



Treatment & social reintegration- quality assurance system in Croatia

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Goals and principle of drug treatment and social reintegration systems

A key goal of demand reduction programmes target addictions and associated health and social risks are developing and improving the efficient, integrated, comprehensive and evidence-based drug reduction system.

Treatment includes all structured interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and social integration) aimed to helping people who use drugs or have drug addiction problems in order to improve their psychological, medical and social status.

The key principles of the National Strategy and Action Plan:

- **improve the quality of treatment** and provide drug users or drug addicts with the optimal form of treatment according to their individual needs
- **establish a balanced and multidisciplinary approach**
- **to enhance and ensure better** treatment and care for special groups of addicts, such as persons with dual disorders, minors, female addicts and mothers with children, and care for children of addicts
- **conduct an evidence-based evaluation of treatment** in many field of treatment of drug addiction how is to define to what extent the above outcomes have been accomplished

The **recovery concept** that implies a process of social reintegration and the overall treatment of persons who, after being freed from addiction and PDU, should become active members of the society is the key issue that requires serious consideration for future strategies in the area of treatment.



Drug treatment and social reintegration systems in Croatia

- In the Republic of Croatia, treatment of drug abusers is primarily conducted in the health care system, and certain forms of psychosocial treatment are also conducted in the social welfare system, therapeutic communities and associations, as well as in the prison and probation systems.
- In addition, treatment of addicts who are minors or young adults, as well as occasional alcohol and drug users is also conducted in homes for children without adequate parental care, and children and youth with behavioural disorders.
- Inpatient/residential drug treatment services are provided in hospitals, therapeutic communities and particular penal authorities within the prison system.
- In Croatia, as in most other countries, are two basic forms of addiction treatment, namely: pharmacotherapy and psychosocial treatment, which should be strongly linked both in the treatment of opiate addiction and in the treatment of all other forms of addiction.
- Therefore, social reintegration is the logical consequence following psycho-social rehabilitation and treatment, as well as an important factor in the integral recovery of treated addicts.



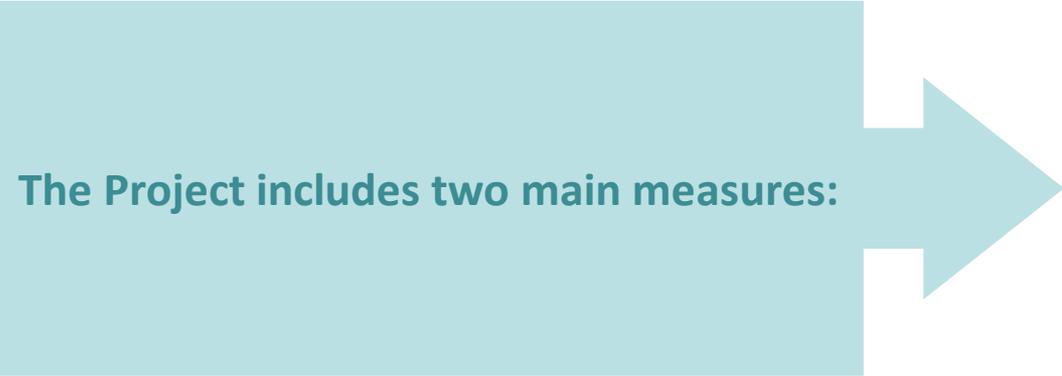
The Project of Social Reintegration

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted:



2007

- **The Project of Social Reintegration of Drug Dependent Persons**
- **The Protocol of Cooperation and Operation of the relevant national authorities, institutions and civil society organisations for the implementation of the Project of Social Reintegration.**



The Project includes two main measures:

- 1. Professional retraining and additional training of drug dependent persons who are in one of the rehabilitation programmes or have completed such a programme**
- 2. Stimulating employment of drug dependent persons**



What led to the implementation of quality assurance systems?

Really important tools for developing of quality assurance systems are:

- **The Guidelines-** contains recommendations aimed at optimizing patient care and are based on systematic evidence reports and an assessment of the benefits or harms of alternative care options.
- **Standards** - are principles and rules based on recommended interventions in the Guidelines. Quality standards are generally accepted principles or a set of rules for the best or most appropriate way to implement some interventions mentioned in Guidelines.
- **Protocols** - are documents that specify the procedures for carrying out certain tasks listed in the Guidelines.
- **Educations** - The most common way to ensure treatment quality in the Republic of Croatia are personnel training, professional events (seminars, conferences, etc.), specialized training courses and thematic meetings.
- **Evaluation-** is the path to science-based programs, and can be defined as a systematic, objective process aimed at determining the success of a strategy or program in whether and to what extent the strategy / program has achieved its goals and objectives.





Concept of developing the system: from standards to quality assurance system- key stakeholders and their roles

The main national institutions promoting quality assurance in treatment and social integration are the Ministry of Health and Croatian National Institute of Public Health (CNIPH).

- **Ministry of Health** is responsible for ensuring quality in the implementation of programmes which are conducted in the health care system.
- **Croatian National Institute of Public Health** keeps the Registry of Persons Treated for Psychoactive Drug Abuse, takes part in creation and implementation of general and targeted programmes in the area of mental health and addiction prevention. In addition, CPHI is responsible for coordinating activities and measures provided for in the national strategic documents, as well as for initiating the development of the guidelines and standards to enhance quality in the implementation of drug demand reduction programmes.
- Regardless of the types of programmes, bodies responsible for programme implementation and quality control are also:
 - **Ministry of Science and Education** takes part in creation, implementation and monitoring of addiction prevention programmes, it also takes part in the implementation of the Social Reintegration Project.
 - **Ministry of Justice and Administration** is responsible for ensuring quality in the implementation of treatment and social integration programmes which are conducted in the prison system.
 - **Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy** takes part in the implementation of the Social Reintegration Project by creating active labour market measures targeting treated addicts and is responsible for ensuring quality in the implementation of programmes which are conducted in the social welfare system, including treatment and social reintegration programmes for addicts.



Concept of developing the system: from standards to quality assurance system-description of our work with Quality Standards

The Croatian Institute of Public Health and Ministry of Health – Service for combating of drug abuse is responsible for the coordination and implementation monitoring all drug policy in area of treatment and social integration what include:

- ✓ Assessment of the current situation and level of harmonization with the EU standards and requirements
- ✓ Development Plan and programs– defined concrete activities and projects in line with real needs
- ✓ Streamline multi-agency collaboration
- ✓ Set up multidisciplinary Working Groups for relevant areas and developing standards, guidelines and protocols
- ✓ Organized educations, trainings, workshops including standardized training for experts from different treatment area
- ✓ Attribute special attention to support services targeting treatment of substance use disorders in minors, women and other vulnerable groups like migrants, double diagnosis,etc.
- ✓ Drafted strategic documents a National strategy and Action plans
- ✓ Promote standards and guidelines on the national and local level
- ✓ Prepared surveys in certain areas (e.g. seroprevalence, Roma people, etc)
- ✓ Prepared evaluation survey projects as like evaluation of National strategy, Guidelines and Project of social integration
- ✓ Prepared annual report about drug abuse and set of data for EMCCDA



Concept of developing the system: -What we were doing for developing of quality assurance systems for treatment and social integration

- 2006 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the **Guidelines for methadone pharmacotherapy of opioid addicts**. In the same year the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare adopted **the Guidelines for buprenorphine pharmacotherapy of opioid addicts**.
- 2014 the **Guidelines for psychosocial treatment of drug addicts in the health care, social or prison system** adopted by the Commission of the Croatian Government
- 2011 ex Office for Combating Drug Abuse in cooperation with the experts from the Dutch Institute of Mental Health and Addiction – Trimbos Institute conducted the first project of scientific evaluation of the National Strategy on Combating Drug Abuse for the period 2006-2012.
- The results of the above evaluation represented the direction for setting strategic objectives under the National Strategy on Combating Drug Abuse for the period 2012-2017, but also indicated the areas that required further strengthening.
- 2014 Evaluation of Project of social reintegration was implemented
- In 2016, a joint study “Assessment of Drug Treatment System in the Republic of Croatia” was carried out by the OCDA and the Trimbos Institute.
- In the second half of 2017, with the support of the OCDA, the Trimbos Institute conducted the second phase of the study – a special evaluation of treatment and dispensing of substitution therapy that was characterized by increasingly significant financial resources.



Concept of developing the system: -What we do now for developing of quality assurance systems for treatment and social integration

- 2021 evaluation research project of *Guidelines for psychosocial treatment of drug addicts in the health care, social or prison system in the Republic of Croatia* was conducted and established experts groups for revision of Guidelines
- 2020-2022 Croatia is participating in two important Project of Pompidou group aimed at vulnerable groups- migrants, women and children whose parents have drug addiction problems (*Children whose parents use drugs and Support Network of Professionals (SNP) working on Drug-Related Challenges for Refugees, Migrants & IDPS*)
- 2021-2022- Development program standards for the evaluation / verification of programs of social care homes, therapeutic communities and other social care providers for people with alcohol, drug, gambling and other forms of addiction and established a Commission to evaluate these programs
- 2022. Expert Working Group established for the drafting of the *Protocol on cooperation during, treatment and care of persons with drug addiction problems with a special purpose for minors, women and children whose parents use drugs*
- 2022. Organize 3 regional training on the topic of planning psychosocial programs and evaluation of treatment



Concept of developing the system: practical impact of using Quality Standards

Evaluation of Project of social integration 2014.

- The general assessment of the Project is positive, and achieved satisfactory results and the positive impact which are:
- has contributed to a better inclusion of addicts in the community, education and the labor market and allowed a chance for abstinence,
- improved sensitization of the public and reduced stigmatization of drug users
- improved social integration of drug addicts and stimulated representation of social reintegration in general policy on drugs

Evaluation of National drug strategy (2017)

- The area of treatment was rated as good / 60% agree that NS had a significant impact on development of standard quality in area of treatment.
- A multidisciplinary approach is provided
- Structured involvement of civil society / beneficiaries is enabled - quality assessment is recommended among beneficiaries, end users of treatment systems, as well as persons "outside treatment"
- Treatment with substitution therapy in prisons is possible but is of questionable / worrying quality

Evaluation of guidelines of psychosocial treatment (2021)

- Psychosocial treatment seems to be an important part of the treatment of people with drug addiction both from the perspective of professionals and from the perspective of users.
- The guidelines are a very useful tool for working with people with drug addiction, but they need to be significantly supplemented, especially in terms of interventions for specific groups, protocols and standards for implementing individual interventions and respect for recovery from both professional and user perspectives.

What we learned from evaluations and implementation of standards?

- Some of the key recommendations arising from this Evaluation were the need for better and more regular information and education on using interventions from guidelines in order to encourage their application in practice.
- There are the need for organizing training on individual psychosocial interventions and evaluation of treatment was emphasized, as well as the need to harmonize the reporting system on individual psychosocial interventions, as well as the development of cooperation protocols that would more clearly define the role of which system and the role of individual experts.
- Moreover, psychosocial treatment is extremely important in their recovery and they assess the interventions as extremely useful and necessary, but also that they were not equally available to them in all systems.
- It is extremely important that the treatment program should be scientifically based and in accordance with the characteristics and needs of each user (tailor-made approach).
- Finally, the activities and results of treatment services and services providers should be subject to regular external and internal evaluation.





Thank you for your attention!



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send its to my email:

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