



**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF RELIGIOUS  
COMMUNITIES  
(STRAPAC)**

**Strategic Partnerships**

**Key Action 2**

**Sector: Adult Education**

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**Deliverable IO.2**

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## Prologue

Underpinned by the results of the field study conducted for Deliverable OI1, a common Training Guide was developed aiming at serving as an on-line training tool for religious communities, acting in marginalized regions and rural areas. It consists of theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part includes good practices about social,

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charity or entrepreneurship/educational work (already collected in the previous stages of the project) of local religious communities acting in poor or disadvantaged regions (collected by the field studies and during the blended mobility sessions). The practical part introduces representatives of religious communities in developing and preparing sustainable projects, organizing fundraising campaigns, and becoming social entrepreneurs or good leaders, includes information about available European Union funds related to their activities at grassroots level in rural or poor regions.

The guide will provide an extraordinary opportunity to target groups involved to learn about international good practices of European religious communities in the field of social entrepreneurship and fight against social exclusion.

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## Introduction

This paper was devised as a result of 5 in-depth field studies, carried out in Romania, Bulgaria, Norway, Greece and Italy from October 2017 to April 2018 by qualified theologians and other specialists, recruited specifically for the implementation of the international project “Strategic Partnership for Representatives of Religious communities” (STRAPAC), funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (2014—2020). STRAPAC project is tailored to service staff of religious communities and professionals in theology from poor regions/rural areas, active members of different religious denominations and other interested stakeholders, including people in need. The project aims to introduce new methods for fighting against social exclusion at local level, by offering innovative training tools and opportunities for learning mobilities, transnational cooperation and exchange of good practices.

## STRAPAC project objectives

- To help professionals, belonging to different religious communities in poor regions and/or rural areas to gain skills how to work with vulnerable groups of people and to tackle social exclusion more effectively;
- To enhance the multicultural skills of representatives of religious communities to better cope with people with different cultural, ethnic or religious background and to increase their ability to hold interreligious dialogue;
- To create a strategic partnership network of representatives of communities with different religious and confessional background, and from different European countries.

The project was carried out by the Centre for Dialogue between Sciences and Theology (University of Craiova, Romania) in partnership with Regional Development Foundation (Vidin, Bulgaria), Gal del Ducato (Italy), MF Norwegian School of Theology (Oslo, Norway) and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

**Centre for Dialogue between Sciences and Theology** (University of Craiova)([www.cdst.ro](http://www.cdst.ro)) is a Romanian non-for-profit legal entity established in 2006. Its members are professionals from 6 socio-humanistic faculties of the University of Craiova. It is in fact a form of research institute acting in the domain

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of educational services with members who are university leaders in the socio-humanistic field.

**Regional Development Foundation** is a Bulgarian non-for-profit organization, established for the benefit of the general public in 2000 and is headquartered in the town of Vidin, Bulgaria. The main objectives of the organization are to support the development and the promotion of moral values, civil society, education, science and culture and to help for the development of disadvantaged regions in Bulgaria. It also works to promote the European Union, its main priorities and programmes both at local, national and international level. The Foundation currently coordinates the activities of the Information Centre of the European Union in Bulgaria and Europe Direct Information centre in the town of Vidin.

**MF Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo** is a specialized university in the field of Theology and Religious Studies and is the largest theological institution in Norway. MF is a leading research institution, offering two doctoral programmes, a professional degree in theology, eight master programmes and four bachelor programmes. It has trained about 70 % of the clergy of the Church of Norway (Lutheran), as well as teachers, catechists, missionaries and other workers in church and society. MF does also educate clergy for the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church and offers courses and degrees in Pentecostal theology as well as for the Salvation Army. The school has also increasingly become an international school with a global focus, both in terms of its student body and its programs and curriculum. MF sees a close relationship in today's world between a ministry in and to the local church and a commitment to global Christianity.

**The Local Action Group del Ducato** is an Italian non-for-profit organization/public equivalent body (not performing economic activities on the market) established in May 2015 with the aim to promote the local development of Parma and Piacenza territories (Emilia-Romagna Region, North of Italy), acting both as Local Development Agency and Local Action Group. The LAG del Ducato gathers together 31 local partner organizations both public and private in the area, including 59 Municipalities in the two Provinces, for a total of over 138.000 inhabitants and a surface of 3.904,91 square kilometres. The main areas of interest and work of GdD are related to the sustainable tourism. However social innovation and promotion of community cooperatives, restoration of public buildings, organization of cultural and artistic events, development of the potential of rural areas, reconversion and regeneration of rural cultural heritage, measures to contrast rural

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depopulation and to create better mobility connections between the city and the rural areas represents other relevant areas of activity of the GdD.

**The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** was founded in 1925 and first opened its doors a year later, in 1926. Today, it is the largest university in Greece. The University comprises 10 faculties, which consist of 40 schools and 1 single School Faculty. Currently it has more than 70 000 students. In 2015 the University was evaluated with "Worthy of Merit" (the highest grade in a four-grade scale), having received in the individual sections 11 "Worthy of Merit" and 15 "Positive Evaluation", which is considered an excellent evaluation for all sections. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki conducts research projects, participates in European research programmes and other EU funded programmes, cooperates with international institutions and organizations, attracting outstanding researchers from within Greece and abroad.

This paper serves as an online learning tool for representatives of different religious communities from poor regions and/or rural areas. As one of the objectives of STRAPAC project was to increase religious organisations' and structures' skills and competences to better cope with the social exclusion at local level, this guide includes information about the social theory and diakonia, but also how to develop good project, how to organize fundraising campaigns, and how to develop leadership and communication skills. It also represents a short overview of the successful diakonic practices of different religious denominations in the five countries, involved in the project. In particular it is an overview of their compassionate and charitable work. Good examples for optimising the social and welfare work of different religious organisations and the Church's official structures on the local parish/congregation levels are also presented. The role and the work of the Churches in providing services to people in need is also addressed. We believe it is very important that those practices will be successfully applied in the work of the different religious communities at local level. To that end, the guide presents innovative community outreach practices, which could successfully be transferred and introduced on a local level. The content of this guide, including the international community outreach practices, identified in the five countries involved in STRAPAC project, are an important factor for the improving of the skills of representatives of religious communities for developing of the social welfare work and fighting social exclusion. The guide offers new methods for diakonic work which corresponds to the needs of the Church and other religious communities and its members engaged in assisting vulnerable groups.

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## PART A. THEORY

### 1.Exchange of Good Church Practices in Bulgaria in the Late 2010s

The study analyses the state-of-play in social work done by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church - Bulgarian Patriarchate and by different organisations representing other religions in Bulgaria. The following key aspects will be considered:

- 1) Traditions and current situation in Bulgaria;
- 2) Social activities of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church;
- 3) Social activities of other Christian communities;
- 4) Practices within the Muslim and Jewish communities;
- 5) Other examples of religious charitable work

#### Traditions and Current Situation

The traditional religion in Bulgaria is Orthodox Christianity, with a total of 83% of the population (4,374,135 people) identifying as Eastern Orthodox. In second place comes the Muslim community, accounting for 9% (546,004 people) in the latest census. The share of Catholics and Protestants is as low as 2%. Analysing social activities by religion, however, has shown those ratios to be somewhat different, with the proportions of the smaller religious groups appearing to be generally higher.

Despite the ratification of the separation of the Church from the State during the transition from monarchic to republican rule in 1945, religious life in Bulgaria continued to be regulated by government bodies - the Committee for the Affairs of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Religious Cults at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Committee for Religious Cults and Religions at the Council of Ministers in the past, and the Religious Affairs Directorate at the Council of Ministers at present. Officially represented religions in the country are entitled to public support in the form of small subsidy allocations from the state budget, whose annual amounts are discussed by the relevant parliamentary committees, and are then subject to approval and voting as part of the state budget. In 2018, however, additional subsidies were proposed for the two largest religious communities. The total amount of the allocations, which in 2019 came to about BGN 21 million, is agreed by the government, but the actual distribution is done in accordance with the number of adherents having declared affiliation with the religion in question.

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The administrative procedure for the allowance of state subsidies for the purposes of religion and the preservation of religious cultural heritage does not as yet take into account the significant differences in percentage distribution between the official and the actual members of those communities and sub-cultures, and their dynamics. Since activities such as church volunteering, ktetorship, donorship and harizanship are still awaiting administrative regulation, their social practices often remain unnoticed, and they are generally not recognised as significant by the general public, especially given the as yet unrestored cultural capacity of parish and monastic life. In this situation, the work of active Orthodox believers and social groups, clerics, public figures, media, artists and analysts becomes even more significant in the context of the key Christian concept of charity as practiced by the officially represented religions in the country in the face of economic stagnation.

As the representative of the dominant and *traditional* constitutional religion, in 2018 the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate benefited from over BGN 43 million worth of state aid. Allocated mostly for salaries and maintenance of significant monuments of church heritage, some of which are also tourist sites, this funding is binding upon religious communities, which are expected to respect the generally accepted rules regarding the operation of such public property. For example, the lavish renovation of the Bulgarian Iron Church in Istanbul and its housing stock would have been impossible without the treaty of good neighbourship concerning the preservation of the building as a tourist site in return for the restoration of a number of endangered valuable monuments of Bulgarian Islamic cultural heritage, also operating as regional and museum sites.

The Grand Mufti's Office enjoyed the second largest subsidy, to the amount of BGN 5.4 million. The needs of religious communities to finance their planned in-country activities are generally backed by extra-budgetary, often foreign-sourced, funding. In 2019 Bulgarian media were shaken by the controversies surrounding the government's decision to reschedule or waive the debts of religious communities as an act of goodwill on account of it being almost impossible to meet the high maintenance costs of their traditionally owned buildings for public use and their other property serving various sacred or communal purposes. It thus became clear to the general public that the concept of civic consciousness, with whose support religious taxation can in principle be imposed, is still deficient in Bulgaria.

A large part of the funding goes for, among others, maintenance of places of worship, administration and salaries. Being able to earmark some of this already slim budget specifically for development of social activities in support of the community, despite the gradual local and country-wide post-socialist recovery of church culture and the increased

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awareness of organised Orthodox charity, is still seen as exceptional. Ever since the Revival and the war periods, which rose charity to the national level, the notion that charitable activities are acts of personal choice made by individuals or communities, such as eparchies, monasteries and parishes, has been gradually taking hold within the Orthodox Church. The selfless Christian urge to counteract this harmful trend in an attempt to fulfil religion's inherent social support function is the cause behind the existence of many small-scale examples of individual representatives of religious communities doing exactly that today.

Underdevelopment is not only a national issue, considering that Bulgaria is the country with the lowest per capita income of all EU member states, but also a regional and local one, to an extent that the mismatch between the standard of living in big cities and smaller towns has become the cause of large-scale mobility and depopulation of entire areas. While better-developed regions boast comparatively lower rates of population living in extreme poverty, remote territories experience an urgent need for all kinds of support, among which social assistance stands out. There is very little awareness among the locals of how institutions work, which, coupled with the generally high illiteracy rate, makes asking for help nearly impossible. At the same time, it would take only a little training and guidance to change the lives of the residents of such areas for the better.

An ageing population and lower birth rates are further deterrents to economic development. Much of the working-age population has left home in search of work in bigger cities or abroad. This has resulted in elderly parents, and often children, being left behind, with one whole generation entirely missing, and a corresponding gap in family and cultural upbringing. Many children who grow up without immediate parental control drop out of school at an early age and have little to no chance of return, which in turn negatively affects their social integration.

Generally, support to people in need is provided by government institutions in partnership with civic organisations, a form of cooperation which is gradually being restored. It is precisely this public infrastructure that the present study aims to examine. More specifically, it will analyse the establishment of good social practices within religious communities in an attempt to fight social exclusion.

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### Social work: the case of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The whole of the God-inspired verse of the Bible, the sacred book of the Christian world expounding the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Old and the New Testaments, abounds in examples of charitable deeds. For the Jewish people almsgiving to the widowed, the orphaned, the elderly, the sick and the outcast was governed by law. The essence of all Ten Commandments, holding equally for the three Abrahamic religions, but also of the main part of the Old Testament as re-enacted in the Gospel, is contained in the first two commandments, on which “hang all the law and the prophets” and which direct us to love our Lord with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40).

Among the many calls to charity which can be found in the Bible, the common saying *If you have two shirts, give one to the poor* can be traced back to the words of the Lord “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11). This so hard to acquire and yet so generously rewarded virtue plays an important role in the fifth Beatitude, recounted by Jesus in the Sermon of the Mount, when He said: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7). Fundamentally, we can see the accomplishment of all of the above in the example of our Lord – in the first instance, through His self-identification with the objects of His charity, and, finally, through His sacrificial deed at the end of the three-year-long sermon.

Whereas the triune God instructs us to care for each other and to help each other, the crucifixion is the ultimate pledge for the transformation of humanity into eternity. The daily concern for the sustenance of the people, symbolised by the advance and celebration of the *daily bread* in the *Our Father*, as well as in its interpretations related to the gratuitous nature of the spiritual gift of charity, is also exemplified in the New Testament through the example set by our Lord Jesus Christ. In one of His miracles - an instance of divine community building and care giving - Jesus fed the 5,000 having gathered to listen to His sermon by miraculously breaking the five loaves and two fish wholeheartedly conferred by a young man from his personal rations, “and [they] were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained” (Matthew 14:20).

In support of the compelling Biblical argument of charity, faith, good works and kind bearings as assurance for a gracious life on earth but also in heaven, partaking of the prosphora regularly evokes heavenly prosperity. In the words of the Old Testament psalmist: “The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not

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want any good thing” (Psalm 34:10). Through their lives, numerous saints, in particular the venerable, the unmercenaries, the fools-for-Christ, but also the enlighteners, the confessors and the martyrs, the equal-to-the-Apostles and the right-believing, with their spiritual struggles in the name of good shepherdhood, ktetorship and blessed sacrifice, have testified to the righteousness of these spiritual social laws and to the virtues of prayerful and active support and assistance. It was with great deliberation that the reverend hermit Saint John of Rila the Wonderworker, the patron saint of the Bulgarian spiritual congregation, discoursed upon these fundamental ecclesial dogmas in his *A Testament to Disciples*, and when offered the royal gifts, he only kept a small portion of food out of reverence. The scroll which the saint is often shown to carry in one of his hands typically bears an inscription with the words of the next verse of the same psalm, which, having praised the Lord’s protection of the poor, now goes on: “Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Psalm 34:11).

Historically, in times of need, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has offered much bigger support to the people than the state. This has been accomplished through the concerted efforts of parish fraternities and sororities, and age- and activity-based organisations, and goes beyond the duties of church choirs and trustee boards. The exemplary virtuous and philanthropic work of Bulgaria’s tsarship and clergy in the post-liberation period, carried out in a context of ever shifting national and diocesan borders, was followed by an unseen-before rise in fraternal ecclesial life in the interwar period, at a time when Christians were severely persecuted by the Soviet regime. By 1938, a total of 250 such communities operated in Bulgaria in support of the poor, the sick and the uneducated. They were in no way worse than chitalishta in terms of community building, funds setting, and managing orphanages, old people’s homes, hospitals, shelters, social kitchens, Sunday schools and children’s summer camps.

The surviving periodical literature, guidebooks, reference aids and other publications of that time testify to forgotten and often neglected practices, and offer guidance on their potential restoration and actualisation today, when we are already beginning to review and revitalise their experience. From a spiritual perspective, it is clear that in spite of their big achievements, a stage of saturation or over-satisfaction with the results was never reached; on the contrary, the aim, just like in liturgical life, was to always move forward, no matter the cost. The advance of Communism put an end to the activities of all independent public organisations, mainly because of concerns about potential emergence of private initiatives and funding restrictions. In addition, the charitable work of other religions was considered a risk factor for promotion of foreign interests, in view of which all assets, experience and responsibilities were conferred on the new public government and social ideology.

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The fall of the Socialist regime put the Church in a very difficult position. Generations of Bulgarians had lived without recognising it as a living and active institution serving a public purpose. More specifically, since the 1930s, nearly a century ago, the dominant public assumption as regards the Church has been that it should unflaggingly pursue unity. Long-lasting church divisions in Bulgaria have significantly delayed the reintegration of the spiritual dimension in public life, which, after all, is constitutionally permissible, and have failed to achieve any major reconceptualisation of the relations between the state and the people, on the one hand, and religious communities, on the other, in an illusory search of previously expropriated rights and freedoms.

Despite all kinds of difficulties, the institution of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate continues to enjoy a traditionally high level of public credibility. The key underlying factor here is the humility and patience shown in cooperating with all institutions in the public interest, without hasty dismissals of the nature of activities, orientation of teams and members, or sources of funding as incompatible with Orthodoxy. That is why, at the ceremony for the award of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I with an honorary doctoral degree by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences during His visit to Bulgaria in 2015, He stressed on the importance of sensitivity with which the community of the Orthodox Church should approach any ecological or poverty-related issue, as otherwise it would lose some of its integrity, public image and confessional authority. His Holiness Patriarch of Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia Neophyte approaches with great care, respect and attention befitting a true religious leader the spiritual benefits of the social initiatives which the Holy Synod and the Holy Metropolitanate are asked to bless.

The present paper is a sequel to a previously conducted survey among representatives of the Orthodox Church and other religious communities in Bulgaria. The data included in it relate to practices and prospects for development of social work activities in poor areas. It further contains many good examples which can be shared as ready-made solutions to common problems with the other partnering countries on this project.

### Children's summer camp in a restored and active Bulgarian monastery

The summer is the season when different monasteries across the country organise Orthodox camps for children and young people. Multiple funding options are explored to make them free for families wanting to have their children raised and instructed in the virtues of Christianity during the summer holidays, while food and lodging are usually provided by the monastery.

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In poorer areas, food costs are covered by the visiting Sunday school from its project budget or through programme or donor funding. The aim is to enable teachers and clerics to offer practical guidance to the visiting children and teenagers on compassionate caregiving and considerate treatment of the environment. The programme activities include first aid training, volunteering, pilgrimage and creative work.

Some of the monasteries in the area of Sveta Gora of Sofia in which summer camps and gatherings have been held for decades or more recently, since their restoration, are Kremikovtsi Monastery of St. George the Trophy Bearer, Eleshnitsa Monastery of the Assumption of the Theotokos, and German Monastery of St. John of Rila, a metochion of Zograf Monastery. In Sofia Eparchy excellent summer camps and gatherings are organised by Gigintsi Monastery, the spiritual centre of Sveta Gora of Kraishte, whereas at municipal level Kyustendil Spiritual District in Sofia Eparchy actively subsidises and develops religious education and book publishing. In Vidin Eparchy summer camps are held in Lopushna Monastery of St. John the Forerunner, which has also accepted immigrant families.

Other traditional camp locations are Hadzhidimovo Monastery of St. George the Trophy Bearer in Nevrokop Eparchy and Kapinovo Monastery of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, together with the established traditions of Sunday schools in Veliko Tarnovo Eparchy. In Plovdiv Eparchy, where religious education and schools are common and hassle-free as funding and maintenance is provided by the Metropolitanate, summer camps are organised in Bachkovo Stauropegic Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos. The eparchies of Lovech and Veliko Tarnovo set good examples of high-quality publication of church literature for children, as well as patronage of the development of church art. Major achievements in religious education can be found in the eparchies of Stara Zagora, Varna and Veliki Preslav, and Ruse, while Sliven Eparchy is a leader in the teaching of local Orthodox lore. The eparchies of Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Nevrokop, and Varna and Veliki Preslav develop pilgrimage and parish initiatives for children and young people.

Church youth activity in Bulgaria is not yet centralised, but relies on shared solid experience and proven traditions instituted by devout theologians, teachers and administrators. Its coordination and promotion is done by using modern media tools, some of which has already been assigned to young people.

### **Parish centres with Sunday schools, interest clubs and kindergartens**

In Bulgaria, it is common for every church, and in some cases even monastery, such as for example Kalofer Monastery under the direction of hegumenia Valentina, to host activities

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for children and, albeit less often, for adults. Despite the lack of a dedicated Orthodox school in the country, some schools' curricula feature extensive instruction in spiritual and material ecclesial heritage. Some kindergartens offer different forms of day-time activities for children close to religious education, while the parish centre in the Church of the Intercession of the Theotokos in Sofia was the first to offer private church kindergarten and day-care activities and to work on social projects for integration of children with disabilities and minority backgrounds. Subsequently, a licensed private kindergarten opened in the Church of the Assumption of the Theotokos, close to Sofia's Malashevtsi and Orlandovtsi neighbourhoods (where recently a centre for working with children has opened in the Monastery of the Three Holy Hierarchs, the former location of the Good Samaritan Movement). Instruction is provided by theological pedagogues under the spiritual guidance of oikonomos Yoan Kukov, with whose blessing annual church readings are organised in the parish centre in the Rotunda of Saint George.

Traditionally, classes in icon painting, woodcarving, folk dancing and church singing can be taken in the churches of the Intercession of the Theotokos, whose iconography school is named after Zahari Zograf, and of Saints Cyril and Methodius, next to Women's Market in Sofia, and more recently – in the church of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the neighbourhood of Krasno Selo. Church art classes are offered by the Church of the Transfiguration in Sofia, the iconography studio of Plovdiv Metropolitanate, and the Spiritual and Educational Centre of St. Michael the Archangel in Varna. The newly built Church of the Nativity in Sofia's Mladost-3 neighbourhood maintains a school of kliros chanting in the Byzantine tradition and a Sunday school, visited by dozens of students each week, and has plans to expand by opening a fully operation parish centre in the not so distant future. In addition to the professional choirs in some churches in Sofia and other cities, good examples can be found in the parish centres of the churches of St. Paraskevi and the Nativity of the Theotokos, as well as in smaller towns and villages with living traditions or new initiatives.

The diverse classes offered to believers and theologians include a range of vocational skills and qualifications training, as well as instruction in church culture and practice. Good creative models in the organisation of church activities are adopted by the two centres for prevention of sectarianism, while other interesting initiatives include: *Boxing Against Aggression*, set up by the experienced trainer Father Andon Shavulev in Blagoevgrad; the creation and presentation of Orthodox films, music and books; journalism clubs; the inter-school contests for multimedia presentations held under the joint *Initiative for Spirituality and Culture* of Varna Municipality and the Metropolitanate of Varna and Veliki Preslav, which also features an Orthodox book week event. Other traditional activities include:

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voluntary painting of chapels by iconography students; pilgrimage tours of church choirs in remote areas without kliros singers; chanting contests such as *Hosanna in the Highest*, held by Darbi Foundation during Pomorie Festival; children's drawing contests such as *God is Love*, *Resurrection of Christ*, and *Land of St. John of Rila*; charitable exhibitions and bazaars such as *Christmas Star*; the activities of Bird House – Sofia; and the religious theatre and music events held, among others, in Sofia, Plovdiv and Stara Zagora.

Social work is included in the curricula of seminary schools, which are currently boys-only, and is prominently represented in the theological faculties and departments of the universities of Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Shumen, with dedicated syllabi and scholarly work on local and global church and civic charity. Free instruction in modern Greek has become a traditional part of the cultural calendar in Sofia thanks to the voluntary initiative of several generations of teachers and their love of Greek culture.

### Working with drug users

The leader in this most difficult aspect of spiritual care – pastoral work with people with special needs, disabilities and difficulties – is the Orthodox community in Varna, which is also the host of Orthodox Book Week. The Orthodox Centre for Combatting Substance Addictions was founded in 2005 in the name of St. Boyan Enravota the Holy Martyr in the Church of the Holy Tsar Boris I the Christianiser in Asparuhovo neighbourhood, which also operates a social kitchen. The reference to the time of Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity is not accidental. Like many other contemporary clerics coming from military, police, sports or medical occupations, the local priest Father Georgi Fotakiev, a former fighting sport contestant, has helped to save many lives here. Having discovered God, he joined the Church and bravely rose to the challenge of accepting a number of young addicts having nowhere else to go and seeking his life-saving support. He put them up at his home, and, after a year's joint work with a doctor, a psychologist and a therapist, all of his efforts paid off. This is how the only Orthodox addiction treatment programme in the country began. At its core lie faith, prayer, sport, labour and awareness.

In 2004, by which time the Orthodox Values Public Committee had already been set up in Varna and a second spiritual and educational centre in the name of St. John of Rila was about to be established, the highly esteemed Russian neurologist, hieromonk and hegumen prof. Anatoly Berestov was invited to present his experience in the prevention of abusive practices, including hostile cults, and to share the precious spiritual and practical knowledge of the Russian monastery rehabilitation centre for survivors of pseudo-religious

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organisations, occult practices, alcohol and drug abuse at a time when young people from Bulgaria were sent to communities abroad as the local monasteries were unable to cope with the problem.

One of the first steps in the care provision for Orthodox survivors of different forms of destructive addictive behaviour, besides the visit to the centre in Russia, publishing work, cooperation with health and educational institutions, and exchange of experience, was the reading of akathists to the icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos of the Inexhaustible Cup. Molebens in Varna began in the 1990s with the founding of the St. Andrew Social Association as a Bulgarian-German non-profit organisation by the Metropolitanate with the help of the Liebenau and St. Francis foundations for the purpose of ministry and establishment in the Christian spirit of social, health and educational facilities. The association has already started the construction of the children's Faith, Hope and Charity complex in the village of Kichevo and has begun to provide care for the neighbouring villages. In Sofia akathists for the treatment of all kinds of addictions began to be read by Father Yoan Karamihalev in the Church of St. Andrew, which also houses a part of the saint's relics.

### Church social kitchens

Dozens of social kitchens operate and are organised within the diocese of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Their main purpose is to provide food to socially disadvantaged people so they can survive despite their meagre incomes. Sofia boasts two parishes with successful social kitchen initiatives. One is housed in the Church of St. Elijah the Prophet in Druzhba-2 neighbourhood, where volunteers use social networks to organise their work. Each Saturday, under the guidance of Simeon Marinov, poor people are offered freshly cooked food and sometimes even clothes, in the winter months. The social assistance and religious education traditions initiated by the former municipal government were mostly in response to the exemplary parish work of the trustees of this and of two more churches. The Church of St. Elijah was also one of the first in Sofia to have a children's playground, a renovated interior and a Sunday school. Currently, a larger church, to be named after the Annunciation of the Lord, is under construction.

A similar initiative, set up during the difficult transition period in Darvenitsa neighbourhood in Sofia in the model of the long-established catholic tradition of Sveta Gora of Sofia and of the nearby monastery of St. Elijah, known for its social activities and people-orientation, is the offering of warm food to poor people a number of times each

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week. The initiative is still maintained by several hard-working laymen, blessed by the late Father Dimitar Vukadinov of the Church of St. George the Holy Great Martyr, who created a true spiritual centre, which now has long-standing traditions in theological talks, a Sunday school, a church library, a website and child management among others. This is also where Sonia Ankova began her YouTube channel *Hram*. Another distinguished member of the clergy is sub-deacon Emiliyan Pogonchev, a long-time representative of the Balkan Orthodox Youth Association. Many of the church's parishioners took singing courses in the first two parish centres to open church art schools - in the churches of the Intercession of the Theotokos and of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The actual building in Darvenitsa where the parish centre is housed, a former village church of the Revival period, was one of the few to be canonically painted in the 1990s by the professor of church iconography Asen Gitsov. Currently, two more churches are under construction in the area. In Blagoevgrad, the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra in Gramada neighbourhood organises an exemplary voluntary social kitchen on Sundays, after liturgy, and maintains a parish centre with multiple activities, a Sunday school, and a modest clothing warehouse. The work of the centre is promoted through the Orthodox Information Centre – Blagoevgrad and an active social media account. Every visitor to the centre is always given a warm welcome.

The National Ombudsman's Office, headed by Maya Manolova, also sets a good example with its church campaigning initiatives. Together with prominent athletes, they have recently organised a number of social kitchens. The food served there is warm or packaged, and respects the Orthodox fasting tradition. As regards social assistance, food vouchers are distributed to poor and elderly people in an attempt to highlight the need for social justice.

### Care for the homeless and the orphaned

It would seem that in Bulgaria the only ones willing to take responsibility for church social charity are the now well-known Father Ivan and his family. They have set up two exemplary facilities - a shelter in Novi Han and a housing complex in the village of Yakimovo, both of which offer protection to people in dire social situations, such as single mothers, monks, orphans and homeless people. The support given by media to his appeals for financial aid brings out pressing issues related to the regulation of charitable work in the country, which the public administration is still struggling to resolve.

Indirect support to young people in need is also offered under the *Money for Bottle Caps* and *Save an Icon* initiatives, as well as through exhibitions of children's drawings. These are often held to raise money for expensive neonatal life-saving equipment, medicaments

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and treatment of children with severe conditions or disabilities, clothes, food and other necessary items for people in disadvantaged position, and provide children with hands-on charitable experience.

### Support for the sick and the convicted

Support for convicts serving prison sentences in Bulgaria and for sick people is provided by volunteers under the spiritual guidance of several priests having gained specific experience in this very demanding type of pastoral care over the years. One of them is oikonomos Father Nicolai Georgiev, also known as *the Convict* on account of his year-long pastoral care for prisoners, whose high spiritual and social value has earned him wide public recognition. International organisations such as Prison Fellowship – Bulgaria hold initiatives like *Angel's Christmas Tree*, aiming to collect gifts for prisoners' children, and programmes like *Convict's Journey* - for social rehabilitation. A serious problem is the cremation of deceased heirless Christians having previously been taken to hospital. The issue has been taken to heart by Father Sergei, who liaises with institutions to obtain permission for Christian burials.

Church care for the sick includes regular visits to health facilities, blessing of waters, consecration of hospital chapels and litiya processions with saints' relics or miraculous icons during epidemics or natural disasters. An example of such pastoral care was the making of an exquisite copy of the Mount Athos icon of the Panagia Pantanassa, now housed in Gigintsi Monastery but often taken to different locations around the country for veneration and blessing. In the past few years various associations, donors and pilgrims have managed to supplicate and organise tours of the relics of St. Clement of Ohrid and St. Pantaleon, as well as of precious copies of various miraculous icons.

More and more often, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has managed to provide access to churches and monasteries for people with special needs and to cater for the religious education of people with visual impairments, hearing difficulties, and mobility, speech or mental disabilities. This is usually done in partnership with institutions and professionals engaged in the relevant sector.

### Social activities of other Christian communities

The Catholic community in Bulgaria has long-standing traditions in charity and charitable activities for socially disadvantaged people, regardless of their religious affiliation. Given the meagre size of public subsidies, international support from the global Roman Catholic community is central to the social mission of Catholic parishes in the country. The

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Bulgarian branch of the Maltese Order maintains a Facebook group and mobilises volunteers who take part in distributing warm food in the winter months in the monastery of the Sisters of the Eucharist in Sofia. The tradition of assisting people by buying medications and prescription glasses, and supporting employment in healthcare and social work is just a small part of the work of the sisters and clergy. The medical centre and the church provide care for elderly and previously oppressed sisters, but also work in the public interest. Other popular initiatives in Bulgaria include Don Bosco's youth activities, pilgrimages and family forums, and care provision for Legio Maria's sick patients. International volunteers also donate some time helping in the hospice for palliative care founded by Donka Paprikova, the Bulgarian Mother Theresa, as well as assisting in the organisation of the rich cultural programme of the *Srebarna Esen* club for elderly intellectuals and artists.

Caritas is an international charitable and social organisation which has “worked to reduce poverty and to ensure a dignity life” for 26 years. As stated on their website, “Caritas’ staff strive to relieve the suffering of the vulnerable people with daily care and attention.” Acting under the *Do good!* motto, and armed with the sign of the *cross* appearing in their logo and the concept of *care* from their name, Caritas currently provide monthly assistance to 410 elderly people, 488 homeless people, 335 children and young people at risk, 229 migrants and asylum seekers, and 39 women in disadvantaged position.

For the Protestant denomination the act of spreading the word of God by distributing Bibles and giving sermons in the past traditionally involved significant charitable work, such as opening the first crèches and kindergartens in the country or prestigious foreign language colleges, in addition to the already existing Catholic ones. These traditions have been kept, and the more recent publishing and educational work of this community has also been recognised for its fine examples of Christian mercy and charity.

### Practices of the Islamic and Jewish communities

The Muslim community is also well-known for its charity considering that almsgiving and caring for one's neighbour are seen as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Obligatory *zakat* in the form of food, clothes, tools, labour, building materials, logistic assistance etc. is distributed not just in ethnically and religiously diverse areas but all around the country regardless of the religious affiliation of the recipients. The 2019 National Ramadan Charitable Campaign for Social Assistance, held by the Social Affairs Department of the Grand Mufti's Office between 8 April and 5 May under the slogan *Be the Hope of the*

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*Needy*, included an *iftar* contribution to the amount of BGN 5 per person and a food package to the amount of BGN 30. The campaign announcement published on the Mufti's Office website recalls the words of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH): "He who removes from a believer one of his difficulties of this world, Allah will remove one of his troubles on the Day of Resurrection; and he who finds relief for a hard-pressed person, Allah will make things easy for him on the Day of Resurrection". Other major aspects of charity in Islamic cultural and religious tradition, regardless of internal religious differences, include the provision of *halal* food, the *qurbani* ritual, and *hajj* pilgrimages; however clothing, including religious attire, caring for the sick and education are considered a priority, particularly for children, and involve people from other religions too. There are several Muslim educational institutions in Bulgaria, including secondary schools and colleges operating beside the more mainstream Arabic or Turkish secular schools and youth centres. In the month of Ramadan, the Mufti's Office holds a traditional charitable campaign in support of Islamic education in Bulgaria under the slogan *Supporting education means investing in future*. This fund-raising initiative appeals to people to get involved and support Islamic education, and recalls the words of Allah: "And whatever good you [believers] spend is for yourselves, and you do not spend except seeking the countenance of Allah. And whatever you spend of good – it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged," Surah Al-Banaras.

The Jewish community in Bulgaria holds peace and care giving as priority virtues in the support of its fellow believers at difficult times. The current structures of the Organisation of Jews in Bulgaria *Shalom* comprise both classical and liberal movements and synagogues, reflecting the diverse ethnic specificities of the Jewish religion. The organisation's Facebook page quotes the amount of over BGN 40,000 raised by over 100 attendees at the Annual Charitable Gala Dinner of 22 November 2018, as well as its allocation to five causes to be announced later.

As mentioned on the organisation's website, it offers care for elderly people with the help of the *Hai* daytime centre and other clubs and institutions, such as *Chitalishte Shalom Aleichem* in Plovdiv, where various activities are organised for the whole community.

### Other examples of religious charity

Interesting charitable initiatives are also organised by the more than one hundred other international and local religious formations, whether formally registered or not, which are based in Bulgaria. For example, the Mormon communities look after

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the employment of their members, while volunteer pastors strive to address the practical problems of the people in need they visit during their missions. The White Brotherhood and various Buddhist movements tend to the healthy lifestyle of their members and followers. International and non-confessional cultural initiatives, such as religious festivals, immigrant exhibitions, temples' open-door policies, prayers for peace, exhibitions, forums and others, usually include charitable and social support initiatives. These are organised by several Bulgarian associations and academic groups or by branches or associates of similar local or international structures that have explored such issues for decades and in spite of the almost complete disinterest in their events on behalf of the Bulgarian confessional communities, which tend to prioritise issues concerning their inner lives.

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## 2.The Roman Catholic perspective

After the Second Vatican Council the option for the poor or the preferential option for the poor became one of the basic principles of the Catholic social teaching as articulated in the 20th century. The phrase "option for the poor" was firstly used by Father Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1968 in a letter to the Jesuits of Latin America. The principle was articulated by the Catholic Bishops of Latin America (CELAM) at the influential conferences in Medellin and Puebla, as well as by several popes, particularly Pope John Paul II and nowadays Francis. What is the theological and historical meaning of this option for the poor and the excluded? It refers primarily to the special place of the poor in God's people. In order to better understand this – theological and practical – we should focus on some numbers of *Evangelii gaudium* and then on a passage of *Populorum progressio*. In number 197 of *Evangelii gaudium* the Bishop of Rome affirms: "God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself "became poor" (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the "yes" uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire. The Saviour was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families; he was presented at the Temple along with two turtledoves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb (cf. Lk 2:24; Lev 5:7); he was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn his bread. When he began to preach the Kingdom, crowds of the dispossessed followed him, illustrating his words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18). He assured those burdened by sorrow and crushed by poverty that God has a special place for them in his heart: "Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk 6:20); he made himself one of them: "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat", and he taught them that mercy towards all of these is the key to heaven (cf. Mt 25:5ff.)." He continues in number 198: "For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor "his first mercy". This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind... which was in Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness". This option [...] "is

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implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty”. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.” In *Populorum progressio* at the number 20 we find: “If development calls for an ever-growing number of technical experts, even more necessary still is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism, one which will enable our contemporaries to enjoy the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation, and thus find themselves. This is what will guarantee man's authentic development - his transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones”. These ideas produced also in Italy many new experiences: drug addicted rehabilitation communities, community centers for young boys and girls, family-homes, new visions of the school and education, a series of activities for basic needs of people (housing, food, health).

### Caritas Italiana

Within this background in 1971, at the behest of Pope Paul VI and in the spirit of renewal initiated by the Second Vatican Council, Caritas Italiana was born as the pastoral organisation of the Italian Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference for the promotion of charity.

It is an umbrella organisation counting in Italy about 230 Caritas established at diocesan level to promote the witness of charity of the ecclesial community, paying particular attention to the pedagogical approach of each activity promoted. Article 1 of the Statute of Caritas in fact defines that it has a “prevailing pedagogical (educational) function”. Caritas is the official instrument in every Diocese for the promotion and coordination of charitable and welfare initiatives of the local church.

#### *The tasks of Caritas:*

- ✓ to promote charity and to translate it into concrete actions;
- ✓ to ensure proper coordination of initiatives and services of Christian inspiration;
- ✓ to start, organize and coordinate emergency operations in Italy and abroad.

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In collaboration with other bodies of Christian inspiration:

- ✓ to carry out studies and research on the needs and their causes;
- ✓ to promote volunteering and encourage the training of pastoral agents of charity and of Christians engaged in social services;
- ✓ to contribute to human and social development of the countries of the South of the World through public awareness.

Solidarity, peace education and global issues, dialogue, shared responsibility international emergency operations are the main lines of the commitments of Caritas in Italy and all over the world. Permanent connections with other national Caritas are guaranteed by the Caritas Internationals' network. It gathers in a federation 162 organizations of which 48 belongs to Caritas Europe too.

### **Absolute poverty: the socio-demographic profile of the poor in Italy**

According to the Caritas Italiana - 2018 Report on poverty and law enforcement policies, in Italy the number of absolute poor (that is, people who cannot reach one decent standard of living) continues to increase, rising from 4 million 700 thousand in 2016 to 5 million 58 thousand in 2017, despite the timid signs of recovery on the economic front and employment. From the pre-crisis years to the present, the number of poor has increased by 182%, a figure which gives the sense of the distortion that took place due to the economic recession.

The evident peculiarity of these years of post-crisis concerns the youth issue: from about 5 years in fact, poverty tends to increase with decreasing age, decreeing minors and young people as the most disadvantaged categories (in 2007 the trend was exactly the opposite). Among the individuals in absolute poverty minors are 1 million 208 thousand (12.1% of the total) and young people in the range 18-34 years 1 million 112 thousand (10.4%): today is poor almost one out of two minor or young.

Education continues to be among the factors that more influence (today more than yesterday) the condition of poverty. From 2016 to 2017 the conditions of the families in which the "head" person has obtained the primary school license at the maximum (passing from 8.2% to 10.7%) have aggravated. On the contrary the families where the "head" has at least one high school title present an incidence rates of poverty much lower (3.6%).

As regards citizenship, absolute poverty remains below the average in the families of only nationals (Italians) (5.1%), although in slight increase when compared to last year, while it stands on very high levels among the families with only foreign components (29.2%).

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The disadvantage of the immigrants is not an element of novelty and it seems to be further strengthening. Wanting to simplify, among the Italian citizens is poor one family out of twenty, almost one on three when it comes to foreigners.

### The faces of the poor met by Caritas: some figures

During 2017, the "faces" encountered by the Caritas network were 197.332. Data and information come from 1.982 "listening" centres (58.9% of the total) placed in 185 dioceses (which correspond to 84.8% of Italian diocesan Caritas). Year after year the intercepted stories of poverty are more complex, chronic and multidimensional. 42,2% of people encountered is an Italian citizen, 57,8% foreign. In the North and the Centre of Italy the persons taken in charge are mostly foreigners (over 60%), while in the South the people in need are in the majority Italians (67,6%). In terms of gender 2017 marks the overtaking of male over women, due to the transformations of migratory dynamics, such as the decline in migration from Eastern countries, that matter more women employed in the caregiver, and against, the increase of asylum seekers and refugees coming from African countries, which mainly sees men as protagonists. 42,6% of the people met in 2017 were new "users"; 22,4% were in charge of the listening centres for 1-2 years; 12,3% for 3-4 years. It is increasing the share, rather high, of those who live situations of fragility for 5 years and more (22,6%).

The average age of the people met is 44 years. Young people between 18 and 34 years old represent the major number of people met (25.1%); among the Italians the people of 45-54 years old prevail (29,3%) and 55-64 years (24.7%); the retired people represent the 15,6%. The stories of loneliness are increasing and, on the other hand, the situations of those experiencing a relational stability given by a union/marriage diminish. 63.9% of the people listened to, about 89 thousand people, claim to have children. Among them over 26 thousand people live with minor children, an important figure when compared to the number correspondent of households. The situation of minors involved in these situations of fragility is worrying, in light of the fact that these material deprivations will penalize irremediably their future, on the economic and socio-educational level. They are often activated vicious circles that hand down disadvantaged situations from generation to generation.

As for education, the close connection with the state of poverty is evident if it considers that over two-thirds of the people who turn to Caritas have a low degree, equal to or lower than the compulsory license (68,3%); among the Italians this condition concerns the 77,4%

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of “users”. The situation of young people in the 18-34 age group arouses even more concern: 60,9% of Italian youth met (outside the educational and training circuit), owns only a compulsory license; 7,5% can barely count on the primary license. In close correlation to the subject of education is the employment condition. The unemployed listened to in 2017 represent 63,8%; among foreigners the percentage rises to 67,4%. Last but not least, there is to highlight the increase of homeless people and stories characterized by a lower relational background (loneliness) and the fact that even today the breakdown of family ties can be a trigger entering in a state of poverty and need.

### Needs and interventions

In line with previous years, in the needs’ analysis of the cases stand out economic poverty (78.4%), followed by employment problems (54.0%) and housing problems (26.7%), the latter well increasing when compared to 2016. Within this category we note a clear increase, from 44.3% to 52.5%, of those without a home. To the material difficulties follow other forms of vulnerability like family problems (14.2%), difficulties related to health (12.8%) or to migratory processes (12.5%). Out of 100 people for whom at least one need was registered almost 40 showed 3 or more areas of difficulty. Only 36.5% expressed difficulties referring to a single dimension of need (the percentage is decreasing compared to the previous year); the more frequent situations of overlapping needs are those in which poverty is combined with occupational distress. However, they do not turn to Caritas exclusively for aspects of material poverty or due to work problems: 46.1% of people met by Caritas do not manifest explicitly employment problems; 4.2% of the total even referred to the listening centres for problems that go beyond both economic and working problems (i.e. mental illness, depression, separations, divorces, death of a relative, difficulties in assisting family members, problems of detention and justice). However, the most frequent requests are those relating to tangible goods and services (62.1%), up compared to 2016. However, regards the interventions and the answers provided, the most frequent form of aid was the provision of material goods and services (62.9%), up on the past. Among these prevail distribution of food parcels, clothing and meals at the canteen. In absolute value in 2017 approximately 2 million 600 thousand interventions were carried out, a slight decrease compared to 2016.

### Educational and cultural poverty in Italy

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The national data of the “listening centres”, besides confirming a strong correlation between levels of education and economic poverty, also show an association - confirmed by statistics - between levels of education and chronicity of poverty: those who have a low level of education or medium-low in addition to falling more easily into a state of need, they also run the risk of living a situation of chronic poverty that cannot be solved in a short time. The link between child poverty and socio-economic disadvantage conditions is particularly marked. Nevertheless, in Italy educational poverty remains a phenomenon mainly “hereditary”, which mostly concerns families affected by traditional socio-economic poverty. For example, there are situations of greater disadvantage in this regard (both in terms of services and individual possibilities) in the Southern regions that record the highest levels of absolute poverty. In the South of Italy and in the Islands there is less coverage of kindergartens, full-time nursery, primary and secondary schools, a lower percentage of children that benefit from cultural and / or sporting offers and at the same time a greater incidence of early school leaving. Regarding of foreign citizens, they highlight educational poverty rates greater than their native peers.

### The comparison with Europe

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, Italy has achieved the education objective, slightly exceeding the required threshold of 26% of graduates in 2016 among the 30-34 years old population. This incidence remains however below the EU28 average (39.9%) in 2017. In comparison with other countries, Italy is placed at the penultimate place in Europe for the presence of graduates, only Romania has less graduated people. While recording a growing trend, Italy therefore shows a low level of educational capital in the future generation of young adults. It was also reached the second objective of the educational-scholastic sector, according to the Europa 2020 Strategy: the reduction below the 16% of the share of population aged 18-24 years old that owns at least the lower secondary school license (the European target was 10%). Italy is in fourth place in Europe for incidence of early school leaving (14.0%), after Malta, Spain and Romania.

Among the people met by Caritas at national level, the 11.4% on average are illiterate or do not own any educational qualifications.

A high school degree in Western countries can be considered as the minimum training level required to find a job and avoid social exclusion phenomena.

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## 8 x mille

According to the Italian law, the 8 per thousand (*8 per mille* in Italian) of the annual income tax collected by the State is divided among different religious confessions and the State too.

The religious confessions who benefit from the 8 per thousand have established an agreement, ratified by the Italian Parliament, in which they put forward the request to receive the 8 per thousand. The number of religious confessions benefiting from the *8 per mille* can vary. At the time being the beneficiaries of the *8 per mille* are: the Italian State, for social and humanitarian purposes, the Roman Catholic Church, the Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches, the Union of the Jewish Communities in Italy, the Union of the Adventist Churches, the Lutheran Church and the Assemblies of God in Italy, the Sacred Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy and Exarchate for Southern Europe, the Apostolic Church in Italy, the Christian Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy, the Italian Buddhist Union, the Italian Hindu Union and the Italian Buddhist Institute “Soka Gakkai”.

When taxpayers fill in their tax return, they may decide to donate their *8 per mille* to one of the religious confessions above mentioned or to the Italian State. Even those who have not to pay taxes or have tax credits, may devolve their *8 per mille* via a fiscal document (called in Italian *CUD*) given them by the employer.

In fact, nobody assigns his tax revenue to a specific recipient, but the system is akin to a large survey at the end of which the allocation of the funds is carried out on the account of the choices made by taxpayers.

The Italian law sets out which scopes the funds, either for the State and the religious confessions, are to be used for. Italy uses its 8 per thousand’s share for extraordinary interventions in the following fields:

1. World hunger
2. Natural disasters
3. Assistance to refugees
4. Preservation of the cultural heritage

Religious confessions exploit their *8 per mille*’s share for:

- ✓ Humanitarian activities

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- ✓ Social and cultural activities
- ✓ Charity, religious activities and worship needs
- ✓ Sustenance of the Clergy
- ✓ Safeguard of religious interests of Jews in Italy, protection of minorities against racism and anti-Semitism (only the Union of the Jewish Communities in Italy).

It is crucial to underline the importance of 8 per thousand for the sustenance of clergy of the Catholic Church. So do the Sacred Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy and Exarchate for Southern Europe and the Italian Hindu Union.

Actually, the Catholic priests' salaries are paid by the dioceses with the *8 per mille* funds they receive from the Italian Catholic Church for the sustenance of clergy, together with other local revenues.

Although only 40% of taxpayers show their preference about the 8 per thousand, the whole amount of *8 per mille* is distributed. In 2018, out of 40 million and 770 thousand tax payers, 17 million and 600 thousand made the choice of the destination of the eight per thousand. Over 23 million did not express any preference. The vast majority of choices fell on the Catholic Church (14 million preferences, less if compared to last year) followed, as usual, by the State (2 million and 564 thousand indications, on the rise). Next, the Waldensians (565,000 preferences, up on last year) and then the Jewish Communities (60,000, on the rise), the Assemblies of God (41,000, up), the Lutherans (30,000, down) and the Adventist Churches (23 thousand, stable).

The Roman Catholic Church and others religious confessions broadcast every year on radios and TVs advertisements concerning the allocation of 8 per thousand and a specific web-site reports all the figures and initiatives supported: <https://www.8xmille.it/>

The 5 per thousand (*5 per mille* in Italian) is different from the 8 per thousand, because it is a share relating only to the total amount of taxes every citizen pays to the State. The beneficiaries of the *5 per mille* can be non-profit organizations, social cooperatives, associations, charities, etc.

If anyone would like to donate its *5 per mille*, he/she can do it when filling its tax return by explicitly specifying the fiscal code, the address and the denomination of the beneficiary. Obviously, the more taxes you pay, the more you donate.

Since many of these charities are part of or related to the Catholic Church's or other denominations' or confessions' social activities, the 5 per thousand is a good opportunity to help the charitable projects.

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*Povertà in Attesa - Rapporto Caritas Italiana 2018 su povertà e politiche di contrasto*, Caritas Italiana, 2018

*17° Rapporto su povertà giovanili ed esclusione sociale in Italia*, Caritas Italiana, 2017

*5° Rapporto sulle politiche contro la povertà in Italia*, Caritas Italiana, 2015

*Caritas Cares, Poverty and Social Exclusion among young people – Italy Report*, Caritas Europa November 2017

<https://www.caritas.it/>

<https://www.8xmille.it/>

<https://italianonprofit.it/risorse/definizioni/8-per-mille/>

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### 3. Welfare and Charity Work of the Romanian Orthodox Church

Social assistance, through specific measures and actions, should develop the individual, group or collective capacity to meet social needs, improve quality of life and promote [enforcement of] the cohesion principles and social inclusion.” – Art. 2, Para. 3 of Act 292/2011: Social Assistance Act.

The social assistance provided by the Church is social assistance with a spiritual and religious dimension. On the basis of the teachings of Christianity and Christian compassion and charity, the Church develops and perfects services to support lay people, guided not only by the economic and social parameters of the times, but also by the expectations of the lay people who actively participate both in the provision of the services and the use of those services.”

According to the Rules for the Organisation and Functioning of the Social Assistance System, in the Romanian Orthodox Church the social assistance (welfare) system is based on the Church’s shepherding and missionary service and is of social and charitable nature. Social welfare work is done in accordance with the government regulations concerning the organisation and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church and in compliance with the applicable social service providers legislation.

The Romanian Orthodox Church, via its central and local branches (patriarchate, diocese, parishes, monasteries), and via non-government organisations operating with the approval of the competent church authorities, provides social services certified in accordance with the applicable legislation to all disadvantaged populations.

Work done in the field of social welfare is funded by the social service providers’ own resources, state and local budget subsidies, donations and sponsorships received under the conditions and order provided for by law, public collections, voluntary contributions and from income from any source not in violation of applicable law or the regulations of the ROC Statute.

The structures (administration) of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Romania and abroad may request financial aid from the Romanian Patriarchate, as well as assistance from the state and local budgets in support of its social welfare work. Furthermore, in support of its social and charity work, the Romanian Orthodox Church may, through its local administration, engage in economic activity.

The work done by the branches of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in their capacity as social service providers, is recognised and supported by the state, which allows for forming partnerships and signing agreements sanctioned by law.

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The Romanian state, via its State Secretariat, maintains a good relationship with all religious denominations recognised in Romania, and pursuant to Acts Nos. 125/18.03.2002 and 489/2006 on the freedom of religion and the general status of denominations, and if the state budget permits, financial assistance may be granted to individual religious communities to support social welfare services and activities organised by religious organisations in hospitals, orphanages and retirement homes as well as other forms of social assistance provided on a national or international level by religious organisations in Romania.

Both the Constitution of Romania, which casts religions as partners of the state in social welfare matters, and the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church allow the Church, under direct supervision from the church boards, to set up centres which offer special, educational, cultural and missionary services to young people, organised according to the needs of each individual parish.

Art.3 of the Rules for the Organisation and Functioning of the Social Assistance System of the Romanian Orthodox Church defines the objectives of the Romanian Orthodox Church's network for social assistance as follows:

1. Fulfilling the Church's mission towards people in need and in accordance with the Christian faith;
2. Providing primary [and] specialised social services as well as social and health care in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations;
3. Creating supporting networks on the municipal level for individuals and populations in need;
4. Incorporating and managing its own organisations for providing social assistance and social and health care, or operating in partnerships with public and/or private organisations;
5. Conducting social surveys and studies concerning various social problems and phenomena;
6. Active participation in the making and enforcement of social policies, strategies and action plans on the national, regional and local levels;
7. Cooperation and building partnerships with decentralised public offices of ministries, organisations within the central and local public administration and other government or private institutions active in the field;
8. Informing the public opinion on social welfare matters and raising societal awareness by organizing conferences, seminars, round tables, discussions, etc.; making publications (magazines, brochures, leaflets), audio-visual materials, materials in

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electronic format; organising advertising campaigns to get society involved in solving social problems.

Considering the objectives set by the Church in the field of social assistance, the Romanian Orthodox Church believes that the specific measures and actions to be undertaken should be realised in such a way that:

- ✓ Social services provided by the Church would form a package of related measures supplementing the national social welfare system;
- ✓ Social services would be evaluated periodically in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness to ensure their continuous adjustment to the beneficiaries' actual needs;
- ✓ The services offered would prevent and limit any form of dependence on the support provided by the Church.

The Romanian Orthodox Church's system for social assistance is an integrated system which functions within the Church's administration structure or within the social and charity organisations patronised by it.

The Romanian Orthodox Church's social assistance system is professionally organised within the Church's administration under the following structure:

- ✓ Social assistance on the parish level;
- ✓ Social assistance on the diocese level, where a Social Assistance Department is set up, a part of the diocese's missionary sector;
- ✓ Social assistance on the Romanian Patriarchate level, within the "Church and Society" sector wherein the Romanian Patriarchate Social Assistance Department operates.

### Metropolitan of Oltenia

In the Archdiocese of Craiova specialised social services are provided by social centres created specifically for that purpose and by the "Vasiliada" Association, a non-government non-profit organisation operating under the spiritual patronage of the Metropolitan of Oltenia.

The Archdiocese of Craiova is a certified social service provider for the following social centres:

- ✓ Multifunctional Social Centre for disadvantaged children from Craiova – certified in August 2012;
- ✓ "Anastasia" Day Centre for disadvantaged children from Craiova – certified in August 2012;

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- ✓ “St. Callinicus” safe house – “Samuil” retirement home, established in February 2012;
- ✓ “Renaissance” Residential Social Centre for the elderly (retirement home) – certified in May 2013;
- ✓ “Metropolitan Firmilian” Social Centre for the elderly – certified in June 2011;
- ✓ Multifunctional Centre for disadvantaged children going to kindergarten – certified in March 2013;
- ✓ Multifunctional Children’s Social Centre Târgu Jiu – certified in 2012;
- ✓ Primary social services – Social Assistance Department participates in the implementation of the Crisis Intervention Programme in partnership with the “Vasiliada” Association. The Programme offers assistance to vulnerable populations by: consulting and support in finding employment and housing, facilitating access to other types of social services, enrolment in qualification courses, and other specialised services, psychological consulting, rights and obligations information services, support and assistance to ensure an active and independent way of life, in-kind and financial aid in cases of emergency.

Concurrently with the social and charity work done by the structures of the Romanian Orthodox Church, associations and foundations operating under the patronage of the Church’s administrative structures but being separate legal entities also perform social welfare work, in accordance with the legislation on non-government organisation, namely Government Ordinance No. 26 of 2000 on associations and foundations, passed by Act 246/2005, amended by Act 305/2008 and 34/2010.

On the Romanian Patriarchate level, the operation of these non-government organisations is approved with a resolution of the Holy Synod, and on the other structural levels it is approved with the Diocese’s blessing.

These organisations’ incorporation documents must comply with the regulations of the ROC Statute and the Rules for the Organisation and Functioning of the Social Assistance System of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Their objectives must contribute to achieving the objectives set by ROC in the field of social welfare.

The activities of these non-government organisations are monitored by the social department of the respective diocese which grants the approval within which they do their social welfare work.

In an environment where one of the gravest problems faced by the Church as a social service provider is the lack of funds, as is also evident from a sociological survey realised within the “Analysis of the Romanian Orthodox Church’s Social Work” study (60% of responders believe that the Church does not have a sufficient independent income to allow it to organise

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the social and charitable work as needed), the incorporation of non-government organisations with the Church's blessing is very appropriate, as access to some funding opportunities is only open to non-government organisations.

Here we present some of the organisations operating under the spiritual patronage of the Romanian Orthodox Church:

- ✓ **“Diaconia” Association** in Bucharest incorporated in 1999 with the sanction of the Romanian Patriarchate. His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romania, is the honorary chairman.
- ✓ **“Bucuria Ajutorului” Foundation**, founded in 2010 under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Bucharest, at the initiative of His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romania. The Foundation has been a certified social service provider since July 2011. Its vision is of “a world where people know that to help means not only to give, but above all the shared joy between giver and receiver”.
- ✓ **“Solidarity and Hope” Foundation** – an organisation incorporated in 2002 under the patronage of the Archbishop of Iași and doing charity, cultural, educational and civic programmes. It has subsidiaries in Botoșani, Hârlău, Roznov, Săvinești, Darabani, Săveni, Piatra Neamț, Târgu Neamț and Pașcani.
- ✓ **“Petru Vodă” Foundation**, founded by the “St. Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Monastery in Petru Vodă, which offers certified social services via two centres: “The Intercession of the Theotokos” Social Centre for children and “St. Spyridon” retirement home with a 40-bed capacity, a medical office, a dental office and a chemist's.
- ✓ **“Orthodox Christian Charity” Foundation, Sibiu**, founded in 2009 implements the social assistance of the Archdiocese of Sibiu.
- ✓ **“Codrii Mamului – Fumureni” Association**, an Orthodox organisation working in the field of social welfare with the approval of the Archdiocese of Râmnicu, focused on ensuring basic human rights protection, in particular among disadvantaged populations; supporting professional, social and cultural interests, especially for the citizens of the Vâlcea region; creating sustainable development initiatives, promoting and preservation of the authentic cultural heritage of Romanian rural areas.
- ✓ **“Filantropia Timișoara” Foundation (FTF)**, founded in 2006 under the patronage of the Metropolitan of Banat. This is a Christian Orthodox

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foundation for charity and community development working on social, charity, cultural, educational and civic programmes.

- ✓ **“Filantropia Ortodoxa Alba Iulia” Association**, working in the social service field, incorporated under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia. It was incorporated in 2001 and currently has 16 subsidiaries in the Alba and Mureş regions. The Association offers a wide range of services: 12 home care services for the elderly; 11 day care services for children (one day care centre and 10 educational centres); 5 residential services for children (4 family-type homes and 1 recovery centre for children who are victims of violence); 1 crisis centre (providing services in cases of emergency); two residential services for elderly people with disabilities (safe houses); two services for people with disabilities; two community kitchens; two consulting services; 1 regional centre for social inclusion.
- ✓ **“Christiana” Christian Medical Association** in Cluj is one of the first associations incorporated by the Romanian Orthodox Church, in 1991, as a subsidiary of the “Christiana” Foundation of Bucharest.
- ✓ **“St. Sava” Children’s Foundation in Buzău**, founded at the initiative of the priest Prof. Mihail Milea, PhD and with the blessing of His Grace Epiphany, Archbishop of Buzău and Vrancea, on 12 April 1993, the feast day of St. Sava. The organisation operates under the “St. Sava” municipal cathedral.
- ✓ **“St. Basil the Great” Charitable Orthodox Christian Association** in Galaţi, incorporated in 2001 under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Lower Danube. It is primarily involved in working with projects providing social assistance to orphaned children and children from low income families.
- ✓ **“Bishop Melchisedec” Foundation – Bacău branch**, founded in July 2008 by His Grace Ioachim, Bishop of Bacău, to continue the missionary and charitable work of the estimable Melchisedec Stefanescu, Bishop of Roman. (1823-1892)
- ✓ **“St. Stephen the Great” Association, Harja**, a non-government organisation founded in 2012 with the blessing of the Archdiocese of Roman and Bacău. The Association’s seat is in the village of Harja, Oituz Municipality, Bacău region. The Association provides social, medical, educational, psychological and spiritual services to children and families as well as elderly people in need. It operates mostly via four social centres, two of which offer home care and permanent residence for the elderly, and the other two are day centres for youths: “St. Dionysius Exiguus” *after-school care centre* and “St. Andrew the

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Apostle” centre for creativity, art and tradition for discovering traditional Romanian values through crafts, folklore, folk songs and dances workshop;

- ✓ **“Filantropia Oradea” Association** is a non-government organisation operating in the field of social welfare under the patronage of the Bishopric of Oradea. The Association has been in operation since 2009 with the approval of His Grace Sofronie, Bishop of Oradea. In 2011 the organisation expands into Bihor, opening 6 new subsidiaries in the region. With the support of the Bishopric of Oradea, over the span of recent years the Association has initiated a number of actions in support of multiple sclerosis patients.
- ✓ **“Matei Basarab” Social and Cultural Association**, incorporated in 2002 as a non-government organisation under the patronage of the Bishopric of Slobozia and Călărași;
- ✓ **“Letca Noua” Association**, a non-government organisation incorporated in 2006, working in the field of social welfare and operating with the blessing of the Bishopric of Giurgiu.
- ✓ **“Filantropia Porolissum” Association**, created at the initiative of His Grace Petroniu, Bishop of Salaj, in 2009. The organisation operates under the patronage of the Bishopric of Salaj and is focused on assisting families at social risk. It is a certified provider of home care services for the elderly and of information and consulting services for persons at social risk. The Association has been providing social services via its “St. Nicholas” Consulting Centre since 2010.
- ✓ **“St. Spyridon the Elder” Foundation, Bucharest**, which has founded a medical and social centre offering free-of-charge services to people without health insurance and/or people with no income.
- ✓ **“Diaconia” Social Mission**, founded in 2001, is a non-government organisation working in the welfare field in the Republic of Moldova under the patronage of the Metropolitan of Bessarabia. Its main areas of work include: providing in-kind or financial aid to people in need, organising volunteer groups to take part in providing certain social services, supporting the work of various social establishments. In 2011 the organisation founded the largest social establishment in the Metropolitan of Bessarabia – the “Mother’s Embrace” maternity centre, intended to serve as a benchmark for high-quality social services for mothers.
- ✓ **“Vasiliada” Association**, founded in 2001 in the Archdiocese of Craiova.

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- ✓ **“Cuvântul Care Zidește” Foundation**, a non-profit organisation working under the patronage of the Metropolitan of Oltenia, founded in June 2001, with the Metropolitan of Oltenia serving as its honorary chairman. The Foundation aims to promote cultural and spiritual Christian values, to do charitable work in support of people in need, without discrimination, and to provide instructive and educational services in all areas. Its work is broken down in several programmes:
  - ✓ Missionary programmes in schools, kindergartens and parishes;
  - ✓ A programme focused on working with prisons in Craiova;
  - ✓ A programme to support orphaned children;
  - ✓ A programme aimed at promoting the values of the national church legacy.
- ✓ **National Society of Romanian Orthodox Women**, Craiova branch. The National Society of Romanian Orthodox Women was founded in 1910 by Princess Alexandrina Cantacuzino. Its main purpose is to protect the Orthodox faith and the Church’s continuity.
- ✓ **Association of Romanian Orthodox Christian Students**, Craiova branch. The main purpose of the Association is “to promote faith and Orthodox Christian spirituality in universities and academic environments.
- ✓ **“Antim Ivireanul” Association** is a religious, cultural, social and charity organisation working under the patronage of the Archbishop of Râmnic.

In 2007, the eight most significant and respectable organisations from the eparchies of the Romanian Patriarchate working across Romania asked for the Holy Synod’s blessing to establish a foundation. Thus, with the Romanian Orthodox Church’s Holy Synod’s approval, the **“Filantropia” Federation** was founded – the first organisation of a federal type within the Romanian Patriarchate, unifying the actions of its members on the national level, while simultaneously allowing them to preserve their identity and keep their own action plans on a local level.

In 2009 another five establishments joined the eight founding organisations. By 2010 the number of Federation members had grown to sixteen. One more organisation was accepted as member in 2011 (the “Bucuria Ajutorului” Foundation of the Archdiocese of Bucharest), making the total number of members of the Federation seventeen.

The “Filantropia” Federation provides assistance to various beneficiaries: abandoned children, the homeless, single-parent families or poor families, HIV-positive people and people living with AIDS, victims of domestic violence of human trafficking, the elderly, people with special needs, alcohol and drug addicts, etc.

The “Filantropia” Federation’s main objectives are as follows:

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1. Developing the organisational skills of members or organisations wishing to become members of the Romanian Orthodox Church's social welfare structures;
2. Fostering cooperation between members and organisations wishing to become members and the Church's local structures, as well as facilitating exchange of information and good practices between the member organisations, other non-government organisations operating with eparchies' approval and their social and charity sectors;
3. Developing and implementing general programmes in the following areas: social assistance, medical and educational assistance and community development.

Since its inception the “Filantropia” Federation has been involved, as a leader or a partner, in the implementation of many organisational development and social intervention projects. In their execution the Federation has worked in collaboration with a number of partners from Romania and abroad.

#### Major projects implemented by the “Filantropia” Federation:

##### **1) ANIMANOVA – Integration of Victims of Human Trafficking into the Labour Market**

The “Filantropia Federation”, in cooperation with the “Partnership for Equality” Centre (leading organisation) and 5 partner organisations from Italy, implemented the “Integration of Victims of Human Trafficking into the Labour Market” project, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. The Project was launched in July 2009 and was realised over a period of 36 months. Its core objective was to develop the skills and abilities of the key players in the area of prevention and combating human trafficking and integration of victims of human trafficking into the labour market.

##### **2) SOCIAL – Strategy for Employment and Qualification Through Training and Independence-Promoting Actions**

The Project was launched in October 2009, with an implementation period of 36 months, and was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. The leading organisation on the Project was the National Prison Administration, in partnership with: the “Filantropia” Federation, the Romanian Patriarchate, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, Healthcare and Social

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Policy, several Italian organisations. Beneficiaries of the Projects were the “Vasiliada” Association (Craiova) and prisons in Timiș and Dolj. The aim of Project was to reduce the inequality of chances for prisoners and former prisoners in their transition from imprisonment into civil life and employment, setting out to provide the social (re)integration service by: promoting alternative models of employment assistance and developing services for integration into the work process; generating flexible and innovative jobs.

### **3) Social inclusion enterprises**

This project was started in October 2009 by the “Filantropia” Federation in partnership with the Romanian Patriarchate and the “Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team – Europe (NESsT)” Association and was implemented in the course of 24 months with the financial support of the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. Its objective was to build capacity for creating and managing social enterprises. They will serve as practical and innovative tools for increasing the financial sustainability of organisations and promoting the social inclusion of vulnerable populations.

### **4) Together for Better Social Services – Building the organisational capacity of the national network of Christian non-government organisations.**

The project’s duration was 27 months and it was started on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. Its objective is to build institutional capacity for the “Filantropia” Federation (a national network of Christian non-government organisations working in the field of social welfare), in order to allow it to be a significant factor in the social inclusion policy making process on the local, regional and national levels. The project was funded under the by the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. It was implemented in partnership with the Romanian Patriarchate in the “Filantropia” Federation.

### **5) FORTE – Sustainable Training for Social Partnership**

Starting in September 2010, the “Filantropia” Federation, in cooperation with the Romanian Patriarchate, Instituto de Formación Integral (IFI) and “Global Commercial Development”, implemented the FORTE project – Sustainable Training for Social Partnership over an implementation period of 36 months, with the financial support of the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme. The project’s aim is to develop the organisational skills of officers working in the administration of the Patriarchate and nine eparchies of the Romanian Orthodox Church, so as to make them stronger partners in the field of social inclusion on the national level. The specific objectives of the project are: 1) producing a systematic, objective and professional assessment of the organisational abilities and social

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service provision capacity of the Patriarchate's administration and the administrations of the following eparchies: the Archdiocese of Roman and Bacău, the Archdiocese of Sibiu, the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia, the Archdiocese of Severin and Strehaia, the Archdiocese of Timișoara, the Archdiocese of Lower Danube, the Bishopric of Giurgiu, the Bishopric of Tulcea and the Bishopric of Oradea; 2) upgrading the competences of officers serving in national, regional and local institutional bodies so as to make the Romanian Patriarchate a more effective, more transparent and more sustainable partner in the field of social inclusion.

#### **6) Territorial Network of Christian Social Service Providers – Strategic partners in the field of social inclusion**

Between 1 October 2009 and 1 March 2012 the International Orthodox Christian Charities – IOCC Romania, in partnership with the Romanian Patriarchate and the “Filantropia” Federation, implemented the Territorial Network of Christian Social Service Providers project, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the “Human Resources Development” Operational Programme 2007–2013. It was implemented in the Archdioceses of Bucharest, Iași and Craiova and focused on developing the organisational capacity of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) in the administrations of the Patriarchate and three Archdiocese (Bucharest, Craiova, Iași) in Romania as a pilot phase of the seven-year plan for developing the capacity on the national level and consequently making ROC the strongest strategic partner of the government in the field of social inclusion. The project had the following objectives: 1) producing a systematic and objective assessment of the organisational capacity and social service provision capacity on the level of the three eparchies; 2) creating three diocesan strategies for inclusion in the field of social assistance and an diocesan plan to support the diocesan strategies; 4) improving ROC's competences in the three abovementioned eparchies as well as the administration of the Patriarchate so that ROC could act as a more effective, more transparent and more sustainable partner in the field of social assistance. An analysis of the organisational capacity for providing social and charity services was done as part of the project, on the basis of a survey conducted in 67 branches of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), 39 of which do charity work (58%) and 28 are social service providers (42%). The survey combined three major methods: documenting, structured interview and target group, with the latter method allowing for identification of the most commonly held opinions on the level of each diocese in terms of:

- ✓ The quality and role of the providers of social and charity services in parishes;
- ✓ Ways to improve social service provision;
- ✓ The significance of working in a network for the provision of social and charity services;

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- ✓ The role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the field of social assistance.

It is evident from the report that “the social and charity aspect is lacking in terms of meeting the specific social service needs of different categories of disadvantaged populations, across all dioceses”, however, on the other hand, the report highlights the following strengths of the social and charity work done by ROC’s structures: “the significant institutional capacity for involving volunteers/the community in the social and charity activities and projects, a much bigger capacity compared to any other institution in the social welfare field in Romania; the developed infrastructure which would facilitate the provision of social services; the widespread territorial network facilitating social service provision; a large potential for attracting resources (fundraising); a unique coordination structure; dedicated and committed human resources (albeit inadequate in number).”

The report presents the following statistical data concerning the social and charity work done through ROC’s administrative structures:

- a. There are 7 certified social service providers (one monastery and 7 NGOs) and 724 charity providers (8 archpriesthoods, 681 parishes, 35 monasteries and 1 NGO) in the Archdiocese of Bucharest.
- b. There are 19 certifies social service providers (1 diocesan centre, 6 archpriesthoods, 2 parishes – both urban ones – and 10 NGOs) and 1087 charity providers, all parishes, a large number of which (903) urban ones, in the Archdiocese of Iași.
- c. There are 3 certifies social service providers (1 diocesan centre, and 2 NGOs) and 577 charity providers (6 archpriesthoods and 571 parishes, most of which (487) are rural ones) in the Archdiocese of Craiova.

In conclusion, on the diocesan level, thanks to the social and charity work done by the Romanian Orthodox Church, 466,537 beneficiaries were covered in 2012. The work is broken down into two components: social assistance work and charity work.

Social assistance work. There were 679 operating institutions assisting 89,556 beneficiaries in Bucharest and in various cities, towns and villages across the eparchies in 2012. Because of the constant diversification of the services offered and the ongoing expansion and certification of centres, there is a need for integrated reorganisation of the competence criteria activities.

Below is the chart of social establishments and their respective beneficiaries on the church administration level (diocesan centres, archpriesthoods and parishes):

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<b>SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS ON THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATION LEVEL</b>		
<b>SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENT CATEGORIES</b>	<b>NO. OF SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS</b>	<b>NO. OF BENEFICIARIES</b>
Community kitchens and bakeries	154	16,139
Health care institutions and chemist's	44	16,735
Day centres for children	61	2,715
Day centres for the elderly	22	1,089
Residential centres for the elderly	34	786
Community centres	20	1,989
Family-type centres (foster homes)	37	528
Social kindergartens and day care facilities	34	965
Safe houses	14	126
Information and consulting centres and resource centres	105	35,563
Institutions for adult learning	4	580
Emergency accommodation centres (for the homeless, for victims of domestic violence, for victims of human trafficking)	18	910
Camp campuses	12	3,489
Training centres	34	1,199
Other institutions	86	6,743

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The social establishments listed above have been founded and are managed in cooperation with 126 associations and foundations with a social and charity profile which are either diocesan organisations or operate with the diocese's blessing and in collaboration with local authorities.

The beneficiaries of the social services provided in the abovementioned establishments are divided into the following categories:

1. Children from social establishments run by the Church but predominantly from poor families who cannot support them, or children whose parents work abroad;
2. People with hearing or visual impairments or speech impediments, drug users and other addicts, HIV-positive people and people living with AIDS;
3. Elderly people from social protection establishments run by the Church, from social transit centres and overnight shelters, elderly people who live alone and need help with mobility, people who were abandoned by their family or people with serious health problems;
4. Unemployed people, adults in need, victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic violence, released prisoners, natural disaster survivors;
5. Other categories (mothers with children in critical situations, homeless people, youths leaving the government social protection system, etc.).

<b>BENEFICIARY CATEGORIES</b>	<b>NO. OF BENEFICIARIES</b>
Children (from poor families who cannot support them, or children whose parents work abroad; children from social centres)	30,707
People with hearing or visual impairments or speech impediments, drug users and other addicts, HIV-positive people and people living with AIDS	17,014
Elderly people, elderly people who live alone and need help with mobility, people who were abandoned by their families or people with serious health problems	22,717
Unemployed people, adults in need, victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic violence, released prisoners, natural disaster survivors	17,497

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Other categories (mothers with children in critical situations, homeless people, youths leaving the government social protection system when they reach majority, etc.)	1,621
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There are approximately 2000 partnerships on the parish level between various religious units within the same parish or from different parishes, with local administration institutions, educational institutions, health care institutions, government social assistance institutions, NGOs, etc.

273 projects and programmes are being implemented in different parishes, on the diocesan administration level: with external funding, with public funding, funded from own resources or with mixed funding. Apart from them, there are 686 charity projects running.

<b>PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED ON THE DIOCESAN LEVEL</b>	<b>NO. OF SOCIAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES</b>	
	External funding	23
	Public funding	20
	Funding from own resources	168
	Mixed funding	62

141 social projects and programmes are being implemented on the non-government church organisation level: with external funding, with public funding, funded from own resources or with mixed funding. It should be noted that social service providers from the diocesan administrative structures and the providers from the non-government church organisations form effective partnerships in their work on social projects.

<b>PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED ON AN NON-GOVERNMENT CHURCH ORGANISATION LEVEL</b>	<b>NO. OF SOCIAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES</b>	
	External funding	23
	Public funding	27
	Funding from own resources	58

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	Mixed funding	33
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Charity work done in the eparchies of the Romanian Orthodox Church has the following specific expressions:

1. Direct financial aid provided to 95,802;
2. In-kind aid, consisting of: food, clothes, supplies, hygienic and sanitary items, medicines, electric appliances, etc., provided to 281,179;
3. Collecting material goods for the people affected by the snowfall during the early months of the year.

The 2012 budget for maintaining the social and charity work done within the Romanian Patriarchate consists of:

1. Donations, sponsorships, collections for people in need and parishes' own funds;
2. Resources used in the social assistance work, listed in detail below, comprising: the "Filantropia" Fund (collections from worshippers), parishes' and non-government church organisations' own funds; external funding; sponsorships, donations and the "2%" campaign.

The funding resources listed above are used for the following purposes:

1. Direct in-kind and financial assistance;
2. Maintenance and management of social establishments;
3. Organisation and remuneration costs;
4. For people in need (including the value of the goods offered);
5. Development of programmes.

As mentioned above, the social and missionary work in parishes is done with the help of the associations and foundations operating with the approval of the Holy Synod or the respective diocese's officers. Therefore, 77 organisations with social and charity profile and 34 youth organisations are involved in the implementation of dioceses' projects.

Generally, the youth organisations' involvement consists of:

1. Humanitarian work and visits in foster homes and asylums;
2. Organising camping trips and pilgrimages to monasteries in Romania and abroad;

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3. Organising missionary centres for young people in various dioceses;
4. Catechesis activities and missionary and commemorative acts;
5. Preparing and disseminating Christian publications and prayer books;
6. Organising conferences, symposia, youth meetings and Christian nights with priests, ecclesiastics and people from the cultural sphere;
7. Organising competitions to promote Christianity's traditions and values;
8. Providing religious assistance to people with hearing impairments;
9. Organising religious music festivals and competitions.

Using its administrative and organisational structure and with its human and logistical potential, the Romanian Orthodox Church can help expand and diversify the existing social service system, having also in mind the Church's willingness to spare resources and community players and its capacity to deliver social assistance services to disadvantaged individuals from the religious communities which it leads as their shepherd, directly and in a personalised manner. ROC is an important community player and an active partner of the official institutions for provision of social services.

### **Strategic Guidelines for Improving the Social and Charitable Work of the Romanian Church**

Keeping in mind the difficulties as well as the strengths of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) and its structures in terms of providing social assistance, and in light of the strategic objectives defined by some dioceses with view to improving the quality of the social and charity services provided by the Church, we believe the following specific measures/actions should be undertaken:

1) Developing (annual) action plans in the social work sphere, on all levels interested in doing social welfare work (dioceses, monasteries, archpriests) and developing strategies in the social work sphere in all diocesan centres and non-government organisation operating with ROC's approval in the field of social work. The strategic planning process must be proactive and involve the organisations in order to raise the level of accountability.

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- 2) Developing plans for raising funds for social welfare work by diocesan centres and non-government organisations operating with ROC's approval in the field of social work. Increasing donor loyalty across donors.
- 3) Training a group of professionals for developing and implementing projects or striking an ongoing collaboration with a company specialising in project development and implementation.
- 4) Attracting large companies who organise social campaigns or wish to sponsor ROC's social welfare and charity efforts by signing partnership agreements or sponsorship agreements.
- 5) Establishing social enterprises in order to maintain ROC's social welfare and charity work, keeping in mind a prospect for a favourable legal framework.
- 6) Signing partnership agreements between ROC's units and public or private institutions involved in the field of social work.
- 7) Creating a web portal or forum to provide information for funding opportunities for ROC's units.
- 8) Attracting volunteers to supplement the inadequate numbers of qualified personnel in the fields of social assistance and accounting; appropriate motivation on their part; signing volunteer service agreements in order to increase volunteers' accountability.
- 9) Creating a supporting structure for priests who are active in the field of social and charity work which would allow them to share information and exchange experience. The training aspect thereof should include improving participants' skills in various fields, such as: strategic and operational planning of activities; analysis/assessment of social needs, SWOT analysis, communication; fundraising.
- 10) Organising periodic exchange of experience initiatives between dioceses with a view to improving the quality of services offered and standardising working procedures.
- 11) Developing a database, on the diocesan centre level, containing all social service providers, both certified and not certified, in order to facilitate communication between them.
- 12) Creating a network among the parishes/monasteries doing social welfare work.
- 13) Supporting ROC's units that wish to be certified as social service providers with the specialist staff on the diocesan centre level.

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- 14) Preparing standardised documents for doing social welfare and charity work, at least on the diocesan centre level.
- 15) Developing a working plan, on the diocesan centre level, aimed at improving mediation in social welfare and charity work in the diocese.
- 16) Preparing standardised tools for donation reporting.
- 17) Standardising the procedures for internal communication carried out both among the units within a diocese and among the separate dioceses.
- 18) Creating charity committees.
- 19) A more active participation of monasteries in social welfare and charity work. In the past, many monasteries played a significant social and humanitarian role. As early as the 15th century, big monasteries had “infirmaries” where elderly and sick monks as well as some laymen were cared for: Putna (15th century), Arges, Bistrita in Oltenia, Cozia (16th century), Dragomirna, Sadova, Hurezi (17th century), Coltea and Antim in Bucharest, Sfantul Pantelimon, near Bucharest, Sfantul Spiridon in Iasi, Prophet Samuil in Focsani, Precista Mare in Roman, Neamt, Cernica (18th century), etc. They all did substantial charity work.
- 20) Establishing diocesan deposit funds to be used for intervention in emergencies, transferable between diocesan centres, and a partnership with the Emergency Inspectorates. Developing a procedure for intervention in a case of emergency. Building a database with volunteers trained to intervene in emergencies.

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#### 4. The faith-based social services to people in need . The Greek experience

##### The theological foundations of the Church Diaconia

The faith based social work involves actions organized by communities (with professionals, volunteers, or both). It addresses a variety of social and psychosocial problems faced by individuals, families, groups, or wider communities. Its main aims are the empowerment of vulnerable people, their social integration and the promotion of social cohesion as an overall goal. It is based on value-principles such as the social justice, the respect of human rights, the cultivation of collective responsibility, the respect of diversity. The faith based social work in modern societies not only supports the vulnerable groups, but also enhances all citizens' well-being, it promotes social welfare and propels the social change towards the vision of a just *societas*.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the organized social work dates back to the emergence of the early modern state (18th century), which evolved into a welfare state or social state later on the 20th century. The problems linked with poverty and later with the social exclusion faced by marginalized individuals and social groups emerged along with the rapid development of the industrialization and the urbanization while they have been aggravated by the world wars, environmental disasters, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Nowadays, the social work is performed in an extremely complex and interdependent world. The development of globalization in its various dimensions - economic, social, ecological - has led to the expansion of social services, which are now addressed to a greater amount of people affected by the changing social conditions, either directly, such as the immigrants, the refugees, or indirectly, such as the "new" poor, the victims of war or natural disasters etc.<sup>3</sup>

The Christ-based teaching of the Early Christianity on the diaconic love for fellow humans gave new emphasis and orientation to the concept of caring for the sufferer.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Zastrow, *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare: Empowering People*, Brooks / Cole, Canada 2009

<sup>2</sup> Ol. Stasinopoulou, *Welfare State*, Gutenberg, Athens 2006 (Gr).

<sup>3</sup> Is. Hare, «Defining social work for the 21st century. The International Federation of Social Workers' revised definition of social work», *International Social Work* 47/3 (2004) 407–424.

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This loving attitude and way of life integrated the terms used at that time such as ministry, philanthropy, charity and transformed them within the new horizon of meaning. More specifically, “the Christians invested these terms with particular existential, theological and social meaning and placed them among the fundamental values of Christian life”.<sup>4</sup> Since the very early years, the issue of diaconia has been a constituent element of the organized Christian life and it concerns men and women, clergy and laity.<sup>5</sup> The evangelical term “diaconia”, often understood with an eucharistic and eschatological perspective,<sup>6</sup> is also used for describing a wide range of humanitarian and social activities, from the simplest to the most organized forms of social care and social work in the ecclesiastic communities.<sup>7</sup> Diaconia includes the organization of various Christian institutions that offered multidimensional social care and specialized community services as part of the ecclesiastical life from the first “Christian” centuries until the present time.<sup>8</sup>

The early Christian communities developed the first networks of solidarity and brought to the foreground teachings, initiatives and institutions in service of the most vulnerable members of the society.

Gradually, from the first community in Jerusalem to the numbered metropolises and as the “Ecclesia” becomes stronger in economic, political and social terms the Church / social diaconia takes new characteristics. Particularly important for the shaping of the welfare work was the 4th century. The great Fathers of the 4th century do not only denounce social inequality and injustice in their didache, but also took action as they tried to meet the basic social needs of that time. Great Basil established the so called “Vasileiada” in Caesarea of Cappadocia (372 AD), a multi-dynamic Institution that included social care facilities, such as hospitals, orphanages, etc. Corresponding institutions are organized by John Chrysostom in Constantinople (398-404 AD), which covered the needs of the poor, the sick and other people in need.

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<sup>4</sup> C.N. Tsironis, «Diaconia: Early Christian communities- Byzantine times », in I. Petrou (ed.), *History of Orthodox Church (313-1054)*, Road, Athens 2009, pp. 566-601, [here pp 566-567], (Gr).

<sup>5</sup> See *Mt* 23, 11, *Mk* 10, 45, *Lk* 22, 27, *Acts* 6, 1-3, *Rom* 12, 15,

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, «διακονία του λόγου», *Acts* 6,4, «διακονία των τραπεζών», *Acts* 6,2, «διακονία της δικαιοσύνης και της καταλλαγής» Β' Κορ. 3,9 και Β' Κορ. 5,18, See, relatively, P. Vasiliadis, *Charis-society-diaconia*, Thessaloniki 1985, (Gr).

<sup>7</sup> For diaconia in the early Christian communities, see, P. Vasiliadis, *Biblical studies*, P. Pournaras, Thessaloniki 1992, p. 359, (Gr)., C.N. Tsironis, *Globalization and local communities*, Vania, Thessaloniki 2007, pp. 174-194, (Gr). Kjetil Fretheim, “Dimensions of diaconia: the public, political and prophetic”, *Diaconia* 4/1 (2013) 67-80.

<sup>8</sup> See, C. N Tsironis, «Diaconia...», in I. Petrou (ed.), as above, pp. 566-601.

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The organization of social care during the Byzantine Empire [e.g. the Middle Ages] has gradually evolved and developed into a variety of institutions, such as hospitals, hospices, hotels and hostels, which have specialized staff and offer specialized services dedicated to the services of the most vulnerable groups of the population.

The increase of the welfare work in Byzantium caused by a variety of reasons:

a) Continuous changes in social conditions due to the constant wars and recurring epidemics increased the suffered population and underlined the need of facing core social problems such as extreme poverty, orphanage, etc.

b) The development of large urban centers (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Thessaloniki) attracted large numbers of people and created alerting and sometimes massive social problems.

(c) The imitation of the philanthropic attitude of Christ was portrayed as ideal in social life.

Many of these ancient institutions contributed to the foundation of the newer welfare structures. The Church continued her welfare work in various ways sometimes by supplementing or filling the gaps of the welfare system and sometimes by offering the core services in community care following her evangelical mandate and long history.

### Women in the diaconical work

In the diaconic work of the Church, the role of women in the care of people is highlighted. More generally, the role of women in undertaking social activities and offering social work is particularly important in the Greek orthodox culture. Empirical research affirms the fact that women are more active in voluntarism, being the majority in relation to men volunteers.<sup>9</sup> Especially, women are more active in the field of social and health services.<sup>10</sup> Several studies refer to the so-called phenomenon of “feminine philanthropy” highlighting the fact that many charities are a privileged field of women’s activity.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, common observation attributes the multifaceted social and philanthropic work of Church to women as many of them offer voluntary services within the parish, to the extent that diaconia is considered by some people as a “women

<sup>9</sup> See, P. Polyzoidis, *Volunteering and social protection*, Ellinika Grammata, Athens 2006, (Gr). Prot.fr. Vasileios Kalliakmanis, *Volunteering and social responsibility*, Mygdonia, Thessaloniki 2002, (Gr).

<sup>10</sup> See, K. Gaskin & J. D. Smith, *A New Civic Europe? A Study of the Extend and Role of Volunteering*, The National Volunteering Center, London, 1997, σ. 37.

<sup>11</sup> See, W. C., Richardson, *Women’s Philanthropy. Untapped Resources, Unlimited Potential: An Opportunity for Philanthropy and Communities*, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek 2000.

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issue”.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, according to the feminist ethics, the ethical behavior of women is primarily determined by their interest in and care for the others rather than by abstract and rigid rules.<sup>13</sup>

In the evangelical texts there are many models of feminine activities and roles that reflect the multi-faceted aspects of feminine diaconia and put emphasis on feminine dynamism and potential.<sup>14</sup> Well known women, such as the Myrofores, the Samaritan, the sisters of Lazar, Martha and Mary, Maria Magdalene, Elisabeth, Joanna, and, par excellence, Maria the Theotokos, Mother of Jesus, as well as many other anonymous women constitute ideal models of diaconal action for women in the ecclesiastical field. Particularly interesting is the reference to Martha and Mary as, through their oppositional but at the same time complementary dimension, they may on the one hand, contribute to the understanding of the functional roles of women and on the other, delineate feminine models of social action in the Church.

The two evangelical images of Martha and Mary describe two different perceptions for women, which in their turn “prescribe” the different roles that women are called to play in the Orthodox Church.<sup>15</sup> They may be used as ideal types, as models, in our effort to approach, in a better way, the position of women in the Church and roles it entails. At this point it is necessary to make clear that this approach is not a biblical hermeneutical reading but an attempt for sociological analysis using sociological tools, such as the ideal type. When analyzing typologically the two models of women one can schematize the image of women and consequently the nature and character of diaconic work that derives from each one of them.<sup>16</sup>

The two models, Martha and Mary, as they are depicted in the evangelical text of Luc, 10, 38-42, typologically represent two different worlds with different social

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<sup>12</sup> See, Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries. A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, Routledge, New York / London 1993.

<sup>13</sup> See, Julia Driver, *Ηθική φιλοσοφία. Οι βασικές της αρχές*, transl. & ed, I.N. Μαρκόπουλος, University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 2010, pp. 207-225, James Rachels .

<sup>14</sup> For the role of women in the early Christian community, see Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, «The role of women in early Christianity», in I. Petrou (ed.), *History of the Orthodox Church*, v. I, Road, Athens 2009, pp. 340-361.

<sup>15</sup> *Lk* 10, 38-42.

<sup>16</sup> For a theological hermeneutics see, Basil the Great, *Όροι κατά πλάτος* 20, P.G. 31, 973B, and *Ασκητικάί διατάξεις*, P.G. 31, 1325A-1328C, Ioannis Chrysostomos, *Εις την προδοσίαν του Σωτήρος και εξής* (sp), P.G. 59, 717 and *Περί υπομονής* (sp), P.G. 63, 941, Cyril of Alexandria, *Εξήγησις εις το κατά Λουκάν Ευαγγέλιον*, P.G. 72, 622B, *Εξήγησις εις το κατά Ιωάννην Ευαγγέλιον*, P.G. 74, 40 B-C and *Ομιλίες διάφοραι* 13, P.G. 77, 1052C, Abbas Neilos, *Διαφέρουσιν των εν πόλεσιν οικισμένων οι εν ερήμοις ησυχάζοντες*, P.G. 79, 1080 B-C.

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structures and relations: the static, hierarchical and patriarchal traditional society and the open, equal and participatory modern society. The traditional form of society is related to a specific distribution of positions, power and work between the two sexes as well as distinct fields of action, which in their turn correspond to the distinction of space between “private” and “public”. The domestic, private space, where the family concentrates and functions, constitutes the “women’s sphere”, which women are responsible for. On the contrary, the public sphere is the wider political and social space that constitutes the space of responsibility and activity of men. This distribution is not equal, as the distinction between the two spheres and, by extension, the two genders creates an unequal distribution of power between men who are dominant and women who are subjugated. Men are the leaders, responsible for all important decisions; women are dominated, accepting passively the decisions of men, remaining true to their roles as wives, mothers, and daughters. Men are attributed all superior work, such as the administration and powerful positions in the public sphere, whereas women are responsible for “menial” tasks, such as keeping house and raising children.<sup>17</sup>

In modern societies, the public space “is enlarged” so as to accept women as equal members, with roles that correspond to those of men and more participatory procedures in the allocation of positions and power. The key changes that defined modern society, such as industrialization, urbanization and political liberalization resulted in the change of the position and role of women. Women’s entrance into the labor market, the expansion of education to both sexes, the recognition of civil, political and social rights played an essential role in the free formation of the personality of women and in their claim for an equal place in the social and political field.<sup>18</sup>

The model of Martha corresponds to the traditional social structures according to which women are restricted to the private sphere, have no say in public affairs, remain silent in the public space, and even cover their head. The decisions they make concern domestic issues, relating to their household and children, while the public issues, administrative and financial responsibilities, are a concern of men. They remain “hidden” in the home kitchens, having the absolute responsibility of

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<sup>17</sup> For the traditional society, see I Petrou, *Sociology*, Vania, Thessaloniki 2007, pp. 164-182, Especially for the position of women, see Hufton Olwen, *Women in European History (1500-1800)*, transl. Ειρήνη Χρυσόχδου, Nefeli, Athens Αθήνα 2003 (Gr).

<sup>18</sup> See, Ioannis Petrou, *Sociology*, op. cit., pp. 285-301.

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the necessary yet menial jobs and roles, without any prospect of education or social participation.

The model of Mary expresses a society that is open to women's participation; women are given the opportunity to fight for a position in the public sphere, perform a variety of roles and offer diaconia to the community and broader society, depending on their gifts. This model is closer to that of modern women, who claim an equal position in society alongside men and perform a variety of roles at many levels of modern life: political, financial, professional, educational and so on. The image of Mary, seated at the feet of Jesus listening attentively to him, actually represents modern women who afford enriched possibilities to participate and offer diaconia in a variety of ways in the Church. In reality, it expresses the attempt of women to function as full and equal members in the new society that Christ himself inaugurates and realizes.

In this way, in the early Christian communities women perform a variety of roles and diaconias contributing actively to their better function. So, along with the traditional role of wife and mother, women adopt within the community a set of new unexpected roles, such as those of the missionary, charismatic prophetess, teacher and social worker.<sup>19</sup> Especially the role of Deaconesses in the ancient Church confers an institutional upgrading to the position of women at that time, at least within the community. Irrespective of the fact whether deaconesses had the permission to be ordained or not, the institutional recognition of their role within the community indicates a relative improvement of their position compared to the one they hold in the surrounding society.<sup>20</sup>

With the passage of time –for different reasons- the role of deaconesses focuses on social work. Under this form, the institution of deaconesses flourishes especially during the era of Great Fathers (5th c.) with Olympiad being the most famous deaconess, collaborator of Saint John Chrysostom. The sectors of feminine diaconia are many and they cover many areas of the diverse social and philanthropic work of the Church that involves a variety of activities, especially during the early Byzantine period. The deaconesses worked mainly in ecclesiastical hospitals and philanthropic institutions. They cared for the sick, the poor, the

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<sup>19</sup> For the women that are referred in the early Christian communities, see, Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, *The role of women in early Christianity*, in I. Petrou (ed.), *History of the Orthodox Church*, v. I, Road, Athens 2009, v. 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-360. See also Elisabeth Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, Wilmington 1983.

<sup>20</sup> K. Madigan & C. Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church*, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore 2005.

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prisoners and the elderly; they were responsible for keeping the church clean and in order; they gave the sign to women for participation in the chanting of the congregation and also introduced the “kiss of peace” among them. In the sources, reference is also made to their active participation in the enshrouding, funeral and burial of deceased Christian women as well as the consolation of their relatives<sup>21</sup>. Over the centuries, however, the institutional recognition of the role of deaconesses, even in the form of social contribution that it held in Byzantine society, gradually degenerates and, around the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it ceases to exist in the Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, despite their functional demission, women, as faithful to a “feminine destiny” continue to offer voluntarily and unofficially a various diaconia. In the structure and distribution of the ecclesiastical work, as this is expressed in a variety of areas, women hold auxiliary, complementary roles.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the diaconal contribution of women is easily accepted as long as it is limited to traditional sectors (teaching, catecheses, social work), always in an auxiliary form, without disturbing the established order of ecclesiastical structure. This diaconia, beyond its actual value due to the fact that it is offered by women silently as a gift of love, is faced by the ecclesiastical milieu as absolutely normal, as an extension of women’s housekeeping roles in the family.

The Inter-Orthodox Theological Conference of Rhodes (1998) put forth specific proposals for the full development of women’s attributes, such as reviving the institution of deaconesses, taking up positions of authority in the ecclesiastical administration, appointing representatives in the Ecumenical Movement, as well as providing diaconia as readers, chanters, social care providers and so on.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the “old fashioned” work of women, expressed by “Martha”, remains important and maintains its value. Nevertheless, the Church should take seriously into consideration the dynamics expressed by “Mary”, respectfully accept women, recognize the central role the play in the ecclesiastical body, provide the necessary institutional frame for the recognition of the work

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<sup>21</sup> See, V. Karras, “Female Deacons in the Byzantine Church”, *Church History* 73/2 (2004) 272-316 and “The liturgical functions of consecrated women in the Byzantine Church”, *Theological Studies* 66 (2005) 96-116, N. Edgards, “Gender and the Study of Christian Social Practice”, *Diaconia* 1/2 (2010) 199-213.

<sup>22</sup> See N. Papageorgiou, «Οι γυναίκες στην εκκλησιαστική διοίκηση: Δυνατότητες ή προοπτικές;», in *Ο σύγχρονος ρόλος της γυναίκας στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία*, Πρακτικά της Α’ και Β’ Συνδιασκέψεως Γυναικών – Εκπροσώπων ιερών Μητροπόλεων της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος, Κλάδος Εκδόσεων της Επικοινωνιακής και Μορφωτικής Υπηρεσίας της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος, Athens, 2007, pp. 145-155.

<sup>23</sup> Archim. Gennadios Lymouris (ed.), *Woman in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of Women*, op., cit., p. 38.

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women offer, seek new ways for the development of feminine gifts, discover new operation models so as to transform itself into a participatory, decentralized, democratic and member-centered Church functioning as a body that provides space and opportunities for both “Martha” and “Mary”. These two evangelical images of Martha and Mary, as models of diaconia in the ecclesiastical field, best describe the way towards the full and active participation of women in the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted ecclesiastical life. The development of these models offers unlimited possibilities both to the Church, in order to make the best of the rich contribution of women at all levels, and to women themselves, so as to offer, from the position they wish, their multifaceted diaconia to the Church.

We described above two main and significant issues concerning the faith – based social support to young excluded and other people in need in the context of the Greek Orthodox Church. The first one is the long tradition and the theological basis of diaconia. One need to understand the meaning bestowal of the social / community work in order to get a clear idea of what is happening in the church organizations due to the fact that “Tradition” is the most important point of reference in the life of the Greek orthodox parishes. In this sense the social support given to people in need is not a socio-political option, or even a voluntary mood, but rather a part of a larger continuum, that is the life in faith. The second to point to be underlined is the crucial role the women have in the implementation of the Diaconia. Both in the traditional and the modern world women were and still a fundamental contribution to the faith- based social support with a variety of roles and responsibilities.

An overview of the good practices in five European countries follows, which will give a better idea of the way the faith-based organizations understand their role and shed light to the relevant training needs.

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## 5. The Norwegian Experience – causes of social exclusion in Norway (findings from the field study)

The primary indicator of integration in the Norwegian society is access to the labour market. Being a precondition to employment, education is another important indicator of integration. For these reasons, the groups that are considered most at risk of social exclusion in the Norwegian context are immigrants – particularly recently arrived – youth who have dropped out of school, and people struggling with mental health issues, particularly young people. Immigrants recently arrived often struggle to enter the labour market because of limited knowledge of the Norwegian language, because of lack of a support network, and often because of the very fact of being foreigners, not recognized as full members of the Norwegian society.

When asked to name reasons for social exclusion from the Norwegian society, participants in the present research refer to aspects of the experience of the above named groups: unemployment, poverty, child poverty, limited knowledge of the Norwegian culture and language, lack of social networks, limited access to recreational activities (particularly for children), high-school drop-out, drug abuse, mental health issues, loneliness, anxiety and grief. Social exclusion as a consequence of unemployment, poverty, health issues, including mental health issues, and a limited support network is experienced by both immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, and people with a Norwegian background.

A relatively new phenomenon in the Norwegian context is that of immigrants from other European Countries, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, such as Romania and Bulgaria, travelling to Norway in search for working opportunities. High expectations about a new life in Norway are harshly confronted with the difficulty to enter the job market and getting access to housing. Often members of this group end in a new state of poverty and are at risk of health issues, mental health issues and drug addiction, says one of the interviewees. For this people, services such as emergency housing and food distribution have been reintroduced.

Another vulnerable group of people are those who entered Norway legally, applied for a residence permit and had their request denied. Such people end up in a situation similar to that of those who entered the Country illegally. Neither those belonging to the first group nor those belonging to the second have access to welfare benefits. To these groups of people are offered health services, food and emergency accommodation by some of the organisations represented in this research.

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The fight for social inclusion is on the agenda of the Government, of NGOs and of religious communities and institutions. Some religious communities and institutions have been particularly active in providing assistance to undocumented migrants.

Interview material indicates that the work against social exclusion needs to be conducted at least at two levels: among those who live at the margins of the Norwegian society as well as among those who are well integrated and play a key role in making Norwegian society as inclusive as possible. Integration is described as a two-way process.

### Religious ethical principles and human rights

The representatives of Norwegian religious communities that have been involved in the present research are all Christian. From their faith-based, Christian experience and perspective, they voice a shared understanding of social practice as a duty for religious communities. Such understanding of social practice as a duty, is grounded on an understanding of all human beings as created equal in the image of God. The principle of equal creation in the image of God grounds the recognition that all human beings are entitled to the same rights, regardless of their nationality, religion or life-stance, culture, gender, sexual orientation, level of ability or social status. Recognising to every human being the same rights is both a religious and a secular principle. A religious principle is supported by a secular one, namely adherence to the universal declaration of human rights. Together with freedom, democracy and equality, respect for human rights is widely recognized as a core value of Norwegian culture, shared also by religious actors.

Asked about the ethical and moral principles guiding work against social exclusion, participants understandably refer to the duty for Christians to follow the example of Jesus in his ministry in favour of the vulnerable and marginalised. Representatives of faith-based organisations understand themselves as being the ‘arms and feet’ of Jesus in this world. Following the example of Jesus implies active love for one’s neighbour, expressing care and helping people in need as well as welcoming strangers “as if it was Jesus himself”.

Respect for human rights implies respect for the right of every person to practice in accordance with his or her own religion and world-view. In this respect, inter-religious work and work that aims at fostering dialogue, mutual knowledge and understanding across cultures and life-stances, is perceived by several representatives of faith-based organisations as a key aspect of their work against social exclusion.

The combination of religious and secular (humanistic) concerns about the rights of every person to a worthy life and the duty to engage in social issues have three main

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consequences. The first one is that representatives of religious communities are called to engage in society in order to benefit every member of the society – not only church members. Such a wide scope of the work against social exclusion is described in terms of work for social justice. Secondly, such a wide and inclusive scope of the work for social inclusion becomes particularly visible in the work for inter-religious dialogue, meaning that the work of Christian actors is aimed also at non-Christian members of the society with the purpose to build a fully inclusive society also in terms of religions and world-views. The third consequence is that in order to make the work for social inclusion as effective as possible, representatives of religious communities feel that they have a duty to cooperate with secular organisations and institutions. Social inclusion is in this way seen as the result of concerted efforts by religious communities and secular institutions.

### Developments in the understanding of diakonia in the Nordic Countries

The ethical and moral principles for the engagement against social exclusion expressed by the interviewees, reflect also a development occurred in the last decades in the Nordic Countries of Europe of the understanding of diakonia or Christian social practice, both as practice and as a theoretical discipline.

The so-called diaconal movement was launched in Germany in the mid-1800s. It was supported by an understanding of diakonia as ‘loving care for the poor’. Communities of deaconesses and deacons were established and in such communities members were trained as nurses, teachers and social workers preparing to alleviate the suffering of homeless people, orphans, prisoners and the sick. The movement soon spread to the rest of Germany and to neighbouring Countries, including Norway. The Inner City Mission was established in Oslo (at that time called Christiania) in the year 1855 with the goal to be close to the most vulnerable in society and to established programmes aimed at “help to self-help”.

As mentioned, the concept of diakonia has been evolving in the last decades. From an understanding of diakonia as charitable service offered to the sick and the poor, the concept has come to indicate efforts geared towards the empowerment of those at the margins, not the least through initiatives that aim at confronting the root causes of injustice. From a model that can be defined paternalistic, with clear demarcations between subjects and objects of help, diakonia has been reinterpreted in terms of mutuality, partnership and interdependence. Relations of power are questioned and a restorative understanding of diakonia point towards the fact that just relations benefits all, both the privileged and the

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underprivileged. The concept of diakonia has further been expanded to include concern for creation and therefore practices that aim at preserving the environment.

Norway has been at the forefront in the development of this new understanding of diakonia, and responses from Norwegian participants in the present research indicate how such a new understanding of diakonia as empowerment of those at the margins, struggle for justice and care for the environment is well established in Norwegian faith-based organisations working towards inclusive communities.

### Welfare and religion

Participants in the research were asked to choose between three alternatives about who should provide welfare services in Europe: 1. governmental structures; 2. faith communities or 3. faith communities in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organisations. All participants expressed a preference for the third option. Welfare in Norway is considered a duty for all the three parts – Government, non-governmental organisations and faith-based communities – and welfare services are considered most effective when they are the result of a synergy of efforts.

Public welfare services were introduced in some of the north European countries by the end of 1800, inspired by diaconal projects that had been established by churches and religious organisations. With the introduction of public welfare services, it became natural for diaconal institutions to co-operate with such government-led services, and also for diaconal workers to find work in public structures. Close links were developed between diakonial institutions or institutions run by the churches, and services provided by the State.

The current understanding of welfare in Norway – or of Norway as a welfare state – is that the state and local authorities are responsible for ensuring that all inhabitants have access to services such as schools, health care and social benefits (such as unemployment subsidies, paid parental leaves, paid absence from work in case of illness, etc.). Every member of the society is entitled to such benefits. In such a welfare state, rights come with duties such as paying taxes and being active in the job market, either by being employed or by actively searching for employment opportunities. Another duty for all the beneficiaries of a welfare system is to be part of organisations to help themselves and others to be full participants in the society. Contributing to a well-functioning society is understood as the responsibility of all.

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The question for faith-based organisations is not so much if diakonia should be an alternative to services provided by the public sector, but what is the added factor, what is the particular contribution of the work carried out by faith-based organisations. Another important question is how is diakonia affected by its interaction with public services.

Cooperation between diaconal and public institutions in the Norwegian context implies also that to a large extent, diaconal projects are financed by the government. To the question about the sources of financial support for faith-based projects against social exclusion in Norway, the majority of the participants indicated the government as the primary source, followed by the municipality (again a public source of funding) and by private sponsors.

### Services provided by faith-based organisations

In the frame of an understanding of diakonia or Christian social practice as empowerment of those who find themselves at the margins of society, as capacity building and construction of inclusive communities, when asked about the major areas of engagement of their organisation, the majority of participants in this research indicated ‘support to migrants’. Since migrants are perceived as among the most vulnerable in society, various forms of assistance to migrants are developed such as provision of information on services, legal and economic support, tools for entrepreneurship, and educational support. Language training, also in the social form of language cafes, figures prominently as a way to facilitate the access of immigrants into the Norwegian society.

Beside the provision of services (‘social assistance’), raising awareness and providing information and competence on a variety of topics, not the least on how to get access to social benefits, is seen as a way to provide vulnerable people with the tools to move from positions of marginalisation. For both people who have recently immigrated and for young drop-outs from high-school ‘educational support’ is of crucial importance. Such is also ‘vocational training’.

Another major area of intervention that has been indicated by a large percentage of participants, is addressing issues of health, primarily understood as mental health. Social exclusion and mental health issues reinforce each other. A solution to both problems is therefore pursued by jointly addressing such issues.

‘Assistance in prison’ and ‘legal support’ are also indicated as areas of intervention, where legal support is provided also to people who don’t have a criminal record.

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Meals, housing, running rehabilitation centres for people who make use of drugs, in other words expressions of Christian social practice in a traditional understanding of the term, are named together with more contemporary expressions of diakonia such as political lobbying. Engaging people in voluntary activities is also to be read in the frame of an understanding of diakonia as capacity building and empowerment.

### A step-by-step methodology

Participants were asked if their organizations follow a pre-defined step-by-step plan in their work against social exclusion. Some participants indicate a preference towards a contextual approach to diakonia. Rather than imposing on people a predefined work plan, some organisations chose as a starting point in designing their work, the specific needs of the people involved. Other participants understood the question about a step-by-step work plan in terms of building relationships, a process that by its own nature is gradual or step-by-step. The same principle is applied to building relationships in view to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. Some other participants referred to an established step-by-step routine, for example in their work with people who make use of drugs. Here, diaconal work can follow the steps of establishing contact, offering rehabilitation, providing housing, education, and work opportunities. Following such a step-by-step methodology, says one participant, aims also at showing in practice that it is possible to move on in life.

### Good practices

When asked about what they consider ‘good practices’, participants refer to creating platforms for people to meet as a practice of primary importance. Such meeting places might be open cafes where elderly people meet once a week to join activities such as dancing; might be places that offer education programs for youth; most often are language cafes attended by both recent immigrants and Norwegians. While recent immigrants acquire much needed knowledge of the Norwegian language, Norwegians get a better understanding of the life experience of immigrants.

At such meeting places, food is often served. Sharing food brings people closer to each other, facilitate meaningful conversations and promotes fellowship. Promotion of mutual understanding is seen as supporting a process of gradual inclusion in the Norwegian society.

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Several interviewees refer to how open cafes run by their organisations are an antidote to loneliness in an environment characterized by mutual respect.

Creating meeting spaces for people with different backgrounds and life experiences aims also at facilitating inter-cultural and inter-religious or life-stance encounter. Several participants understand ‘meeting places’ as space for dialogue. Promoting encounter is therefore considered an effective contribution towards a pluralistic and therefore inclusive society also in religious terms. Interviewees refer to how encounters of representatives of different religious communities at “Dialogue dinners” become the starting point for long term friendships. Personal relationships are understood as the most effective tool towards cultural and religious tolerance.

Practices are described as ‘good’ when they allow for the full participation of all the people concerned in designing programmes. It is considered desirable that the people concerned ‘own’ the activities that are aimed at their social inclusion. One interviewee tells that in the early phase of a ‘day-school’ for asylum seekers, regular meetings were held with the people who were going to attend the school. The fact that such planning meetings were attended by all parts concerned, is considered an effective strategy towards the sustainability of the project.

Another interviewee tells about how at the end of monthly dialogue group meetings held by the community the interviewee works for, all the participants are encouraged to stay after the official part of the meeting is over, in order to plan the next meeting. Such a practice is so established and well received that almost every participants is willing to stay over. The story is offered as an example of how people appreciate being not just beneficiaries but also owners of initiatives that concern them.

Such examples provided by participants in the present research, exemplify the development of the understanding of diakonia as work aiming at establishing mutual relationships and at promoting empowerment also by providing the people concerned with the opportunity to ‘speak for themselves’.

Another example of good practices is what an interviewee calls “unified measures”. The idea here is to concentrate in one place the provision of services such as housing, distribution of food and clothes, legal help and counselling. Such concentration makes it easier for the beneficiaries to access services.

In line with an understanding of diakonia also as expression of care for the environment, some organisations make sure that houses built to host among others, refugees, are designed as a climate neutral.

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An initiative described as “most significant” is the offer of medical care at health centres for undocumented immigrants. Here a guiding principle is that the most significant development is “from nothing to something”. The move from nothing to something is not just a good start, it is to be considered a success story. Moving out of a status of social exclusion and into a condition of real inclusion is a long and difficult process. It is therefore a good practice to appreciate even small achievements, small steps towards inclusion.

### Specialised social workers and volunteers

Social work financed by the government and social work conducted by diaconal institutions in cooperation with services run by the government, require a considerable level of expertise and call for the professionalisation of social work. At the same time, social work as described by the participants in the research, could not be run solely by specialised people, both because of the size of the work that needs to be done and because funds provided by the government are not unlimited. Work for social inclusion conducted by NGOs and religious organisations relies considerably on the contribution of volunteers. Participants in the present research were asked to evaluate the role of specialised social workers and volunteers in the different types of activities aimed at addressing social exclusion.

Professional social work is considered absolutely necessary for a number of reasons. Professionally trained social workers provide a much needed sense of safety and stability to people who live in vulnerable conditions. Such sense of safety and stability is important also for the volunteers that contribute to the given activities as it gives to volunteers the necessary confidence to take part in such work. Interviewees express the idea that particularly in the encounter with people struggling with mental health issues, it is of great importance that social workers show sufficient competence.

At the same time, the contribution of volunteers is seen not only as a necessity in terms of conducting more work than what is funded. The work of volunteers is considered as an asset because it is usually paired with high levels of motivation and because volunteers bring to social work a wide range of interests and expertise beside competence in social work. Participants in the research see the mixture of roles, motivations and expertise as a recipe for success in the work for social inclusion. Interviewees express also the idea that great benefits could be gained from exchange programmes that bring Norwegian volunteer and professional workers in closer contact with people engaged in similar activities in other

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Countries. Exchange programmes are seen as an opportunity to increase knowledge of issues related to social exclusion and facilitating inter-cultural understanding.

### **Training programmes attended and topics to be integrated**

Participants in the present research, a great majority of which are staff of diaconal institutions and religious organisations, indicate that they have received training in the areas of poverty issues, issues of racism and xenophobia, gender issues and topics related to migration (minority issues and religious identities). Among the topics that should be integrated in further training programmes, participants in the research mention intercultural training; the relation between social exclusion and political decisions making process; training in political lobbying and advocacy work; exploring issues of empowerment; and inter-cultural understanding.

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## PART B - PRAXIS

### Leadership through Effective Communication

In addition to enhancing our own self-awareness and control, being able to express our thoughts and feelings so as to make ourselves understood also facilitates our communication and cooperation with others, and thus leads to more effective impact achievement, which is a key leadership quality.

According to D. Ivanov (2019), leadership refers to our ability to influence someone else's will in a way that would positively change their thinking and behaviour so that:

- ✓ He/she will start doing things in a certain way;
- ✓ He/she will become more efficient or productive;
- ✓ He/she will adapt to new situations;
- ✓ He/she will voluntarily commit and strongly desire to achieve certain goals;
- ✓ He/she will start thinking about how to achieve better results.

Leadership through effective communication is based on the assumption that the difference between day-to-day communication and opinions is rather blurred.

A leader's ability to engage, inspire and affect is crucial to the success or failure of his/her efforts to make a change. D. Ivanov (2019) notes that influencing and motivating call for an approach that is substantially different from those geared towards addressing current challenges. He further concludes that the ability to communicate effectively is the key to successful leadership. Considering that a leader's role is to lead, its effective implementation will depend on the support he/she can get from his/her followers. This can only be achieved if they have all committed and non-formally accepted their responsibilities.

Let us now turn to the process of mind-set and behaviour modification, as this is essential to clarifying the mechanisms of successful leadership. This is driven by the process of motivation, which is key to understanding leadership and lies at the heart of any current influence to which human behaviour is subjected. It follows that in order to be successful, a leader must be fully aware of the nature of motivation and have a perfect command of its tools.

In its terminological usage *motivation* refers to the act of moving (from the Latin *motivus* – a derivative of *moveo*, meaning *to move*). We can therefore assume that motivation is an inner state activating or triggering wilful decisions concerning the achievement of certain

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goals. This movement is generated by motives, i.e. incentives of active human behaviours, which are in turn based on needs met by real or imagined products or services. Unsatisfied needs serve as starting points for the motivation process. Stimuli (from the Latin *stimulus*, meaning *a goad*) are outer influences exerted upon a person or a group, and can become motives if only if they can adequately meet a need (Иванов, Петрова, 2016).

One of the most widely known classifications of needs is Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which was first proposed in his 1943 paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*, and subsequently expanded and published in *Towards a Psychology of Being* (Maslow, A., & Lowery, R., 1998). Maslow posited a hierarchy of human needs based on two groupings: deficiency needs and growth needs. Within the deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency. The first four levels are:

- ✓ Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.;
- ✓ Safety/security: out of danger;
- ✓ Belongingness and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted; and
- ✓ Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition.

According to Maslow, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs if and only if the deficiency needs are met. Maslow's initial conceptualisation included only one growth need – self-actualisation. Self-actualised people are characterised by:

2. a) Being problem-focused;
3. b) Incorporating an ongoing freshness of appreciation of life;
4. c) A concern about personal growth; and
5. d) The ability to have peak experiences.

Maslow later differentiated the growth need of self-actualisation, specifically identifying two of the first growth needs as part of the more general level of self-actualisation and one beyond the general level that focused on growth beyond that oriented towards self. They are:

- ✓ Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore;
- ✓ Aesthetic: symmetry, order, and beauty;
- ✓ Self-actualisation: to find self-fulfilment and realise one's potential; and
- ✓ Self-transcendence: to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfilment and realise their potential.

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Maslow's basic position is that as one becomes more self-actualised and self-transcendent, one becomes wiser (develops wisdom) and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations (Huitt, 2007).

It should be pointed out that the latter four levels differ significantly from the former in that motivation continues to grow in proportion to their satisfaction, which is also the key to self-realisation and spiritual development (Александров, 2018).

What is also worth noting is that when a person encounters a life-threatening or *limit situation*, as these were called by Karl Jaspers, the satisfaction of lower-level needs ceases to act as motivation, leaving only *self-transcendence* intact.

Not everyone, however, can reach the higher tiers of Maslow's hierarchy, as their attainment is based on a phased-out approach, in line with one's spiritual and moral maturation. In general, the majority of needs belong to the lower levels, and, overall, the higher the level, the less essential the need. One can live well enough without self-actualisation, but one will never survive unless his/her physiological needs are met. A prolonged failure to satisfy higher-level needs will only result in their gradual suppression and disappearance; conversely, their fulfilment will bring about a feeling of accomplishment, health and biological efficiency. When needs at multiple levels are met, one is more likely to value the higher-level achievements (Кацева, P., 2012). The ability to recognise people's development level in order to successfully meet their needs is crucial for any successful leader. Norwood (1999) argued that Maslow's hierarchy could be used to describe the kinds of information individuals seek at different levels of development. For example, individuals at the lowest level seek **coping information** in order to meet their basic needs. Information that is not directly connected to helping a person meet his or her needs in a very short time span is simply left unattended. Individuals at the safety level need **helping information**. They seek to be assisted in seeing how they can be safe and secure. **Enlightening information** is sought by individuals seeking to meet their belongingness needs. Quite often this can be found in books or other materials on relationship development. **Empowering information** is sought by people at the esteem level. They are looking for information on how their egos can be developed. Finally, people in the growth levels of cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualisation seek **edifying information**. According to Huitt (2007), at the level of transcendence individuals would seek information on how to connect to something beyond themselves or to how others could be edified.

If it is true that motives drive actions, then what is it that drives motives and makes them active? According to Yannaras (2002), needs can be arranged hierarchically based on the

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meanings we assign to our existence and lives, the world, matter, history etc., whereas the manner of their hierarchisation determines cultural differences. Thus, the direction of self-actualisation and spiritual development can be reversed towards the realisation of different moral values, in accordance with the value system of the individual, and in this lies the connection between motivation and values.

A successful leader can be an effective communicator if and only if he/she is aware of the decision-making process. The latter can be presented as a sequence of five steps, the first of which is the presence of a need (Поптодоров & Денев, 2002; Александров, 2018). This can be exemplified as follows:

*Need => Battle of Motives => Choice of Motive* (along with goals and means) => *Decision to Act* => *Action (activity)* to realise the chosen goals and the means for their realisation.

As can be seen from the diagram, wilful acts are initiated by the presence of needs, which in turn become motives. This is followed by a battle of motives, until one of them is selected, on which the decision to act will be based. The choice of a motive (the motivating choice) is itself a type of mechanism based on free will and determined by the value system of the individual, as well as by his/her perception of moral significance, favourableness and usefulness. Here, free will consists simply in the choice of motives, goals and means for their realisation. There are multiple social science theories devoted to each of the stages in this process. One is Lean Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, described in his book *When Prophecy Fails* (1956). In it, cognitive dissonance is defined as a state of inconsistency, contradiction and non-compliance between the attitudes, knowledge, ideas and beliefs held by an individual and the information presented to him/her by the surroundings. According to this theory, people whose behaviour is not harmonious with this information will either re-structure their beliefs to conform to their behaviour, or will change their behaviour altogether. This is based on the assumption that in general we strive to maintain balance or consistency between our behaviour and our beliefs, between what we know or believe in and how we act, and between ourselves and the outside world. Festinger considers that people are far more likely to manipulate facts so they can fit their beliefs than vice versa. In contexts like these leaders exert a strong influence on people's behaviours, as their authority has been accepted and they are being voluntarily followed. It is precisely these acceptance and voluntariness that reduce the cognitive dissonance at the *battle-of-motives* and *choice-of-motive* stages, easily leading to *decisions to act*. In other words, as long as they can avoid cognitive dissonance, people will continue to follow their adopted leaders, no matter the cost.

Another determining factor for human behaviour and the influences exerted upon it is attitude change. In psychology, an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and

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behaviours toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Psychologists define attitudes as a learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way. This can include evaluations of people, issues, objects, or events. Such evaluations are often positive or negative, but they can also be uncertain at times. Researchers also suggest that there are several different components that make up attitudes:

- 1) Affective Component: how the object, person, issue, or event makes you feel;
- 2) Behavioural Component: how the attitude influences your behaviour;
- 3) Cognitive Component: your thoughts and beliefs about the subject.

There are a number of factors that can influence how and why attitudes form.

a) Experience

Attitudes form directly as a result of experience. They may emerge due to direct personal experience, or they may result from observation.

b) Social Factors

Social roles and social norms can have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expected to behave in a particular role or context. Social norms involve society's rules for what behaviours are considered appropriate.

c) Learning

Attitudes can be learned in a variety of ways. Consider how advertisers use classical conditioning to influence your attitude toward a particular product. In a television commercial, you see young, beautiful people having fun on a tropical beach while enjoying a sports drink. This attractive and appealing imagery causes you to develop a positive association with this particular beverage (Cerry, 2019).

According to D. Ivanov (2019), attitudes are formed as mental, volitional and emotional states of readiness having direct (directional) or dynamic influence on the responses towards any object or situation with which an individual may come into contact.

The power of influencing and the question of whether persuasion, i.e. being a leader, can actually be mastered has captivated the human brain ever since the time of the ancient theoreticians of the rhetoric art. First among them Aristotle defines the rhetorician as someone who is “always able to see what is persuasive” (*Topics* VI.12). He argued that the essence of rhetoric lies in our “ability to see what is possibly persuasive in every given case” (*Rhet.* I.2) and claimed that some modes of persuasion belong strictly to the art of rhetoric and some do not. Whereas the latter (inartificial proofs) are not supplied by the speaker, such as witnesses, testimony, written contracts etc., the former (artificial proofs) are constructed by him/her. The first kind has merely to be used, and the second has to be

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invented. He further considered three kinds of artificial proofs: “The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.” In Aristotle’s rhetorical theory the artificial proofs are known as *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*, and form the so-called rhetorical triangle.

*Ethos*, or the proof of character (more specifically moral character, as implied by its name), is the strongest and major mode. Its power to persuade lies in the ethical character of the leader, his/her reputation, and the strategies used to convince the audience in his/her authority and credibility. This can be done by:

- 1) Coming across as a person of good moral character, who genuinely believes in what he/she is saying;
- 2) Appearing as a competent, intelligent and knowledgeable figure in the field in question, the situation etc.;
- 3) Creating the impression of being outspoken and, rather than being driven by selfish motives, of being genuinely concerned about the best interest of people and their well-being.

*Ethos* refers to a leader’s ability to persuade others and make them find his arguments credible. It is particularly important that this kind of persuasion should be achieved by what the speaker says, and the way in which he/she says it, and not by what people think of his/her character before he/she begins to speak.

*Logos* appeals to reason, and refers to the logical arguments supporting the speaker’s claims or thesis, or the ability to draw conclusions. It can further be interpreted as the content of an argument, or the extent to which the leader has managed to substantiate his/her point of view. Logical proofs require the use of syllogisms and other logical operations, and take two forms – inductive and deductive. An inductive proof uses a series of examples to draw a general conclusion, while a deductive proof is a syllogism or enthymeme (rhetorical syllogism). To be effective, a speaker’s *logos* must be in harmony with his/her *pathos* and *ethos*.

*Pathos*, i.e. the emotional proof, refers to persuading the audience through the use of emotions. In essence, it draws heavily on the audience’s own values, beliefs and attitudes, and can be seen as exemplary of the role of the audience in the persuasive act. It typically appeals to those of the audience’s emotions that are harmonious with the position of the leader. One of its key aspects is identifying with the audience, as people seem to be more receptive when spoken to in their own language, as a result of which the speaker will be perceived as one of them and his/her credibility will increase. This identification refers an sub-conscious transfer of qualities and emotional states inherent in the leader onto the listener. Thus, it exemplifies his/her compassionate nature and the ability to re-live the

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content of the speech. At the linguistic level, this is achieved by favouring the inclusive *we*, while at the same time avoiding any differentiation or confrontation which may occur as a result of using the exclusive *I* and *you*. *Pathos* can also be seen as the benevolent acceptance of the leader on behalf of the follower, and can be best described as *empathy* (Jae, Y. J., 2007). The attainment of a specific emotional state in the audience is accomplished through the act of utterance, or, to be even more specific, through everything that is contained in the concept of *rhetorical action*, i.e. the overall impact of speaking.

The rhetorical triangle is equilateral, suggesting that the three modes of persuasion should be balanced. Below are some questions to help their identification and usage. The questions can be used in two ways – for self-assessment and for assessment of effective communication in others.

*Logos*: Is the thesis clear and specific? Is the thesis supported by strong reasons and credible evidence? Is the argument logical and arranged in a well-reasoned order?

*Ethos*: What are the leader's qualifications? How has the leader connected him/herself to the topic being discussed? Does he/she demonstrate respect for multiple viewpoints? Are sources credible? Does the leader use a tone that is suitable for the audience/purpose? Is the diction used appropriate for the audience/purpose? Are the documents presented in a polished and professional manner?

*Pathos*: Are vivid examples, details and images used to engage the hearer's emotions and imagination? Does the leader appeal to the values and beliefs of the hearer by using examples the hearer can relate to or care about?

In conclusion, a leader is someone who has the ability to inspire, motivate and change social attitudes, and, ultimately, people's behaviours. This influence is in turn based on rhetorical communication and oratorical impact, i.e. something that can be learned, or a technique that can be mastered. Thus, a leader's success is proportional to his/her ability to communicate effectively. Moreover, it can be positively confirmed that a successful leader is a successful communicator, and only a successful communicator can be a successful leader.

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## Organising community work

*How to plan and develop good projects (marketing equivalent strategy, including training and educational projects)*

The first step toward a good project is to elaborate a good project proposal. The purpose of this section is to help you design a project that can be “sold” to sponsors and stakeholders and/or that can be used in fundraising campaigns or financial subventions. That is the case when you apply for European Union funds.

A project proposal, in its details, is unique to each project. Still, each proposal should attempt at answering the main questions listed below. In this sense, we are here providing a sort of template for what we consider an effective proposal:

- ✓ What problem are you trying to solve?
- ✓ How does the project align with your organization’s overall strategic goals?
- ✓ What are the benefits for the user?
- ✓ What parameters will you use to measure success?
- ✓ What are the deliverables?
- ✓ What is the timeframe, what are the deadlines and how do you plan to meet them?
- ✓ What resources do you need to complete the project on time?
- ✓ What’s the project budget?
- ✓ What are the possible risks?
- ✓ Who are the people responsible for the project and what are their roles?
- ✓ How will the project be reported?

Most project proposals are designed to help you answer all of those questions as you complete your document. A proposal, for example, could be divided into these six basic parts:

**Executive Summary:** here you provide an outline of the project in such a way that catches the sponsor’s or donor’s attention.

**History:** is it advisable to put the project in context; mention any precedents and how they can positively or negatively affect the outcome of the project.

**Requirements:** describe in detail the problem(s) the project aims to solve or the opportunity(s) it exploits.

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**Solution:** illustrate the plan to solve the problem or take advantage of the opportunities you have identified.

**Authorization:** mention the people who are officially responsible throughout the project.

**Appendix:** this is where you attach papers supporting your proposal.

This is a starting point. Writing a project proposal is the first step to outline what the project is designed to accomplish, and using a template will help you to make sure that you are addressing as many as possible among the concerns and questions of your audience. But there are many more ways you can boost your proposal in order to make it more effective. The following five tips will help you to write a successful project proposal.

### Put a fair amount of time and energy in writing the proposal

Think of the proposal as a project in itself (albeit a small project). Apply all the project management skills and experience you have towards defining the steps involved in creating the proposal, including how long it will take and what resources you will need to accomplish it.

The best proposals are well researched ones. Include time for research, as well as some float for delayed requests for data. Make sure you are also planning for when you intend to have the actual presentation. Be prepared for the eventuality that when you bring up the idea to sponsors or possible financiers to meet to discuss the proposal, you will actually discuss the project in some detail with them at that time. So, be sure to have done some preliminary work on the proposal, at a minimum a solid elevator pitch, so you can speak intelligently about it. You don't want sponsors to shoot down an idea, before it has a chance to get a fair hearing.

Finally, give yourself time to get peer feedback, or even mentor or sponsor feedback, while you're drafting and developing the proposal. Ask trusted advisers to review your idea and drafts, as well as provide feedback on mock presentations. Make sure you leave yourself time to incorporate feedback, too.

### Prepare an effective introduction to the project

If you can't wow your audience in your opening pitch, it's going to be that much harder to win them over as you go through the finer details of the proposal during your project proposal presentation. You need to write your executive summary so that the project sounds exciting, addresses a problem that needs resolution or defines an opportunity that can be profitable.

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Of course, you want to supply an overview of the facts. What is that problem, need or goal? What's your solution and how do the numbers support that? What are the costs and benefits of your solution? But you want to draft this section (and present it) with energy. Avoid being too timid with your words or trying earnestly to “just let the data do the talking.” Numbers are only interesting when presented by humans. If you can sweep up the sponsors in your enthusiasm, they'll be more likely to follow you as you explain the details of how you plan to achieve your goal.

Be sure to further amaze your sponsors by acknowledging an overview of the risks and issues inherent in the project. By noting them up front in the executive summary, you can address how you'll mitigate them proactively, and avoid letting your audience stew in a state of worry and what ifs. The best executive summary is a roll up of all the research and due diligence you have put into the rest of your proposal.

### Make your writing clear and effective

Good writing is, above all, clear and understandable and intended for a particular audience. That goes doubly so for the body of your proposal. You want to articulate the details without getting lost in the weeds, and in so doing lose your audience.

So, what do you do? You stick to the pertinent facts. Trust that you have wowed them in the executive summary; now make your case step-by-step using relevant data to bring your point home. Most readers (including possible evaluators) will not read every single word you write. They will scan your document, looking for data that validates your claim.

Follow our proposal outline template through the body of the document. You'll be providing the background and history, as well as detailed synopsis of the type of project, its scope, context analysis and competitor research, where relevant. All of the details that your sponsor/financier is going to need, should be laid out following the outline, so that it's simple and easy for them to read quickly.

Don't get too creative. It's not the time or place. Once you've given them a stunning executive summary, the sponsors/financier are going to want to get down to the nitty gritty of the project, without any unneeded flourishes, in an easily scannable document so that they can make the best decision possible.

### State clearly goals and objectives

Your project boils down to the plan that you've formulated. There can be no dead ends on this route, or you're not going to get approval.

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Know the difference between a goal and an objective. Goals are broad, defining the project overall. But that doesn't mean you can be vague. Again, you want to write a clear, singular and easily understood goal. Objectives are the details about how you will achieve those goals. To do this, follow the old journal rule of the Five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why? These objectives must always support your goal, and they should make logical sense in the order in which you set them up.

Here's a tip to help you make better goals: make them SMART goals. Everyone wants to be smart, right? In this case, it stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based. Following this logic, you'll be able to convince decision makers that your project is not just SMART, but also in good hands.

### [Link your project to previous ones](#)

You don't have to reinvent the wheel. There's likely historical data that gives your current proposal a solid foundation on which to present your proposed project to sponsors.

Historical data is simply data collected about past events, in this case, prior projects or teams. By connecting your proposal to successful projects of the past that shared similar goals or constraints, you're able to explain to sponsors that this proposal is viable. Find data to support both why this project is a winner, either because you've analyzed past failure rates or because you've analyzed the successes of projects past.

Once your proposal is approved, the real work begins. You'll have to plan, schedule, manage resources, monitor progress and report back to your sponsors/donors. To do this efficiently and productively demands a robust and dynamic project management staff and tools.

### [How to apply for European Funds](#)

The European Union provides funding through nationally managed Programmes as well as through grants managed directly by the European Commission. About 80% of EU funding is granted through Programmes managed in the EU countries themselves. Where the European Commission directly manages funding, it does so by awarding grants, launching tendering procedures, etc. The European Commission helps fund projects and organisations which contribute to the implementation of EU Programmes and policies. It grants funding through calls for proposals and projects. To get funding for your project, you will need to identify a relevant Programme and Call for proposals/projects and carefully follow the

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specific guidelines on how to apply. Each call is unique. Bear in mind that your project will compete for funding with projects submitted by other applicants for the same call.

When considering to embark on a European project, applicants must get acquainted with the documents and technicalities of the EU Fund and/or Programme they want to apply for. Tailoring the project idea on Fund or Programme priorities is a prerequisite of every successful project preparation. Evaluators will look closely at the sustainability of the project, avoiding to finance project ideas which are likely to end in nothing once the money flow from the European Commission stops.

To be eligible for funding, you may need look for a project partner in other countries. Any company, research organisation or non-governmental organisation can be a partner, regardless of where they are based, provided they are financially viable and qualified to perform the tasks specified in the project proposal. However, there must be proof of the operational and financial viability to carry out project tasks within the proposal. Furthermore, the application must show that project partners are committed to the idea and have the capacity to keep the project going and deliver **lasting and meaningful results**. The surest way to do this is to **make sure that the project idea is in line with the mission and vision of the partners**. Only then the project will last. Equally important to ensure sustainability are good **dissemination and exploitation strategies**.

A project can be approached either from a top-down or from a bottom-up perspective. The way in which applicants decide to approach a project depends on their **strengths** and on what they want to achieve. If prospective applicants have a great idea that they want to realise as such, they will choose a bottom-up approach, trying to find the perfect call to finance their idea. Unfortunately, it is not that common to have the perfect match between one's idea and the calls issued by a financial programme. Therefore, the original idea will have to be **tailored on the priorities and requirements of the targeted call**. This can make the project idea change drastically compared to the original, and therefore partners will always have to check if the new idea still matches their mission, vision and expertise. Partners can alternatively choose to focus on their expertise. In that case, they will focus on previously identified problem they have the capacity to deal with. Understanding the difference between these approaches is very important. Competition is very high. In order to avoid any waste of times and resources, projects should set **SMART objectives**. The objectives of a successful project should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic, while the project itself should be delivered within a reasonable "time frame". Crucial steps during the preparation phase are also to look around and **understand which kind of projects have been previously financed under the targeted programme and/or**

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**the same subject**, trying to **learn best practices** and seeking the **advices** of those who have experience of writing and evaluating winning project proposals.

In order to write a successful proposal, partners should first identify the most attractive call topic according to their capacity and the capacity of the target group they represent. It is also crucial to understand the process of submission of the application, which can vary according to the financial programme of reference and the call one applies for. Thirdly, given the high number of rejected proposals and the short time allocated to the evaluation of each proposal, it is of utmost importance to impress the evaluators. Some good everyday habits can help:

- ✓ Build to last: each and every project should be conceived as to last after the money flow from the European Commission ends. Partners must be committed to the objectives of the project.
- ✓ Upset the status quo by keeping things simple. Innovation and clarity are very important aspects of successful applications. Evaluators do not have much time to assess applications. The most effective way to impress them is to present the main ideas of the project in a clear way.
- ✓ Exchange ideas with the partners, don't delay, delegate: this very important concept should be applied both to the members of the team and the members of the partnership. A good organisation should include at least four partners with different responsibilities. The proposal writing team should include the following figures:
  - ✓ someone with expertise in the topic
  - ✓ someone with experience in the impact part of the project. Applicants should try to emphasise how project results will be applied in specific domains and to specific target groups
  - ✓ someone responsible of all administrative tasks
  - ✓ an external evaluator (*super partes*)

Leverage good to great. Most projects are good. However, given the number of projects submitted and the usual relatively low available budget, only great project ideas presented in a very good way win. Good projects should never compromise, nor in the consortium-building phase nor in the writing process. The more compromises we make, the lower the quality of the final project. For this reason, it is crucial to get feedback from people who do not belong in the project team. One other “must do” to leverage good to great is to allow time to the project. The preparation of a project should take appropriate time, and the project should be complete two weeks before the deadline for submission. In this way,

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partners allow themselves some time to get feedback and improve the quality of the application.

Recognise mistakes. In the case of unsuccessful applications, it is crucial to recognise mistakes and be ready to put aside feelings and change the project idea dramatically if needed. General observations from the European Commission as explanation of the project's rejection are not enough to leverage projects from good to great. Unsuccessful applicants should be ready to analyse their project idea thoroughly, and to identify the mistakes they made while conceiving and presenting their project idea. If they are ready to do so, and they still believe in the importance of their idea, they will go for the next call with a better proposal.

### How to organize fundraising campaigns? Creating a Fundraising Plan

Any idea of your organization without a plan is just a wish. You need a clear set of objectives, and a map of how we aim to get there. Your organization has different needs, goals, strengths, and priorities, so your fundraising plan must be in accordance with these, also the plan must take into account previous successfully activities. And finally you must create a non-profit fundraising plan on paper.

For this task you need to have in mind two basic questions: **How much money do you need to raise?** and **Who do you plan on raising it from?**

Your plan will also be a vehicle for detailing your sources of revenue and how much income you expect from each, whether it's individual donors, corporations, foundations, the government, or earned income.

It is critical to have multiple, diverse sources of revenue, so that if you unexpectedly lose one, you still have others to rely on.

### You need to Know Your Finances

Now that you have a sense of everything your fundraising plan is meant to accomplish, and some of the various sections it will include, let's get into it. Knowing how much money you need to raise starts with good financial planning. You can't create a fundraising plan without a budget. How much does the work you do cost? What are your programmatic, fundraising, and overhead expenses? Once you know your expenses, you need to figure out how you will pay for them; in other words, how will you raise the money to pay for them? And don't forget that fundraising itself costs money. You can't raise money without spending money.

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### Plan Creation

In order to develop an effective plan all team must take part. Here are the steps Andrea McManus, Partner with ViTreo Group Inc and a recognized leader in the nonprofit sector ( <http://afpicon.com/sessions>) suggests:

Assess your environment, both internally and externally. Internally, look at things like organizational priorities, programs, and resources, including staff, technology, and capabilities. Capabilities should include expertise in fundraising, marketing, and other key areas. Externally, discuss things like fundraising trends, best practices, industry benchmarks, and how peer organizations (those doing similar work with similar budgets) are succeeding at fundraising.

Assess your donors, both current and aspirational. What kind of support can you conservatively expect from your current donors and prospects? What does your current donor base look like, and what do you want it to look like? Gaining a realistic sense of how much money you can raise from your base, combined with other potential strategies, will enable you to determine the feasibility of the financial goals you'll tackle later in the discussion.

Outline your goals. In order to achieve the impact your organization envisions, what kind of fundraising infrastructure and results are needed? A couple examples are included below to help kick-start your discussion, but don't just think about financial targets from different channels, although those are certainly crucial. Consider also the kinds of capacity that you as an organization need to build to thrive, for example, increasing board participation in fundraising and contributions; launching your first successful crowdfunding campaign, etc.

Identify your objectives. What are the three or four (or more) things you need to accomplish in order to achieve the big-picture goals and strategies you've outlined? Break down the goal into the elements required to ensure it happens. Again, some examples to get you thinking are below.

Identify your tactics. This is where you get into the nitty-gritty details, breaking down each objective one more step. In other words, the who, what, when, where, and how. Who will you be raising money from, and how? What are the concrete actions that need to occur to achieve your objectives? Be very specific and include measurable goals, such as: We will apply for six grants from private foundations by the end of the second quarter.

Identify your budget and resources. How much will it cost to raise this money, and who will do it? Do you have the necessary tools in place, including a CRM platform, staff, subscriptions to foundation or donor prospecting databases, marketing and communications support, an online fundraising platform, etc.?

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Assign responsibilities and create deadlines.

### Document your Plan

The written plan should be specific, but also as short as possible and easy to read.

Organize the plan by two to five goals and associate each goal with three to six objectives, and then associate each objective with tactics. Assign a lead person and deadline for each tactic.

### Gather Your Prospects

Donor prospecting is absolutely crucial to fundraising. So much so that we've dedicated all of Chapter 5 to it. Your prospect list will be critical to the development and implementation of your fundraising plan. You will need it to assess your current donors and determine where to focus your efforts, as well as to identify new opportunities.

### Keep It Alive

Once you've spent precious time and resources creating a solid fundraising plan that secures board approval, the worst that can happen is for it to sit on a shelf. Your plan must be a living document that guides your activities, and it must be updated or at least reviewed annually. At each review, involve the board, key staff, and volunteers and evaluate whether you are on point or falling behind. This will allow you to hold people accountable, make strategic decisions, and shift tactics as needed. It will also enable you to recognize and celebrate your successes, something too few of us fundraisers take the time to do! Use your objectives to create key performance indicators and include them in your organizational dashboard, so that evaluation of your fundraising efforts is integrated into the evaluation of your overall organizational health.

### Conclusion

1. you need to know where you're going and how you'll get there
2. you need to know how much money are you trying to raise
3. you need to know how who are you going to raise it from
4. you need to be strategic and think long-term, but also clarify the interim steps required for
5. include as many key staff, board members, and volunteers as possible in your fundraising planning process

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6. review your prospect list in advance to ensure your goals are realistic

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<https://www.networkforgood.com/non-profit-fundraising-resources/>  
[www.fundraising123.org](http://www.fundraising123.org)  
<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/>  
[www.mrssl.com/lab](http://www.mrssl.com/lab)

### How to build your fundraising dream team?

#### Hiring and Training the staff

Raising money for your cause depends directly upon the strength of your team. Hiring the right people, training them properly, and fostering their professional growth are critical to building a, efficient, cohesive, and successful fundraising team.

*“Fundraising is about building relationships, and each person on your team plays an important role in your interaction with supporters. Hiring the right people, training them properly, and fostering their professional growth are critical to building a, efficient, cohesive, and successful fundraising team. Building your fundraising dream team is only possible if you learn and follow best practices around hiring and training. Investing resources in the hiring process will help ensure you bring the right people on board and keep employee retention high, saving valuable time and resources in the future.”*

Critical Skills and Competencies according to Missy Sherburne, chief partnerships officer at DonorsChoose.org:

### What is important to your organization, in terms of alignment with the mission

From interns to senior management, event volunteers to engaged board members, each and every person driving your fundraising machine is a critical part of building a successful, high-functioning development infrastructure. Surrounding yourself with the right people, properly training them, and fostering their professional growth will result directly in you raising more money

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First of all you need to have a clear Job Description for your staff.

Building your fundraising dream team is only possible if you learn and follow best practices around hiring and training. Investing resources in the hiring process will help ensure you bring the right people on board and keep employee retention high, saving valuable time and resources in the future.

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[www.blueavocado.org](http://www.blueavocado.org)

[www.guidestar.com](http://www.guidestar.com)

[www.afpnet.org](http://www.afpnet.org)

### Engaging Your Board

Many small nonprofits launch with a friends and family board that simply lends their names to the NGO application, and still others are grassroots organizations that leverage a “working board” to augment their staff. Here are tips and tools that can help nonprofits successfully partner with their boards to drive fundraising results according to Lisa Hoffman, a well-known consultant:

### Skills and Competencies for engaging your board:

#### Know What You’re Looking For

A simple spreadsheet it’s helpful to organize these into “buckets,” including leadership, expertise and connection to the mission, financial capability and connections, demographics, and so forth.

There should be time allocated at every board meeting to quickly look at fundraising results to date, and compare them to your overall plan and goals. The board should be familiar with your strategic fundraising plan and be able to ask focused questions about progress and results.

Be clear about fundraising and all other expectations when recruiting board members provide fundraising training and materials to all board members annually ensure each board member has an individual fundraising goal and plan for the year.

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Heyman, Darian Rodriguez. 2016. *Nonprofit fundraising 101: a practical guide with easy to implement ideas & tips from industry experts*. Ed. Hoboken, New Jersey, Wiley <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1134927>.

## Good Practices in Faith-Based Organizations

### Social assistance initiatives as a good practice and a possible model for other "anti-social exclusion" organizations

Faith-based organizations participated in the field research conducted for O.I. 1 Deliverable operate through several social services and activities and assist the socially excluded people of their regions. In general, their services are provided to vulnerable groups of people at need, particularly those who cannot access any form of assistance or facility. They have also built social networks among people of different ages and cultures, offer therapy, language courses, meals, urgent financial assistance and help homeless. They support people in navigating through complex administrative systems, providing shelter for unprotected women, children, and immigrants.

### Good practices in Italy

The **National Park of Appennino Tosco-Emiliano** has signed an agreement with a *Social Cooperative* in charge supporting refugees and asylum seekers at local level. The agreement introduces small groups of refugees and asylum seekers in an apprenticeship period. During the apprenticeship refugees and asylum seekers are trained in the field of environmental protection and forestry working side by side with local rangers.

*Social cooperatives<sup>24</sup> exist to provide social services such as the care of children, elderly and disabled people, and the integration of unemployed people into the workforce. The phenomenon is most developed in Italy but exists in various forms in many other countries. In countries such as Sweden and Britain they exist without being*

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<sup>24</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_cooperative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_cooperative)

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*"....Every single Monday evening our organization distributes food at Parma Railway station to people at need (130 meals as average). Other local volunteers associations serve the meals the other evenings of the week. We only buy water because the food we distribute is collected from the mass retail trade at the end of each day by the local charity platform our organization belongs to...."*

*under a special legislation, while elements of the Italian model have been legislated for in Belgium (société à finalité sociale / vennootschap met sociaal oogmerk) and Poland.*

**"SVEP - Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato di Piacenza"**, is an organization set up by a group of voluntary service associations in the Piacenza area, to support, promote, enhance and qualify the volunteer activities through the provision of services in favor of voluntary service associations. SVEP rules the Center of Services for the

Voluntary Service of Piacenza. These Centers, instituted by law, distribute performances in favor of voluntary service associations:

a) Prepare instruments and initiatives that aim at the growth of culture of solidarity and at the promotion of voluntary activities.

*"....We try to integrate people from foreign backgrounds exhorting them to fully live the community, without closing them in sorts of "ghettos" with only people from their countries/religions (i.e. common meals where every person brings a course from its country of origin)..."*

b) Offer qualified advice and assistance.

c) Organize learning opportunities for volunteers.

d) Offer information, news and documentation about the activities of local and national voluntary service associations.

e) Help the fulfillment of voluntary projects.

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Respondents from Italy also mentioned many successful good practices of integrating foreign people (migrants, asylum seekers and refugees) in voluntary networks. Foreign people at need attend training courses and provide voluntary assistance at Emergency Rooms of local hospitals. Apart from that, last summer most visitors of the National Park of Appennino Tosco-Emiliano had the opportunity to see and appreciate the work done by refugees in keeping the paths and trails of the Park free from branches and shrubs. According to the respondent's opinion, it was an effective way of increasing immigrants' acceptance and preventing hate and xenophobia.

Another good practice recorded is the creation of a **consortium among aged land and forest owners**, directed by the local priest, in order to preserve the landscape and keep clean pastures from grazing animals and brambles by providing their properties (lands and forests) to young farmers of the area. At the beginning there were difficulties in gathering together people living isolated in the mountain areas, and then the idea to keep the properties together was really complicated, but the aging of the people involved and the overwhelming brambles that covered all the pastures convinced them to create the consortium and to ask young farmers to bring their animals there. This initiative provided a means of exchanging skills, knowledge, experiences and resources among farmers involved. And it provided a way of sharing outputs, such as revenues, employment, and protection against natural hazards.

There are parishes in Italy providing apartments for people/families facing temporary economic troubles (due i.e. to the job loss, delayed salaries payments). A retirement home for 80 elderly and a professional kitchen able to provide fresh food/meals every day initiated many years ago by the Sanctuary / Local Parishes are now managed by the public sector (Local Authorities) or by public & private partnerships.

Another good practice in Italy is the foundation of **rural and not-for-profit banks**, aiming at serving the interests of its stakeholders and members of the local community through the provision of financial operations and services, towards an overall objective of improving moral, cultural and economic conditions, promoting collaboration and teaching the benefits of saving and forward planning as well as encouraging social responsibility and sustainable growth at local level. Rural banks act as financial intermediaries, with fundamental activities of loans and savings accounts, accompanied by Corporate Social Responsibility principles.

Last but not least, good practices related to drug addiction services were notably reported. "**Luna Stellata**" assistance center supporting drug addicted mothers is included in the most well-known communities, with motivated people, and recognized

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role at drug abuse assistance. It consists of addiction and mental health professionals with a breadth of skills and knowledge. They specialize in outpatient, family, and consulting based recovery programs and services and provide solutions for individuals and families who are struggling with the disease of addiction and the impact it has on the varied facets of their lives. "Luna Stellata" organizes awareness rising events in the main theatre of Piacenza in order to sensitize the population about prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and any kind of addictions.

**"Informa Sociale"** is a good practice at local level. It is a public & private network of institutions, organizations and people created around disability, to inform and to provide support (each one according to their specificities) to disabled people and their families.

## Bulgaria

*The vast majority of the respondents from Bulgaria highlighted the efforts of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to establish Sunday Schools, camps and other types of spiritual formation for young people and adults.*

In Bulgaria there are Orthodox summer camps for children from all over the country.

Monasteries offer accommodation, knowledge and practical experience about the surrounding nature. Children learn how to ring church bells and light campfires. At one of their camps there was an autistic child. At the beginning, the other children ignored him completely. A week later, the child was so involved in their community that his condition had become a plus in their relationship. The other children started to see the world through his eyes.

*".....Just before Easter 2017 the children decided to ask the adults not to throw away packaging of Easter egg dying kits with icon prints but to send it to us. We used it to make greeting cards, which were then sold, and the children gave all the money to children suffered from cancer. The next initiative of the children from our church will be to raise money for a classroom. They will organise a charity sale, where they will greet the residents of Lozenets neighbourhood. At the event they will dye Easter eggs together with children from other Sunday schools. Parents and lay people will participate and support the organisation of the event....."*

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Great efforts in the field of social assistance are also provided by the community of the **Church of the Nativity**. In particular:

- ✓ Each autumn they organise a collection of schoolbags and aids for children in need.
- ✓ On feast days, volunteers visit pensioners' clubs, talk with the beneficiaries and the parish children perform a theatre piece.
- ✓ Volunteers collect plastic bottle caps, they recycle them and donate the money to disadvantaged children.
- ✓ Send presents to children whose parents are in prison.
- ✓ Provide clothes to people in need.

The food bank (state-run) in Bulgaria is open only on weekdays. During the weekend, people only had dry bread to eat. **Bdinski Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos** started a campaign offering warm food to people in need and managed to agree with a local restaurant to prepare the food, attract sponsors to buy the products, and volunteers to do the deliveries.

**Diakonia.bg** is an *online platform* promoting social assistance initiatives where anyone can seek and find social and pastoral care. The platform is used as a portal for the needs of parishes and as a support tool for long-term needy people (through donation campaigns). The project started in 2016 aiming at increasing public awareness regarding a wide range of social initiatives, causes and activities of Orthodox parishes and monasteries.

## Romania

**Mitropolia Moldovei și Bucovinei** in Romania strengthens and improves social services at local level by: developing a minimum intervention package as a compulsory responsibility of the local authority; financing a national program to ensure in every locality the existence of at least one full-time employee who carries out social work and works with vulnerable people and their families; financing a national program for the training of social assistance staff and developing methodologies, guides and tools to support the widespread application of rural case management; developing a robust social monitoring and evaluation system at Community level. The dialogue developed daily with the people concerned and the help that they receive from the Church (both

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in food / clothing and legislative support) makes them believe that they are following a natural and effective way of the Orthodox philanthropy.

*The majority of respondents from Romania participate in cofounded projects coordinated by **Vasiliada Association**, a non-governmental, non-profit association with Christian and social character. The objectives of their collaboration are as follows:*

- ✓ To provide specialized primary social services, as well as services of social medical care according to the legal frame in this field.
- ✓ To create and maintain some support networks, at the community level for the people or the social groups which are found in situation of difficulty.
- ✓ To create and develop partnerships with the decentralized public services of the of the ministries, public organisms of central and local administration.
- ✓ To actively participate at applying social policies, strategies, and action plans both at national county and local level.
- ✓ To run studies and social researches concerning different problems and social phenomena.
- ✓ To inform the public opinion on the social problems, with the purpose of educating and raising the awareness organizing conferences, seminars, round tables, debates a.s.o.to edit publications (magazines, brochures, hand-out`s), etc.

Good practices from Romania should definitely include the public & private partnership Asociatia Vasiliada's emergency social center for homeless people "Saint Vasile" in Craiova and the Center for Social Inclusion as well.

The beneficiaries of the Center for Social Inclusion include Roma minority, people with disabilities, women victims of domestic violence, and single parent families. Social assistance provided to them comprise professional advice, training courses / professional requalification, assistance in searching for a job, and public campaigns to promote alternative forms of employment of the vulnerable people.

The Orthodox Parish "**Lunca Jiului**" has created a multilevel network of community volunteers who collect information about vulnerable people. The Parish volunteer groups analyse the needs of the people at risk and then they are trying to resolve each case attracting the interest of the believers and donors.

## Norway

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Two years ago, an initiative was launched for a major peace event in the city of Bergen, by the **Church Center for Dialogue**, called the TOGETHER FOR PEACE. This is a cultural event taking place in church, but the activity is designed so that everyone can participate, regardless of religious affiliation. Peace texts by representatives from many different religious traditions in the city are communicated to the attendants. New jazz music and songs are also composed. Everything is put together and relates to four themes: THE CRY – THE RESPONSE – THE HOPE – THE CHALLENGE. Finally, children (with different viewpoints of life) light candles shaped like a heart, and they bring their lights out of the church with hope. This was a powerful evening that has affected many and created very good ripples.

A single mother of five children arrived in Norway as refugee two years ago and was more than eager to take part in Norwegian introduction programmes. She came to their project accompanied by a municipal social worker, asking if there were activities she could take part in. She was introduced to aerobics class, and already at the first occasion she took an active role as volunteer, welcoming the others in Norwegian and Arabic, and distributed leaflets with information about the class. She flourished in the role and managed to recruit new members to the activity. The role gave her a position in the Norwegian milieu that she did not have before and gave her an experience of inclusion and participation.

*“.....A central vision for our project is to be a meeting place across age, and religious and ethnic backgrounds. For that reason we have invited Muslims to contribute as volunteer leaders in our activities for women. Two Muslim women are responsible for preparing activities and welcoming participants in an aerobics class, twice a week.....”*

“**Ny giv**” project is also recorded in the good practises from Norway, introduced by the **Church City Mission** (Kirkens Bymisjon). Every participant may choose an activity/hobby and is given a guide/coach who helps with practical issues, equipment etc. It is one activity every week for the participant and the coach. The aim is that the participant can take part in a bigger community related to the activity.

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**Church City Mission** (Kirkens Bymisjon) is a diaconal foundation in Norway doing social work in the fields of alcohol care, elderly care, child welfare, mental health care and among prostitutes - as well as religious activities with pastoral care, preaching and church work. According to their mission Church City Mission organizes the following initiatives:

- ✓ Through cafes, meeting places, activity centers and other low threshold offers, people living on the streets get the opportunity to get a meal, rest and good fellowship. They serve good, nutritious food and greatly emphasize fellowship around meals.
- ✓ Offer a job to go to, often as an alternative to substance abuse, prostitution and crime.
- ✓ People who are addicted to drugs or alcohol can get specialized and professional treatment and rehabilitation at our institutions
- ✓ Young people and their families get counseling through tough life changes and situations
- ✓ Male and female sex workers have meeting places where they are presented with alternatives to prostitution.
- ✓ Homeless people get the opportunity to get a place to live and training that enables them to thrive in their homes.
- ✓ People in acute crises have access to a 24 hour helpline on the phone or via online chat, 365 days a year.
- ✓ People from minority ethnic background have, through the Church City Mission, opportunities to build new networks and new lives without poverty where their resources can be fully utilized.
- ✓ Through many day centers and nursing homes, elderly people get to escape the isolation and loneliness and enjoy cultural experiences as well as good care.

**Betanien Foundation Oslo** has cooperated with the Norwegian Housing Bank (Norwegian State) in building 35 flats that will serve as first home to refugees and others in need of housing. Being present in the project with skilled people on a daily basis, they give counselling and help people in solving their everyday problems, in their contact with the local authorities, etc. This project is also an environmental pilot project designed as a climate neutral “Future house”. A very meaningful output of the project is experienced when a group of volunteers / participants in the project is having a supper together, trying to understand each other across different languages and geographical

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backgrounds, making steps towards a larger degree of inclusion in the Norwegian society.

Good practices in Norway include also language cafés organized by the **Gamlebyen og Grønland menighet**. People from other countries, who cannot speak Norwegian, meet Norwegians over a light meal and coffee and practice speaking Norwegian. Each café has a theme (eg. “Home”) and with pictures, paper and pencils the participants communicate with each other and thereby learn how to communicate in Norwegian. The foreigners can learn Norwegian language and culture and make friends whereas the Norwegians have the opportunity to learn the hardships and situations of immigrants and often want to assist them further and include them elsewhere. There are also organized workshops for handicraft, where immigrant women and their children participate and make different forms of handicraft together. While doing this, they also learn the language.

*“...Once, one the women, coming from Syria, brought her six year old boy to the handicraft workshop. After a nourishing dinner, they started to do the different handicraft activities. One of the Norwegian volunteers needed assistance in making a shirt. The Syrian woman assisted her. When she was finished, she started to cry, and told us in the staff that this was the first time after coming to Norway that she actually was able to “give something back” to the country to which she had fled to, not only being in the receiving end...”*

There are also open café once a week for elderly, including dancing, for people who are lonely, working together with youths to combat social exclusion. Open Café share several stories about lonely people getting in contact with other people, in an environment characterized by mutual respect.

Weekly evening services provided by faith based organizations in Norway were described in the field research by the volunteers involved. This brings people together,

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and facilitates meaningful conversations and fellowship. The service is inclusive in various ways. One example is an open session where guests are invited to light a candle and say a few words about who are and what the candles are for.

## Greece

The activities of the “**Faros tou Kosmou**” (Lighthouse of the World) Roma Children’s Protection Center start from the early awakening of Roma children and the provision of the necessary breakfast, and go on with taking their steps to school, preparing the lunch table with the love of the volunteer ladies, ensuring that no children are left alone. Tuition, music lessons and foreign language lessons by volunteer teachers of the city, contribute to the overall effort for an eco-systemic support for the children in need. Since November 2016, Faros has created a volunteer training team with a goal and vision to help the school-aged children, to discover and love learning, to unlock their potential. In addition to the courses, the organization provides counseling services as well as Vocational Guidance. Finally, a Mental and Psyche Empowerment Group is established and supervised by a School Psychologist. Through the workshops and meetings each child discovers his/her own “wants” and talents. The “Faros tou kosmou” gives children the opportunity to participate in a variety of actions and hobbies. Over the years the participating children have organized painting and photography exhibitions, participated in competitions and even created their own films. They have two robotics teams, Fargobots and Connect, and the Rottators team. The teams through their participation in pan-Hellenic and international competitions earned awards (1st team award, 1st prize of a younger coach, 1st prize award, 2nd prize award) and changed the image of the area. Through their creativity and their knowledge and teamwork they managed to break their ghetto.

The “Faros tou kosmou” is a certified center for the employment of volunteers and also participates in EVS and Erasmus + programs.

The team of their volunteers is called “RO-LEARNING”, because it aims with everything that gives children easy and equal access to LEARNING. The “Faros tou Kosmou” in cooperation with the Centers for Prevention of Addictions and Promotion of Psychosocial Health “Sirios” provides volunteers with education, psychological support and guidance, empowerment as well as certification of volunteer work.

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The **Program "Actions in favor of the child and the family Roma** is a **specialized intervention program** (Athens, Gr) that entails socialization, integration, learning and psychological support aspects provided to Roma elementary school students, along with parental counseling. The aim of the program is to help reduce the number of Roma dropouts, family planning and managing domestic violence and problematic behaviors. Besides integration - educational intervention, the program also includes other actions such as workshops, educational field trips, visual arts and drama based games.

The program is conducted by specialist teachers, psychologists, social workers and speech therapists in order to cover all the needs of a comprehensive and targeted intervention. This program also assists the school while offering a certain flexibility enabling it to achieve broader goals without the pressure of a school curriculum.

During the three years that the program has been up and running, there were a total of **more than 250 beneficiaries**, including children and parents. Particular mention needs to be made of the fact that **80% of the children involved in the program continued to attend school**.

The programme acts as a driving force to the education system and as an advocate of social peace and progress in areas with complex problems such as the Municipality of Fyli (Athens).

The program was created at the initiative of the Metropolitan of Ilion, Acharnon and Petroupolis and was implemented with the support of the Hellenic Petroleum Group. The support offered by teachers, educational bodies, local government bodies and Media representatives. In other words, the program simultaneously involved the Church, Local Government, the Ministry of Education and the Private Sector giving a message of unity and common desire of all four, to contribute to the continuation and establishment of such ambitious initiatives.

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## Findings and recommendations

**The research findings and the overall project outputs have made the presence of specialized-trained staff in faith-based organizations crystal clear.** Service staff and religious professionals, especially in religious communities located in rural areas, reported the need of developing basic competences and transversal skills, such as volunteers empowering and engagement, minority integration practices, communication, leadership skills, in order to tackle social exclusion more effectively and protect vulnerable groups of people in marginalized communities.

STRAPAC project involves complementary faith-based partners, belonging to different sectors of education, with necessary experience, high professional skills and expertise and notably converged interests in combating social exclusion. The added value of STRAPAC project highlights the untapped and full of potential perspective of establishing interregional and transnational strategic partnership networks of religious communities representatives with a variety of religious and confessional background aiming at strengthening the cooperation through exchange of experience and good practices, resulting in skills development. **Each one of the participant countries provided through the project and during the field study an expertise of great value in various fields of social assistance. The outcome is a multifaced synthesis and a unique collaborative scheme with potential synergy maximization.** It should also be noted that in every project country the vast majority of the good practices recorded are made through public and private organizations synergies, depicting a horizontal and collaborative dimension in tackling social exclusion.

Financing the collaboration of religious communities in national, interregional and transnational level remains the main obstacle regarding the creation of synergies among them. Participation in European projects, state co-funding and self-financing comprise the main alternative financial sources to be utilized by religious organizations in order to support a strategy of collaborative welfare activities. More specifically, **the European funds facilitate the development of anti-social exclusion projects in every programming period and offer the opportunity of capitalizing on existed research and promising partnerships.**

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## Connecting the dots: Universities, Training in service, social support in local communities

It is evident that a specialized traineeship is absolutely necessary for dealing with social exclusion. Local communities and organizations agree that people need to have an advanced education and traineeship in order not only to combat social exclusion but to provide assistance to any social group that needs support. It seems that a large number of community/ social workers in faith-based Organizations has never participated to educational programmes concerning social exclusion. This fact not only relates with the scope and the quality of the social services offered but also with the development of a culture of cooperation. Without an updated, focused and continuous training the exchange of good practices, the establishment of networks as well as the development of joined study programs remain goals that can be hardly achieved.

What is proposed in the framework of this program is the application of Tuning methodology in the field of the faith-based social work (local parishes, religious institutions, etc). The idea is based on the outputs of the well-known project TUNING Educational Structures in Europe. This project since 2000 and for more than a decade focused on «(re-)designing, develop, implement, evaluate and enhance quality first, second and third cycle degree programmes» (<http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu>). Moreover, it launched the idea that universities should find the common ground for a collaboration and mutual understanding maintaining, at the same time, their diversity and autonomy. One of the main targets was to develop professional profiles and comparable and compatible learning outcomes in order to promote readable and comparable degrees and to facilitate employability of the graduates.

The project responded to the modern tendencies in higher education underling the need to shift from a professor-oriented approach to a learner- centered one. The study programs must be clear on what a student should know, understand and be able to do in order to be ready for working in the field.

The Tuning process deals with generic and subject specific competences which include and combine knowledge, skills and attitudes. These competences take the form of learning outcomes which will be included in the courses of the different study programs and assessed in various ways in order to verify whether the student has obtained them. Learning outcomes are defined by the academic staff. These are «Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion

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of learning. They can refer to a single course unit or module or else to a period of studies, for example, a first or a second cycle programme. Learning outcomes specify the minimum requirements for award of credit».

The design of new study programs requires the consultation with graduates, employers and academics in order to find out what are the most important generic competences for the subject area. Moreover, a group of experts should take the responsibility to come to an agreement on what are the specific competences for each cycle program. (Bachelor-Master).

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a sine qua non tool for the above mentioned design of programs which is based on the measurement of student's workload in order to achieve expected learning outcomes. Workload is the time students need to complete all learning activities required to achieve the expected learning outcomes. For example, 60 ECTS credits indicate the workload of a full academic year that is 1.500 to 1.800 hours. One credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. Includes lectures, seminars, projects, homework, exercises, laboratories examinations etc.

The design of a degree follows concrete steps: 1. During this process social needs, the working types of the graduates in the field concerned and degrees offered are identified taking into account the situation in different countries. 2. The definition of academic and professional profiles. A discussion on the generic competences in order to identify the most relevant generic competences (key generic competences) for the relevant subject area (eg. social work). 3. The identification of the most important specific Competences for the relevant subject area. These competences will be translated in Learning Outcomes and they could be distributed for further discussion to Graduates, Employers, Academic Staff and Students. 4. The definition of a general descriptor for the first cycle (Bachelor) and for the second cycle (Master) taking into account the descriptors defined for the Qualification Framework 5. The discussion on the teaching methods and assessment in degree programmes and course units.

Finally, the Programme quality assurance includes the built-in monitoring, evaluation and updating procedures.

To make it clearer the general competences or the general academic skills needed - independently of the specific subject - could be the following:

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<b>Instrumental competences</b>	<b>Interpersonal competences</b>	<b>Systemic competences</b>
Capacity for analyses and synthesis	Critical and self-critical abilities	Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
Capacity for organisation and planning	Teamwork	Research skills
Basic general knowledge	Interpersonal skills	Capacity to learn
Grounding in basic knowledge of the profession	Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team	Capacity to adapt to new situations
Oral and written communication in your native language	Ability to communicate with experts in other fields	Capacity for generating new ideas (creativity)
Knowledge of a second language	Appreciation of diversity and multiculturality	Leadership
Elementary computing skills	Ability to work in an international context	Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries
Information management skills (ability to retrieve and analyse information from different sources)	Ethical commitment	Ability to work autonomously
Problem solving		Project design and management
Decision-making		Initiative and entrepreneur spirit
		Concern for quality
		Will to succeed

From the above mentioned generic competences, a first cycle degree on community/ social work could have the following key generic competences:

2. Ability to apply knowledge in practice
3. Ability to communicate both orally and through the written word in a foreign language
4. Ability to be critical and self-critical
5. Knowledge and understanding of the subject area and understanding of the profession
6. Ability to search for, process and analyse and synthesize data using the necessary technologies
7. Ability to adapt to novel situations and make decisions
8. Generate new research ideas and design and manage projects.
9. promote free, inductive and deductive thinking.
10. Ability to undertake research at an appropriate level
11. Ability to show awareness of equal opportunities and gender issues
12. Respect diversity, multiculturalism and the natural environment

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This analysis is concluded with an example of specific competences (Learning Outcomes) that potentially could be applied in the subject area of social work (Based on Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences: [http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SQF\\_Social-Sciences\\_EN.pdf](http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SQF_Social-Sciences_EN.pdf)).

Graduates in community/social work (Level 6: Bachelor) are expected to have:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
Advanced knowledge of social structures and organizations in both space and time.	The capacity to apply in practice as required an understanding of the complexity of different mentalities, social behaviours	Ability to show awareness of equal opportunities and gender issues
Advanced knowledge of group dynamics and their internal (power, influence, communication etc.) and external (environment) interrelations	The capacity to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Ability to show awareness to social justice, human rights, cohesion and citizenship.
Advanced theoretical and practical knowledge of processes of social changes	Ability to communicate both orally and through the written word, using the terminology and techniques accepted in the profession	Ability to act and resolve problems with empathy, social responsibility and civic awareness
Broad and integrated knowledge and comprehension of the interdisciplinary background of the field of studies or practice in social sciences	Capacity to contribute to the resolution of interpersonal and intercultural conflicts	Ability to act on the basis of ethical reasoning and recognise ethical practice of others

Graduates in community/ social work (Level 7: Master) are expected to have:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
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Advanced knowledge and understanding of the processes of the development of power relationships and diversity in society	The capacity to apply in practice as required an understanding of the complexity of different mentalities, social behaviours	The capacity to take responsibility for the practical application of their knowledge
Interdisciplinary knowledge relevant to the specialist area of study or practice.	An ability to employ tools as necessary from other relevant disciplines (as Education Sciences, Psychology, Law)	An enhanced ability for abstract and analytical thinking, and synthesis of ideas
Critical knowledge of a range of appropriate methodologies to the perspective of the discipline	Ability to Influence policy in the field	An ability to define and undertake research topics at an advanced level
Advanced knowledge and in depth understanding of ethical issues	Demonstrates innovation, advanced problem solving and mastery of methods and approaches in complex and specialized fields	Ability to take responsibility for the management and implementation of project

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