



**PROFILING OF  
POTENTIAL TARGET  
GROUPS FOR MOTIVATION  
AND SUPPORT SERVICES  
AND THE NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT STUDY**



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I N V E S T I N G I N Y O U R F U T U R E

# PROFILING OF POTENTIAL TARGET GROUPS FOR MOTIVATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

## SUMMARY



Baltic  
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## SUMMARY

Research “Profiling of potential target groups for motivation and support services and the needs assessment study” has been carried out within the project “Diversity promotion”. The study aims to provide the characteristics of persons at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, to identify the needs of the target group and to provide recommendations on necessary support for successful integration into society, involvement in social life, including education, improvement of qualification and obtaining employment, and support in rights protection in case of discrimination.

The target groups of the research are: (1) persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of gender, persons after the parental leave, the victims of violence, persons who provide care for another family member, and representatives of single-parent families; (2) persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of age (persons over 50); (3) persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of disability, including unemployed persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities and low levels of education; (4) persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, including the Roma and other ethnic minorities. Besides these direct target groups, an additional target group of the study were different organizations and institutions involved in the providing the support and combating social exclusion: social services, educational services, libraries and cultural houses, the State Employment Agency, and non-governmental organizations.

There were 126 in-depth interviews conducted in the study, of which 109 in-depth interviews were carried out with the direct target groups: 37 in-depth interviews with the persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of gender; 15 in-depth interviews with the persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of age (persons over 50); 40 in-depth interviews with the persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of disability; 17 in-depth interviews with the persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity. Additionally 17 in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions were conducted with different organizations and institutions involved in the providing the support and combating social exclusion: social services, educational services, libraries and cultural houses, the State Employment Agency, and non-governmental organizations.

The study scrutinizes the experience of discrimination and indications of social exclusion of persons of the four direct target groups. The needs analysis is provided with the focus on necessary support services to facilitate the integration of the target groups into society, as well as the legal awareness and advocacy of the target groups.

The main results of the study are practical guidelines for support activities to the persons from target groups, which are summarized in the description of the profiling of target groups and include the identification of subgroups, their needs and the most effective and targeted motivation and support services.

Target group profiling distinguishes between two types of criteria: general criteria and target group-specific criteria. This approach has been chosen because the research data reveals that the target groups have common needs, as well as the specific subgroups have very specific needs related to particular limitations they face or stereotypes in society. Two key indicators that affect the situation of all target groups in the context of social exclusion are the target group income and employment status. If a person of the particular target group has a status of poor person or low-income person, or his or her income is comparable to the income level laid down for the granting of a status of low-income person, these persons have a significantly higher risk of social exclusion because of low income. These persons have also significantly fewer

opportunities to defend themselves in case of discrimination as well as their access to health services and meaningful leisure opportunities is more limited, because of a shortage of money to pay for these services and transport costs. The income level is closely related to the person's employment status. If a person has been long-term unemployed or working low intensity work (part-time work) and has no support within the family, then a person has a significantly lower income, and often suffers from apathy, disbelief in self, and low motivation to do anything to change the situation. In those cases there is a need for motivation services.

A general criterion which applies to all target groups and helps to profile the target group representatives is an experience of discrimination. If a person has suffered from a direct discrimination in the labour market or in services, that is to say, has been faced with unjustified difference in treatment on the basis of different personal characteristics (for example, gender, age, disability, ethnic origin), the person should be assisted to receive a legal protection. Suggested support tools in these cases are: 1) an individual legal counselling; 2) emotional support and encouragement, to defend their rights. If a person has faced with situations of covert discrimination or perceived discrimination, then a person needs informational support to recognize discrimination and to protect himself or herself in a situation of discrimination. Suggested support tools in these cases are: 1) individual counselling provided by a social change agent or lawyer; 2) the group lessons. A social change agent in this study is defined as a person who facilitates changes in the perception of situation and self, and whose main task is to help the target group representatives themselves to identify and solve their problems, by attracting the necessary resources. To ensure a quality of provided support social change agents have to be people who are experienced in working with specific target groups, and have to have education of a social worker, a psychologist or a related set of professions (social rehabilitator, social pedagogue, etc.).

The target group-specific criteria are linked to each target group characteristics, target sub-groups and their specific needs. For the target group of persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of **gender**, part of the target group-specific criteria are related to the person's family situation. Very often these are persons on parental leave, representatives of one-parent families, persons caring for another family member. Help is more needed for those, who have a status of poor person or low-income person, or his or her income is comparable to the income level laid down for the granting of a status of low-income person, as well as for those who have experienced direct or covert discrimination or are subjected to several risks of social exclusion and discrimination risks (multiple discrimination).

Persons providing care for another family member, especially if this family member is a child with a disability, as well as single-parent families are faced with stigma or shame in everyday life, as well as emotional crisis for the first time faced with a specific situation (divorce, birth of a child with disabilities, family member's illness). To overcome emotional crisis or stigma and to raise self-esteem people in these situations need a psychological support. It can be provided as individual consultations of psychologist or as support groups, bringing together people with common needs, such as support group for parents or women who are raising children alone.

Single-parent families in particular need a support to gain the recovery of maintenance from a partner who does not participate in the upbringing of children. The study reveals that this target group suffers from a shortage of information how to perform this procedure, especially when the children are not born in a registered marriage.

To attend individual counselling or group sessions, an important need of the target group is for non-standard / flexible babysitting services. While people who are providing care for their family members, are in need for temporarily care services for dependent persons.

Victims of domestic violence have a specific range of needs, and in many cases they also are subject to a number of risks of social exclusion and discrimination (multiple discrimination). For example, in situations

where domestic violence has been interrupted, the victims of violence who have minor children, often become a single-parent family, in many cases, these families are at the risk of poverty. Victims of domestic violence are a special subgroup because their traumatic experiences are mostly related to situations of violence for several years, and they have significantly influenced a person's psyche and self-esteem. The most urgent needs of this target group are the need for information on the possibilities to receive a support in case of domestic violence. There is also a need to encourage these persons to seek help and to support them to stop the violence. The necessary support includes psychological counselling while being in crises situation as well as a psycho-social support after the violence has been interrupted.

For the target group of persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of **age**, there is a need for emotional support and raising of self-esteem. This particularly concerns those who are over 50 and are unsuccessful in their job search, because negative experience in job search cause depression and hopelessness, and contributes to the isolation and self-discrimination. Self-discrimination in these cases takes the form of self-impeachment and refusal to seek employment, to build social contacts. The study reveals the need to promote active aging practices, because social activity and health of persons over 50 is relatively low. Bone and joint system diseases that cause continuous back or joint pain have the greatest impact on a person's subjective perception, well-being and the ability to be socially active. Due to chronic back or joint pain, persons over 50 are no longer willing to leave the house and take part in social activities. To contribute the physical preservation of representatives of the target group it would be necessary to develop the possibilities to participate in therapeutic exercises under the supervision of a physiotherapist, which could be organized together with lectures or thematic events. Lectures and thematic events on healthy lifestyles are necessary to raise awareness of the importance of timely health care and the measures which the target group representatives may carry out on a daily basis. Physical activities can be organized as group lessons, and they may have a significant positive impact on a person's motivation to change his or her behaviour and to overcome the biases of society.

For the target group of persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of **disability**, there is a need for support in raising self-esteem. This could be provided as group lessons integrated with other educational and information activities, such as the provision of information about the rights, opportunities and where to turn for help, NGO start-ups, local current events, etc. Due to the constraints of the functional capacity, persons with disabilities more often need a support in obtaining information (especially persons with learning difficulties, but sometimes also persons who have hearing or sight impairments). Persons with disabilities face difficulties in obtaining different support services provided by state and municipality institution, because of the numerous administrative procedures. Therefore, they need a support in contact with the state and municipal institutions, such as providing information in easy language, interpreting or translating information for those whose native language is not Latvian, and others. This kind of support can be provided by a social change agent as a support person, who is competent in matters of the provision of services to persons with disabilities (the formal eligibility requirements) and may accompany persons with disabilities during the visits to the state and local government authorities or health authorities.

The study reveals that there are cases when persons with disabilities have limited opportunities to get out of their flat or house (housing is not suitable for persons with disabilities, there are no support from family members or assistant, which helps to get out of home), and these persons are exposed to social exclusion due to inaccessibility of environment. In these cases before to involve a particular person in the motivation activities, it is necessary to address the issue of persons mobility and accessibility of environment.

A special target group that requires increased attention are persons with disabilities or potential disabilities immediately after severe injuries, as well as persons with disabilities or potential disabilities after acute stages of illness. People returning to everyday life after a very serious turmoil, which has completely changed his or her life, need a special support, not only physical rehabilitation, but also psycho-social rehabilitation. If the representatives of this group does not receive psycho-social support, they often are

unable to adapt to the new living conditions, and choose destructive behaviour, such as increased use of alcohol. To overcome emotional crisis and to raise self-confidence they need both psychological counselling as well as support groups, such as support groups for people with certain types of diseases or functional disorders. In certain cases, the previous working experience of persons with a disability or potential disability after an injury or illness is not applicable, because they have lost their working capacity in certain respects. For example, many physical workers do not see the job prospects because after an injury or illness they can not make what they could before and are not able to discern new directions for developing their careers. In these cases, they need a support of career consultant, whose role in these situations would be to help to realize their potential to carry out any other work or look for other opportunities for self-realization.

Within the target group of persons who are subject to the risk of social exclusion and discrimination on grounds of **ethnicity**, a special sub-group is the Roma, in comparison with other ethnic groups in Latvia, because it is significantly disadvantaged. To combat social exclusion and discrimination of Roma it is necessary to develop individual support for Roma people aiming to activate Roma capacity, the ability to be aware of their problems and solve them and the motivation or desire to change their current situation. After the social change agent's assessment of what is the most urgent needs of the particular individual and the resources necessary to attract in order to provide the necessary support, there is a need of targeted work with each individual and jointly made decisions on particular steps towards solutions of the problems.

One of the social change agent's tasks is to provide support to the Roma in contact with the state and municipal institutions, such as presenting information in easy language and explaining it, and helping to deal with the administrative procedures for various services. Ideally, a social change agent to enhance motivation and support services for Roma is a Roma mediator and has been sufficiently prepared to make the social change agent functions. In providing support for the Roma it is especially important that any information is presented clearly and it has to be verified whether the information is actually perceived.

Interviews with Roma about their life in Latvia reveals that there is a lack of confidence among the Roma in relation to any specific support or services to Roma. Thus, when developing motivation and support services for the Roma population, special attention should be given to strategies to gain the trust of the Roma and to show the potential benefits of engaging in a particular activity. In this process, the involvement of trained Roma mediators could be very helpful. When providing any support services, a potential benefit to a particular person should be explained, and all other things about the conditions and obligations to receive this support should be discussed during the individual conversation because general information to vast audience not everyone will understand.

Roma and other visually distinct ethnic groups in Latvia face suspicious or even a direct negative attitude and sometimes hate speech on the street, in public transport and in other public places. Visibly different ethnic groups in Latvia experience negative attitudes out of sight, sometimes there are persons who does not want to sit next to them in public transport, and there are also hate speech and violent assault cases. In these cases, it is necessary to provide information, what to do in different situations when they are facing hate speech, discrimination in labour market or discrimination in receiving any services or in the most radical cases witnessed violence on ethnic basis. Informational support about the rights, opportunities and where to turn for help, can be provide both in individual consultations by a social change agent or a lawyer specializing in these matters as well as in lectures or support group meetings.

Support services in each case should be adapted to specific needs; otherwise, the support provided will be ineffective. The main attention within project activities and services provided should be paid to motivation of representatives of the target group to change their attitudes positively towards themselves and their possibilities. It is also important to support target group representatives to receive already developed services by helping them to prepare necessary documents, assisting them during the visits to state

and municipality institutions, especially when the aid or service is refused. It is also important to educate target group representatives about their rights and opportunities to receive already established support services, and finally it is necessary to create inter-professional teams involving key institutions in provision of support to get a coordinated and sustainable support.

In the context of activities to be implemented within the project “Diversity promotion”, it should be taken into account that if the most acute needs are not granted, a person will not be ready to engage in activities to enhance motivation (for example, the need for mobility by providing technical aids or adapted housing to be able to get out of the apartment building, or the need for physical security in case of violence in the family).