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REDEFINING MASCULINITY.

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Men in Belarus 2018-2021

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ABBREVIATIONS IN THIS APPLICATION

MÄN	Riksorganisationen Män för Jämställdhet/Men for Gender Equality, Stockholm.
SAfE	Solidarity Action for Equality 2015 – 2019, Sida-funded project in Russia.
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
WWP	European Network for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence
WAVE	Women Against Violence Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
HRBA	Human Right's Based Approach
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline of the application

The following application for the project *Men in Belarus 2018-2021* is a continuation and development of the current project *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018*, and is planned to be carried out in partnership between MÄN, in Sweden, and Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives, in Belarus. The main aim of the application is to present the planned objectives, expected results and how we plan to work towards them during the four year of project implementation. To reach this aim the following chapters are provided in this application:

- The application starts with an introduction and continues with an analysis of to the context in Belarus, in *chapter two*.
- The *third chapter* provides a short description of the background through the presentation of experiences and lessons learnt during the previous project.
- *Chapter four* consists of a presentation of the implementing partners; MÄN, Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives, whereas *chapter five* elaborates on their roles and responsibilities.
- In *chapter six* the project objectives, expected results and target groups are presented, together with a summarisation of the planned methodology and key activities for each of the five intermediate objectives.
- Over all risks and risk management is presented in *chapter seven*.
- Finally, *chapter eight* presents a financial overview for the planned project period.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Results Matrix (Project Plan 2018-2021)

Annex 2: Project Budget 2018-2021

Annex 3: Annual Activity Plan 2018

Annex 4: Annual Budget 2018

Annex 5: Risk Analysis

2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1. Gender equality in Belarus

In the last couple of years, and in particular during the last year in the current project *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018*, the project partners have noticed a positive shift in the way fatherhood and men as caregivers are viewed in the modern Belarusian society. This change has partly become realised due to mass media's increased interest in the work with fathers and communication with relevant duty bearers, within the framework of the current project. Taken together, this has contributed to harmonious and efficient advancements in the introduction of innovative social forms to work with fathers and masculinity, and the continued advocacy for gender equality through, for example, mandatory parental leave for fathers. One action taken by the state has been their explicit statement in the *National Plan for Gender Equality 2011-2015* expressing that father groups should be established and that social centres are responsible for the implementation. The formation and development of a new role of the conscious father indicates a positive trend and a momentum that requires continued focus to reach gender equality and combating men's violence.

Despite this positive change in the view of fathers, huge challenges in connections to gender equality and men's violence against women and children remain. At the moment, there is no national action plan in the area of prevention of violence against women. As a result, there is neither a coordinating body,

institution or organization responsible for monitoring the area of violence against women. The supportive and preventive work being done in this area is mainly provided by NGOs and women's shelters, occasionally with encouragement from the state. The issue of domestic violence, as part of violence against women, has received increased attention from the government and society during the last five years. Domestic violence offences make one third of the total number of crimes taking place in homes all over the country. According to registered cases of the Ministry of Internal Affairs up to 90% of such crimes are committed by offenders having alcohol addiction, and 88% of domestic offenders are unemployed men¹. If we assume that there is a connection between substance abuse and/or psychological distress and men's violence against women, a further focus for preventive actions against men's violence should be on men in need of support.

The latest and 5th *Belarusian National Plan for Gender Equality 2017-2020*² highlights the need to support and start proactive actions for men's health through for example counselling. This goes in line with the need seen by the project partners to address men in need of support as a new preventive way of combating men's violence against women and support gender equality. During 2016, the Belarusian government also approved the 2016-2020 State Programme *Health and Demographic Safety of the Republic of Belarus*³. The Programme aims to create conditions for improving health of the population. For example, it promotes a healthy lifestyle, preventing alcoholism and the efforts to decrease the mortality rate. The new focus on men's health will hopefully bring further legitimacy and support to the preventive work of the project partners and the objectives of this planned project.

2.2 Public awareness on gender equality

The general public's understanding of the meaning of the term 'gender' varies, and the majority of people are not familiar with the term. According to a study⁴, performed by the Office for European Expertise and Communication in Minsk, those who has heard this term generally associated it with the notion of 'feminism' or 'fighting for women's rights'. Gender issues are often wrongly perceived as specifically female. Nevertheless, nearly half of the population understand the term 'gender equality' as equal rights and opportunities for women and men. In a public discourse, oftentimes there is a substitution of notions and distortion of meanings when the term 'gender equality' is associated with the promotion of same-sex relationships, with the denial of a family institution and with the formation of a genderless person.

According to a 2012 sociological survey⁵ carried out by the agency NewEffector, neither men nor women in Belarus express their need for feminism. Belarus displayed the lowest level of tolerance towards feminist ideas in comparison to example Ukraine and Russia. Only 4% of women in Belarus characterized themselves as openly feminist. Moreover, only 6% of men in Belarus claimed to support feminist ideas.

A survey conducted among Belarusian pupils and students showed the same unfamiliarity to the notion of 'gender'. The majority of the respondents supported patriarchal relations between men and women, where a woman is first and foremost "*a mother and a house keeper*". A considerable amount of the interviewees was positive to the division of professions and occupations as male and female. They equally disagreed to see women at leadership positions neither in public nor private spheres. Furthermore, from the experience of Gender Perspectives' work with youth they see the same lack of awareness on gender issues. Their trainings on gender have revealed that the majority of the training content is new for the participants. The post-trainings questioning revealed that information on gender issues was new to 78% of the boys and 66% of the girls.

The lack of gender awareness among youth is not surprising when looking at how the patriarchal system

¹ <http://mvd.gov.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=13911>

² The Edict of the Council of Ministers №200 from March 14, 2016.

³ Read full text at: <http://eng.belta.by/society/view/belarus-to-earmark-over-145bn-for-health-and-demographic-security-program-in-2016-2020-87912-2015/>

⁴ Analysis of the Gender Sector in Belarus. Office for European Expertise and Communication. Minsk, 2014

⁵ Galina Dzesiatava. Feminism in Belarus: present but unpopular
<https://belarusdigest.com/story/feminism-in-belarus-present-but-unpopular/>

of values is reproduced in school books and teaching materials. Furthermore, a survey⁶ of the attitude of teachers towards the biological and social factors in the formation of a person showed that the majority believed that the sex of a child determines what teachers is supposed to discuss with him or her, what to advise and what to give as a present. As it seems Belarusian teachers think by the categories of a traditional patriarchal pattern of society and transmit these values to the pupils.

If to follow the guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Education⁷ for gender education at schools, the main criteria of the gender culture are “*understanding of a traditional to the national culture image of a man and a woman; awareness about socially approved qualities of boys, male adolescents, men and girls, female adolescents and women; the adoption of the relevant gender roles and the readiness to implement them*”.⁸

There are some social media accounts addressing feminism, mostly originated in Ukraine and Russia, accessible to the youth. However, these accounts are primarily relevant for those who already support gender equality ideas, and are sometimes too advanced for the general public and youth. Most of the forums for discussion and the Belarussian media contain rather high intolerance and express traditional points of view on male and female roles in society.

Gender norms among women and men play a significant role in the justification of men’s violence against women. Therefore, we believe it is important to create opportunities to talk about gender roles and masculinity with youth, both boys and girls, in order to create real change early on and promote social structures based on gender equality.

2.3 The legal context and pressure on civil society organisations

While still constrained, relations between the state and civil society in Belarus improved slightly during 2016, according to the report *CSO Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*⁹. This is for example supported by the fact that CSOs were involved in discussions at various levels on legal reforms and dialogue between Belarus and the EU. But, despite these positive signs, the legal environment under which CSOs operate remains highly restrictive in many ways and access to local and foreign funding is limited and complicated. For instance, activities of unregistered CSOs continues to be criminalized and the registration procedure is complex which further limits the access to both local and foreign funding. In March 2016, Presidential Decree No. 5 on Foreign Aid came into force, which regulates the receipt and registration of foreign funding to Belarus. In practice, the registration process gives the state the opportunity to arbitrarily deny access to foreign aid if they do not agree with the organisation and their work or the purpose of the funding.

According to the *CSOSI* report, CSOs became better at diversifying their funding sources and thereby improving financial viability slightly during 2016. At the same time, foreign funding levels seem to be declining, based on the local CSOs reports. International donors are increasingly reallocating the remaining funds to government agencies and government-organized NGOs (GONGOs), rather than independent CSOs, according to the *CSOSI* report. We see this development as highly problematic and as a threat towards the work for human rights executed by CSOs that already struggle to remain active in Belarus.

While the legal environment remains as one of the biggest challenges to CSOs, they have focused on developing their organizational capacities and made consistent efforts to promote their public image. Unfortunately, several public demonstrations in the beginning of 2017 were meet with brutal force and

⁶ Schurko Tatiana, Kuznetsova Marina, “Gender Competence at School: Teachers”, Gender Route, 2012, available at: http://gender-route.org/articles/sex_gender_practice/gendernaya_kompetentnost_v_shkole_uchitelya/

⁷ Konovalchik E.A., Smotritskaya G.E., Formation of the Students Gender Culture: A Guide for the Teachers of General Education Institutions. Minsk: National Institute of Education, 2008.

⁸ Instructions and methodological guidelines from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus “Specificities of organisation and planning of the ideological and educational activities in the general education institutions in 2011/2012 academic years.

⁹ CSO Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, The United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

violence from the state which might make it harder for CSOs to encourage people into publicly supporting their campaigns and activities.

Considering the developments in the Belarusian society and the present political landscape, pursuing the work within the focus area of this seems not only relevant, but also very important. The project's focus on gender equality in Belarus goes in line with the *Swedish Foreign Affairs* strategy for Eastern Europe¹⁰. In the strategy it is clearly stated that efforts should contribute to changing attitudes towards gender stereotypes and unequal gender roles, and that men's and boy's involvement is crucial for achieving a more equal society.

Even though we, the partners in the current project, regard the work and achievements over the last three years as very successful, we also know that there is still a long way to go. We do however see the potential to build on what has been established and achieved until now. We have a lot more to give regarding issues affecting men and care, violence prevention, gender equality and involving the youth.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Experiences and lessons learnt from the previous project

This project is a continuation of the on-going Sida-financed project, *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018*, to engage men for gender equality in Belarus and to end men's violence against women. As described in this project application we want to broaden the scope of our work and build further on experiences made during the current project so far.

Evaluation and reflection

Many lessons have been drawn from the 8-month long reorientation phase during the current project, which was a result of contradictory views and unclear roles within the project team. The reorientation phase resulted in changes to the project management team as well as initiated cooperation with a women's rights organisation. In retrospect, we are now able to evaluate and confirm that these decisions and adjustments were not only necessary but have also been highly positive for the continuation of the cooperation including the prospect for fulfilling expected results. Furthermore, one of the biggest lessons learnt is to always create space within the project team for important discussions of ideological nature and to establish trust among partners. Also, to use the possibility to temporarily halt the implementation of project activities in order to enable evaluation, reflection and clarification primarily in regards to roles, responsibilities and values if viewed necessary for a project to reach its expected results in a successful manner.

Accountability

The MenEngage Global Alliance, to which MÄN and Klub Lvov belong, has made it a priority to take a firm stand on what good-quality work with men and boys look like; gender-norms transformative, feminist-informed, and in partnership with women's rights and other social justice partners.

During the course of the current project the importance of being accountable to and working with women's rights actors became increasingly evident, resulting in the cooperation with the women's rights organisation Gender Perspectives. Being accountable towards the women's movement means for example that we need to acknowledge and support the important work that these actors have been doing for many years. Furthermore, to acknowledge that this project should in no way risk counteracting what these actors want to achieve in terms of women's rights and gender equality. Through the participation of Gender Perspectives, the voices of women, their expertise and extensive experience from the work for gender equality have had a great impact on planning and facilitation of activities, as well as on the dialogue and decisions taken during project meetings. They have contributed to the dialogue on ideology

¹⁰ <http://www.regeringen.se/49c858/contentassets/93f229ec24c44d5cbbbae5d47f891bad/resultatstrategi-for-reformsamarbete-med-osteuropa-vastra-balkan-o-turkiet-2014---2020>

and fundamental values in the project, including a deeper understanding of gender equality, gender power analysis and accountability to the women's movement. A fundamental shift has taken place within the project team in terms of what issues may be raised and what terminology may be used during activities etc. Also it is obvious, and of importance to recognise that some of the discussions held within the project team today would simply not have been possible without the cooperation with Gender Perspectives.

The cooperation with Gender Perspectives in the on-going project has provided a stronger foundation for the project and strengthened the links to the wider gender justice scene and agenda in Belarus, including insights on key political processes. This is vital to the ongoing work on responsible parenting, transformation of masculinity norms and sustainability of achieved results. Therefore, the partnership with Gender Perspectives and cooperation with the women's movement will be strengthened and is seen as vital to the continued work and the proposed project.

To keep the discussions alive around the ideological base and the direction of the project, and to secure a strong consensus, will remain priorities in the proposed project. This also entails a deeper discussion on what accountability means in practice. Through their membership in the global network MenEngage, MÄN has been part of the process of developing an accountability toolkit¹¹, including guidelines and standards for how organisations targeting or engaging men and boys in work for gender equality can work with accountability in practice. The toolkit has already been translated into Russian, funded by Sida through MÄN's work with the project *SAFE* in Russia. We aim to deepen our knowledge, and continue the constant process of re-evaluating our position and the different ways we can and should be accountable towards the women's movement. The MenEngage accountability toolkit is an example of what we can use as support.

Communication

Another lesson learnt that came out of the reorientation phase was to enhance effectiveness and enable accountability there needs to be trust. In order to build trust in the project team there needs to be closer and more transparent communication. This has led to much more frequent contact and meetings between the project managers, and the dialogue in the on-going project is much more direct than prior to the reorientation phase. We have seen the importance of creating structures for inclusive processes in all the phases of the project, from planning, implementing to reporting.

While planning for the proposed project, the current project team has defined the need to have a smaller and more stable project team that enables the group to meet on more regular basis and share information. This will hopefully deepen the sense of mutual ownership even more. Inclusive processes and transparent communication will be the cornerstones built on when creating structures for the project team in this proposed project.

Methods used

An overall conclusion about the work with fathers, is that father groups have proven to be a useful method in Belarus to achieve the objective of active fathers involved in their children's lives. Our expectation is that this will contribute to reaching the long term objective of increased gender equality and ending men's violence against women and children.

One obvious conclusion from the on-going project is the major advantages connected to allowing father group leaders themselves to influence themes and content of methodological materials in comparison to providing them with ready-to-use toolkits. By involving the father group leaders from the outset they could provide the project team with invaluable insights of the needs of the target group, hence they are also representing as fathers themselves. It gave the group leaders an enhanced understanding and ownership of the material. To actively involve the target group and let their needs guide the process of developing an activity or project goes in line with methods connected to the Human Rights Based

¹¹ <http://menengage.org/resources/menengage-accountability-training-toolkit/>

Approach¹² (HRBA). HRBA will be used as point of departure when planning for the proposed project. We will look at opportunities for more direct involvement of the target group in the process of planning activities and developing material for the work with fathers, as well as the support for men and youth groups. This could for example be realised through reference groups, consisting of representatives for the target group tied to the separate activities that will be involved at different stages of the planning process.

Peer-to-peer training is another useful method where the trainer is representing the target group being trained. In the training of father group facilitators, it has become evident that using the participants own experiences as fathers and men is crucial to the role as father group facilitator. Self-reflection and encouraging participants to scrutinize the image they have of themselves as men and fathers has been important elements to stimulate gender transformation. We believe that this is also adaptable to the work with youth groups. A young person will be more likely to gain trust through the sense of recognition from the youths being trained. Furthermore, we believe this will promote the willingness to take in and reflect on topics such as gender norms and masculinity. Peer-to-peer training will therefore be the method tried and used in the proposed project in the work with youth.

The creation of a network for father group facilitators has enabled the facilitators to meet regularly, and to develop and learn from each other's experiences. Through the network they get to meet more experienced facilitators who function as mentors and get to take part in joint capacity building. We have learnt that by creating this support system we enhance the commitment, and as a result the sustainability, of active father group facilitators. This method of creating networks and mentorship for volunteers and facilitators will also be adopted to the planned work with youth and support for men, in the proposed project.

Support for men

In the ongoing project a chat-forum was created as an extra support for father group participants, who felt the need to discuss questions and issues related to fatherhood, their partners and family life. Based on the increasing number of users on the chat, we have found that there is a great need among Belarusian men to have access to a forum where they can talk and discuss their feelings and experiences from being fathers and men. This insight contributed to the defined need to start a support line for men. What we also learnt from the chat-forum is that it is hard for the father group leaders to have a constant presence on the platform, and that their presence is important to support discussions between different users that sometimes derail or take a negative turn. Based on this lesson learnt the new support line will focus on individual support and be run by trained professionals.

External stakeholders

The cooperation with **Minsk City Family Centre**, has proven to be of key value. The project's close connections with the Minsk City Family Centre has allowed for a more sustainable relationship with the national social centres around the country and an opportunity to organise courses and other activities on their premises. This will greatly increase our ability to reach out to the target audience around the country. The Family Centre is run by the state, which in this case has contributed to legitimacy for the project in various ways, and has created an opportunity to invite decision makers to make them understand the work and purpose with father groups. On the other hand, we have learnt through the initiated work with youths that working closely to the state can put limits to what and how we can do activities and in extension the results we want to see. Therefore, when planning for the work with youth groups ahead the focus will be on informal trainings where we can use the material we see as relevant and fit without having to compromise with its message and the purpose of being gender norm transformative.

The opportunities for outreach to the public and strategic advocacy have increased throughout the current project through the increased **media** attention and their interest in reporting on the work with fathers. For example, public campaigns around father's day have attracted lots of media attention, and

¹² <http://hrbaportal.org/faq/what-is-a-human-rights-based-approach>

were covered by both newspapers and TV-channels. The fact that the thematic focus as well as the implemented activities of this project are still perceived as newsworthy is something we should make sure to derive advantage from. But the media attention is not only for the better and the project team have learnt that we need to be able to better influence what is being said about our activities and purpose. One successful way to gain influence have been to invite journalists and representatives from relevant ministries and other authorities to a media lunch where the project, its activities and objectives have been presented. Similar informational meetings, for media and decision makers, will therefore be included in the proposed project's plan, as part of strategic advocacy and communication. Furthermore, there will be specific media training for representatives from the project team in order for them to better receive and meet questions from different media actors, so that the information spread gives the fairest view possible.

International and regional contacts have been of considerable value to the ongoing project for networking and exchange of experience. As engaging men for gender equality is still a very young field of expertise, the meeting and sharing with actors from other contexts is pivotal. The group of regional consultants connected to the current project have strongly contributed to the ideological discussions by sharing their experience from other projects with men and fathers as a means to promote gender equality. Throughout 2017, we have increasingly realized the potential benefits connected to strengthening the collaboration between the projects MÄN is involved in in Belarus and Russia, respectively. With partly similar direction and contexts, we foresee positive synergies from bringing the two projects closer. We thus intend to intensify the cooperation and exchange between the proposed project and the Russian project when relevant, to enable mutual learning and broadened knowledge of everyone involved. Among activities planned are for example a joint training on accountability in practice and participation in the yearly conference on fatherhood held in Russia. We also see great possibilities in exchanging experiences around the work with youth groups, where the Russian team is taking steps forward.

4. THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERORGANISATIONS

4.1 Belarusian partners

Klub Lvov

Klub Lvov is a Belarusian Non-Governmental Organization established in 2004 with approximately 140 individual members divided into 9 local associations spread around different cities. They have been working with issues such as gender equality and fatherhood programs since 2009, with support from MÄN.

Klub Lvov's close collaboration with the Family Centre in Minsk and contact with relevant state authorities has strongly contributed to the successful construction of a system for father groups in Minsk, during the project *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018*. With support from MÄN and Gender Perspective, they have been able to train and gather around 25 dedicated father group facilitators so far, who will be an important asset for the continued work with fathers in this project.

Gender Perspectives

Gender Perspectives was founded in 2010 and is today an important and strong voice within the women's movement, both in Belarus and in an international context. They are mainly carrying out activities relating to the areas of prevention of domestic violence, combating human trafficking and promotion of gender equality. In addition to working for women's rights and providing support to women whose rights have been violated, Gender Perspectives also promotes the notion that gender equality is beneficial for both women and men.

Gender Perspectives became a part of the project *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018* in 2015 with an advisory function to the project management and have been part of the training of father group facilitators, based on their extensive knowledge in gender equality, work with men's violence against women and insights to key political processes in Belarus.

4.2 Swedish partner

MÄN – Men for Gender Equality

MÄN is a civil society organization, founded in 1993, working towards gender equality and ending men's violence against women. The main strategy is to involve men to challenge destructive masculinities, with the purpose of ending men's violence against women and children.

In Sweden MÄN has been developing work with father groups for gender equality; activities with young men and women to challenge gender norms and gender transformative methods for violence prevention since the end of the 1990's. The important experiences that the organisation has gained over the years will be brought in to this project.

We assess that the administrative capacity of MÄN is adequate, and it will be further strengthened during the project period due to continued organisational development efforts. With financial support from Sida and EU, MÄN has carried out large-scale projects in cooperation with partners in, for example, Russia, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Holland and Great Britain hence the organisation has extensive experience from international partner cooperation. An Efficiency Audit, carried out in 2016 within the framework of the Sida-funded project *SAFE, Solidarity and Action for Equality in Russia*, confirmed that MÄN's organisational structure as well as systems and routines for operational and financial management and control are adequate to support international development operations.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The project team

All three project partners, MÄN, Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives, will share the responsibility for the goal fulfilment of the project. In addition to this Klub Lvov and Gender Perspective will have the main responsibility for implementation of activities in Belarus, with support from MÄN. MÄN, as the Swedish partner, is the main applicant in relation to Sida and will carry the overall responsibility for the financial control.

In order to create the best possible conditions for efficiency, stability and transparent communication between the three main partners, a six-person project team will be formed. It will consist of two persons from each organisation, where one of these two persons will be the appointed project leader. The project team will meet on a regular basis to do strategic planning, follow-up and monitoring of the project. In between meetings the project team will keep each other updated on planned activities and share other relevant information. In dealing with specific issues, others with relevant knowledge and skills working with parts of the implementation of project activities, may be invited to participate and give their advice.

To meet the project objective five focus areas with associated medium term objectives have been defined, see *Project description* below. Klub Lvov will have an overall responsibility to develop and implement activities for the continued work with fathers and men as caregivers. Gender Perspectives will have the overall responsibility to develop and implement activities addressing the need to create a support system for men, and further develop a program to reach youth for awareness raising around gender norms and equality. MÄN will support both Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives with their experience and expertise in these areas. The project partners share the responsibility to develop and implement activities to realise the remaining two focus areas; on cooperation with national stakeholders and strategic management of the project.

5.2 Accountability

We believe that when engaging men for gender equality the work must be based in a feminist agenda, with a clear gender power analysis and in alliance with the women's movement. During the course of the on-going project (2013-2018) the importance of being accountable to and working with women's rights actors has become increasingly evident. This has for instance resulted in the initiated cooperation

with Gender Perspectives and the decision to include them as formal partners in the new project. Read more about our perspective on accountability under the section *Experiences and Lessons Learnt from the Previous Project* above.

In practice, within this project, it means that Klub Lvov and MÄN are responsible to make sure to include and ask for the knowledge, experience and priorities of the women's movement. In this case the partner and representative Gender Perspectives, in decision making and in developing activities addressing men. Gender Perspectives is in turn responsible for supporting and sharing their knowledge in ensuring that a strong gender power analysis inspects all parts of the project's activities. And to voice any concerns if the agreed upon values are seen as being compromised. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up and signed by all three parties containing the basic values that will lay as a foundation for the project. This will guide the partner's work and cooperation, including definitions of accountability and its purpose. It will also state what it means in practice that Klub Lvov and MÄN are accountable towards Gender Perspectives.

5.3 Other stakeholders and external support

As engaging men for gender equality is still a very young field of expertise, the meeting and sharing with actors from other contexts is pivotal. Furthermore, the team of regional and international consultants tied to the current project has proven to be a valuable and strategic asset for capacity development, quality assurance and sustainability to the work. A set team of regional consultants will not be formed in the same way as in the current project, but they may function as temporary advisors if needed. In addition to this, the project partners in Belarus will continue to build upon the existing close relationship with the colleagues in Russia from the Sida supported project SAFE, also hosted by MÄN. The Belarusian, Russian and Swedish partners have a lot to learn from each other and the project leaders at MÄN, for the two projects, will provide a link for coordinating the planning of activities. There is much to gain from joint participation, for example at conferences with relevant themes or trainings in organisational development.

Being connected to relevant international networks and campaigns will be of great importance for exchange of experience and advocacy. For example, the Men Care Campaign, focusing on men's role as caregivers and active fathers, and the network Women Against Violence Europe that gathers organisations working in the field of combating violence against women and children, where Gender Perspectives is a current member. The MenEngage Global Alliance is another important platform for continuous updates on the work of engaging boys and men in gender equality work around the world. Both MÄN and Klub Lvov are current members, and MÄN also acts as co-coordinator in the steering committee for MenEngage Europe and as regional representative to the global board.

The project partners have an ongoing contact with UNFPA, that also has an articulated interest in working on issues of engaging boys and men in the work for gender equality. We see a relevance in understanding each other's work to better complement our efforts rather than risk unnecessary overlaps. We also see the opportunity for information sharing, coordination and support of each other's efforts and work e.g. on policy improvements.

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will be a continuation and further development of the work set in motion by the current project, *New Men in Belarus 2013-2018*. The following chapter outlines the project logic with planned overall objectives, project objective and intermediate objectives. It also introduces the theory of change and methodology that the project builds upon in order to contribute to the behavioural changes we see necessary to achieve the project's objectives and long-term vision, and a more detailed description of the target groups and respective planned interventions.

6.1 Project Objectives

The project *Men in Belarus 2018-2021* has the following objectives and planned results:

Overall Objectives

In a long-term perspective the planned project is expected to contribute to the following overall objectives:

- A continued process to promote gender equality in the Belarusian society, both on the individual and the societal level
- A decrease in men's violence against women and children
- More gender equal relationships for persons in the project's target groups
- Changes to traditional gender norms and redefinition of masculinity
- Increased responsibility among fathers for children and care work
- Improved relationships between fathers and children

Project Objective

A coordinated support structure created and in use for men and youth in Belarus to be able to develop equal relationships, redefine masculinity norms and enhance gender equality in the Belarusian society.

Intermediate objectives

1. **Fatherhood and care work:** A well-developed national support system and network to reach out to men to promote active parenthood and equal relationships
2. **Counselling for men in need of support:** Gender-sensitive counselling service provided for men to enable them to reflect on masculinity in life situations
3. **Young people and gender norms:** Young women and men targeted by peer-to-peer gender education increase their awareness of gender equality issues and change attitude towards gender roles and norms
4. **Cooperation with national stakeholders:** Strategic cooperation and networking at a national level to have a fruitful dialogue on gender equality as a means for development
5. **Strategic management of the project:** Strengthened strategic and operational management capacity including professional partnerships among the partner organisations

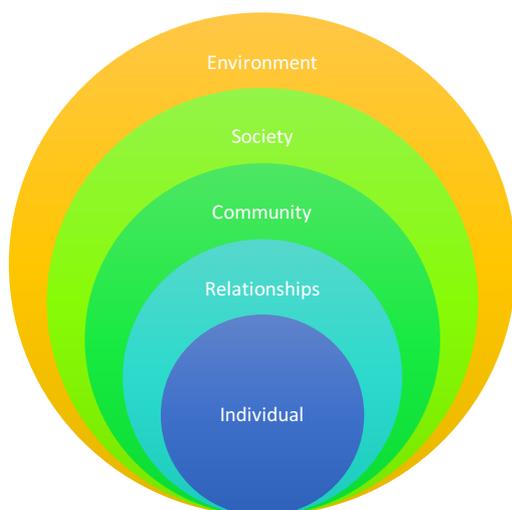
See the project's result matrix in *Annex 1* for more details such as indicators and planned activities.

6.2 Theory of Change and methodology

In the light of the context analysis and background above, research and our experience tells us that the work for gender equality and against violence must take place at all levels in society – from the individual level to the structural – in order to increase gender equality and to decrease or stop men's violence against woman and children. Change at the individual and relational level, which is where people experience ill-health, violence and discrimination, can only occur if all levels of society are engaged in a process of transformation: individual, relational, community and government. There needs to be involvement and cooperation between relevant actors on different arenas in society with preventive as well as reactive strategies. This includes working with the inclusion of women, men and children based in a gender power analysis from an individual level to a structural level. Hence, when planning the proposed project and its implementation it has been made with a holistic view in mind based in a socio-ecological approach.

To help us in creating and implementing a holistic approach, we are using the socio-ecological model in order to gain a clearer sense of our work. The model below shows different levels where one can identify stakeholders and target groups in order to handle risk and protective factors related to gender equality and violence.

The socio-ecological model



Environment: the natural environment, climate, ecological systems on which humans are dependent.

Society level: includes structures and systems, federal, state and local regulations, laws, societal norms, use of language etc.

Community level: includes institutions and organisations (schools, health care, business, religious communities, institutions, NGOs); also the relationship between these organisations etc.

Relationship level: or interpersonal level, which includes individual relationships, support groups, social network, cultural contexts etc.

Individual level: individual attitudes and history, beliefs, knowledge, behaviours etc.

To enable achievement of the project objective it has been divided into five intermediate objectives to reach both the identified target groups and relevant stakeholders at different levels in society, in line with the socio-ecological model. The project activities will address these target groups and stakeholders in order to influence their behaviour, read more in the section *Target Groups and Expected Results* below and see the detailed project matrix in *Annex 1*.

On the **individual level**, this includes preventive work with the primary target groups; fathers and men on their way of becoming fathers, persons that meet men in their role as parents (group facilitators, project team etc.), men in need of support, and youth of all sexes.

On the **relationship level**, the father groups, youth groups and support line for men are the planned activities that will enable the interpersonal meetings we see as invaluable for personal change on an individual level. The project will also address the secondary target group where we for example see the women being partners to men and fathers.

On a **community level**, it is crucial that the organisations and institutions who meet these men and youths are equipped with the right knowledge and “know how”, in order for the outcomes of such meetings to lead an enhanced understanding of gender equality and prevention of violence. Their services need to be provided from a rights-based approach where the principles of non-discrimination and access to services and information are particularly crucial. In the planned project this includes the trainers and counsellors representing the project partners, staff at health care centres meeting expecting parents, state run social centres, local duty-bearers and other relevant NGOs. Roles and responsibilities related to the accountability of project partners and the duty-bearers at different institutions need to be known and transparent to both decision makers and professionals, among the service providers as well as among citizens.

On a **society level**, we see the need to address both duty-bearers and the public, to inform them about our work and raise awareness about gender equality and men’s violence against women. Media is an important actor on this level as a means to reach the public. Equally important will be to advocate for and be included in the Belarusian state’s initiatives to create policies relevant to our work. To support different institutions’ work to facilitate better cooperation for a common view of the problem, focusing on rights, and what can be done in order to change structures, laws and norms.

The proposed project has so far no planned activities addressing the **environmental level**, but this is something we might be able to include in future work by drawing lessons from the pilot, currently implemented in our Sida supported project *SAfE in Russia*, on combining an environmental and gender perspective.

This project will mainly focus on preventive work that aim to create better conditions for gender equality and prevent violence before it occurs. However, project activities may also contribute to follow-up of

situations and cases where there is a need for rehabilitation or other more long-term actions, including referral to treatment. We regard the implementation of a holistic approach as crucial for developing the work for gender equality, on violence prevention and responses to violence – and for making this work sustainable. In a long-term perspective, this would entail being able to work with all relevant stakeholders at all levels of society, both in a preventive and reactive manner, which is the vision for our work. Even if we start-out on a small scale, we have a larger holistic picture in mind, and strive to develop our work over time towards that goal.

Methodology

While there are many components necessary to fully achieve gender equality, such as challenging the structures, attitudes, practices and institutions that sustain privileges, inequitable norms are essential. To be able to mobilize boys and men to be active change agents for gender equality it is crucial to first make them aware of how gender norms affect themselves and others. The process of self-reflection is often challenging, though, and constantly shifting, but also a critical foundation for changing of mind-sets and transformation.

To achieve the changes we want to see with the prospect of eventually influencing social structures and norms, we believe in the idea of providing knowledge and platforms for reflection to raise awareness that could contribute to changed behaviour and changed attitudes on all levels of society. For our work this means creating safe and non-judging meeting places and platforms where men get to derive from their own experiences and feelings, which creates an opportunity for self-reflection and mirroring in others. When using the method of self-reflection in combination with new knowledge, guided by a gender power analysis, we can help men open up to the possibility to redefine their roles as men and fathers. By this they can be helped to change their behaviours and attitudes in relation to their partners, children, gender equality and violence.

In order to best create the conditions for self-reflection, we first need to ensure that we facilitate safe and welcoming meeting places. When meeting boys and men that are usually not used to talk about their own emotions it is crucial to address them in an open and non-judgmental way. Facilitators or counselors are therefore trained in methods on how to ask questions and direct the focus to the men's own experiences and feelings.

The earlier in life we start reflecting upon gender roles and norms the more sustainable change we can achieve. The planned project therefore intends to expand the work with young men and women, with the peer education approach as our method of choice. As mentioned in the section *Experiences and lessons learnt from the previous project*, peer-to-peer training is a useful method where the trainer is representing the target group being trained. It has been proven successful in the work with father groups in the current project. Research suggests that adolescents are more likely to modify their behaviors and attitudes if they receive messages from peers who face similar concerns and pressures.¹³

Regardless of method, it remains crucial that the work we do contributes to a broader woman's rights and gender justice agenda. Although our methods focus on the individual's feelings, experiences and reflections, we cannot lose the connection to the overall social structures and norms that we all relate to and which we want to change. When we work with men, it becomes important to be able to clarify the link between their own position, no matter what, and overall patriarchal power structures. The assumption is that this will help them to see how gender equality and redefined masculinities are beneficial to everyone in society.

To ensure that what we do in this project is well grounded in feminist theory and that a gender power analysis is included correctly Gender Perspectives, experts and representatives of the women's movement, will be included throughout the processes and support the project partners with their expertise. Read more on how we view accountability and how it will be ensured in this project under the section *Roles and Responsibilities*.

¹³ Abdi, F and Simbar (M) *The Peer Education Approach in Adolescents- Narrative Review Article*, Iranian Journal of Public Health (2013), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4499060/>

6.3 Target Groups and Expected Results

To reach the project objective and based on the context analysis above, five main focus areas have been identified, each with an associated intermediate objective. They are: The continued work with issues relating to **fatherhood and care work**; The creation of a system with **counselling for men in need of support**; To further develop a program to work with **young people and gender norms**, for awareness raising on gender equality; **Cooperation with national stakeholders** to enable a dialogue about gender equality on a society level; And the fifth area addresses the **strategic management of the project** to ensure efficiency and sustainability. See a detailed description for each of the five areas below.

The *primary target group* of planned activities are fathers and men on their way of becoming fathers, persons that meet men in their role as parents, men in need of support, and youth of all sexes. A *secondary target group* are women as partners to men and fathers, the public and decision-makers on different levels and positions.

Fatherhood and care work

Intermediate objective 1: *A well-developed national support system and network to reach out to men to promote active parenthood and equal relationships.*

One of the objectives in the current project is to “*create a sustainable system contributing to fathers’ increased involvement in their children’s lives*”. The strategy of choice in achieving this has been – and remains – father groups with the purpose of challenging gender stereotypes, getting fathers involved in care work and reducing men’s violence against women and children. A well-functioning system for educating and supporting father group facilitators as well as methods for ensuring quality, are in place and being implemented through family centres in all of the nine districts in Minsk. The base and great asset in the current project is the father group leaders. Men who have been involved in issues of fatherhood and masculinity, and in addition have led groups with the intention to inspire and involve other men, and who have begun their own journey of self-reflection and norm critique. We regard it crucial to continue to invest in this group of men and to offer them opportunities to stay active in their parenthood. Within our plan for 2017 is also to broaden our base and scope by inviting and including maternal health clinics as partners and platforms for the recruitment of father group participants.

During 2014 and 2015 the facilitators in the current project initiated contact with family centres around the country and held trainings for father group facilitators in e.g. Gomel, Mogilev, Nezvich and Vitebsk. The next step will be to consolidate the contact with these and other social centres and expand the work with fathers beyond the Minsk region. The planned project will strengthen and develop the cooperation with different Health Centres that meet expecting parents.

This project is designed to build on the achievements of the current project and maintain the value of the system created and existing pool of dedicated facilitators. The Minsk City Family Centre is a strategic partner for ensuring the sustainability of the work and securing a physical space for future activities. The current project’s close connections with the Minsk City Family Centre will allow for a more sustainable relationship, also with the national social centres around the country, and an opportunity to organise courses and other activities on their premises. This this will greatly increase our ability to reach out to the primary target group, the fathers.

The current project has been successful in reaching out to both the public and decision makers, the secondary target group, through active interaction with journalists and implementation of campaigns to shed light on the issues around fatherhood, parenting and caregiving. This will be continued and developed with innovative methods in the planned project to keep the momentum and to ensure sustainability. As an example, a media lunch has been planned for early 2018, to which journalists and representatives from relevant ministries and other authorities will be invited to take part in a presentation of the project, its objectives and the plans ahead. There is also great potential to develop the local advocacy work and contribute with international expertise on national policy recommendations. This includes issues related to introducing mandatory paternity leave, where the recommendations have been

prepared during 2016-2017. Currently, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is collecting information about international practices on the issue.

Future actions will be directed towards forming a sustainable network organisation constituting of and led by the father group facilitators, and with time also men and others that share the interest of focusing on men as caregivers and violence prevention in Belarus. The idea is based on the seen need to create a long-term solution for local ownership of the work, and enhance the possibilities for development into other areas as well as the involvement of men in the work against men's violence and for gender equality.

Counselling for men in need of support

Intermediate objective 2: *Gender-sensitive counselling service provided for men to enable them to reflect on masculinity in life situations.*

In addition to the preventive work with fathers, as a means to work for gender equality and against violence, there is a need to target and challenge cultural gender norms and masculinities preventing men's personal development and changed behaviour. We see the need for a support system starting with a gender-sensitive counselling service where men can turn to address issues important to them concerning for example relationships, fatherhood, sex and violence. This will provide men with a safe space to raise their concerns and get support in discussing and seeking solutions for gender related issues and the expectations on them in their role as men.

In Belarus there are general services of psychological assistance and counselling for the adult population and children. There is a national toll-free hotline for survivors of domestic violence that receives 90% of phone calls from women that are victims of male violence in families. However, there is no service for men where they can discuss gender related problems and share doubt, ask questions and exchange ideas with gender-sensitivity trained counsellors. The idea of a support line is based on analysis of the public opinion and feedback from specialists, who suggest a specialized service for men run by consultants, covering a broad range of issues such as; dealing with violence and aggression (between men and towards women), parental and paternity rights, psychological counselling, raising children, family relations, etc.

The format of a support line will be a combined service accessible by phone and online, it shall be anonymous, confidential and in daily operation. Based on Gender Perspectives previous experience of running hotlines, where they have seen a frequent request for legal assistance and counselling a team of consultants shall compose of lawyers, psychologists, and peer-counsellors. Such combination would ensure flexibility, consistency and complement ability of the provided service. All consultants, independently of their main profession, will be trained in how to give counselling in a gender-sensitive manner based in a gender power analysis.

The operation of the support line for men will be supported by informational promotion campaigns, awareness raising activities and educational capacity building seminars for external specialists. It will also be promoted nationally via traditional and social media, internet banners, father groups and through other relevant channels.

The process of establishing a support system of this kind will be able to draw on years of experience from Gender Perspectives' work with hot-lines and counselling for women, combined with MÄN's online based support and counselling service for boys and young men. Gender Perspectives' extensive know-how and expertise in working from a gender power analysis is also one of the major reasons why the responsibility to establish this support system lies with them. A reference group with participants from the target group and other relevant actors will be formed to advise throughout the start-up phase. The plan is to devote the first project year to set up the service, including to define a final format and modality, train consultants in how to give gender-sensitive counselling and start up an information campaign. The focus will be to gather best practises from other actors with experience of giving counselling to boys and men. A study-visit to Sweden, to meet with MÄN and other relevant actors, is planned during the start-up phase to serve in this regard.

When the support line is up and running and evaluated we will further investigate the possibility to be able to advice and refer men seeking support for violent behaviour to further assistance in the form of professional treatment.

Young people and gender norms

Intermediate objective 3: *Young women and men targeted by peer-to-peer gender education increase their awareness of gender equality issues and change attitude towards gender roles and norms.*

We consider activities in which we reach boys and girls at an early age crucial to encourage questioning of gender norms, and masculinity norms in particular, as part of the basis for discussions on gender equality and violence prevention. During 2017 we will see the results from piloting a contextualised and translated version of the Macho Factory material (the Swedish material Machofabriken) and, if possible, use this for further development and incorporation in already existing programs.

The planned method is peer-to-peer education as it is recognised as an effective approach when working with youth and demonstrating positive role models, attitudes and behaviour. Gender-balanced groups of youth between the age of 18-20 will be trained as trainers to work with youth in the age range of 15-18 in addressing gender norms and gender equality. The peer-to-peer trainers will work both independently and in cooperation with trainers from the project partner Gender Perspectives, who can serve as mentors, and annual capacity building events will be organised. The peer-to-peer trainers will work in gender-balanced pairs to show a gender equal cooperation in practice. It is expected that each peer-to-peer pair will conduct 10 trainings for youth every year. The peer-to-peer trainers will work as volunteers, but related expenses will be covered by the project, such as renting premises, promotion items, travel expenses, etc. Printed materials will be produced for supporting the trainings, including a manual on how to organise peer-to-peer work on gender related issues.

During the first project year the material and outline of the training of peer-to-peer trainers will be developed, tested, evaluated and finalised. From the second year of the project period a network of trainers and peer-to-peer trainers will be formed with the aim of capacity building and promoting sustainability. But also to conduct workshops in different regions of Belarus for teachers and other interested specialists on how to work with young people when addressing issues related to gender equality.

This work will be supported by and draw lessons from Gender Perspectives long history of working with youth on burning social issues like human trafficking, domestic violence and gender inequality, Klub Lvov's experience from targeting youth during the current project and MÄN's extensive experience from working with young people in Sweden.

To increase the inclusion of the target group young men and women, contacts with the Belarusian youth movement have already been taken and a meeting to discuss possible cooperation will be conducted during the beginning of 2018. We are hoping to be able to enter cooperation with youth organisations to ensure a human rights based approach through direct involvement of the target group in every stage of the planning process, but also to be able to reach youth outside of the formal educational system.

Cooperation with national stakeholders

Intermediate objective 4: *Strategic cooperation and networking at a national level to have a fruitful dialogue on gender equality as a means for development.*

Most of this planned project's activities are aiming at creating safe spaces for individual reflection as a means to contribute to changed behaviour and changed attitudes. This is how we believe changing of structures can be achieved from below and up. As argued in the section *Theory of Change and Methodology* we see the need to address all levels in society to create sustainable structural change, in line with a holistic view. In this project that means also addressing duty-bearers in charge of social service delivery, policy work, health and educational systems etc. And external stakeholders working

with the same or similar issues that can be seen as allies, for example other NGOs or organisations like UNFPA, or actors with the power to reach and effect the public, such as the Belarusian media.

To create awareness and understanding for our work with men and youths a number of roundtable meetings with duty-bearers and external stakeholders will be arranged, with the aim to increase the cooperation and support to the project's activities and its purpose. We will also continue to build upon the good contacts, within several state ministries and relevant stakeholders, that have been established during the current project. The planned project partners will continue to advocate for a Paternity leave policy to be adopted and for a National father day to be established. Both through meetings with relevant duty-bearers, but also through public campaigns and public activities during for example Father's Day. If other strategically relevant opportunities to participate in policy work appears, such as work on the national gender policy etc., participation in these processes may also be included within the framework of this intermediate project objective.

In Belarus, like in many other countries, the media plays a big role in influencing the awareness and attitude of the public. To build on the fact that the project is still perceived as newsworthy and lessons learnt from the current project there are several activities planned to invite journalists and representatives from relevant ministries and authorities to the project's planned public activities, such as the Father's Day celebration, and to media lunches where the project, its activities and objectives will be presented. Furthermore, there will be specific media training for representatives from the project team in order for them to better receive and meet questions from different media actors, so that the information spread gives the fairest view possible. As an additional informational tool reports will be compiled, published and distributed to increase the awareness about the project, its purpose and results.

Another important step to increase that information shared and spread about the project is portraying its activities and purpose in a correct and fair way will be for the project partners to develop and agree on a communication strategy. This process will be prioritised during the first year of the planned project to make sure that the project partners share a common language and message when talking about the project. The same kind of understanding needs to be adopted on how to cooperate and communicate with different stakeholders, to also ensure an external communication that does not put the project nor the partners at risk. Since the topic of gender equality is somewhat sensitive to address in different arenas of the Belarussian context this needs to be done on well-informed decisions. In order to reach this understanding a stakeholder analysis will be a part of the process of developing a communications strategy. Working with risk analysis and risk management is one of the most important parts of management capacity and has therefore its own section below, focusing on the plans to strengthen the partners in this field.

Strategic management of the project

Intermediate objective 5: *Strengthened strategic and operational management capacity including professional partnerships among the partner organisations.*

In order to enable goal fulfilment in the project as a whole, we see the work on this area as a prerequisite. Both the strengthening of the project partner's management capacities and professional partnership will contribute to the success of the rest of the implemented project activities. To assure professional partnership among the partner organisations, Klub Lvov, Gender Perspectives and MÄN, we need to establish efficient structures for cooperation and transparent communication in the project team. This will be prioritised during the first months of the planned project period. The first coordination meetings in 2018 will be dedicated to inclusive and transparent discussions on these topics, taking its starting point in experiences and reflections from the cooperation in the current project. A Memorandum of Understanding will be produced with its content based on the outcomes of this process. To ensure trust and efficiency in the partnership these discussions and team-reflections will be a continues process during the entire project period. Read more about the set-up of the project team under the section *Roles and Responsibilities*.

Another important step will be to make a needs assessment in the beginning of the project to define what kind of capacity building should be prioritised. The needs assessment will function as a baseline to support the evaluation and follow-up of the project partner's capacity building and organisational

development during the rest of the activity period, 2018-2021. An area already identified in need of capacity building is how to work with accountability in practice. This need is identified among both the Swedish and Belarusian partners. The plan is to take part in a training in the MenEngage accountability toolkit that will be arranged and hosted by the partners in project *SAFE* in Russia, during 2018. This will increase the awareness among the project partners of the importance of the project being accountable towards the women's movement and women's rights. In addition, it will help the project partners to define how to work with accountability and what it means in practice.

Taking part in international conferences and workshops for experience exchange on relevant topics will be of continuous importance for the project. This could, for example, be activities within the framework of the MenCare network, focusing on fathers and care giving. All project partners will be responsible for monitoring relevant fields and informing each other when good opportunities for knowledge gathering and sharing are provided. A project partner's participation will follow after a joint project team decision.

7. RISK ANALYSIS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

During 2016 MÄN started an internal process to enhance our efforts to implement a more systematic and structured risk and crisis management. With external support, we entered a process aiming at refining our capacity, procedures and routines for security assessment and risk mitigation, which also included specific analysis and recommendations for the Belarusian context. This process resulted for example in that representatives from both Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives took part in a risk assessment workshop in Sweden during the spring of 2017, within the framework of the current project. The process with external support will continue during the fall of 2017, after submission of this application, and will further strengthen and guide the continuous work with preventing and dealing with risks. See all the details concerning the risk analysis and decisions on strategies for risk management for the planned project in the attached *Risk Matrix, Annex 5*.

For the project team to adhere to the sometimes fast changing political context in Belarus they will address questions relating to risks at each project team meeting and share information, on a daily basis, via different means of communication when needed. Through a continuous dialogue regarding risks and risk analysis, the project team will enhance their understanding and capability to meet current situations, and to decide on responsibilities for the realisation of practical actions, preventive and reactive, if risks do occur.

One of the identified internal risks is inefficient cooperation in the project team and between the partner organisations. We believe that an agreed language and common values among the project partners will reduce the risk of internal divisions and inefficient cooperation, so a continuation of already on-going talks will be prioritized during the first phase of the planned project. We know from experience that the best way to continue to develop this is by spending a lot of time together to further develop the safe atmosphere in the group, which is a necessity for open discussions.

Based on the recommendation from the efficiency audit, carried out by Sida during 2016, an Anti-corruption policy was drafted, adopted and translated into Russian. The Anti-corruption policy has been included in all new partner agreements from 2017, and will be accordingly in this planned project. Implementation of the anti-corruption policy, rules and procedures will be monitored as part of overall risk management and the internal control processes. As part of the internal control, Mango Health Checks¹⁴ will be carried out to assess the partner organisations financial management skills. In general, the partner organisations must commit to sharing information and strengthening collective action to prevent corruption.

¹⁴ <https://www.mango.org.uk/guide/healthcheck>

8. FINANCING

The activity period we apply for is set from January 1st, 2018 to December 31st, 2021. As the current project expires March 31, 2018, the implementation of the planned project's activities is scheduled to start April 1st, 2018. However, there is a wish from the project partners that the formal start date is set to January 1st, so that we can start the registration process in Belarus as soon as possible in early 2018. The process of getting a project approved by the state can take up to 3-5 months, so a formal start on the 1st of January will increase the chance that we can start the implementation as planned in April. The registration process can in a simplified manner be described like this; MÄN will transfer the project funds to Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives and the registration process cannot start until the funds are in their accounts. The next step is that Klub Lvov and Gender Perspectives make a formal request to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to issue the support letters. After such letters are received by both organizations, partners will apply to the Ministry of Economy or to the Humanitarian Department of the President's Administration for project registration. Project application, budget and agreement with MÄN will be submitted in English and Russian for consideration. When the state has formally registered the project the Belarusian project partners are legally allowed to start implementing activities.

We are also applying for the project period to formally run until 31st of May, 2022, in order to create space for the final reporting process following the completion of project activities on the 31st of December, 2021.

As can be seen in the attached budget proposals, a relatively large part of the project's entire budget is planned for use in the first two years of the project. This is largely due to the fact that the intermediate objectives 1, 2 and 3 all need to develop programs, new material, informational campaigns, recruiting staff and volunteers etc. to get the activities and services in motion. When this thorough pre-work is done during the start-up phase and the structures are in place, we do not estimate that the continued work will require the same budget amounts.

The amount requested from Sida is 14 699 018 SEK for four years.

See detailed Project Budget proposal in *Annex 2* for the whole activity period, 2018-2021, and Annual Budget plan for 2018 in *Annex 4*.

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