

## **7. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR DE-INSTITUTIONALIZED CARE**

### **7.1. Present state**

Pursuant to the Law on Social Protection the de-institutionalized care that takes place in or through a CSW includes: first social service to social care beneficiaries; assistance to an individual; assistance to a family; care in the home and assistance to an individual and to a family; temporary and day care and accommodation as assistance to an individual or family; placement in a foster family; placement in a small group home and assisted living.

In practice, in the case of first social service, and especially in the cases of assistance to an individual and assistance to a family, not enough attention is paid to offering and delivering these services. Professional, advisory and counseling work with beneficiaries is neglected because the administering of cash transfers takes up most of the human capital and resources in the CSW.

#### ***7.1.1. Day care centers and centers for daily and temporary accommodation***

Institutions for social care (de-institutionalized care) that are currently operating are:

- Day center and clubs for elderly and adult persons (2).
- Day center for street children – children on streets (2). MLSP helps fund a non-government organization that operates a day center for street children in Suto Orizari.
- Day center for persons who use or abuse drugs and other psychotropic substances and precursors (2). MLSP collaborates with the Ministry of Health, municipality and a religious community in a day center in Strumica.
- Center for homeless persons (1)
- Center for victims of family violence (6)
- Day center for persons with mental or physical impediments: 23 day centers for children with moderate or severe intellectual impediments; 1 Day center for children with cerebral palsy. MLSP participates in the funding of 3 day centers for adults with moderate or severe intellectual impediments (in Skopje, Ohrid and Radovis) managed by the national organization for the disabled National Center for Support of Persons with Intellectual Impediments

– Poraka; and 1 Day center for adults with moderate or severe intellectual impediments in Kumanovo funded by the local government together with Poraka.

- Center for provision of assistance in the home: in past practice, the government has not yet developed the form of provision of care and assistance in the home for various categories of beneficiaries. Several successful projects for care and assistance in the home are implemented by the non-government sector, but the face issues of financial sustainability.

- Soup kitchens: The soup kitchens project started in March 2007, and over 48,500,000.00 denars have been allocated for this purpose from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia. A total of 36 soup kitchens have been opened to date, in cooperation with municipalities and pre-schools, serving a total of 3457 beneficiaries of permanent cash assistance.

The reforms of the system of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia in the past few years placed the strongest emphasis on developing the day care and accommodation as assistance to individuals or families. As it can be seen from the presented data on the current situation, several such centers are open and operating, and most of them serve children as a priority group of beneficiaries. The need remains to further develop the existing centers and establish new centers at the local level.

### **7.1.2. Foster families**

Foster families as a form of care has a long tradition in Macedonia, starting from the early 1960s. For a long time this form of care was practiced primarily in Skopje, while in recent years it is also developing in other parts of the country. In 2004, secondary legislation made it possible to establish criteria for selection of foster families and the type and scope of services. With the process of de-institutionalization of children with disabilities, a number of them (23) were placed in foster families in several cities in Macedonia, which initiated the process of this type of care for children with disabilities. In 2009 a total of 92 children with developmental impediments were placed in care. In 2010 there are a total of 140 foster families that care for 219 children between the ages of 3 and 26. The CSW also place orphans and children without parental care in the homes of close relatives which are not considered foster families.

Despite the media promotion and development of this form of care that should fundamentally be temporary, it remains focused on long-term care of the categories of children with disabilities and orphans or children without parental care, but not on other categories at social risk that could be covered with this form of care under the Law on Social Protection. Despite the well-developed secondary legislation, in practice the implementation of this form of care is accompanied by weaknesses. Significant improvements are needed in terms of selection of foster families, general and specialized education of the foster parents, as well as continued and systematic support to the foster families. Also, care in foster families does not differentiate between general and specialized

(therapeutic) care, nor between temporary and long-term care, and there is no kinship care.

## 7.2. Activities, implementing agents and time frame

### Goal 1. Improvement of professional services and counseling

#### Measures:

- System-level and organizational separation of the administration of cash benefits from the provision of social services as competences and responsibilities of the CSW (See Chapter 1).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS

*Timeframe:* long term

- Introduction of a triage unit in the CSW (CSS).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, CSS

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of centers for individual, group and family therapy.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, CSS, municipalities, non-government sector.

*Timeframe:* long term

- Introduction of new forms of implementation of social rehabilitation of persons who use or abuse drugs and other psychotropic substances and precursors in therapeutic communities.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, CSS, municipalities, non-government sector

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of service norms and standards in therapy centers and communities.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Adding precision to the conditions and criteria for involvement of licensed therapists for delivery of individual, family and group therapy (establishing guidelines for use of external expertise: prices of services, duration of treatment, lists of experts etc.).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS

*Timeframe:* long term

- Preparation and precise determination of the norms for services and scope of work engagement of the professional staff in the institutions for social protection.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS

*Timeframe:* medium term

### Goal 2. improvement of day care and temporary care

## Measures:

- Preparation of a detailed in-depth analysis of the needs for social services at the local level through identification of population groups at risk; available premises; capabilities of the local organizations and institutions; possible forms of funding and proposals for establishment of a network of local centers for day care and temporary care on the basis of the identified needs.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ISWSP, donors, municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Conducting an evaluation of the existing centers in terms of available space and human resources, organization of the operations, utilization of the centers, problems and needs, professional work with the beneficiaries, effects achieved, in order to propose solutions for improving their operation.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ISWSP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Enhancement of network of centers for day admission and temporary admission and care by opening additional centers, territorially distributed according to the local needs of the residents: day care centers for the elderly; clubs for the elderly; day care centers for street children; day care centers for users of drugs and alcohol; day care centers for persons with mental or physical disability.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, municipalities, NGO, donors, private sector

*Timeframe:* long term

- Introduction of centers for socialization and re-socialization of elderly persons, persons with disabilities, children with social and behavioral that emphasize useful, productive and positive engagement in sports, cultural and recreational events, development of the beneficiaries' skills and potentials, promotion of active life through involvement in community life. This form of care could be implemented by civic organizations, municipalities and other local entities through funding participation and co-payments by the beneficiaries.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, ISP, municipalities, NGO, donors

*Timeframe:* long term

- Re-defining the relationship between the central and local governments with regard to establishment, operation and funding of centers for day care and temporary care, with the aim of gradual decentralization and handover to the municipalities.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, municipalities

*Timeframe:* long term

- Establishment of local councils for development of the network of social services at the local level, where the members would be representatives of municipalities, CSW, NGO, private sector, faith-based and humanitarian organizations, institutions for social protection.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, CSW, NGO, private sector, faith-based and humanitarian organizations, ISP

*Timeframe:* long term

- Increasing the budget allocations for development of de-institutionalized forms of care through private-public partnerships.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Adding clarity and precision to the public solicitations published by MLSP for specific social welfare protection services (type of service, place where the service is to be offered, user/beneficiary categories etc) based on prior analyses of social service needs at the local level.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Expanding opportunities for submitting applications to the annual public solicitations to other private (for-profit and not-for-profit) sector entities, in addition to the citizens' associations, such as humanitarian and faith-based organizations and groups, municipalities, educational organizations and others.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Promotion of projects based on local networking among municipalities, citizens' associations, private businesses and other entities, by giving priority to such projects in the appropriate public solicitations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Assessment of possibilities to accelerate the procedures associated with the public solicitations and introduction of longer-term strategic planning by finding new modalities for funding the projects selected through the public solicitations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS

*Timeframe:* long term

- Precise determination of the conditions and criteria for membership in the Commission for Cooperation with Citizens' Associations, establishment of a membership mandate and expansion with two new members (distinguished experts and professionals with at least five years working experience in the field) and a NGO representative with rotating one-year term.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Promotion of volunteering in the centers for day care and temporary care through systematic and coordinated cooperation with the appropriate educational institutions, NGO, humanitarian and religious organizations.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS, ISP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Improvement of the professional work in the centers for day care and temporary care by adding the following activities: intensifying individual and group work with clients and parents/guardians, organizing the clients and/or their parents/guardians into self-help groups, promotion of more organized forms of association, organizing sport, cultural and entertainment events, enhancement of the interactions and collaboration with parents/guardians.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS, ISP, donors

*Timeframe:* medium term

### Goal 3. Improving placements in foster families

#### Measures:

- Division of the forms of care according to a duration of placement criterion, namely: interventional placement (up to 30 days), temporary (up to 6 months), permanent care (for adults, elderly persons and children until legal adulthood).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Division of the types of accommodation/care according to the functional criteria, namely: general accommodation/care (placement with caregivers who do not need to have special university-level specialization), specialized accommodation/care (therapeutic care where the caregivers are degree-qualified defectologists, social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors) and "respite" care (temporary general or specialized placement in a foster family to satisfy the needs for rest, therapy, health treatment and fulfillment of domestic, family and professional obligations by caregivers of elderly persons, parents/guardians of children with disabilities, etc).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, CSS

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of special cash benefit for therapy in specialized foster families.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF

*Timeframe:* long term

- Promotion of placement in foster families for categories of beneficiaries for whom this type of care had been seldom used in the past: children with

behavioral-social problems; child victims of family violence; juvenile perpetrator of felony or misdemeanor; elderly person; adult person with a disability.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Regulation (in the secondary legislation) of the use of placement in a foster family appropriate to the category of beneficiaries and local accommodation/care capacities, according to the following categories and types of accommodation/care:
  - orphan child (general/permanent)
  - child without parental care (general/ permanent or temporary)
  - child with behavioral-social problems (abused, neglected or socially insecure child) and child victim of family violence (specialized/temporary and interventional)
  - juvenile offender, felony or misdemeanor (specialized/temporary)
  - person with moderate or severe impediments in mental development, person with deep impediments in mental development and person with permanent physical disability (specialized/permanent)
  - elderly person (general/specialized and permanent).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Strengthening of the functions of the foster family for help and support to the biological family during interventional and temporary placements.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Provision of appropriate assistance and support to the foster family by the CSW (CSS) through opportunities to use additional social services, continued supervision, mandatory general and specialized education, enhanced support and counseling in the transition periods just before and just after the placement and after the end of foster care, organizing in self-help groups and/or organizations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, CSS, donors  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Strengthening of the professional work with the biological family during interventional and temporary placements in order to avoid long-term care through counseling and therapy, as well as “entering into a contract” about the goals to be achieved.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Preparation of a plan for long-term solution of the problematic life situation of the person placed in a foster family.

*Implementing agents:* ISS, CSS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Strengthening of professional work with the beneficiaries of this type of care in the areas of: counseling and support before and right after placement to facilitate adaptation to the new living conditions, maintenance of close ties with the biological family, organizing group work and self-help groups, preparation for leaving the foster family (finding employment and getting ready for autonomous living).

*Implementing agents:* CSS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of foster care in a family of relatives (kinship care), which should be given priority before placement in a (unrelated) foster care family if that would be in the best interest of the child or beneficiary, in view of the advantages of this type of care: placement in a familiar environment, easier adaptation and less stress, maintaining ties with the biological family, better quality of care due to tighter emotional, cultural and social ties with the foster family of relatives etc.

*Implementing agents:* ISS  
*Timeframe:* medium term

#### **Goal 4. Development of other forms of de-institutionalized care**

##### **Measures:**

- Establishment of centers for assistance in the home environment for elderly and disabled persons and their families (distribution of food, maintenance of personal hygiene and sanitation in the home, repairs and adjustments of living conditions in the home, supply of food and medicines etc.).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, ISP, municipalities, donors, NGO, private sector  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of care centers in home environments for frail elderly and disabled persons (with a health care and social dimension).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF, ISS, ISP, municipalities, donors, NGO, private sector  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of forms of support to families at social risk (crisis centers for children from families at social risk, family helpers and others).

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS, ISP, municipalities, donors, NGO, private sector  
*Timeframe:* medium term

- Introduction of integrated centers for local social services in the municipalities with opportunities for co-funding and co-payment from beneficiaries. These centers would provide information about the available

services for various categories of beneficiaries at social risk, provide assistance in choosing the social service needed, offer direct services for assistance and care in domestic environments etc.

*Implementing agents:* Municipalities, NGO, humanitarian and faith-based organizations, donors, private sector

*Timeframe:* long term

- Allocation of budget funds for implementation of home assistance and care through annual solicitations published by the MLSP.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, MF

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Development of the forms of home assistance and care by civic associations, the private sector, municipalities, faith-based organizations and other local actors, on the basis of co-funding (public solicitations, own sources and co-payment by beneficiaries).

*Implementing agents:* CSS, municipalities, NGO, humanitarian and faith-based organizations, donors, private sector

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Developing the form of employing personal assistants to the beneficiaries of assistance and care from another person, by hiring unemployed persons and beneficiaries of social welfare cash benefits.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, CSS, EARM, municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of SOS lines for elderly and disabled persons, families at risk, children and youth, and others.

*Implementing agents:* CSS, municipalities, NGO

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of alarm centers for elderly and disabled persons and those who care for them.

*Implementing agents:* CSS, municipalities, NGO, private sector

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Establishment of precise criteria for operation of SOS lines, professional qualifications of SOS line service providers, and establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and control of the operations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, ISS

*Timeframe:* medium term

- Gradual transfer of responsibilities for management and funding of the existing soup kitchens to the municipalities; the municipalities could take over and operate the kitchens in cooperation with other institutions and organizations.

*Implementing agents:* MLSP, municipalities

*Timeframe:* medium term

### **III. MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The National Program for Development of Social Protection 2011-2021 is the basis for reform of the system of social protection and development of normative acts and other documents in the field of social protection. The MLSP leads the reform of the system of social protection and is the principal agent and initiator of the past and future strategic reform activities. The MLSP, as principal agent of the reform, will undertake activities for establishing structured and operational partner relationships with the relevant actors for implementation of this Program. In that regard, the MLSP will establish mechanisms for coordination of strategic activities, discussions and cooperation.

The Minister of Labor and Social Policy will establish a Coordinating Body with the task to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this program. This Coordinating Body will include representatives from :

- MLSP (3)
- MLSG (1)
- MF (1)
- ZELS (1)
- ISP (3)
- ISA (1)
- NGO (3 with rotating membership, depending on the stage of implementation)
- ISWSP (2)
- National coordinating bodies for implementation of strategic documents in the field of social protection (1, as needed).

In its monitoring and evaluation tasks, the Coordinating Body will collaborate with local councils that would be established under this Program.

The Coordinating Body will establish Annual Operational Plans for implementation of the Program for Development of Social Protection. At least once a year there will be an evaluation of the achieved strategic activities and achieved results. The MLSP will use internal and external resources for evaluation.

Evaluation will be conducted with the aim of:

- reviewing progress in following the envisaged strategic directions;
- identification of strategic issues in implementation;
- revision of the Program in accordance with established needs and circumstances.

The Coordinating Body will submit reports on the implementation of the Annual Operational Plans to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

### **IV. FUNDING**

Funding for the implementation of this Program will be provided from the national budget of the Republic of Macedonia, municipal budgets and donors.