

EU Tacis / Reform of the Social Protection System in Azerbaijan

**Joining the forces of public institutions, Civil
Society and business communities in the
implementation of social rehabilitation measures for
low income families and vulnerable groups
(The pilot initiatives)**

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Contents:

0. Executive summary	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Setting up the collaboration between different stakeholders on rayon level	8
2.1. Assessment of present situation and some perspectives	8
2.2. Creation of rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation	9
2.3. Decision making process, financing and exchange of information	13
3. Methodological basis for the development of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR)	17
3.1. Definition of stakeholders in the limited geographic areas	18
3.2. Carrying out the local needs assessment	18
3.3. Setting of the objectives shared by the policy-makers	19
3.4. Selection of operators	19
3.5. Monitoring and evaluation of actions	20
3.6. Evaluation of priorities	20
3.7. Programme budgeting and funding	20
4. Examples of projects	22
4.1. Project 1: Weekend or one-day trips for the outdoor holidays in the mountains or at the sea shore	23
4.2. Project 2: After school activities	24
4.3. Project 3: Creation of Intergenerational Social Centre	25
Bibliography	27
Annex	28

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List of abbreviations

CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
HBS	Household Budget Survey
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LMPSR	Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation
MIS	local housing commonwealth – GEK
MOLSPP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population
NGO	Non-Governmental organisation
sobes	Former abbreviation for Social Protection Centres
SCSR	Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation
SPC	Social Protection Centres
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance

0. Executive summary

The development of “**Programme for social rehabilitation of low income families**” by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan is a good period to list and to analyse all available resources and set up the endowment for the **coordination of social actions between different stakeholders**. Apart from the MLSPP and its regional divisions (SPCs), other institutions are already participating (or can be potentially involved) in social services provision in Azerbaijan:

- Rayon administrations (Ispolkom);
- Representatives of platforms of Civil Society Organisations including NGOs, Community-based elderly councils, Community-based organisation
- Sponsors and Donors (enterprises, organisation, citizens, personalities)
- Other partners including other concerned Ministries and public agencies, representatives of legislative branch (rayon’s deputy), international donors, etc.

As it was highlighted by the majority of stakeholders, in Azerbaijan the lack of resources is clearly not the major impediment in the organisation of social rehabilitation of vulnerable groups and low-income households. The mobilisation of resources depends on political will. At the same time the **lack of coordination** between different actions and different stakeholders is observed. Often, the sponsors and donors select themselves the target groups according to their own vision of the **population deserving the help** without getting the information from competent organisations. The help is often provided **without real analysis of needs** of low-income population and vulnerable groups.

The main institutional proposal of this paper is to organise the **Rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation (SCSR)** which can be a body bringing together the representatives of all relevant stakeholders and controlling the implementation of **Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR)**. Based on the analysis of local situation it is proposed that the decision-making process in this Steering Committee should be made rather by the public authorities (Local SPCs and Rayon administrations). In addition, it is possible to include the representatives of the SCO platform into decision making process on this stage as well. Other private stakeholders can participate in the Steering Committee with consultative voice. At the same time, the distribution of power between two public entities in this Steering committee should be somehow proportional to the resources which every entity bring to the implementation of the LMPSR.

Better **cooperation between public institutions and local Civil Society Organisations** (SCOs) used as operators and providers of social services can be beneficial for overall impact of the social rehabilitation programmes. In this paper we use large definition of Civil Society Organisations taking into account not only the structured organisations but the civic activism as well: non-for-profit associations, NGOs, popular initiatives, sports or club leaders, professional federations, neighbourhood committees, municipal officials, elderly council, etc.). The choice of local CSOs can be justified because they are more flexible and can easily to get in touch with target groups of population. This characteristic allows them to act more operatively facing some social problems. At the same time, this mechanism of cooperation can help

to structure a healthy Civil Society as reliable partner of public institutions in implementation of social services.

Methodological basis for the development of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR) was developed in present working paper. This plan should be based on the detailed local poverty analysis and have its own budget. Taking into account, that budgetary allocations cannot be made before next year, we propose on the first stage to **test the collaboration between main stakeholders** in the pilot regions through organisation of actions which don't need the mobilisation of public budgetary resources. It is possible to test such activities according to present legislation without changing the budgets of public institutions. There are the ranges of in-kind resources which can be mobilised both from public and private sources.

In order to limit the scope of pilot actions the decision was made to put a specific emphasise on the development of measures addressing the **children from the low-income families**. Anyway, in Azerbaijan, as in many other countries, the households having numerous children are more vulnerable to the poverty, compared to other population. At the same time, preparing specific actions it is important to keep in mind that they should assure the social diversity effect. In fact, the actions should avoid treating separately the children from vulnerable families in order to **avoid social exclusion**.

Three proposals for pilot project were developed in this paper:

- Weekend or one-day trips for the outdoor holidays
- After school activities
- Creation of Intergenerational Social Centre

These projects are based on detailed analysis of local situation and propose some concrete solutions (such as using of already existing infrastructure for social actions: involvement of existing network of Olympic Centres in the organisation of activities for the children from vulnerable families).

1. Introduction

In January 2007 the Technical Assistance team developed the proposal for four pilot initiatives to be implemented in the pilot regions selected in the framework of the project. These proposals were approved by the project steering committee in January 2007.

Pilot actions will mainly take place in following regions:

- Baku (Nizami and Sabail)
- Quba

Some limited actions can be implemented in other regions:

- Nakhicivan
- Lenkaran
- Ismaylly

The project team proposes to test four pilot initiatives before the end of the project:

- 1) **Improving the information** about the low-income households in Azerbaijan and developing of monitoring practices
- 2) **Forecasting of budgetary expenditures** related to TSA in case of introduction of differentiated guaranteed minimums (benefits) for different groups of population.
- 3) **Improving of working process** in the local Social Protection Centres testing the work division between social workers and controllers
- 4) **Pooling together the forces of different stakeholders** in the organisation of social services and social rehabilitation measures for the low-income households and different vulnerable groups of population.

This report represents the detailed proposal for the **fourth component** - the implementation of the measures for social rehabilitation of low income families and other vulnerable groups with participation of wide range of stakeholders, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), business communities and public institutions. The choice to start from fourth component is based on two reasons. First of all, making consensus between different stakeholders proposed in this report can be very time consuming activity. Secondly, starting other components requires more detailed databases which in principle would be completed by the MLSP and SPCs in the pilot regions up to the summer 2007 (database of results of questionnaire, data from Statkom, data about potential beneficiaries of TSA, etc.).

Throughout February - March 2007 the experts of the project implemented a set of interview with the representatives of MLSP, with the directors and specialists of Social Protection Centres in the pilot regions, the representatives of local executives (Rayon's administration) dealing with social issues, the representatives of Civil Society Organisations¹, etc. This report is based on these interviews with the representatives of the key stakeholders able to work together in development of comprehensive social rehabilitation policies.

¹ In line with Russel & all. (2005) , we will use the large definition of Civil society taking into account not only the structured organisations but the civic activism as well (for example, elderly councils, etc.)

During these interviews the proposals were discussed in terms of feasibility and possibility of adaptation of international experience and especially this of European Union countries into Azerbaijan realities. The detailed initiatives on organisation of social services will be presented to wide range of concerned stakeholders during the regional seminars in May – June 2007. The proposed actions can be implemented thought the summer – autumn 2007.

The report is axed around three main paragraphs:

First paragraph proposes the methodology for the mechanism of organisation of collaboration between different stakeholders in organisation of social rehabilitation measures (and broadly speaking social services) adapted to the specific poverty pattern of every region.

Second paragraph discusses the methodology for development and implementation of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation.

Finally, the last paragraph presents the free examples of actions which can be implemented in the pilot regions.

In order to limit the scope of pilot actions the decision was made to put a specific emphasise on the development of measures addressing the children form the low-income families. It is well known that in Azerbaijan as in many other countries the households having numerous children are more vulnerable to the poverty, compared to other population. The objective of these actions is to test the collaboration between different stakeholders in organisation of social services. If this experience will be found fruitful by all involved stakeholders, after the results' analysis of this pilot action every region can develop its own plan of social rehabilitation and propose its own scope of actions.

2. Setting up the collaboration between different stakeholders on rayon level

2.1. Assessment of present situation and some perspectives

In the beginning of 2007 the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan has developed the “Programme for social rehabilitation of low income families”². The technical assistance team provided the basis for debate on this issue developing the discussion paper on the social rehabilitation of low-income households (see Tretyak & Hassanov, 2006). The main aim of such programme should be to develop the set of comprehensive interdependent measures in order to improve the social inclusion of households addressing the local Social Protection Centres in the framework of Targeted Social Assistance administration. Such programmes are usually based on the understanding that the administration of social benefits such as Targeted Social Assistance alone cannot solve the problem of vulnerable groups of population. While the administration of in-cash social benefits can alleviate the situation of households founding themselves in difficult situation temporarily, this measure alone is less efficient in combating the long-term poverty. At the same time, the administration of in-cash social benefits can help in identification of different vulnerable groups of population. After this identification the special social rehabilitation measures, adapted to the needs of every particular vulnerable group can be developed and implemented through social services provision.

Taking into account the different pattern of poverty and needs of population in different administrative districts of Azerbaijan (Rayons), the impact of rehabilitation policies would be more efficient if the measures would be adapted to real needs of population of every region.

The interviews with different stakeholders which can be potentially involved in the implementation of comprehensive social rehabilitation policies in the pilot regions (including Local Social Protection Centres, Local administrations, Civil Society Organisations) revealed following observations:

- 1) There are the scopes of Social Service **actions** aiming at rehabilitation of low-income population and vulnerable groups which are **already organised** by different actors in Azerbaijan. However, these actions are often bearing the on-off character; there is no systemic approach for rehabilitation measures. Often they are focused on the distribution of meal or other natural help before the national or religious holydays.
- 2) The number of actions and their impact depend most of time on the **will, reactivity and ability of the stakeholders to mobilise the necessary resources** in every region. Sometimes the couple of very active personalities are mobilising the resources in order to carry out social rehabilitation measures.
- 3) The lack of resources is clearly not a major factor impeding the development of comprehensive rehabilitation measures. However, at present, there is no properly speaking the budget coming from public institutions devoted to social rehabilitation measures. Often the active personalities are mobilising the resources from different private sources.

² The presentation of this programme was made the 25 April 2007 in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan.

- 4) The **lack of coordination** between different actions, different stakeholders (Rayon administration, Social Protection Centres, Civil Society Organisations) and between the sponsors and donors is observed. Often, the sponsors and donors select themselves the target groups according to their own vision of population deserving the help. Furthermore the nature of help is often decided by the sponsors themselves without real analysis of needs of low-income population. The opinion about lack of coordination is shared by the majority of the stakeholders.
- 5) The different stakeholders are using different sources of information in order to identify the vulnerable groups of populations. In the majority of cases this **information is not shared and can differ considerably** (the persons identified through TSA administration by Social Protection Centres, the persons identified by local MIS (local housing commonwealth – GEK), the persons identified by the rayon administration, the information gathered by local police, the persons identified by the NGOs, etc).

Example of Sbahl rayon:

The administration of Sbahl rayon has an important experience in organisation of social rehabilitation actions aiming at different target groups of vulnerable population. The deputy head of administration in charge of social policies, Mrs Halida Bairamova, is organising the actions for the large scope of vulnerable groups in its rayon as well as in other rayons of Azerbaijan (summer camps for low-income families' children, food distributions to the population in need, the gifts for the soldiers in duty, etc). She mainly uses the information from the MIS and the letter of peoples directly addressing her in order to identify the persons with specific needs.

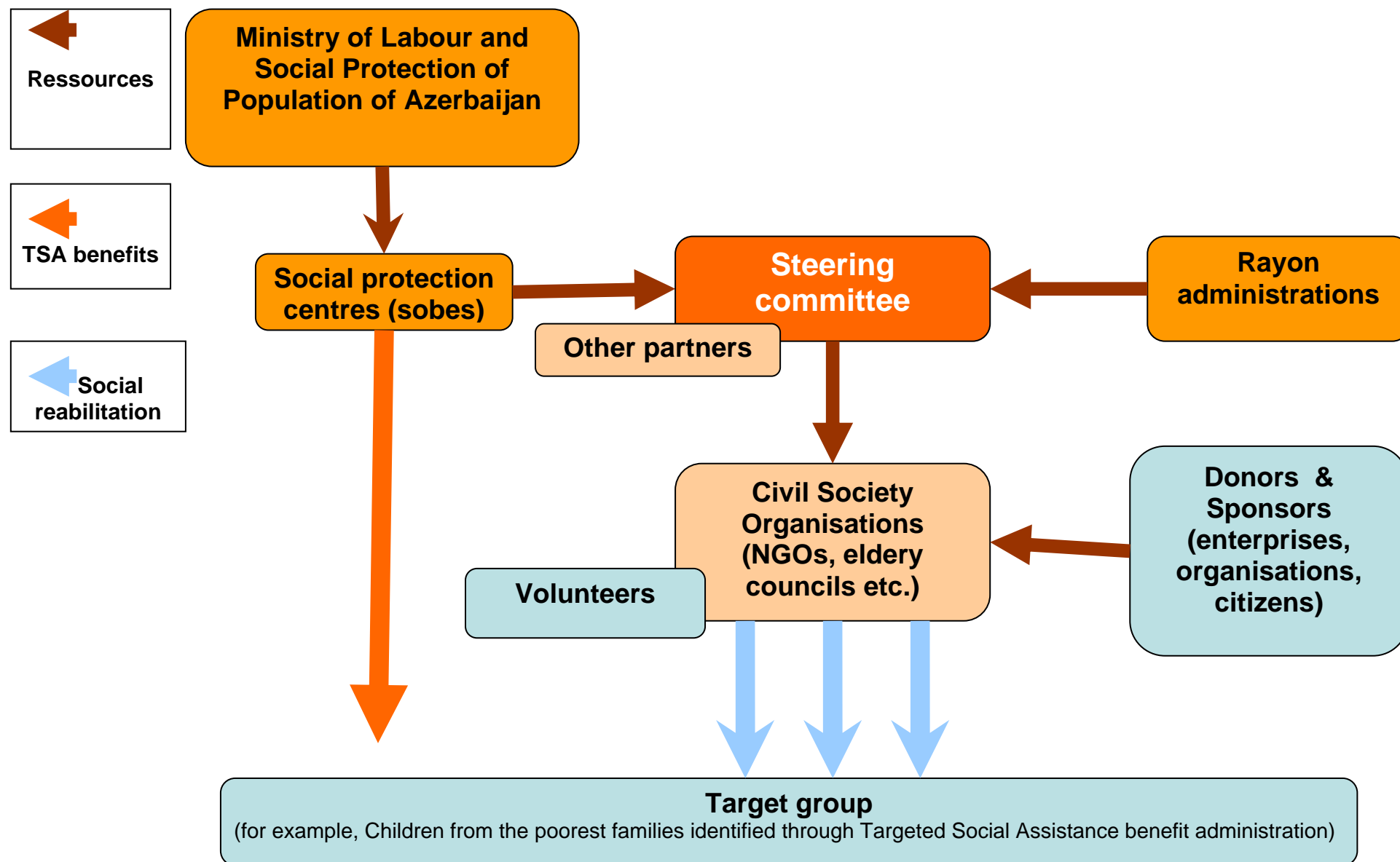
The development of "Programme for social rehabilitation of low income families" can be a good moment to list and to analyse all available resources and organise the coordination of actions between different entities. Such integrated approach can help in bringing together the resources of Ministry of Labour, but also those of other entities such as rayon administrations, private companies', Civil Society Organisations, citizens' resources, volunteers', international organisations, etc³. Furthermore, the consensus between different stakeholders will improve the transparency and accountability of the actions as well as their impact.

2.2. Creation of rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation

Taking into account the situation with social rehabilitation, it is proposed to test the mechanism of collaboration between different stakeholders on the example of the pilot regions selected in the framework of the project. The main institutional proposal consists in introduction of the **Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation** on Rayon level. This Steering Committee should pull together all relevant stakeholders which can help in funding and in implementation of social rehabilitation measures in given rayon. The implementation of comprehensive social rehabilitation strategy on rayon levels would be more efficient if all relevant stakeholders would joint their forces, resources and information.

³ The reinforcing of cooperation between different stakeholders was mentioned in the Strategy Paper (see Piirainen (2006), paragraph 5.4.)

Chart 1 Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation and distribution of resources



The composition of this Steering Committee can be different for every region. However, taking into account the current structure of distribution of responsibilities between central and local administrations, two entities should play the leading role in this body: the Rayon administration and the Social Protection Centre. At the same time, other institutions can take part in this committee (see the Chart 1).

The distribution of responsibilities of main stakeholders can be presented as follows:

The **Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan** – develop the national programme of social rehabilitation and social inclusion for the low-income families with specified financial resources (budget). Furthermore, the Ministry carries out the overall coordination of this programme through the network of Social Protection Centres. At the same time, it assures the contact, lobbying and coordination of measures with other Ministries and public agencies. In fact, there is large scope of public institutions which can be concerned by the implementation of social actions: Ministry of Labour and Social Action, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence etc. all these public institutions are working with various vulnerable groups and are gathering information about them.

Local Social Protection Centres (*sobes*) adopts the measures of national programme of social rehabilitation to local realities, selecting and enforcing the measures more urgent and more appropriate for their rayon. In order to reach this objective, the SPC should carry out the **local poverty survey** based on the information from the database of beneficiaries of TSA, from the database of peoples addressing the SPC for TSA, comparing this data with those of other stakeholders (rayon administration, MISs, CSOs etc). The CPS presents this **Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation** to the Steering committee for approval. At the same time the CPS continues to administrate the TSA and some social actions already implemented according to present legislation.

Rayon administration (represented by the Deputy-Head of rayon executive power in charge of social development) represents other major partner which can influence the decision on rayon social policies. In these terms the representative of this administration should takes part in the Steering committee in order to assure the coherence of efforts of both public administrations. The Rayon administration should deploy its own resources (budget, workforce etc.) for the implementation of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation. At the same time the rayon administrations can help in mobilisation of business communities working in the rayon.

Local **Civil Society Organisations** (SCOs) can be very helpful in the implementation of social rehabilitation projects as operators for selected projects⁴. In most European countries the local SCOs are deeply involved in the policy of social rehabilitation of vulnerable groups of population through the system of Social Contracting⁵. Those organisations are usually non-profit civil society organisations including associations, NGOs, community-based organisations, Trade Unions, employers' organisations, etc⁶.

⁴ The involving of Civil Society was already formulated in strategy paper - Piirainen (2006). Detailed discussion can be found in Struyk (2003).

⁵ See Fultz & Tracy (2004) for best practices overview.

⁶ It is worth to mention that in some countries the for-profit organisations can be involved in the social policies implementation as well. However, on this stage it is proposed to use only non-profit making SCO.

They finance their activities through both public and private sources. These organisations are free to mobilise the private sources for their projects (members' fees, donors' contributions, volunteers etc.). At the same time, some of their actions can be financed (or co-financed) by the public authorities. In order to get the access to public financing they should be compliant with strictly defined criteria (for example: be not-profit making, have their headquarters in the country, not to be bankrupt etc.) and have their projects in line with defined priorities of national (or regional) social rehabilitation programme.

The **Donors and Sponsors** (enterprises, organisations, citizens) can participate in the implementation of **Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation** providing different additional resources. The resources can be both financial and in-kind⁷. As it was mentioned before, different donors are organising already the social rehabilitation actions throughout Azerbaijan. However, these actions are not based on the detailed poverty analysis carried out by professionals. If they will be informed about the local poverty pattern and about the relevant programme for social rehabilitation, they can joint their forces with other authorities either financing or co-financing the actions. Furthermore, the citizens can take part in the actions implemented by the Civil Society Organisations as volunteers.

In this light, the **Rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation (SCSR)** can be a body bringing together the representatives of all these stakeholders:

- Local social protection centres (*sobes*)
- *Rayon* administrations (*Ispolkom*)
- Representatives of platforms of Civil Society Organisations including NGOs, Community-based elderly councils, Community-based organisation
- Donors (citizens, enterprises, organisation)
- Other partners including other concerned Ministries and public agencies, representatives of legislative branch (*rayon's* deputy), international donors, etc.

The Steering Committee can meet on regular basis in order to take the decision about the social rehabilitation policies in the region. For example, one monthly meeting can be enough for this activity. Based on local poverty survey carried out continuously by the Local Social Protection Centre⁸, the SCSR can adopt once in the year the **Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR)** which would be implemented in the *rayon*⁹. This Master Plan will list the main objectives and the available resources. In lines with the LMPSR priorities the Steering Committee can launch the call for proposals inviting the Civil Society Organisations to propose the different projects corresponding to the local Master Plan priorities and objectives. The Steering Committee will select the project and organisations and will organise the projects' monitoring and evaluation.

The advantages of such responsibilities distribution are following:

- 1) The coordination of all resources (financial, in-kind, workforce, private, public) can be resulted in more efficient impact of social rehabilitation policies.
- 2) The Civil Society Organisations can be used as additional resource by the public administrations dealing with social rehabilitation policies. It is easy to mobilise

⁷ In the beginning, for the pilot actions, it would be better to mobilise only in-kind resources.

⁸ The development of local poverty surveys and monitoring will be tested in the framework of other pilot project.

⁹ The methodological aspects of development of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation will be discussed in paragraph 3.

such organisations and it is easy to reorient the public funding in case of changes of priorities.

- 3) The implementation of the actions by the Civil Society Organisations can be positive sign for the sponsors and donors. Sometimes the donors are not willing to entrust their resources to public authorities because of lack of confidence. The possibility to give the resources for the concrete actions can be resulted in the rise of such types of sponsorship.

It is important to mention that, on this stage the capacities of local CSOs (including social oriented NGOs) are quite low¹⁰. Many of existing NGOs don't have any stable sources of financing and focused on short-term survival. In different extent this situation is similar in many eastern European countries¹¹. However the potential for their development is considered rather as substantial. Therefore, the mechanism of cooperation between these stakeholders can help to structure healthy Civil Society as reliable partner of public institutions in implementation of social services.

Based on international experience it is possible to foresee that the budgets of rehabilitation programmes would be limited in the beginning of its implementation and will grow if the impact of such programmes will be seen as positive by the major stakeholders. This gradual increasing in budgets can go along with gradual incising of capacities of local Civil Society Organisations.

In the future it would be possible to support the creation of grassroots Civil Society Organisations pooling together the persons coming from the target group population in order to implement some projects selected in the framework of regional social rehabilitation programme. In fact, this can be helpful for the impact of social rehabilitation activities. First of all, the peoples coming from target communities are more aware about the real needs of their own communities and can adapt the measures for these real needs. Secondly, they can easily get in contact with their communities compared to representatives of public institutions (sometimes there is the lack of confidence between some vulnerable groups and public institutions, for example street children). And last but not least, this can be an additional strategy for the reintegration by employment of the household members receiving the TSA who are able to work. For example, it is possible to introduce the obligation for the household members in the working age receiving the TSA either to go through Employment agency, to follow the vocational training procedures or **to go to work as a volunteer in the NGO implementing the social rehabilitation measures**¹².

2.3. Decision making process, financing and exchange of information

The decisions about the priorities of the Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR) as well as about the use of different available resources must be based on the large consensus between different stakeholders listed above. The consensus represents a part and parcel for the mobilisation of necessary resources as well as for the lasting impact of social rehabilitation policies. In this light, it is very important to settle down the decision making process which will maintain the confidence between all

¹⁰ See Russel & all. (2005) for detailed analysis of current situation in Azeri civil society.

¹¹ The situation in Ukraine is analysed in details in Hryvnyak (2004)

¹² This solution represents the application of Conditional Cash Transfer discussed in previous working paper Tretyak (2006)

the stakeholders. Different stakeholders should play their own role in the different stages of implementation of the Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation.

Based on the analysis of local situation we are proposing that the decision about the priorities and objectives of the Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR) should be made rather by the public authorities (Local social protection centres, Rayon administrations, other relevant public institutions if any). Other private stakeholders should participate in debates with consultative voice. However, it is possible to include the representative of the SCO platform into decision making process on this stage. In any cases, the public authorities will be motivated to settle down the priorities taking into consideration the opinions of other stakeholders because in opposite case they will not be able to mobilise the private resources. At the same time, the private stakeholders can participate in the selection of operators as well as in the evaluation of the projects implemented by the SCOs with similar voice as the public institutions in case if they bring the resources to these actions.

It is important to mention that the experimentation of this scheme does not mean that all private charities actions should be made only through this mechanism. This scheme can be complimentary sources of actions which are already implemented in Azerbaijan. For example, the Geidar Aliev Foundation finances large cultural and social infrastructure development projects such as building and reconstruction of schools, hospitals etc. Inviting the representatives of this important institution to take part in the Steering Committee on Rayon level can be very beneficial for the coordination of social rehabilitation measures with the activities of this foundation.

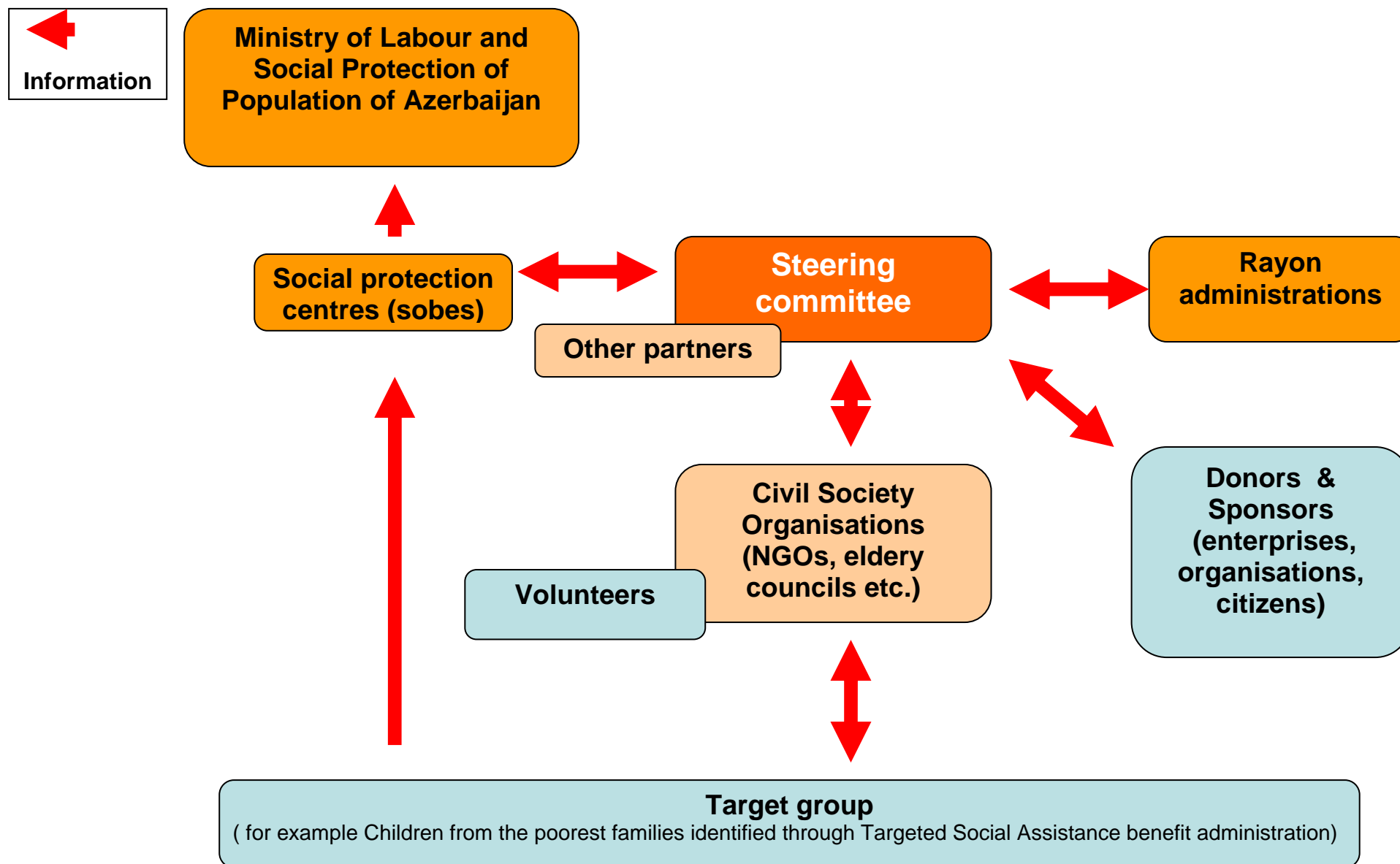
In this light, it is very important for public entities to bring their resources for the participation in such schemes. In case if the public institutions, neither SPC, nor rayon administration would not bring any resources and instead of that will ask only the business communities to joints the forces there is two major consequences of such behaviour:

- 1) Business communities will be less willing to give some resources if they are not sure about the commitment of public authorities. Furthermore, they can interpret this situation as that the public administrations would like to take control on their charity projects without mobilising their own resources.
- 2) The legitimacy of the public administration to take part in decision making process concerning how to deploy the mobilised resources will be very low if they are not bringing any resources.

At the same time, the distribution of power in this Steering committee should be somehow proportional to the resources which every entity bring to the implementation of the Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation. The situation when one entity bring the majority of resources and others entities are participating in the decision making process without bringing the resources should be avoided. In the case of differentiated participation of public authorities in the budget of the programme, they should have different weight in decision-making as well.

Other positive effect of Rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation creation can be the organisation of regular consultation and exchange of information between main stakeholders. These consultations will improve the information about the target population (Chart 2).

Chart 2 Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation and information flows



Taking into account that one of the objectives for the administration of Targeted Social Assistance is to gather the reliable information about the peoples living in difficult economic situation, it is very important to assure the quality of this information. Based on reliable information the Ministry can develop the comprehensive policy aiming at poverty reduction. Furthermore this information will help to assure the efficient targeting procedure and reduce the inclusion and exclusion errors¹³.

In present situation the local Social Protection Centres gather together the information about the population eligible for TSA. This information is concentrated on national level by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population. Some concerns were raised about the necessity of introduction of reliable monitoring for the administration of TSA. In this light, the introduction of the Rayon Steering Committee for Social Rehabilitation can play an important role in the improvement of the procedure of administration of TSA.

Other stakeholder proposed to take part in the Steering Committee can have their own information about the peoples living in difficult situation. Thus, during the interview with rayon administrations it appeared that they often use their own sources of information (MIS, peoples addressing directly, etc.). Furthermore, the Civil Society Organisations working directly with their target groups have their own sources of information which can compliment those of the local SPCs. The Steering Committee can be a platform where this information can be exchanged.

Thus, the SPCs, rayon administrations and other relevant public authorities can compare their information and develop the reliable list of the low-income population (target group). The CSOs can compliment this list with their information. Afterwards, the Steering Committee can inform the potential donors about the special needs of low-income households and other vulnerable groups as well as organise the social services aiming at social rehabilitation of these groups. The CSOs in their turn can inform their target groups about the priorities and objectives of public policies, as well as about their rights on TSA and other benefits.

¹³ The discussion about possible causes of exclusion and inclusion errors was presented in the discussion paper Tretyak (2006).

3. Methodological basis for the development of Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR)

The Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation (LMPSR) and social services provision in general are complimentary for the administration of Targeted Social Assistance for the vulnerable population. Technically, the amount of TSA should not have a cause and effect relationship with the specific social services.

The consensus and synergy between different stakeholders is the determining factors in the success of actions and collective efforts and will guarantee the successful impact of social services on the most vulnerable groups of population.

The conditions for the successful Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation depend on several stages:

- 1) Listing all potential stakeholders in a predetermined geographic area,
- 2) Implementation of a needs analysis for the vulnerable groups of population with a ranking of priorities in the predetermined geographic area,
- 3) Setting of objectives shared by the policy-makers (i.e., political action decision-makers) and other stakeholders in order to develop consistent overall direction for the social rehabilitation measures,
- 4) Selection of best operators (sub-contractors) having an important experience and capacities in the selected actions and implementation methodology,
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation of every action by the Steering Committee
- 6) Common evaluation of groups of actions in the end of period
- 7) Setting up of maximum available annual budget (specifying the origin of financial and in-kind contributions) and listing the possible types of actions.

The master plan represents the backbone of local social development. In fact, it involves the political decision-makers in concerted actions by bringing together political choices and local needs.

Examples of priorities of the Master Plan for area actions:

- Improving childcare facilities
- social centres creation
- combating juvenile delinquency through promoting sport activities
- developing cultural activities for children (theatre, music, group games)
- integration activities for seniors
- all other activities for which the local poverty survey has indicated a priority.

As it was highlighted in the introduction for this discussion paper, in our pilot actions we suggest to stress the attention first of all on the implementation of the actions targeting the children from the low-income households. In this light, the examples of priorities developed in this paragraph are axed rather on the actions aiming at this type of target group. At the same time, it is worth to mention that the same logic can be applied to other target groups.

In the beginning the Master plan priorities can be settled down for one year. However, after the testing period it is better to start establishing these priorities on the multi-annual basis. According to international experience three-five years period is the necessary time for testing the impact of a social service actions.

Following the trainings for social workers carried out in the framework of Tacis project, these professionals can participate both in the local poverty analysis and also contribute to the proposal of new social actions.

3.1. Definition of stakeholders in the limited geographic areas

During the pilot projects, the actions will be tested in selected regions: essentially Baku (Nizami and Sabhail), Quba. The regions of Nakhicivan, Lenkaran and Ismayly can be involved in a limited number of actions if the necessary consensus among different stakeholders can be reached in these regions.

First of all, the understanding between local administration and local SPCs on the poverty related issues should be gained. The interview demonstrated that quite often the relationship between these two public entities exists but the contacts on social service provision are usually not bearing the regular basis. At the same time, in most of cases, the representatives of these two branches are demonstrated the willingness to work together.

Secondly, in these regions a list of prominent stakeholders must be established, and it would be desirable if the local Steering Committee would approve that list. The common characteristics of these stakeholders (sponsors-donors, subcontractors, CSOs) should be their awareness of social actions because their contribution to projects is essential.

The stakeholders include not only potential sponsors, but the platforms of Civil Society Organisations (see the Attachment). These organisations can help in identification of major priorities and selection of prominent operators for projects' implementation¹⁴.

3. 2. Carrying out the local needs assessment

For the first information about local needs of the low-income households and their children, it would be possible to analyse the database of households receiving the TSA as well as the questionnaire implemented in the SPCs¹⁵. In order to get more precise information about the needs of children it is preferable to create specific questionnaire addressing the children of two age groups: 6-12 and 13-18.

For the distribution of this questionnaire and explanation of its objectives and content it is preferable to involve the schools' administrations in the pilot regions and/or Civil Society Organisations (Azerbaijan National Parent-Teacher Association, for example). The teachers will ensure the proper understanding of questions by parent, collection of questionnaires and verification of answers.

¹⁴ Relevant stakeholders to take part in the local Steering Committee are presented in previous paragraph

¹⁵ The SPCs gather the information, but the software for analysing the results is not functioning yet

With help of this questionnaire, the parents and their children will be informed that actions could be implemented based on the needs identified through the questionnaire (children's desire to participate in sports, music, theatre, arts, etc.). The development of scope of actions to meet the children demand depends on the activeness and willingness of the local network of potential stakeholders.

In terms of priorities, the activities are intended to reach the specific target group: the children from the low-income households. At the same time, preparing specific actions it is important to keep in mind that they should assure the **social diversity effect**. In fact, the actions should avoid treating separately the children from vulnerable families in order to **avoid social exclusion**.

3.3. Setting of the objectives shared by the policy-makers

There is a great risk of obtaining many requests for social actions, but it also would demonstrate the overall dynamic and needs. In fact, children's requests for leisure activities will no doubt be numerous. Therefore, the Steering Committee will have to group the priorities by types of actions. Furthermore some actions could be difficult to implement depending on available resources (funding, human resources, infrastructures, volunteers, etc.). In this light, the priorities should be realistic and correspond to available resources, mobilised from both public and private institutions.

3.4. Selection of operators

The selection of operators (sub-contractors) to implement the actions will be a central component of the steering committee's work. The conditions for the selection should be professional and technical capacities, which guarantees respect for project implementation, and ethics approach with regard to the supervision of children and their involvement in different activities.

A multi-year objective agreement could be signed between the Steering committee and the project promoter. This agreement would set up the annual financial contribution rules and the objectives to meet. An annual evaluation would measure the project's impact on the vulnerable groups of population. The annual action plan could be submitted to the Steering committee.

The pedagogical component of the action should be established on the basis of **Guidelines** produced by the Steering Committee. These Guidelines will determine the criteria to be followed for the implementation of the action. The operator and its pedagogic team would design the teaching component along with the methodology and expected results. It is possible to allow the same operator to propose several projects per year once the steering committee has approved that operator.

The large scope of Civil Society Organisations: non-profit associations, NGOs, popular initiatives, teachers, sports or club leaders, professional federations, neighbourhood committees, municipal officials, elder council, etc., may be approved to propose local social development projects.

During the interviews, the limited list of Local Civil Society Organisations dealing with children related issues was identified (see Attachment). This list is not exhaustive and

should be completed with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in every pilot region.

3.5. Monitoring and evaluation of actions

In order to address the eventual difficulties during the project implementation as well as to assess the overall impact of the actions the Steering Committee should carry out the continuous follow-up of the implemented projects. Every action/project should be subject to evaluation on cost-effectiveness, targeting of the population, expected outcomes, etc. by the Steering Committee.

For this it is necessary to develop the template of **project assessment file**, which can be used during the project implementation for the assessment of different projects. Furthermore, it is important to develop the prominent follow-up indicators to measure the action's relevance and impact.

3.6. Evaluation of priorities

Common evaluation of groups of actions (by priority) by the Steering Committee is necessary in the end of the period in order to take the decision either to continue the implementation of similar actions/projects, or to amend the guidelines and review the expected results, or to stop the implementation during next period.

The overall assessment results could be a helpful tool for making decisions about the best social policies for the future periods. For successful and faithful evaluation of existing priorities certain period of experimentation is necessary. In this light, it would be desirable to develop the priorities and actions which are not very ambitious in order to evaluate their relevance in the beginning.

Involving social workers in this type of discussions should be beneficial to their professional development. It would also be desirable if the social workers participated as consultants on the steering committee.

3.7. Programme budgeting and funding

Development of the Local Master Plan for Social Rehabilitation will allow setting up the main priorities and objectives for social services provision. At the same time, the actions necessary for reaching every objective have their own costs. Therefore, the Master Plan should set up the budget corresponding to every priority.

The financial resources originating from public institutions (ministries, rayons' executives powers, SPCs) can be complemented with funding (financial or in-kind) from various transparent sources:

- Businesses making contributions in order to gain the positive image,
- Artists who want to support the social actions or enhance their reputation,
- Sponsors who want to develop a product (for example, mineral water),
- Orchestras putting on concerts to benefit social actions,
- Foundations or CSOs making a contribution for specific actions,

It is also necessary foresee that in-kind donations may be significant, and it would be necessary to calculate those contributions (for example: making sport infrastructures available, providing educational materials, free catering, providing the transport for different project, etc.).

Other principle is to make the parents to participate in financing of such social actions. Usually this participation should be rather symbolic. The idea is that even symbolic financial participation demonstrates the commitment of parents to the rehabilitation measures. Obviously, for low-income households even symbolic financial participation can be difficult. In this case they can be asked to provide some in-kind participation (as in case of preparing the meals for the children participating in outdoor trip, for example).

Example: Organisation of Social Rehabilitation for vulnerable groups in Kiev (Ukraine)

During the study tour in Ukraine (15-22 April 2007), the delegation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan had the opportunity to study the experience of Kiev administration (General direction for social protection of population) in organisation of local programmes for social services.

It was emphasised that local administration deploy its own budget for the organisation of local programmes for social assistance and social services in its region. These local programmes bear the complimentary character with existing State programmes.

The local programme “*Turbota*” (in English – “Care”) is developed for 5 years period. This programme is financed by local budget and approved by local parliament. One of the objective of the programme is providing of **additional social assistance** (in-cash and in-kind) to the peoples loving in Kiev.

Furthermore, in the framework of this programme a large scope of **social services provision is organised in collaboration with non-profit non-governmental organisation** on the basis of medium term social contract, such as:

- Organisation and management of social hostel (“*Sotsialny Ghotel*”) in collaboration with non-profit organisation “*Narodna Dopomoga*”. This Hostel is open for the homeless peoples.
- Organisation of Social Patrol with same non-profit organisation. This activity is implemented every year from 1 of December up to 1 of April. The teams of Social Patrol visit the places with concentration of homeless peoples in order to provide them with basic assistance (hot meal, hot clothes, but also psychological and legal help). The equipment of this Patrol is provided by local programme, whereas the “*Narodna Dopomoga*” provides the social workers experienced in the work with such peoples. The salaries of these social workers are financed in the framework of the programme “*Turbota*” as well.

4. Examples of projects

As it was mentioned above, during the pilot project we are intended to stress our attention more on the measures for reintegration and social inclusion of children from low-income households and other vulnerable families.

Social reintegration of children and young peoples plays very important role in Social Inclusion and Poverty combating because these measures reduce the preconditions for the long-term poverty. The children from the vulnerable low-income families are often included in different kind of works in order to help their families to earn some revenues (especially in rural areas where the agricultural activities are the only sources of income). These children are therefore often forced to stop or postpone their school enrolment. Moreover, the families of these children often cannot afford to organise them the proper childcare, medical treatment and necessary holidays. All these characteristics enforce the exclusion phenomenon and represent the endowment for the long term poverty.

The Constitution of Azerbaijan foresees the right leisure for every citizen, and the paid holidays for the working population. However, in Azerbaijan as in many other contemporary countries there is quite important number of families which cannot afford the organisation of holidays for their children. The share of working poor population becomes especially important during the economic crisis following the Soviet Union disintegration and meltdown of former social services shrinking by inflation. At the same time, the access to the healthcare, education and social integration for the children from vulnerable families represents the necessary condition for their future successful integration in normal life. The holidays are very important for the children because they help in preventing the social exclusion and help in better understanding of the world.

Possible target population:

- Children from the poorest families identified through Targeted Social Assistance benefit administration
- Children from the refugees' families
- Children with special difficulties (children below 16 eligible for disability benefit; children below 16 through hosted in the rehabilitation centres in Baku and newly constructed in Nakhichevan)
- Children from other families in order to assure the social mixture between different children and avoid the social segregation.

In France the Non-Profit Organisation **Secours Populaire Français** has an important experience in organisation of different social actions aiming at poor and vulnerable groups of population. This organisation is implementing different measures such as distribution of hot meals for the poor population, collecting and distribution of hot clothes, organisation of holidays for the children of low-income families, social assistance to the low-income and vulnerable groups of population. During the visit of the delegation of Azeri Ministry of Social Protection of Population in Paris in November 2006, this experience was considered as very interesting by Azeri partners.

Hereafter three ideas for the projects which can be implemented in Azerbaijan by local operators with help of wide range of stakeholders (publics and privates) are presented:

4.1. Project 1: Weekend or one-day trips for the outdoor holidays in the mountains or at the sea shore

Main Objective: Providing children with group recreational activities, thus avoiding idleness and encouraging a spirit of group and solidarity.

Organisation and implementation of action:

The person in charge of the trip must agree with the accompanying persons the plan for the trip and share this plan with parents and potential financial partners.

It is important to create the preconditions for organisation of the social diversity between the children participating in such activities. As it was mentioned before, these activities should bring together the children from vulnerable families and other children from families with normal situation. This will avoid the social exclusion. This can be done through introduction of different price for the participation in these activities for the families with different level of revenues. For example, the wealthy families are paying the full price, whereas the low income families are paying the reduced price (or participating for free). The difference is covered by the project.

An assessment of the action with the financial result will be sent to the steering committee eight days after the end of the activity.

Resources to mobilise:

Transport: it is necessary to organise the group transportation (by bus or by train). The transport costs can be either provided or paid by sponsors or budget of public institutions.

Catering: meals for the day can be prepared by the parents, provided by donors – sponsors or paid by the public administration

Sleeping facilities: not necessary in case of one-day trip. In case of the weekend the facilities of a resort centres (both public and private) with housing and bathroom facilities can be used. Taking into account the numerous private resort facilities existing on the sea coast and in the mountains (for example in Guba region), it is possible to mobilise the owners to open their resort centres for such activities for one or two days per month (probably during the period of low commercial demand). Otherwise the budget of social rehabilitation can cover some limited costs.

Supervision and accompanying: by teachers, qualified operating CSO staffs or parents (one accompanying person for six children under 10 years of age or one accompanying person for 10 children age 10-16). The accompanying person and other

responsible adults can be volunteers or paid professionals from CSO, depending on the budget availability.

Equipment for outdoor activities: playgrounds or sport grounds for the day-long trips. In some case some sport equipment can be rented or purchased.

Insurances: based on existing legislation on individual and collective responsibility, it is important to take into consideration the transfer of parental responsibility in case of accident. To check out what kind of insurances exist. In any cases, parents should sign the document authorising their children to take part in the activities;

Example of using of already existing infrastructure:

Recently the network of **Olympic Centres** was build throughout all Azerbaijan. These centres exist in the majority of rayon centres (the project team visited two of them – in Guba and in Shekhi). They combine the hotel facilities and sport grounds. Most of them have the swimming pool (in case of Guba centre 50 meters long), grounds for football, volleyball etc. They are often used as resort centres during important tourist affluence in the regions. However, between the major sport events and tourist periods these centres are rather empty (between the week-end during the winter). At the same time, the infrastructure is maintained and ready to be used (heating of the buildings, of swimming pools, the illumination etc.). Using such infrastructure it is possible to organise the different types of athletic activity for the children and teenagers coming from the low-income families (free of charge or with limited price) and even organise inter-regional competitions. For this the MLSP can contact the corresponding public authority (Ministry of youth and sport), while the local SPCs can get in touch with local administrations managing these centres in order to discuss the cooperation opportunities.

4.2. Project 2: After school activities

Main Objective: Facilitating harmonious child development via educational, cultural and athletic activities.

Organisation and implementation of action:

Sports, leisure and recreational activities for kids can be implemented in the afternoon period after school. These activities should generate a real involvement of the children (examples: theatre, music, introduction to team sports, computers, chess, etc.) avoiding the simple consumers' behaviour to social services

Both the teachers and the local CSOs should be gathered together, or new structures adapted to the activities should be developed.

Resources to mobilise:

Mainly the same approach for the resources' mobilisation can be used as in previous project (see the outdoor activities). Taking into account that these activities don't require the overnight trips, the sleeping facilities and catering are not necessary. The transport would be necessary only in case of organisation of specific activities far from the children housings (e.g., to theatres, concerts).

Equipment. Special location should be made available to the children for the various proposed activities (at school or special municipal hall) with opening hours adapted to their school timetable. The electricity bill should be paid and proper cleaning should be assured. Possible provision of specific equipment and facilities (games, musical instruments, show and theatre tickets, etc.)

4.3. Project 3: Creation of Intergenerational Social Centre

Objectives:

- Encourage intergenerational communication through various activities to help fragile sectors of the population to escape their isolation
- Develop intergenerational solidarity mechanisms

Organisation and implementation of action:

The main idea of such Centres is to bring together the senior population (alone old peoples as well as senior population coming from strong families) and children coming from vulnerable households. Such children are often at risk because their family members often don't have the time to devote to them. At the same time, the alone seniors (retired, handicapped etc.) are often in lack of relationships. Bringing them together in the Intergenerational Social Centre can be beneficial for both these vulnerable categories. Such centres where all participants communicate and participate in various activities together should be open to everyone from children to seniors.

The senior volunteers can lead the workshops that match their know-how (painting, writing, cooking, games, etc.). Based on their life experience, senior volunteers can play a major role in supervising children in leisure activities and also in after-school tutoring of children who need extra help. It is very important to inform potential volunteers through public information meetings.

This kind of structures can be organised in a high-density urban neighbourhood or on the inter-municipality basis in the rural environment. In both cases, the idea of such structures is based on the shared willingness of all prominent actors (social workers, teachers, cultural and athletic coaches, local association leaders, local NGOs, but all local population as well) to work together for the organisation of social services for most vulnerable groups of population. At the same time, as in other listed above projects, all

kind of diversities (ethnic, social or cultural) represent the backbone for success of local social development programs.

These Centres are intended to be a structure open to the people from 6 to 70 years old. The character of this kind of Centres can vary depending on the specific activities organised in them. However, a local needs assessment must first be implemented in order to determine the types of activities to organise. In fact, the possible activities should be defined according to the available human resources. Therefore, their identification and their determination to implement the procedure are also indispensable.

Resources to mobilise:

Supervision and accompanying: social workers, teachers, athletic and cultural leaders, local association leaders, local NGOs and volunteers

Salaries of permanent staffs necessary to make such structure operational:

- Director with specific social service provision experience,
- Accountant or bookkeeper,
- Secretary (with social action experience) to supervise the participants.

The role of the supervising persons is essential with regard to activities because that individual determines, along with the consumers (peoples of all ages using these centres) the activities' planning, organisation and management.

Equipment:

- Special location should be made available with opening hours adapted to the people who want to participate in the activities of the Centre.
- Acquisition of equipment for different activities (games, sporting equipment, etc.),
- Costs for structure (electricity, heating, etc.)

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Annexe: Civil Society Organisations which can help in the implementation of social rehabilitation measures for low income families and vulnerable groups (with specific emphasise on the Social Services for Children and Youth)

Platforms of Civil Society Organisations

Name of organization	Mission	Contact info
Azerbaijan NGO Alliance for Children's Rights	A platform unifying more then 70 NGOs working throughout Azerbaijan on children related issues	http://www.ngoalliance.net/
National NGO Forum	NNF has 402 national NGOs as its members and (through 5 Recourse Centers) in rural areas 320 independent NNGOs and 735 branches of Baku based NNGOs (all together 1447 NNGOs) are the direct beneficiaries of the NNF	http://www.ngoforum.az/

Azeri Civil Society Organisations dealing with Social Services for Children and Youth

Umid - Society of Azerbaijan Mothers	Help for children who suffered from war. Humanitarian aid for refugees, poor people. Defense of children rights.	
Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society, Local NGO	-Community -Development -Youth activity -Health in Community -Income Generation	
"Umid Yeri" Place of Hope	Support of homeless children and lonely women (hot dinner once per day) Providing Shelter for homeless children Attract street children to study Future plans: creation of a part-time farm for a refugee street children; creation of a small city for the homeless	www.umidyeri.org

	children and lonely women.	
Azerbaijan National Parent-Teacher Association	School based Parent-Teacher councils	
Union of Children of Azerbaijan (UCA)	Raising of children morally and physically. Humanitarian aid for children-refugees, children from poor families.	
Azerbaijan Child Organization	Providing assistance to the most vulnerable groups of children; developing a strategy for national policy for child development Cultural and charitable events for refugee and displaced children and orphans	
Azerbaijan Republic Children Organization	Moral and aesthetic upbringing of children. Support for psychological and physical health of children. Organization of leisure for children. Moral and material support for children from disabled, refugees, martyrs families and for orphans.	
“Müşviq”	Supporting children with disabilities and their families	
Goy Gurashaghi (Rainbow)	Supporting children with disabilities and their families	
“LOTOS” Disability Training Center		
Child Healthy World	Supporting children with disabilities and their families	
"PRAXIS" Support to Social Development Public Union	The overall aim of the organization is to contribute to the reduction of poverty and enhancement of a civil society	
“Yuks-ae-lis” Social Development	Social activities involving young peoples	

International Organisations active in Azerbaijan

Save the Children		http://www.savechildren.org.az/
World Vision Azerbaijan	Azeri branch of World Vision International. Relief and development organisation working for the well being of all people, especially children, through emergency relief, education, health care, economic development and promotion of justice.	http://www.wvi.org/ http://meero.worldvision.org/
CHF		www.chf.az
Norvey Refugees Council Azerbaijan		
UAFA (United Aid for Azerbaijan)	Azerbaijani based NGO headed by Mrs Gwen Burchell of the UK	
Counter Part		www.counterpart.az

The information about the Civil Society Organisations is gathered together from their websites, from the interview with their representatives as well as from the website www.azerweb.com