

SLP *Eastern Europe & Eurasia*

Social Legacy Program

Social Services for Disabled Populations



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EQUIP3 Consortium:

Education Development Center (Lead Implementing Agency) • Academy for Educational Development • Catholic Relief Services • International Council on National Youth Policy • International Youth Foundation • National Youth Employment Coalition • National Youth Leadership Council • Opportunities Industrialization Centers International • Partners of the Americas • Plan International Childreach • Sesame Workshop • Street Kids International • World Learning

Additional Partners:

YouthBuild • EcoVentures International • Mercy Corps • Family Health International

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Project Overview The USAID Eastern Europe & Eurasia Social Legacy Program (SLP) reaches out to youth and other vulnerable groups in the Europe and Eurasia region, giving them the tools they need to become local leaders and promote social change. SLP is implemented by Education Development Center (EDC) through EQUIP3 — a USAID-funded mechanism focused on youth development.

SLP is implementing three components in the E&E region: 1)Anti-corruption in Education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Macedonia; 2)Disabilities in Armenia and Georgia; and 3)Workforce Development in Kosovo and Montenegro.

The SLP **Disabilities Component**

Based on background research, EDC presented an overview of disability issues in the E&E region which put forward the following recommendations for work in the region, particularly in Armenia and Georgia: 1) Develop the Capacity of a National Coalition of Disability Organizations, and 2) Sponsor cross-institutional or cross sector disability initiatives that support one or more elements of the national disability strategy.

Activities in Armenia & Georgia: EDC has identified Skarp Health Centre NGO in Armenia and Coalition for Independent Living (CIL) in Georgia to serve as the Secretariats for activities in disability coalition development and cross-cutting disability advocacy. The cross-cutting initiatives are implemented through a small grants program in which local disability NGOs conduct advocacy activities on topics that cut across all types of disabilities.

Coalition Development

In Armenia, coalition development activities focus on supporting the country's nascent Disability Advocacy Coalition toward the goal of becoming a formally recognized national coalition. By building the capacity of a national coalition, we hope to enable Armenia disability NGOs to overcome a history of internal competition and therefore fragmentation and to develop a coordinated strategy for moving Armenia's disability agenda forward. Capacity is being developed both through the presence of experienced international and regional colleagues and through the knowledge building that Armenian participants engage in during the sessions.

Georgia is exemplary in the E&E region in that it boasts a strong coalition of disability NGOs, namely the Coalition for Independent Living (CIL). EDC is working towards building on the strong and organized advocacy institution for the disabled by supporting CIL to serve as Secretariat for a cross cutting disability initiative. The priorities for the cross cutting initiative are the development of information referral center for people with disabilities (PWDs) and support for the employment of people with disabilities. These initiatives are open to all Coalition member NGOs as well as other NGO stakeholders. The particular focus of the initiative was jointly determined by these NGOs during an early planning meeting, to ensure that the initiative would result in a noticeable change in public awareness and allow a broad spectrum of disability stakeholders to benefit.

Working With Advocacy Institutions...

EDC is working with the following organizations to implement project activities: 1) **Skarp Health Centre NGO** in Armenia and 2) **Coalition for Independent Living (CIL)** in Georgia.

With these two organizations, EDC will develop the capacity of a national coalition of disability organizations in each country and develop the capacity of NGOs to advocate for people with disabilities and effectively integrate them into society.

Armenia

Secretariat Organization: Skarp Health Centre NGO

Skarp Health Centre NGO was established in 1999 by a man who himself was disabled and came to realize that there were no support systems to help people with disabilities (PWDs) in Armenia. That is how the idea for establishing a centre where PWDs could get together and discuss their issues came about.

Skarp NGO has a mission to support the disabled youth of Armenia to become independent and treated as equal members of the Armenian society. After its establishment, Skarp was primarily providing healthcare facilities for the disabled youth through creating a unique gym specifically designed for PWDs. Simultaneously the organization was trying to address the employment problems faced by PWDs and work towards integrating disabled youth into society.

Over the years, Skarp has built up considerable experience and expertise in providing equal opportunities across vocational education, healthcare, and employment of PWDs. In 2006 Skarp became a member (and then a board member) of the Armenian Disability Advocacy Coalition (DAC) which is composed of 15 NGOs working to address issues related to disability.



Two- day session on developing the Disability Advocacy Coalition in Armenia

Georgia

Secretariat Organization: Coalition for Independent Living (CIL)

The Coalition for Independent Living is an organization whose mission is to create equal opportunities for disabled persons by revealing their potential, and to ensure maximum involvement of people with disabilities (PWD) in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country.

With this goal in mind, the Coalition works to raise public awareness and replace traditional (negative) attitudes towards disability and PWD with contemporary approaches which can change the attitudes of the society and hope to eventually impact legislation to help support the integration of PWD into society. In this regard, CIL is supporting NGOs whose activities are focused on the protection of equal civil rights, services, and opportunities for PWD.

Based on international norms and conventions, CIL works towards popularizing the philosophy of independent living. CIL recognizes the rights of each PWD to be independent and integrated within the society.



Disability Advocacy Coalition Meeting in Georgia