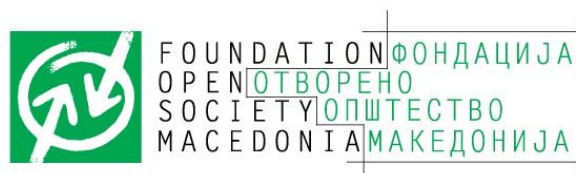


FOUNDATION OPEN SOCIETY – MACEDONIA

ANNUAL REPORT

| 2016 |



February 2017

|| SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE END OF 2016 ||

Foundation Open Society – Macedonia (FOSM), under the strategy for the period 2014–2017, focuses its resources and efforts towards rebuilding democracy and democratic governance as its long-term goal, by means of:

- Supporting civil society organizations (CSOs) to advance fields identified as the most threatened: 1) freedom of expression; 2) challenging the health establishment to advance human rights; 3) youth engagement for social change; 4) combating government corruption; 5) human rights monitoring and documentation; and 6) budget transparency. These CSOs have adequate expertise, access to relevant target groups, well-developed coalitions and alumni networks, allowing them to efficiently articulate their own strategies and respond to emerging challenges and circumstances.
- Implementing four concepts, those being: 1) Civic Empowerment and Mobilization; 2) Model of Citizen-centric Municipality; 3) Roma Integration; and 4) Humanitarian and Legal Assistance to Migrants.
- Implementing the initiative for creation of legal empowerment shared framework and its institutionalization, by scaling up existing diverse forms on provision of community-based access to justice in order to address the needs of Roma, sex workers, drug users and other marginalized groups, at local and national level.

Total amount of funds spent on implementing *FOSM's* activities in 2016 accounted for 274,761,367 MKD, of which 226,167,235 MKD were secured from the Open Society Foundations and 48,594,131 MKD from other donors.

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|| SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC FIELDS ||

Key outcomes and/or activities that marked work of CSOs supported under FOSM's strategic fields in 2016

#FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

• MEDIA DEVELOPMENT CENTRE •

Media Development Centre (CRM) started its 2016 activities with simultaneous publication of three policy papers: “Media and the Electoral Legislation”, “Online Media and Media Legislation in Macedonia”, and “Public Information Campaigns of the Government and State Institutions (Government Advertising)”. *MDC* was actively involved in creation of an informal coalition of CSOs working in the media sector in order to define possible directions for urgent democratic reform priorities in the Republic of Macedonia, which resulted in publication of the document “Blueprint for Urgent Democratic Reforms”. In the capacity of organization providing free legal aid and court representation for media outlets and journalists in civil and criminal lawsuits brought against them in relation to their coverage and reporting, *MDC* provided defence counselling to 26 journalists and media outlets.

• METAMORPHOSIS – FOUNDATION FOR INTERNET AND SOCIETY •

In the course of 2016, *Metamorphosis – Foundation for Internet and Society (Metamorphosis)* increased visibility of Macedonian civic initiatives in the country and abroad by using Internet-based tools such as: news aggregator *Ping.mk* and news portal *Portalb.mk* (in Albanian language), as well as in synergy with news agency *Meta.mk* (in Macedonian and English language), and ensuring significant presence in the social media. *Metamorphosis* cooperated with *Global Voices*, *European Digital Rights Initiative (EDRI)*, *Association for Progressive Communications (APC)* and *IFEX*, to ensure information dissemination about Macedonia abroad and to encourage advocacy for freedom of expression with the European Parliament and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights. *Metamorphosis* continued its cooperation with the Directorate for Personal Data Protection on the promotional activity called “Privacy Class”, which involved dissemination of human rights knowledge, including privacy, freedom of expression and fight against hate speech, organized at total of 21 high schools in Skopje, Prilep, Gostivar, Kicevo, Struga and Tetovo. In addition, *Metamorphosis* continued its activities on capacity building for CSOs in Macedonia concerning strategic use of new technologies to advance their missions, by means of training and software donations.

In December 2016, with the support from OSF Information Program from New York, *Metamorphosis* continued implementation of the project “Initiative for Open Educational Resources in Macedonia”, aimed to create an open educational ecosystem in the country that would allow free sharing of knowledge on the Internet.

• ONLINE MEDIA •

The four online news media (*A1on.mk*, *Plusinfo.mk*, *Portalb.mk* and *Okno.mk*) provided citizens with information on current topics and events from the country and abroad. In addition to covering developments in Macedonia, these online media offered professional information to citizens about foreign media reports and topics related to state-of-affairs in Macedonia, as well as events in the region and beyond. Data from *YouTube*, *Google Analytics* and *GRID.MK* are indicative of their readership ratings among citizens, as they demonstrate an upward trend in terms of number of readers and visitors.

#CHALLENGING THE HEALTH ESTABLISHMENT TO ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS

• COALITION SEXUAL AND HEALTH RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES •

In order to promote human rights of marginalized communities, *Coalition “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities” (Coalition SHRMC)* established cooperation with several state institutions for capacity building of civil servants to work with members of these communities. Hence, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *the Coalition* delivered training to 50 social workers from inter-municipal social work centres in 25 towns, while 20 members of local committees on patients’ rights from Delcevo, Skopje, Ohrid, Stip, Bitola and Strumica benefited from training on detecting discrimination against LGBTI persons and on possibilities to advance health rights and health services for marginalized communities. In order to map the situation in terms of health services available to transgender persons, an analysis was developed and will be shared with the transgender community and health professionals, as well as with decision makers, for the purpose of improving the current situation.

Aimed at promotion of the rights of LGBTI community, total of nine public events were organized in Kumanovo, Tetovo and Bitola, accompanied with campaign against homophobia and transphobic violence. *Coalition SHRMC* organized three-day festival with alternative films and videos on topics related to sexuality and gender and body image in film art from former Yugoslavia. As part of regular monitoring and documentation of violation of human rights of marginalized communities, activities were taken to monitor implementation of the Strategy on Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health, which led to the conclusion that budget funds have not been allocated for that purpose and that the strategy is not implemented in the reality.

Monitoring of media reports on LGBTI resulted in motion of six appeals to the Appeal Commission at the Council of Media Ethics in the Republic of Macedonia on the grounds of hate speech based on sexual orientation, gender identity and disrespect for the right to privacy of LGBTI persons and sex workers. In addition, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination was addressed with one complaint against hate speech based on sexual orientation and political affiliation.

In partnership with *HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje* and *International Centre on Human Rights and Drug Policy at the University of Essex*, shadow report was submitted to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This Committee was also presented with report on state-of-affairs related to reproductive rights of women, developed by *HERA – Health Education and Research Association and Coalition SHRMC*. Based on these findings, relevant recommendations were drafted for promotion of reproductive rights of women in the Republic of Macedonia, while in partnership with *ILGA*,¹ joint submission on health rights of transgender persons was made to the European Committee on Social Rights.

• HOPS – HEALTHY OPTIONS PROJECT SKOPJE •

In the course of 2016, under the programme on paralegal and social assistance to sex workers, *HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje* organized workshops on the following topics: detecting cases of violence; improving communication skills; obtaining information and education on sexual and reproductive health; discrimination and mechanisms on protection against discrimination; domestic violence; health care and exercise of rights in health and social protection. Paralegals engaged under this programme conducted a total of 573 field visits to 178 sex workers in Skopje, Strumica, Struga, Ohrid and Gostivar and provided paralegal assistance for identified cases of violation of rights in the fields of social protection, health insurance, discrimination based on sex work and transgender identity.

Under the harm reduction programme for underage children, *HOPS* provided a total of 720 services to 33 children, including information and advice related to addiction treatment, exercising the right to health insurance and obtaining personal identification documents, reduction of risks related to HIV and Hepatitis C. Moreover, *HOPS*'s team worked on motivating parents of children who use drugs to start treatment at existing health institutions, i.e. Psychiatric Clinic, Department on Children and Youth, Institute of Mental Health for Children and Youth, and Toxicology Clinic.

In 2016, *HOPS*'s legal team developed a comparative analysis of legal frameworks on sex work in Sweden, New Zealand and Germany, as positive models for regulation of sex works, which included overview of positive and negative effects on life, health and work of sex workers. In addition, on the basis of analysis of opinions shared by 310 sex workers about the need to change legal regulations on sex works, *HOPS* drafted proposed solutions on amending the existing legislation in the Republic of Macedonia.

¹ *International Lesbian and Gay Association*

#YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**• YOUTH EDUCATIONAL FORUM •**

The project “Youth Engagement for Social Change” was implemented at 20 youth clubs which created space for learning, activism and youth integration in 10 towns across Macedonia. More than 500 young people worked and learned together as part of *Debate*, *Street Law* and *MediArt* clubs, and translated their knowledge into direct local initiatives that included performances, photo exhibitions, comics, quizzes and other creative events. *Street Law* club members were introduced to and visited the Ombudsman Offices in Skopje, Tetovo and Bitola and basic courts in Tetovo and Kumanovo. Four hundred citizens visited photo exhibitions organized by youth club members around local problems in Struga, Tetovo, Veles and Negotino. Youth in Tetovo worked on covering hate speech graffiti, while those in Veles drew art TV-set and organized street projections, and youth in Negotino published youth comic magazine featuring their works – Comic Art.

Hundred high-school students researched and debated as part of the National Debate Championship held on 7th and 8th May 2016 at FON University. In 2016, *Youth Educational Forum (YEF)* supported four high-school communities at the schools “Koco Racin” – Veles, “Kiril Pejcinovik” – Tetovo, “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” – Negotino and “Jane Sandanski” – Bitola to strengthen their capacity on conducting research, and provided assistance to three local youth councils in the municipalities Cair, Struga and Debar, to improve their operation and accountability.

Key achievements of this organization included developing set of recommendations targeting youth, education reforms and related policies, which were duly noted in the Resolution on Republic of Macedonia adopted by the European Parliament in 2016. Moreover, *YEF* actively participated in policy-making processes, such as development of Comprehensive Strategy on Education in the Republic of Macedonia and civil society document “Blueprint for Urgent Democratic Reforms”.

In 2016, youth-centred *Radio YEF* had more than 1,000,000 visits, while key stories aired implied research stories on air pollution, education and civil society organizations. This media outlet also covered stories related to youth life, public transport, migration and other burning issues that are of interest for the youth.

• FOUNDATION FOR DEBATE AND EDUCATION IDEA SOUTHEAST EUROPE •

The art of advocacy is regional project of *Foundation for Debate and Education IDEA Southeast Europe*, as part of which young human rights activists and members of youth CSOs acquired new advocacy skills by means of artistic expression. In the period 22nd to 29th June 2016, in Ohrid around 60 participants from 10 countries in the Southeast Europe region learned how to advocate for their ideas by using comics, data visualization, music and poetry as advocacy tools. This project is financed by OSF Human Rights Initiative from New York.

#COMBATING GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION

• MACEDONIAN CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN TRAINING •

Throughout the year, *Macedonian Centre for European Training (MCET)* developed comparative analysis of European Commission's reports on the Republic of Macedonia and presented it at the annual conference titled "Urgent Reform Fails", held in November 2016, followed by debate on key issues with other civil society representatives and the international community. It was proved that the comparative analysis maintains its crucial importance and represents food for thought for overall debate about the country's accession in the EU, as it provides an ideal overview of remarks put forward by the Commission, while indicating developments in this sector, as well as positive or negative trends in reforms or lack thereof.

Third year in a row, *MCET* conducted its survey research EUROMETER on acceptance of European values, public support for the EU accession process and atmosphere of fear in the country. Collected data were used to develop briefs and reports, as well as policy documents addressing the impasse in EU accession. Furthermore, *MCET* organized the School of European Policies dedicated to promotion of democracy by discussing topics such as: EU accession, Europeanisation, populism and non-liberal regimes in Europe. The School was held in early October 2016 with participation of civil society representatives, activists, as well as scholars from universities and research centres from Macedonia and the region (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo). Total of six education and debate sessions (EUROTALK) were organized for the think-tank community in Skopje and for representatives from several relevant CSOs on topics such as: Europeanization of the society, EU as global actor, EU enlargement policy and Macedonia's accession in the EU.

#HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION

• HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA •

In the course of 2016, *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia (Helsinki Committee)* provided free legal aid in total of 371 cases, of which 2 executive procedures, 22 administrative procedures, 14 civil procedures, 62 criminal procedures, 8 misdemeanour procedures, 19 labour disputes, 17 cases concerned prisons and psychiatric hospitals, 15 cases were related to human rights and the police, 24 cases on health and social rights, 12 cases on family law, 19 cases concerned labour disputes and 7 cases were related to detention conditions.

In this period, shadow report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was drafted and concerned reconsideration of the second, third and fourth periodic reports of the Republic of Macedonia under the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. More specifically, the shadow report addressed problems related to protection and respect for rights of migrants and

asylum seekers, unlawful cancellation of the right to social allowance for people at social risk and access to social services for LGBTI persons, non-enforcement of the Law on Elimination, Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence on the part of relevant institutions, inefficient health care system and hindered access to health services, segregation of Roma children at public education institutions and access to education at juvenile correction facilities.

In the course of 2016, *Helsinki Committee* strengthened its cooperation with domestic and international CSOs. Members of the Network on Protection against Discrimination drafted comments and recommendations for the proposed National Strategy on Non-Discrimination 2016–2020 and presented them to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In that, recommendations targeting marginalized communities, such as LGBTI persons, drug users and sex workers, were accepted by the ministry. Moreover, representatives from the Network on Protection against Discrimination actively participated in the working group tasked to develop amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination.

#BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

• ASSOCIATION FOR EMANCIPATION, SOLIDARITY AND EQUALITY OF WOMEN – ESE •

In order to establish effects of other policies beyond the field of health care, but relevant for the health budget, *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE (ESE)* initiated the process on mapping and analysing key national macroeconomic policies and regulations (first stage) and establishment of key indicators that would serve as baseline for analysis of macroeconomic effects and policies on the social and health protection sectors (second stage). As part of monitoring and analysis of health and social protection budgets from gender perspective, analysis was developed on unpaid work at Roma households concerning care for seriously ill people, in terms of analysing budget implementation of the National Strategy on Fight against Domestic Violence, underway is preparation of document that merges two analyses on realization of two separate grants² intended to support implementation of the Strategy.

Based on data from publicly available documents and those collected by using the instrument on free access to public information, reports were developed on implementation of the Programme on Early Detection of Malignant Diseases (Cervical Cancer) for the period 2012-2014 and the Programme on Treatment of Rare Diseases for the period 2015–2016. In order to promote these findings before the wider public, simplified versions of these reports were developed in the form of infographics and were presented on national and local media, internet portals and printed media.

² UN Joint Program “Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence 2008-2011” and UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

As regards promotion of transparency and accountability of the government and its institutions, on the occasion of 10th anniversary from the adoption of the Law on Free Access to Public Information, an information was released in the media about the level of transparency exercised by all public institutions in the Republic of Macedonia, manner in which the law is enforced and its impact on public institutions' transparency of operation. Information based on findings from the assessment of reactive transparency in 2015 and copy of relevant reports were submitted to 38 institutions.

As part of activities related to implementation of the combined approach (social accountability and legal empowerment), in cooperation with the School of Public Health at the Johns Hopkins University, survey questionnaire on comprehensive assessment of health priorities among Roma people was piloted. In order to ensure efficient implementation of field activities, *ESE* drafted the “Manual for Roma Community Animators and Facilitators”, while representatives from three partner Roma CSOs were trained to act as animators and facilitators that will work in the field of social accountability and legal empowerment. For the purpose of providing adequate information for animators and facilitators, website www.healthrights.mk was regularly updated with total of thirteen amendments to relevant laws, as well as ten publications. In addition, *ESE* provided technical support to three partner Roma CSOs to implement social audit in terms of number of outreach visits to Roma households and in terms of coverage of Roma women with preventive gynaecological health service pursuant to the Programme on Early Detection of Malignant Diseases.

|| CONCEPTS in 2016 ||

Progress against 2016 milestones

|| CIVIC EMPOWERMENT AND MOBILIZATION

Overall goal of the concept on Civic Empowerment and Mobilization is to contribute to the revival of democratic governance.

First objective under this concept is for empowered individuals, informal groups and CSOs, coordinated within an open, inclusive and non-partisan platform, to raise and address acute and contentious issues in response to backsliding democracy.

From 107 applications submitted to the call for proposals announced in June 2016, *FOSM* awarded grants to 11 projects in total amount of 100,740 USD, aimed to contribute to civic engagement and mobilization for improved democratic practices on local and national level. In that, 8 grants were awarded to CSOs and 3 grants were awarded to informal civic initiatives. Additionally, 13 social network activists were supported to encourage critical thinking and debate in the new media.

FOSM supported the civic action *We Decide!* which aimed to inform, motivate and encourage citizens to vote on the early parliamentary elections scheduled to take place on 11th December 2016. The civic action was focused on monitoring the election process and potential election irregularities. Moreover, it included monitoring of election campaign financing and election campaign coverage in news programmes aired at the public service broadcaster - MRT. The second portion of this action was focused on promotion and protection of ballot secrecy and therefore established toll-free line that was contacted by 140 citizens to report alleged election irregularities. Main tools used by the civic action included field activities on information dissemination with the newsletter "*We Decide*" and organization of flash mobs, including audio-visual messages aired in mainstream and social media. In addition, the action organized the youth campaign "Vote for What You Want" aimed to encourage youth turnout on the early parliamentary elections.

In the course of 2016, total of 9 ALARMS were published and promoted in printed and social media, 6 of which were dedicated to 2017 draft budget and 3 concerned the early parliamentary elections.

Throughout the year, 5 sessions were organized as part of the training cycle "School of Culture and Politics", in total duration of 20 days. Purpose of these training sessions was to provide broad knowledge to participants from CSOs, informal groups and civil activists on topics such as: culture and politics; art and power; culture of regimes; and culture of resistance. Trainings were attended by 134 participants from different towns across the Republic of Macedonia.

Activities on translation and printing of publications/books on various societal topics continued in the course of 2016. In that regard, five books were printed:

“The Origins of Albanian Nationalism” by Nathalie Clayer, “On the Political” by Chantal Mouffe, “On Populist Reason” by Ernesto Laclau, “Security, Territory, Population” by Michel Foucault and “Subculture: The Meaning of Style” by Dick Hebdige.

The Club “Citizens for European Macedonia” (CEM Club) continued to serve as platform for expression of critical public thought and open space available to all CSOs and informal groups. A total of 204 events took place at CEM Club, organized by *FOSM* and around seventy CSOs, informal groups, civic initiatives, embassies, publishers, theatre troops, etc. and were attended by more than 3,600 visitors.

Implementation of **USAID Civil Society Project**, which started in 2012 and should end in August 2016, was extended by December 2016.

All 41 grants awarded to 39 CSOs in the previous year continued to implement their respective activities in 2016. In that, these grants were awarded under all three project components, as follows: 14 grants to CSOs acting as democracy hubs in their communities, 13 grants to CSOs engaged in monitoring and researched-based advocacy, and 14 grants for joint actions of CSOs.

Aimed at capacity building on project implementation, *FOSM* organized and delivered 5 training courses on strategic planning, presentation and communication skills, civic activism, public relations and free access to public information. Moreover, CSOs working on monitoring and advocacy benefited from total of 8 training sessions on capacity building for better understanding and access to EU funds, budget transparency and accountability, monitoring budget transparency and accountability, writing effective policy papers and advocacy. These training workshops were attended by total of 304 civil society representatives and activists.

At the three networking meetings organized in Skopje and attended by 57 representatives from CSOs, grantees had the opportunity to present their respective project activities and implementation dynamics.

In cooperation with the partner organization *Reactor – Research in Action*, *FOSM* organized three social hackathons: development and implementation of internet-based campaigns, digital communication contents and open data creation, and data visualization, attended by 61 representatives from grantee organizations. At the four workshops organized, civil society representatives and activists had the opportunity to develop concepts for creative civic actions, events and performances.

The partner organization *Youth Educational Forum (YEF)* organized the Fifth Youth Summer Academy with 99 participants and 2 follow-up actions in Veles and Skopje, 3 volunteer actions with 70 participants (Delcevo, Struga, Kratovo), local initiatives in Bitola, Skopje, Resen and Tetovo, 2 national youth campaigns on promotion of argument-based and competitive debate and on civil and political rights and freedoms, events called *Student Station 4.0* (with 25 student and youth organizations and 300 visitors), *Argument: Organized Expression*, Conference for Social Activism *Engage!* and events *Engage Youth* at Ponikva and *Engage@Akto* in

Bitola (with more than 1,000 visitors), regional debate tournaments in Negotino, Tetovo and Kicevo (with participation of 77 debaters). *YEF* produced and promoted videos on corruption in higher education and new textbook for its *Street Law* programme. Debate clubs at the two universities regularly organized student meetings, debates and discussions.

The School for Active Citizenship run by the partner organization *Forum – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation* covered 49 participants from the 9th and 10th generations, organized three reflection workshops for alumni from the last three generations, meeting with 47 alumni and implemented 5 alumni actions.

In 2016, *Reactor – Research in Action* conducted a new round of survey research on civic engagement, developed comparative analysis of civic engagement surveys conducted in the period 2012-2106, and updated the dynamic website www.graganskoucestvo.mk with 2016 data.

Second objective under this concept implies civic empowerment and mobilization for participatory development of alternative laws and policies, thus demonstrating the benefits from civic engagement and mobilizing civil society actors to take actions and engage in issues of public interest.

Under this objective, *FOSM* developed 5 analyses aimed to contribute to improvement of certain policies and practices, primarily those related to Chapter 23 from the EU accession process, focused on human rights and judiciary. Following topics were subject of analysis: definition of public interest in the legislation; execution of judgments from the European Court of Human Rights; efficiency of independent human rights bodies; performance of regulatory bodies; and impact of UN human rights protection mechanisms in the Republic of Macedonia.

As part of USAID Civil Society Project, the partner organization *Center for Civil Communications* published 2 periodic reports on monitoring public procurements organized by institutions at national level, 2 periodic reports on monitoring public procurements organized by institutions at local level, 3 indices of rationality, and designed summary edition of monitoring reports on public procurements implemented in the last five years under this project. In addition, they published the *Guide for Citizens on Monitoring Public Procurements*. *Center for Civil Communications* created and promoted the website www.opendata.mk which allows insight in key findings from monitoring of public procurements and public spending.

Total of six Accession Watch Reports were published in cooperation with *Macedonian Centre for European Training*, including comparative analysis of EC Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia in the period 2012–2016.

USAID Civil Society Project enabled development and publication of 6 policy papers on the following topics: foreign direct investments; the voters list; homelessness; promotion of the work of the Constitutional Court; and equitable regional development. Series of round tables were organized in Skopje, Stip, Tetovo, Strumica, Bitola, Prilep and Debar allowed stakeholders to discuss results from

implemented projects and opened possibilities for further actions and advocacy in order to increase impact of project activities.

As part of advocacy efforts and in cooperation with partner organizations and project grantees, *FOSM* organized 10 public events, those being: debate and promotion of the document “Proposed Solutions to Improve Investment Policy in the Republic of Macedonia” (with *Association of Young Analysts and Researchers*), debate “Urgent Reform Fails” (with *Macedonian Centre for European Training*), public debates “Culture Workers and Freelance Artists: Conditions and Rights”, “Culture of Inquiry: Role of Artists in Social and Political Crisis” and “What Should/Is Done and How to Archive Culture for Civic Changes” (with *Faculty of Things That Can’t Be Learned*), discussion “What I Have Lost for Liberty” (with student organization “*Izlez*”), 2 public debate events “Human Rights Weekend” and National Debate Tournament for Beginners (with *Youth Educational Forum*), closing conference of the School for Active Citizenship (with *Forum – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation*), promotion of research results on civic engagement in Macedonia in the period 2012-2016 “How to Achieve Greater Civic Engagement” (with *Reactor – Research in Action*).

At the closing event held in December 2016, *USAID*, *FOSM* and the partner organizations presented results achieved under five-year implementation of the *USAID Civil Society Project*.

The Civic Engagement Project was launched in August 2016, implemented by the *East West Management Institute – EWMI* in partnership with four local CSOs: *Metamorphosis – Foundation for Internet and Society*, *Association for Democratic Initiatives*, *FOSM* and *National Youth Council of Macedonia*. This project will strengthen constructive participation of CSOs in policies and issues of public interest and will increase and maintain youth engagement in public life in Macedonia. Capacity building activities for CSOs that will be delivered by *FOSM* start in January 2017.

The “National Policy Dialogue” continued its implemented under the **Regional Research Promotion Programme** (RRPP), focused on legal regulation of research in the field of social sciences, in order to propose model for scientific research activity funding that will improve quality, efficiency and impact of research activities and will address needs of the research community in Macedonia.

FOSM implemented this project in cooperation with three research organizations: *European Policy Institute – Skopje*, *Association Healthgrouper Summit – Skopje* and *Coalition “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities”*, and two independent experts: professors Emilija Simoska PhD and Snezana Bilik PhD.

In that, the project was based on analysis of data collected from primary and secondary sources, which provided baseline for development of 3 policy studies and proposed model for scientific research funding.³ Draft version of the proposed

³ http://www.fosm.mk/CMS/Files/Documents/Predlog-model%20za%20finansiranje_MK.pdf

model was presented before the domestic and foreign expert public and other interested parties in June 2016.

Preliminary results from the empirical research were presented at 3 public discussions held in the period March-April 2016. The first discussion covered thematic priorities, i.e. the need for thematic focus of open calls for scientific research projects. The second discussion underlined activities needed to advance the application process for scientific research grants on the part of the Ministry of Education and Science, while the third discussed the issue of ensuring high quality review of scientific research proposals.

In addition to issues covered under policy studies, answers were sought to three other issues related to comparative experiences in the region and beyond that were also of interest for the model on scientific research funding. They resulted in development of 3 position papers, i.e. policy briefs.

Regional seminar on “Qualitative Data Management and Analysis” was organized in February 2016, in Belgrade, attended by 25 young researchers. In April 2016, research academy titled “Introduction to Social Sciences for Young Researchers from the Western Balkans” was held in Sarajevo. This academy was attended by 35 young researchers attending lectures delivered by 13 instructors from distinguished universities and research institutes in West Europe and the region.

In September 2016, Tirana hosted RRPP’s last international conference on the topic “Is the Western Balkan Changing in Societal, Political and Economic Terms?”, attended by more than 100 young researchers from the region and beyond.

March 2016 marked the successful completion of remaining three regional projects supported under the 2013 open call.

At the same time (March 2016), RRPP announced an internal call for extension of research project supported under the 2013 open call, whereby all 6 organizations from Macedonia were awarded additional grants and implemented them with success by the end of March 2017, thus marking the official end of this programme.

|| MODEL OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC MUNICIPALITY

This concept was implemented in three big, urban, and multi-ethnic municipalities: Strumica, Centar and Struga, over the period 2014–2016. Overall goal was to offer model of citizen-centric municipality for participatory development and adoption of local strategies and actions plans in the fields of education, youth, social protection and cooperation with the civil sector. The concept provided different types of training for municipal administration, school employees and civil society representatives, aimed to build their capacity and improve service provision to citizens. In early 2016, relevant cooperation agreements were signed with mayors of said municipalities and concerned continuation and completion of activities implemented in the course of 2014 and 2015.

As part of this concept, activities implemented in the course of 2016 included organization of series of training on: 1) capacity building for transparent and accountable municipalities targeting 36 municipal administration employees and municipal council members, with a focus on local budgeting; and 2) creation of model on child-centric municipality, attended by 25 municipal administration employees and municipal council members. Primary goal under the second training was to guide and mentor all three municipalities in establishment of separate body/commission that would have the interests of the child in the forefront, as well as development of vision and basic values for strategic document on the model of child-centric municipality; designing procedures for children participation in different fields and activities at local level; and initiation of children budget programme under the municipal budget. Representatives from CSOs in all three municipalities attended advanced training on monitoring of public procurements intended to expand their knowledge and skills acquired in 2015.

Local school representatives were covered by three-day training on creative teaching attended by 32 participants from three project schools in the municipalities Strumica, Centar and Struga. Moreover, civil society representatives were trained to use the monitoring methodology for implementation of action plans related to local strategies which significantly improved their knowledge so they would be able to submit applications on the open call for monitoring implementation of local strategies and accompanying action plans in each of the municipalities. A total 15 CSOs applied on the open call and 10 of them were awarded grants (3 in Strumica, 4 in Centar and 3 in Struga). Throughout the year they monitored implementation of four local strategies and action plans in all three municipalities. Monitoring reports for individual local strategies of relevant municipalities will be published and discussed with the local authorities.

Pursuant to the cooperation agreement with *Foundation for Local Community Development*, civic project and budget forums were organized in all three municipalities in the second half of 2016. Project forums were organized in October 2016 and were attended by 323 citizens (74 in Struga, 114 in Centar and 135 in Strumica), resulting in selection of 4 projects to be co-financed, which were later approved and regulated with grant agreements signed with the municipalities, as follows: 1) infrastructural reconstructions in the field of social protection – procurement of montage container units for the kindergarten “Sun” in the Municipality of Struga; 2) replacement of façade window frames at the kindergarten “Kogcagin”, facility “Pinocchio” in the Municipality of Centar; 3) installation of food elevator at kindergarten “Koco Racin”, facility “Naum Naumovski Borce” in the Municipality of Centar; and 4) construction of new NGO Centre, in order to create institutional cooperation mechanism between municipal administration and civil sector in the Municipality of Strumica. Two budget forum sessions in each of the municipalities were organized in the first half of November and second half of December, attended by total of 407 citizens (138 in Struga, 83 in Centar and 186 in Strumica). These sessions were focused on discussing municipalities’ developmental programmes and selection of priority projects to be financed under 2017 municipal budgets.

The concept included implementation of activities that combine several tools and approaches, thus contributing to attainment of the second objective, i.e. provision of quality services for citizens and strengthening civic participation in community life. Community Centres established in all three municipalities provided direct administrative assistance to 275 citizens. In addition, manual on municipal competences, procedures and services was developed, published and distributed to citizens in the Municipality of Strumica, intended as reader-friendly and streamlined tool for them to cope with uncertainties of municipal procedures. For the purpose of contributing to transparent operation of the municipality and transparent process on awarding funds to associations, the brochure “Grant-Awarded Projects in the Municipality of Strumica in 2015” was developed and published. Info Day on announcement of open calls by the municipality to finance projects of CSOs and sports clubs was organized in Struga, including a presentation of survey results targeting performance of municipal utility enterprises “Komunalno” and “Proacqua”. Total of 11 training sessions on different topics organized by Community Centres were attended by 223 civil society participants, as well as students and teachers.

Good practices encouraged by Community Centres in all three municipalities included organization of so-called Open Days with municipal administration employees and municipal council members, addressing two dimensions of local government work. The first concerns establishment of direct communication between municipal council members and administration employees with the citizens. Open Days were focused on different topics of interest for the citizens, and were organized and implemented by employees at Community Centres. Novelty in this approach implied the fact that municipal councillors acted as members of commissions within the municipal council and that, so far, this type of interaction (in terms of format and topics discussed) has not been organized by the municipalities. Benefits thereof include direct discussion between councillors and citizens, as well as direct form of accountability and transparency. The second dimension and benefit from this practice implies solution to one systemic challenge observed in all municipalities across the state, i.e. marginalization of the role played by the municipal council vis-à-vis role and power entrusted to the mayor. According to evaluation findings on implementation of the model of citizen-centric municipality, benefits from organization of Open Days as regular practice were identified in increased accountability and transparency of the mayor before the municipal council, and of the municipality before the citizens. Total of 10 Open Days were organized in the course of 2016 with representatives of municipal council’s commissions and municipal administration employees and were attended by 275 citizens that had the opportunity to discuss issues and topics of their interest and need.

Community Centres in all three municipalities were engaged in development of the municipality’s social map which, in the absence of official population census, should contribute to better-structured planning of municipal activities in response to citizens’ needs, including financial implications thereof. Social maps of all three municipalities were printed in Macedonian and Albanian language, and were

promoted in front of 160 citizens in all three municipalities. Moreover, a leaflet on youth rights and obligations was developed and printed, followed by promotion among 500 high-school students in Struga. Several important survey researches were conducted and targeted various issues, such as, for example, local level services to address youth's needs (Centar); municipal competences and authorizations in the fields of education and culture (Struga). Municipality of Centar organized two surveys among parents of primary school children targeting extra-curricular activities and among parents of kindergarten children targeting activities that should be integrated in work programmes for pre-school children. Community Centres were actively involved in development of draft versions of action plans in the field of culture for all three municipalities.

Moreover, Community Centres actively supported several civic initiatives and allowed their premises to be used for support and organization of events by local CSOs with attendance from 257 citizens. Towards the end of 2016, Community Centres were registered as citizens' association and were awarded operation grants for the first quarter of 2017, in order to ensure completion of activities on civic budgets for all three municipalities and fundraising with other donors.

The project **Civic Participation for Local Democracy** was launched in January 2016 and is financed with grant from the EC IPA 2 Support for Civil Society and Media in 2014. It is implemented by *FOSM* and *Centre for Development of Local Democracy (CDLD)*. The project aims to assist CSOs working in the field of culture in all three partner municipalities (Struga, Strumica and Centar) to actively participate in local culture policy-making. In the course of 2016, participatory process was organized for development and adoption of local strategies on culture for the period 2017-2022 in all three municipalities, accompanied with relevant action plans. The process on culture strategy development was preceded by series of training and workshops with representatives from CSOs, institutions, municipal administration employees and municipal councils. In all three municipalities, the capacity building programme on strategic management and participatory planning included 3 one-day training on participatory planning tools (51 participants), strategic planning and situational analyses (48 participants), and methods of action planning (34 participants), which enabled participants to get acquainted with the strategic planning process and participatory planning tools, types of situational analyses, development of situational analysis in the field of culture, definition of mission and vision in the field of culture, strategy goals, priorities and measures, structure of balanced score cards, strategic goals, priorities and measures, and action planning. The programme on development of strategy and action plan in the field of culture included organization and delivery of training on situational analyses and definition of the vision (47 participants); development of the strategy framework (54 participants); and development of action plans (61 participants).

The project also included implementation of the programme on institutional and organizational capacity building and sustainability, primarily intended for CSOs, but attended also by municipal administration employees. This programme was comprised of 4 one-day training delivered in all three municipalities on the following topics: culture agenda 2020, national context and legislation vis-a-vis EU

culture policy (21 participants); innovation and multidisciplinary approach to implementation of local culture policies with application of best practices and lessons learned in other countries (17 participants); financial management, EU institutions and culture funds (25 participants) and project cycle management (22 participants).

FOSM efforts under the project **Access to Justice in Macedonia**, with focus on poor and marginalized groups, are financed by the European Union (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) and are implemented by supporting 5 free legal organizations that have provided legal advice and preliminary legal aid to 979 citizens. From 37 free legal aid applications submitted to the Ministry of Justice, 13 are pending approval, free attorney services were awarded in 10 cases, 1 application was withdrawn, and 13 applications were rejected. In order to provide representation for 9 cases led before the Administrative Court on the grounds of rejected free legal aid applications, the project secured attorney services and motioned individual lawsuits. Key project activities include education for citizens about their rights in two areas (labour rights and social protection), delivered as part of 5 public legal education sessions that were attended by more than 100 citizens, which also obtained copies of relevant manuals with the most important information in these two areas.

Moreover, the project included development of policy paper that identified weaknesses and shortcoming of the Law on Free Legal Aid, including recommendations for improvement. The policy paper was drafted on the request from the team implementing the twinning project on development of new law on free legal aid. At the project start, special software was developed and is used to register all free legal aid applicants, thereby enabling overview of data on applicants' demographic characteristics, legal problems they are facing, time needed by the Ministry of Justice to take decision upon free legal aid applications, and time needed by the Administrative Court to take ruling upon appeals motioned.

|| ROMA INTEGRATION

Empowering Roma to exercise health rights

Aimed at promoting the health status of Roma, *FOSM* applied several approaches: 1) provision of legal protection and paralegal assistance for exercise of health rights; 2) social accountability for implementation of health services that affect health status of Roma; and 3) changing negative narrative for Roma at healthcare institutions.

With the support from *FOSM*, 8 CSOs provided legal/paralegal assistance for total of 1,917 cases in 10 Roma communities (Suto Orizari, Delcevo, Vinica, village Crnik, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, Gostivar, Karpos and Gjorce Petrov). High number of problems concerned social protection that directly or indirectly affects exercise of the right to health insurance and other health rights, most common among them being applications for refunding health care costs, obtaining health card, reporting

irregularities to the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate and scheduling terms for specialist examinations. In addition to support provided in individual cases, the concept included implementation of joint activities by several CSOs, such as: petition to amend legal provisions whereby the right to social allowance is revoked on the basis of fast money transfers;⁴ development of shadow report on issues related to availability of gynaecological services for Roma women, illegal charges and discrimination against Roma women, which was presented by civil society representatives and Roma community members at the 58th session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Geneva;⁵ petition to the Ministry of Health to address lack of gynaecological services in the Municipality of Suto Orizari;⁶ and submission of complaints to the Ombudsman⁷ by women from Roma communities in Bitola and Prilep.

The partner organizations providing paralegal assistance and support also worked on continuous information dissemination and education of local Roma population about their health rights. For that purpose, series of workshops were organized on topics such as: right to child protection and child allowance; patient rights; exercise of rights related to antenatal health protection; contraceptives; possibilities for free-of-charge medical examinations; and other issues of interest for the Roma communities. In addition and for the purpose of timely information dissemination, printed materials were regularly distributed in Roma communities. Building relations and maintaining communication with competent health institutions were of particular importance to address problems and barriers faced by Roma in exercising their health rights. Meetings between Roma community representatives and local health institutions allowed the communities to engage in self-advocacy and direct involvement in discussion of problems and possible solutions to improve the situation, as well as to demand accountability from competent institutions. This contributes to change of positions and behaviour on the part of health professionals towards Roma, making them proactive in approaching the community and delivering health services.⁸

⁴ The contested provision was revoked in January 2016 with the Rulebook on Amending the Rulebook on the Method of Establishing Income, Property and Property Rights of Households, Determining Household the Holder of Social Rights and Documents Necessary for Exercise of the Right to Social Monetary Assistance ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 13 from 27.1.2016).

⁵ As a result of advocacy at the 58th session, CESCR recommended the Republic of Macedonia to intensify its efforts in order to ensure availability and accessibility of primary health care services to all people, regardless of geographical location; to immediately discontinue practices on illegal charges; to take all necessary measures to increase the number of gynaecologists and ensure that all women have access to gynaecological health services within their municipality, particularly in Suto Orizari; and to ensure that modern contraceptive methods are affordable to all.

⁶ Increase state subsidies for gynaecologist that will work in Suto Orizari and earmarking 2 resident scholarships for medical students in gynaecology that would later work in this municipality.

⁷ In most cases, the reaction on the part of the Ombudsman to persons/entities addressed by submitted complaints (most often they concern private health institutions) resulted in cancellation of practice on illegal charges for services, as well as establishment of mechanisms on free gynaecological services for pregnant women.

⁸ Upon the petition submitted by the Roma Civic Parliament from Bitola addressed to the Ministry of Health, PHI Clinical Hospital "MD Trifun Panovski" – Bitola, Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia – Regional Office in Bitola, Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia – Sector on Control, Regional Ombudsman Office in Bitola, the Deputy Ombudsman initiated a procedure which resulted in cancellation of practices for advance payment of hospital treatment, as well as non-issuance of discharge letters for patients that are unable to immediately settle participation fee for services provided at the Clinical Hospital "MD Trifun Panovski" in Bitola.

In 2016, *FOSM* continued to support implementation of activities by Roma CSOs and Roma community members on monitoring delivery and quality of health services related to immunization, women health, systematic check-ups, outreach nurse visits, antenatal care, etc. Community monitoring was performed in regard to services and measures anticipated under preventive health care programmes for immunization of Roma children (0-15 years), systematic check-ups, early screening for cervical cancer, and antenatal health care. Civil society representatives and Roma community members presented these findings in front of competent institutions and the broader public. Identified shortcomings were presented at public debates and press conferences, followed with demands addressed to competent institutions.

In order to ensure adequate capacity building, partner organizations were delivered training on topics such as: contents and budget of preventive health programmes; method on development and adoption of preventive health programmes; budgeting cycle related to programme development; advocacy related to the budgeting cycle; legislation on the right to access to public information; practical enforcement of the right to access to public information; social and child protection; Law on Labour Relations and labour-related rights; implementation of methodologies on community monitoring and social audit; social networks and storytelling. Aimed at ensuring sustainability of interventions on changing negative narrative for Roma at health institutions, group of professors from four medical faculties developed curricula for the subject “Cultural and Structural Competences of Health Professionals”, which will be part of undergraduate studies at the Faculties of Medicine in Skopje, Bitola, Stip and Tetovo.

Empowering Roma to promote their achievements in education

In the course of 2016, *FOSM* pursued the strategic goal on empowering Roma to promote their achievements in education by means of: 1) provision of additional out-of-school assistance to Roma primary school pupils; 2) scholarships, mentorship and other assistance to Roma university students; and 3) advocacy for sustainability of results achieved under *FOSM*'s previous education interventions.

With support from *FOSM*, 436 Roma primary school pupils from Skopje and Kumanovo benefited from direct education assistance provided by Roma CSOs *Dendo Vas* from Skopje and *Kham* from Kumanovo. Majority of these pupils are repatriated asylum seekers from European states which, after their return to the Republic of Macedonia, remained outside the education system or have joined school instruction late. They were assisted in obtaining relevant documents and re-enrolment at schools, comprehension of instruction materials, preparations for external testing and successful completion of respective grades.

Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) significantly contributed to increasing the number of enrolled and graduated Roma high-school and university students in the country. In the academic year 2016/2017, total of 100 RMUSP scholarships were awarded, of which 84 scholarships to undergraduate students, 15 scholarships to master

students and 1 scholarship to doctoral student. RHSP awarded total of 20 scholarships to medical students, 16 of which are undergraduate students, 2 are master students, 1 is doctoral student and 1 is residency student. In addition, RHSP scholarship beneficiaries received mentorship assistance from 12 professors and together attended the summer camp and advocacy training.

FOSM organized and delivered one training on the topic “What is Inclusive Quality Education and How to Achieve It?”, intended for 5 CSOs working on advocacy for various issues related to education integration of Roma children. The training aimed to introduce participants with aspects, preconditions, indicators and measures for promotion of inclusive education at community and school level. At the same time, the training included discussion of segregation forms in education and benefits from inclusive quality education. The training titled “Positive Education”, which *FOSM* organized for teachers from four primary schools, aimed to introduce them to benefits from positive education and its effects on students, teachers and parents. In that, the training elaborated on factors of psychological wellbeing, constructive and destructive cognitive styles of thinking and their links to school performance and psychological wellbeing of students, as well as characteristics of good school.

In order to respond to urgent needs of 31 Roma family members that were left without homes after their improvised dwellings under the Kale Fortress had been demolished (including people without documents, pregnant women, ill persons and small children), support was given to efforts of the *Initiative for Development and Inclusion of Communities (IRIZ)* for provision of food, diapers and basic supplies.

|| HUMANITARIAN AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS

In the course of 2016, around 100,000 food packages and other assistance were provided to more than 700,000 people transiting the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Moreover, over 30 cases of human rights violations and hate speech were documented. Analysis of policies and practices identified possibilities for policy advancements. Public debates and promotional interactive events were organized in order to inform the public on humanitarian aspects of the refugee and migrant crisis, underscoring violations of human rights and international standards. Representatives from partner organizations presented their monitoring findings and policy recommendations on numerous national, regional and international advocacy events. Social media were used to promote activities and send messages on the urgency of adequate protection of people on the move. “Media Glossary on Migration” was translated in Macedonian and Albanian language in order to assist skills advancement for media professionals. The public anti-xenophobia campaign “Children of the Planet Earth” highlighted links and differences of various groups in society, with focus on negative public opinion and called the public to reconsider its behaviour and attitudes.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonian Young Lawyers’ Association and Humanitarian Aid Organization LEGIS joined *FOSM* in implementation of this concept in the period August 2015 - January 2017.

|| LEGAL EMPOWERMENT SHARED FRAMEWORK

In 2016 *FOSM* started implementation of the four-year initiative whose main goals include development of framework on legal empowerment and its institutionalization, by scaling existing and diverse forms of community-based access to justice to address the needs of Roma, sex workers, drug users and other marginalized groups, on local and national level. Outcomes expected by the end of 2020 include establishment of partnership between representatives from relevant state institutions, local authorities and CSOs providing legal and paralegal assistance, in order to jointly work on promotion of funding for different forms of legal/paralegal assistance. This initiative is part of *Open Society Foundations'* efforts to institutionalize basic legal service at national level, and in addition to Macedonia, it includes other 9 countries (Moldavia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ukraine, the United States and Indonesia).

Hence, efforts taken by *FOSM* in 2016 were geared towards: 1) increasing the number of beneficiaries of legal/paralegal assistance (impoverished people, Roma, sex workers and members of other marginalized communities) and increasing their legal literacy; 2) scaling up forms of legal assistance by establishing university legal clinic; and 3) conducting analyses and research and building partnership for joint advocacy with CSOs working on legal empowerment.

Efforts taken under the first objective include activities implemented by 8 CSOs⁹ providing legal and paralegal assistance and 5 CSOs providing free legal aid.¹⁰

Under this initiative, the concept on legal clinic for vulnerable groups at the Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje was developed. More specifically, the legal clinic is envisaged to strengthen practical competences of students and teaching staff to work with vulnerable groups (people at social risk, LGBTI, sex workers and Roma) for the purpose of solving their legal problems, and will contribute to institutional capacity building for advancement of legal assistance mechanisms. In that, the Faculty of Law will engage in new forms of delivering interdisciplinary student instruction in cooperation with CSOs, establishment of clinic-based education for students, and provision of information on the rights and exercise thereof in the community.

In order to ensure argument-based advocacy for attainment of overall goal defined under this initiative, i.e. institutionalization of legal/paralegal assistance forms, series of activities were taken in the course of 2016, as follows: cost and benefit analysis on provision of different types of free legal and paralegal assistance in the community; research survey on legal power and access to justice among

⁹ Health Education and Research Association – HERA, Association for Democratic Development of Roma "SUN", Roma SOS – Roma Organization for Multicultural Affirmation, Citizens' Association for Health, Social and Education Support "Initiative for Development and Inclusion of Communities" Skopje, Centre for Democratic Development and Initiatives – CDRIM, NGO Kham Delcevo, Association of Education Professionals and Protection of Women and Children Rights "LIL" Skopje, and Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁰ These activities are described under the concepts on Model of Citizen-Centric Municipality and Roma Integration.

drug users and sex workers; research survey on public perception and citizens' knowledge about the Law on Free Legal Aid, and underway is research survey on legal needs among the Roma population in Macedonia.

In the first year of implementation and for the purpose of strengthening advocacy efforts, a network was established of 19 CSOs providing free legal and paralegal assistance. In addition, 4 meetings were organized to share work experiences, present experiences of participants in the international course on legal empowerment and initial survey findings, while the last three-day workshop was used to engage in joint strategic planning.