

# FOUNDATION OPEN SOCIETY - MACEDONIA

## ANNUAL REPORT | 2014 |



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## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN 2014

*Foundation Open Society – Macedonia (FOSM)*, within its strategy for the period 2014-2017, directed its resources and efforts to restoring democracy and democratic governance as its long-term goal, by means of:

- Support to 12 CSOs to advance the following fields identified as the most endangered: 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 organizations have relevant expertise, access to adequate target groups, well developed coalitions and alumni networks that enable them to articulate their strategies and respond to possible challenges and circumstances;
- Implementation of three concepts: Civic Empowerment and Mobilization, Model of Citizen-centric Municipality and Roma Integration.

## SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC FIELDS

### Key outcomes and/or activities that marked the work of CSOs supported in *FOSM's* strategic fields for 2014

#### FIELD 1:

#### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

##### ▪ ONLINE MEDIA ▪

Four news online media (*A1on.mk*; *Plusinfo.mk*; *Potalb.mk* and *Okno.mk*) offered a different approach to informing citizens in Macedonia. Unlike the traditional media, they provided citizens with information about events and current affairs that have not been covered or have been marginalized by the mainstream media, despite their importance and scope. In addition to this alternative coverage of important topics and events in Macedonia, these online media also offered live feeds, accurate and unbiased information to citizens about topics discussed abroad and concerning the state-of-affairs in Macedonia.

Their impact and ratings among citizens, as well as their visits and views, are obvious from data obtained from YouTube, Google Analytics, GRID.MK, which are indicative of increased numbers of viewers and readers. In the case of *A1on.mk*, the number of video views on the YouTube service has doubled in 2014 compared to statistics for the previous year 2013, while in the case of *Plusinfo.mk* and *Portalb.mk* there is evident trend of increased readers compared to 2013.

##### ▪ MEDIA DEVELOPMENT CENTRE ▪

Under *Media Development Centre's (MDC)* organization and mediation, 9 news websites agreed on the principles of fair use of others' copyrights in media coverage and accepted the self-

regulatory principles on copyrights for online media. Amended and expanded issue of “Manual on Copyrights and Related Rights in Electronic Media” developed by a group of authors from the Faculty of Law was promoted, including the public policy document titled “From MRT to Independent Public Broadcasting Service in Macedonia” authored by Klime Babunski. *MDC* organized two training events attended by 15 participants from news websites in Macedonia, one of which focused on integration of civil journalism in online media and the other concerned copyrights and related rights for online media.

As part of its activities related to monitoring of media legislation, *MDC* developed and published 3 quarterly reports from monitoring court cases related to libel and defamation and 3 quarterly reports on the performance of regulatory bodies, the Parliament, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, and MRT. In cooperation with *FOSM*, *MDC* organized a debate on the topic “Freedom of Expression Evicted from the Parliament and Left on the Doorstep of the Constitutional Court: What Should Have the Constitutional Court Debated When Deciding in the Matter Concerning the Journalist?” centred around the decision taken by the Constitutional Court whereby it rejected the application submitted by the *Association of Journalists in Macedonia* and six journalists to motion protection of their rights in the events from 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

#### ▪ **METAMORPHOSIS - FOUNDATION FOR INTERNET AND SOCIETY** ▪

In the course of 2014, *Metamorphosis – Foundation for Internet and Society (Metamorphosis)* expanded and strengthened its alternative infrastructure for information and mobilization of citizens in Macedonia with the use of new technologies. By means of platforms and tools developed by *Metamorphosis*, such as *Ping* and *Kauza*, in cooperation with other NGOs, networks and independent media from the country and abroad, the system for content production and promotion was created and was aimed at breaking the media blockage in the country and beyond, while in some aspects (for example, articles about Macedonia on *Global Voices*) this production was doubled compared to 2013.

Series of training, mentorship and tactical support for their efforts and online promotion of thematic networks between NGOs and independent media resulted in capacity building of a core of non-governmental organizations, activists and intellectuals to use new technologies. Gradual success in adopting this type of action by the civil society sector is visible also in the increased effect from use of new technologies in organization, realization and coverage of protests in the second half of 2014 (for example, against pollution in Tetovo, student protests, protests of honoraria workers, protests for City Trade Centre, etc.).

Visibility abroad of events in Macedonia was increased with the use of international networks comprised of civil society organizations, media and/or activists/bloggers, as an important element for mobilizing support of the international community and the diplomatic corps, international institutions and associations. Direct active cooperation was established for freedom of speech issues in Macedonia with the networks of *Reporters without Borders*, *EDRI - European Digital Rights*, *APC*, *IFEX*, *Global Voices*, etc., as well as with *OSCE* and *OSCE* representative on freedom of the media, *UNDP*, and diplomatic offices in the country. In order to cover all interested parties, these efforts were combined with public events for networking, lobbying and advocacy, including the conferences “e-Society.mk”, “Youth and Media” (February) and “Human Rights on

the Internet” (December), debates focused on freedom of expression in Macedonia and France (February) and international days of the action “Freedom Instead of Fear” in Skopje, POINT conference in Sarajevo, and others, attended by hundreds of representatives from the civil society sector and the media, state and educational institutions and the private sector.

## **FIELD 2:**

### **CHALLENGING THE HEALTH ESTABLISHMENT TO ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS**

#### **▪ COALITION FOR SEXUAL AND HEALTH RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES ▪**

*Coalition for Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities’ (Coalition SHRMC)* work in 2014 was focused on improving the situation in terms of sexual and health rights of drug users and LGBTI community. Joint advocacy efforts with the *National Network against Homophobia and Transphobia* resulted in deletion of paragraph 2 under Amendment 33 to the Constitution whereby out-of-wedlock community, as well as other forms of partnership that produce legal capacity should be defined as community exclusively between a man and a woman. The second in a row Pride Week was successfully organized. After 7 years of advocacy efforts, three textbooks in psychiatry and medical psychiatry were withdrawn from use at the Faculty of Medicine, as they contained homophobic statements. The community monitoring report drafted by *HOPS - Healthy Options Project - Skopje* and the *Coalition SHRMC* is quoted in the Strategy on Drugs in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 - 2020. Activities were taken for strategic litigation in 10 cases concerning violation of health rights, and in 5 cases applications were motioned in front of the European Court of Human Rights. 2 new procedures were initiated, in the case of violation of the right to housing for an HIV positive person and in the case of a transgender person for change of personal data kept by an educational institution.

Team of doctors from a relevant area in Macedonia was formed and conducted a study visit to Belgrade for the purpose of sensitizing for work with transgender people, but also for advocacy for the purpose of enabling medical gender reassigned in the Republic of Macedonia. For the first time in the state, advocacy efforts for this change are enhanced with a team of doctors that will contribute to the process with their expertise and professionalism. Cooperation was initiated with the Bureau of Social Affairs for the purpose of developing a module for work with marginalized communities that will become part of official and mandatory training for licensing expert workers (social workers) from social work centres and will be delivered by the Bureau.

The *Coalition SHRMC* drafted “Guidelines on International Standards for Protection against Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity”, and conducted an analysis of the laws and policies governing police competences and the laws governing possession of drugs, enabling use, production and circulation of narcotic substances. Findings from the organized focus groups with drug users in 6 municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia were presented at the National Conference on Use of Drugs. As a result of advocacy efforts, 7 political parties endorsed the Declaration on condemning hate speech and discriminatory speech against women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender persons and marginalized communities; in its annual report, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination for the first time referred to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation as societal problem and

stated that discrimination is often purposeful and motivated by hatred towards particular ethnic groups, marginalized communities, LGBTI population, etc. Within UN Universal Periodic Review, 24 of the total of 104 adopted recommendations concern protection against discrimination, 5 of which concern discrimination against LGBTI community, and 4 concern gender inequality. Two campaigns were organized and realized in this reporting period: "Say NO to Homophobia and Transphobia" and "Article 3: Initiative for Support and Solidarity to Improve Protection against Discrimination of LGBTI Community". 7 videos were filmed as part of the strategy for video advocacy aimed at amending the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (LPPAD). The *Coalition SHRMC* joined the working group led by the *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia* and the *National Democratic Institute* for amending the LPPAD.

### ▪ HOPS - HEALTHY OPTIONS PROJECT SKOPJE ▪

In the course of 2014, as part of *HOPS - Healthy Options Project Skopje's (HOPS)* program on legal aid provision for sex workers and drug users and program on advocacy for rights of juvenile drug users, 22 drug users received a total of 173 services, 8 of which concerned the right to medical treatment, court representation in cases of violation of human rights and discrimination in exercise of rights for Roma drug users, representation of marital partners who are Roma drug users. 17 field visits were organized and realized and resulted in established contacts with 6 new children who are drug users (total of 15 from the beginning of the year). *HOPS* conducted a research/assessment of the knowledge among sex workers concerning the existing legal regulations on sex work and their opinion about other existing models of regulation covering a total of 130 sex workers from 4 towns. Legal aid and court representation was secured for 3 sex workers whose right to privacy had been violated by 5 media outlets, as well as legal aid and representation for 13 sex workers that were arrested and forcefully tested for HIV/hepatitis before the judicial bodies in the Republic of Macedonia. Continuous psychological and social assistance was provided for sex workers.

The conference on treatment of drug addicted youth was attended by 25 participants and representative of the organization *Dialogue* from Vienna and included presentation of experiences related to treatment of drug addicted youth. Manual on treatment and care of youth using drugs was developed and promoted and the monitoring and advocacy process was evaluated in terms of its effectiveness. Second issue of the magazine "Drugs – Policies and Practices" was published. The National Conference on Drug Policies was organized with participation of representatives from line ministries, institutions, faculties, citizens' association and people using drugs from Macedonia and representatives from the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Russia. Legal aid was provided in 6 cases concerning protection of rights of drug users, i.e. their denied access to treatment, and in cases of discrimination. Research was conducted on treatment of Hepatitis C in the Republic of Macedonia and three-day conference was organized for professionals, aimed at exchange of experiences and good practices in treatment of Hepatitis C with guests from Georgia.

*HOPS* ensured video documentation of events and produced 6 videos and 1 documentary feature with representatives from the Ombudsman and the Daily Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Addictions. The media campaign was initiated in December and will continue in the course of 2015.

### **FIELD 3: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

#### **▪ YOUTH EDUCATIONAL FORUM ▪**

In 2014, 1,800 young people were directly involved in activities organized by *Youth Educational Forum's (YEF)* Youth Clubs in Debate, Street Law and Media/Art in 16 towns throughout Macedonia (Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Veles, Debar, Kicevo, Struga, Bitola, Negotino, Kratovo, Gevgelija, Resen, Stip, Strumica). They raised 22 own initiatives in the form of public debates on current issues, performances, exhibitions, volunteer actions for the sports centre in Tetovo, events for bicyclists, etc. Youth Clubs are the place of education and association of young leaders, space for cooperation of youth from different communities, compensation of shortfalls in formal education for the purpose of developing active citizens and supporting youth ideas and engagement. Seven debate tournaments were organized, of which 2 national level tournaments with total of 300 debaters and 170 debates. The first international debate tournament for students in Macedonia was organized with participation of students from the countries in the region.

*YEF* intensified the work aimed at strengthening the forms of high school organization and worked with high school communities in 8 schools. The activities covered 250 high school students with capacity building by means of training and coaching, mentorship, development of annual work program for the school communities. All these resulted in gradual creation of conditions at local level for association into national community of high school students.

*YEF's* research titled "Violence among High School Students" is the first study that provides an overview of high school students' perceptions about the violence in Macedonia. Research was also conducted about the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2005-2015, academic and student mobility, civil effectiveness, conformism and locus control with the student population.

With the support from *FOSM* and the European Commission, *YEF* initiated facilitation of the process on creating local youth councils and local youth policy making in 12 municipalities. 12 youth hubs were established, followed by initiative boards with around 200 youth representatives from different forms of association, which attended a total of 80 training events on capacity building. 3 youth councils have already been formed and the remaining are in process of establishment, which will be followed by a process on youth policy making in the respective municipalities.

In June, the Third Conference on Social Activism "ENGAGE" was organized at which, in addition, to domestic speakers, we had a speaking guest from Ukraine. This event was attended by 3,000 visitors and 500 online viewers, while key topics discussed included civil activism in Macedonia, freedom of media, investigative journalism, art and satire as political tools, covered with presentations and workshops delivered by 20 speakers. *Radio YEF* continued its transparent and professional reporting on youth, civil and educational topics. In 2014, more than 300 texts were published, more than 1000 episodes from 26 shows were produced, and published news stories had more than 400,000 unique visits from different persons.

## FIELD 4:

### COMBATING GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION

#### ▪ MACEDONIAN CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN TRAINING ▪

In 2014, *Macedonian Centre For European Training (MCET)* published five research studies: “Fitting into the European Framework for Protection of Human Rights”, “Refashioning: Macedonia’s New European Story - Europeanization of the Macedonian Political Parties”, “Freedom of Roma Movement in the Light of Visa Liberalization”, “Political Culture, Europeanization and Fears in Macedonia, 2014 Report from the Eurometer Survey Research” and “Detour Europe – Research on Absorption of Community Program Funds in Macedonia”. 12 policy papers were also developed and concerned: competition policy in Macedonia, chapter 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights), civic activism and political culture, constitutional amendments and their compliance with EU standards, as well as the greatest challenges on Macedonia’s path to opening EU accession negotiations.

*MCET* used these documents to advocate and enhance the pro-EU side in the public discourse, but also for institutional struggle for accepting European values and standards. *MCET* was an active participant in the consultations organized by the EU Delegation in Skopje for the purpose of drafting EC’s Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia, and events organized for consultations with the Secretariat for European Affairs and other institutions and organizations. *MCET* had more than 40 media announcements and participated in televised or radio broadcasted shows in an effort to promote ideas for Macedonia’s accelerated and essential accession in the EU. *MCET* is the leading organization under “IPA II Mechanism” which will function until 2020 and will represent a platform for better programming of EU funds intended for civil society organizations. This mechanism is recognized by the EU Delegation in Skopje as legitimate and was referred to in EC’s 2014 Progress Report.

In 2014, *MCET* improved its international networking and became a member of the prestigious network of think-tank organizations in Europe (*EPIN - European Policy Institutes Network*). *MCET* representatives took part in more than five regional conferences, schools and working meeting in several countries from the region and the EU, and were involved in regional research processes concerning Europeanization of countries in the region, re-evaluation of EU Enlargement Policy, monitoring utilization of EU funds, etc. At these events, *MCET* presented its policy papers. *MCET* became a reporting organization for Macedonia in the renowned report on EU Integrations in Europe (EU28 Watch) of the European Policies Institute in Berlin.

In 2014, *MCET* delivered more than 30 days of training, covering more than 150 people (from local governments, civil society organizations, journalists, lawyers and students). Topics covered at these training events centred around the history of EU, EU institutions and decision-making process, utilization of EU funds, studying the EU framework on human rights, etc.

## **FIELD 5:**

### **HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION**

#### **▪ HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA ▪**

*Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia (MHC)* remained focused on monitoring the situation with human rights and their protection, as well as provision of legal aid in cases of human rights violation, especially in the field of freedom of expression, discrimination, fair trial, freedom and security, exercising the right to public assembly and social protection.

Compared to the previous years, in 2014 *MHC* was addressed with increased number of applications for free legal aid and applications for monitoring court proceedings, as well as with applications for legal advice concerning submission of applications in front of the European Court of Human Rights. This is indicative of citizens' increased trust in *MHC* to report cases of violation of their rights, but also of their increased awareness about violation of their rights. This is evident from *MHC* reactions/alerts, monthly reports, statements and interviews of *MHC* representatives in the media. *MHC* actualized the occurrence of political prisoners in the Republic of Macedonia by means of its annual report, monthly briefs, as well as interviews of *MHC* representatives.

*MHC* was specifically focused on prevention and protection against discrimination, especially of vulnerable groups of citizens such as Roma, LGBTI community, people with intellectual and physical disabilities (especially the hard on hearing and blind persons) and women, as well as discrimination on the grounds of political affiliation. Assuming the coordination within the *Network on Protection against Discrimination* comprised of civil society organizations profiled in work with marginalized groups, relevant institutions were addressed with applications for eliminating practices of discrimination on the basis of health status (HIV), as well as discrimination against drug users. Moreover, *MHC* screened the situation in terms of discrimination against Roma at the border crossing points, i.e. denial of their right to freely leave the country. Results thereof confirmed the systemic discrimination against Roma on the part of the Ministry of Interior, followed by motions for court proceedings.

*MHC* actively worked on pooling resources in the civil sector for joint actions on protection of human rights, which included: 1) submission of shadow report to the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which resulted in adoption of several issues/problems by the UN and indications that the state should respond to and work on improving the situation in terms of these human rights; 2) organization of joint protests; and 3) drafting documents on unconstitutionality of proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia presented to the Government and the Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.

*MHC* was recognized as provider of free legal aid in exercise of the right to public assembly/protest of citizens/groups that appeared as organizers. In almost all cases of organization of such events, *MHC* was requested to provide legal advice in terms of rights and obligations stemming from the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Law on Public Assembly. In addition, *MHC* was also asked to monitor such assemblies and provide legal aid in cases of violation of rights on such assemblies on the part of institutions, and especially on the



part of the Ministry of Interior. In parallel, *MHC* informed the public of such violations by means of press releases and monthly briefs, which resulted in information of the broader public and increased awareness among citizens about violated rights at the specific events/assemblies.

## **FIELD 6:**

### **BUDGET TRANSPARENCY**

#### **▪ ASSOCIATION FOR EMANCIPATION, SOLIDARITY AND EQUALITY OF WOMEN – ESE ▪**

In the course of 2014, on the basis of monitoring and budget analysis activities, *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE (ESE)* developed an analysis of the implementation of 2012 program for cervical cancer screening and identified the main problems in the implementation thereof. Budget monitoring and analysis activities were initiated for three preventive health programs implemented by the Ministry of Health in 2013, those being: Program for Active health Protection of Mothers and Children, Program for Systematic Check Ups of Pupils and Students and Program for Early Detection of Malignant Diseases. Total of 891 Freedom of Information applications have been submitted to relevant implementing parties of these programs.

As regards community monitoring and social audit, *ESE* provided technical support to three partner Roma CSOs. Community Score Cards on immunization coverage and preventive health care services have been developed for total of seven municipalities. Social audit covering operation of outreach nurses in three municipalities was implemented. Scope of work was extended also to the coverage of Roma women under the Program for Cervical Cancer Screening, and for that purpose, *ESE* worked on capacity building for three organizations by means of training delivery, as well as development of methodology and questionnaires for the purpose of conducting a research in the community. The document titled “Coverage of Roma Children with Immunization and Preventive Health Services” was published; one video on the issue of immunization was produced; and public debate was organized as part of the European Immunization Week.

In the course of 2014, *ESE* - in cooperation with three CSOs profiled in promotion of Roma status - continued the provision of paralegal assistance in the field of Roma health protection. For the purpose of strengthening capacities of coordinators and paralegals, one initial and two continuous training events were organized and delivered. This year *ESE* established the e-library, which enables paralegals access to information at any time about all issues they encounter in the process of providing assistance and support, i.e. about the manner of exercising health rights, as well as about other questions of interest. Special attention was paid to case management for people who addressed the paralegals for assistance. For the purpose of monitoring, support and assessment of paralegals’ performance, 12 field visits were realized, four to each organization. In 2014, paralegals provided assistance to around 800 Roma, and visited more than 300 Roma families and educated 300 Roma on different issues in the field of health rights.

Gender Responsive Budgeting Methodology was used to prepare the following documents: draft-analysis and recommendations for increased coverage of women with programs on cervical and breast cancer screening; research on the failure to disbursed third party care allowance for

terminally ill people from Roma families; analysis of implementation of the ORIO Grant extended by the Dutch Government; draft-analysis on the contribution of UN Joint Program for Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence in the implementation of the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2008-2011. In order to promote transparency and accountability of public institutions, reactive and proactive transparency (STAR Survey) was monitored and covered several public institutions and facilities (37 for proactive and 74 for reactive transparency). Moreover, *ESE* participated in the development of the Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership Initiative. In 2014, capacity building training was delivered to 20 representatives from 10 CSOs and concerned topics such as the right to health, organization and funding of the health system in the Republic of Macedonia, local and national level budgeting processes, budget monitoring methodologies, community monitoring and social audit.

## CONCEPTS IN 2014

### Progress against 2014 milestones

#### CONCEPT 1:

#### CIVIC EMPOWERMENT AND MOBILIZATION

*FOSM's* concept on empowered and mobilized citizens aims to contribute to the revival of democratic governance.

First objective under this concept is for empowered individuals, informal groups and civil society organizations, coordinated within an open, inclusive and non-partisan platform, to initiate acute and provocative issues in response to democracy backsliding.

(1) *AJDE! Platform for Citizen Politics (AJDE!)* was established in late 2014 by 150 activists. In addition to intensive consultations and coordination, the civic platform *AJDE!* implemented several action performances in order to alert the public about: non-separation of the Parliament and the Government; damages caused by the abuse of the public broadcasting service MRT for the benefit of government's marketing needs; irresponsible behaviour on the part of the Ministry of Health as regards medical treatment of one minor child that resulted in her death. Disadvantageous provisions incorporated in the laws on the precarious work motivated the civic platform *AJDE!* to prepare activities aimed at organizing collection of endorsements for the petition against such unconstitutional provisions.

(2) Capacity building training sessions were attended by total of 300 activists and representatives of civil society organizations. Training topics focused on public relations; recognizing propaganda and manipulations, as well as effective use of tools for free access to public information.

(3) For the purpose of facilitating civil response to dramatically declining democratic practices, *FOSM* awarded grants to 10 initiatives whose activities, *inter alia*, focus on environmental and nature protection, monitoring of early parliamentary elections, youth and local policies, as well as solidarity actions to alleviate the growing poverty among the population. Support was also extended to 9 social media activists.

(4) Inadequate enforcement of applicable policies and laws was illustrated on 15 ALERTS, published and distributed as insertions to newspapers in Macedonian and Albanian languages, which served the purpose of informing and animating the broader public.

(5) Citizens for European Macedonia Club (CEM Club) continued to serve as the only alternative space to the heavily restricted public scene. 74 civil society organizations, think-tanks, informal groups, publishing houses and individuals organized 215 public events, with total of 4,616 participants. 15 public debates organized by *FOSM* covered issues related to democracy and dictatorship, culture and politics in culture, architecture and “Skopje 2014” project, the Macedonian question throughout the history, political transitions in Macedonia and in the region, freedom of expression, constitutional amendments, civic activism and engagement, economic situation in the country and growing rate of poverty.

In the course of 2014, *FOSM* published the following books: “Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals” by Soul D. Alinsky, “The Origins of Totalitarianism” by Hannah Arendt, “Enver Hoxha” by Blendi Fevziu and “Loyal Unto Death” by Keith Brown.

Under the **USAID Civil Society Project**, activities were implemented as part of 21 grants awarded to civil society organizations within two project components: grants for joint actions of CSOs and fellowships for young researchers and activists at renowned CSOs.

By mid-2014, the Cooperative Agreement with *USAID* on implementation of the USAID Civil Society Project was extended until August 2016. The new open call for proposals was announced and entailed two types of grants: grants for CSOs acting as democratic hubs in their communities and grants for CSOs engaged in monitoring governmental policies and research-based advocacy. Total of 27 projects were recommended for financing.

As part of advocacy activities, three public debates were organized in cooperation with project partners and grantees, those being: “Word and Freedom”, debate and promotion of an Inventory (*Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities*); “Engage”, social activism conference (*Youth Educational Forum*), and the regional conference “Safeguarding the Space for Peaceful Assembly in Southeast Europe” (*Reactor – Research in Action* and *European Centre for Non-Profit Law*). The partner organization *Youth Educational Forum* organized the third Summer Academy for Youth, delivered 8 training sessions for total of 124 young people from Negotino, Resen, Gevgelija, Prilep and Veles, and organized 15 local youth events.

Inception training sessions were organized for all groups of grantees, aimed at capacity building for successful implementation of project activities (project implementation procedures, financial and narrative reports, branding public materials and events, communication and coordination), followed by training on project monitoring and evaluation, civic engagement, public relations, recognizing propaganda and manipulation, and free access to public information. All these trainings covered a total of 138 participants. The partner organization *FORUM – Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation*, delivered training for 51 participants from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generation of the School for Active Citizenship and organized an alumni meeting and implemented three actions with the alumni.

The partner organization *Centre for Civil Communications* published a total of 9 reports from the monitoring of public procurements organized by institutions at central and local level. The project

published 4 Accession Watch Reports prepared by *Macedonian Centre for European Training*, 2 monitoring reports for the decentralization process and 4 public policy papers (on improving legal remedies in public procurements, on the census and demographic issues, on civic engagement and on interethnic integration).

The final external evaluation report for the USAID Civil Society Project (Management Systems International) showed that project activities have positive effect and have increased civic engagement, especially on local compared to national level. The report underlines that the Project positively has positive impacts on political and civil society organization activism, and on knowledge, skills, and motivation around citizen activism.

Concept's second objective aims to empower and mobilize citizens to develop alternative laws and policies by means of participatory processes, thereby demonstrating benefits from civic engagement and mobilizing civil society actors to take action and actively engage in issues of public interest.

(1) 2 working groups were established, comprised of representatives from civil society organization and experts, and were tasked with developing alternative solutions to the Law on Social Protection and the Law on Referendum and Other Forms of Civic Initiatives. The concept for the new Law on Social Protection proposes new approaches (minimum income) and legal solutions for institutional separation of activities on distribution of social allowance grants, decentralization of social protection services and redefining categories of social allowance beneficiaries, as well as institutional structure and organization that would ensure improved social protection and efficient control and oversight. The concept for the Law on Referendum is focused on liberalization of initiation of civic initiatives, expanding the scope of issues around which referenda can be organized and regulating the referendum financing.

Within the annual agreement for the **Regional Research Promotion Program** with the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, a total of 6 organizations from Macedonia were awarded grants to implement regional research projects. Among the program cohort comprised of 67 researchers, 70% are women and 58% of them are young researchers. *FOSM* provided support for and monitored the implementation of these projects. Prior to initiation of their respective project activities, 30 participants met in Skopje to agree their operational plans and responsibilities. Total of 21 young researchers from the region attended the international seminar on academic writing, which took place in Skopje, in November 2014.

## **CONCEPT 2:**

### **MODEL OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC MUNICIPALITY**

Within *FOSM*'s strategy for the period 2014-2017, this concept anticipates creation of the model of citizen-centric municipality which implements participatory local policy making and provides quality services to citizens. The concept targets three big, urban and multi-ethnic municipalities (Strumica, Centar and Struga) whose mayors come from different opposition political parties

(both Macedonian and Albanian) and were elected to office on the 2013 local elections.<sup>1</sup> Cooperation Agreements within this concept were signed with all three municipalities in early 2014.

First objective under this concept aims to strengthen administrative and financial capacity for good governance of local government units and schools. Attainment of this objective implied application of different tools and approaches:

(1) In each of the three municipalities, capacity building was provided for municipal administrations and Municipal Council members to deploy strategic planning, participatory policy making, design communication strategies and explore EU funding opportunities. Newly employed officers in all three municipalities benefited from additional training on local government competences. 231 municipal employees and members of Municipal Councils participated in these 5 targeted training events. Total of 200 participants from civil society organizations from all three municipalities attended training sessions on understanding municipal competences and antidiscrimination, in order to implement tools for monitoring of local self-government units. Training events aimed to assist civil society organizations to influence policy making processes. Total number of 251 representatives (school management, teachers, school boards and members of parent councils) from schools in each municipality was trained in democratic governance, education for social justice and participatory development of multiannual school plans. By the end of 2014, two secondary schools from Strumica and Struga and one primary school from Centar drafted their three-year development plans that should be implemented by the end of the concept's timeframe.

(2) Participatory local policy-making was implemented by means of facilitated process and technical support for the working groups comprised of experts, municipality representatives, civil society representatives and other stakeholders. Total of 632 participants participated in public sessions, debates and workshops on local policy making. Local policies are developed in the field of social protection and education as municipal competences affecting majority of local population, as well as local policies in the fields of youth and cooperation with the civil society, and were submitted for adoption by the Municipal Councils by the end of 2014.

Second objective under the concept aims to invigorate local democracy and empower civil society to actively participate in community life. This objective was attained by combining following tools and approaches:

(1) In the last quarter of the reporting period, three community centres were established with in-kind contribution from the municipalities. The centres provided direct services to citizens, including non-formal education for youth and adults, legal and administrative assistance to citizens in need to properly exercise their civic rights and obligations. Moreover, the centres served as premises for organization of civil and cultural initiatives and activities. In the three-month period from their establishment, more than 200 citizens were involved in the activities of community centres, as anticipated in their operational work plans. In addition, the centres organized 18 various events (debates, training, informative meetings, etc.) for citizens in the three municipalities. Each municipality was awarded small grant for rearrangement of their

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<sup>1</sup> On the 2013 local elections, opposition parties won the elections in 5 municipalities (from total of 81).

municipal council meeting rooms, for the purpose of enabling participation of citizens in local level decision-making processes.

(2) *FOSM*'s commitment to improve access to justice in Macedonia, focusing on poor and marginalized groups (segregated by gender, age, ethnic background, and type of legal problem), resulted in registration and support for 6 civil society organizations for provision of free legal aid, and they provided legal counsel and preliminary legal aid for 1,243 citizens. *FOSM* provided court representation for 13 applicants for free legal aid whose applications have been rejected. Registered organisations monitored 6 court hearings in cases of approved free legal aid. Advocacy strategy aimed at improving the Law on Free Legal Aid was developed for the purpose of continuing efforts for equal access to justice of citizens and for strengthening capacity of CSOs profiled in the field of human rights. **Access to Justice in Macedonia** project was funded by the European Union (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) and *FOSM*.

(3) **Community Forums** program, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), was implemented in 2 municipalities (Tetovo and Krivogastani) and resulted in implementation of 2 projects in the local communities. 12 community forums were organized and with active participation of citizens, priority areas were identified and projects were developed. The projects, one in each municipality, were co-financed by the municipalities. Total of 1,116 citizens participated in the community forums. The model of community forums proved to be a good practice for broad consultations and citizens' involvement in local policy and decision-making processes.

Data from the baseline study and survey of citizens' satisfaction in each municipality, conducted before the start of activities planned for 2014, should enable *FOSM* to assess progress achieved and plan adaptations and changes, where needed, to concept's implementation in the future period.

### **CONCEPT 3:** **ROMA INTEGRATION**

Committed to decreasing the gap between policies and practices as prerequisite for Roma integration, this concept aims at achieving the following objectives:

- empowering Roma to enjoy health rights and improve education outcomes; and
- holding the Government accountable for shaping, budgeting and delivering effective and just education and health systems.

The long-term goal is to keep the integration of Roma high on the national agenda beyond 2015 and to accelerate progress towards meeting the goals and objectives on health and education from the new National Roma Strategy. Scaling joint work and partnership with OSF Public Health Program, 13 Roma and non-Roma CSOs was central in attainment of 6 milestones set for 2014.

(1) Empowered Roma to enjoy health rights - Continuous support for innovative legal empowerment approaches as health interventions, including paralegal assistance and advocacy for rights-based legal protection that improve health, generated empowered Roma organizations to develop methodology of work and implement it in the field. As a result, 808 Roma in 3 municipalities (Suto Orizari, Delcevo and Pehcevo) received paralegal assistance; 744 Roma families in the municipalities of Prilep and Bitola were provided free legal aid and logistic assistance for fulfilment of their rights to health protection, health insurance and social rights; 3 positive verdicts in cases of health right violations were adopted (confirmed malpractices and compensation of material damage in 2 civil cases; confirmed doctor responsibility in 1 criminal case); an urgency for action related to violation of reproductive rights by a private gynaecology practice was filed to the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate; law amendments related to the right to health insurance (administrative obstacles for unemployed people in terms of obtaining health insurance) was initiated; notifications to relevant institutions were submitted and series of meetings were held; and positive answer was received from the Ombudsman upon the complaint lodged for illegal charges imposed for gynaecological services. Public events on community empowerment for recognizing health right violations were organized with Roma communities in 5 different municipalities, attended by total of 102 persons.

(2) Improved completion rate of Roma primary schools students and increased number of Roma high school and university graduates - *FOSM's* biggest and most comprehensive intervention in education was phased out in June 2014, with the completion of 10-year Roma Education Project (REP) funded by *USAID* and the *Pestalozzi Children's Foundation (PCF)*. *FOSM* published and shared with key constituencies/stakeholders (teachers, school principals, students, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, CSOs and donor community) findings of the REP Final External Performance Evaluation Report.

Roma Education Fund (REP), Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) significantly contributed to increased number of Roma high school and university graduates in the country. 13 beneficiaries of REP/Romaversitas graduated in the academic year 2013/14, whereby the number graduated beneficiaries reached 108 under Romaversitas and around 100 under RMUSP for the period 2004-2014. Mentorship, media advocacy and communication training empowered 20 high school and 37 university students benefiting from RHSP to improve their academic performance and advocacy skills for health care policies and to promote and pursue medical career. 11 Roma graduated at medical faculties and were employed in state institutions. Supplementary components of the RHSP (advocacy, media and mentorship) enabled 38 Roma high/vocational school and university students and 19 mentors to boost personal capacities in the area of advocacy and health policies, human rights in health, creation and decision making processes, and to increase the visibility and advocacy skills through implementation of advocacy, outreach, media and capacity building activities.

(3) Increased capacities for media outreach and advanced community monitoring - Seeking to provide sufficient prospective for effective advocacy, along with capacity building for methodologies within core strategic approaches, four Roma Health CSOs were additionally provided with 5 trainings (advocacy, communication and PR, argumentation and debate, internet activism and social media, video and audio activism). As a result, they used different channels for

media advocacy to present work on improving Roma health - 6 short videos on various health problems and TV show addressing the issue of illegal charges for antenatal services for Roma and TV debate focused on the problem with the gynaecology practice in Suto Orizari were broadcasted. Publication of 17 announcements in total emphasized the need for a gynaecology practice in Suto Orizari. 20 radio shows about most burning health issues among Roma in Delcevo were broadcasted on the local radio; e-petition for improvement of the emergency services was submitted to the Ministry of Health; and press conference and public debate on immunization of Roma children were held. Petition for opening gynaecology practice in the Municipality of Suto Orizari was initiated and publicly promoted and was accompanied with an educational public event for signature collection (1,570 signatures collected).

In addition, within the newly started initiative on changing narratives about Roma in health care, in collaboration with PHP, *FOSM* organized a 4-day seminar on *improving health services for Roma by changing the negative narratives*, with participants from different groups of stakeholders (14 CSOs, university professors and general practitioners). Main purpose was for participants to learn communication theories and models used in the formative research of attitude and behaviour change interventions and to undertake initial strategic planning for identifying target audiences and brainstorm possible actions and tactics as part of intervention(s) on changing attitudes/narratives among health care professionals.

(4) Adopted measures for improvement of the quality of immunization services and the quality of reproductive health services - Committed to advance health and human rights of Roma, *FOSM* is supporting CSOs to effectively and strategically use social accountability approaches and tools to push for greater accountability and transparency in financing and delivery of health services related to immunization and reproductive health of Roma at local and national level. The main novelty and benefit from implemented work is that the community monitoring enables CSOs to increase Roma communities' awareness and understanding about accessibility, quality and effectiveness of services they are entitled to, as well as to empower Roma for self-advocacy in front of local and national authorities. Achievements introduced with application of the social accountability approach include: adoption of 2 specific measures and budget allocations in the 2014 governmental program for health protection of mothers and children for improving the quality of immunization services (increased number of patronage nurse visits and increased activities for identification of non-immunized children); increased immunization rate of Roma children (0-4 yrs.) in 5 municipalities (Suto Orizari, Gorce Petrov, Saraj, Karpos, Delcevo); provision of CSOs and community members' participation in the Committee on Safe Motherhood; preparation and public presentation of community score cards (CSC) related to immunization and quality of antenatal services; introduction of main stakeholders with key findings from CSCs; joint definition of mutual conclusions on further steps for improving antenatal care of Roma women from Suto Orizari; education of 536 women about their reproductive rights; etc.

(5) Research data and policy recommendations produced to ensure informed advocacy work - *FOSM* assembled 5 researches that provided evidence and built capacity of individuals and Roma CSOs to hold the state accountable for delivery of education and health services to Roma. "We Are All Human: Health Care for All People Regardless of Their Ethnicity" - a baseline study of the health status, exercise of the right to health and access to health care services for the Roma minority compared to other ethnic groups, and 2 separate excerpts "Social Determinants' Effect



on Roma Health” and “Gender Perspectives of Roma Health and Their Access to Health Care” were published to inform health advocacy work of *FOSM*’s Roma and non-Roma partner CSOs. Research results on attitudes of health care professionals towards Roma commissioned in cooperation with the School of Communication at the University of Miami will be used to inform the design of communication interventions implemented by *FOSM*’s Roma CSOs grantees.

A set of additional three research studies were also carried out to ensure informed advocacy work in education. The first research report “Do Roma Have Better Education Today” includes findings from the national public opinion survey conducted on a representative sample of Roma about the current situation in the field of education, education barriers and key factors with most significant influence on education pipeline of Roma, and provides assessment of progress Roma see today in education compared to the situation before the Roma Decade’s start. The second document explores the presence, forms and consequences of Roma segregation in education within current education policies and practices, and detects wide-spread perceptions, opinions and segregation awareness trends among Roma and non-Roma. The third document provides a qualitative analysis of national strategy documents on Roma integration from the commencement of the Roma Decade to date, from the human rights perspective.

(6) Non-formal Roma advocacy network created to enable effective advocacy and participation of Roma - *FOSM*’s support convened a non-formal group of Roma activists from 17 grassroots CSOs that presented the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with education and health policy recommendations for the new National Strategy on Roma. Being partially integrated in the Strategy, the submissions tackle key problems and propose critical goals and measures that need to be addressed in education and health strategy chapters. 11 CSOs made a joint submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review at the 18<sup>th</sup> session of UPR working group, indicating problems and recommendations for improving the health of marginalized groups, including Roma.

Multi-purpose series of events were held with partner Roma CSOs to explore and built upon various advocacy tools (networking, coalition building, etc.) and achieve greater efficiency in jointly identified cross-sectorial education and health themes for advocacy deriving from the National Strategy for Roma as a reference framework. Consolidation of the existing advocacy network comprised of 9 Roma health CSOs encouraged greater coordination among them and yielded few successful advocacy initiatives. The workshop for Roma health and education partner CSOs about changing the narratives about Roma in the context of health care initiated strategic planning and assisted the organizations to identify target audiences and brainstorm possible actions and tactics as part of intervention(s) to change attitudes/narratives among health care professionals. CSOs started development of project proposals for work in 2015. *FOSM* representatives participated at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> meeting on Roma and Roma refugees organized by the Macedonian Government, whereas representatives of medical faculties, OSF staff, NGOs and other health professionals from 5 countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Hungary and Macedonia) participated in the Salzburg seminar organized with PHP on changing the narrative on Roma in the context of health care. 7 *FOSM*/PHP grantees that work on legal empowerment participated in the event “Convening on Access to Justice for Roma in Europe” in Budapest, organized by PHP, OSJI and RIO.

**The total amount of funds spent for implementation of FOSM's activities in 2014 amounted to 218,046,776 denars, out of which 165,706,323 denars are from Foundation to Promote Open Society and 52,340,452 denars from other donors.**