Marking the World Mental Health Day

Lumnije Demolli is 37 years old and suffers from a mental illness. Lumnije for more than 26 years has been isolated at home. She did not go to school, and she was illiterate. This is due to lack of support from the family as well as insults from the neighbors and neighborhood children. “I came here with my dad. I lived with dad, grandmother and grandfather. All three have died. Now I continue coming to ‘Dëshira’ Club. I’m so glad that I learned reading and writing and now I’m learning tailoring and I started working as a tailor’s assistant. Now through ‘Dëshira’ Club I socialize with students, with people. Before they called me ‘stupid’, I was unable to go out, they did not let me. Now I am very happy to be here with friends and have a nice time”.

Non-governmental organization ‘Dëshira’ Club from Prishtina is a day-care center for the rehabilitation of persons with mental disabilities with about 200 members. The active participation of the members contributes to the identification and referral of other persons with mental health problems, marginalized by society and isolated by their family members. For many people with mental impairment in Kosovo, freedom of movement is quite difficult and this category of people is also “isolated” by the members of their family, due to prejudices coming from society.

‘Dëshira’ Club is providing integration, educational and social programs, including courses on computer use, literacy, employment support and counseling services, etc., to members with mental health impairment. Apart from socialization and rehabilitation, the goal is to make the members become more independent, to engage and integrate into the labor market through job training and self-employment.

Today, ‘Dëshira’ Club marks the World Mental Health Day through advocacy campaign for the rights of persons with mental impairment, contributing to raising public awareness of the needs of this category of people and engaging in a more constructive cooperation between Kosovo institutions and this initiative.

‘Dëshira’ Club is implementing the project “Enhance Participation of Persons with Intellectual Impairments in Employment and Self-Employment” supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, that is funded by the United States Agency for International Development – USAID and implemented by the Advocacy Training & Resources Center - ATRC.