



FOUNDATION ФОНДАЦИЈА
OPEN ОТВОРЕНО
SOCIETY ОПШТЕСТВО
MACEDONIA МАКЕДОНИЈА

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FOUNDATION OPEN SOCIETY - MACEDONIA

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2013

In 2013 all programs of *Foundation Open Society - Macedonia (FOSM)* contributed toward achievement of goals assigned within the three strategic priority areas: ***accelerating EU accession of Macedonia; encouraging civic participation and activism; and integration of Roma, youth and socially marginalized groups.***

FOSM made the anticipated progress towards achieving the goals set within the ***accelerating EU accession of Macedonia*** strategic priority. Outcomes and results of the activities implemented suggest that *FOSM's* approach and tools have been mostly effective and greatly needed, although the country's progress in the *EU* accession has been hampered by the lack of political willingness on the part of the Government. *FOSM* has mostly contributed through monitoring and advocacy activities combined with capacity building initiatives crucial to press for progress in the reforms.

Four *Accession Watch*¹ reports, prepared in cooperation with *Macedonian Centre for European Training (MCET)* within *USAID Civil Society Project*, have closely monitored the progress achieved under the auspices of the *High Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD)* with the *European Commission (EC)* as well as was the transparency of the usage of IPA and Union Program funds. Apart from analysis of strategic documents and desk research, data were collected through survey and interviews. Analysis of the progress in *HLAD* was based on priorities set by the *EC* and expected to be delivered by the Government in order to demonstrate progress in Macedonia's *EU* agenda. The general conclusion is that there are many areas characterized by slow or no progress, such as the reform of electoral code, freedom of expression, rule of law, reform of public administration, and functioning market economy, which to a large extent indicates that *HLAD* gives poor results. Analysis of the usage of the *EU* funds shows that there is evident lack of absorption capacity as well as indications of misuse of the funds of the *Youth in Action* program for what alerts were sent to *EC* and *European Parliament (EP)* in Brussels. Activities implemented in cooperation with *MCET* related to supporting the shadow negotiation teams resulted with development of matrixes that analyse the state of affairs in the areas of three negotiating chapters - judiciary and fundamental rights, social policy and employment, and competition. The matrixes served as basis for publishing nine policy briefs² tackling different shortcomings and recommending solutions in the relevant areas. Part of the policy briefs were discussed at three debates related to policies in the area of fundamental rights, democracy and competition with representatives from media, government institutions and CSOs. The *Accession Watch* reports and the policy briefs served as valuable source of information to the MPs, civil society and the media in assessing the alignment of governmental policies and practices with the targets set by *EC*.

¹ 1. December Fairy Tale; 2. Forgotten Agenda 2014; 3. Youth of Action; 4. Win-Win Policy

² 1. Does the EU have the power to protect fundamental values: the case of Hungary; 2. Does the EU have the power to protect fundamental values: the case of Austria; 3. Whether the Republic of Macedonia follows suit in the harmonisation of its national legislation with the international conventions that regulate the obligation for alimony with foreign element; 4. Problems with the realisation of the meeting rights of the parent that doesn't live with the child; 5. Private enforcement of Competition policy in the EU and in Macedonia: how can the consumers and companies get damages from breach of competition policy rules; 6. Republic of Croatia - The experience of the negotiations process for Chapter 8 (Competition Policy); 7. Competition Policy in Macedonia and its implementation; 8. Does Macedonia have Competition Policy; 9. What you pay is what you get: financial and personnel capacities of the Commission for protection of competition

FOSM engaged independent experts and prompted stakeholder participation in the process of approximation of the national legislation with EU. Two independent analyses of the draft-law influencing the mechanisms for the human rights protection and the functioning of the civic sector were prepared and these concerned the Law on Misdemeanors, the Law on Public Administration and the Law on Public Sector Employees. During 2013, the work on detailed law analyses continued as part of the *Law Watch Analyses* edition, with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the key reform laws that are part of the process of approximation of the national legislation with EU. The following analyses were published: (1) *Six Years Later: Is the Wall of Silence Cracking?*; (2) *Legal Needs and Path to Justice in the Republic of Macedonia*; and (3) *The Judgments Ought to be Implemented - Analysis of implementation of European Court of Human Rights' Judgments in the Republic of Macedonia*. Additionally, at the end of 2013, another three analyses have been initiated: (1) the functioning of the regulatory bodies in Macedonia; (2) the ongoing reforms in the administration, including the functioning of the newly established State Commission for decision making in administrative proceedings and employment relationship procedures; and (3) effective criminal defense.

FOSM in cooperation with *Center for Civic Communications* within *USAID Civil Society Project* conducted monitoring of 240 public procurements implemented by the central government institutions and municipalities. The analyses of the findings from the monitoring accompanied by recommendations were published in four quarterly reports related to the monitoring of the central-level government institutions and in two semi-annual reports covering the findings of the monitoring of the municipal public procurements. The reports point out to several key problems in the public procurement system that undermine the principles of transparency, competition, accountability and responsibility in spending public money. Several bold shortcomings detected among a significant share of monitored sample of public procurements raise the dilemma whether public procurements are performed only for the sake of complying with the form, without proper application of the basic principles governing public procurements, such as competition among companies, equal treatment and non-discrimination, transparency as well as the cost-effective and efficient use of public funds. The analyses underline the need for establishment of control mechanisms that would prevent malpractices and violation of legal provisions in all stages of public procurements. Findings of the monitoring of the public procurements were embedded in the *USAID analysis of Macedonia Inclusive Growth Diagnostic*. Many of the findings were quoted by the MPs during the parliamentary plenary session on amendments of the Law on Public Procurement in September 2013, which points to the weaknesses of the public procurement system. Some of the recommendations were included in the latest amendments of the Law on Public Procurement adopted by the Parliament in October 2013. In addition, a comparative analysis of relevant practices pursued by the countries in the region and in EU shows that almost all of them have stipulated penal provisions for violations made to the Law on Public Procurement. Macedonia is among a handful of countries in the world whose Law on Public Procurement does not stipulate sanctions for violations made to legal provisions in effect, despite the numerous cases of violations identified in the practice.

FOSM in cooperation with *Transparency Macedonia (TM)* published the analysis "*Money in Politics – 2013 Annual Report, Transparency of Political Party Financing*" with the ultimate goal to prepare a comprehensive monitoring on the transparency of the political party financing. The analysis contains final observations on the situation and recommendations to improve the legal framework governing financing of political parties and their election campaigns. FOSM and TM's suggestions for urgent

change of the relative level of campaign donations for legal entities in the amount of 5% of their total revenues have been accepted with the new amendments to the Electoral Code that changed it into absolute numbers. In order to push for greater transparency of the authorities, *FOSM* continued using the Law on Free Access to Public Information as a research tool to obtain answers from the institutions in order to monitor public policies and their programs' implementation. 250 free access to information requests were submitted and 97 appeals were lodged at the administrative and court instances for the protection of the right to free access to information.

Monitoring of the decentralization process and performances of 12 municipalities was conducted in cooperation with the *Centre for Local Democracy Development (CLDD)* within *USAID Civil Society Project*. Two semi-annual reports related to fiscal decentralization and education were prepared. The reports showed small progress in the fiscal decentralization and in the delivery of municipal services in the area of education especially when analyzing the trend for the period 2009-2012. Key findings about fiscal decentralization in the Republic of Macedonia, as monitored in the period 2009-2012, suggest that the country lags behind the countries from the region and *European Union* and if the current trend continues, a long period of time would be required to achieve the commitments for greater financial independence of municipalities. They served the municipal officials and citizens as credible source of information in policy-making and advocacy for change.

Our commitment for improving the access to justice, focusing on the poor and marginalized groups, resulted with registration and support of six organizations for free legal aid that provided legal counsel and legal aid for 1,288 citizens. A collaboration was established with the courts and attorneys that represent cases in which free legal aid has been approved. The registered organisations monitored 34 court hearings in cases with approved free legal aid. *FOSM* provided court representation for eight applicants for free legal aid whose applications were rejected. At the end of 2013, *FOSM* obtained an 18-month financial support from *European Union (EIDHR Instrument)* in order to continue its efforts for citizens' equal access to justice and strengthening the capacities of the national organizations that work in the human rights field.

FOSM's support to eight NGOs that comprise the *Network for Protection Against Discrimination (the Network)* resulted with submission of six petitions in front of the *Commission for Protection against Discrimination*. During 2013, *the Network* extended its work through submission of seven criminal charges in front of the Public Prosecution from which *the Network* demanded to initiate court proceedings for incitement of discrimination. Most criminal charges, or more precisely four, raised concerns motions for establishment of criminal liability in the cases concerning physical attacks on *LGBTI Support Centre*. Also, the network was approved by the Basic Court - Gostivar to appear as an intervener in an anti-discrimination case that was developed by *the Network* in cooperation with a lawyer from Gostivar. The network continuously informs the public about relevant anti-discrimination issues.

FOSM together with *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia* in June 2013 prepared a submission for the Macedonia's second cycle under the *UN Universal Periodic Review*. The submission provided responds to 30 of the 42 recommendations that were given to Macedonia in 2009, and attempts to present CSOs observations on human rights situation. 23 organizations joined the submission and gave their contribution with comments and recommendations.

FOSM continued to support the activities of *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE* for budget monitoring of the two health preventive programs i.e. Program for Active Health Care of Mothers and Children and Program for Early Detection of Malignant Diseases. The budget monitoring is aimed at monitoring of the funds allocated for immunization of Roma children and allocated funds for activities for breast and uterus cancer. As a result of the monitoring process, two analyses were produced - analysis on the status of implementation of the activities for immunization of Roma children³ complemented with the findings from the community monitoring⁴ and analysis of the status of implementation of the activities for early detection of breast and uterus cancer⁵. Apart from the already mentioned analyses, the Roma partners that are involved in the community monitoring processes, have produced Score cards⁶ for each of the involved municipalities, showing the local community assessment on the status of implementation of the immunization activities in their communities. The budget monitoring is not restricted solely to the operation of the relevant institutions appointed for implementation of the health preventive programs, but is rather extended to the analysis of the health budget in general, including the budget of the Ministry of Health and budget of the Health Insurance Fund⁷. As a result of the advocacy efforts, Ministry of Health has increased the number of educational activities foreseen with the Program for Active Health Care of Mothers and Children (from 6 to 50 i.e. with coverage of 5,000 Roma families). In addition to the budget and community monitoring activities, the implementation of the activities aimed at increased transparency and accountability of the public institutions, especially of the public health institutions, continued. Part of the activities were related to the process of access to public information and part to the assessment of the level of transparency and accountability of the public institutions implemented through the so-called STAR survey. Three leaflets were produced as a result of the assessment of the level of transparency and accountability of the public institutions⁸.

Also, within the same reporting cycle, *FOSM* supported the preparation of a joint submission⁹ that indicates the problems and recommendations for improvement of the health of Roma people, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), LGBT population, women, people with mental disability and victims of human trafficking. The document was prepared by *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE* in cooperation with 10 other civic organizations. As a result, 28

³ http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Sto_rabotime/2014/1/Opfat_na_decata_Romi_so_vakcinacija.pdf and http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Анализа_2.pdf

⁴ The community monitoring is implemented by three Roma NGOs: *NGO KHAM Delchevo*, *Center for Democratic Development and Initiatives - CDRIM* and *Association of Education Workers for Protection of Women's and Children's Rights - LIL* in Delchevo, village of Crnik, Shuto Orizari, Gjorche Petrov, Karposh and Saraj

⁵ http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Анализа_dojka_1_verzija.pdf and http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Анализа_рак_на_грло_на_матка_5_verzija.pdf

⁶ http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Sto_rabotime/2014/1/Скор_картичка_ЦДРИМ.pdf; http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Sto_rabotime/2014/1/Скор_картичка_КХАМ.pdf

⁷ http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/So_kolku_pari_raspolaga_zdravstvoto.pdf

⁸ http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Najzatvoreni_institucii_za_javnost_za_2013.pdf ; http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Najnetransparentna_institucija_vo_RM_za_2013.pdf ; <http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2014/Proaktivno%20netransparentni%20za%202013.pdf>

⁹ <http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/Ostanati/2013/Joint%20Submission%20on%20health%20to%20the%20UPR%20-ESE%20and%20other%20CSO%27s,%20Macedonia.pdf>

recommendations related to health issues were incorporated in the draft report¹⁰ of *Universal Periodic Review* working group for Macedonia.

With the financial support to 11 online media¹¹, two dailies¹² (in Macedonian and in Albanian language) and the weekly *Fokus*, *FOSM* enabled to citizens access to independent and alternative sources of information. During 2013, the number of journalists-fellows was increased with additional five correspondents from five provincial towns, thus increasing the production of the informative portals with socio-political, economic, social topics and other issues of public interest for the citizens. Within the project *Media Mirror*, five media monitoring reports were issued and were distributed to the all media and to all relevant domestic and international institutions. For one of the reports a debate was organized where the level of self-censorship and freedom of expression within the media themselves was discussed. The book "*The Thinker's Guide to Fallacies - The Art of Mental Trickery and Manipulation*" by Richard Paul and Linda Elder was promoted as a part of *Media Mirror* project. This book aims to indicate ways of propaganda and manipulation, especially in a situation where a constant limitation of freedom of expression occurs. *FOSM* and its partners, *Metamorphosis Foundation* and *Youth Educational Forum (YEF)*, implemented the regional project *Youth and Media* in 11 countries¹³ where a survey was conducted on the relations between youth and media. The survey findings were presented and discussed at the international final conference on youth and media held in Skopje at the beginning of February 2014 with the participation of youth organizations representatives from Macedonia and abroad and participation of partners from the 11 countries where the survey was conducted.

Several initiatives aiming at influencing education policies at national and school level were undertaken. The cooperation with the *International Centre for Educational Policy Studies/ Faculty of Education*, Ljubljana continued with developing new training modules on *Promotion of Participation in Schools*. The training delivered to four primary schools, was followed by action research and by implementation of small-scale initiatives in each participating school. Following the new trends in teaching methodology, two guidebooks in Macedonian and in Albanian language were published: *Creative Approach to Teaching* and *Social Justice in Education*. The guidebooks are widely used by school teachers as well as by the teachers from the teacher training institutes. In order to provide university students with basic literature in the field of gender studies, the third volume of *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes* from the edition *A History of Woman in the West* was translated into Macedonian language.

Progress was achieved under the *Regional Research Promotion Program (RRPP) in the Western Balkans*, managed by the *University of Fribourg* and financed by the *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation*, aimed at supporting researchers to contribute to social, economic and institutional reforms in the region. More than a dozen researchers from Macedonia benefited from three regional capacity building training events. Additional 11 researchers from Macedonia participated in the 5th RRPP Annual Conference "*Social, Political and Economic Change in the Western Balkans*" in Belgrade. The publication "*Research in Social Science in Macedonia*" was promoted at the national

¹⁰A/HRC/WG.6/14/L.8

http://esem.org.mk/pdf/Voved/Monitoring%20na%20chovet%20prava/Izvestai%20vo%20senka/UPR/A_HRC_WG.6_18_L8_Macedonia_MK.pdf

¹¹ Plusinfo, A1on, Libertas, Portalb, Skaj, Mojotgrad, MKRevolucija, Burevesnik, Maktel, Globusmagazin and the online edition of Fokus

¹² Sloboden pecat (Free Press) and Lajm (News)

¹³ Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia

conference “*Improving Policies in the Field of Research in Social Sciences in the Republic of Macedonia*” in Skopje. The program will continue in the period 2014-2016 and beside the support provided for capacity building of young researchers, FOSM will also implement a project aimed at advancing the research policies in the country.

Several initiatives of Macedonian CSOs, supported through the *East-East Program: Partnership Beyond Borders*, also contributed to the attainment of anticipated progress. *Youth Educational Forum* organized a one-week study visit for 13 representatives of youth organizations from Georgia aiming to exchange positive experience and information about effective models for strengthening capacities of youth organizations by youth and student mobilization, managing local and national youth networks, encouraging volunteerism, initiation of youth activism, and use of social media as tool for advocacy. *Faculty for the Things That Can't Be Learnt* hosted a regional conference dedicated to dialog between experts and broader public audience related to the public space, the role of the individual and the personal responsibilities in the process of democratization of the state and society. At the conference, creative projects dedicated to the public space as an open platform for civic activism, public expression of political opinions and promotion of the social justice concept were presented. Nine representatives of Albanian civil sector attended the study visit which was organized by *NGO Konekt* and focused on promotion and development of policies for improvement of the concept for social responsibility. Colleagues from Albania by direct contacts with their Macedonian colleagues exchanged ideas and positive practices for creating strategic approaches in achieving social responsibility for support of different groups in society. *Jasminka Frikshikj (Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in the Republic of Macedonia - ESE)* and *Sandra Anastasovska (Youth Educational Forum)* participated in the trilateral initiative between East Timor, South Sudan and Macedonia focused on exchange of experience for strengthening the role of youth population in the process of democratization of the state and society, issues related to monitoring of public health budgets, participation of civil organization in the process of creation and implementation of public health polices, and possible approaches for improvement of right to health for women and marginalized communities.

Within the ***encouraging civic participation and activism*** strategic priority, FOSM made progress in mobilizing citizens and CSOs in social advocacy actions, focusing on issues crucial for the Macedonian democracy. *Citizens for European Macedonia Club*, or *CEM Club*, in Skopje, enabled 84 CSOs, informal groups, publishing houses and think-tank institutions to organize 205 public events with total of 4,582 participants, on issues related to human rights, youth, poverty, marginalized groups, gender equality, identity and history, regional cooperation, reform of institutions, civic activism, elections, media freedoms, education, health, transparency of institutions, EU accession, etc. Financial support was provided for four initiatives for gender equality; propaganda detection and reaction; creation of live libraries of civil disobedience; and sustaining the web portal www.okno.mk that contains critical articles for urban culture and policy. At the beginning of 2013, the book “*Black Monday*” was published, containing texts, media articles, photographs and recordings that testify for the events associated to the 2013 State Budget Adoption and the forceful eviction of journalists and opposition from the Parliament. More than 100 lawyers, professors, journalists and civic activists attended the book promotion followed by a debate.

USAID Civil Society Project, implemented by *FOSM* in partnership with *Youth Educational Forum*, *Forum - Center for Strategic Research and Documentation*, *Center for Civil Communications* and *Reactor - Research in Action*, enabled provision of 43 grants to CSOs and informal groups acting as democracy hubs in their communities or conducting oversight of public institutions and research-based advocacy. Supported projects were focused on a variety of issues, such as judicial independence, freedom of expression, EU integration, corruption, public procurements, gender equality, human rights, youth issues, poverty, ethnic minorities, discrimination, volunteerism, environmental issues, agriculture, urban planning, and animal protection. Additional 21 grants have been awarded in December 2013 for improving CSOs cooperation and networking and for fellows' engagement in research projects, which are going to be implemented during 2014. 400 representatives of CSOs and civic initiatives increased their knowledge on monitoring of public procurements, decentralization implementation and *EU* integration, writing effective policy documents and advocacy through capacity building activities. *School for Active Citizenships* was attended by 54 participants, while 257 young people from 12 cities were trained for using new media and tools for internet activism. 878 representatives of the civil sector and non-formal initiatives participated on three civic forums and five debates that provided space for exchange of experiences and discussions on civic engagement, volunteerism, voting on elections, the role of civil society sector in democratic processes as well as the opportunities and challenges for civil society development in Macedonia.

FOSM financially supported ten initiatives of CSOs and individuals, aimed to encourage and develop intercultural understanding and cooperation. During 2013, eight books on Macedonian history and democracy authored by foreign writers have been translated and prepared for publishing, while two of them were published, "*From Dictatorship to Democracy*" by Gene Sharp and "*Macedonian Question from 1944 to Present Days*" by Tchavdar Marinov. Roma artists from Shutka Municipality, known as *Shutka Roma Rap*, who fuse hip-hop and traditional Roma music, toured Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia and Hungary and promoted their second album "*I am Underground*" ("*Me sijum Underground*"). In October, the album reached 8th place on the prestigious *World Music Charts Europe*.

Community Forums Program, funded by the *Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)* and implemented in 9 municipalities, resulted in implementation of 14 projects in the local communities that were identified and developed with strong citizens' participation. All projects were co-financed by the municipalities. The community forums model showed to be good practice for wide consultation and citizens' involvement in local policy and decision making. Therefore, all municipalities involved in the program have adopted the community forum within the municipal statutes as formal instrument for participatory decision making. The latest *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by *FOSM* and *SDC* at the end of 2012 extends the program cooperation until June 2014.

Significant progress was made in achieving the objectives set under the ***integration of Roma, youth and other marginalized groups*** strategic priority. *Roma Education Project (REP)* supported by *USAID*, *Pestalozzi Children's Foundation* and *Roma Education Fund* completed the ninth year of implementation, providing comprehensive educational support to increase school retention and academic achievement of participating Roma children and youth. A total of 191 pre-school children were provided educational assistance including the development of social and cognitive skills,

cultural and hygiene habits of students, Macedonian language acquisition and basic knowledge in math. A total of 863 Roma and 173 non-Roma students received direct out-of-school support in homework writing, subjects based tutoring, creative and other workshops on daily basis by the Roma Education Centers in Prilep, Kumanovo and Skopje. *REP* beneficiaries continued to demonstrate far better school performance comparing to non-participating Roma students.

Small intercultural initiatives were implemented by seven project primary schools enriching the extracurricular activities, improving the school climate and interaction among all students. Over 2,100 Roma and non-Roma students (Macedonians, Turks, Serbs, Bosnians, etc.), over 300 parents and 200 teachers participated in the project activities. Over 100 teachers from all 7 project schools were trained in interactive teaching methods and children's rights. The project schools were also provided with didactical materials and schools supplies to enable teachers to employ the knowledge gained at the training.

Research on *Education of Students with Low Learning Achievements* was conducted in cooperation with the *International Centre for Educational Policy Studies/ Faculty of Education*, Ljubljana. The findings and the recommendations were presented at four round tables countrywide.

FOSM's Romaversitas project continued to advance the personal capacities and carrier prospects of Roma university students by provision of additional academic support (tutoring, academic training, etc.). In 2012/13 academic year, 76 Roma university students from different study fields received RMUSP¹⁴ scholarship, while 105 students received scholarships for 2013/14 academic year. In addition, 72 RHSP¹⁵ scholarships were awarded in 2012/13 and 56 in 2013/14.

The final performance external evaluation of *REP* was conducted in the period April-June 2013. The final project external evaluation states: *"The key conclusion of this evaluation report is that Roma Education Program was an invaluable experience that achieved remarkable results and has an outstanding potential for continuation of replication. The project met its objectives, benefiting from a solid budget, a tailored, pipeline approach and covering (in terms of final beneficiaries) entire age cohorts."*¹⁶

The Youth for an Open Society Program, implemented by *FOSM's* strategic partner *Youth Educational Forum (YEF)*, attracted an impressive number of youngsters from all over the country. Coached by a pool of 40 volunteer trainers, the 22 Debate clubs and 19 Street Law clubs, gathered over 600 high-school students in weekly lectures on debate, argumentation, rule of law, civil and political rights and various events. Young debaters participated in two national and ten regional debate tournaments, competing on political motions. The Macedonian debaters reached the top 16 teams on the world championship and got the 2nd best speaker position. Dozens of public debates were organized, including *"Argument: Organized Expression"*, a mega-debate event bringing in public figures and a live audience of over 400 to a debate on elections. The most active members attended advanced training events, such as *"Street Law: EU Training"* (70 participants) and *"YEF Academy"* (80 participants). Over 100 members of Media-Art Clusters in five cities, participated in workshops on digital activism, street activism and alternative forms of public expression. *Radio MOF* hosted 20

¹⁴ Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program of the Open Society Foundation funded through the Roma Education Fund

¹⁵ Public Health Scholarship Program of the Open Society Foundation funded through the Roma Education Fund and OSF Public Health Program

¹⁶ Radu Florea and others, 2013, Roma Education Project Performance Evaluation Report .p.6

shows on its radio program led by CSOs, young activists and musicians (including the first LGBT show in the country) and produced over 1,000 single shows and posted 3,000 articles. The radio mentored 15 young journalists and provided video streaming support for 15 various civil society events. Upon the introduction of the External examination reform affecting all primary and secondary education students in the country, YEF conducted an analysis and assisted students in submitting complaints due to the flawed process. YEF gathered a petition counting to 25,378 signatures to declare the external testing in 2013 as pilot and prepared an analysis of the implementation. YEF worked with students in four high-schools in building capacities for pluralist student organizing and drafting a student program for the academic year which was submitted to the schools, aimed at gradual change to the shattered system of student organizing. In 2013, two national researches were performed: “*Violence in Schools*” and “*Monitoring of the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy and Program for Advancement of Education*”.

Aimed at supporting the law-based protection of health rights of socially marginalized communities (LGBTI population, sex workers, drug users, PLHIV and Roma), FOSM continued to support the legal representation involving different SMGs (sex workers, drug users, transgender persons and PLHIV). Strategic litigation actions are undertaken in 17 lawsuits out of which five cases (two cases of unauthorized DNA sample taking by the police; two cases of gender legal recognition; and one case of unauthorized medical data disclosure from methadone treatment program) are submitted to the *European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)*. Additionally, advocacy efforts for adequate Antiretroviral therapy for PLHIV, led by *Organization of People Living with HIV “Stronger Together”*, resulted in increase of the budget for Antiretroviral therapy and monitoring tests by 87.5% for 2013 (from €52,000 EUR to €97,500 EUR) and the increase of the HIV Program of the Ministry of Health by 2.75 times (175%) for 2014 (€130,081 EUR to €357,723 EUR). Calculations for realistic budgeting for Antiretroviral therapy done by “*Stronger Together*” were the key argument for these changes.

A research regarding the health status, fulfillment of right to health and access to health care services for Roma minority in comparison to other ethnic groups in Republic of Macedonia was supported. The research was composed of two parts: a household based survey conducted among a sample of Roma people and sample of people from other ethnic groups living in vicinity of Roma neighborhoods and desk review of relevant documents on national and international level. The research results showed that the situation regarding health status and access to health care services is more negative among Roma people in comparison to other ethnic groups. Roma people face with negative influence on their health from the social determinants more than other ethnic groups. Also Roma people face with higher degree of discrimination and improper treatment in the health care settings comparing to other ethnic groups. Having in consideration the lack of health data and other relevant data for Roma people, this research should represent solid basis for development of future policies and activities aimed for improvement of Roma health status and their access to health care services.

FOSM continued with its support to the paralegals program implemented by *NGO KHAM Delchevo*, *Center for Democratic Development and Initiatives - CDRIM* and *Association of Citizens for Support of Marginalized Groups ROMA RESOURCE CENTRE Skopje*. In 2013 they have provided paralegal support and assistance to 1,162 Roma in three Roma communities. Parallel to the provision of the paralegal assistance and support, a range of activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of paralegals (initial and continuous training events), advancing the case management and operation of

the paralegals program were undertaken. Continuous support for provision of legal representation and legal services resulted in positive outcome in three court cases of violations of human rights of Roma in the health care facilities and provision of legal services for health protection and social welfare for 1,653 persons. The model of *Roma Health Mediators*, developed with FOSM's support, is further implemented by the Ministry of Health, whereupon FOSM's representative is a member of the monitoring group established by the ministry.

The capacity building of Roma CSOs to advance the health rights of Roma was complemented with strategic media training and mentoring, provided by the *Youth Educational Forum*, enabled four Roma CSOs to make use of media advocacy tools, including community radio, TV, video advocacy, etc.

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Aiming to achieve a comprehensive advocacy that reflects all invested efforts in the area of Roma health, FOSM initiated establishment of the *Roma Health Advocacy Group*¹⁷ (*the Group*) comprised of nine Roma and non-Roma CSOs. Development of the *National Roma Integration Strategy*, a process led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, opened an opportunity for *the Group* to push their findings in a form of a joint submission of recommendations and measures to be integrated in five areas of the strategy: (1) health rights protection; (2) Roma children immunization; (3) information and health education; (4) access to gynecological and antenatal services; and (5) employment of Roma as health care professionals in public health institutions.

Project on Legalization of Roma Housing used the rare and time-limited legal possibility to assist poor Roma household in obtaining ownership documents for their homes, thus making them more secure in recovering from the consequences of the economic crisis. The project provided monitoring, legal assistance and advocacy to facilitate the legalization process. The established *Roma Housing Legalization Fund* provided interest-free micro-loans to cover their expenses for the legal and administrative procedure. This project's implementation timeframe is three years, until the beginning of 2015, and it is expected that by that time more than 1,300 Roma families will be assisted in obtaining ownership documents for their homes. In 2013, the established database registered around 1,500 legalization cases and the project provided 350 legal advices and disbursed 700 loans.

The total amount of funds spent for implementation of FOSM's activities in 2013 amounted to 319,784,116 denars, out of which 210,583,675 denars are from the Open Society Foundations and 109,200,441 denars from other donors.

¹⁷ Member CSOs of Roma Health Advocacy Group are: ROMA S.O.S. - Roma Organization for Multicultural Affirmation, Foundation Open Society - Macedonia, NGO LIL - Association that Merges Activities in the Field of Health and Human Rights for Protection and Promotion of Women's and Children's Rights, NGO KHAM - Delchevo, Association for Roma Community Development SUMNAL - Skopje, Association SASTIPE - Gostivar, Association National Roma Centrum - Kumanovo, H.E.R.A - Health Education and Research Association and Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE

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