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Institution Name Institute of Mental Health

Name of the relevant department, unit, section or area of the institution

Institute of Mental Health

City Belgrade

Country SERBIA

Reference SRB-9

Title WHO Collaborating Centre for mental health workforce development

Report Year 09/2010 to 09/2011

1. Implementation of the work plan. For each main activity briefly explain how the activity was implemented, the outcome and impact and, if available, the results of the evaluation (e.g. evaluation of a course by the participants). Also explain difficulties (if any). Do not provide technical results in this form (technical results, if applicable, are to be sent directly to the WHO Department you work with).

Activity 1 Training of multidisciplinary staff working in community mental health services and evaluation of services

Explanation

Activity 2 Continuous training in mental health issues of primary health care workers

Explanation

Conference on the role of health professionals in health and human rights was held on 8 September 2011 in Oslo, Norway and the objective of the conference was to demonstrate how medical associations can collaborate across cultural and ethnic differences to promote ethics and human rights in medicine.

Some of the conference topics were the rights of the mentally ill patient, the role of doctors in treatment of torture survivors and documentation of torture and how health as a bridge to peace - re-establishing the contact between the medical associations in former Yugoslavia.

Our WHO collaborating project Collaboration on educational programmes for general practitioners was presented. This program is being carried out in collaboration with the Institute of Public Health from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and supported by the Committee for Human Rights, Norwegian Medical Association and is lasting for ten years now.

The training of general practitioners, pediatricians and nurses were organized in order to enable them to early recognize and diagnose mental health problems as well as to develop communication skills. Special focus was given to most common mental disorders (such as depression, anxiety) but also to severe mental disorders. Future steps in collaboration are being defined and the program of the next course prepared. The aim will be to apply already developed curricula by the IMH for general practitioners in the whole country and in the countries of Stability Pact for SE.

The Institute of Mental Health also participated in creating National Guidelines for Depression Treatment which will be used in primary, secondary and tertiary health care level (chair of the Task Force was Prof. Dusica Lecic-Tosevski). The Guidelines include all contemporary treatments based on the evidence based data (psychopharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, ECT, alternative therapies) and specific population groups (children/adolescents, women and elderly population). The Guidelines were presented at four university cities of Serbia and included all three healthcare levels.

Activity 3 Education of families with mentally ill members.

Explanation

a. Training program on "Systemic approach to families with mentally ill member in the system of social care"

The program "Systemic approach to families with mentally ill member in the system of social care" has been accredited by the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare in 2009 and it was implemented during 2009/2010 in the form of lectures and workshops in different municipalities. Acknowledging the importance of the implementation of the Program for the community, The Republic Institute for Public Health reaccredited the Program on March 2011 for the next period 2011-2014. Reaccreditation was made taking into account the basic needs of the social welfare system employees aiming at

strengthening their professional capacities to work with families with a mentally ill member.

The following effects of the programme stand out as significant: the development of systemic model in approaching families with mentally ill members, enhancing knowledge in identifying family strengths, developed skills of social welfare professionals in implementing basic systemic interventions in counseling families under risk and the families with mentally ill member and the improved work within the community in approaching those families (destigmatisation, network, etc.).

The Programme is under way and it is in a phase where the interest for inclusion of various social welfare organizations is being identified.

b. Psycho-educational and supportive groups for families with mentally ill members

It is well known that diagnosis of mental disorder represents a significant crisis for the family, unprepared for the changes and for the periods of instability, crisis and uncertainty about the future functioning. Most studies and clinical experiences confirmed that families of mentally ill members feel helplessness, burden and feeling that professionals from mental health field are frequently ignoring them in the treatment of the ill member. The results of studies show that 30% of family members of mentally ill persons have psychiatric symptoms such as some level of stress, anxiety, depression, denial or resignation.

Acknowledging all mentioned and recognizing need for this kind of help, Psycho-educational and supportive groups for families with mentally ill members started in April 2011 at the Institute for Mental Health. It is directed to the close family members of the persons with psychotic mental disorders, above all their parents or siblings. The groups are organized twice per month and lead by the family therapists, members of the Department for the Couple and Family of the IMH, including basic systemic interventions, counseling and psycho-educational type of work. The aims of the groups are focused on: improving basic knowledge and information concerning the psychotic mental disorders and the behavior of psychotic persons; gaining useful skills significant for the approach to the ill family member; enhancing healthy family strengths; developing capacities to recognize personal strengths and skills of all family members; focusing on enhancement of available mechanisms for reducing vulnerability and social isolation of these families; support and interventions with an aim of keeping the functional integrity of the families;

Feedback from the group members confirmed their need for such kind of support and usefulness of the programme.

c. Continuing medical education "Multidisciplinary treatment of patients with psychotic disorder" - "Family and psychotic disorder"

Among the Programmes for continuing medical education organized by the IMH, the Programme "Multidisciplinary treatment of patients with psychotic disorder" was organized and realized twice during 2011, in January and in May. The Programme was accredited by the Health Council of Republic of Serbia in September 2010 for the period of the next 12 months. Taking into account the basic need of medical staff, above all nurses and health technicians, concerning the strengthening their professional capacities to work with families with a psychotic family member, the content of the lectures included information on families with mentally ill members (schizophrenia, paranoid disorder, affective disorders, suicidality) and basic knowledge and skills needed for working with families with mentally ill member. The results of the evaluation indicated that the training was successfully implemented.

d. Parent's functioning and mental disorders - Research activity:

Mental health disorders effect and threaten the functioning of parents in different ways, which is of great importance for the growth and development of children. In clinical and therapeutic practice it is important to have research that indicates the threats that the context of mental disorders could have on the parenting abilities.

The objectives of the research which was carried out during 2011 at the IMH (Department for the Couple and Family and Department for Psychotic Disorders) were:

1. To determine if the parents' functioning is compromised by mental disorders, as well as by possible co-morbidity with personality disorders.
2. To determine specific aspects of parents' functioning that have been compromised by mental disorders, that would be important for the development of "help and support programs" for families with a member with mental disorder.
3. To determine differences in parents' personality functioning depending on the mental disorder.

It is presumed that the data which would be published from the research (during 2012), would

point to the specific aspects of functioning of parents with mental disorders and open a possibility for the development of specific programs of support that would increase the competencies of parents with a mental disorder. In our practice it became clear that even the interview and exploration itself has the educational component in relation to parenting skills.

Activity 4 Education of general practitioners in primary health care settings for identification and diagnosis of alcoholism.

Explanation

Collaborative program between IMH and WHO named "Alcoholism prevention" is based on two huge projects: "National Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention program" and "Education of general practitioners in primary health care settings for identification and diagnosis of alcoholism".

The project "National Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention program" is being continually carried out since 2008, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia.

The IMH experts have created, within this project "Diagnostic-therapeutic guidelines for alcoholism", aiming at all health care levels and professionals engaged in alcoholism treatment. The Guidelines are published by the IMH in late 2009. During the past year the Guidelines were promoted. For that purpose two major gatherings were organized: February 2nd 2011 in Special psychiatric hospital Vrsac and April 15th 2011 at the IMH. Also, the IMH representatives presented the Guidelines at the National Symposium on harmonization of National Health Politics regarding prevention and treatment of Alcoholism with the Guidelines of European Action Plan on Alcoholism 2012-2020, in Belgrade May 26th 2011. Around 200 copies of the Guidelines were given to attendees at the meetings mentioned above. It is planned to have by the end of 2011 major experts meeting on which the Guidelines will be presented to psychiatrists from the whole Serbia.

Within the project "National Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention program" and the program "Improving Population Health related to diseases of special socio-medical importance", a sub-project "Education of doctors and medical staff in primary health care in the area of early alcoholism diagnostics" was implemented. The training was held on June 11th 2011 at the IMH. There were six theory sessions and each attendee was given the Handbook with elaborated topics. There were 92 attendees from the area of Mladenovac, Sopot and Barajevo.

"Education of general practitioners in primary health care settings for identification and diagnosis of alcoholism" is joint project of the IMH and Institute for Public Health of Serbia. The project was supported by the International Association of Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), Finland and lasted for 3 years (2008-2011). During the spring 2011 the Third phase of the Project started. The four workshops were held in Belgrade, with retesting attendees and evaluating the education. Out of 400 general practitioners the program was completed by 75%. The first results of the evaluating questionnaire have shown the increase of knowledge in alcohol abuse area in all cases, but also their subjective satisfaction with the completed education. The complete data analyses is going to be done by the Institute for Public Health of Serbia and it is planned to have conference at the end of the year in order to present all outcomes of this 3 years long project.

Draft Proposal of the 'Global Strategy in diminishing the negative effects of alcohol consumption and its implementation in WHO member countries'

The international meeting of the World Health Organization for the European region was held in Zurich May 3 - 5, 2011. The main topic at the meeting was the Draft Proposal of the 'Global Strategy in diminishing the negative effects of alcohol consumption and its implementation in WHO member countries'. The participants from member countries were introduced with a working document for the implementation of this strategy. The conclusions of the meeting called for further analysis of the working document and suggestions from member countries for the completion of the final version of this strategy. The national focal point for alcoholism (Dr Roza Panoski from the IMH attended this meeting).

Activity 5 Training in child and adolescent mental health care.

Explanation

a. Training in prevention of violence among children and youth

During this period the overall goal of the education was to improve the knowledge of medical professionals, especially nurses in primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare level regarding the issue of prevention of children's and youth's violence. In addition to prevention such as early start and continuity of preventive activities, in this education we emphasized the crucial role of nurses in the management of violent youths hospitalized either because of severe delinquent behavior or co-

morbidity (such as impulsivity and behavioural problems).

The program evaluation indicated participants' satisfaction by the provided theoretical and practical contents, and over 87% of the participants reported that education fulfilled their expectation.

Recommendations for the future:

-To continue and develop closer cooperation of health care professionals and other professionals connected with youth violence phenomenon (professionals working in foster care and homes for delinquents as well as in schools, because in each mentioned institution either nurses or primary health care workers are employed).

-Continuously working on better connection of health care professionals with local communities in addressing problems of children and youth violence.

b. Training program on prevention of suicide and suicidal behavior of the youth

The training program Prevention of suicide and suicidal behavior was conducted in 2010 to the primary, secondary and tertiary health care professionals, particularly nurses. The course was slightly modified and adapted for practical use, and the overall goal of the education was to improve the knowledge concerning the issue of suicidal behavior of the youth with more emphasis on youth suicidal behavior at inpatient departments.

The after course evaluation has shown that over 89% of the participants reported that education fulfilled their expectations. The organization, the structure, the content of the education and the interactive workshop activities received the highest grade and especially good grade was given to the exchange of clinical experiences through the group supervisions.

Recommendations for the future:

-The further courses ought to be complemented with one-day training on clinical work with adolescents in primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare. In this way a need for the continuous education in the area of youth suicides would be underlined.

-Establishment of a stronger and clearly defined cooperation network between the health sector, schools and centers for social work aimed at reducing the rate of suicides and suicidal behavior of the youth.

c. Application of the Special Protocol Pertaining to the Protection of Children and their Health from Abuse and Neglect

The Special Protocol of the Healthcare System on Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect prepared by the IMH experts was adopted in April 2009 and it defined roles and tasks binding for all medical institutions and healthcare professionals and associates. The Protocol requires the establishment and training of Teams for the protection of children from abuse and neglect (CAN) in the all-levels of healthcare. The primary healthcare, which is the most accessible sector aimed at general population of children, has its highly significant role in prevention, early detection, evidencing and elimination of the consequences of abuse and neglect, as well as in sending children to the specialist services of secondary and tertiary healthcare. Each healthcare professional and associate is required to act upon and report his/her suspicion of abuse and neglect to the healthcare institution's expert team. Each healthcare service is obliged to establish their own (expert) team for the protection of children from abuse and neglect. Team is established in line with the Protocol, based on the specific characteristics of the institution and environment, with the task to recognize the cases of abuse and/or neglect, report it to the competent authority/service, assess the risks, condition and needs of the child and family, to plan the measures and services of child protection as well as to provide expert support to colleagues and plan CAN prevention programmes.

The Ministry of Health has recognized an urgent need to support implementation of the Special Protocol within health care system and has delegated the lead role to the IMH to organize and technically support the process of development of training modules and manual for implementation of the Protocol within healthcare system.

The Institute of Mental Health has set a standardized package for the training of health professionals in the implementation of the Special Protocol. It has also developed the manual detailing relevant knowledge and skills required, internal and external procedures and forms for responding to the cases of CAN as well as for the monitoring the healthcare system response.

In the first phase of the project, four regional trainers' teams (in each university center: Novi Sad, Nis, Kragujevac and Belgrade) were established in close consultation with the Ministry of Health (MH). The Belgrade team - core group, coordinated by the Institute of Mental Health (delegated by the MH) has lead the process and educated the regional trainers' teams which adopted the joint methodology for training and participated in its finalization as well as in the preparation of the manual. Thirty

professionals from those three centers were trained.

Each regional trainers' team piloted one training with 6-7 teams for CAN in their region. The training provided trainees with information on General and Special protocol (roles and responsibilities of teams, planning, procedures, reporting mechanisms, cooperation with other sectors), the knowledge relevant to child abuse/neglect issues, age and gender specific (detection, documentation, reporting, protection, etc.), and training skills (needed to provide basic training to all health staff within their institutions).

The trainings will be by the end of the year provided to 24-30 teams for CAN/app 90 people (including pediatricians, nurses, gynecologists, psychologists and social workers where they exist).

The future plans will be an introductory session to include PHC managers, social medicine specialists, protectors of patients rights (all relevant members of health institution) and members of local community – CSW, police and education representatives, and local ombudsmen. It is expected that the standardized training package and capacity building of health professionals will ensure quality response from health care services, within their own mandate as well as strengthen cooperation with all other sectors which has developed their special protocols as well.

We are planning to continue with the training of all primary health care professionals and to follow up the implementation of the Special protocol.

d) Transforming Residential Institutions for Children and Developing Sustainable Alternatives supported by the European Union and implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in partnership with UNICEF

The social welfare institutions have long been the only option for children in Serbia unable to grow up in their birth families, either because of disability, behavioral issues or due to a lack of parental care. Children and youth with developmental disabilities represent vulnerable group for inadequate care and treatment, their families usually lack adequate support in the community and placement in long term institutions was seen as an adequate response to the needs of those children and youth.

The development of adequate and sustainable alternatives in the community was recognized mostly in theory. In real life, however, a lack of adequate system of support in the community, lack of knowledge, skills, and sometimes, inadequate value systems, not only in the community but also in the helping services, represent strong barriers in promoting change.

The aim of the project is to ensure full capacity of the child care system in responding to the needs and rights of the most vulnerable children in Serbia. Recognizing the importance of health services in addressing the needs of children with developmental disabilities and their families, we were engaged in creating and implementing two important projects that started at the end of 2009, continued through 2010 and in the first half of the 2011. The aims and results of the projects are presented below.

Project: "Family as center of child development" / working with families of children with developmental disabilities in the community/

The strengthening of community capacities and especially implementation of the proactive approach and activities in the community, aiming at promotion of social inclusion and preventing institutionalization of children with disability was the main aim of the project activities. In partnership with the Belgrade Institute for Public Health a training package was developed to strengthen the role of patronage services in assessing the needs of the children and families and improve communication skills in their work with families. Direct work with families and their role in coordinating closely with community centers and services, associations of parents and the municipal administration, in order to guide parents and refer them in the right direction was stressed as equally important. The training package consisted of four modules: Medical aspects of the problem; Family with child with developmental disability; Communication skills in work with families; Promoting positive and empowering helping models in the community. The trainings were held as two day workshops in Belgrade and regional centers - Nis, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, in groups of up to 30 participants - mainly home visiting nurses, nurses from health centers and kindergartens and representatives of community authorities and social centers.

During the course of the training 15 workshops were held, with 486 participants from the local communities. Of that number 317 were nurses from the health centers (mainly HV nurses), 100 nurses from kindergartens and 69 participants were representatives from the local communities. As part of the project, the manual "Guide for working with families of children with developmental disabilities in the community" was written, printed and delivered to participants. The emphasis was on use of highly participative methods and techniques. Brief theoretical introduction was followed with the work in small groups and discussions about current situation and personal experiences in the different communities. The evaluations done at the end of the workshops showed high levels of satisfaction with

the training and low level of the satisfaction about current situation in the field. It is clear that the important part of the future activities should incorporate more team building activities in the community with other responsible local institutions and services.

Project: "Improving communication with families of children with serious health hazards and developmental disabilities"

This model of family support, developed in partnership with the Child Rights Centre and many medical professionals, has become an integral part of the Professional Guidelines for implementing the National Health-care Programme for Women, Children and Youth.

The accredited training programme for its implementation was used to train over 150 doctors and other medical staff working in the largest 21 maternity wards and 28 specialized hospital for infants and children. As part of the first phase of the Project the Manual with guidelines was written, and was used during the training. The project aimed at training of medical staff from maternity wards in Serbia, as well as from other medical institutions, in order to empower them for the application of new procedures and methods in dealing with, and providing support to, parents of at-risk children or children with disabilities. This part of the project represented further step, aimed at teaching the basics of practical skills of counseling to participants of the previous activities.

The program started in June 2010 and ended in May 2011. It was held as two days workshops, implemented in Belgrade and other regional centres - Novi Sad, Nis, Kragujevac. The topics covered theoretical basis and practising skills of communication between health workers and parent in the specific situations of the presence of serious health hazards or developmental disability, shortly after the delivery in the premises of the hospital. The method included short theoretical lectures, work in small groups, guided demonstration of skills of counseling, role play and plenary discussions with whole group. The participants showed adequate activity, stressing the importance of early adequate rapport and help to parents and the acceptance of standardized procedures that would help in establishing and practicing the model in their hospital units.

The project activities ended with the conference in July, "Strengthening the capacities of health care system in work with families of children with serious developmental risks and disabilities". The participants were the professionals participating in various phases of the project activities - designing the training, manual and implementation of the education. The conclusion was that support system for families and children with disability in some wards is improved, and some maternity hospitals incorporated new procedures. It was also stated that there is necessity to continue with efforts in establishing adequate network of support services and that possible projects in the future should search for ways of reaching the greater number of professionals in the training.

Activity 6 Training of staff employed in social care homes

Explanation

2. Other information related to the Collaboration between the centre and WHO. Briefly describe visits by WHO staff to the centre, visits by the centre staff to WHO (HQ and/or Regional Office), use of the centre staff by WHO, support provided by centre staff for courses cosponsored or organized by WHO (HQ and/or Regional Office), WHO financial support to the centre through contractual or Technical Services Agreement or other type of support provided by WHO, any other collaborative activities. Please mention any difficulties encountered in the collaboration and suggestions for increased and improved collaboration with WHO.

There were no visits of the WHO staff, neither any financial support of the WHO. There were no WHO cosponsored activities. A collaborative activity has been only the project on children with disabilities.

3. Collaboration with other WHO Collaborating Centres: Briefly describe the nature and outcome of the collaboration and the name(s) of the other WHO collaborating centre(s) with which the centre has collaborated. If applicable, please mention the name of the network of WHO CCs to which the centre belongs. Also include suggestions for increased and improved collaboration with other WHO CC

The IMH is participating at the Mental Health Program of the Stability Pact for SEE, since 2002. The new representative was nominated by the MH (an expert from the IMH, Dr Oliver Vidojevic). The new national counterpart for WHO for mental health was nominated by the MH (Prof. Dusica Lecic-Tosevski, the IMH director).

We would appreciate a closer collaboration and receiving important documents from WHO related to mental health.