



TRANSPARENCY IN HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

The USAID's Transparency in Health Engagement Project is providing technical assistance to three government independent institutions and selected civil society organizations and media sources to identify and report corruption in the health sector. Working with the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution (ASAI), the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Prevention of Conflict of Interest (HIDAACI), and the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Project will generate evidence through performance audits, asset reporting, and complaint investigations; with the goal to enhance transparency mechanisms and engage citizens more effectively in the fight against corruption.

PROGRAM AREAS

INCREASE PERFORMANCE AUDITS IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

The Project is working with the ASAI to strengthen their capacities to conduct performance audits of government health facilities and identify instances of corruption. Through a modular training conducted during March-June 2018, 19 Performance Auditors acquired in-depth knowledge on health system governance, with a focus on the reimbursement and procurement of drugs in the hospitals. In total The Project has engaged 37 staff from ASAI, that have participated in several activities to better understand the health system, how it works, the risks for corruption, and how corruption impacts the quality of care provided. The Project provided technical assistance for a performance audit conducted on the National Emergency Care Center to improve the data quality of the audit report. New ICT solutions including a Red Flag index for procurement in health, Open Data formats for the reports to be more user-friendly for citizens and Data Mining approaches are being developed for the institution, to increase transparency and better serve the public.

DEVELOP ELECTRONIC ASSET DECLARATION SYSTEM

HIDAACI receives asset declarations from 5,000 to 6,000 public officials annually, of which about 70 are health officials (less than 1%). A robust software solution with a public search interface will improve media and civil society's ability to monitor government performance. In close collaboration with HIDAACI, the Project is developing the software solution for an electronic asset and conflict of interest declaration system (EACIDS), which is expected to be operational by 2019.

IMPROVE CAPACITIES OF THE OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE

The Project is working with the Ombudsperson office to strengthen the organizational capacity to receive, investigate, and resolve complaints in the health sector. 20 Ombudsperson staff from central and regional level have participated in training activities delivered by the Project to better understand the health system, how it works, the risks for corruption, and how corruption impacts the quality of care provided. More tailored trainings and technical assistance was provided to 7 regional officers to increase their facilitation skills for outreach activities in the communities they serve. The Project supported the regional offices in organizing four regional round tables with communities and key stakeholders to discuss the health care system, how it is serving the communities and how corruption is perceived. During these round tables 108 people were reached and informed in Dropull, Saranda, Fier and Kukes. The Project has also supported the development of a mobile phone application for receiving complaints, which was launched in October 2018.

SMALL GRANTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

The Project awarded 4 grants for civil society and media organizations, working on transparency, anti-corruption, health and human rights issues. The organizations are implementing activities throughout 2018 to educate the public and lead advocacy campaigns to increase accountability of health institutions.

ACHIEVED RESULTS

- Delivered 9 capacity building events for the three target institutions and selected CSOs and media.
- Increased collaboration among institutions by facilitating a joint inspection of ASAI and Ombudsperson on National Emergency Care Unit performance.
- Developed Guidelines for Communication and Engagement with Civil Society, Media and the Parliament for ASAI and Ombudsperson.
- 20 national and regional journalists have been trained on data journalism and investigations techniques, resulting in more qualitative data-rich and investigative stories produced.
- Around 350,000 people have been reached through Reporter.al webpage, where 13 data-rich stories/investigations have been published from April – October 2018 on health care transparency issues. The articles have been republished at least 70 times in other media outlets in Albania.
- Around 90 chronic patients have been informed about their rights, how to address their complaints and the role of the main independent institutions that safeguard their rights as patients.
- Around 110,000 people have been reached through shendet.com.al webpage where 7 informative articles/investigations and two raising awareness video on patients' rights have been published. Further, 1200 people have been informed through printed supplements of Shendet Plus newspaper.
- 15 civil society organizations at the regional level have been trained on mobilizing communities in fighting corruption and improving transparency in the health sector.

Current Project

Name: Transparency in Health Engagement

Duration: Mar. '17 – Mar. '19

Implementer: University Research Co., Inc.

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