

**Project name:** COMMUNITIES INCLUDE – an initiative for universally accessible basic social community services

**Project promotor:** Rehabilitation center for stress and trauma

**Partners:**

- Faculty of Law – Study Center for Social Work, University of Zagreb
- Einurð ehf., Reykjavík, Island

**Project implementation period:** 01.12.2020. – 31.05.2023.

**Total project value:** € 165,730.00, of which € 149,157.00 was provided through financial support from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway within the European Economic Area and Norwegian grants

**Contact person for more information:** Dragana Knezić, dragana@rctzg.hr

**Link to relevant website:** <http://rctzg.hr/-/>

**Project summary:**

The COMMUNITIES INCLUDE project addresses the problem of inequality in access to basic social services in different parts of the country for vulnerable groups of beneficiaries such as children, youth and families at risk of social exclusion, people with disabilities, the elderly, citizens living in poverty. Availability and quality social services, such as counseling and assistance, personal and teaching assistants, organized housing or other support services for integration into the community, are the foundation of social inclusion, protection of the well-being and quality of life of vulnerable people. In Croatia, these basic social services are not equally accessible to all who need them because local communities and those who provide such services in communities are insufficiently involved in their planning and organization. In addition, data on the availability of social services and on the resources available to communities to provide basic social services to their citizens are lacking.

In this project, we will conduct research to obtain data on the actual availability of certain social services in communities in Croatia. We will consult with a large number of professionals providing social services in order to reach a consensus on what basic social services should be available to all those in need in their local community. Additional analyzes will determine what is needed to organize such a model of social services at the local community level: financial resources, human resources and equipment and infrastructure. We will also develop digital tools that will make it easier for local communities and professionals to assess the resources at their disposal to make basic social services available to all who need them, as well as to assess the quality of those services.

We will organize trainings for representatives of municipalities and cities, institutions and organizations for the provision of social services in order to introduce this model of organization of social services to as many professionals and decision makers at different levels. The goal of these trainings is to strengthen the capacity of local communities to take on a more significant role in the planning and organization of social services to their citizens, better coordination and connection of resources available to the community. We will also form a coalition - the Initiative for Universally Accessible Basic Social Services, which will advocate for changes in the planning and organization of social services at the national level.