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**research Proposal**

**Research Proposal: Community Health – Development and Implementation of Local Public Health Strategies**

**Background**

During the last ten years the health infrastructure both for curative and preventive services has been gradually deteriorated in South Sudan. Prevention of diseases, though historically considered as the flagship of the national health system, remains today far behind the curative medicine in terms of resource allocations to health care. The network of the Institutes of Public Health (IPH) is the main actor in public health development in the country. Today, however the network, which was supposed to be the pillar of a modern health, care system, is in the situation where the roles and tasks of its IPH remain unclear (Scheme1

* organizations structure of public health in South Sudan
* public parliament and the republic government
* national health council
* ministry of health- health insurance fund-finance/republic institute of public health
* primary health care Centers.

**Abstra**ct

Public Health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting mental and physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts. Public Health may be considered as the structures and processes by which the health of populations is understood, safeguarded and promoted through the organized efforts of society”. Population of South Sudan experienced many social and economic threats during 20012-2019. Years of life under severe stress and trauma-ridden environment have brought depression and hopelessness, followed by general negligence towards health and increased risk behavior. During the last decade of the 10 years, the health status of the population of South Sudan was harmfully influenced by numerous factors, but especially by the general situation in the country (the long lasting economic.

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local public health strategies together with advocacy for health, will empower capacity and competence of public-health professionals at the local level.

**Overall goal**

Two years project, which is proposed, must contribute to development and implementation of efficient public health strategies at the local level, based on the population health needs and participatory approach.

**Objectives**

To achieve this goal project has several specific objectives, which are planned to be accomplished within parallel and successive phases:

• Development of seminars for education of local public-health professionals in the field of new public health, which will be based on good principles of continuing education established in Bologna Declaration,

• Delivery of seminars among local public-health professionals to increase their knowledge in new public health and to gain skills for development of public health strategies based on local needs,

• Assessment of public health needs in local communities and designing local public health strategies, and

• Implementation of local strategies through small community projects and their evaluations.

**Brief description of the research proposal of development projects**

Project, with duration of two years, will be developed in three phases and based on international programmed of new public health and contemporary educational methods, defined in South Sudan Declaration, on wash approach in the Workforce Development Programmed, as well as on adopted and proposed documents of “public Health Policy” and “National Public Health Strategy for South Sudan”, as well as on specificities of local environments.

**Description of activities**

In the first phase, project team will direct its activities to design educative seminars (modules) for capacity building of public health professionals from three regions in South Sudan. The basic objectives of all modules will be to improve participants’ knowledge about new public health and to empower them with skills necessary for development and implementation of local public health strategies. Starting from development of local partnership for health, as form of collaboration through strong coalition, with aim to improve health of local

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population, education will target all relevant partners at the local level. Numerous health problems are too complex to be solved only by health services. Besides this, solutions for health problems could be found only at the places of their origins – local environments where people are working and living. Through partnership for health, local community could instruct development of healthy public policy, influence changes of people behavior, contribute to development of community health through changes in environment, minimization of health risks, and development of local initiatives for employment, prevention of other, numerous problems influencing local health. Therefore, participants in educative seminars will be professionals from regional institutes of public health, physicians from primary health care centers, representatives of local governments (municipalities), representatives of educational sectors (teachers from primary and secondary schools), representatives of non-governmental organizations dealing with health and representatives of local media. Education will be organized through five successive seminars:

1.Public health, policy for health and public health strategy,

2. Health determinants and population health assessment and monitoring,

3. Information and knowledge in public health,

4. Public health management, and

5. Health promotion and community actions.

1. Public health, policy for health and public health strategy – In the introductory part of this module participants will gain knowledge about the historical perspectives of public health, its definition and fields of public health, basic characteristics of new public health and basic functions. They will also highlight values and ethics of public health and its practice – health promotion. The content of module also involves principles and evolving context in defining each public policy and consequently policy for health in the sense of moving from traditional, administratively directed concepts towards horizontal, participative approach. Participants will also have opportunities to gain knowledge about current trends in EU legislation, which is covering public health issue, about new public health programmed in South Sudan for the period 2017 – 2008 and about process of health advocacy. Special attention will be given to public health ethics. Objectives of this module is to enable participants to:

• Understand meaning and importance of policy for health, context in which policy is developed and its possible options,

• Describe developmental process in policy formulation (policy cycle)

• Understand the role of citizens and other significant partners in the process of policy development,

• Define roles of public health professionals in the process of formulation and implementation of public health policy,

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• Highlight tools for public health strategy development, and

• Underline phases in development public health strategy and build skills for its formulation.

2. Health determinants and population health assessment and monitoring – The content of this seminar – module will be defined to specify health determinants based on synthetic, comprehensive approach in explanation of complex mechanisms in which different factors influence people’s health. Health determinants will be a framework in defining genesis of health and different ways of its improvement. Objective of the module is to enable participants to:

• Broaden their knowledge about factors influencing health,

• Recognize interaction between genetic and environmental health determinants,

• Locate the roles of health services in adequate context within health determinants,

• Recognize the roles of public health professionals in multi-sectoral collaboration and interventions for health.

The objective of the module will be also to offer the basic epidemiological knowledge about population health assessment. The importance of data sources and health surveillance will be presented to the participants, as well as importance of use of descriptive, analytical and experimental methods in analyzing and monitoring of population health status. Special attention will be given to highlight advantages and limitation of different epidemiological methods. Exercises within module will increase participants’ skills in using different population health indicators, as well as skills in application of epidemiological research to be able to design, implement and comment results of their own research and research of other investigators involving in population health problems. Participants will be also able to recognize the importance of health status monitoring in the process of formulation of public health strategy at the local level.

3. Information and knowledge in public health – The general objective of the module is to provide understanding of applicative domains of informatics, its importance and achievements in the public health system. In order to achieve this goal historical overview, current situation and possible future application of information and information-communication technologies will be presented to participants. This module has, as a base, understandings of processes, which model current and future information structure of public health system. Before increasing of specific knowledge participants will make the overview of health determinants and its measurement, together with population health status assessment. Understanding of this approach is based on basic sciences dealing with population health. Participants will gain:

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• Knowledge about current and future trends in development of computer and communication technologies,

• Skills necessary for its application in management and leadership including strategies for obtaining, budgeting, acquisition and implementation,

• Knowledge and skills related to tools and systems of informatics science in the public health system including support to decision making process, outcome management, public health meta data bases, Internet and knowledge resources.

4. Information and knowledge in public health –The general objective of the module is to deliver general framework for understanding the management roles and its application through managerial practice in the practice of public health. The content of the module is related to general management theory, managerial processes and managerial functions, as well as to highlighting of management specificities in the field of public health. Its content is also directed to understandings of interrelationships among all management functions and towards understanding of nature of possible challenges facing managers in transitional societies during accomplishment of certain objectives in health policy and health promotion. After completion of the module, participants will be able to understand possibilities for improvements of public health system within the management strengths in transitional conditions, with application of active methods of education (nominal group techniques, case studies, simulations and role-playing techniques). The content of the module will stress the operational questions, which could appear during public health strategy development and/or during development of the community projects. The main topics, besides management theory and practice and tools of strategic planning such as SWOT analysis, will include:

• Efficient project management (definition, organizational project structure, necessary human resources, steps in project management, development of realistic project budget and evaluation methods),

• Data management system (data bases, form for case reporting, data collection techniques, quality assurance, control and improvement, follow up and auditing), and

• Regulations in this field and skills in sponsor’s attraction (sources, sponsor identification, sponsor motivation).

5. Health promotion and community actions – The content of the module is based on actual concept of health promotion, which encompasses multidisciplinary approach and maximal community participation. The basic objectives of the module is to enable participants to:

• Develop critical understandings of theories, concepts, principles, key questions and dilemmas related to health promotion,

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• Critically analyze and explain possibilities and limitations of health promotion concept,

• Identify differences between health promotion and health education, as well as their relations,

• Learn to identify and apply different behavioral interventions and communication technologies in health promotion at individual and family level and the level of community,

• Apply knowledge and understandings of health promotion in selection of models for intervention – small community projects based on previously formulated public health strategies at the local level,

• Identify and apply appropriate methods of health needs assessment, and

• Develop, implement and evaluate health promotion programmed in local communities and for local problems.

In the second phase, which will start with delivery of the second module, and will be organized together with education, participants will apply knowledge gained after second and third module to the process of local needs assessment in the regional public health, priority selection and formulation of local public health strategy. They will start from the new public health programmed of South Sudan (2009-2010) and from draft proposal of National Public Health Strategy for South Sudan. Their work will be under the supervision of lecturers who are responsible for education, all the time. It is expected that during one-year proposal of three regional public health strategies will be developed, which will cover 10 years in the future. In the second phase the process of local consensus development is also planned, through public discussions. The consensus development will be focused on the objectives of local strategies as well as activities (action plan).The process of consensus development will involve all relevant partners at the local level. The process of adoption of public health strategy at the level of local government will be also initiated together with its promotion through local media. Publishing of local public health strategies is planned, as well.

In the third phase, which will have duration of 6 months, small community projects will be proposed and their implementation. The project participants will be educated for these activities during fourth and fifth modules. Small projects will be oriented towards local health problems and towards local vulnerable groups (women and children, elderly, migrants, Roma population, people living with disabilities).

**Project methods**

The foundations of the project are contemporary educational methods and application of knowledge gained in the field of new public health. Education is based on the principles formulated in Bologna Declaration on Higher Education

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**Target group**

Target group in this project will be public health professionals and partners in local community, who are relevant for development and implementation of public health strategy at the local level (from regional Institute of public health: Local Government:

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from NGO sector: 3). Considering the importance of local experience exchange, at the same time 3 regions will be involved, with possibility to develop local strategies in other Serbian regions, following the same method.

**Project participants**

Total number of full-time project members will be 10 (project coordinator, assistant project coordinator and 8 members, out of which 4 will be lecturers and designer of modules, while 4 will be creative workshop leaders). All full-time members of the project are PhD, MSc, teachers, assistants and scientific researcher employed at the School of Medicine, Belgrade University. It is planned that international experts will be also involved in project activities, in total 3 of them (from Ugana, kenya and south sudan ). All CVs of project members and international experts are presented in Appendix.

**Place and time of project realization**

Project will be realized at the Institute of Social Medicine, School of Medicine, Belgrade University and in the selected regions – regional Institutes of Public health and local NGOs. The first phase will start in December 2003. This phase, during which one module will be designed and delivered will finished in May 2004. The second phase will start in May 2004 and last up to June 2005, while third phase will begin in June 2005 and last up to the end of December 2005.

**How shall we assess whether our project accomplished desired goal?**

In the first phase the accomplishment of desired objectives will be assessed according to modules designed in the written form (its structure, quality and justification to the principles of Bologna Declaration). In this phase education will be also evaluated by participants with application of “before-after” evaluation design and by application of specific questionnaires which will assess participants’ knowledge and satisfaction with education.

In the second phase accomplishment of objectives will be evaluated by the same approach – “before-after” evaluation when education is considered, while proposals of local public health strategies will be also evaluated according to their objective and action plans, whether they are based on previous assessed local priorities – situation analysis, what are the structures and feasibilities of action plans and whether public health strategies are delivered in written forms. In this phase, project objectives will be evaluated also by numbers of participants in the local public discussions about proposed strategies, as well as by numbers of media contributions (in electronic and published media).

Third phase will be evaluated through small community health promotion projects and by the level to which multidisciplinary and participatory approach are applied – congruence between community project objectives and local public health strategy (its objectives and action plan), involvement of different partners from the community in the project activities, number of citizens covered by project intervention, level of citizens involvement, level of knowledge about health, which is gained by community members, eventually changes in their attitudes and behavior.

One of the project evaluations during all three phases will be indicator related to number of project operational meetings and consultation with project participants from selected regions.