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2019

**FOUNDATION OPEN
SOCIETY - MACEDONIA**

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction 3

Report on Activities Implemented under FOSM's Concepts in 2019 4

 Key Milestones and/or Activities Implemented by CSOs Supported under FOSM's
Strategic Fields in 2019 30

 List of Projects and Grantees Supported in 2019 50

INTRODUCTION

In the period 2019–2022, the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia (FOSM) will work on attainment of three strategic goals, those being: **1)** to support state reforms in FOSM's priority areas (EU accession, education and youth, healthcare, legal and fiscal framework for civil society, and legal empowerment). FOSM will secure support for civil society participation, contributions to policy creation, capacity building and provision of know-how; **2)** to hold governments accountable by monitoring progress within the overall policy framework relevant to EU accession, monitoring public budgeting and spending in higher education and healthcare budget allocations that affect marginalized groups, and monitoring policies of local governments in the areas of urban planning, environmental protection and local budgets in three municipalities; and **3)** to improve access to and quality of health, legal and education services for underserved communities.

In 2019, activities planned for attainment of all three strategic goals were implemented under four **concepts**: (1) Civil Society Engagement in EU Accession; (2) Community Partnerships for Advancing Local Democracy; (3) Education for Small Ethnic Communities; and (4) Legal Empowerment Network Strategy; and three **fields**: (1) Enabling Environment for Civil Society; (2) Students' Rights and Engagement; and (3) Right-Based Health Policies.

Total funds spent for implementation of FOSM's 2019 activities amounted to 252,775,434 MKD, of which 234,492,852 MKD come from the Open Society Foundations, while 18,282,581 MKD are funds from other donors.

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED UNDER FOSM's
CONCEPTS IN 2019**

CONCEPT: CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN EU ACCESSION

The *Civil Society Engagement in EU Accession* concept aims to support EU-related policy reform agenda in the areas of judiciary, anticorruption and antidiscrimination, thus contributing to Europeanization of the society.

Objectives defined under this concept are: (1) to strengthen capacity and to increase knowledge of civil society organizations and public administration on EU's institutional structures and key political process, accession negotiations, and EU *acquis* in the areas of judiciary, anticorruption, and antidiscrimination; (2) to enable a structured dialogue between CSOs and the government as mechanism for policy shaping in the areas of judiciary, anticorruption, and antidiscrimination; (3) to oversee the overall EU accession process to ensure that reforms serve the public interest and meet the citizens' expectations; and (4) to increase information flow and improve citizens' understanding of EU-related reforms, in order to help them make informed decision and support reform processes for Europeanization of the society.

In line the approved annual plan of activities and budget, a series of activities were implemented in 2019 aimed towards attainment of closely interrelated and complementary objectives through:

1) Grant scheme for three networks of associations and foundations to conduct independent policy oversight in the areas of judiciary, antidiscrimination and anticorruption, which included:

- Support to the *Blueprint Group for Judiciary Reforms*, comprised of the *Coalition "All for Fair Trials"*, *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights*, *Institute for Human Rights*, *European Policy Institute*, *Macedonian Young Lawyers Association* and *Center for Legal Research and Analyses*, which monitors implementation of the Strategy on Justice System Reform (2017-2022) and its Action Plan (hereinafter: the Strategy). This support resulted in development and presentation of "Analysis on Implementation of the Strategy on Justice System Reform (2017-2022) in the Period 2018-2019".¹ Moreover, three monitoring briefings on the strategy implementation were developed for journalists,² as well as a policy brief on "Vetting Process in the Judiciary of the Republic of North Macedonia".³

¹ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Analiza-na-sproveduvanje-na-Strategijata-za-reforma-na-pravosudniot-sektor-2017-2022.pdf>

² Available at: <https://fosm.mk/press-release/prezentiran-prviot-monitoring-brif-za-sledene-na-reformite-vo-pravosudstvoto/>; <https://fosm.mk/press-release/graganskite-organizatsii-reagiraat-vazhnite-zakoni-se-nosat-na-netransparenten-nachin-i-so-delumna-vkluchenost-na-graganskiot-sektor/>; <https://fosm.mk/press-release/bluprint-grupa-donesenite-zakoni-se-dobra-osnova-za-promeni-potrebna-e-dosledna-implementatsija/>

³ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/veting-proczes-na-sudstvoto-vo-rsm.pdf>

- Support to the Platform for Fight against Corruption through the *Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis"*, which developed and presented three policy briefs, as follows: "Analysis of Anticorruption Provisions and Corruption Risks under the New Law on Public Procurements",⁴ "Analysis of SCPC Performance in 2017 and Recommendations for the New SCPC Composition"⁵ and policy study on efficiency of anticorruption institutions in prosecution of corruption "Comparative Overview of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Operation of the Prosecution Office against Organized Crime and Corruption and the Special Prosecution Office".⁶
- Support to *Coalition Margins*, which works on advancing the system for prevention and protection against discrimination through adherent enforcement of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in compliance with European standards. In particular, "Report on Implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in the Period 2011-2018"⁷ was developed and promoted.
- In addition and upon initiative from these three networks, with support from other networks of associations and foundations that unite almost 100 associations, foundations and initiatives, press conference and protest were organized outside the Parliament of RNM demanding MPs to urgently select and appoint management personnel at several institutions and regulatory authorities through the parliamentary committee on elections and appointments.⁸

2) Support to the *Foundation for Internet and Society Metamorphosis* to implement the project "Media Reform Observatory"⁹ aimed to contribute towards delivery of the Urgent Reform Priorities as precondition for RNM's accession in the EU, by identifying and eliminating obstacles to democratic development of the media.

3) Grant to *Eurothink – Center for European Strategy*, to monitor the overall EU accession process in order to ensure that reforms serve the public interest and meet the citizens' expectations, and to monitor utilization of EU funds, which included:

- Development and promotion of "Comparative Analysis of the European Commission's Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia 2016-2019",¹⁰ which provides illustrative overview of progress achieved under EU integration per chapters.

⁴ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/analiza-tm-mkd.pdf>

⁵ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/analiza-dksk-mkd.pdf>

⁶ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/analiza-studija-mkd.pdf>

⁷ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/izvestaj-za-implementacija-na-zakonot-za-sprecuvanje-diskriminacija-2011-2018.pdf>

⁸ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/grashanskite-organizaczii-pobaraa-sobraniето-itno-da-ja-deblokira-rabotata-na-komisijata-za-izbori-i-imenuvana/>

⁹ Available at: <http://mediaobservatorium.mk/>

¹⁰ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/prezentatsija-na-komparativnata-analiza-na-izveshtaite-na-evropskata-komisija-datum-za-reformi/>

- Development and promotion of “Analysis of the Macedonian Participation in Erasmus Plus: Potentials and Limitations”¹¹ which analyzed the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility's performance and results from management of decentralized actions under the program Erasmus+ in the period 2014–2018.
- Development and presentation of four editions of “Accession Logs”¹² related to North Macedonia's EU accession process, which analyzed work of the government, development of EU-related policies, implementation of the Urgent Reform Priorities, and regular political dialogue between North Macedonia and the EU.
- Organization of five educational and debate sessions, the so-called EUROTALK, organized according to the Chatham House Rule, with ambassadors from EU member-states and experts that work in the field of EU integration.
- Organization of two-day “School of European Policies”, which was focused on events, challenges and narratives at EU level that determine enlargement discourse at the EU level and impact perceptions of citizens and impacts perceptions of citizens and factors from EU member-states about candidate countries, as well as on building effective two-directional communication strategies – targeting decision-makers and the public.
- Implementation and presentation of two survey research editions under “Eurometer” which inquire about citizens' views and opinions on issues related to EU integration and their trust in institutions.

4) In cooperation with the *Institute for European Politics in Berlin*, five specialized trainings were organized with international lecturers on topics related to EU integration, regional experiences and specific areas under Chapter 23 (judiciary, anticorruption and antidiscrimination). The overall goal of these trainings was to build capacity of civil society members and public administration representatives about the EU accession process. Trainings were attended by 176 people of which 120 members of civil society organizations and foundations, and 56 civil servants from 15 central institutions in RNM.

5) Grant scheme for associations and foundations to increase information flow and improve citizens' understanding of EU-related reforms under Chapter 23, as follows:

- 15 grants to associations¹³ to implement activities that would contribute to better understanding of RNM's accession in the EU.

¹¹ Available at: https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Analiza_Erazmus_ZA-WEB.pdf

¹² Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/zapis-7.pdf>; <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/zapis-9.pdf>; <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/accession-log-8-1.pdf>; and <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/zapis10.pdf>

¹³ Available at: <https://bit.ly/2wsX9da>

- Design of media campaign to visualize findings from 15 grants awarded to improve citizens' understanding of EU-related reforms.

6) Monitoring the public administration reform, conducted by FOSM under the project **Civil Alliance for Transparency – CSO Watchdog over Public Administration Reform**, and supported by the European Union through IPA 2015 Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, which included the following activities:

- Development of three reports on implementation track record of the Strategy on Public Administration Reform 2018–2022 in the period February – December 2018,¹⁴ in the period July – December 2018¹⁵ and final report that presented four journalist investigative stories on issues related to public administration employment and optimization, emergence of corruption and access to services.¹⁶
- Development and presentation¹⁷ of the survey research “Citizens’ Views on the Public Administration Performance”.¹⁸
- Development of three policy documents, as follows: “Towards Accountable and Transparent Public Administration By Means of Functional Oversight Institutions – Assessment of Oversight Institutions’ Efficiency and Effectiveness”,¹⁹ “Driving Force of the Negotiations: Role of the Public Administration in Negotiations Through the Work of Working Groups”²⁰ and “Gender Analysis of the Public Sector in RNM with Special Overview of Women on Managerial Positions”.²¹
- Development and publication of six analyses²² based on findings from monitoring public administration reform and focused on local administration. Analyses featured monitoring findings on topics such as: citizens’ satisfaction with quality of local services, public finance management, transparency of employment processes, technical and technology needs of specific institutions in the public sector, access to information for persons with disabilities. Monitoring activities covered 25 municipalities.

¹⁴ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/II-Izvestaj-RJA-FINAL-WEB.pdf>

¹⁵ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/foom-reforma-na-javnata-administracija-3-izveshtaj.pdf>

¹⁶ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/IV-Izveshtaj-SRJA1.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://bit.ly/2xZPEed>

¹⁸ Available at: <https://bit.ly/2xmGpVx>

¹⁹ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/kon-odgovorna-i-transparentna-javna-administratsija-preku-funkcionalni-kontrolni-institutsij/>

²⁰ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/dvizhechkata-sila-na-pregovorite-ulogata-na-javnata-administratsija-vo-pregovorite-sogledana-niz-rabotnite-grupi/>

²¹ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/javna-politika-2.pdf>

²² Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/novi-shest-analizi-od-monitoringot-na-reformata-na-javnata-administratsija-na-lokalno-nivo/>

- Organization of the closing conference “What Is Next? Public Administration Reforms after the June European Council”, with participation of government officials, ambassadors, representatives from the EU Delegation, civil society organizations and journalists, who provided an overview of current state-of-affairs and observations about opportunities and challenges in public administration reform, especially in the aftermath of the June European Council.²³

7) In addition, this concept implemented the project **Support to Macedonia for EU and NATO Integration**, with financial support from the *Open Society Initiative for Europe's* Reserve Fund, in cooperation with the *Open Society European Policy Institute*. In particular, the project concerned institutional support to the Cabinet of the Chief Technical Negotiator, through engagement of four expert staffers.

8) With funds from the *Open Society Initiative for Europe's* Reserve Fund, and in cooperation with the *Open Society European Policy Institute*, FOSM implements the project **State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police**. In that, FOSM established cooperation and supported *BIRN Macedonia, Coalition “All for Fair Trials”, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and Institute for Human Rights* to develop a publication titled ‘State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police’ This publication analyses forms and methods applied for political capture of institutions in North Macedonia that has led to the country's categorized as “state capture”. Results of these analyses are presented to the public in the form of six investigative stories conducted by journalists at BIRN, and accompanied with expert analyses on state-of-affairs in the judiciary, public prosecution and police. This publication will be promoted in the course of 2020, together with distribution of findings and recommendations to domestic and international institutions and organizations.

9) Implementation of the project **Redefining Anticorruption Narratives** started together with *Open Society Foundations Latin America and United States Programs* and in cooperation with *Topos Partnership*. The overall goal of this initiative is to identify and apply effective public narratives that disclose corruption, while cultivating civil engagement, action and hope. The project includes comparative case studies from three countries: North Macedonia, Brazil and the United States. CSOs from North Macedonia involved in this project are: *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE; Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis”; Youth Educational Forum, Association Multikultura and Coalition “All for Fair Trials”*.

10) Also, FOSM established a separate office for the project **Dialogue with CSOs – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integration**, which is implemented in cooperation with the partner organizations *Center for Civil Communications, Reactor – Research in Action and Eurothink – Center for European Strategies*. This project is

²³ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/reformite-na-javnata-administratsija-treba-da-prodolzhat-so-istoto-tempo-se-sproveduvaat-za-trajno-da-se-podobri-kvalitetot-na-zhivot-na-sekoj-graganin/>

supported by the European Union through IPA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016–2017, and included:

- Design and establishment of the Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integration, This web-platform (www.dijalogkoneu.mk) is used for centralized dissemination of information about the EU accession process and hosts information on work and functionality of three formal mechanisms for cooperation between civils society organizations and institutions of RNM. In designing the web-platform, efforts were made to map associations and foundations in RNM, resulting in creation of database with 2,096 active associations and foundations.
- Organization of conference on the topic “Advancing Structured Dialogue between Institutions and Civil Society Organizations”, which included presentation of the Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integration as central point for consultations of associations and foundations with the institutions.
- Development of “Monitoring Methodology on Sector Working Groups’ Work and Effects”, as document that defines the monitoring approach to functionality of sector working groups and participation of civil society organizations in their work.
- Monitoring seven meetings held by sector working groups by project researchers, with secured presence of researches at their meetings and formation of sector monitoring committees. Ten meetings were held with representatives from line ministries responsible for work of sector working groups, and six memoranda are signed for cooperation and exchange of information with competent secretariats,²⁴ including a commitment to build the structured dialogue.
- Network of civil servants is formed and cooperation with them covers exchange of information on participation of associations and foundations in work of sector working groups and development of sector-wide consultations with civil society representatives.
- Development of four policy documents related to the Republic of North Macedonia’s EU accession process on topics such as: “Role and Importance of Sector Working Groups in Macedonia’s EU Accession”; “Coverage of the Sector Working Group on Competition and Innovation”; “Role and Involvement of CSOs in the Accession Negotiations between the Republic of Serbia and the EU” and “Role and Involvement of CSOs in the Accession Negotiations between the Republic of Montenegro and the EU”.
- Development and organization of ten sector-wide consultations between civil society organizations and representatives from line ministries, which included

²⁴ Secretariat for European Affairs; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy

discussions on involvement of civil society organizations in sector working groups and development of recommendations to improve their participation. Also, the web platform allowed promotion of indicators to measure progress in implementation of sector-wide policies by competent institutions, and organization of meetings with civil society organizations.

- Activities to document and publish minutes from two sessions held by the Council for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society.²⁵ Relevant session agendas and minutes, including session invitations, are archived on the web-platform (www.dijalogkoneu.mk).

As part of its operational activities, FOSM provided financial and expert support to the process of drafting the Transparency Strategy of the Government of RNM with Action Plan (2019–2021). In addition, FOSM representatives took part in: working group tasked to develop the Law on Free Access to Public Information; working group tasked to develop the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests; advocacy activities for establishment of the model for involvement of civil society organizations in the state's negotiations structure for EU accession; and development of the National Strategy on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interests 2020–2024 with Action Plan.

Establishment of Civil Society Network for Open Government Partnership (OGP) and National OGP Council

In December 2019, with support from the secretariat at the international initiative Open Government Partnership and in cooperation with the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, FOSM started activities for establishment of the Civil Society Network for Open Government Partnership (OGP) and National OGP Council.

The purpose is to create a structure for consultations and coordination within the civil society, and between authorities, civil society organizations, citizens and other interested parties in the process on design, implementation, support, promotion and monitoring of priorities and initiatives under OGP, in the wake of development of the new action plan.

Clear, structured and permanent mechanism between civil society and authorities will be established to increase civil society participation in OGP processes, development of national action plan, as well as to support, stimulate and monitor implementation of ongoing and future plans. The new structure should upgrade existing practices and engaged resources and implies creation of civil society network that will increase interest, knowledge and organization among civil society organizations for involvement in OGP processes and formation of national structure/body, the so-called OGP Council,

²⁵ Available at: <https://dijalogkoneu.mk/цсо-дијалог/совет-за-соработка-со-граѓански-цента/седници/?link=sednici>

comprised of equal number of representatives from institutions (at high level) and civil society organizations. OGP Council will coordinate and monitor the process on development and implementation of the national action plan.

In December 2019, initial meeting was organized with civil society organizations that are currently part of existing working groups under OGP. After this meeting, the Initiative Board was established for formation of the civil society network, comprised of 10 CSOs. At its first meeting, the Initiative Board reconsidered and adopted draft documents pertaining to network regulation and operation (structure and principles, open call and membership application template) and announced the call for network membership. In addition to 10 members of the Initiative Board, a total of 54 civil society organizations applied for network membership. The network will encourage, support and monitor authorities and institutions to increase their transparency and accountability and to ensure opportunities for civil society's active participation.

The first draft-model for establishment of OGP Council (as national body or so-called multistakeholder forum) is developed and anticipates this body to work on coordination and monitoring development and implementation of national action plans, with focus on needs, goals, tasks, composition/members, selection method, role and responsibilities. On December 24, 2019, the Initiative Board held a consultation meeting with representatives from institutions that were previously involved in OGP processes at which the draft model was reconsidered and recommendations for improvements were drafted.

The network's founding assembly will be held in early 2020, and will invite international organizations. In February 2020, documents governing OGP Council are expected to be finalized through a consultation process, followed by announcement of call for participation in this body (for civil society organizations) and appointment of representatives from institutions in order to make this body functional.

CONCEPT: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR ADVANCING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

The *Community Partnership for Advancing Local Democracy* concept supports joint efforts of local civic actors to stimulate systemic changes in the areas of environmental protection, urban planning and public spending in three municipalities – Bitola, Tetovo and Shtip.

The first objective under this concept is to empower disadvantaged communities to engage in consultation processes in their local environments to design policy solutions that reflect their priority needs.

In cooperation with members of the Macedonian Creative Activism Team, which operates as part of the *Contemporary Art Centre*, through collection and analysis of data with guided desk research, as well as structured interviews during field visits and conversations with stakeholders, a detailed analysis was development on actual state-of-affairs and specific needs in each of the three municipalities. Adequate to research findings, under mentorship from the *Center for Artistic Activism* from New York, and as part of the creative activism methodology, the Macedonian Creative Activism Team adapted the curriculum on creative community engagement. Local activist hubs were formed in all three municipalities, followed by organization of workshops and lectures (based on this curriculum). By applying newly-acquired knowledge and skills, with support from the Macedonian Creative Activism Team, the local groups organized participatory processes for designing urban actions that were implemented in all three municipalities.

In Tetovo, four urban actions were organized. A figure of renowned cartoon character *La Linea* was placed in the neighborhood Banjiche to alarm about dangerous pothole that has been there for three years. Due to unregulated landslide, the pothole is expanding and at times of intensive rainfall poses serious safety threat for by-passers and local residents. The second action "Welcome to Tetovo: A Town Where Nobody Cares about Anything"²⁶ took place in early September 2019. At frequented locations across the town activists placed posters to alarm about the enormous quantity of discarded litter, non-reconstructed potholes in the road, traffic chaos, need for public transport, etc. With the action "Support Pillar"²⁷ activists from Tetovo called for resolution of the landslide problem and non-reconstructed support pillar on the road to Banjiche. With the action "Attention! No Traffic Lights!" activists publicly called municipal authorities to take urgent measures necessary to regulate traffic and put into operation traffic lights on the intersection near the Tetovo University and the Secondary School of Medicine "Nikola Shtejn".

The local hub in Shtip organized four actions focused on growing problems with urban planning in the town. The first action, staged in front of the local primary school, concerned placement of several plastic ducks in the asphalt pothole that has existed for long period of time, and was filled with atmospheric water after rainfalls. The "Duckling Family" managed to prevent cars from driving over the pothole and splashing pedestrians and pupils. With the action "Looking for Thor from the planet of Asgard" activists called competent authorities to reconstruct problematic sections along the boulevard near the school and to place adequate traffic signals that would increase traffic safety. The action called "Thor Throws His Litter in Bins, and Asgard Has Waste Bins" appealed to competent institutions to place new waste bins along the

²⁶ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/dobredojdovte-vo-tetovo-gradot-vo-koj-nikom-u-ne-mu-e-gajle-za-nishto/>

²⁷ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/umetnichka-akcija-potpورا/>

recreational pedestrian path, and urged residents of Shtip to uphold environmentally aware behavior. The action “Welcome to Shtip, A Town without Public Toilets and Public Culture” reiterated the need for the public toilets to be put into function. At the same time, activists called their fellow citizens to care for public culture and hygiene and to behave responsibly towards their own town. In addition, as part of the Festival of Textile Workers, members of the local activist hub placed an enormous needle as monument and symbol of textile industry and textile workers. These actions motivated competent local institutions to react and address some of the problems indicated.

The local group in Bitola organized four actions. The action called “This Is Not a Parking Lot” marked several frequent locations across the town with yellow balloons in just one afternoon. In doing that, activists raised the issue of unresolved problems with parking space across the town, which results in limited mobility of pedestrians and lowered safety of traffic participants. The second action, “Tell the Clouds, Bitola Is Dying!”²⁸ raised awareness about one of the most burning problems in Bitola – air pollution. Early in the winter, in November, they organized follow-up action called “Winter Is Coming, Will We Breathe Again”. Visible radiation signs were placed on existing roundabouts in Bitola, aimed to raise awareness about the need to urgently find sustainable solutions to reduce air pollution in Bitola. The streets of Bitola were given new signs with satirical names that showcased their unique problems.

Macedonian Creative Activism Team held regular coordination meetings, but also virtual meetings with the *Center for Artistic Activism* from New York. In October, work meeting was organized among all three local groups, *Centre for Artistic Activism* and Macedonian Creative Activism Team, thus completing the first stage of their training. Afterwards, members of these groups were sent targeted call to award grants and they, together with the Macedonian Creative Activism Team, developed annual plans for action intended to advocate for resolution of problems in their communities by using the creative activism methodology. Three grants were awarded to organize and facilitate inclusive consultation processes in their respective communities that should result in development and implementation of project ideas, as follows: local activist hub in Bitola was awarded grant for the project “Creative Bitola”, local activist hub in Tetovo for the project “Quiet Revolution”, and local activist hub in Shtip for the project “Cre/Action for Democracy Development”.

The conference “THIS IS (NOT) RIGHT – About Creative Activism and the Ambitions to Impact Societal Changes”²⁹ was organized on December 21, 2019, in cooperation with the *Contemporary Art Centre* and the *Foundation IDEA Southeast Europe*. At the event, more than 100 activists and theoreticians from the country and the region shared experiences, opinions, lessons learned, good practices and interesting ideas for utilizing potential of creative activism for societal changes. It also offered an attempt to initiate

²⁸ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/kazhete-im-na-oblastite-bitola-umira/>

²⁹ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/event/konferencija-vaka-ne-biva/>

systemic reflection on the *artivistic* space in the country, to locate actors and formats of actions, but also to recognize ideological and strategic frameworks and tactical experiences, as well as to document and analyze success factors of these engagements.

In all three regions (Bitola, Shtip and Tetovo), the *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights* continued to conduct regular monitoring of extreme nationalist narratives. Monitoring findings and analyses were offered for public discussion, in order to encourage debate for finding efficient methods to prevent and address challenges imposed by hate speech. Cooperation between *FOSM* and *Helsinki Committee* in monitoring extreme nationalist narratives will continue in the next 12 months.

In cooperation with the *Open Society Foundations Art Exchange Program* from New York, institutional support was secured for the *Contemporary Art Center* from Skopje for the period 2019–2022, while in cooperation with the *Open Society Europe Initiative* a grant was awarded to *Kontrapunkt* to support participation of guests from the region at the upcoming session on *KRIK Festival* in 2020. *FOSM* supported the association *Roma Economic Development Initiative REDI* from Tetovo in their action to donate funds to Roma families affected by the earthquake in Albania.

The concept's team continuously monitored implementation of grants and provided consultations and mentorship according to identified specific needs, as well as counselling for development of narrative and financial grants on awarded grants.

Second objective under the *Community Partnership for Advancing Local Democracy* concept is to support intensified joint oversight and advocacy efforts of civic actors aimed to improve quality of policies and practices in the areas of environmental protection, urban planning and public spending.

In particular, two trainings were organized for members of civil society organizations that have capacity to conduct oversight and advocacy in the areas of environmental protection and public spending. The first capacity-building training for local organizations to work on issues related to environmental protection, delivered by the *Centre for Environmental Research and Information Eko-svest* from Skopje, was attended by 10 representatives from civil society organizations in the regions of Tetovo, Shtip and Bitola. Selected participants were actively engaged in the training that was designed as interactive workshop intended to encourage them to get out from their comfort zones and respond to requirements of exercises anticipated for this training. The training on monitoring public spending was organized by the *Center for Civil Communications* from Skopje and was attended by 15 representatives from 8 civil society organizations from Bitola, Shtip and Tetovo. This training allowed expanded and deeper knowledge pertaining to research and monitoring skills and introduced participants to the new Law on Public Procurements. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to discuss methods of analysis for tender procedures exposed in the media,

to be introduced and to browse the Electronic Public Procurement System, as well as risks and consequences from corruption in public procurements.

In early June, FOSM announced an open call to award grants to grass-root organizations and/or networks engaged in monitoring and advocacy for policies and practices before local authorities in Bitola, Tetovo and Shtip, in the areas of environmental protection, public spending and urban planning. In that, 10 grants³⁰ were awarded to monitor and advocate for policies and practices of local authorities in Bitola, Tetovo and Shtip.

National Strategy on Development of the Concept of One Society and Interculturalism in the Republic of North Macedonia (2020–2022)

In 2019, FOSM contributed to development of the National Strategy on Development of the Concept of One Society I and Interculturalism in the Republic of North Macedonia (2020–2022) with active participation of own representatives in thematic clusters on education, culture, youth, social inclusion and local self-government, and representative in the multidisciplinary coordination body for strategy development. At the same time, FOSM secured financial support for engagement of a team comprised of seven experts, for development of cluster analyses necessary for strategy development. In their finalized form, these analyses covered: needs assessment; public policy framework analysis; key institutions/factors and their operation; analysis of the area of operation and services delivered; stakeholder analysis; analysis of the surrounding (internal and external); and conclusion on state-of-affairs/challenges. In addition, one expert worked on alignment of strategy's final text, which was adopted by the Government of RNM in November 2019.

In addition to developing these analyses, experts also participated in consultations and finalization of the draft strategy, including action plans per thematic area, established priorities and goals under the strategy, as well as measures and instruments that arose from consultation processes. Also, FOSM representatives and engaged experts provided inputs at consultation meetings and public events, and at the international conference held in October 2019.

Regional Creative Hubs

As part of the *Open Society Foundations Anticorruption Initiative*, the project **Regional Creative Hubs: Tapping into the Power of Arts and Culture to Embolden Citizen Action against Corruption** is implemented in West Africa and the Western Balkans in the period 2019–2021. The overall goal of this initiative is to embolden artists, advocates and journalists to be more effective in their efforts to impact citizens' interest for

³⁰ Available at: <https://fosm.mk/current-project/dodeleni-10-granta-na-lokalni-graganski-organizatsii-i-mrezhi/>

engagement in corruption-related issues in their respective environments. The regional creative hubs are virtual platforms as part of which participants strive to learn *why and how* to become creatively engaged in anticorruption issues to change public perceptions and to impact public policies. The project involves four national foundations in the Western Balkans (North Macedonia, Albania, Bosna and Herzegovina, and Serbia) and the regional foundation for West Africa (OSIWA). FOSM and OSIWA are tasked to facilitate coordination, communication and cooperation among participants in this initiative.

In April, the first meeting among representatives from foundations involved in the project was held in Belgrade and included detailed discussion of activities planned under the project, as well alignment of their respective implementation timelines, and individual responsibilities for all parties involved. Moreover, needs for additional budget funds were identified. The meeting was attended by representatives from the *Center for Artistic Activism* and *OSF Art Exchange Program* from New York. The second working meeting of this initiative was held in December, in Dakar, Senegal, hosted by colleagues from West Africa. Parties involved in the project organize regular virtual meetings for preparation and implementation of activities.

FOSM announced an international open call to select learning partner organization for this initiative, which will design the methodology and will conduct external evaluation of the project by identifying relevant indicators, milestone achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

The first regional training for interested artists, activists and journalists from the Western Balkans was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 14 to 19 October 2019. The training called “Academy for Artistic Action” was delivered by the *Center for Artistic Activism* from New York, in cooperation with the Macedonian Creative Activism Team within the *Contemporary Art Center* from Skopje. A total of 20 participants (5 from each Western Balkan state involved in the initiative) had the opportunity to be familiarized with the creative activism methodology and design solutions, through artistic forms, to identified problems in relation to widespread corruption practices. This training was completed with organization of the creative action “Don’t Mito (Bribe), Don’t Corrupt”³¹ staged in downtown Sarajevo by academy participants. To the surprise of all participants and in spite of low expectations, within three hours more than 50 corruptive stories from citizens were gathered in the central pedestrian area in Sarajevo.

After this training was completed, all foundations that participate in this initiative announced targeted calls to award small grants. This call was open for artists, activists and journalists who have successfully completed the training and they were able to propose learning activities for engagement of new audiences to test the methodology and to apply knowledge acquired at the training. The proposed creative action (or

³¹ Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=9qWYtIJrYSA

series of actions) had to impact public understanding of the fight against corruption. FOSM supported all five proposals made by participants from Macedonia with small grants, as follows: Darko Taleski for the creative action "Corruption Parade"; Dragana Gunin for the creative action "Say NO to Corruption at Universities"; Zorica Zafirovska for the creative action "Oxygen!"; Igor Ilievski for the creative action "Shakedown the Judge"; and Jelmaz Dervishi for the creative action "Open Anticorruption Day". Mentorship and consultations with trainers from the Academy for Artistic Action were secured for all projects approved. The second regional training "Academy for Artistic Action" intended for West Africa countries was organized in December, in Dakar, Senegal, and was attended by 20 artists, activists and journalists from Ghana, Senegal and Guinea.

CONCEPT: EDUCATION FOR SMALL ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Pursuant to its 2019 strategy priorities, FOSM started implementation of the *Education for Small Ethnic Communities* concept, aimed to contribute to improved quality of education in languages spoken by small ethnic communities (Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian). By direct support to ten rural schools delivering instruction in languages of small ethnic communities, the concept aims to improve teacher competences and to enrich teaching and other educational resources (technical equipment, textbooks and teaching aids, literature works, didactic and other materials in their respective language of instruction), as well as to design educational policies and sustainable systemic solutions that will enable equal educational opportunities for all pupils.

FOSM implements this concept in cooperation with the Administration for Development of Education in Languages of Small Ethnic Communities (Administration) at the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), in close cooperation with strategic partner organizations *Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives "Step by Step"* and *Foundation for Internet and Society Metamorphosis*.

The concept involves two schools with instruction in Bosnian language (satellite school "Dituria" in v. Ljubin, Municipality of Saraj, and primary school "Rajko Zhinzifov" in v. Orizari, Municipality of Veles), three schools with instruction in Serbian language (primary school "Cyril and Methodius" in v. Kucheviste, Municipality of Chucher Sandevo, primary school "Svetozar Markovikj" in v. Staro Nagorichane, Municipality of Staro Nagorichane, and primary school "Brothers Ribar" in v. Tabanovce, Municipality of Kumanovo), four schools with instruction in Turkish language (primary school "Nedzati Zekirija" in v. Kodjadjik, Municipality of Centar Zhupa; primary school "Goce Delchev" in v. Vasilevo, Municipality of Vasilevo; primary school "Mustafa Kemal Ataturk" in v. Dolno Kolichani, Municipality of Studenichani, and primary school "Strasho Pindjur" in v. Karbinci, Municipality of Karbinci) and primary school "Brothers Ramiz and Hamid" in

the Municipality of Shuto Orizari, which has the highest number of pupils attending elective subject *Roma Language and Culture*. FOSM signed memoranda of cooperation with all project schools.

The first objective under *Education for Small Ethnic Communities* concept is to provide direct support to ten rural schools with instruction in languages of small ethnic communities.

In 2019, the focus of our work was delivery of capacity-building training for teachers, as one of key activities under this concept. This activity was implemented in partnership with the *Foundation "Step by Step"* and BDE.

The *Foundation "Step by Step"* revised and refreshed training materials according to new contemporary trends in teaching and learning and according to needs shared by project schools at the first visits. All developed materials were translated in the languages of small ethnic communities (Bosnian, Serbian and Turkish).

The training session "Quality Pedagogy Practice of 21st Century" was organized in Struga, in the period June 24 to 27, 2019, and was attended by 73 class teachers from project schools. They had the opportunity to get familiarized with underlying principles for delivery of contemporary instruction, teaching strategies and techniques that stimulate curiosity, research, critical thinking and cooperation for interaction between adults and children, inclusion of family and community members in education of children, inclusion, respect for differences and democracy for all children and their families, as well as creation of learning and continuous professional development environment. In the same period, another training "Reading and Writing to Critical Thinking" was held in Ohrid, with participation of 81 subject teachers and representatives from expert services at project schools. The purpose of this training was to equip teachers for instruction that allows pupils to develop abilities for critical thinking, problem resolution, argument-based discussion and cooperative learning. This training was secured for additional 29 teachers from different primary schools that have election subjects such as: *Vlach Language and Culture*, *Bosniak Language and Culture* and *Roma Language and Culture*.

The training "Social Justice Education" was organized in Ohrid, in the period August 18 to 21 and 21 to 24, 2019, and was attended by 144 teachers from ten project schools. The three training modules (naming, announcing and building alliances) provided an opportunity to get familiarized with the concept of social justice, understand the importance of differences among people, understand psychological and social basis for creation of prejudices and stereotypes, what discrimination means and what needs to be done to overcome these phenomena.

In order to ensure that adopted concepts, as well as knowledge and skills acquired by teachers at these training sessions are applied in classrooms and with their pupils,

through educators from the *Foundation "Step by Step"*, FOSM secured continuous assistance to teachers by means of visits and establishment of learning communities in all ten project schools. As innovative form of professional development, learning communities allow individual teachers to work on improving their pedagogy practices through independent work and research, as well as peer discussions. The purpose of these learning communities is to create learning culture at schools, teachers to take action to improve their work by creating efficient systems of reflection and documentation of their professional development. The learning process in each of these communities is led by a mentor appointed by the project and they are guiding members of each learning community according to the learning leadership methodology of the Cambridge Faculty of Education, adjusted to local circumstances. In 2019, a total of 30 mentorship meetings were held, three per project school. The first meeting was attended by 129 teachers, the second - 127 teachers and third mentorship meeting was attended by 116 teachers. Five network events were encouraged and supported, and they implied mutual visits (school host and school guest), allowing enhanced cooperation and exchange of good school practices for teaching and learning among project schools.

The mobile "library on wheels", abounding with picture books, books and educational materials, made three visits to these schools, allowing pupils to make friends with actors, read picture books together in Turkish, Bosnian, Serbian and Macedonian languages, discuss topics and contents of picture books and have fun. The library on wheels was visited by more than 2,000 pupils, parents and teachers, all of whom took great pleasure to be part of these activities. For great number of children, this was the first contact with library and literature in their mother tongue. The purpose of this initiative is to instigate children's love for books and interest for reading.

"Social Justice for Quality Education" was this year's topic of the traditional event *Speech 4 Teach*, which took place on December 19, 2019, at the Youth Cultural Center in Skopje, where seven teachers, practitioners, civil society members and professors delivered inspirational speeches and shared their personal stories and views, challenges they are facing in their respective work environments, but also views and opinions on possibilities how to address them.

In order to encourage creation and distribution of educational resources in languages of small ethnic communities, FOSM's partner organization *Metamorphosis* organized a short course on Open Educational Resources (OER) for class and subject teachers from project schools, at which they were familiarized with basic concepts of OER, why they are important for the education process, and benefits for teachers and pupils from use of such resources. They were also presented with methods and tools for free-of-charge creation of OER, while teachers had the opportunity to attend hands-on workshop with mentorship by the team at *Metamorphosis* to immediately start content creation and

upload them online. At the same time, activities started to design and reorganize the website www.oer.mk.

FOSM secured didactical materials and teaching aids according to individual needs and requirements of project schools (equipment for classrooms in natural sciences, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, sport equipment, music instruments, etc.), thus enriching teaching and learning resources at the project schools and allowing teachers to apply knowledge acquired at training sessions more easily and with quality. FOSM also secured mandatory titles of school reading assignments in Turkish and Serbian languages, as well as reading assignments in Macedonian language for the primary school "Brothers Ramiz and Hamid" in the Municipality of Shuto Orizari.

Work with children in combined classes was indicated as challenge by teachers in small rural areas, especially at satellite schools with small number of pupils. Based on detected challenges and needs at project schools, and pursuant to FOSM's memorandum of cooperation with BDE, the Bureau developed "Manual for Education in Combined Classes at Primary Schools". This manual will serve as baseline for training of teachers at these schools, who work in rural areas and with combined classes.

The second objective under the *Education for Small Ethnic Communities* concept is work with education authorities on designing educational policies and sustainable systemic solutions that will provide equal education opportunities for all pupils.

Under the second objective, FOSM representatives took part in several working groups tasked to develop and/or revise strategic documents and define action plans. In the period February – May, FOSM participated in setting priorities, goals and activities under the National Strategy on Development of the Concept of One Society and Interculturalism in the Republic of North Macedonia, i.e. clusters on education and youth. In addition, FOSM selected and appointed representative in the Sector Monitoring Committee for the 2017 annual action program, with focus on education, and actively participated in work on defining indicators for the Revised Employment and Social Reform Program (ESRP 2022). At the same time, FOSM provided inputs for indicators under the *Performance Assessment Framework on Education, Employment and Social Policy in RNM*.

In cooperation with *Foundation "Step by Step"*, FOSM presented its comments and proposals to advance professional and carrier development of teaching staff under the Draft Law on Teachers and Expert Associates at Primary and Secondary Schools, which was adopted in mid-2019.

Due to implementation of ongoing activities and planning of future initiatives to advance instruction for small ethnic communities, FOSM developed an analysis of relevant national strategic documents to establish regulations on and status of education in instruction languages of small ethnic communities: Turks, Serbs, Bosniaks,

Vlachs and Roma, and to foster community language and culture, i.e. to implement measures such as: a) instruction in languages of small ethnic communities, and b) elective subjects *Language and Culture* (of small ethnic communities). This analysis aims to examine: positioning of measures for education of members of small ethnic communities in their mother tongue as part of state strategic documents; current state-of-affairs in delivery of instruction in languages spoken by small ethnic communities in RNM; current situation in terms of implementation of the subject *Language and Culture*; possible obstacles and difficulties in attainment of goals pursued by these measures; and perspectives of these measures. In general and based on this analysis, it could be concluded that, at the level of policy, these issues are not analyzed and there is lack of vital support for quality education in languages spoken by small ethnic communities, and that collection of desegregated data on ethnic background imposes a series challenges, thus threatening the possibility for valid and relevant assessment of quality and effectiveness of measures for education of small ethnic community members and the subject *Language and Culture*. This analysis will be shared with relevant institutions (MES, BDE, the Administration, municipalities and project schools) and will be available on FOSM's website.

With financial support from the *Open Society Foundations Education Support Program*, FOSM awarded grant to the *Association of Young Analysts and Researchers - AYAR* from Skopje to develop and pilot the "Methodology on Allocation of Municipal Budget Funds to Primary Schools" in municipalities where the *Education for Small Ethnic Communities* concept is implemented, as follows: Saraj, Karbinci, Veles, Chucher Sandevo, Staro Nagorichane, Kumanovo, Centar Zhupa, Vasilevo, Studenichani and Shuto Orizari. By means of field and comparative analysis, this research aims to offer preliminary assessment of required reconstruction activities and new investments in targeted municipalities; to increase openness and availability of local self-governments to needs of local actors, and to develop methodology for sustainable and rational allocation of funds to primary schools in these municipalities. In 2019, activities started with data collection under the instrument for free access to public information in all ten municipalities and development of questionnaires to interview school principals and teachers. Findings and complete analysis with recommendations for future measures are expected to be presented before stakeholders and the public in May 2020.

Moreover, with financial support from *Open Society Foundations Education Support Program*, FOSM awarded grant to the *Association of School Principals and Student Dormitory Directors "SCHOOL LEADERS"* from Skopje to strengthen the association's role as stakeholder and to ensure its involvement in development of state-wide education policies, through support for development of its multiannual strategy, which also includes communication strategy and action plan.

Third objective under the *Education for Small Ethnic Communities* Concept is to support Roma inclusion in the education.

As continuation of its long-standing efforts and strategic commitment on Roma inclusion in all spheres of the society, FOSM designed and started implementation of the three-year project **Stay@School: Action for Roma Inclusion in Primary Education**, financed by the European Union. This project is implemented together with the association *Education Support Center "Dendo Vas"*, *Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives "Step by Step"* and in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science.

The project anticipates disbursement of 1,545 scholarships for at least 615 children across the state enrolled in first cycle of primary education (315 scholarships in the school year 2019/20, 615 scholarships in the school year 2020/2021 and 615 scholarships in the school year 2021/2022), direct work with Roma communities on the importance and effects of regular school attendance on children's performance, their education and life; training for teachers and small school grants for creation of inclusive learning and work environment at around 50 schools in the state. By alleviating the financial burden to the most vulnerable Roma families related to schooling of their children, the project will increase the scope and will reduce dropping out rates among Roma from primary education, while contributing to regular school attendance and successful transition to next grades.

Aimed at securing additional support for Roma pupils, FOSM awarded two grants to the association *Roma Business Information Center of Macedonia*. The first grant facilitated development of the Program for Pedagogic Assistants for primary education pupils according to the profile defined under the classification of vocations adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) and upon previous approval from MES. The second grant is awarded to pilot the program by means of training a group of pedagogical assistants in duration of 190 hours over a period of three months, whereby through theory lectures and practical work candidates are trained and take the final exam that helps them acquire certificate of pedagogic assistant for primary education pupils.

By the end of 2019, FOSM awarded grant to the *Association for Protection of the Rights of the Child* which runs the daily center for street children in Shuto Orizari for more than 13 years and works on reducing children's stay on the streets. In particular, FOSM's support will help this center to accommodate 62 children aged 4 to 18 years who are outside the education system, as well as additional 38 children from repatriated families that receive support in terms of clothing, hygiene products, school materials, and psycho-social support and assistance for school homework.

By the end of September 2019, FOSM administered scholarships for Roma youth that attend medical and other study programs under RMUSP and RHSP, financed by the Roma Education Fund.

CONCEPT: LEGAL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK STRATEGY

In 2019, FOSM entered the final year of the four-year global initiative *Open Society Foundations Legal Empowerment*. The overall goal under the *Legal Empowerment Network Strategy* is to develop and implement developmental policies on legal empowerment at national and local level that would ensure access to justice for poor and marginalized groups of citizens (Roma, sex workers, people who use drugs, textile workers).

Three objectives under the *Legal Empowerment Network Strategy* cover activities related to: (1) institutionalization of legal empowerment through development of national and local policies on legal empowerment in cooperation with all stakeholders – representatives from relevant national and local institutions, academia, civil society organizations and affected groups of citizens; (2) ensuring sustainability of different modalities for access to justice services; and (3) securing continuous delivery of quality legal services and legal empowerment for poor and marginalized communities (Roma, sex workers, people who use drugs and textile workers). Through joint work with representatives from relevant national and local institutions, academia, civil society organizations and affected groups of citizens, FOSM strives to promote possibilities for institutionalization and sustainability of different modalities for community-based access to justice services.

Activities implemented under the first objective on institutionalization of legal empowerment concerned advocacy aimed at:

- Continuous implementation of two commitments in the priority area on access to justice under the Open Government Partnership's Fourth National Action Plan 2018 – 2020. In cooperation with two line ministries responsible for implementation of these commitments (Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy), FOSM representatives participated in implementation of activities under both commitments that contribute towards increased access to justice, but also to general promotion of the rule of law at national and international level.
- Aimed at closer familiarization with the concept of access to justice and legal empowerment that would ensure their adequate participation in implementation of activities under OGP commitments, two seminars were organized for employees from both ministries. The first seminar, intended for representatives from MLSP and social work centers, was designed as cooperative effort between FOSM, MLSP, MoJ, partner organizations and the Legal Clinic. The second seminar, intended for representatives from MoJ and its regional offices responsible for provision of free legal aid, was designed in cooperation with MoJ and representatives from the Council of Europe's project "Support to Legal Aid Reforms".

- At the level of sector-wide institutionalization of legal empowerment, MLSP integrated the access to justice approach in the broader scope of its social services. Under the new systematization act, the Roma Information Centers became organizational units within 13 social work centers and they will engage trained paralegals. FOSM will deliver training for paralegals that cover areas in which citizens most frequently face legal problems.
- At local level and in cooperation with civil society organizations and municipal authorities, access to justice centers for Roma and other socially vulnerable groups were established in two municipalities - Shuto Orizari and Prilep. Moreover, in compliance with the National Strategy on Roma, municipal councils in 12 municipalities with significant number of Roma population adopted operational plans on legal empowerment as part of their Local Action Plans on Roma Integration. Workshop and working meeting were organized with representatives from municipal authorities to ensure adequate implementation of local policies and better familiarization with the concept of legal empowerment. In six municipalities, joint priorities of the local action groups were developed for the period 2019 – 2020.
- With support from FOSM, the Minister of Labor and Social Policy attended the Open Government Partnership Global Summit that took place in Ottawa, Canada, from 29 to 31 May, where she presented the Macedonian model for sector-wide institutionalization of legal empowerment. At the same event, FOSM presented Macedonian experiences from integration and importance of access to justice among priorities aimed to attain OGP goals.
- Representatives from FOSM, associations that work on access to justice and Deputy Minister of Justice took part in the World Justice Forum held in The Hague, the Netherlands, in period 29 April–2 May 2019, where they presented our experiences in the field of legal empowerment.
- Use of OGP as platform for domestic and international advocacy allowed FOSM representatives to present experiences and achievements at two important events: the above-referred World Justice Forum in The Hague, the Netherlands, and the OGP Regional Exchange of Experience Meeting, held in Budva, Montenegro, on October 3 and 4, 2019.
- The new Law on Free Legal Aid (LFLA), drafted as a result of cooperation between MoJ, FOSM, *Macedonian Young Lawyers Association* and five associations authorized for provision of primary legal aid, entered into effect in October 2019, Improved solutions under this law are expected to contribute to increased scope of citizens that apply for and are approved primary and secondary legal aid, to accelerate the procedure that is now anticipated as urgent, and to ensure sustainability for authorized associations. In the aftermath of the law's adoption,

FOSM actively participated in drafting secondary legislation that further regulates adequate enforcement of the law,

- Except in regard to new LFLA, directly and through support to civil society organizations, FOSM took active part in advocacy for and development of several laws relevant to legal empowerment, such as: Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, Law on Labor Relations, Law on Social Protection, Law on Healthcare, advocacy for transposition of SDG goal. 16 in the national legislation, and development of policy brief on amendments to legislation and policies that will affect the *pro bono* culture.
- FOSM's support to civil society organizations that work on advancing the status of Roma allowed organization of seven advocacy meetings at local level and one meeting at central level with the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Implementation of the Strategy on Advancing the Status of Roma. Roma communities in municipalities Delchevo, Berovo, Pehchevo and Vinica were empowered as a result of continuous advocacy at local level, especially visible with engagement of 43 Roma who are beneficiaries of the new social measure on guaranteed minimum income in implementation of the Program on Community Public Work.
- 22 individual meetings with attorneys-at-law resulted in development of the report on state-of-affairs related to *pro bono* legal assistance, i.e. the manner in which *pro bono* services are offered by different law firms and the share of individual cases per law firm, keeping separate records on *pro bono* cases, and how are these cases taxed.
- Manual for establishment and maintenance of *pro bono* program in operation of law firms and individual attorney offices was also developed.

Efforts to attain the second objective under the *Legal Empowerment Network Strategy* on ensuring sustainability of different modalities for access to justice services were geared towards:

- Changes to the new LFLA, to introduce grant scheme for associations authorized for provision of primary legal aid, which will ensure sustainability of this type of services;
- Integration of paralegals from Roma Information Centers into social work centers, whose work will be reimbursed with funds from MLSP's budget;
- Support to nine civil society organizations to implement activities for innovative funding, organize auctions, sport events, meetings with the business community, public events and campaigns to raise funds, services and equipment used to cover portion of legal services provided by these organizations;

- Organization and delivery of comprehensive training on social entrepreneurship, accompanied with several-months individual mentorship for ten civil society organizations.

Third objective under *the Legal Empowerment Network Strategy* on securing continuous delivery of quality legal services and legal empowerment to poor and marginalized groups of citizens (Roma, sex workers, people who use drugs, and textile workers) is attained by support to 15 civil society organizations³² for provision of legal services through four modalities of community-based access to justice approaches: paralegal assistance, community-based legal assistance, free legal aid under LFLA and legal clinic for vulnerable groups. Hence, activities implemented in 2019 included:

- Legal and paralegal assistance was provided to more than 2,971 Roma from 12 Roma communities in relation to patient rights, discrimination, illegal charges for healthcare services, health and social insurance, personal identification documents, social assistance, third-party care and assistance, reproductive health, immunization, etc. Moreover, field visits to 12 municipalities by trained paralegals allowed provision of systemic information dissemination on rights and possibilities for provision of paralegal assistance, identification of legal problems and continuous monitoring of individual violations of human rights. An individual lawsuit is motioned against the state before the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in relation to protection against discrimination of Roma women in terms of access to gynecologist. Numerous educational workshops were organized for around 379 Roma citizens on topic such as: immunization, patient rights, health and social insurance, healthcare and free health examinations; preventive healthcare programs, women's health, outreach services, free access to public information, etc.
- Civil Forum was organized in Shuto Orizari with 25 community members and representatives from Roma partner organizations. This forum was organized by the *Women Initiative of Shuto Orizari*, with focus on monetary implications that arise from the new Law on Social Protection.
- A total of 1,113 citizens addressed the five organizations registered for provision of free legal aid, mainly in the field of social protection, labor relations, family relations, property tenure issues, children protection and protection of domestic violence

³² HOPS - Healthy Options Project Skopje; Health Education and Research Association – HERA; Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE; Initiative for Community Development and Inclusion; Association for Development and Promotion of Roma Community “Romano Chachipe”; Education and Humanitarian Organization - EHO Shtip; National Roma Centrum – Kumanovo; Youth Cultural Centre – Bitola; Association for Democratic Development of Roma “Sun” – Tetovo, Izbor – Strumica; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights; Association for Legal Education and Transparency STATION LET – Prilep, NGO KHAM – Delchevo, Legal Clinic for Vulnerable Groups, and Coalition Margins.

victims. 34 citizens applied for free legal aid to MoJ, requesting free attorney representation in court. Nine legal empowerment sessions were organized, as well as three info-days, at which citizens were familiarized with their rights and obligations in the field of social protection, labor relations, execution services, gender-based violence, etc.

- A total of 664 legal services were provided to 59 sex workers, while eight paralegals organized 555 meetings to provide paralegal assistance to 141 sex workers. A total of 26 sex workers benefited from 132 psychological services. Court representation was secured to 14 sex workers and one family member of a diseased sex worker. Among them, 12 sex workers are involved in court procedures for violation of many human rights during the police raid organized by the Ministry of Interior (MoI) called "Suppression of Street Prostitution" in November 2008, which were completed before domestic courts, but continue before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Eight people who use drugs were provided representation before competent domestic and foreign bodies, as follows: two cases for possession of psychoactive substances for personal use; one case for protection against violence on child who uses drugs and two applications before ECtHR for two procedures on protection of the rights of people use drugs (two applicants per procedure), or more precisely, one procedure against illegal disclosure of data from the methadone center at the General Hospital in Strumica and the other for abuse of DNA data of one person who uses drugs. Moreover, discrimination lawsuit was motioned on behalf of a person dismissed from work for being treated with methadone therapy.
- Advice was provided to 50 members of different marginalized communities, while 150 cases on violation of rights of marginalized communities were documented. Court representation was provided to 20 clients in criminal, civil and administrative procedures.
- 1,497 individual pieces of legal information were provided to textile workers at 60 textile factories, including organization of four informative meetings with female workers. One request was submitted to the State Labor Inspectorate for performance of extraordinary inspection at particular company.
- 36 students worked at the Legal Clinic, of which four students are from past generations at the Legal Clinic for Vulnerable Groups who decided to continue their activity at this clinic. Students were divided into four departments at the clinic. Six training sessions were organized on developing students' sensitivity to work with vulnerable groups, focused on building their knowledge and skills for presentation of legal information in work with members of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Furthermore, six training sessions were organized for in-depth theoretical knowledge, aimed to equip students at the Legal Clinic with specialized knowledge in the respective fields covered by their department.

- Two training sessions were organized for paralegals on topic such as: right to health, healthcare system, health insurance, and protection of patient rights. They were attended by total of 46 participants. The paralegal teams provided assistance and support for exercise of rights in the fields of healthcare, health insurance and protection of patient rights.
- Workshop was organized with civil society organizations included in the system of free legal aid, attended by 18 participants from total of ten civil society organizations.
- Six info-sessions were organized for 135 citizens from socially deprived families, families at social risk, parents of children and children with disabilities, agricultural workers, etc.
- Three administrative lawsuits are initiated against decisions taken by MLSP. Although there are sufficiently strong evidence in these cases that indicate to the need for monetary allowance to be granted (pension or social allowance), the social work centers took negative decisions, which were later confirmed by MLSP.
- Around 15 cases have been recorded in different parts of the state relating to the same legal issue, i.e. collection of public utility debts that are beyond the statute of limitations and are not subject of valid court decisions.
- Three procedures were initiated before the Agency for Electronic Communications, of which two are successfully completed.
- One procedure was initiated before the Energy Regulatory Commission for out-of-court dispute settlement with EVN Macedonia.
- Legal empowerment efforts were accompanied with media activities in the form of regular targeted stories aired on local radio and television outlets, as well as in the social media. Three videos were produced to promote the new Law on Free Legal Aid.

Implementation of the project **Access to Justice for the Most Marginalized**, for which FOSM was awarded grant by the European Union by the end of 2019, will be of great importance towards attainment of the third objective. The purpose of this project is to enable human rights protection through legal empowerment to promote access to justice for the most marginalized groups, with focus on Roma, people who use drugs, sex workers, children and families at social risk, and other vulnerable communities. It will be implemented by FOSM, in partnership with *HOPS - Healthy Options Project Skopje* and *Association for Legal Education and Transparency STATION LET – Prilep*, in the period January 2020 – July 2021.

**KEY MILESTONES AND/OR ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY
CSOs SUPPORTED UNDER FOSM's STRATEGIC FIELDS IN
2019**

FIELD: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

In 2019, under the *Enabling Environment for Civil Society* field, FOSM established cooperation with the General Secretariat (GS) at the Government of RNM, Department on Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations and the Government's Council for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society, for financial and expert support to develop "Analysis of financial support to associations and foundations from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia (from 2017 to first half of 2019) with comparative analysis of models on state funding from other countries and proposed model for Fund for Support and Development of Civil Society and Co-Funding EU Projects in RNM".

FOSM actively participated in implementation of **USAID Civic Engagement Project**, in the capacity of partner organization, from January 2017 until April 2019, and administratively completed the project in June 2019, with submission of the final narrative and financial report. After having conducted an audit for 2018 operations, international audit house KPMG issued positive opinion on FOSM's financial performance and procedures under the project.

FOSM's role was to implement activities related to capacity-building for grantees supported by the project. In 2019, FOSM activities significantly contributed to strengthening capacities of 14 civil society organizations and three networks comprised of organizations that are project grantees. FOSM secured support for implementation of individual capacity-buildings plans for all grantees, developed in cooperation with civil society organizations. This support included training, peer learning and networking events, individual mentorship and/or expert assistance tailored to needs and priorities on organizational improvement at individual civil society organizations.

FIELD: STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND ENGAGEMENT

Through support for several civil society organizations in the *Students' Rights and Engagement* field, FOSM aims to advance student rights and engagement for better youth and student policies and for greater transparency and accountability in higher education. Moreover, FOSM representative attended public hearings organized at the Parliament of RNM, which included presentations and suggestions from youth organizations and relevant factors in terms of support for the Law on Youth Engagement, and participated in panel discussions organized by the Agency for Youth and Sports aimed to support the initiative for adoption of Law on Youth and revision of existing Strategy on Youth of RNM and development of action plans for the next period.

Citizens' Association Youth Educational Forum (YEF) used the financial support received to focus its activities on active participation in monitoring current and designing new

student and youth policies and monitoring their implementation by competent institutions and bodies. YEF representatives participated in the working group tasked to draft the Law on Youth Engagement, which was adopted in early 2020 and for the first time allowed adequate regulation aimed to support youth and youth activism and engagement. Through its members, YEF contributed in the working group on amending the Law on Secondary Education in regard to student organization and engagement; the working group on student standard and youth standard, which also includes an initiative for regulation of youth work; and the National Strategy on Developing the Concept of One Society and Interculturalism in the Republic of North Macedonia, as part of clusters on youth and education. YEF maintains continuous communication, coordination and cooperation with the Agency for Youth and Sports in regard to revision of the National Strategy on Youth and creation of new action plans.

YEF continued its work under its programs such as *Debate*, *Street Law* and *Activism*, whereby throughout the school year 2019/20 it operated youth clubs in Skopje, Veles, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Bitola, Struga and Prilep. Lectures were organized on weekly basis according to a pre-defined curriculum. Additionally, in the school year 2019/20 the debate program established international cooperation with three secondary schools in Skopje, as follows; "Josip Broz Tito", "Nikola Karev" and "Orce Nikolov", and organized meetings and lectures at these schools. The debate program developed two new curricula on elementary and advanced level of debate and initiated implementation of the mentorship system, whereby a more experienced lecturer from Skopje serves as mentor to new lecturers from debate clubs in other towns across the state, in order to provide additional support for new lecturers.

YEF issued a public reaction to express its disagreement with the budget adjustment that anticipated budget cut in the amount of 14 million euros for the education sector. This press release landed on positive reactions in the public, was shared by significant number of media outlets and was supported by other civil society organizations that joined the public reaction against budget cuts for education. Together with 15 civil society organizations, YEF reacted to significant budget cuts in the field of higher education, which also targeted student dormitories.

In 2019, *Radio YEF* team was enhanced with two students that were allowed to perform their internship and learn at this youth media. In early October, the radio's website installed a new function called "[Report a problem](#)" that facilitates reporting of problems in the field of education, which were later used to develop investigative stories. *Radio YEF* continued production of its show program "In Class", which in 2019 reached 8,379 views.

In November and December 2019, elections for student representatives in faculty and university bodies were organized for the first time pursuant to the new Law on Higher Education adopted in 2018. YEF regularly informed the general public, and especially

students about the possibility to be nominated and elected as student representatives, and trained 30 young people that later monitored these elections at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje. According to YEF monitors, the student elections were organized without major incidents and disturbance to the election process. The voter lists registered a total of 25,444 students. Unfortunately, not all faculties published the numbers of students that have exercised their right to vote. Based on available information, the turnout rate for 11 from total of 23 faculties that account for 55.9% of students with rights to vote stood at 14.09%.

Repeated balloting was organized at two faculties due to irregularities (more ballots in boxes compared to signed students on the voter list; students who voted, but are not registered on the voter lists, i.e. were allowed to vote without being asked to provide identification document). It is important to note that all these shortcomings were noted by respective election committees at the faculties and that no irregularities were reported during the repeated balloting. In technical and logistic terms, conclusions concern the fact that most faculties were not equipped with adequate voting materials, such as voting booths and translucent ballot boxes. For illustration, only the Faculty of Philology "Blazhe Koneski" had assembled a voting booth intended for persons with physical disabilities. At all faculties the elections resulted in selection of total of 390 members to faculty assemblies.

In 2019, YEF marked its 20th anniversary as youth organization with several activities and events, the most important being the closing event "Conference on Youth and Education", which included three panel discussions on following topics: "Informal Education: Corrective or Integral Part of the Education Process?"; "The Future of Education: What Is (Must Be) Next?"; and "Youth Issues That Are Yet to Become Priorities". The event was attended by YEF members, long-term partner organizations, as well as institutions and collaborators in the field of informal education and youth policies. Speakers at the conference included Arbr Ademi, Minister of Education and Science; Ivana Tufekdjikj, Member of the Parliament of RNM; representative from UNICEF in RNM, several former executive directors and presidents at YEF, as well as representatives from partner youth organizations, donors, university professors and secondary school principals.

FOSM supported the project "Financial Transparency and Accountability in Higher Education and Science in RNM" implemented by the *Independent Academic Union in Skopje (NAKS)*. By means of analyses, research and recommendations to educational authorities and higher education institutions, the project aims to underline importance and advocate for greater transparency of funding for higher education and greater openness and inclusiveness of processes. In 2019, NAKS conducted analyses and research on accessibility of MES budget and analysis of higher education budget, in order to identify the procedure and criteria used for allocation of funds to public universities and scientific institutions, as well as legal grounds for setting salaries of

employees in higher education and science, analysis of salaries for employees at public universities and scientific institutions in RNM, and survey research on public perceptions about valuation of academic effort at public higher educational institutions. Findings have shown a series of vague provisions and inconsistencies in terms of creation, presentation, adoption and control over budget spending for higher education and science, but also major lack of junior university staff, great differences in amounts and methods for setting salaries of academic staff among public universities and higher educational institutions at same universities, etc. NAKS shared its research findings with MES and the public, and they will be discussed at public debates planned for the months of February and March 2020.

Under its call to award grants for joint actions on analysis, monitoring and advocacy for creation and/or implementation of student and youth policies, FOSM awarded two grants, as follows:

- (1) Informal **Network for Prevention of Brain Drain**, led by the *Association Leaders for Education, Activism and Development* from Skopje, with following network members: 1) *Center for Youth Activism KRIK* - Skopje; 2) *Association for Dyslexia EINSTEIN* - Skopje; 3) *Center for Multi-Disciplinary Development PROCESS* - Skopje; 4) *Association "Youth Alliance"* - Krushevo; 5) *Association for Education "Mladiinfo International"* - Skopje; and 6) *Citizens Association "Youth Can"* - Skopje, was supported to conduct an analysis and monitor implementation of the National Strategy on Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of Brain Drain among University-Educated and Professional Staff 2013-2020, and to organize consultations with all stakeholders in order to generate recommendations, policies and measures aimed to reduce brain drain among young and university educated staff from the country. The project started with press conference and public debate with participation of heads from relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Science, Agency for Youth and Sports and Agency for Emigration, all of whom discussed national measures to prevent brain-drain, however conversations with youth in attendance allowed the conclusion that said measures had not helped in reversing the trend of youth emigration from the country, which has been confirmed by a series of research papers published in 2019. Through the media and interviews, partner organizations in the network informed the public about planned activities and designed the methodology for data collection that would serve as baseline for analysis of this strategy, followed by collection and processing of information from six in-depth interviews. In 2019, activities included public opinion survey that resulted in collection of significant number of 1,190 answers that would be used for adequate analysis that will be shared with the public in the first quarter of 2020, including proposals for future measures to prevent brain-drain.

(2) **Network for Student (Re)formation** formed by the *National Youth Council of Macedonia* with several partner organizations, as follows: 1) *Local Community Development Foundation - Shtip*; 2) *Association for Civil Activism FORUM 16 - Bitola*; 3) *Youth Cultural Center - Bitola*; 4) *Association for Sustainable Development SFERA INTERNATIONAL - Bitola*; and 5) *Center for Education and Development CED - Tearce*, was awarded support to address the issue of student organization and to monitor the process for establishment of the new model of student organization at three state universities, i.e. University "Goce Delchev" – Shtip, University "St. Clement of Ohrid" – Bitola, and Tetovo University. The project is planned to encourage active participation of students in these processes, by means of better information and motivation to get involved in decision-making and student advocacy before university bodies. Development of detailed plan for advocacy and coordination among project partners marked the start of campaign for student organization that informed students about their rights and possibilities to participate in university work, but also about the new model of student organization. In that, advocacy efforts targeted dean and rector administrations at all three universities for adherent implementation of legal provisions and establishment of effective system for student organization. Also, field activists from local partner organizations were engaged in continuous monitoring of processes at each of the three state universities and drafted monitoring reports and recommendations to improve the process. In general, according to initially obtained data from elections organized at the Universities in Shtip and Bitola, the turnout rate of students is relatively low, i.e. lower than 15%, but without tangible findings about election irregularities. Unfortunately, the partner organization encountered problems in terms of collecting data from the student elections organized at the Tetovo University, having in mind non-transparency on the part of student representatives and inability to obtain access to requested documents and information. Full analysis of student elections at the three state universities and accompanying report will be conducted in the first quarter of 2020 and will be shared with dean and rector administrations and the general public.

With support from the *Open Society Foundations Higher Education Support Program*, FOSM enabled implementation of YEF's project "Student Dormitories Free of Corruption". The purpose was to support student activism to increase transparency and accountability of student dormitories and to improve quality of services received by tenants at student dormitories based in Skopje.

YEF conducted a survey on sample of 300 respondents (student tenants) accommodated at state-run student dormitories "Kuzman Josifovski – Pitu", "Goce Delchev" and "Stiv Naumov" in Skopje. The survey was focused on living standards of students, their participation in decision-making and their perceptions about various

forms of corruption present at student dormitories. The survey report "Patched Student Life" showed that students assessed the situation at their respective dormitory with an average score of 2.93 from maximum 5, emphasizing poor living conditions, lack of funds and premises for studying and lack of sport and cultural activities as main aspects that need to be improved. According to this survey, although the basic conditions for participation are fulfilled in legal terms, 92% of respondents indicated they have never participated in decision-making at their dormitories, while 70% of them have low knowledge about administrative bodies that operate within state-run student dormitories. Reasons indicated for non-participation include: lack of time, lack of information about participation mechanisms and lack of trust that they could change something. 40% of respondents have noted corruption at student dormitories, more than 35% of them have personal experience with some form of examined corruptive phenomena and/or know somebody that has personal experience with that. More than 70% of representatives would not participate in examined corruptive activities, 89% of them do not know where they could report corruption, and as many as 53% of respondents would not report them to competent bodies. YEF conducted an analysis of public procurements at student dormitories in the period 2015-2018 in order to examine how much and how state-run student dormitories allocate and spent budget funds to meet student needs. The analysis showed low allocation of only 61 MKD per day for preparation of breakfast, lunch and dinner for student tenants. Food costs for students account for only 15% of total expenditure at state-run student dormitories. Findings from both research reports were shared with competent institutions and education authorities and were used to advocate for changes to the new Law on Student Standard, whose development is underway. Moreover, the project supported three student initiatives to improve living conditions at their dormitories, which resulted in refurbishment and equipment for the library at "Stiv Naumov", revival of the disco and backyard at "Kuzman Josifovski – Pitu", and refurbished playground intended for sport activities by tenants at "Goce Delchev".

In November 2019, YEF received additional support from *the Open Society Foundations Higher Education Support Program* for the project "Engaged Students for Student Dormitories Free of Corruption" and continued its work with student dormitories, by expanding its research to cover the two biggest student dormitories outside the capital – in Bitola and in Shtip, and one of the biggest state-run student dormitories in Skopje ("Pelagonija"). In order to improve student standard and create active students familiar with their rights and obligations, in the next 12 months and with assistance from three local youth organizations, YEF will work on implementation of local actions to improve conditions at student dormitories, organization of training and creation of manual on student rights.

FIELD: RIGHTS-BASED HEALTH POLICIES

In the field *Rights-Based Health Policies*, FOSM supports several civil society organizations that work on advancement of health policies that facilitate exercise of healthcare services and rights of marginalized communities (LGBTI, Roma, people who use drugs, sex workers and people living with HIV).

In 2019, institutional grants were awarded to *Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE*; *Healthy Options Project Skopje – HOPS*, *Coalition Margins* and *Association for Support to Marginalized Workers STAR-STAR*, as well as project grants to monitor budgets of harm reduction programs, and grants to associations that work on changing the narrative towards Roma, in order to support activities aimed at attainment of following objectives: (1) health budget monitoring and analysis and holding the government accountable for allocation of maximum available funds for progressive and non-discriminatory enforcement of health rights; (2) advocacy for health policy reform to accommodate community needs; and (3) ensuring involvement and participation of affected communities in planning, monitoring and evaluation of health policy implementation.

In 2019, ***Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE*** actively participated in monitoring implementation of existing and creation of new healthcare policies. Upon invitation from the Ministry of Health (MoH), ESE representatives took part in several working groups tasked with drafting the new Law on Health Protection by submitting a total of 55 proposals³³ developed by this and other 20 civil society organizations. Due to dissatisfaction with the manner in which MoH led this process and unsatisfactory level of transparency, and for the purpose of engaging in additional advocacy to address problems identified in development of this law, problems faced by civil society organizations were elaborated at the 13th session of the Council for Cooperation with and Development of Civil Society. ESE participated in development of the action plan for minimum sexual and reproductive health services package at times of crisis and emergency, especially in the section on health protection of mothers and children at times of crisis; development of the program on active health protection of mothers and children, which integrated proposals made by ESE in relation to activities targeting Roma communities; and participated in the reform planning process for primary healthcare, organized by MoH and WHO, with presentation of findings and recommendations for the outreach service, registered gynecologists and preventive teams for children health at healthcare centers, and made requests for community involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of primary healthcare services, with special emphasis on vulnerable population groups. Moreover, ESE

³³ Proposals are based on elaborated data and arguments arising from work of these organizations, as well as actual needs of citizens and are aimed to advance healthcare coverage of the population, with special focus on vulnerable population groups (including Roma, people with rare diseases, LGBTI, youth, people living with HIV, people who use drugs and other groups).

contributed in development of the Strategy on Safe Motherhood, the Plan on Primary Healthcare Reform, the Protocols for Prenatal and Postnatal Health Protection and other secondary legislation.

In addition, *ESE* addressed the Government and MoH with requests for necessary measures that need to be taken in order to deliver commitments assumed under the High Level Policy Declaration at the United Nations in relation to the Universal Health Coverage by 2030. These requests were also shared with the public and were covered by the media. Based on its work, *ESE* drafted recommendations for the revision of the National Action Plan on Roma Health and took part in working teams tasked with planning and implementation of the Open Government Partnership's National Action Plan 2018 – 2020.

Since it is established that, for many years, the Macedonian healthcare system has not been allocating sufficient funds for preventive healthcare, advocacy efforts continued in 2019 and were aimed at increasing budget allocations for preventive healthcare. Minister of Health and Minister of Finance were addressed with requests to increase the budget for preventive healthcare. Activities related to budget monitoring and analysis³⁴ for programs adopted in 2019 noted certain improvements in regard to budget increase, whereby budget funds for the Program on Active Health Protection of Mothers and Children were increased by 2,000,000 MKD, budget funds for the Program on Systemic Check Ups for Students and Pupils by 5,270,000 MKD, budget funds for the Program on Treatment of Rare Diseases were increased by 29,907,000 MKD and budget funds for the Program on Breast Cancer Screening by 170,000 MKD. In this reporting period, backsliding was noted only under the Program on Uterine Cancer Screening, where budget funds were reduced by 2,800,000 MKD and implied revoking of activities targeting Roma women, as unique measure that was first adopted and implemented in 2018.

Public debate with press conference³⁵ was organized as part of advocacy at national level aimed to promote Roma health, women reproductive health, and health of mothers and children, and featured addresses by civil society representatives and members of Roma communities in Shuto Orizari and Delchevo. The public debate included presentation of findings from work on the integrated approach conducted by *ESE* and Roma partner organizations, and was used to share demands to improve state-of-affairs in regard to Roma health status, with special emphasis on women, mothers and children. The public debate was attended by representatives of the media, civil society organizations, public health institutions and international organizations.

As part of its work on involvement of citizens in processes for planning, implementation and assessment of legislation, budgets and services in the field of social and economic

³⁴ Available at: <http://www.esem.org.mk/index.php/biblioteka/najnovi-publikacii-i-izdanija.html>

³⁵ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4AFKmmPMr8>

rights, *ESE* continued to provide continuous technical support, mentorship and supervision over work performed by three Roma organizations that apply the integrated approach on social accountability and legal empowerment in Roma communities in regard to following activities: community work (community mapping and mobilization), collection and analysis of data by Roma communities; budget monitoring and analysis at local level, provision of paralegal assistance, and development and implementation of local advocacy strategies.

In addition to domestic civil society organizations, *ESE* delivered training and mentorship support for capacity building of civil society organizations in Southeast Europe (Bulgaria and Romania) that work on promotion of Roma health, in regard to implementation of the methodologies of social accountability and legal empowerment. One two-days training was organized for 15 civil society organizations from Bulgaria and one organization from Romania, followed by continuous technical support. At the Salzburg International Seminar, *ESE* presented its experiences with application of social accountability and legal empowerment for promotion of Roma health in North Macedonia before participants from civil society organizations, universities and other institutions from Central and Southeast Europe.

Capacity-building and mentorship for application of the methodologies of budget monitoring and analysis was provided to two civil society organizations from Montenegro and Serbia that work on harm reduction programs. *ESE's* engagement in this field and for the needs of advocacy implemented by *HOPS - Healthy Options Project Skopje*, the analysis "Possibilities to Finance Harm Reduction Programs in RNM with Cigarette, Alcohol and Beer Excise". At the international workshop "ERS/TBEC Workshop on Advocacy and People-Centered Care" in Zagreb, *ESE's* representative facilitated the session for development of advocacy plans on funding programs to combat tuberculosis through national budgets.

As part of its cooperation with institutions, *ESE* will work on capacity building for MoH and public health institutions by delivering training and providing mentorship support in the process for introduction and implementation of innovative approaches to involve citizens in monitoring, creation and implementation of preventive healthcare programs. In 2019, MoH selected the Program on Prevention of HIV/AIDS as the pilot program for this approach.

In addition to budget analysis of preventive healthcare program, in 2019 *ESE* also worked on analysis of reasons behind the trend on increased newborn and perinatal mortality in Macedonia, as well as analysis of shortcomings in the system for data collection for these indicators, which emerged from cooperation with group of relevant experts, the Administration for E-Health and analysis of available data. Finalization and promotion of this analysis is planned for 2020. In the second half of 2019, data was collected to develop the macroeconomic analysis of the overall budget for health

protection of women, mothers and children in regard to three aspects: MoH costs, costs of the Health Insurance Fund and out-of-pocket payments by patients. This analysis will be finalized in the course of 2020.

Moreover, the analysis "What is the Cost of Unpaid Care Work in Households?"³⁶ was developed on the basis of data from previously conducted survey research among households that provide care for serious ill and fatigued people. The analysis showed time required to provide care and costs related to care provision. Also, it allows insight in effects from care provision on primary caregivers, including the impact on their ability to work, personal earnings, health and the like, and the impact on the entire household, including increased costs, reduced income, etc.

In the field of fiscal transparency, *ESE* conducts regular annual assessment of fiscal transparency and accountability of institutions in the field of social and economic rights. Hence, it developed relevant reports³⁷ with assessment of the level of active transparency for 26 public institutions and the level of reactive transparency for 85 public institutions in 2018, and drafted an analysis of the assessment process.

Moreover, *ESE* assessed transparency in public procurements organized by 62 public health institutions in 2018. Based on analysis of data from total of 9,696 public procurements that were organized as part of 3,136 projects by 62 public health institutions³⁸ (32 healthcare centers that implemented 3,631 public procurements; 11 public health centers and the Institute of Public Health that implemented 1,532 public procurements; 16 general and clinical hospitals that implemented 4,082 public procurements; the University Clinic of Gynecology and Obstetrics that implemented 312 public procurements and MoH that implemented 139 public procurements) and translated these findings into report³⁹ that provides information about the method and purpose of public funds spent by the public healthcare system under public procurements; level of transparency in implementation of public procurements; the manner in which budget funds are spent and who benefits the most from public procurements in the public healthcare system; for which purposes do public health institutions spend most funds and how much of these costs are justified. In addition, *ESE* continued to collect data on public procurements organized by the same public institutions in 2019, which will be subject of analysis in the next period.

For the purpose of developing these reports, *ESE* submitted 2,163 requests under the instrument for free access to public information to 88 public institutions. Due to violation

³⁶ Available at: <https://www.esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikaciji/2019/Neplatena%20rabota%20za%20nega.pdf>

³⁷ Available at: <https://www.esem.org.mk/index.php/biblioteka/najnovi-publikaciji-izdanija.html>

³⁸ Institutions covered with this analysis are public health facilities that deliver preventive health services for women, children and Roma and overlap with preventive health programs that are in the focus of monitoring efforts implemented by *ESE*.

³⁹ Available at: https://www.esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikaciji/2019/Analiza%20Javni%20nabavki_MK.pdf

of the right to free access to public information, a total of 396 appeals were lodged against 21 public institutions.

Aimed at advancing the level of fiscal transparency, *ESE* monitors implementation of the Open Government Partnership's National Action Plan 2018-2020 in regard to fiscal transparency and access to information. A total of six coordination meetings were organized with public institutions involved in implementation of OGP NAP, as follows: with MoH, for alignment of the report on the Program for Early Detection of Malignant Diseases; with the Employment Service Agency, about the annual report on performance of this institution and proposal of template for open format reporting; with the Ministry of Finance, for coordination of activities under the priority area on fiscal transparency, and consultation meeting for development of software for public disclosure of data on real-time changes to the treasury system; and with the Commission for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information (KOMSPI) to agree the contents and method for informative meetings with citizens on familiarizing them with the right to free access to public information.

Under its priority on advancing fiscal transparency, *ESE* submitted a proposal on the contents of the annual operation report of the Employment Service Agency which was partially accepted and reflected in its 2018 annual report (improvements are noted in regard to presentation of budget data); submitted a proposal on the contents of open database for semiannual data on the status of implementation of employment measures and services (program and budgetary) that was accepted by the Agency and will be published in the first half of 2020 for the year 2019; provided technical support and assistance for finalization of the report format in terms of program and budget implementation of the Program on Early Detection of Malignant Diseases for 2018 that was published on MoH's official website; and provided proposals to improve the electronic database at the Ministry of Finance for publication of information on real-time changes in the treasury system.

Aimed to raise awareness among the general public on the importance of fiscal transparency and the need to increase transparency of public institutions, *ESE* organized media campaign on Facebook, whereby in the period of six months obtained the following statistics: 41,055 reached; 1,069 engagements; and 53,940 likes. Moreover, in cooperation with KOMSPI and aimed to familiarize citizens with the right to free access to public information, nine informative sessions were organized with citizens in Sveti Nikole, Shuto Orizari (two meetings), Vinica, Delchevo, village Crnik, Tetovo, Strumica and Bitola.

Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS) works on promotion of health rights of marginalized communities, with special focus on people who use drugs, underage children that use psychoactive substance and sex workers. In 2019, except for provision of necessary services, HOPS continued advocacy activities for adequate systemic

policy solutions that are of particular importance for its target groups. HOPS representatives participated in working groups on: reform of laws that penalize sex work; adoption of law that regulates sex work in order to ensure safe work environment; improving economic, social and health status of sex workers; reform of drug policies and adoption of the Law on Control of Opiate Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and amendments to the Criminal Code in order to create humane drug policies; and development of protocol for treatment of street children, action plan on minimum sexual and reproductive health services package at times of crisis and emergency for the period 2019 – 2022, National Strategy on Drugs, Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women, including domestic violence, Comprehensive Program on Treatment, Rehabilitation and Resocialization of Underage Children that Use Psychoactive Substances, rehabilitation of probation convicts, healthcare in prisons, etc.

As part of its advocacy for policies that promote the status of target groups, *HOPS* proposed an initiative for the Government's 2020 Annual Work Program to include presentation of economic benefits and promotion of human rights from creation of policies that decriminalize sex work. The proposed initiative anticipates changes to Article 191 of the Criminal Code and Article 20 of the Law on Disturbance of Public Peace and Order, that would create safe working conditions for this community, promote and advance their social status and economic wellbeing, improve their health status, improve quality of healthcare services, reduce human and children trafficking, and would ensure harm reduction from this line of work. After having received positive responses from Mol and MoJ, decision was made for *HOPS* representative to be involved in the working groups tasked to draft changes to the Criminal Code related to decriminalization of sex work.

Aimed at better organization of activities in work with children aged 5 to 15 years who live in small group homes, in 2019 *HOPS* partnered with MLSP and organized 19 training sessions to strengthen professional capacity and skills of experts that work at decentralized institutions. As part of this training, MLSP employees were presented with the "Manual for Organization of Workshops with Children in Small Group Homes" that includes 19 different modules/concepts for organization and structure of activities for work with children. In 2020, MLSP is expected to accept and start implementation of the Manual.

In 2019, as part of their continuous field work on key locations in Skopje,⁴⁰ *HOPS* teams contacted a total of 3,267 drug users, of which 43 are underage children (26 male and 17 female), including 10 new children aged 10 to 18 years who use ecstasy, marihuana, amphetamines and other psychoactive substances. From this group, five children

⁴⁰ Women's Park, Central Church, City Trade Center, Green Market, City Park and Railway Station

started addiction treatment and three children visited therapy sessions with *HOPS* psychologist and psychiatrist.

Expert legal teams at *HOPS* provided a total of 1,341 legal services to 126 different people who use drugs (109 male and 17 female), of which 49 users are members of the Roma community. Legal information and advice was provided in relation to social services, obtaining health insurance and healthcare, obtaining social assistance of different types, issuance of personal documents, accommodation at shelters, possibilities and models for addiction treatment, harm reduction, and minimum assistance in form of food, clothing and hygiene products. In 2019, the most frequently violated rights included the right to health, right to treatment, right to free movement, and right to fair trial, but there were also cases of discrimination due to addiction, as well as torture, inhumane and degrading treatment. Eight people who use drugs were provided legal assistance and representation before competent domestic and foreign institutions, as follows: two persons charged for possession of psychoactive substances for personal use drugs and one case that involved violence against child who uses drugs. Two applications were submitted before ECtHR for two procedures that concerned violation of the patient's right to privacy: one procedure implied disclosure of information to Mol by the methadone center within the General Hospital in Strumica, while the second concerned abuse of DNA sample from a person who uses drugs. At the same time, court representation was secured for 12 sex workers and one family member to a deceased sex worker for violation of their rights during the police raid from November 2008. In this case, application was submitted before ECtHR and is pending decision, while one sex worker that was unfoundedly accused for child trafficking was provided legal assistance and court representation.

Expert teams at the daily center for support to sex workers and their families provided a total of 771 legal services and contacted 63 different clients (53 women and 10 men), of which 45 are members of the Roma community. Most of these services (254) provided to total of 142 sex workers are in the field of family law, while 34 people were provided continuous psycho-social assistance.

For the purpose of legal empowerment, 29 educative workshops were organized at the daily center for support to sex workers and their families for a total of 55 community members. Topics⁴¹ covered by these workshops were mainly defined by the community, in cooperation with *HOPS* legal advisor and inspector from Mol's Internal Control Sector.

In order to strengthen capacity of the community of sex workers, *HOPS* organized workshop on utilization of creative tools and approaches (video, theater, photography, and music) to advocate for development of policies that are of interest to the

⁴¹ Discrimination of sex workers, civil activism, types of drugs and treatment, methods for partnership networking, human trafficking, self-help under duress, protection against domestic violence, social protection and healthcare, etc.

community; as well as on advancing their skills for communication with the media, enhancing self-confidence and promoting public speaking skills.

On the International Sex Workers Day, *HOPS* organized a donor event⁴² aimed to raise funds for continuous education of sex workers on protection from violence and raise awareness on the need to advance the rights of marginalized communities.⁴³

As part of their field visits in Skopje, Ohrid, Struga, Strumica and Gostivar, the team of eight paralegals established a total of 716 contacts and provided paralegal assistance for total of 170 different clients, of which 16 are new contacts. In 2019, total of 224 services were provided to the community of sex workers, of which 82 persons were accompanied and 142 were referred to relevant institutions or organizations. Majority of problems raised by sex workers concern issues related to family law, domestic violence, physical violence from clients and the police, healthcare, social assistance, change of residence and issuance of personal documents.

In order to improve quality of harm reduction services, in 2019 *HOPS* continued its activities on monitoring revenue and expenditure under MoH budget in regard to funds collected as excise from sales of ethyl alcohol, tobacco and beer. In partnership with *Association ESE*, an analysis was conducted about possibilities for self-sustainability and funding of addiction programs implemented by civil society organizations with excise funds collected from sales of ethyl alcohol, beer and cigarettes.⁴⁴ Moreover, an analysis was conducted about quality of programs for treatment of addiction diseases,⁴⁵ which served as basis for drafting recommendations to advance health policies and established practices on harm reduction from drug use.

Advocacy activities at local level included organization of two-day workshop for representatives from six local self-governments.⁴⁶ As a result of this activity, together with municipalities Kisela Voda and Centar, *HOPS* applied on the open call announced by MLSP and the World Bank for establishment of resocialization program for drug users. Furthermore, in partnership with the *Association "Option"* from Ohrid and the Municipality of Ohrid, *HOPS* worked on development of the local strategy on harm reduction, and in partnership with the Municipality of Strumica developed the "Local Strategy on Prevention of HIV for the Period 2020–2025" which anticipates financial

⁴² June 1, 2019, venue: BackYard in Skopje, fundraising activities included organization of five-a-side football tournament, sales of art works made by community members, creative workshop for children on design of t-shirts, and personal storytelling by Claire McFarlane, who is victim of physical violence and activist for fight against all forms of violence against women.

⁴³ 16 educative workshops were organized for sex workers.

⁴⁴ Available at: <https://hops.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/HOPS-AKCIZI-FINAL-ZA-web.pdf>

⁴⁵ Available at: <https://hops.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/KVALITETOT-NA-PROGRAMITE-ZA-LEKUVANE-NA-ZAVISNOSTI-VO-MAKEDONIJA.pdf>

⁴⁶ Skopje, Kisela Voda, Ohrid, Kavadarci, Strumica and Gostivar

support from the local budget for harm reduction activities and funding for civil society organizations that work on this matter.

The ninth school “Drugs, Policies and Practices” was organized by the end of 2019 and offered a multidisciplinary approach to education for 18 junior expert staff in regard to work on drug addictions, with special focus on the models of drug policies, evidence-based treatment, harm reduction, psycho-social programs, and integrating the concept of human rights and gender mainstreaming in development of harm reduction policies.

As representative of a group of associations⁴⁷ that work with different marginalized communities, **Coalition Margins** works on promotion, advocacy, protection and care for human rights of marginalized communities in regard to exercise of equal access to healthcare, social and legal services and their involvement in all societal processes, by ensuring an enabling environment for respect of equality, freedom and differences.

In 2019, *Coalition Margins* was active in several advocacy processes that are important for advancing the status and wellbeing for members of different marginalized groups. In addition to the key role played in adoption of the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, members of the *Coalition Margins* had a leading role in advocacy for changes to several laws, such as the Law on Termination of Pregnancy, Law on General Records, submission and adoption of amendments to the new Law on Primary Education in cooperation with the interparty parliamentary group on LGBTI. New provisions that concern protection against discrimination and violence in primary education significantly improved the Law on Primary Education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Science initiated a procedure for creation of secondary legislation that would further define and establish mechanisms for addressing and reporting all types of violence at primary schools.

As a result of long-term advocacy for creation of education process without discriminatory contents targeting marginalized communities, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with BDE on identification and change of textbooks with discriminatory contents in primary, secondary and higher education. Thus far, five textbooks for primary and six textbooks for secondary education have been withdrawn. A full revision process was initiated and includes cooperation with the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the Ombudsman Office, MES, Mess's pedagogy service, and the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”.

As member of the Interdisciplinary Group for Equal Opportunities, *Coalition Margins* initiated conclusion on sexist hate speech and discriminatory contents in textbooks.

⁴⁷ Since 2011, Coalition Margins is registered as independent legal entity, i.e. non-governmental organization founded by HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje, HERA – Health Education and Research Association, Izbor – Strumica, EGAL and STAR-STAR.

Furthermore, in the context of direct promotion and advancement of the rights of marginalized communities, *Coalition Margins* continued its cooperation with relevant institutions in order to strengthen capacity of civil servants to work with members of marginalized communities, while in cooperation with the Active of Expert Services in Secondary Education, the City of Skopje and secondary schools, efforts were taken on strengthening capacity of secondary schools to deal with gender-based violence and bullying.

In partnership with the Bureau of Social Activity as the institution competent to license expert workers, a training program was organized for continuous development of expert workers in the system of social protection according to Module 19 on work with marginalized communities/groups at risk. A novelty in 2019 was introduction of additional target group under Module 19, i.e. LGBTI community (in addition to people who use drugs, sex workers and people living with HIV). The training was completed by 50 participants, all employed at social work centers in different towns across the state (Strumica, Ohrid, Debar, Skopje, Bitola, Gostivar, Tetovo, etc.) The goals of this training include development of sensitivity to problems and needs of people living with HIV and LGBTI community members, development of skills and knowledge on expert work with these marginalized groups, and encouraging greater cooperation among institutions that provide services for support and protection of marginalized communities.

The Association of Medical Doctors accredited this program as training module for doctors on work with people living with HIV and trans-community. According to the accreditation certificate, the training accounts for 12.5 points for doctors-lecturers and 9 points for doctors-participants. In partnership with the Association of Private General Physicians of Macedonia, *Coalition Margins* held two trainings with general physicians and several specialists (gynecologists), or total of 31 participants from several towns in the state. The first training focused on health needs of trans-people, while the second covered the need for multidisciplinary approach in access to and provision of healthcare services for people living with HIV. The purpose of these trainings was to develop medical doctors' sensitivity and to further educate them on different aspects related to health needs of transgender people, health rights of transgender people, different specialist services included in the process for medical confirmation of gender, health rights of transgender people, and further education according to the most recent medical and scientific knowledge related to HIV infection, needs of people living with HIV, and most frequent violations of their rights within the healthcare system. In addition, the list of medical doctors also serves as reference list for medical practices that can offer safe environment for trans-people and is shared with members of this community from different towns.

In the period April–December 2019, *Coalition Margins* cooperated with the Active of Expert Services to organize two series of training on the topic of gender-based violence and bullying for expert associates and teachers from secondary schools in Skopje,

Kumanovo and Veles. It was delivered to 28 expert associates and teachers from 11 secondary schools.⁴⁸ Topics covered include gender and gender norms and equalities/inequalities, their effect on mental health and life of young people, and gender-based violence and its presence in school environments. The purpose was to develop skills to recognize the heteronormative system's impact on youth development and system for protection against gender-based violence in schools. After the evaluation conducted by the Active of Expert Services, trained staff of expert associates and teachers showed improved skills for recognition, prevention and protection of gender-based violence. The trainings are designed on the basis of the manual "Right to Gender-Sensitive School/Prevention and Early Intervention against Gender-Based Violence at Schools, Manual for Teachers and Expert Services at Schools", published by *Coalition Margins* in 2018.

In 2019, *Coalition Margins* continued its activities on provision of legal assistance and documentation of cases in which human rights of marginalized communities have been violated. Court representation was secured for two trans-women in a procedure led against one media outlet; two trans-women were represented before the prosecution due to violation of their rights by the police; six trans-people were represented in different stages of administrative procedure and lawsuit before the Administrative Court and Higher Administrative Court; one trans-person was represented before ECtHR and four drug users are represented in two procedures led before ECtHR. Except for the case "G", i.e. the case of person X v. Macedonia, where ECtHR took judgement in favor of person X represented by *Coalition Margins*, all other cases are still pending decision.

A total of 174 cases related to violation of the rights of marginalized communities were documented in 2019. Most of these cases concern gay men and transgender women, but also sex workers, people who use drugs, and several cases of transgender men. The cases are documented by victims themselves, paralegals and field workers from partner organizations and members of *Coalition Margins*. Most victims only document these cases, request legal advice or referral to other type of services (support, healthcare or social protection services). The willingness to report these cases before competent institutions still remains the key challenge, especially those than concern violence in the context of sex work and violence related to sexual orientation.

Two training sessions on documenting cases were organized for people living with HIV and LGBTI. Two meetings were held in Gostivar and Strumica to provide legal advice in specific cases of violated rights and to familiarize target communities with the possibility to document cases and availability of legal assistance and psycho-social counseling.

⁴⁸ "Jovche Teslichkov" – Veles; "Dimitrija Chupovski" – Veles; Gymnasium "Goce Delchev" – Kumanovo; "Pero Nakov" – Kumanovo; "Brothers Miladinovci" – Skopje; Gymnasium "Zef Ljush Marku" – Skopje; "Zdravko Cvetkovski" – Skopje; "MD Panche Karagjov" – Skopje; "Panche Arsovski" – Skopje; "St. Naum of Ohrid" – Skopje and "Vlado Tasevski" – Skopje.

These meetings reached out to 12 persons, while training on documenting cases covered 11 persons.

As regards hate speech in the media and on the social networks, increased occurrence of hate speech towards LGBTI people was registered during the Pride Parade. In order to test protection mechanisms, some hate speech comments were reported to the sector on cybercrime at Mol, but there is no feedback for any of them. One case of hate speech towards LGBTI people by internet portal was reported before the Council of Media Ethics, which approved the appeal. Three cases of discrimination against LGBTI people were reported to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the Ombudsman Office and the Pharmaceutical Chamber. In all cases, competent authorities have failed to establish discrimination, and only one case is pending response from the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.

As regards violation of rights by the police, four procedures are initiated and concern violation of rights in police proceedings, discriminatory treatment, abuse while performing official duty and harassment of sex workers, people who use drugs and LGBTI. No response is obtained in one case; violation was established in two cases, and disciplinary proceedings against police officer are initiated in one case.

In one case of domestic violence against transgender girl, relevant procedure was initiated before the Social Work Centre, followed by appeal for actions to be taken by social workers. As a result of this procedure, social services organized several counseling sessions for the family, and domestic violence stopped.

Key challenges include lack of capacity at competent institutions to recognize and protect rights of marginalized communities, while in terms of police actions, these challenges concern non-functionality of the system for control over the police, lack of political will to sanction police officers and failure to assume responsibility for such actions.

With support from the *Open Society Foundations Public Health Program*, institutional grant was awarded to the **Association for Support to Marginalized Workers STAR-STAR**. In addition to capacity-building activities for sex workers to be able to self-advocate for promotion of their socio-economic and health status, issuing monthly electronic editions of the magazine "S-Work" and activities related to the info-line for online support, in 2019, STAR-STAR was especially active in involving the community in processes for HIV prevention. After consultations on use of PrEP prophylaxis⁴⁹ with the community of sex workers in three regions (STAR Central – Skopje, STAR West – Gostivar and STAR East – Strumica), STAR-STAR participated in creation of the National Protocol for PrEP and PEP Prophylaxis, which was adopted by the Ministry of Health. Particularly important and

⁴⁹ Preventive use of medicines before exposure to HIV risk behavior

confirmation of successful work is the international award⁵⁰ STAR-STAR received by Positive Action Challenges in 2019. This year's March of Sex Workers was thematically organized around gender-based violence against sex workers.

Changing Negative Narratives Towards Roma

Through the *Open Society Foundations Public Health Program*, FOSM secured support for civil society organizations to implement projects on changing negative narratives towards Roma in public healthcare settings.

The team of **Vidi Vaka (Now This)** created 15 videos, 3 graphic news stories and 3 video interviews, which were aired on the social media and reached a total of 18,524 views. Moreover, students from the Faculty of Medicine at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" – Skopje took part in public debate and viewing of the most popular video products related to narratives towards Roma in healthcare institutions.

Association Theater Roma - Skopje used the power of theater as a tool to influence narratives about Roma. The theater play "Labyrinth",⁵¹ performed on December 2, 2019, at the National Opera and Ballet in Skopje and attended by audience of 450 people, was used to send clear messages for the need to change perceptions and communication of health workers and to raise awareness about the need to ensure equal treatment in access to healthcare services without prejudices and discrimination.

In order to advance cultural and structural competencies of health workers, a team of university professors⁵² in cooperation with the **Association of Internist Doctors** continued activities from the previous year. As part of continuous education for medical doctors, four accredited workshops were organized in Shtip, Veles, Strumica and Prilep for 100 health workers. Moreover, summer school was organized in Berovo for 25 students who are future health workers.

Lectures on the accredited elective subject *Cultural and Structural Competencies for Health Workers* continued as part of study programs in general medicine and other three-year medical studies, as well as postgraduate and doctoral studies in public health.

⁵⁰ Available at: <https://bit.ly/3atQD3G>

⁵¹ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBaZCXhwY20>

⁵² Prof. MD Elena Kjosevska, prof. MD Vesna Velikj Stefanovska and prof. MD Ljubica Georgievska Ismail

LIST OF PROJECTS AND GRANTEES SUPPORTED IN 2019

Civic Society Engagement in EU Accession		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
EUROTHINK - Center for European Strategies, Skopje	Citizens for European Reforms	\$60,000.00
Coalition "All for Fair Trials", Skopje	For Justice: Monitoring Implementation of the Strategy on Justice Reforms 2019-2020	\$44,940.00
Coalition for Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities MARGINI, Skopje	LPPD Watch Analysis: Monitoring Implementation of the New Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination	\$45,000.00
Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis", Skopje	Monitoring the Performance Track Record of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption	\$38,389.00
Association on Economic Research, Advocacy and Decision Making "Finance Think", Skopje	Gender Equality at Work: Monitoring at Local Level	\$6,915.00
Kontrapunkt, Skopje	EU REKA	\$6,970.00
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Skopje	Impact of Chapter 23 on the Republic of North Macedonia's Accession in the European Union	\$6,948.00
Citizens Association of Textile, Leather and Shoe Workers "Loud Textile Worker", Shtip	Access to Justice in the East Region	\$6,803.00
Association for Education of Farmers "Zelena Berza", Bitola	From Rural Woman to Successful Entrepreneur without Stereotypes and Discrimination	\$7,000.00
Rural Coalition, Kumanovo	Fundamental Human Rights and Gender Equality - Challenge for Practice in Rural Areas	\$7,000.00
Association for Local Democracy - Community Center in Municipality of Struga, Struga	Analysis of Public Perceptions on the EU Accession Process with Focus on Chapter 23	\$6,969.00
Roma Business Information Center, Skopje	Respect for Rights of Prisoners from Ethnic Communities through the Prism of the Roma	\$6,994.00

	Community	
Coalition "All for Fair Trials", Skopje	Detention between Domestic and European Practice	\$7,000.00
Citizens' Association Media Plus, Shtip	Local Information is also Test for the EU	\$6,920.00
Association for Research, Analysis and Development "Green Magnifier", Skopje	Resocialization and Reintegration in the Society Through Probation	\$6,690.00
Association for Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women in Economy, Shtip	Be Brave, Speak Loud!	\$6,811.31
Association for Rural Development Local Action Group "Agro Leader", Krivogashtani	EU Skepticism versus EU Optimism in Rural Areas	\$6,840.00
Multiculture, Tetovo	Youth are the Change for Accession in the European Union	\$6,819.00
Center for Legal Research and Analysis, Skopje	Administrative Justice According to European Standards	\$6,990.00
Coalition "All for Fair Trials", Skopje	Systemic Monitoring of Criminal Court Cases	\$30,000.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$321,998.31

Civic Alliance for Transparency: CSO Watchdog over Public Administration Reform		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Association on Economic Research, Advocacy and Decision Making "Finance Think", Skopje	360 Monitoring Provision of Social Services on Local Level: Experiences in the Municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni	\$10,719.33
SUBTOTAL:		\$10,719.33

State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police

RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Coalition "All for Fair Trials", Skopje	State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police	\$9,700.00
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Skopje	State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police	\$10,500.00
Institute for Human Rights, Skopje	State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police	\$6,000.00
Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Skopje	State Capture in North Macedonia: Judiciary, Prosecution, Police	\$40,290.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$66,490.00

Community Partnership for Advancing Local Democracy

RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Regional Geography Society GEOSFERA, Bitola	Awake ECO-AWARENESS in SELF	\$5,840.00
Citizens' Association Media Plus, Shtip	React at the Right Place	\$5,685.00
Lawyers Association Legal Think, Shtip	Youth Involvement in Planning Public Procurements	\$5,594.00
Women's Centre, Tetovo	Social Protection for Citizens in the Municipality of Tetovo	\$6,164.00
Union of Associations for Rural Development LAG's network, Krivogashtani	Together to Protect the Environment	\$5,000.00
National Roma Centrum, Kumanovo	Promoting Roma Participation in Local Urban Planning Policies	\$5,950.00
Movement for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development Global, Bitola	Citizens Monitor, Create and Decide on Their Money	\$5,750.00

Multiculture, Tetovo	How are Public Procurement Funds Spent by High-School Students	\$6,110.00
Local Community Development Foundation, Shtip	(RE)VISION of Local Financing for Civil Society Organizations	\$5,400.00
Women's Civic Initiative "Klea", Bitola	Active Women in the Municipality of Bitola	\$5,507.00
Denis Ampev	CreAction for Democracy Development	\$24,978.00
Miroslav Stojkovski	Creative Bitola	\$25,000.00
Egzona Abdi	Silent Revolution	\$24,770.00
Contemporary Art Center, Skopje	Institutional support for period of three years	\$150,000.00
Kontrapunkt, Skopje	Festival for Critical Culture - CRIC	\$3,400.00
Association Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative REDI, Tetovo	Action for Donations to Affected Roma Families in Albania	\$1,100.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$286,248.00

Regional Creative Hubs: Tapping into The Power of Arts and Culture to Embolden Citizen Action Against Corruption

RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Zorica Zafirovska	Oxygen!	\$1,000.00
Igor K. Ilievski	Shake up the Judge	\$1,000.00
Darko Taleski	Corruption Parade	\$1,000.00

Jelmaz Dervishi	Anticorruption Open Day	\$1,000.00
Dragana Gunin Stojchevska	Say NO to Corruption at Universities	\$900.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$4,900.00

Education of Small Ethnic Communities		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Foundation for Education and Culture Initiatives "Step by Step", Skopje	Strategic Partnership with FOSM in Implementation of the Concept "Education of Small Ethnic Communities"	\$51,000.00
Roma Business Information Center, Skopje	Pedagogic Assistant for Students in Primary Education	\$2,200.00
Metamorphosis Foundation for Internet and Society, Skopje	Open Educational Resources	\$20,000.00
Roma Business Information Center, Skopje	Pedagogic Assistant for Student in Primary Education	\$11,990.00
Association of School Principals "School Leaders", Skopje	Strengthening the Network of School Principals in North Macedonia	\$15,000.00
Ditura Primary School, vlg. Ljubin, Saraj	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$5,000.00
Goce Delchev Primary School, vlg. Vasilevo, Vasilevo	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00
Brakja Ramiz i Hamid Primary School, Shuto Orizari, Skopje	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$5,000.00
Sv. Kiril i Metodij Primary School, vlg. Kucheviste, Chucher Sandevo	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk Primary School, Dolno Kolichani, Studenichani	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00

Nexati Zekirija Primary School, vlg. Kodjadjik, Center Zhupa	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00
Strasho Pindjur Primary School, vlg. Josifovo, Valandovo	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00
Svetozar Markovikj Primary School, vlg. Staro Nagorichane, Staro Nagorichane	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$3,000.00
Rajko Zhinzifov Primary School, vlg. Gorno Orizari, Veles	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$3,000.00
Brakja Ribar Primary School, vlg. Tabanovce, Kumanovo	Didactical Materials and Aids for Better Quality of Teaching	\$4,000.00
Association of Young Analysts and Researchers, Skopje	Methodology on Allocation of Municipal Funds to Primary Schools	\$25,000.00
Association for Protection of Child's Rights, Skopje	Social and Educational Support for Street Children	\$15,000.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$180,190.00

Legal Empowerment Network Strategy		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Romano Chachipe, Skopje	Social Accountability and Legal Empowerment for the Roma Community	\$37,908.00
IDIC - Initiative for Development and Inclusion of the Communities, Skopje	Social Accountability and Legal Empowerment for the Roma Community	\$12,000.00
NGO "Kham", Delchevo	Social Accountability and Legal Empowerment for the Roma Community	\$8,000.00
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE, Skopje	Institutional Support for ESE	\$50,000.00
Association for Roma Democratic Development "Sonce", Tetovo	Paralegal Assistance for the Roma Community in the West Part of RNM	\$78,560.00
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Skopje	Legal Empowerment of Textile Workers for Self-Advocacy	\$40,000.00

HERA - Health Education and Research Association, Skopje	Promoting Reproductive Rights of Roma Women in Shuto Orizari	\$145,790.00
Association for Legal Education and Transparency Station LET, Prilep	Center for Access to Justice	\$42,450.00
Association for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children - LIL, Skopje	Monitoring and Documenting Violations of Patient Rights of Roma People	\$46,500.00
Foundation CEED Macedonia, Skopje	Social Entrepreneurship as Possibility for Self-Sustainability of CSOs	\$46,330.00
Coalition for Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities MARGINI, Skopje	Promotion of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal SDG 16.3 at National Level	\$55,690.00
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE, Skopje	Standardization and Sustainability of Different Types of Free Legal Aid	\$39,573.00
Izbor, Strumica	Access to Justice in Macedonia	\$14,400.00
Youth Cultural Centre, Bitola	Access to Justice in Macedonia	\$18,070.00
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Skopje	Access to Justice in Macedonia	\$20,700.00
National Roma Centrum, Kumanovo	Access to Justice in Macedonia	\$20,000.00
Educational-Humanitarian Organization EHO, Shtip	Access to Justice in Macedonia	\$15,146.00
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE, Skopje	Improve Access to Justice and Provision of Different Free Legal Aid to Poor and Vulnerable Groups	\$30,000.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$721,117.00

Students Rights and Engagement		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Youth Educational Forum, Skopje	Engaging Youth for Student and Youth Policies	\$100,000.00

Media plus Fokus DOOEL, Skopje	Practical Training for Young Journalists	\$8,000.00
Independent Academic Trade Union - NAKS, Skopje	Financial Transparency and Accountability in the Higher Education and Science in RNM	\$27,535.00
Association Leaders for Education, Activism and Development, Skopje	Preventing Brain Drain	\$14,951.00
National Youth Council of Macedonia, Skopje	Student (Re)Formation	\$14,982.00
Youth Educational Forum, Skopje	Engaged Students for Student Dormitories without Corruption in the Republic of North Macedonia	\$50,000.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$215,468.00

Rights-Based Health Policies		
RECIPIENT	PURPOSE	AWARD in USD
Association of Citizens "Theatre Roma", Skopje	Changing the Narrative for Roma at Healthcare Institutions	\$21,140.00
Foundation IDEA Southeast Europe, Skopje	Changing the Narrative for Roma Patients at Healthcare Institutions - Stories of Sunai	\$72,000.00
NGO "Kham", Delchevo	Technical Support and Mentorship for Domestic and Foreign Roma Organizations to Use Social Accountability and Legal Empowerment Methodologies	\$15,000.00
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women - ESE, Skopje	Technical Support and Mentorship for Domestic and Foreign Roma Organizations to Use Social Accountability and Legal Empowerment Methodologies	\$43,000.00
Coalition for Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities MARGINI, Skopje	Promoting Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities	\$141,395.00

HOPS - Healthy Option Project Skopje, Skopje	Improving Health of People Using Drugs by Ensuring Continuous Funding for Harm Reduction Programs from the National Budget	\$60,000.00
HOPS - Healthy Option Project Skopje, Skopje	Institutional Support for HOPS	\$182,500.00
Association for Supporting Marginalized Workers STAR-STAR, Skopje	Organizational Capacity Building for STAR-STAR	\$35,000.00
Center for Civic Communications, Skopje	Reducing Corruption in Education and Healthcare at Local Level	\$15,500.00
Association for Legal Education and Transparency Station LET, Prilep	Reducing Corruption in Education and Healthcare at Local Level	\$10,000.00
Association for Local Democracy - Community Center in Municipality of Struga, Struga	Reducing Corruption in Education and Healthcare at Local Level	\$10,000.00
SUBTOTAL:		\$605,535.00

TOTAL FOR GRANT SUPPORT IN 2019: \$2,412,665.64

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