

## Concept paper

Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, is afflicted by serious social problems that are compounded by emigration that is draining the country of its younger and more energetic population. The nascent social work profession in Moldova is struggling for professional status, societal legitimacy, proper education, adequate remuneration, and solidarity. There are about 2,500 social workers in Moldova, and they mostly operate on the level of casework, under the international standards of the profession. There was a social work association Moldova established about ten years ago but it has been inactive at least for five years. When recently an international group was attempting to find an association representing social workers in Moldova, they could find nothing better than a nurses' association to represent them.

At this moment the Association lacks support from international organizations that have already set up a good network of collaboration on the topic of Social Work development. In the Moldovan environment it is a difficult task to promote any kind of social action, or change with no international support of well-known organizations.

The newly-formed National Association of Social Workers in Moldova was founded by a group of MSW students at the Free International University of Moldova and their practicing social work partners at several Moldovan municipalities. Our team consists of social workers, MSW students, and educators in alliance with other professions in order to provide interdisciplinary approach towards social needs of Moldova. Our team also has international representatives who are responsible for international liaison.

The National Association of Social Workers in Moldova is necessary for the following reasons:

- To foster solidarity, collective identity, professional betterment, and societal legitimacy for social workers in the Republic of Moldova
- To organize communities and social action on behalf of marginalized groups and toward a more just and equitable society
- To advocate with governmental structures for salaries, working condition, benefits, etc.
- To create training opportunities, capacity building, professional enhancement
- To assure peer support, expert advice, employment opportunities and opportunities to participate in funded projects.
- To conduct research and involve social workers in academic scholarship opportunities.
- To develop and maintain a database of experts in the field of Social Work.
- To provide local and international professional networking, and dissemination of information: news on social issues, changes in laws and regulations, etc.
- To promote the Social Work profession

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