

STRATEGIC PLAN

for the period from 2026. to 2036.

**Association of Parents of Children with
Disabilities – Vukovar Butterflies**

info@vukovarski-leptirici.hr



PUBLISHER:

Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities – Vukovar
Butterflies

PREPARED BY:

The Association's expert team: Viktorija Matin, Željka Toth and
Andreja Mandić

The preparation of this Strategic plan is the result of joint work by experts, the Association's Presidency and parents, as well as the result of the experiences through which the Association has grown and developed. We hope that we have set realistic goals and that we will achieve them together.

“Every child deserves the opportunity to grow, learn and develop surrounded by support, understanding and acceptance. Young people with developmental difficulties and people with disabilities deserve the opportunity to live a fulfilled, active and dignified life. Our task is to build a community in which differences become a strength and supports a resource available to everyone. This Strategic plan paves the way towards a society in which every person, regardless of challenges or difficulties, has the opportunity to reach their full potential – with professional support, solidarity and trust that we build day by day.”

Viktorija Matin

Željka Toth

Andreja Mandić

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Purpose and importance of the strategic plan
- 1.2. The Association's mission and vision
- 1.3. Core values
- 1.4. Legal and social framework of operation

2. Current situation analysis

- 2.1. Brief overview of the Association and programmes implemented to date
- 2.2. Needs analysis of beneficiaries (children, young people, adults and families)
- 2.3. SWOT analysis
- 2.4. External factors (legal framework, demographic trends, partnerships)

3. Strategic goals (2025–2030)

- 3.1. Improving the quality of services for children with developmental difficulties
- 3.2. Development and expansion of services for young people
- 3.3. Empowering adults with disabilities through different models of day care
- 3.4. Obtaining the status of an integrative and sheltered workshop
- 3.5. Strengthening the Association's capacities (expert team, premises, equipment)
- 3.6. Strengthening cooperation with the local community, institutions and partners
- 3.7. Ensuring financial sustainability

4. Programme areas and activities

- 4.1. Early intervention and psychosocial support for children up to 18 years of age

- 4.2. Half-day care and sports, educational, creative and recreational activities
- 4.3. Youth work (counselling, workshops, socialisation programmes, volunteering)
- 4.4. Services for adults with disabilities
 - 4.4.1. Half-day care
 - 4.4.2. Full-day care
 - 4.4.3. Respite care
 - 4.4.4. Temporary accommodation
- 4.5. Development of an integrative/sheltered workshop and employment
- 4.6. Family support (education, counselling, parent groups)

5. Resources and capacities

- 5.1. Human resources
- 5.2. Facilities and material resources
- 5.3. Technological resources
- 5.4. Investment needs

6. Monitoring and evaluation plan

- 6.1. Success indicators (outputs and outcomes)
- 6.2. Data collection methods
- 6.3. Annual progress review
- 6.4. Evaluation of the plan at the end of the five-year period

7. Financial framework

- 7.1. Estimated required funds
- 7.2. Funding sources
- 7.3. Sustainability plan

8. Conclusion

Summary of the vision and expected positive effects on beneficiaries and the community.

1.INTRODUCTION

Draft for a New Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan of the Association of Parents of Children with Developmental Difficulties – Vukovar Butterflies (hereinafter: the Association) was developed through a collaborative process involving experts in early intervention, psychosocial support and rehabilitation, the Association’s employees and external associates, parents who are active members of the Association, as well as project leaders who have contributed to the organisation’s development and growth over the past years.

The strategic planning process was carried out in two complementary parts. The first part included a detailed analysis of the environment and the Association’s existing human, material and financial capacities. At this stage, a broad working group participated, consisting of the expert team, employees, representatives of the governing body, active members and external associates.

The second part focused on collecting and analysing feedback and proposals from other relevant stakeholders to make the final Strategic Plan as realistic, feasible and aligned as possible with the needs of beneficiaries, partners and the community. In reflecting on the Association’s further development, special attention was given to achievements to date, current social and legislative developments, and key stakeholders—partners, associates, institutions and beneficiaries—who will play an important role in partnership and programme activities in the next five-year period.

The Association prepared this Strategic Plan taking into account the development priorities of the Republic of Croatia and the relevant European framework, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030, the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as national documents related to social policy, education, deinstitutionalisation and the development of social services. These documents highlight the importance of equal participation of persons with disabilities in society, strengthening their rights, ensuring accessibility of systems and services, and empowering families through timely and high-quality support.

Particular attention is focused on support for parenting and for families of children with developmental difficulties. Families face numerous challenges and needs—emotional, logistical, material and psychosocial—and it is therefore crucial to ensure a support system that enables a better quality of life for the entire family, starting from the moment they first face a diagnosis and onwards.

Through its programmes, the Association makes a significant contribution to the development of complementary and alternative social services aimed at children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities. Due to the continuous growth in the number of beneficiaries and the wide scope of activities delivered, the need has emerged for clearer profiling, improvement and standardisation of services to ensure long-term quality and sustainability.

The Strategic Plan responds to challenges in the provision of early intervention services, psychosocial support, half-day and full-day care for children, young people and adults with disabilities, respite care services, temporary accommodation, and programmes focused on integration, inclusion and employment within the framework of a future integrative/sheltered workshop. The document lays the foundations for stable and high-quality further development of the Association and defines the direction of action for the next five years, in line with the needs of beneficiaries, the local community and national priorities.

1.1. Purpose and Importance of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is the key document guiding the Association's development in the next five-year period. Its purpose is to define clear priorities, goals and activities that will enable further improvement of services for children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities, and to empower their families. The document connects the Association's vision and mission with concrete, feasible steps to ensure long-term sustainability, expertise and quality of work.

The Strategic Plan is important for several key reasons:

- *Development and improvement of services* – enables targeted and planned development of existing and new social services, particularly early intervention, psychosocial support, half-day and full-day care, activities for children and young people, and programmes for adults with disabilities.
- *Ensuring quality and standardisation* – defines work standards, needs for professional staff, education and the development of employees' competencies, enabling consistent and high-quality implementation of all activities.
- *Efficient resource management* – supports rational planning and use of financial, human and material resources and anticipates future needs, including infrastructure, equipment and premises capacity.
- *Transparency and accountability* – strengthen trust among beneficiaries, partners, donors and institutions by clearly presenting the development direction, responsibilities of activity holders and expected results.
- *Strengthening cooperation and partnerships* – serves as a tool for developing cooperation with the local community, institutions, civil society organisations, local and regional authorities, and international partners.
- *Ensuring financial sustainability* – enables timely preparation for calls, funds and financing programmes at local, national and European level.

- *Alignment with European and national strategic documents* – ensures that the Association’s programme activities and plans follow the guidelines and objectives defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Development Strategy and other relevant documents.

The Strategic Plan is therefore not only a management document, but also a tool that enables comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive operation of the Association in line with the needs of beneficiaries and the community. It defines a long-term development direction, sets clear foundations for growth and innovation, and ensures stability and quality of work in the years ahead.

1.2. Mission and Vision

The mission of the Vukovar Butterflies Association is to provide high-quality, timely and comprehensive support to children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities and their families, with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities, respect for human rights and full inclusion in the community. The Association operates through the development and implementation of early intervention services, psychosocial support, educational, rehabilitation and social programmes, as well as organised forms of care, placing the dignity, potential and individual needs of each beneficiary at the centre of its work.

Special emphasis is placed on empowering families, building an inclusive environment and promoting social solidarity. Guided by the motto “Respect everyone’s rights and we will change the world together!”, the Association advocates a culture of rights, equality and diversity and actively contributes to the development of a fairer and more inclusive society.

The vision of the Vukovar Butterflies Association is a society in which every child, young person and adult with disabilities has equal opportunities for development, learning, work and active participation in the community, without barriers, discrimination or exclusion. The Association strives to be recognised as a competent, sustainable and innovative organisation that continuously develops high-quality social services, contributes to positive change in the local and wider community, and acts as a strong advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and their families.

The vision includes developing a support network that enables independence, a dignified life and full participation of beneficiaries in all aspects of social life. By respecting everyone’s rights and encouraging understanding, solidarity and cooperation, the Association believes that it is possible to change the world and is guided by the motto: “Be the change you wish to see!”

1.3. Core Values

The core values of the Association represent the foundation of its work, decision-making and relationships with beneficiaries, families, employees, partners and the wider community. They guide the development of programmes and services and ensure consistency in implementing the mission and vision.

- *Respect for human rights and equal opportunities* – the Association promotes and protects the rights of children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities, advocating equality, non-discrimination and full participation in society. Respect for rights is the basis of all activities, in line with the motto “Respect everyone’s rights and we will change the world together!”
- *Dignity and an individual approach* – each beneficiary is viewed as a unique person with their own needs, potential and life circumstances. The Association respects everyone’s dignity and ensures an individualised approach to support and service provision.
- *Inclusion and social participation* – the Association actively contributes to creating an inclusive society that embraces diversity and removes barriers to participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of life—education, work, leisure time and social activities.
- *Family support and partnership* – the family is recognised as a key pillar in the development and well-being of children, young people and adults with disabilities. The Association works in partnership with parents and family members, providing professional, emotional and counselling support.
- *Expertise, responsibility and quality* – the Association strives for a high level of professional expertise, continuous staff education and the application of modern approaches in early intervention, rehabilitation and social services. Accountability to beneficiaries, donors and the community is the basis for quality and transparent work.
- *Cooperation and togetherness* – the Association nurtures cooperation with institutions, civil society organisations, the local community and other relevant stakeholders, believing that lasting change is achieved through joint action and mutual trust.
- *Sustainability and development* – the Association advocates long-term sustainability of its programmes and organisational capacities through responsible resource management, development planning and continuous service improvement in line with the needs of beneficiaries and the community.

1.4. Legal and Social Framework of Operation

The Association’s work is based on the applicable legislative framework of the Republic of Croatia, international documents on the protection of human rights, and strategic guidelines of the European Union promoting social inclusion, equality and respect for the rights of children and persons with disabilities.

International and European framework

The Association aligns its work with the principles and obligations arising from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention emphasises the right of persons with disabilities to equal participation in society, access to services, independence, dignity and inclusion in the community, along with the obligation of states and society to remove barriers and provide the necessary support.

At European Union level, the Association's work is aligned with the goals of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030, the European Pillar of Social Rights, and broader EU policies on social inclusion, employment and deinstitutionalisation. These documents emphasise the development of accessible, high-quality, community-based social services, support for families and strengthening independent living for persons with disabilities.

National framework of the Republic of Croatia

At national level, the Association operates in line with relevant Croatian laws and strategic documents, including regulations in the fields of social welfare, education, healthcare, employment and civil society development. Particular emphasis is placed on implementing national policies aimed at equalising opportunities for persons with disabilities, developing community-based social services, and strengthening support for children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities and their families.

The Association's Strategic Plan is also aligned with the development goals defined in the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia up to 2030, which highlights social inclusion, service accessibility, reducing inequalities and strengthening civil society organisations' capacities.

Social context of operation

The Association operates in a social context where challenges remain regarding the availability, continuity and diversity of social services for children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities and their families. The lack of early intervention services, limited premises and capacity for organised forms of care, the need for respite care and temporary accommodation services, and the need for greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in work and community life are key areas addressed by the Association through its programmes.

In this context, the Vukovar Butterflies Association plays an important role in developing complementary and innovative social services, raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, and creating a more inclusive and sensitive local community. Through its work, the Association contributes to the implementation of

public policies at local and national level, acting as a bridge between beneficiaries, families, institutions and the community.

2. CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

The current situation analysis describes the Association's work to date, existing services and programmes, project activities, capacities, developmental changes and the need for further improvement throughout the next strategic period.

2.1. Brief Overview of the Association and Programmes Implemented to Date

The Association of Parents of Children with Developmental Difficulties – Vukovar Butterflies was founded in 2011. with the aim of providing support to children with developmental difficulties and their families, and promoting equal inclusion in all aspects of social life. The Association operates as a voluntary, non-governmental and non-profit organisation active in Vukovar, Vukovar-Srijem County and neighbouring counties. Through its activities, it seeks to improve the quality of life of children with developmental difficulties, young persons with disabilities and their families, and to influence the development of social programmes and public policies. The Association actively encourages cooperation with parents, professionals, institutions and other organisations, informs the public about the specific challenges faced by persons with disabilities, and contributes to building an inclusive social culture through various educational and social activities.

The Association is highly active in preventing and combating discrimination based on health, educational and social status. To this end, numerous protests, round tables and meetings have been organised with all relevant stakeholders, particularly with the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities and the Ombudsperson for Children. Through our engagement, we have contributed to changes in public policies and to improvements in the rights of children with developmental difficulties, and we have influenced broader public awareness of these issues through numerous media appearances. From its establishment to the present day, the Association has participated in a range of advocacy activities aimed at improving the position of children with developmental difficulties in the community, addressing local authorities, competent ministries and the Government of the Republic of Croatia. This resulted in the recognition of the Association as a social service provider and the signing of a contract with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy.

The Association implements a wide range of programmes and services aimed at children, young people and adults with disabilities, through its own capacities and project funding.

A. Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation Programmes

The Association provides continuous rehabilitation services, including psychological support, neurofeedback training, sensory integration, daily living skills training,

speech and language therapy, kinesiotherapy, sports and recreational activities, and half-day care. In addition, various workshops, playgroups and other activities are organised to encourage socialisation, development and relief for families.

B. Diagnostic Assessments

The Association conducts diagnostic assessments to determine the developmental, functional and communication needs of children with developmental difficulties. Based on assessment results, individualised support and rehabilitation programmes are planned and social rights and entitlements are accessed.

C. Project Activities

The Association implements and participates in numerous projects aimed at developing social, rehabilitation, inclusive and educational services for children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities. Project activities serve as a foundation for developing high-quality programmes, improving professional practice, empowering families and expanding opportunities for social inclusion.

1. *Growing, Playing and Learning Together* – Half-day Care Programme for Children in Vukovar – a three-year programme aimed at providing structured daily activities through half-day care for children with developmental difficulties, encouraging their development, socialisation and inclusion in the community, as well as sports activities in Vukovar and Ilok.
2. *A Short Break – A Big Difference!* – an innovative social service developing respite care through day, half-day and overnight stays, as well as in-home support, with the aim of relieving parent caregivers and providing a stimulating environment for children and persons with disabilities.
3. *STEM Without Barriers* – a project co-financed by the European Social Fund Plus that brings science and technology closer to children with developmental difficulties through STEM workshops, assistive technology and encouragement of interest in STEM fields.
4. *Special, Just Like You!* – a project funded through the European Solidarity Corps, aimed at promoting social inclusion and active participation of children with developmental difficulties in the community.
5. *Growing, Playing and Learning Together with the Tomatis Method* – a project enabling the implementation of the Tomatis Method, a specialised auditory training programme supporting the development of cognitive, language, motor and social abilities in children with developmental difficulties.
6. *Growing and Creating Together!* – a local project implemented in cooperation with the Town of Ilok, aimed at providing additional development, socialisation and support programmes for children with developmental difficulties.
7. *Playroom* – a project providing daily playroom services in the Association's premises for preschool and school-age children, including children from foster

families and from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The project supports physical, intellectual and social development through structured play and activities.

8. *Support from the City of Vukovar* – direct financial support from municipal government enabling stable implementation of the Association’s programme activities.
9. *#stepTogether – Young People in the Community, Not on the Margins!* – aimed at including young persons with disabilities through the development of social activities and encouraging their active participation in community life.
10. *Parenting Isn’t Easy – Support Is Always Needed!* – a parent support programme through education, support groups and psychological support.
11. *What Can I Do with Sport!* – an initiative using sport to encourage physical development and socialisation of children with developmental difficulties.
12. *Social Centre IN* – a project aimed at providing cultural, creative and social activities for children and adults with disabilities to encourage social participation and community engagement, and many other projects.

Impact of project activities

expansion and improvement of existing rehabilitation and social services
 tailoring support to the individual needs of children and adults
 a wider range of educational, creative and developmental content
 empowerment of families and relief for parent caregivers
 encouragement of social inclusion and active participation in the community
 development of competencies, skills and opportunities for independent living for beneficiaries.

2.2. Needs Analysis of Beneficiaries (Children, Young People, Adults and Families)

The needs analysis is based on the Association’s long-standing work with children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities and their families. It considers the experience of the expert team, feedback from parents and beneficiaries, results of diagnostic assessments, as well as insight into the availability and gaps of services in the local and regional community.

Needs of children with developmental difficulties

Children with developmental difficulties require timely, continuous and individualised support that begins as early as possible and is adapted to the child’s developmental stages. Key identified needs include:

- early intervention and rehabilitation services
- regular diagnostic and developmental assessments to monitor progress and adjust programmes
- structured half-day care that encourages socialisation, skill development and independence

- participation in sports, creative, educational and recreational activities adapted to individual abilities
- support for inclusion in the education system and daily activities in the community
- a safe and stimulating environment that respects each child's individual needs and pace of development

Needs of young persons with disabilities

Young persons with disabilities face additional challenges during the transition from childhood to adulthood, particularly in education, employment and social inclusion.

Their needs include:

- continued professional and psychosocial support after completing primary education
- development of social, communication and life skills
- programmes focused on empowerment, self-confidence and active community participation
- opportunities to take part in work and production activities, including work integration and vocational training
- structured daily activities and organised day care that prevent social isolation
- support in decision-making and future planning

Needs of adults with disabilities

Adults with disabilities often face a lack of accessible and tailored social services in the community. Identified needs include:

- organised half-day and full-day care services
- respite care and temporary accommodation services, especially for persons living with families
- activities aimed at maintaining and developing functional abilities
- social inclusion programmes, companionship and active leisure time
- opportunities for work activation and employment through integrative and sheltered workshops
- support in accessing rights and the social welfare system

Needs of families and parents/caregivers

Families of children and persons with disabilities face emotional, organisational and financial burdens. Their needs include:

- timely information and counselling from the moment they first face the disability
- psychosocial support and support groups
- education about developmental difficulties, rights and available services
- relief through respite care services and organised day care models
- support in balancing family, work and private life
- a sense of belonging, understanding and partnership with the Association

Conclusion of the needs analysis

The needs analysis clearly highlights the necessity for continuous development of accessible, high-quality and individualised community-based services. Particularly important is a connected and holistic approach that supports beneficiaries through different life stages—from early intervention in childhood, through empowering young people, to supporting adults with disabilities and their families.

Through its existing and planned programmes, the Vukovar Butterflies Association addresses these needs and, during the strategic period, aims to further expand capacities, improve service quality and ensure long-term sustainability of the support system.

2.3. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Long-standing experience working with children with developmental difficulties, young people and persons with disabilities
- A developed and recognised system of early intervention, rehabilitation and psychosocial support
- Secured and adequately equipped premises for:
 - playrooms and group activities
 - individual therapies
 - organised day care for adults with disabilities
 - implementation of respite care services
- Additional new premises enabling expansion of services and development of new programmes
- Production activity launched (K-LUMET firefighters) as an example of work integration for young people with disabilities
- Professional, motivated and interdisciplinary team with continuous training
- Engagement of external professional associates according to beneficiaries' needs
- A strong team approach and good internal communication
- Continuous involvement of parents and families in the Association's work
- Long-standing cooperation with educational institutions (e.g. higher education institutions)
- Developed cooperation with related organisations at local, regional and national level
- Recognisable and positive image of the Association in the local community and beyond
- High-quality asset and resource management
- Own vehicle available for beneficiary needs and activity implementation
- A developed system for informing beneficiaries and the public

Weaknesses

- *Lack of professionals of certain profiles (shortage occupations)*
- *High workload of the existing expert team due to the growth in beneficiaries and services*
- *Dependence on project-based funding and time-limited funding sources*
- *Insufficient financial resources for continuous staff training and technical support*
- *Administrative burden on staff due to demanding project and reporting obligations*
- *Limited capacity to expand services without additional investments in people and infrastructure*
- *Underdeveloped system for long-term financial stability*
- *Need for additional strengthening of visibility at national level*

Opportunities

- *Large and growing need for social and rehabilitation services in the community*
- *Lack of similar services in the regular system (healthcare, education, social welfare)*
- *Possibility to develop new services:*
 - *temporary accommodation*
 - *expanded respite care*
 - *full-day care for adults with disabilities*
- *Development of an integrative and sheltered workshop and employment of persons with disabilities*
- *Opportunities to apply to calls of line ministries, EU funds and other donors*
- *Strengthening cooperation with local and regional authorities*
- *Increased social sensitivity to disability, inclusion and mental health topics*
- *Developing partnerships with educational, health and social institutions*
- *Potential to digitalise parts of services and administrative processes*
- *Involving volunteers and young professionals in the Association's work*

Threats

- *Difficulties in finding and retaining professional staff in the county*
- *Discontinuity and uncertainty in funding for social services*
- *Insufficient fulfilment of legal obligations by competent institutions towards children and persons with disabilities*
- *Slow reform processes in social welfare, education and healthcare systems*
- *Rising labour, energy and premises maintenance costs*
- *Administrative complexity and changes in project financing rules*
- *Insufficient service availability for beneficiaries from rural and remote areas*

Risk of organisational overload due to service expansion without securing additional resources

2.4. External Factors (Legal Framework, Demographic Trends, Partnerships)

External factors significantly influence on the work of the Vukovar Butterflies Association, shaping opportunities, constraints and the direction of further development. Analysis of the legal framework, demographic trends and partnership environment enables a better understanding of the context in which the Association operates and ensures alignment of the strategic plan with social and institutional changes.

Legal and institutional framework

The Association operates within the legislative framework of the Republic of Croatia governing social welfare, education, healthcare, employment of persons with disabilities and the work of civil society organisations. Key laws and strategic documents emphasise the development of community-based social services, deinstitutionalisation, early intervention and empowerment of persons with disabilities. Although the legislative framework recognises the importance of support for children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities, challenges remain in practice regarding implementation, service accessibility and stable financing.

Civil society organisations such as the Vukovar Butterflies Association play an important role in filling gaps in the system and providing complementary and innovative community-based services. Changes in legislation, by-laws and financing mechanisms require continuous monitoring, adaptation of the Association's work and additional administrative capacity, while simultaneously creating opportunities to develop new services such as respite care, organised day care and integrative workshops.

Demographic trends

Demographic trends in Vukovar and Vukovar-Srijem County are characterised by population decline, ageing and the outmigration of young families. These trends further burden families of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities, who often face limited resources, a reduced support network and a higher risk of social exclusion.

At the same time, despite negative demographic developments, there is a constant and growing need for specialised social and rehabilitation services, particularly in early intervention, psychosocial support, organised care models, and services for young people and adults with disabilities. The lack of available services in the regular system further increases the importance of the Association's work in the local community.

Partnerships and cooperation

Partnerships are one of the key external factors for the successful operation and development of the Association. The Vukovar Butterflies Association has

developed cooperation with local and regional authorities, educational institutions, healthcare and social welfare services, civil society organisations and professionals of various profiles. Cooperation with the local community enables improved access to services for beneficiaries, joint programme planning and greater visibility of the needs of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities. Partnerships with educational and professional institutions contribute to the quality of professional work, knowledge exchange and the involvement of young professionals in the Association's activities.

In the next strategic period, the Association plans to further strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones, particularly in the areas of employment of people with disabilities, development of an integrative and sheltered workshop, expansion of respite care and temporary accommodation services, and joint advocacy for beneficiaries' rights.

The analysis of external factors shows that the Association operates in a complex yet stimulating environment. Legislative and demographic challenges, along with insufficient service availability within the system, confirm the need for further development and strengthening of the Association's role as a reliable community-based social service provider. Through strategic planning and strong partnerships, the Vukovar Butterflies Association will continue responding to beneficiaries' needs and contributing to the development of an inclusive society.

3. STRATEGIC GOALS

(2026. - 2036.)

3.1. Improving the Quality of Services for Children with Developmental Difficulties

Improve the quality, accessibility and continuity of services for children with developmental difficulties through the development of early intervention, rehabilitation and psychosocial programmes, an individualised approach, and the strengthening of professional and organisational capacities. Early and high-quality support for children with developmental difficulties is essential for their development, social inclusion and quality of life.

The Vukovar Butterflies Association continuously provides a range of rehabilitation and developmental services; however, the increasing number of beneficiaries and the complexity of their needs require further improvement in service quality, expansion of capacity and the development of new programme approaches. Improving service quality includes ensuring timely early intervention, continuous monitoring of children's development, individualised therapeutic programmes, and the integration of rehabilitation, educational and social activities into a comprehensive support system. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring access to services for children from socially vulnerable and rural areas.

Priority areas of action

Within this strategic goal, the Association will focus its activities over the next ten-year period on:

1. Strengthening and further developing early intervention

- ensuring timely and continuous early intervention for children from the earliest age
- improving diagnostic and developmental assessments
- developing individual support plans in cooperation with families

2. Improving rehabilitation and therapeutic services

- developing and enhancing all therapeutic procedures
- introducing and developing innovative therapeutic methods and approaches
- ensuring continuity of therapies through different funding sources

3. Developing structured care models and group activities

- improving half-day care for children with developmental difficulties
- developing group activities focused on socialisation, communication and life skills development
- including children in sports, creative and recreational programmes adapted to their abilities

4. Individualised approach and progress monitoring

- adapting programmes to each child's individual needs
- regular monitoring of development and evaluation of progress
- actively involving parents in planning and implementing support

5. *Strengthening professional capacities*

- continuous education and professional development of staff
- involving external experts according to beneficiaries' needs
- developing a team-based and interdisciplinary approach to work

6. *Strengthening cooperation with families and systems*

- strengthening partnerships with parents and caregivers
- cooperation with educational, healthcare and social welfare institutions
- advocacy for more accessible and higher-quality services for children with developmental difficulties

7. *Developing respite care services*

- providing temporary support for families and caregivers
- enabling relief and reducing psycho-physical burden
- flexible use of the service according to families' needs

Expected results

Implementation of this strategic goal is expected to result in:

- increased availability and improved quality of services for children with developmental difficulties
- improved developmental outcomes and quality of life for children and their families
- strengthened expertise and capacities of the Association
- higher satisfaction of beneficiaries and parents with the services provided
 - increased recognition of the Association as a key community provider of early intervention and rehabilitation services

3.2. Development and Expansion of Services for Young People

Develop and improve comprehensive support programmes for young people with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities with the aim of strengthening their independence, social inclusion, personal development and preparation for active participation in the community.

Youth is a particularly sensitive life stage for people with disabilities, marked by the transition from child-oriented services to adult services. The lack of structured, continuous and tailored programmes for young people often results in disrupted support, social isolation and reduced opportunities for personal development. The Association recognises the need to develop targeted youth programmes that respond to specific needs, interests and potentials. The goal is to ensure a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment in which young people can develop social, communication and life skills, strengthen self-confidence and gradually prepare for greater independence and participation in work and community activities.

Priority areas of action

1. *Developing structured programmes for young people*
 - developing regular day programmes and gatherings for young people
 - designing activities adapted to beneficiaries' age and interests
 - creating a space for socialising, learning and leisure time
2. *Strengthening social and life skills*
 - developing programmes focused on communication skills, independence and responsibility
 - learning everyday life skills (self-care, time management, decision-making)
 - encouraging active participation in the community
3. *Work training and preparation for employment*
 - involving young people in work and occupational activities
 - developing work habits and basic work skills
 - connecting with employment programmes and integrative workshops
4. *Psychosocial support for young people and their families*
 - individual and group counselling
 - support in coping with the challenges of adolescence and transition to adulthood
 - empowering parents and caregivers to support young people
5. *Active participation and inclusion in the community*
 - including young people in sports, cultural and volunteering activities
 - organising trips, workshops and public events
 - promoting a positive image of young persons with disabilities
6. *Cooperation and networking*
 - cooperation with educational institutions, employers and other associations
 - developing cross-sector partnerships
 - exchange of experience and good practices
 - participation in Erasmus+ programmes

Expected results

Implementation of this goal is expected to result in:

- increased participation of young people in structured programmes
- development of young people's social, life and work skills
- higher levels of self-confidence and independence among beneficiaries
- reduced social isolation of young persons with disabilities
- better preparedness for the transition to adulthood and the world of work

3.3. Empowering Adults with Disabilities Through Different Care Models

Develop, improve and ensure access to different models of day care and accommodation for adults with disabilities to increase their independence, quality of life, social inclusion and safety, while simultaneously supporting families and caregivers.

Adults with disabilities and their families face a significant lack of accessible, flexible and tailored day care and accommodation services in the local community. Services such as half-day and full-day care, respite care, temporary accommodation and supported living represent key forms of support that enable a dignified life for persons with disabilities and reduce the burden on families and informal caregivers.

The Association recognises the need to develop a comprehensive system of services for adults with disabilities, focused on beneficiaries' individual needs, empowerment and active participation in the community. Special emphasis is placed on a gradual transition from institutional care to community-based services, in line with the principles of deinstitutionalisation and social inclusion.

Priority areas of action

1. *Developing and improving half-day care*
 - ensuring structured daily programmes for adults with disabilities
 - implementing occupational, educational and rehabilitation activities
 - encouraging socialisation and development of everyday life skills
2. *Introducing and developing full-day care*
 - developing full-day programmes tailored to beneficiaries' individual needs
 - ensuring continuous support throughout the day
 - increasing the level of safety and stability for beneficiaries and their families
3. *Developing respite care services*
 - providing temporary support for families and caregivers
 - enabling relief and reducing psycho-physical burden
 - flexible use of the service according to families' needs
4. *Establishing temporary accommodation services*
 - developing short-term accommodation in crisis and emergency situations
 - ensuring a safe and supportive environment for beneficiaries
 - supporting families in situations of illness, inability to provide care, or other life circumstances
5. *Developing supported living*
 - creating conditions for adults with disabilities to live in the community
 - encouraging independence with the necessary professional support
 - developing models that ensure long-term sustainability and quality of life
6. *Individualised approach and respect for beneficiaries' rights*
 - developing individual support plans
 - respecting the rights, choices and dignity of each person
 - actively involving beneficiaries in decision-making about their own lives
7. *Strengthening professional and infrastructural capacities*
 - developing and equipping facilities adapted to the needs of adults with disabilities
 - staff education and professional development
 - securing the necessary human and material resources

Expected results

Implementation of this strategic goal is expected to result in:

- increased availability of different care and accommodation models for adults with disabilities
- improved quality of life and higher levels of independence for beneficiaries
- reduced burden on families and caregivers
- greater social inclusion of adults with disabilities
- strengthening the Association's role as a key provider of community-based social services

3.4. Obtaining the Status of an Integrative and Sheltered Workshop

In the period 2026–2036, the Association will strategically focus on obtaining the status of an integrative and sheltered workshop, with the aim of creating a sustainable model of employment and work rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and other socially vulnerable groups. Through this status, the Association will further strengthen its social, economic and environmental role in the local community.

The key production activity within the integrative workshop will be the production of the K-LUMET eco firelighter, an innovative and environmentally friendly product made from recycled and natural materials. The production of K-LUMET firelighters will enable beneficiaries to participate in the entire work process—from material preparation, production and packaging to product labelling—according to their abilities and with continuous professional support. This will encourage the development of work skills, a sense of usefulness, self-confidence and social inclusion.

In addition to the K-LUMET eco firelighter, the Association will gradually develop other production activities, in line with market needs, sustainability principles and beneficiaries' capacities. This includes the development of small ecological, promotional and utility products, finishing and packaging services for external clients, and cooperation with local entrepreneurs and institutions. Special emphasis will be placed on the circular economy, reuse of materials and socially responsible business practices.

To obtain the status of an integrative and sheltered workshop, the Association will:

- align its work with applicable laws and by-laws
- strengthen organisational and human capacities
- secure appropriate working premises, equipment and adaptations
- develop training and work support programmes for beneficiaries
- ensure financial sustainability through product sales, projects and partnerships

By implementing this strategic objective, the Vukovar Butterflies Association will contribute in the long term to the employability of persons with disabilities, the development of social entrepreneurship, and the strengthening of an inclusive and sustainable community.

3.5. Strengthening the Association's Capacities (Expert Team, Premises and Equipment)

In the next period, it is essential to strengthen the organisational, professional and infrastructural capacities of the Association to ensure the high quality of existing and new social services, respond to growing beneficiary needs, and secure long-term sustainability and development.

The continuous growth in the number of beneficiaries, the expansion of services and increasing complexity of the needs of children, young people and adults with disabilities require systematic capacity strengthening. To maintain a high level of quality and ensure dignified conditions for beneficiaries and staff, the Association must invest in its expert team, infrastructure and modern equipment. Capacity strengthening is a prerequisite for developing new social services, obtaining the status of an integrative and sheltered workshop, and successfully addressing challenges in care, rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

Priority areas of action

1. *Strengthening and developing the expert team*

- continuous education and professional development of staff
- specialised training for working with beneficiaries with severe and multiple disabilities
- developing an interdisciplinary and team-based approach
- attracting and retaining professionals by creating a supportive working environment

2. *Improvement and expansion of the first facility (579 m²)*

- the existing facility has become insufficient due to a significant increase in the number of children and beneficiaries
- a concept design has been prepared for the extension of a new building for working with children
- the estimated investment value is EUR 220,000
- implementation is planned through donor campaigns, infrastructure and development projects
- the goal is to provide additional therapy and workspaces and increase service accessibility

3. *Adaptation and full accessibility of the second facility (1,480 m²)*

- the second facility is intended for the development of services for adults with disabilities
- internal adaptation and full accessibility are required
- installation of an elevator and an inclined stair platform to ensure full accessibility
- adaptation of sanitary facilities and bathrooms according to beneficiaries' needs

- the facility will be used for:
 - half-day and full-day care
 - respite care
 - temporary accommodation
 - employment and work activities for young persons with disabilities
- 4. *Investments in equipment and assistive technology*
 - procurement of modern and advanced therapeutic and rehabilitation devices
 - investment in assistive technology and adapted aids
 - equipping work and care areas according to the highest standards
 - ensuring a safe, functional and stimulating environment
- 5. *Development of new social services*
 - significant investments in establishing and sustaining new services for adults with disabilities
 - adapting organisational processes and quality standards
 - ensuring financial and operational sustainability of new programmes
- 6. *Creating a dignified environment for living and work*
 - arranging facilities based on principles of dignity, warmth and safety
 - creating an environment that encourages independence, inclusion and personal development
 - ensuring good working conditions for employees and associates

Expected results

Implementation of this strategic goal is expected to result in:

- increased premises and professional capacities of the Association
- a higher level of service quality
- greater availability and diversity of social services
- ensured dignified conditions for beneficiaries' living, work and rehabilitation
- strengthened long-term sustainability and development stability of the Association

3.6. Strengthening Cooperation with the Local Community, Institutions and Partners

Our goal is to strengthen and systematically develop cooperation with the local community, public sector institutions, civil society organisations and other relevant partners to improve service quality, advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and create an inclusive and supportive community.

Cooperation and networking are key prerequisites for sustainable operation of the Association and the development of high-quality community-based social services. The complex needs of children with developmental difficulties, young people and adults with disabilities require a coordinated and interdisciplinary approach that exceeds the capacities of a single organisation.

By strengthening partnerships with local and regional authorities, educational, healthcare and social welfare institutions, as well as the private sector and other associations, the Association aims to ensure more accessible, higher-quality and sustainable services, while also actively participating in shaping local and regional policies focused on persons with disabilities.

Priority areas of action

1. *Cooperation with local and regional governments*
 - strengthening partnership with the City of Vukovar and Vukovar-Srijem County
 - participation in planning and developing local social services
 - advocating beneficiaries' needs through strategic and development documents
2. *Cooperation with public institutions*
 - developing cooperation with social welfare, healthcare and education systems
 - aligning activities and exchanging information to ensure continuity of support
 - joint participation in programmes and projects
3. *Networking with civil society organisations*
 - cooperation with related associations at local, regional and national level
 - exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices
 - joint advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities
4. *Developing partnerships with the private sector*
 - involving entrepreneurs and business entities in donor and development activities
 - developing socially responsible business practices
 - cooperation around employment of persons with disabilities
5. *Strengthening the Association's role in the local community*
 - active participation in public events, campaigns and initiatives
 - increasing visibility of the Association's work and beneficiaries' needs
 - promoting solidarity, inclusion and respect for rights
6. *Developing project and programme partnerships*
 - preparation and implementation of joint projects
 - use of national and EU funding sources
 - strengthening capacities for long-term and sustainable partnerships

Expected results

Implementation of this strategic goal is expected to result in:

- a stronger network of associates and partners
- increased availability and improved quality of services for beneficiaries
- stronger advocacy for the rights of children with developmental difficulties and persons with disabilities
- increased visibility and recognition of the Association in the community
- development of a more inclusive and sensitive local community

3.7. Ensuring Financial Sustainability

We will strive to ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability of the Vukovar Butterflies Association through diversification of funding sources, development of own income, efficient resource management and strengthening of financial capacities.

Financial sustainability is the foundation of stable operation and further development of the Association, especially in the context of service expansion, growth in the number of beneficiaries and significant infrastructure investments. Reliance solely on project funding and short-term sources presents a risk to the continuity of social service provision. The Vukovar Butterflies Association will strategically focus on developing diverse and stable sources of funding, while simultaneously strengthening transparency, efficiency and responsible financial management. Special emphasis is placed on linking social services with socially responsible entrepreneurship.

Priority areas of action

1. *Diversification of funding sources*
 - use of national and EU funds
 - applying to funding calls launched by competent ministries and public authorities
 - development of cooperation with local and regional authorities
 - engaging donors
2. *Development of own income*
 - development and improvement of production activities within the integrative and sheltered workshop
 - placing products and services on the market (K-LUMET firefighters)
 - reinvesting generated income into further service development
3. *Donor and humanitarian activities*
 - implementing targeted donor campaigns
 - engaging citizens, entrepreneurs and the community
 - developing long-term relations with donors and sponsors
4. *Efficient financial management*
 - budget planning aligned with strategic goals
 - cost monitoring and expenditure optimisation
 - transparent financial reporting
5. *Strengthening financial and administrative capacities*
 - strengthening capacities for project preparation and implementation
 - staff training in financial management
 - development of internal procedures and control systems
6. *Long-term planning and sustainability of services*
 - linking financial plans with the development of new services

- ensuring continuity of social service provision
- reducing financial risks and dependence on individual sources

Expected results

Implementation of this strategic goal is expected to result in:

- more stable and diversified funding sources
- increased own income of the Association
- greater financial security and resilience to change
- ensured long-term sustainability of existing and new services
- strengthened trust among donors, partners and beneficiaries

4. PROGRAMME AREAS AND ACTIVITIES

4.1. Early Intervention and Psychosocial Support for Children up to 18 Years of Age

Description of the programme area

Early intervention and psychosocial support form the foundation of the Vukovar Butterflies Association's work. Timely identification of developmental delays and the provision of professional support at the earliest age are essential for a child's optimal development, reduction of difficulties and strengthening of each child's potential. The Association provides comprehensive early intervention and psychosocial support services for children and young people up to the age of 18, with an emphasis on an individualised approach, interdisciplinary work and active involvement of families. The programmes focus not only on the child, but also on strengthening parental competencies and supporting the family as a whole.

Existing services and activities

Within this programme area, the Association delivers:

- developmental and diagnostic assessments
- individual and group therapies, including:
 - psychological support
 - neurofeedback training
 - sensory integration
 - daily living skills training
 - kinesiotherapy and sports and recreational activities
 - augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)
- psychosocial support for children and parents
- counselling and education for parents
- cooperation with educational and healthcare institutions

Programme development and improvement

In the next strategic period, particular emphasis will be placed on:

- improving the quality of existing therapeutic and rehabilitation services
- reducing waiting lists and increasing service accessibility
- developing new, modern and innovative approaches in working with children

Introduction of robotic rehabilitation

The Association plans to introduce robotic rehabilitation as a modern form of therapeutic support for children with developmental difficulties. Using advanced technology, it will enable:

- more precise and effective rehabilitation
- objective monitoring of a child's progress
- increased motivation through interactive therapeutic content

- additional support for children with more severe motor and developmental difficulties

The introduction of robotic rehabilitation represents a significant step forward in service quality, providing children with access to therapies that are otherwise available only in expensive private institutions.

Equal opportunities and free-of-charge services

A key principle of this programme area is ensuring equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their families' socio-economic status. The Association aims to ensure that all early intervention services, including robotic rehabilitation, are provided free of charge to beneficiaries. In this way, the Association actively reduces inequalities, prevents social exclusion and ensures that advanced therapies are accessible to children whose families cannot afford costly private services.

Objectives of the programme area

- to ensure timely and high-quality early intervention
- to improve developmental outcomes for children with developmental difficulties
- to increase access to modern therapeutic methods
- to provide strong psychosocial support to children and families
- to ensure equal opportunities and free-of-charge services for all beneficiaries

Expected results

- improved development and functional abilities of children
- higher satisfaction of children and parents with the services provided
- reduced inequalities in access to therapies
- strengthened position of the Association as a centre of excellence in early intervention

long-term improvement in the quality of life of children and their families

4.2. Half-Day Care and Sports, Educational, Creative and Recreational Activities

Description of the programme area

Half-day care represents an important form of structured support for children with developmental difficulties, providing a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment that encourages the development of social, communication and life skills. The Association's half-day care programme is designed as a complement to formal education and as support to families in organising everyday life. Within half-day care, a variety of activities are implemented in line with children's individual needs, interests and abilities, with the aim of supporting the child's overall development and strengthening inclusion in the community.

Programme content and activities

The half-day care programme includes:

Sports activities

- adapted sports and motor activities
- development of gross and fine motor skills
- promoting healthy habits and physical activity
- inclusion of children in recreational and inclusive sports programmes

Educational activities

- learning support and development of study/work habits
- development of cognitive abilities and functional knowledge
- encouraging independence and responsibility
- adapted learning-through-play workshops

Creative activities

- art, music and drama workshops
- encouraging creative expression and self-confidence
- development of emotional intelligence and communication
- involving children in preparing performances and public events

Recreational and leisure activities

- organising trips, social gatherings and thematic days
- outdoor activities and time spent in nature
- development of social skills through informal learning
- encouraging positive peer relationships

Individualised approach

All activities within half-day care are planned and implemented according to the individual abilities and needs of each child. The expert team ensures programme adaptations so that every child can actively participate, develop their potential and feel accepted.

Role of half-day care in supporting families

The half-day care programme significantly reduces the burden on families by allowing parents and caregivers greater flexibility in daily obligations, while ensuring that the child is included in a high-quality and structured programme.

Objectives of the programme area

- to provide a safe and stimulating environment for children
- to encourage the child's holistic development through structured activities
- to strengthen social and communication skills
- to increase children's inclusion in social life
- to support families in caring for children

Expected results

- improved social and life skills of children
- higher levels of self-confidence and independence
- increased participation of children in community activities
- higher satisfaction of parents and caregivers
- strengthened inclusive values within the local community

4.3. Youth Work (Counselling, Workshops, Socialisation Programmes and Volunteering)

Description of the programme area

Work with young people with developmental difficulties and young people with disabilities is an important segment of the Association's activities, particularly in the context of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This life stage is marked by many changes, challenges and the need for additional support in personal development, decision-making and social inclusion. Youth work programmes focus on empowerment, development of potential and active participation of young people in the community, with particular emphasis on strengthening self-confidence, social skills and a sense of belonging.

Programme content and activities

Counselling

- individual and group counselling for young people
- psychosocial support in coping with growing-up challenges
- support in identity development, independence and decision-making
- counselling in education, employment and life planning

Educational and developmental workshops

- workshops on personal development and life skills
- workshops on communication and social skills
- education on the rights of persons with disabilities
- workshops focused on strengthening work-related and organisational skills

Socialisation programmes

- organised social gatherings and group activities
- trips, thematic days and cultural activities
- fostering peer support and mutual respect
- developing inclusive programmes in cooperation with the local community

Volunteering and active participation

- involving young people in volunteering activities within the Association
- developing a sense of responsibility and usefulness
- encouraging active citizenship and solidarity
- cooperation with volunteer centres and other organisations

Individualised and participatory approach

Youth work programmes are based on an individualised approach and the active involvement of young people in designing and implementing activities. Young people are encouraged to express their interests, ideas and needs, and to take an active role in the community.

Objectives of the programme area

- to empower young people with disabilities
- to encourage the development of social and life skills
- to reduce social isolation among young people
- to increase young people's inclusion in the community
- to promote volunteering and active citizenship

Expected results

- increased self-confidence and independence among young people
- improved social and communication skills
- higher levels of participation in social activities
- positive attitudes towards volunteering and the community
- strengthened sense of belonging and personal value

4.4. Services for Adults with Disabilities**Description of the programme area**

Services for adults with disabilities represent one of the Association's key development directions. The aim of this programme area is to ensure continuous, high-quality and individualised support for people with disabilities in adulthood, enabling them to live with dignity, achieve greater independence and actively participate in the community. By developing different models of day care and accommodation, the Association responds to the real needs of beneficiaries and their families, reduces the risk of institutionalisation and provides flexible forms of support adapted to each beneficiary's life circumstances.

4.4.1. Half-Day Care

Half-day care is intended for adults with disabilities who require daily structure, support and social inclusion, while remaining in their family or community environment.

Activities include:

- structured daily activities
- development of life and social skills
- work and occupational activities
- creative, educational and recreational programmes
- promoting independence and active participation

Objectives:

- to improve beneficiaries' quality of life
- to encourage socialisation and independence
- to support families and caregivers

4.4.2. Full-Day Care

Full-day care provides comprehensive daily support for people with disabilities who require a higher level of assistance during the day.

The programme includes:

- full-day professional support and supervision
- rehabilitation and therapeutic activities
- provision of meals and basic care
- structured activities throughout the day
- safety and stability for beneficiaries

Objectives:

- to ensure continuous and high-quality care
- to increase the sense of security for beneficiaries and families
- to prevent social isolation and institutionalisation

4.4.3. Respite Care

Respite care is intended for families and informal caregivers of adults with disabilities, enabling temporary relief from everyday caregiving responsibilities.

Forms of support:

- short-term stays for beneficiaries
- day-based or multi-day support
- flexible duration according to family needs

Objectives:

- to reduce burden and risk of caregiver burnout
- to ensure high-quality and safe care for beneficiaries
- to maintain stability of the family environment

4.4.4. Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation is intended for people with disabilities in situations where families or caregivers are temporarily unable to provide care.

Reasons for using the service:

- illness or inability of caregivers
- crisis or emergency situations
- need for short-term stabilisation and support

Objectives:

- to ensure a safe and dignified environment
- to provide continuous professional support
- to prevent institutionalisation and social exclusion

4.4.5. Supported Living

Supported living enables adults with disabilities to live in the community with an adapted level of professional assistance.

Key elements include:

- individualised support plans
- encouraging independence and decision-making
- development of life and household skills
- support in daily functioning

Objectives:

- to enable a dignified and independent life in the community
- to increase beneficiaries' level of independence
- to ensure long-term sustainable care models

Expected results of Programme Area 4.4

- increased availability of services for adults with disabilities
- improved quality of life for beneficiaries
- reduced burden on families and caregivers
- greater social inclusion and independence of beneficiaries
- development of sustainable and flexible community-based support models

4.5. Development of an Integrative/Sheltered Workshop and Employment of People with Disabilities

Description of the programme area

The development of an integrative and sheltered workshop represents a key step forward in the employment and work integration of people with disabilities. Through this programme area, the Vukovar Butterflies Association seeks to address the long-standing issue of unemployment among people with disabilities, particularly those with higher levels of support needs, for whom employment in the open labour market is often inaccessible. The aim is to ensure an adapted, safe and stimulating work environment in which people with disabilities can develop work skills, exercise their right to work and contribute to the community, with continuous professional support.

Programmes and activities

Development of the integrative and sheltered workshop

- establishing organisational and administrative conditions for obtaining workshop status
- developing work programmes adapted to the abilities of employed people with disabilities
- ensuring accessible and safe workplaces
- supported employment with professional mentoring

Production and work activities

- developing and improving the production of K-LUMET firefighters
- developing new products and services with market potential
- involving beneficiaries in the full work process, in line with their capacities

Development of work skills and competencies

- training for work tasks
- developing work habits, responsibility and teamwork
- individual employment and professional development plans

Employment support

- continuous professional support for employees
- adaptation of work tasks and working hours
- development of a work assistance system

Cooperation and market orientation

- cooperation with the local community, entrepreneurs and institutions
- promoting socially responsible entrepreneurship
- placing products and services on the market
- increasing visibility of the work and contribution of people with disabilities

Objectives of the programme area

- to enable employment of people with disabilities
- to develop a sustainable model of an integrative and sheltered workshop
- to increase beneficiaries' economic and social inclusion
- to strengthen employees' self-confidence and sense of value
- to contribute to the Association's financial sustainability

Expected results

- employment of young and adult people with disabilities
- increased income from own activities
- developed work and professional skills among beneficiaries
- strengthened positive perceptions of employing people with disabilities
- increased recognition of the Association as an example of good practice

4.6. Family Support (Education, Counselling and Parent Groups)**Description of the programme area**

Families of children with developmental difficulties and people with disabilities face numerous emotional, organisational, financial and social challenges. The role of the family is crucial for the development, well-being and inclusion of beneficiaries in the community; therefore, the Vukovar Butterflies Association places particular emphasis on systematic and continuous support to families. Family support

programmes focus on strengthening parental competencies, safeguarding mental health, empowering families to advocate for rights, and creating a network of mutual support and understanding.

Programme content and activities

Education for parents and family members

- education on developmental difficulties and disability
- information on rights, available services and the social welfare system
- education on parenting, communication and rehabilitation approaches
- workshops to strengthen parenting skills and resilience

Counselling and psychosocial support

- individual counselling for parents and family members
- psychological support in crisis and stressful situations
- support in coping with diagnoses and changes in family life
- counselling related to planning the beneficiary's future

Parent support groups

- regular meetings of parent groups
- exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices
- emotional support and reduction of feelings of isolation
- strengthening togetherness and solidarity

Individualised and partnership-based approach

In its work with families, the Association applies an individualised, empathetic and partnership-based approach, recognising the specific needs of each family. Parents and family members are seen as equal partners in planning and implementing services.

Objectives of the programme area

- to empower families to cope with caregiving challenges
- to strengthen parenting competencies and knowledge
- to reduce stress and emotional burden on families
- to encourage mutual support and connection among parents
- to increase awareness of rights and available opportunities

Expected results

- empowered and well-informed families
- improved quality of family life
- reduced stress levels and feelings of isolation
- stronger cooperation between families and the Association
- increased involvement of families in the Association's activities

5. RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES

5.1. Human Resources

Human resources are the cornerstone of the quality of work of the Vukovar Butterflies Association. The Association employs and brings together a highly qualified, interdisciplinary team working in the fields of early intervention, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, social services and employment of people with disabilities. A particular challenge for the Association is that many of these professionals belong to shortage occupations, with a significant lack of such profiles at national level, and especially at regional level. Despite this, the Association continuously invests effort into attracting, retaining and developing high-quality professional staff.

Structure of the professional team

The Association employs and cooperates with professionals of various profiles, including:

- psychologists
- social pedagogues
- pedagogues
- speech and language therapists
- educational rehabilitators
- nurses
- social workers
- physiotherapists
- occupational therapists
- caregivers and other professional associates

This interdisciplinary approach enables comprehensive support for beneficiaries in line with their individual needs.

Investment in staff development and professional training

Aware of the importance of continuous professional development, the Association systematically invests in:

- professional trainings, seminars and workshops
- lifelong learning and staff development
- monitoring contemporary approaches and working methods
- training on working with beneficiaries with multiple and severe disabilities
- introducing new technologies and innovative therapeutic approaches

Teamwork and organisational culture

The Association fosters a culture of:

- teamwork and mutual support
- open communication and knowledge sharing

- professional responsibility and ethical conduct
- appreciation and respect for each team member

Special attention is given to developing leadership, management and organisational skills to ensure high-quality governance of the Association, programme sustainability and a high standard of service delivery.

Staff well-being

The Association recognises the emotional and professional demands of working with vulnerable groups and strives to ensure:

- support for staff in preventing professional burnout
- a safe and stimulating working environment
- opportunities for professional advancement

Objectives around human resources

- to ensure a stable and competent professional team
- to continuously improve staff knowledge and skills
- to strengthen teamwork and organisational efficiency

to increase the attractiveness of the Association as an employer of choice

Link between the parent-led initiative and the Association's human resources

The Vukovar Butterflies Association began as a parent-led initiative, arising from the need to protect the rights of children with developmental difficulties and to improve the quality of life of children and their families. Parents, driven by personal experience and direct exposure to systemic challenges, laid the foundations for the Association's work. Over time, as the Association grew in size, organisation and programme scope, it became a recognised and relevant partner within the local community in providing social, rehabilitation and psychosocial services.

In parallel with the organisation's development, its human resources evolved—from the initial voluntary engagement of parents to the establishment of a professional, interdisciplinary team. Parents, as members of the Association, gradually assumed responsibility for specific organisational and programme areas, including participation in public life, media communication, organisation of performances, humanitarian actions and donations, and advocacy for the rights of children and persons with disabilities. Their engagement represents an important contribution to strengthening organisational capacities and increasing the Association's visibility.

Association leadership and organisational capacities

The Association is led by three mothers of children with developmental difficulties - who perform their leadership and governance roles on a voluntary basis. This leadership model is grounded in personal experience, empathy and strong motivation for social change, while ensuring that the needs of beneficiaries and families remain at the centre of all decisions and activities.

Parent-led leadership, in synergy with the professional team, supports the

development of an organisational culture that values:

- a partnership-based relationship between management and staff
- teamwork and mutual respect
- transparent and responsible governance
- a strong focus on service quality and beneficiaries' rights

Synergy between professional and volunteer work

Today, the Association combines professional staff and active volunteers, with the parent-led initiative still recognised as an important resource. This synergy enables flexibility, innovation and a strong connection to beneficiaries' needs, while ensuring professional standards in service delivery. This development of human resources—from a parent initiative to a professional organisation—forms a strong foundation for further capacity building, achievement of strategic goals and long-term sustainability.

5.2. Material and Facilities Capacity

Material and facilities capacity represent one of the key prerequisites for high-quality service provision, development of new programmes and long-term sustainability. The continuous growth in the number of beneficiaries, expansion of services and introduction of new social and rehabilitation programmes require adequate, accessible and functional premises. The Association currently operates several facilities in Vukovar and Ilok, forming the basis for further development of services for children, young people, adults with disabilities and their families.

Facilities in Vukovar

First facility – psychosocial support services for children

The Association's first facility in Vukovar, with a total area of 579 m², is used to implement early intervention programmes, individual and group therapies, psychosocial support and half-day care for children with developmental difficulties. The space is equipped with educational materials, therapeutic aids and is adapted to beneficiaries' needs. Due to the significant increase in the number of children and the volume of services provided, the facility has become insufficient in terms of space, which has been identified as one of the key development challenges.

The Association has prepared a concept design and cost estimate for the extension of a new building, valued at EUR 220,000, with the aim of creating additional space capacity for work with children. Implementation is planned through donor campaigns and infrastructure projects.

Second facility – centre for adults with disabilities

The Association's second facility in Vukovar, with a total area of 1,480 m², is intended for the development and delivery of services for adults with disabilities. The following services are planned to be implemented in this facility:

- half-day and full-day care
- respite care services
- temporary accommodation
- employment of young and adult persons with disabilities through an integrative and sheltered workshop

The facility requires significant investment in internal refurbishment and full accessibility adjustments, including:

- installation of an elevator and an inclined stair platform
- adaptation of sanitary facilities and bathrooms
- ensuring full accessibility for persons with disabilities

The goal is to equip the facility in a way that ensures dignified living and working conditions, with high standards of safety, accessibility and quality of care.

Facility in Ilok – CONNECT Community Centre

In addition to its facilities in Vukovar, the Association operates a facility in Ilok, located in the building of the former branch school in Radoš. This represents an important step towards decentralising services and ensuring support availability in more rural areas.

The Association plans to establish the *CONNECT Community Centre* in this facility, where the following will be implemented:

- activities for children and young people at risk
- programmes for children with developmental difficulties
- psychosocial support services
- educational, preventive and developmental activities
- activities aimed at community strengthening and social inclusion
- activities for persons with disabilities

The *CONNECT Community Centre* is envisioned as an open, inclusive and safe space—a place that connects children, families, professionals and the local community, with the aim of preventing social exclusion and providing an early response to the needs of children and young people.

Development potential

Available facilities, together with planned investments and adaptations, provide a strong foundation for:

- expansion of existing services
- development of new social and rehabilitation programmes
- more balanced availability of services across Vukovar-Srijem County
- long-term sustainability and stability of the Association.

5.3. Technological Resources

Technological resources are an important factor in ensuring the quality, efficiency and accessibility of services provided by the Association to children with developmental difficulties, young people, adults with disabilities and their families. Introducing modern technologies enables the application of innovative rehabilitation and therapeutic methods, improved work organisation and better communication with beneficiaries and partners.

Existing technological resources

The Association currently uses various technological resources for:

- implementing rehabilitation and therapeutic procedures
- educational and developmental activities
- administrative work and project management
- informing and communicating with beneficiaries and the public

This includes IT equipment, basic assistive technologies, therapeutic and educational tools, and digital tools for organising work and implementing programmes.

Development and upgrading of technological capacities

In line with the growing needs of beneficiaries and the Association's strategic goals, continuous investment is planned in:

- modern rehabilitation and therapeutic equipment, including advanced and innovative technologies
- robotic rehabilitation for children and young people with developmental difficulties
- assistive technology adapted to persons with severe and multiple disabilities
- digital tools for monitoring beneficiary progress and planning individualised services
- technology that increases beneficiaries' independence and safety

Technology in employment and work integration

In the development of the integrative and sheltered workshop, technological resources play an important role in:

- adapting workplaces for persons with disabilities
- increasing safety and efficiency of work processes
- developing production programmes (K-LUMET firelighter production)
- using assistive and adapted work equipment

Digitalisation and organisational development

The Association continuously upgrades its digital capacities in the areas of:

- documentation and record-keeping
- service quality monitoring

- project management and reporting
- communication with beneficiaries, partners and donors

Digitalisation contributes to transparency, more efficient resource management and improved access to information.

Equal opportunities through technology

Special emphasis is placed on using technology as a tool to reduce inequalities and ensure equal opportunities for all beneficiaries, regardless of socio-economic status. The goal is to provide access to modern therapeutic and rehabilitation solutions without financial burden for families.

Objectives in the area of technological resources

- to improve the quality and efficiency of services
- to introduce innovative therapeutic and rehabilitation methods
- to increase beneficiaries' independence and inclusion
- to ensure equal access to modern technology
- to strengthen the Association's organisational and management capacities

5.4. Investment Needs

To maintain a high quality of existing services while simultaneously developing new programmes in line with beneficiaries' needs and strategic goals, continuous and planned investments are required in human, facilities, technological and organisational capacities. Investment needs stem from the growing number of beneficiaries, expansion of social services, introduction of innovative approaches and the adaptation of facilities and equipment for persons with the most severe forms of disability.

Investments in facilities

Significant investments are needed in:

- extension of the rehabilitation facility in Vukovar (579 m²) to increase capacity for working with children, in line with the prepared concept design and cost estimate of EUR 220,000
- refurbishment and full adaptation of the second facility in Vukovar (1,480 m²), including installation of an elevator, an inclined stair platform, and adaptation of sanitary facilities and bathrooms
- renovation and equipping of the Ilok facility – CONNECT Community Centre, to ensure safe, functional and inclusive conditions for work with children and young people at risk

The aim is to provide facilities that enable dignified living, work and rehabilitation for beneficiaries.

Investments in equipment and technological resources

Investments are required in:

- modern therapeutic and rehabilitation equipment
- robotic rehabilitation and advanced technologies
- assistive technology and aids for people with severe and multiple disabilities
- equipment for the integrative and sheltered workshop
- IT and digital infrastructure

These investments will enable the application of modern working methods and increase the efficiency and accessibility of services.

Investments in human resources

Given the shortage of professional profiles, investments are required in:

- employment of additional professional staff
- continuous professional development and training
- development of leadership and management competencies
- prevention of staff burnout

Investment in people is recognised as the most important long-term investment.

Investments in the development of new social services

The development of new services for adults with disabilities (day care, respite care, temporary accommodation, supported living) requires:

- adaptation of facilities and equipment
- additional human resources
- development of procedures and quality standards
- ensuring financial sustainability of services

Funding sources for investments

The Association plans to finance investments through:

- national and EU funds
- calls for proposals published by relevant ministries
- donor campaigns and donations from citizens and companies
- own income through the development of the integrative and sheltered workshop cooperation with local and regional governments

Purpose of investments

The purpose of all planned investments is to ensure:

- high-quality, accessible and sustainable services
- equal opportunities for all beneficiaries
- long-term stability and development of the Association
- dignity, safety and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

6.1. Performance Indicators (Outputs and Outcomes)

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Plan are based on clearly defined performance indicators that enable systematic tracking of goal achievement, service quality and the actual impact on beneficiaries and the wider community. Indicators are defined as **outputs** (results of activities) and **outcomes** (changes and effects) and are aligned with the Association's programme areas and strategic objectives.

Outputs (results of activities)

Outputs refer to measurable results of implemented activities and include:

- number of children enrolled in early intervention and psychosocial support programmes
- number of individual and group therapies delivered
- number of children included in half-day care and organised activities
- number of young people involved in counselling, educational and socialisation programmes
- number of adults with disabilities included in half-day and full-day care
- number of users of respite care and temporary accommodation services
- number of persons with disabilities employed in the integrative and sheltered workshop
- number of workshops, training sessions and counselling activities provided to families
- number of parents participating in support groups
- number of volunteers and volunteer hours
- number of projects and programme activities implemented
- number of partnerships established with institutions and organisations

Outcomes (effects and changes)

Outcomes refer to changes resulting from implemented activities and include:

- improved developmental, functional and social skills of children with developmental difficulties
- increased independence and quality of life of young people and adults with disabilities
- reduced social isolation of beneficiaries
- increased self-confidence and sense of self-worth among beneficiaries
- empowered families with greater knowledge of rights and available services
- reduced stress levels and emotional burden on families
- increased employability and work inclusion of persons with disabilities
- strengthened social inclusion and participation within the local community
- increased visibility and recognition of the Association as a provider of high-quality services

- improved organisational capacity of the Association for sustainable operation

Data collection approaches

Performance indicators are monitored through:

- beneficiary records and activity tracking
- individual plans and reports prepared by the professional team
- evaluation questionnaires for beneficiaries and families
- internal and external project evaluations
- annual reports on the Association's work

Purpose of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation enable:

- timely adjustment of programmes to beneficiaries' needs
- continuous improvement of service quality
- transparent reporting to donors and partners
- evidence-based decision-making on future development

6.2. Data Collection Methods

The Vukovar Butterflies Association uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to ensure systematic, objective and continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, service quality and achievement of goals. Methods are tailored to different beneficiary groups and programme areas and are applied in accordance with relevant ethical and legal regulations.

Quantitative methods

Quantitative data enable measurement of the scope and frequency of activities and tracking of achieved results. They are collected through:

- beneficiary records and the number of participants by programme
- records of therapies, workshops and activities delivered
- administrative and project reports
- records of working hours, volunteer hours and employment
- financial reports and monitoring of programme costs

Qualitative methods

Qualitative data provide deeper insight into experiences, satisfaction and real changes among beneficiaries and families. They are collected through:

- individual and group discussions with beneficiaries
- interviews and counselling sessions with parents and family members
- professional assessments and observations by the expert team
- case studies and individual support plans
- focus groups with beneficiaries, parents and staff

Evaluation tools

To assess programme quality and impact, the following are used:

- satisfaction questionnaires for beneficiaries and families
- beneficiary self-assessments, where appropriate to their abilities
- standardised and non-standardised tools for assessing development and functionality
- internal evaluation of the professional team's work
- external evaluations within publicly funded projects

Digital tools and systems

Data are collected and stored using:

- digital databases and records
- software tools for documentation management and reporting
- online tools for surveys and evaluations

A digital approach enables better organisation, analysis and accessibility of data, while ensuring compliance with personal data protection requirements.

Ethical principles and data protection

Data collection is conducted with:

- respect for beneficiaries' privacy and dignity
- informed consent from beneficiaries or legal guardians
- compliance with applicable personal data protection regulations (GDPR)
- an ethical approach to working with vulnerable groups

Purpose of data collection

The purpose of these methods is to ensure:

- objective monitoring of progress and service quality
- timely identification of the need for programme adjustments
- improvement of the Association's work and beneficiary well-being
- transparency towards donors, partners and the public

6.3. Annual Progress Review

The annual progress review is a key tool for systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Vukovar Butterflies Association's Strategic Plan. Its purpose is to assess the achievement of planned goals and activities, analyse results, and timely adjust the Association's further actions in line with beneficiaries' needs and changes in the operating environment.

Content of the annual review

The annual progress review includes:

- overview of implemented activities by programme area
- analysis of achieved outputs and outcomes compared to planned indicators

- overview of the number of beneficiaries and the structure of target groups reached
- assessment of the quality of services delivered
- analysis of the use of financial, human and material resources
- overview of partnerships and cooperation achieved
- identification of challenges, risks and barriers in implementation
- proposals for improvement measures and plan adjustments

Process of preparing the annual review

The annual progress review is prepared through:

- data collection from the professional team and programme coordinators
- analysis of records, reports and evaluation tools
- joint meetings of the professional team and Association leadership
- inclusion of feedback from beneficiaries and families

Employees, volunteers and governance bodies are involved in the process, ensuring a participatory and transparent approach.

Timeline

The annual progress review is prepared once a year and covers one calendar year. If needed, interim analyses may also be conducted to respond in a timely manner to identified challenges or changes in beneficiaries' needs.

Use of annual review results

The results of the annual progress review are used for:

- decision-making on further programme development
- adjustment of activities and priorities
- improvement of service quality
- planning financial and human resources
- reporting to donors, partners and the public

Transparency and public availability

A summary of the annual progress review is made publicly available through:

- the Association's annual reports
- the official website and communication channels
- presentation of results to partners and the local community

This ensures transparency of the Association's work and strengthens public trust.

Objective of the annual progress review

The objective of the annual progress review is to ensure:

- systematic monitoring of Strategic Plan implementation
- timely identification of the need for changes
- continuous improvement of the Association's work
- long-term sustainability and service development

6.4. Evaluation of the Plan at the End of the Ten-Year Period

The evaluation of the Vukovar Butterflies Association's Strategic Plan at the end of the ten-year period represents a final, comprehensive assessment of the success of implementing planned objectives, programmes and activities. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which strategic objectives have been achieved, what the long-term effects on beneficiaries and the community are, and what key lessons can inform future strategic planning.

Objectives of the final evaluation

The final evaluation focuses on:

- assessment of achievement of strategic objectives and priorities
- analysis of long-term effects on children, young people, adults with disabilities and their families
- assessment of the sustainability of developed programmes and services
- assessment of efficiency in the use of resources
- identification of good practices and areas for improvement
- development of guidelines for preparing a new strategic plan

Areas of evaluation

The evaluation will cover:

- achievement of planned outputs and outcomes
- development and quality of social and rehabilitation services
- level of beneficiary and family participation and satisfaction
- strengthening of the Association's capacities (human, facilities and technological)
- financial sustainability and stability of the Association
- cooperation with partners and impact on the local community
- contribution to inclusion, equal opportunities and protection of the rights of people with disabilities

Evaluation methodology

The final evaluation will be conducted using a combination of:

- analysis of annual reports and records
- comparison of the baseline situation and achieved results
- qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
- evaluation questionnaires for beneficiaries, families and staff
- focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders

The involvement of an external evaluator is recommended to ensure objectivity and independence of the assessment.

Stakeholder involvement

The final evaluation process will involve:

- beneficiaries and their family members
- the professional team and staff
- Association leadership and governance bodies
- partners and collaborators
- representatives of the local community

A participatory approach ensures a realistic assessment of impacts and increases the relevance of findings.

Results and use of the evaluation

The results of the final evaluation will be used for:

- preparation of a new strategic plan
- improvement of existing programmes and services
- strengthening organisational capacities
- transparent reporting to donors and the public
- strengthening the Association's advocacy activities

Transparency and availability of results

A summary of the final evaluation will be publicly available through:

- official Association reports
- the website and communication channels
- presentation of results to partners and the local community

Final purpose of the evaluation

The final evaluation enables the Association to reflect on its development path, confirm achievements, identify challenges, and responsibly plan future action with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities, dignity and full participation of people with disabilities in society.

7. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

7.1. Estimated Funding Requirements

The achievement of the strategic objectives and the programme development of the Association in the period **2026–2036** requires securing adequate financial resources. The required funds have been estimated according to the key components: human resources, material and facilities capacity, equipment and assistive technology, development of new programmes, and the maintenance of existing services.

1. Human resources

- Employment and retention of the professional team
- Continuous education and professional training
- Professional supervision, management and team coordination

Estimated funding: a significant share of the annual budget, based on the number of employees and planned training hours.

2. Material and facilities capacity

- **First facility in Vukovar (579 m²):** planned construction of an additional building for programme delivery (concept design + cost estimate of EUR 220,000), to be financed through donor campaigns and infrastructure projects
- **Second facility in Vukovar (1,480 m²):** internal refurbishment, adaptation of the premises for adult services, installation of an elevator and an inclined stair platform, adaptation of sanitary facilities
- **Facility in Ilok – CONNECT Community Centre (former Radoš school):** refurbishment and adaptation of the premises for activities for children at risk and children with developmental difficulties, including psychosocial support services

Estimated funding: investments for refurbishment, equipping and accessibility adaptation, according to planned cost estimates for each facility.

3. Technological and rehabilitation equipment

- Procurement of advanced devices, robotic rehabilitation and assistive technology
- Procurement of educational, developmental and therapeutic equipment for all programme groups
- Regular maintenance and replacement of equipment

Estimated funding: capital investments based on equipment priorities and available donations or project funding.

4. Development of new and existing programmes

- Implementation of new services (temporary accommodation, integrative and sheltered workshop)

- Delivery of existing services at expanded capacity (half-day and full-day care, respite care, youth work)
- Organisation of educational, socialisation and volunteering activities

Estimated funding: operational costs for activities, materials, transport, meals, safety measures and external associates.

5. Long-term financial framework and sustainability

The Association plans a combination of funding through:

- national and local sources (ministries, local and regional governments)
- EU funds and infrastructure projects
- donor campaigns, sponsorships and partnership projects
- fundraising through own activities and social entrepreneurship (production of K-LUMET firelighters)

The goal is to ensure a stable and sustainable funding structure enabling continuous implementation of strategic objectives and expansion of capacity for beneficiaries.

7.2. Funding Sources

Ensuring financial stability and sustainability is a key prerequisite for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Funding is based on a combination of public and private sources, EU funds, donor campaigns, and the Association's own income.

1. Public funding

1.1. State and local sources

- **Ministries and sectoral funds:** funding allocated to social and rehabilitation services, programmes for children and young people, early inclusion and support for people with disabilities
- **Local and regional governments (City of Vukovar, Vukovar-Srijem County, City of Ilok):** financial support for regular and innovative programmes, investments in facilities capacity and co-financing of projects
- **Programmes under the National Strategy for the Development of Social Services and the Rights of People with Disabilities:** funding for improving and expanding existing and new services

1.2. European funds

- **European Social Fund and EU programmes:** financing of training, social and rehabilitation programmes, employment and integrative workshops
- **EU Cohesion Policy and infrastructure projects:** investments in refurbishment and extension of facilities, procurement of equipment and development of new social services

2. Private sources

2.1. Donations and sponsorships

- Individuals and entrepreneurs: financial and in-kind support for regular and special projects

- Corporate sponsorships: investment in integration projects, equipment, technology and facilities

2.2. Foundations and humanitarian programmes

- Access to funds supporting the development of social services, rehabilitation, support to persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups

3. The Association's own income

- Social entrepreneurship
- Organisation of fundraising events, charity activities and public performances
- Implementation of project activities with beneficiary participation or donor coverage of specific services

4. A blended funding approach for sustainability

The funding strategy is based on combining multiple sources to:

- ensure the stability of regular programmes
- finance capacity expansion and the development of new services
- reduce dependency on a single funding source
- enable long-term sustainable provision of free-of-charge or subsidised services for all beneficiaries

A sustainable combination of public, private and own-income sources is essential for achieving the Association's strategic objectives. Planned funding is directed towards capacity expansion, improving service quality and developing new programmes, with the priority of ensuring equal opportunities for all beneficiaries regardless of their financial circumstances.

7.3. Sustainability Plan

Sustainable implementation of the Strategic Plan requires ensuring long-term financial, organisational and professional stability. The Sustainability Plan is based on several key dimensions: financial stability, human resources, facilities and material capacity, as well as social visibility and partnerships.

1. Financial sustainability

- **Diversification of funding sources:** a combination of public funding (state and local sources), EU funds, donations and sponsorships, and the Association's own income (social entrepreneurship, fundraising activities)
- **Project planning:** regular preparation and submission of project proposals to finance new and existing programmes, with a focus on long-term infrastructure and social projects
- **Reserve funds:** planning resources for unforeseen costs and continuity of services
- **Transparent financial management:** regular cost monitoring and reporting, efficient use of funds and budgeting by programme areas

2. Sustainable human resources

- **Retention and upskilling of professional staff:** continuous education and professional development
- **Motivation and recognition:** development of a system of incentives, acknowledgements and career advancement opportunities
- **Workforce planning:** ensuring enough professionals for new and existing services and maintaining programme quality
- **Volunteering and parental engagement:** strategic involvement of volunteers and parents in programme delivery and beneficiary support

3. Facilities and material sustainability

- **Investment in facilities capacity:** refurbishment and expansion of existing facilities in Vukovar and Ilok, ensuring a safe, functional and accessible environment for beneficiaries
- **Maintenance and upgrade of equipment:** regular maintenance of rehabilitation equipment, procurement of assistive technology and educational materials
- **Investment planning:** use of infrastructure projects and donor campaigns to finance refurbishments and new capacities

4. Partnerships and social inclusion

- **Cooperation with the local community and institutions:** strengthening partnerships with educational, health and social welfare institutions, local self-government units and other associations
- **Visibility and advocacy:** active promotion of the rights of children and persons with disabilities, participation in public campaigns and inclusion initiatives
- **Development of a donor and sponsor network:** continuous communication and expansion of the donor base to ensure long-term programme support

5. Monitoring and evaluation of sustainability

- Regular monitoring of financial status, resource use and achieved results
- Annual reporting and analysis of the effectiveness of sustainability strategies
- Conducting reviews and adapting the Sustainability Plan in response to changes in the environment, legislation and beneficiaries' needs

The Sustainability Plan ensures the Association's long-term ability to provide high-quality and accessible services to children, young people and adults with disabilities, while supporting families and the community. A combination of diversified funding sources, strengthened human resources, functional facilities and strong partnerships is essential for continuous growth, service quality and the achievement of strategic objectives.

CONCLUSION

Dear Readers,

as three mothers who many years ago launched this initiative out of a heartfelt desire for our children with developmental difficulties to have the same rights and opportunities as all other children, we look with pride at how the Vukovar Butterflies Association has grown and developed into a recognised and trusted partner within the community. From a small parents' initiative to an organisation that today provides a wide range of services to children, young people and adults with disabilities, as well as to their families, the journey has been long and full of challenges—but also filled with immense satisfaction, small victories, and many successes.

Our vision—that all children, young people and adults with disabilities have equal opportunities for development, learning and inclusion in society—has become a reality. Through early intervention, psychosocial support, half-day and full-day care, respite care, temporary accommodation, integrative workshops, sports, educational and creative activities, and support for families, we have built a system tailored to the needs of our beneficiaries in one of Croatia's poorest counties.

We are grateful and happy that through our work and dedication we have created something truly significant and admirable—a lasting contribution to improving the quality of life of children and adults with disabilities. We are proud that through this Association we have built a support system that ensures equality, equal access, and genuine inclusion for everyone, regardless of a family's financial means.

We know that one day the moment may come when we, as the responsible persons who carry out all tasks on a voluntary basis, may no longer be able to lead such a large and complex organisation daily. However, we are confident that the Association will not cease its work. Thanks to clear strategic plans, secured resources, professional support and strong partnerships, the Association can continue to operate as a public institution of the City of Vukovar, the County, or as a state institution. Regardless of the organisational form it takes, the legacy we leave behind ensures continuity and quality.

This Association is our story of love, courage and the fight for our children's rights. It is a story of unity between parents, professionals and the wider community. And for that very reason, while we are proud of everything we have achieved, we look forward to a future in which every child and every person with a disability will be able to reach their full potential.

With love and gratitude,
Viktorija, Željka and Andreja