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## Slovenia – accompanying measures to support the most deprived

Caritas Slovenia

### WHY?

Caritas Slovenia has been distributing European food aid since 2006, and since the initial stages has emphasised the importance of complementing food aid with accompanying measures. While the Slovenian Managing Authority has opted to dedicate its resources predominantly to FEAD food distribution, Caritas recognises that the only way to sustainably support an end recipient's transition out of poverty is by offering the necessary support to address the barriers that they face to social inclusion. They thus use the distribution of food aid as an effective springboard to other anti-poverty measures. One of the main goals of the organisation is to support end recipients in such a way that they are able to maintain their dignity. The main target groups (end recipients) represent families and individuals in need - more specifically - single mothers, families with low income where one or both parents are unemployed, people who find themselves in sudden need (like affected by natural disasters, unpaid wages), homeless people, elderly with low pension, refugees, asylum seekers and foreigners with working visas and without job and socially disadvantaged people.

### WHAT?

The organisation offers a range of services. They, for instance, offer a range of counselling services including: support from social workers at Mother's homes and safe houses in case of domestic violence, professional advice on childrearing, home visits for the elderly and the sick and professional help for drug and alcohol addicts. They can also receive legal counselling from volunteer lawyers.

They additionally organise informative lectures and workshops for different target groups. An example of a theme covered in a lecture is: "Women usually cry, men solve problems in bars" and an example of a workshop is: "Do we really need everything that the advertisements encourage us to buy?"

They adjust the services that they offer according to the specific needs of particular target groups. Following the onset of the financial crisis, for instance, they started offering support in financial planning and budgeting. They also offer specific activities for children such as psychosocial support and summer camps.

Notably, Caritas also takes specific steps to help end recipients that seem comfortable being reliant on social welfare aid, to help them become independent and self-sufficient.



‘Man does not live by bread alone’ is an established truth, of which we at Caritas Slovenia have been aware for a long time. Therefore the measures accompanying distribution of the EU food to the most deprived have been the only natural thing for us to do. The first packages of the EU food arrived to Slovenia in 2006 - at that time numerous factories went bankrupt due to the recession and consequently many people lost their jobs. The EU food proves that the EU is not indifferent towards the people in need. I hope and wish that this kind of aid continues to exist until prosperity returns, which is only possible by creating new jobs. A big thank you on behalf of everyone who was through this aid given hope in the goodness of a fellow man!.”

Jožica Ličen, volunteer

## WHO?

The counselling services and workshops are organised by Caritas Slovenia and its network (6 diocesan/regional Caritas, 311 parish/local Caritas and 2 Caritas Institutions).

## HOW?

Caritas volunteers engage with FEAD end recipients when they pick up their food packages and offer a listening ear. This is one of the more difficult parts of the process as end recipients are generally hesitant to open up and share their stories. The conversations gradually increase in length as the volunteers are able to gain the trust of the end recipient. Ultimately, volunteers attempt to make an individual assessment of the end recipient's needs so as to determine which services are most appropriate. The volunteers subsequently direct the FEAD end recipients to appropriate professionals within the Caritas network.

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