**Sustainability Plan**

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| Project title | **Legal clinics in service of vulnerable groups: enhancing the employability of law students through practical education**  |
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Planning of the future development of activities after the end of the period of eligibility of the ENEMLOS project includes:

* Financial sustainability;
* Organizational sustainability;
* Operational sustainability;
* Multiplication of the project results.

**A. Financial sustainability**

The most important question regarding the sustainability of the project is the financial strategy after the termination of the project. Therefore, it implies achieving sustainability thru alternative financing methods. The planned financing strategy implies:

First, the legal clinics be organized thru the center for legal clinics. The Center shall be recognized as a kind of specific, separate organizational unit within the University of Montenegro. This means that the Center be allocated funds from the University budget;

 Second, financial funds from the budget of the Faculty of Law UoM. These funds will be used to establish the Center for legal clinics in the first place, as well as for other needs in the future;

Further, possible financial sources also are: providers of national funds (the Ministry of education and science), national grants, funds from the local government;

Also, financial sustainability may be supported thru the volunteer work;

Finally, when it comes to financial sustainability the main idea is that the Center for legal clinics be recognized as a free legal aid provider recognized by the Law on free legal aid, which imply state budget financing.

Namely, the Law on free legal aid provides that the authority in charge of granting legal aid is the basic court, i. e. the president of the basic court, while the free legal aid is provided by:

- attorneys from the list of the Bar Association of Montenegro

- the Service for free legal aid within the basic court (legal consulting only).

However, Art. 5 of the Law prescribes that achieving free legal assistance under the Law does not restrict achieving legal assistance from services, NGOs and other organizations established in accordance with law.

Therefore, the Law on free legal aid does not mention law schools nor legal clinics within the law schools as potential authority that may grant legal assistance, however achieving free legal aid under the Law does not restrict achieving legal assistance from other organizations.

Achieving this goal would mean amending the Law and in that case financing will imply funds from the state budget.

**B. Operational sustainability**

Operational sustainability be achieved thru strengthening of the non-academic partners network and cooperation with partners outside of the primary established circle of partnerships. Therefore, we will work on involving as many relevant non-academic partners as possible, more precisely legal professionals who can provide adequate assistance to students in work of the clinics as well as create new opportunities to connect students with the labor market and potential employers after graduation.

It is necessary to expand two groups of non-academic partners in order to sustain the project:

**a.** Associated partners – UNHCR already, etc;

**b.** Former legal clinics students i.e. alumni.

**a.** **New partnerships will help in taking mission ahead**.

* Relevant organizations are interested in the project activities. UNHCR sees an opportunity to get involved since they will provide assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. These vulnerable groups will be connected to services offered through the legal clinics. From the other side, UNHCR experiences could be shared with us, our academic and non-academic partners.
* The Council of Europe is committed to protect LGBT people from discrimination, bearing in mind the negative attitude of our community towards this marginalized group. There is a space for the Faculty of Law to be involved in finding mechanisms to combat discrimination against LGBT population. In this direction, cooperation will be established with the Council of Europe Office in Podgorica as an associated partner.
* When it comes to strengthen the role of public executors in Montenegro relevant persons see opportunity to get involved and benefit from experience gained in legal clinics development.

Institute for Social Research, with UNICEF support, launched activities in facilitating access to justice for children. Our Project Team Members are involved in making strategy for child friendly justice. Hence, further cooperation with UNICEF Office in Montenegro and Institute for Social Research is foreseen.

Local communities are going to be involved to ensure equitable access to project benefits, with a particular emphasis on the protecting the most vulnerable. This project will enable vulnerable groups to exercise their rights through legal aid that can be provided by students at the legal clinic. The services will be offered pro bono and in general interests on behalf of the interested clients.

Additionally, professors, assistants and other associates will have the opportunity to increase and develop their professional knowledge of the practices they will develop with students and other actors at the legal clinic and abroad.

**b.** **Creation and maintenance of the alumni association**.

In this way, not only students beginners be involved but also students mentors who already have experience; not only teachers and non-academic mentors, but also graduated clinical students, ie. alumni. This ensures sustainability because students who gain experience through e.g. year of work in the clinics become mentors to new students (along with academic and non-academic educators), who may also become mentors after gaining the experience.

**C. Organizational sustainability**

The legal clinics are part of the curricula. According to the Law on Higher Education of Montenegro, practical teaching must be part of whole student workload at least in 25%. Hence, clinical setting will be part of educational platform of the Faculty of Law. As labour market research show, there is an increased need for student education aimed at acquiring practical knowledge. This means that the importance of practical teaching will be increasing and thus the use of clinical method developed through the project. Therefore the legal clinics represent the best way to meet that need prescribed by the Law on Higher Education. Since the 25% of teaching in the form of practical teaching is the legal obligation, it guarantees the commitment to the sustainability of the legal clinics.

Since a center for legal clinics be established, which will be located within the Faculty of Law but still isolated enough to ensure the efficiency of the work and will have the status of an organizational unit of the University, there will be a permanent institutional and organizational framework in which generations of students will acquire practical knowledge. Therefore, through the establishment of the Center, which will be financed from the faculty budget, the issue of space for the work of legal clinics and the reception of clients will be permanently resolved, which ensures their work for many years.

Educators who have been trained through the project and gained experience in the work of clinics and mentoring students will later transfer their experiences and knowledge to new educators who will be involved in the work of clinics.

Also, students who are former clinicians and who have thus gained experience, can continue to work in clinics as student mentors to newly enrolled students. Also, students who graduated and were involved in clinics can join as educators. On the other hand, new students will, through the promotion of clinics and all the benefits they receive through working in clinics in terms of connecting with employers and gaining the necessary practical knowledge, be constantly motivated to get involved. Constant promotion of the work of clinics will not be only at the Faculty level, that is towards the students, but towards the wider community and certainly towards members of vulnerable groups who are the primary beneficiaries of the clinics.

The necessary infrastructure will be provided through the project funds for a long period of the clinics operation, so in this sence sustainability could only mean smaller investments.

The center for legal clinics should not only be spatially separated from the Faculty, but also its activities and work should be performed independently. This means that the center will work constantly, so even when the Faculty is not working, that is when there are no classes. In that sence, in order to ensure organizational sustainability special attention will be paid to:

* ensure action within deadlines and under pressure;
* on-call time and working hours;
* working time: throughout the year (when there are no classes - live within the Center, as well as by phone, email etc.).

**D. Multiplication of the project results**

Sustainability and multiplication of the project results mean use and exploitation of results in the long term. Therefore, the project results shall be used and exploited continuously.

First of all, the existing teaching practice will be modernized, especially in practical legal disciplines; the Law on Higher Education of Montenegro prescribes that the study program have to contain practical teaching. That practical teaching is, at least, 25% of students total workload. Legal clinical education is a longstanding method that ensure the implementation of these rules. Additionally, teaching on professional ethical behavior as a part of clinical education will affect enhancing students ethical behavior.

Legal clinics will provide students with hands-on legal experience and offer free legal advice to a wide range of clients. Students are trained and supervised by experienced educators to deliver legal services efficiently and to the highest professional standards. This taste of client casework gives students an opportunity to put their legal skills into practice and to enhance their employability, whilst making a positive contribution to their community and to wider society.

The project targets mainly students, in order to increase their level of practice, which then will help them in the process of employment by developing professional activity during the studies in the legal clinic. The legal clinics enable the development of direct relationships with different citizens, businesses or clients, which makes students feel the most interesting moments that they are expecting after completing their studies. This affects the advancement and further development of their practical legal skills meaning that they will build their knowledge based on market demands. This means that employers will also be able to identify their future employees. Students participating in the legal clinic have a higher opportunity than their colleagues to engage in employment even during their studies and after their completion.

Clinical educational concept will affect student mobilization in policy making. Student will have opportunity to participate in public hearings on legal acts affecting different parts of social life. Drafting legal opinions in this part will make students closer to public problems and students will have an opportunity to develop and improve civil responsibility.

The mobility of staff and students will be improved trough links made during project duration.

Non-academic partners will benefit from establishment of new mechanism of cooperation, interlinking of the higher education institutions and the labour market. From the other side, non-academic partners involved in the clinics could give feedback to academic partners on the curricula and learning outcomes. That is very useful for the curriculum development and preparation for the Faculty accreditation and reaccreditation.

Literature aquired trough the project can be used in future. New books will enable modernization and upgrading of the library.

The following sustainable outcomes shall be multiplied:

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| **Sustainable outcomes*** students educated for solving of practical legal problems.
* students and employers linked.
* teachers trained for the realisation of the clinics .
* other clinics educators trained for the realisation of the clinics
* raising awarness for legal professionals in Montenegro – judges, prosecutors, lawyers, judicial officers, mediators – about strong need for their involvement in practical legal education.
* enhancing data on employability.
* legal assistance to vulnerable groups.
* enhaning chances of members of vulnerable groups in their fight regarding their infringed rights and freedoms.
* raising awareness of the Montenegrin society at large for the need of providing services to vulnerable groups.
 | **Strategy to ensure sustainability of the outomes*** strenghtening the network of non-academic partners who shall educate students in solving practical legal problems; creation and maintenance o an alumni assotiation; promotional materials, events, student info days, work of the legal clinics;
* Signing the MmoUs and contracts with organisations of legal professionals;
* Literature, facilities, equipement, IT infrastructure;
* Media campagne, round tables, conferences, promotional materials, dissemination events
* Promoting legal clinics as the main leverage of the state law school education as a comparative advantage to the other law schools in the country;
* Work of the legal clinics at the Faculty of Law UoM;
* Work of the legal clinics at the Faculty of Law UoM;
* Promotional materials, dissemination events, round tables etc.
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To sum up, the center for legal clinics will be constant institutional support for the legal clinics. The Faculty of Law will put on disposition space for clinics. Space is located in a special part of the Faculty building. In this way, privacy is provided to clients and students involved. It is maybe also important to note that the place is located between the Basic Court in Podgorica, the Prosecutor' s Office and the police administration.

Further, the project enables the development of teaching methodology and creates a new atmosphere at the Faculty which will bring higher efficiency to target groups.

Academic staff of the UOM Faculty of Law will not only further improve their teaching skills but also to stay in touch with the most recent developments in their respective fields of law. It will keep key staff engaged as well as motivated and loyal to the goals of the project.

The skills and knowledge gained by the present educators will be transferable and also replicable in order to produce new educators.

Students will develop direct relations with different citizens, employers labor market. They will advance so after completing their studies they could be involved in work of the clinics in different roles, depending of their future employment and professional orientation. Alumni are important organizational part having in mind that graduated law students will made important basis for the most important institutions in the state.