

ACF / 107

Organization: Retina Bulgaria Association

Project title: Vision for vision

Project duration: 29 months

Project start date: November 1, 2019

Project completion date: March 31, 2022

The main goal of the project was to raise civic awareness and that of central and local authorities about the state of visual health in Bulgaria and the challenges facing it, to raise awareness of the causes of visual impairment and blindness in our country and the needs of people living with them, the need and opportunities to limit visual impairment and blindness.

We wanted to achieve this through civic activism by conducting research and stimulating informed debate based on it, leading to interaction between different stakeholders and providing an opportunity to build a public-private partnership in order to formulate and propose policies to ensure policies for visual health in Bulgaria.

The achieved results of the project can be summarized as follows:

- with established partnerships between the organizations promoting the project and the organizations of professionals - ophthalmologists, optometrists; with Centers for Rehabilitation and Social Integration of People with Visual impairments in the country; with organizations of the Union of the Blind in Bulgaria; with the National Center for Rehabilitation of the Blind in Plovdiv; with the Technological Council at the SSB; with various representatives of local authorities; with various patient organizations;
- created products of the project, which will have their further development: the digital information platform "Portal Vision" with reference information for people with visual impairments; the data and conclusions from the Report on the State of Visual Health in Bulgaria (published in January 2020); the publications made on the project; the opinions provided by experts and stakeholders; the opinions sent by the Retina Bulgaria Association and the expert team within the framework of public consultations on normative acts and national strategies in the period 2021-2022; the set of recommendations for changes in regulations, strategic documents and programs, standards and practices in ophthalmology, rehabilitation and inclusion of people with visual impairments (published in 2022);

- trained and engaged regional trainers of people with visual impairments, incl. health mediators - working "in the field" with vulnerable groups, whose cooperation and commitment are valuable for future initiatives;
- established partnerships with industry representatives, which supported the implementation of the "Vision for Vision" project and expressed their readiness to support follow-up actions to achieve sustainability of the initiative.