

# Newsletter about Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme No. 2



LITHUANIAN - SWISS  
COOPERATION PROGRAMME

**Social clowns can suppress anxiety and fear of ill children, lighten up everyday environment, help to forget the pain and foster optimism. Paediatricians acknowledge the effectiveness of the clown therapy, while scientists have proven its positive effect by various studies and tests. In our country this branch of art therapy is only beginning to develop, therefore Koturna association, operating in the field of social clowning, received support from the Fund of NGOs supported by the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme to help it implement all of its goals.**

The main principle of social clowning is to communicate individually with a child through the child's fantasy and imagination by using a clown's character. Social clowns regularly visit children at the hospitals, orphanages, other care and fostering institutions, and socially vulnerable environment. This therapy has a specific methodology, which helps to find a common language (not necessarily verbal) and to communicate with socially challenged and isolated children, and children with

## Clown Therapy to Help Ill Children Get Better



psychological problems.

While in the United States and Western Europe social clowning is already counting its fourth decade of existence, in Central and Eastern Europe this internationally acknowledged therapy is applied only for the past few years.

The founders of social clowning in Lithuania – Koturna association – faced a problem of its weak institutional abilities, which aggravated the consolidation and development of social clowning activities in the country. For this reason, the sub-project “Consolidation and Development of Social Clowning” was created in Lithuania aimed at creating conditions for improvement of skills of social clowning and qualification of social clowns, and preparing the measures required for attracting financial sources to support social clowning.

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In order to improve the actors’ qualification in the field of social clowning and to expand their competences, three NGO-funded training cycles with professional social clowns – lecturers from the European countries – were

organised. During these training courses 20 persons acquired the necessary knowledge, i.e. basics of clowning improvisation, acrobatics, magic tricks, integration of singing and music, and puppet theatre elements.

The measures for presentation of social clowning activities to potential sponsors were also prepared: a website about clown therapy and an information video clip were created. The NGOs funded the photos of social clowning activities, creation of advertising stands, purchase of clown noses for fundraising campaigns, as well as design and printing of posters, brochures, etc.

“The project was successfully implemented and we succeeded in achieving all the set goals”, said Indrė Vileitė, the author of the clown therapy idea. “Within a year and a half these and other measures helped to make an attractive introduction of social clowning to potential sponsors on the Internet, in the press and during the meetings and funding events.”

The amount allocated by NGOs for funding this project comprised EUR 57,040, of which the funds contributed by Koturna association – EUR 7,456. The period of implementation of the project – from January 2013 to July 2014.

## Young Firefighters’ Organisation – Quality Activities for the Good of the Youth

**The Lithuanian Young Firefighters’ Union brings together young people interested in firefighting, rescue and the firefighter’s profession, provides knowledge and builds skills. However, limited financial resources and management competences prevented it from drafting proper plans for fundraising, development of services and making better use of the opportunities of the organisation. The assistance was offered by the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.**

The Lithuanian Young Firefighters’ Union (LYFU) exists for more than 15 years and teaches young people the rules of fire safety and conduct in emergency situations, introduces them to primary firefighting measures, firefighting and rescue machinery, and teaches to render first aid. The LYFU also organises preventive public events and campaigns designed to introduce the public, and in particular children and youth, to safe handling of fire, possible hazards and recommended actions in emergency situations.

However, in its activities, the company has faced certain problems: lack of information

and knowledge about the possibilities of the LYFU development, limited competences of the organisation’s leaders, insufficient possibilities to improve managerial and educational skills, lack of methodological and



2006.02.27

the European Commission and the Swiss Confederation signed a Memorandum of Understanding.



2007.12.20

the Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Confederation signed a bilateral Framework Agreement and created the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.



2017.06.14

All project agreements under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme were signed; funds were allocated to Lithuania and must be used by 14/06/17.

# Psychological Help to Children Suffering from Oncological Diseases and Their Families

tangible means (teaching materials, professional firefighting and computer equipment) for work with young firefighters and pupils, etc.

The subproject “Development of Activities of the Lithuanian Young Firefighters and Rescuers” funded by the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme was initiated in pursuit for a more successful development of the firefighting sector in Lithuania, building the abilities of the LYFU members and expanding their activities. Even though the organisation had the opportunities for development of its activities, its limited management competences and lack of finances prevented it from drafting adequate fundraising and service development plans, and ensuring due financial independence.

Since February 2013, the LYFU has successfully improved the qualifications of its members, consolidated the resource and methodological base and secured financial independence. Funding of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation programme allowed the LYFU to purchase professional firefighting and computer equipment, publish 100 copies of manuals for young firefighters, organise trainings for young firefighters and practical trainings for young firefighting leaders, and prepare the strategy for development of services and fundraising.

A total of EUR 31,318 was allocated for the implementation of the sub-project. The LYFU also contributed with its own funds amounting to EUR 3,123. The sub-project “Development of the Activities of the Lithuanian Young Firefighters and Rescuers” was successfully completed in February 2014.



## VADOVAS ONKOLOGINE LIGA SERGANČIO VAIKO TĖVAMS

**Every year, more than 100 children in Lithuania are diagnosed with oncological diseases. The number of patients is growing by 1-2 per cent annually. Children's oncological disease interrupts all aspects of life in their family. It alters not only its lifestyle, but also its emotional stability. Loss of health is stressful both to the young patient and his or her family members, and disturbing their relationship.**

Insufficient attention of the state and the public to a complex treatment of children suffering from oncological diseases and their family members is a problem, which prompted the creation of the sub-project “Development of NGO of the Psychological Consultation, Information and Assistance System in Children's Oncology” funded by the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

In a long run, a child's illness may bring hostility between the child and the family, promote anger, anxiety, guilt, shame, humiliation, vulnerability, depression, despair and dependency. Social environment of the children suffering from oncological diseases and their loved ones, and their ability to function can suddenly change, while the disease and treatment may cause various psychological problems.

The main aim of the successfully implemented sub-project was to create a more advantageous environment of the Support and Charity Foundation “Mamų Unija” (Mothers' Union) and other non-governmental organisations (NGO) operating in the field of oncology, as well as to develop human resources by strengthening NGO cooperation forms and improving the quality of

life of oncology patients – children and their loved ones – by providing specific onco-psychological support.

During the implementation of the sub-project two studies related to the need of communication skills were carried out. The first study aimed at determining the needs of doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, volunteers and society members working in the field of oncology. The second study was focused on the families of the children suffering from oncological diseases and allowed to determine the type of assistance they lack most at all stages of the disease treatment.

The communication skills training was also offered to doctors, nurses, social workers and volunteers. They were taught to communicate with the children suffering from oncological diseases and with their parents in order to provide various support to the families dealing with this disease. A special methodological educational material, earlier unavailable in Lithuania, designed for medical specialists and volunteers working with the children in the field of oncology and palliative care, was prepared. Another methodological information package is focused on the children suffering from oncological diseases and their family members.

The sub-project “Development of NGO of the Psychological Consultation, Information and Assistance System in Children’s Oncology” was implemented by the Support and Charity Foundation “Mamų Unija”. The total amount of EUR 37,651 was allocated for its implementation. The Foundation also offered its own resources in the amount of EUR 3,765. The sub-project “Development of NGO of the Psychological Consultation, Information and Assistance System in Children’s Oncology” was successfully completed in October 2013.

## American Pool – A New Extracurricular Activity for Pupils

**The sub-project “Development of the Lithuanian Pool Federation by Organising Extracurricular Activities for Pupils and Fostering Engagement in Cue Sports” was aimed at attracting more young people to play American billiards, which is also referred to as “pool”. The initiative was supported by the NGO funds under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Last year, the Lithuanian Pool Federation had a chance to introduce this branch of sports as an extracurricular activity in five selected schools of the country.**

The Lithuanian Pool Federation (LPF) was founded five years ago, but at that time this branch of sports or the Federation were not very popular. The core problems were a lack of funding allocated to the LPF and a shortage of qualified coaches, as well as children and the youth willing to play the sport. Therefore, one of the main objectives was to create opportunities for expanding the activities of the Lithuanian Pool Federation in schools. A feasibility study was carried out, which clearly demonstrated that pool is interesting to both pupils and their parents.

“Study data shows that children are particularly interested in this new sport. Experience of neighbouring countries, especially Sweden, leaves no doubt that pool in schools has great potential,” said Tomas Brikmanis, President of the Lithuanian Pool Federation. “Sweden alone has more than 4,500 schools and youth



centres with at least one pool table available and organises annual state championships for pupils in which the teams from 400 different schools participate. This experience makes us believe that over the time with the help of necessary resources we will also be able to achieve outstanding results.”

Using the funds from the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme the Lithuanian Pool Federation acquired training accessories that comprised 10 sets of billiard equipment and placed them in five schools. It also prepared a teaching methodology and a learning plan for beginners. The initiatives for improving qualifications and pedagogical preparation of pool

coaches and training them were organised for specialists who will teach pupils. Finally, a two-day pool championship was organised for pupils that attracted more than 100 participants.

Using the funds from the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme the Lithuanian Pool Federation acquired training accessories that comprised 10 sets of billiard equipment and placed them in five schools.

“Only a strategic direction can help achieve the desired results in the future,” said Mr. Brikmanis. “The implementation of the project has yielded long-term benefits.”

A total amount of EUR 37,407 was allocated to the implementation of the sub-project “Development of the Lithuanian Pool Federation by Organising Extracurricular Activities for Pupils and Fostering Engagement in Cue Sports”, which took place from June 2013 to December 2014. The LPF’s leaves pool equipment in five Lithuanian schools, and teachers who received pool-instructor certificates and coacher licences continue to advertise the sport branch as an extracurricular activity.

# Conditions for Pregnant and Parturient Women to Improve at Vilnius Maternity Hospital

For a long time Vilnius Maternity Hospital was unable to offer the highest quality of services to its female patients: the piping system and water and electricity supply conditions in the building were causing numerous problems, in addition to the lack of the necessary medical equipment. The funds of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme will soon ensure a cosy atmosphere conforming to the highest standards offered to patients and newborns at Vilnius Maternity Hospital.

PI Vilnius Maternity Hospital is currently implementing the project “Introduction of Energy Efficient Technologies at PI Vilnius Maternity Hospital Providing Perinatal and Neonatal Care Services” also receives support from the programme “Improvement of Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Services in Lithuania”.

A total of EUR 1,190,859.59 (with additional activities – EUR 1,320,710.73) was allocated for the implementation of the project on the introduction of energy-efficient technologies. Modern heating and ventilation systems were already installed at the maternity ward, and the heating unit was renovated. At the moment, old fluorescent lamps are replaced with modern energy-efficient LED lamps at the expense of the project funds.

It is expected to modernise the electricity supply system, renew the heating units, outdoor hot water supply system and the indoor heating system, and to perform renovation of the ventilation system at Vilnius Maternity Hospital before September 2016. Services of technical design, technical maintenance and other engineering services will be also offered, the



Monika Gete photography

doors of the facilities at the Maternity Ward, and hot and cold water, circulation and fire water supply mains will be replaced for the amount of EUR 109,783.

In 2013-2014, as provided by the programme “Improvement of Perinatal and Neonatal Care Services in Lithuania”, Vilnius Maternity Hospital acquired medical equipment for EUR 583,847: a universal delivery bed, microscope, vital signs monitor for adults, portable ultrasound machine with neonatal sensors, anaesthesia machine for adults, neonatal warming and resuscitation tables, etc. All these devices are particularly necessary for the improvement of health care services.

“Most of the aforementioned devices have already been delivered. The project funds

allowed to receive the equipment we needed most, and which we were forced to borrow, such as oxygen tanks”, said Halina Marija Markevičienė, Deputy Manager for Administration and Maintenance of Vilnius Maternity Hospital. “Moreover, necessary repairs were made, hot and cold water, circulation and fire water supply mains of the obstetrics and gynaecology block were renovated”.

At the moment, the obstetrics and gynaecology block, and the neonatal department have been renovated from the very foundations all the way up to the roof. Once all the planned activities are implemented, the work of the medical workers will be facilitated, while the patients of Vilnius Maternity Hospital will receive high-quality services due to new medical technologies.

## The Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme funds five areas:



**Improving perinatal and neonatal healthcare**

24 hospitals



**Introduction of energy efficient technologies in to hospitals, including the modernisation of heating, water-supply, ventilation and air conditioning systems**

21 hospitals



**Fundamental research development**

11 scientific projects and a Scholarship fund



**Supporting the activities of Lithuanian NGOs by strengthening community organisations and their cooperation with local authorities**

97 subprojects

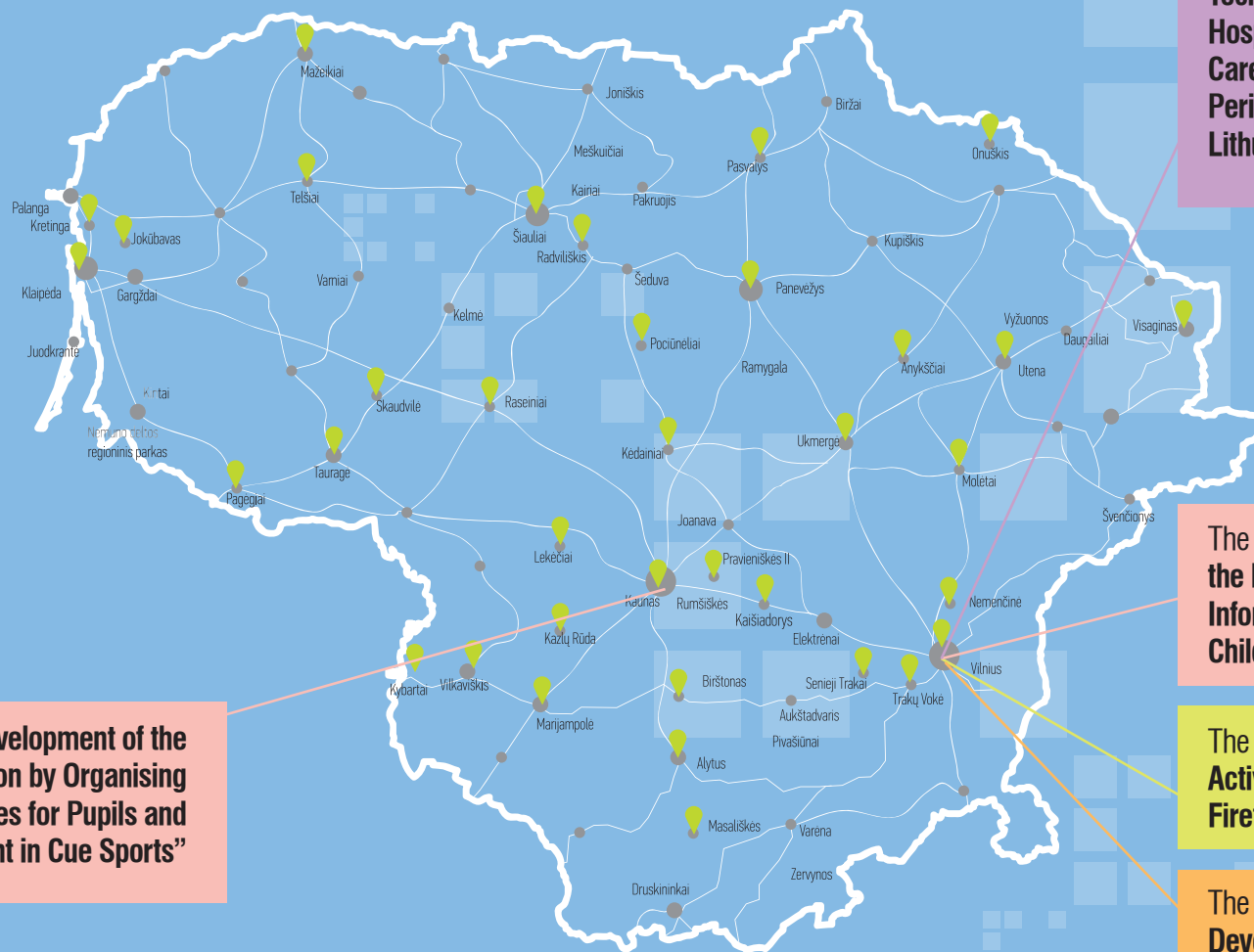


**Modernisation of the judicial system**

1 project

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# Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme project map



Projects: **“Introduction of Energy Efficient Technologies at PI Vilnius Maternity Hospital Providing Perinatal and Neonatal Care Services”** and **“Improvement of Perinatal and Neonatal Care Services in Lithuania”**

The sub-project **“Development of NGO of the Psychological Consultation, Information and Assistance System in Children’s Oncology”**

The sub-project **“Development of the Activities of the Lithuanian Young Firefighters and Rescuers”**

The sub-project **“Consolidation and Development of Social Clowning”**

The sub-project **“Development of the Lithuanian Pool Federation by Organising Extracurricular Activities for Pupils and Fostering Engagement in Cue Sports”**



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Swiss contribution - for real and targeted works