

ANNUAL
REPORT
2022

EM
~~APATHY~~

AS OUR
GUIDING STAR
TOWARDS
A BETTER
AND FAIRER
WORLD



A Member Association of



International
Planned Parenthood
Federation

European Network



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EMPATHY



EMPATHY – dictionaries define it as willingness and capacity to feel for other people. To “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” and, for a moment at least, try and imagine what bothers one’s mind or troubles one’s heart. No borders need crossing to achieve this.

Is *empathy* vanishing the more we fill our pockets? Does it also disappear as we tighten our belts? No – it cannot just disappear if once it had existed. At least that is what we think. This is why it needs to be nurtured from the earliest age.

Can it sprout through the weeds of patriarchy which block the sun from any vulnerability? Can we defy capitalism which justifies all means to dull our senses? Of course, we can. We have to.

In the midst of crisis, which is the same for everyone, but affects everyone differently, *empathy* should be the lighthouse shining ever brighter. Not straying from the path, it shows us, it is not at all easy, especially not in a world that wakes up each morning ostensibly different than yesterday. It is not necessary to nourish it inside of us to be able to build a community without violence and shaming; full of support and care for everyone; exuding kindness, mutual respect, acknowledgment, acceptance, freedom.

We cannot arrive there alone.

FOREWORD

Last year we strongly believed that we had left the pandemic behind, and that calmer times await us – so that we can continue promoting sexual and reproductive rights without having to get to grips with unforeseen challenges it had brought along. However, pandemic crisis only proved to be a prelude, which was followed by the war in Ukraine and the global energy crisis, which up to this day keep alive the social and financial insecurity of all of us.

In the course of our entire work last year, the crisis affected the services the most, and consequently, the youth, the women, and the groups of people who could not afford to use other services but ours. Instead of recognising the need for support as the prices and insecurity skyrocketed, the Ministry of Health failed in its care for people at the margins of the society. Back in 2018, when it fulfilled its promise to provide state funding for the civil sector engaged in HIV prevention, we thought the issue was once and for all resolved; just to have the first budget cuts remind us last year – like snowdrops forecasting spring – that our State always finds it easiest to “write off” the fundamental human rights of those who are socially excluded. Strong reactions and taking to the streets were all in vain.

We have finally managed, sparing no effort, to mobilise international resources so that we can, albeit temporarily, fill in the financial gaps left by the Government. However, this cannot go on forever: with no political commitment, the services will close down, and the right to health and social wellbeing, instead of being a top priority of an EU candidate country, will remain merely a phrase on paper.

If something thrives in crisis, it is, without any doubt, hate speech. In the midst of crisis, bad news and zero media literacy, unfortunately, twisted arguments and lies of antifeminist groups resonate even further, which not only worked restlessly, but even consolidated in their fight against sexuality education. Their constant attacks on the social media against HERA, and against our staff, provided fertile ground for personal threats that put our safety at risk last year. A strong wind at their backs was generated by impunity of hate speech and inexpedience of authorities in tracking down the perpetrators indicated in the lawsuit we had filed.

Under such circumstances, it is even more important to call attention to and acknowledge our success!

Fourteen professional associations and civil society organisations joined us in our efforts to introduce #CSEatShooldesks [#CCOнаКлупа], by signing the **Declaration “With Sexuality Education in Schools to a Healthier and Safer Youth”**. For the first time in the country, **some twenty professionals were trained for counselling and treatment of men in crisis and perpetrators of violence**. We also developed a cross-sectoral **Operational Plan and Concept on Men’s Counselling and Support Centres in the Republic of North Macedonia**, which the State can use as strategic guidelines in preventing the gender-based violence – as we have done nothing if we fail to get the men involved. We were part of the national consultations and working groups for adopting the **new Gender Equality Strategy**, and the Municipality of Strumica even adopted its **Action Plan and Budget for domestic violence services** – a process facilitated with our expertise and in cooperation with the local women’s organisations. We are particularly proud that **some 700 persons did the home-based HIV tests**, thus making the self-testing pilot service part of the corpus of services provided by our facilities, as an innovative digital approach to HIV prevention.

The world is changing. We, too, will change and change our approaches, which will be reflected in our **new Strategic Framework (2023 – 2028)**. On no account will we forgo sexual and reproductive freedom and rights; we will stick to our way forward with an even stronger youth partnership, also striving to ensure a continuous and comprehensive care and protection against gender-based violence. We have been working on the new strategy for more than a year – involving many people: our members, employed staff, domestic and international associates – so as to share ideas and visions of where we see HERA in the future.

We hereby express our heartfelt gratitude to all of them, and to all our donors, associates and members who helped us ride out (yet another) crisis year. The support and trust they give us lend an even greater strength to endure in our commitment to sexual and reproductive rights – because the world will continue to change, but without these rights, it will be neither better nor fairer.

Rumena Gendovska Kojceski,
President

Bojan Jovanovski,
Executive Director

OUR ID

HERA – Health Education and Research Association is the largest civil society organisation for sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Republic of North Macedonia.

HERA is the only organisation providing informal comprehensive sexuality education in the country by way of the peer education model.

Incessantly seeking a better approach to providing care for sexual and reproductive health and support to gender-based violence victims, HERA collaborates with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and professional associations, by delivering training and continuous education to service providers in the area of healthcare and social protection.

Among the greatest victories of our advocacy is the adoption of the progressive abortion law in 2019 and the subsequent piloting of the medical abortion at the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics, as well as ensuring the state funding of the HIV prevention and care for the most affected groups of people.

HERA has been a full member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation since 2009.

OUR FACILITIES

THE "I WANT TO KNOW"
YOUTH CENTRES
FOR SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

OUTPATIENT CLINIC AT VODNO

ul. "Elisije Popovski" br. 2
+389 2 3176 950

OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN ŠUTO ORIZARI

ul. "Šuto Orizari" bb
+389 2 2651 955

THE FIRST FAMILY CENTRE
OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE

ul. "Ivo Agovski" br. 11/2-3
+389 2 3215 905
infopsc@hera.org.mk

MOBILE HIV TESTING
AND COUNSELLING
OUTPATIENT CLINICS

hivtest@hera.org.mk

MOBILE GYNAECOLOGY
OUTPATIENT CLINIC

hera@hera.org.mk

COMPREHENSIVE
SEXUALITY
EDUCATION:

www.seksualnoobrazovanie.mk

HERA
ONLINE



www.hera.org.mk



[@hera.macedonia](https://www.facebook.com/hera.macedonia)



[@HERA_mkd](https://twitter.com/HERA_mkd)



[@heramladi](https://www.instagram.com/heramladi)



[@HERAMacedonia](https://www.youtube.com/HERAMacedonia)

ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

BUDGET CUTS AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE MOST VULNERABLE

After 15 years of success story – with their 2022 HIV budget, the Government devastated " the HIV prevention in Macedonia "

March 2022 – In an untransparent way and without any consultations with the National HIV Commission, **the Ministry of Health slashed the budget allocated to HIV prevention by even 40%**, for services used by at least 10,000 people in 12 towns across the country. Despite all the protests and appeals by experts and civil society organisations, the budget remained unchanged. These budget cuts have drastically reduced the coverage of people using the HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health services, and especially the HIV detection service, which is essential to successfully controlling the epidemic. Some of the mobile clinics and stationary centres run by civil society organisations had to shut down.

HIV Platform protesting against the HIV budget cuts (in front of the Ministry of Health, 17th March 2022)
(© Vančo Džambaski)



April 2022 – Under the slogan **“NO to saving on people’s health”**, 14 member associations of the HIV Platform, the Association ESE – Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women and the Association “Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative” took to the streets in a **civil protest** with a key demand that people’s health should be made top priority, and the economic crisis should not be used as an excuse to save money on healthcare services, despite being knee-deep in a pandemic!



November 2022 – Despite the [appeal](#) by the civil sector, the State adopted the 2023 Budget, which includes drastic healthcare cuts! Although the budget adopted for this year is the largest budget the country has seen in the last 30 years, the State made cuts to 7 out of 10 preventive healthcare programmes.

For example, the Ministry of Health’s budget remained unchanged, so from 3%, as was its share in the period between 2018 and 2020, in 2023 it accounts for only 2.1% of the total budget. “Instead of the 135 million denars required for prevention and treatment of people living with HIV, the budget adopted for 2023 allocated only 90 million denars to the HIV Protection Programme. This will additionally jeopardise the survival of the essential life-saving HIV services that will affect the poorest and socially excluded groups”, the civil sector [reported](#).

Press conference in front of the Assembly by the representatives of the HIV Platform, the Associations ESE and the Association “Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative” (© HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje, November 2022)



"NO To saving
on people's health"

Modern Contraceptives Now!



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ In their [2017 – 2020 Programme](#), the Government made a commitment that at least one contraceptive method will be included in the Positive List of Medicines;
- ▶ Only 14% of women in relationship or marriage use contraception, which is verified to protect against unintended pregnancy;
- ▶ The budget for contraceptives of the vulnerable groups of women, allocated with the healthcare [programme](#) for mothers and children, is insufficient and cannot cover the need for modern contraceptives of socially excluded women.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We prepared a detailed analysis of the regulation, the system of medicines and the possibility to provide free contraception in the country – [Access to Contraceptives and Family Planning Services](#);
- ▶ We formed a network of civil society organisations to advocate for an improved access to contraception;
- ▶ We organised a [national conference](#) where civil society organisations, professional associations, health facilities and MPs called for an improved access to modern contraception;
- ▶ Together with the Ministry of Health, institutions and civil society organisations we discussed at consultative meetings about developing the 2023 Prevention Programme for Mothers and Children.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We published the public policy document [With Better Access to Contraception and Family Planning Services to Universal Healthcare](#), including recommendations on how to improve the sexual and reproductive healthcare;
- ▶ Representatives of 11 civil society organisations participated in capacity building trainings on the modern contraceptive methods funding system and regulation, aimed at identifying possible solutions for a systemic improvement of access to contraceptives;
- ▶ Budget items for contraceptives for socially vulnerable groups and women with repeat abortions, allocated with the [Prevention Programme for Mothers and Children](#), increased five times.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To advocate for expanding the Positive List of Medicines with at least one modern contraceptive for girls and women.
- ▶ **DONOR:** [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

Consultative meeting for the development of the 2023 Prevention Programme for Mothers and Children, with representatives from the public health facilities, professional associations and civil society organisations



Family Doctors – Partners in Providing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The list of health services for family medicine practitioners, as adopted by the Ministry of Health in 2019, allows the family doctors to provide particular sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services;
- ▶ Family doctors operate across all healthcare regions of the country, which is why it is important to use their potential for offering SRH services to women, especially in regions lacking gynaecological facilities.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We performed a [“Mapping of Family Doctors in the Primary Healthcare System in Macedonia”](#), the first of its kind in the country, which yielded a comprehensive image of family doctors’ availability and potential within the healthcare system;
- ▶ We developed a 5-year [National Action Plan for the Provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in the Area of Family Medicine](#) in cooperation with the Family Medicine Centre, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant institutions, healthcare workers’ associations and international and civil society organisations working with vulnerable groups of women;
- ▶ Together with the Family Medicine Centre and the local community health centres we opened 4 gynaecological offices in the community health centres of [Makedonski Brod](#), [Radoviš](#), Delčevo and Resen and we furnished them fully with gynaecological examination chairs, equipment, medical consumables and free contraceptives;
- ▶ We distributed [brochures](#) and [flyers](#) on [“Reproductive Health Above All”](#), which were developed in Macedonian, Roma and Albanian languages, and were also printed in the Braille alphabet.



RESULTS:

- ▶ With the expert working group set up by the Ministry of Health, we developed the calculation and payment model for SRH services and we published it in the [“Recommendations for Stimulating the Sexual and Reproductive Health Service Provision by Family Doctors by Improving the Payment Method”](#);
- ▶ In the newly opened gynaecological offices, in 2022, family doctors provided a total of [4,060 sexual and reproductive health services](#) (of which 2,064 contraception services), to 2,777 women (of which 1,847 were women from vulnerable groups – rural areas, women with disabilities and Roma women).
- ▶ 5,762 members of the community were covered with onsite field activities and SRH education by the community nursing service and the field workers.
- ▶ We shared the acquired experience and the good practice through a case study [“Integrating the Contraception and Reproductive Care Services in the Package of Family Doctors”](#).





FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To advocate for a full implementation of the National SRH Action Plan in the area of family medicine.
- ▶ To monitor the implementation of the Primary Healthcare System reforms.

▶ **ПАРТНЕР:** [Family Medicine Centre – Faculty of Medicine Skopje](#)

▶ **DONORS:** [Japan Trust Fund](#) and [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

The official opening of the gynaecological office in Makedonski Brod was attended by the Ambassador of Japan, the Mayor of Makedonski Brod, the director of the local community health centre, as well as representatives of the Family Medicine Centre and HERA (The Makedonski Brod Community Health Centre)



A gynaecological office equipped to provide SRH services by the family doctors of the Community Health Centre in Radoviš



The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Pilot Programme Produced Positive Results



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Research has shown that between **82% and 96% of parents** and between **88% and 99% of teachers** agree that comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) topics should be studied as part of formal education in the country;
- ▶ In 2021, a CSE Pilot Programme was conducted in the 9th grade of primary education in the country's formal education system.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ HERA, as the main partner of the Education Development Bureau, offered their technical assistance to the Working Group for the development of the National Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategy;
- ▶ Together with professional associations and civil society organisations working with vulnerable groups, we prepared the declaration "[With Sexuality Education in Schools To Healthier and Safer Youth](#)";
- ▶ Evaluation was made in 2022 of the CSE Pilot Programme, which in 2021 covered 85 9th-graders in three primary schools in the Municipalities of Karpoš, Dračevo and Tetovo;
- ▶ Together with the Education Development Bureau, we organised a round table to present the findings of the CSE Pilot Programme evaluation before 40 representatives of the specialised non-teaching staff of Skopje schools.



RESULTS:

- ▶ The Expert Working Groups prepared the first drafts of the National Strategy on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (2022 – 2028);
- ▶ [The Evaluation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Pilot Programme](#) showed that the pupils involved are much more knowledgeable about their sexual and reproductive health and rights than their fellow pupils from other schools in the country;
- ▶ 11 professional associations, 5 of which are medical association – Macedonian Medical Association (MMA) and the specialised associations of MLD, the Association of Doctors of General Practice / Family Medicine, the Association of Albanian Medical Doctors from Macedonia, the Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, and the Family Medicine Centre, as well as 6 associations / federations of psychologists and psychotherapists, social workers, special educators and rehabilitators, and jurists, supported the Declaration for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Schools.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To advocate for the adoption and implementation of the National Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategy.
- ▶ **DONOR:** [The Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)

Presenting the findings from the CSE Pilot Programme Evaluation to 40 representatives from the schools' non-teaching professionals



Youth Voices, Youth Choices!



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic had an adverse effect on the young people's access to the necessary information and services, and consequently on their sexual and reproductive rights;
- ▶ The access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services was made even more difficult for the young people in vulnerable position – young mothers, LGBTI youth, young Roma and the young living in remote areas.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We finalised the research and shared the findings from the [National Report on the COVID-19 Impact on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People in Macedonia](#);
- ▶ We set up the National Youth Group and, through trainings, we strengthened their skills to advocate for youth SRH policies;
- ▶ We advocated in the European Parliament for improving the young people's access to services and information about sexual and reproductive health and rights.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We published a [public policy document](#) giving recommendations how to improve the young people's access to services and information about SRH, mental health and gender-based violence;
- ▶ Together with the young people we organised 7 debates in Skopje, Kumanovo and Strumica to discuss the existing issues and possible solutions for improving the situation.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To implement a national public awareness raising campaign about issues faced by young people and solutions that may improve the youth policies.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

In Šuto Orizari we discussed the topic of "Young People's Access to Information about Sexual and Reproductive Health, Education and Care in Macedonia in the time of COVID-19"



A European Parliament advocacy event for improving the young people's access to services and information about sexual and reproductive health and rights (© International Planned Parenthood Federation)



Boys and Men – the Key to Preventing Gender-Based Violence



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ More than 90% of perpetrators of domestic violence are men, and more than 80% of victims of this violence are women;
- ▶ North Macedonia has no national policies to involve men in violence prevention, nor are there support centres for boys and men;
- ▶ The [research](#) into the implementation of the Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention show that functional work programmes need to be introduced for perpetrators of violence.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We organised three 2-day trainings on gender-based violence prevention covering 40 professionals from public education, healthcare and social protection facilities as well as from academic institutions and civil society organisations;
- ▶ We conducted a 10-day training for 23 professionals on how to work with perpetrators of violence, focusing on victim safety, upon which 19 of the participants were certified on the national level;
- ▶ In partnership with the [Association for Men and Gender Issues of Styria](#), in June we organised a study visit to the representatives of the key ministries so as to exchange good practices in working with boys and men to prevent violence.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We developed a [Concept on Men's Counselling and Support Centres in the Republic of North Macedonia](#), with a financial plan for their establishment;
- ▶ Together with the Ministry of Labour and social Policy and the institutions and organisations we prepared a National Action Plan to Prevent the Gender-Based Violence among Men, Boys and Fathers (2022 – 2027), and a National Action Plan to Work with Perpetrators of Gender-based Violence, Focusing on the Safety of Victims (2022 – 2027);
- ▶ In partnership with ["Reaktor"](#) and the [Association for Men and Gender Issues of Styria](#) we organised the Final Conference entitled ["Take Care like a Man – from Awareness to Involvement; Involving Men in Gender-based Violence Prevention and Working with Perpetrators, Focusing on the Safety of Victims"](#).



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To provide direct services for working with perpetrators of violence;
- ▶ To advocate for the adoption and implementation of the National Action Plans to prevent violence by involving men and working with perpetrators of violence.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [Association for Men and Gender Issues of Styria](#) [*Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark*] and [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria](#)



Conference "Take Care like a Man: from Awareness to Involvement" (Skopje, November)

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

The Caravan Goes On for the Informal Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Young People



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The [research](#) into the situation in our country showed that 52% of girls and 29% of boys aged 15 suffer from a number of psychosomatic symptoms, simultaneously, several times a week;
- ▶ Only 14% of young people aged 20 to 24 use some of the modern contraceptive methods, while the number of teenage pregnancies in Macedonia is almost three times higher than that of the European Union countries.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We continued implementing our informal comprehensive sexuality education programme across the country;
- ▶ We implemented 5 digital education sessions and 3 education sessions about comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for the young people living in rural areas of Macedonia;
- ▶ We continued the cooperation with the University Students Assembly with 2 joint education sessions on CSE in the “Goce Delčev” and “Pelagonija” student dormitories;
- ▶ We implemented a 5-day training for new peer educators in Albanian language;
- ▶ We signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Kumanovo Community Health Centre and we renovated and equipped the premises for the opening of a new Youth Centre.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We covered a total of 238 young people with CSE workshops, 181 of which completed all 7 CSE modules;
- ▶ We trained 3 new CSE peer educators in Albanian language.
- ▶ We opened a [new “I Want To Know” Centre](#) in Kumanovo where young people can seek psychological counselling, education and information about sexual and reproductive health – free and confidentially;
- ▶ In the course of 2022, the Kumanovo Youth Centre was visited by a total of 36 young people seeking psychological assistance and additional 23 young people seeking peer counselling.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To expand the team of peer educators and implement continuous trainings on the contents and new modules of CSE;
- ▶ To implement the informal sexuality education in cooperation with the civil sector, education, healthcare and social protection facilities, parents and students.

▶ **DONORS:** [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#) and [Surecheck](#)

CSE education
with students from
the “Pelagonija”
dormitory



HERAyouth – Young People’s Volunteering and Activism

- ▶ In 2022, the **HERAyouth** team gathered **61 members from all over the country**, and the peer educator groups grew with 3 new young CSE educators in Albanian language. Other sectors of HERAyouth, too, worked full steam ahead: we produced **9 episodes of the radio show “Sexy Neighbourhood”** focusing on the COVID-19 impact on young people and their health, menstrual justice, LGBTI people’s rights, gender identity and other current topics about women’s and young people’s rights.

In the **Feminist Book Club** we read and discussed books and organised a New Year’s event for book exchange.

HERAyouth marched the frontlines of the March 8 March, the Pride Parade, the Transgender People’s Visibility March and the protests against the state budget cuts to HIV prevention. We will also remember this year after the unforgettable **D Festival** experience and the already traditional “Ghost Stories” event on the occasion of Halloween.



1
HERAyouth
at the March
8 March

2
In the Sexy
Neighbourhood
we also discuss the
menstrual justice

3
HERAyouth at
the Transgender
People’s
Visibility March



Equal Opportunities for Roma Women Employment – the Guiding Star of our Activist Advocacy Group



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Roma women are exposed to multiple and intersectional discrimination on a daily basis, and the patriarchal value system, low level of education and early marriages make them economically dependent;
- ▶ [The 2021 Report on the Utilisation of Employment Measures](#) indicated that only 222 people – which is only 2% of all the people that have used any of the employment measures – were Roma women;
- ▶ The National Action Plan for Human Rights of [Roma Women and Girls \(2022 – 2024\)](#) provides for the inclusion of Roma women as a special target group in the National Operational Employment Plan, as well as special measures for their employment.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We organised a wide consultative process to prepare the new active employment measures for Roma women;
- ▶ We organised advocacy meetings and workshops with 4 local self-government units to develop the Local Action Plans for the Employment of Roma Women;
- ▶ We were also a part of the Advocacy Week in Brussels, where we advocated for the problems Roma women encounter in the areas of employment, social protection and healthcare;
- ▶ We strengthened the capacities of 6 members of the informal Roma women's groups to advocate before the EU institutions.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We designed 3 new specialised measures for the employment of Roma women;
- ▶ We published the results from the [Monitoring of the Roma Women's Employment in Public Institutions in 2021](#);
- ▶ We published the report from the [Monitoring of the Utilisation of the Active Employment Measures and Services by the Roma Women in 2021](#);
- ▶ We prepared 4 draft Action Plans for the Employment of Roma Women in the Municipalities of Čorče Petrov, Karpoš, Čair and Kisela Voda.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To advocate for the adoption of the Local Action Plans in the municipalities;
- ▶ To include the specialised employment measures for Roma women in the National Operational Plan and to implement them.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation](#)

Presenting the new employment measures for Roma women before the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency, civil society organisations and other stakeholders



Health and Social Justice Are Equally Important for Roma Woman in Šuto Orizari



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Roma woman of Šuto Orizari encounter barriers in accessing healthcare and social protection services on a daily basis.
- ▶ Over the last decade, Municipality of Šuto Orizari was left without a primary care general gynaecologist for even 4 years, seriously jeopardising the [reproductive health of over 8,000 women](#).



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We provided direct legal aid in the “I Want To Know” Youth Centre of Šuto Orizari and accompanied the clients during their visits to healthcare and social protection facilities;
- ▶ In partnership with the Association [“Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative”](#), we advocated for securing a general gynaecologist in primary healthcare and for the re-opening of the gynaecological office within the Šuto Orizari Community Health Centre;
- ▶ We implemented three capacity building trainings for the team of paralegals in the area of legislation pertaining to gender-based violence, family, civil registers and citizenship.



RESULTS:

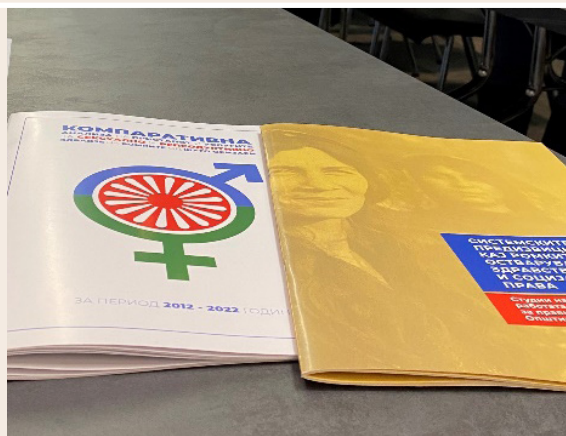
- ▶ A total of 446 clients (of which 363 women) received legal aid and support, as part of the legal aid facility, through our Šuto Orizari Youth Centre;
- ▶ In November, a gynaecological office with a general gynaecologist was opened in the Šuto Orizari Community Health Centre;
- ▶ We prepared the publication [Systemic Challenges of Roma Woman in Enjoying Their Healthcare and Social Protection Rights](#), with case studies from the legal aid facility;
- ▶ We were involved in the development of the [Comparative Analysis of the Šuto Orizari Women’s Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services between 2012 and 2022](#) by the Association “Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative”, which is based on the ten annual Community Score Card surveys.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To ensure continuous legal aid and legal services for the Šuto Orizari Roma woman, focusing on the realisation of economic and social rights;
- ▶ To continue cooperating with the Association “Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative” in providing direct services and strengthening the community.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [Foundation Open Society – Macedonia](#)



Promoting the publications at the panel discussion “Roma Woman’s Access to Health and Social Justice” (Skopje, December)



Capacity building training for the paralegals of the Association “Šuto Orizari Women’s Initiative” (Skopje, December)

Health Services for Vulnerable Groups Women in Times of Crisis



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ During the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased workload of health facilities to deal with the infection, the access of women to basic health services was significantly restricted, especially for women from the most vulnerable groups.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We established a healthcare coalition to realise the project objectives, consisting of HERA and three community associations of people with physical and intellectual disabilities and of Roma woman ([Association for the Promotion and Development of Inclusive Society "Inkluziva"](#), ["Polio Plus" Movement against Disability](#) and the Association ["Šuto Orizari Women's Initiative"](#)).



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To carry out research into the factors affecting the access of Roma woman and women with disabilities to primary healthcare services and into the perceptions of and experiences with corruptive behaviour in the healthcare sector;
- ▶ To develop public policy recommendations for improving the access to primary healthcare services for Roma woman and women with disabilities, including in times of crisis.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [National Democratic Institute – North Macedonia](#)

The founding meeting of the Healthcare Coalition comprising "Inkluziva", "Polio Plus", "Šuto Orizari Women's Initiative" and HERA (Skopje, November)



Young People of Macedonia – Ambassadors for Conveying Healthcare Information



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Young people of our country lack sufficient knowledge about where they can obtain free information and advice and get educated about their sexual and reproductive health.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We established a youth healthcare coalition to implement peer education on topics of healthcare;
- ▶ We organised and realised 5 initiatives with young people concerning different healthcare topics.



RESULTS:

- ▶ 18 young people at social risk were trained in prevention against the use of psychotropic substances and other addictions, in cooperation with the psychiatrist from our Drugs Counselling Facility;
- ▶ 58 young persons (children without parents and parental car, children from socially vulnerable groups and other socially excluded young people) completed the education sessions about comprehensive sexuality education focusing on sexual and reproductive health.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To further educate about topics related to young people's health, through own service facilities.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [International Youth Health Organisation](#)

Healthcare initiative for comprehensive sexuality education in the Counselling Centre for Parents and Children (Šuto Orizari)



Healthcare initiative for comprehensive sexuality education in the SOS Children's Village's Resource Centre in Gazi Baba



CAPACITY
BUILDING
AND
SERVICE
PROVISION

Medical Abortion – a Health Service Inseparable from Women’s Reproductive Freedom



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ In December 2021, with the support of HERA, the medical abortion service was piloted at the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Skopje (UGAK);
- ▶ As part of its [2022 Healthcare Programme for the Protection of Mothers and Children](#), the Ministry of Health allocated 575,000 denars to continuous provision of medical abortion.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We conducted training of trainers to form a team of 8 health professionals from UGAK ensuring the continuation of further delivery of trainings on medical abortion to health professionals;
- ▶ We prepared the training manual and training materials for implementation of accredited trainings on provision of medical abortion;
- ▶ We organised 7 trainings for gynaecologist and obstetrician specialists from the hospitals and clinics across the country in administration of medical abortion;
- ▶ We produced information flyers about medical abortion, in [Macedonian](#) and in [Albanian](#) languages.



RESULTS:

- ▶ We signed a memorandum on extending the cooperation with UGAK and on continuous provision of the medical abortion service in 2022;
- ▶ A total of 385 women performed medical abortion at UGAK;
- ▶ The medical abortion training was accredited by the Macedonian Medical Association for the period 2022 – 2023;
- ▶ A total of 127 gynaecologists and obstetricians from hospitals and clinics from Skopje and other towns across the country attended the trainings on continuous provision of medical abortion.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue building the capacities of hospital gynaecologists and of general gynaecologists to expand the medical abortion services in other towns in the country;
- ▶ To continue organising public awareness raising events for contraception and safe abortion services.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [Austrian Family Planning Association](#), [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria](#) and [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)



Training of trainers for the team of the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics (Skopje)



Accredited training for gynaecologists on medical abortion (Gevgelija)

The Flag System – a Tool for Sexual Violence Prevention



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The [Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention](#) is a tool allowing the professionals to correctly assess the acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour in young people to ensure a proper response and prevent sexual violence;
- ▶ In July 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted the [Guide to the Procedure for Reporting and Protecting the Pupil Victims of Any Form of Violence, Abuse and Neglect](#).



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We translated and adapted the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention* training materials and manual in Macedonian language;
- ▶ We implemented two capacity building trainings for professionals working with young people and with vulnerable groups, and one training for HERA members and associates, on how to apply the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention*.



RESULTS:

- ▶ 8 persons from the team of HERA participated in the sensitisation training on using the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention tool*;
- ▶ A total of 21 professionals from the primary schools' non-teaching staff (the Psychological and Paedagogical Service), social protection institutions, civil society organisations, including education assistants for people with disabilities, were trained to use the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention tool*.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To produce the training materials and manual for sexual violence prevention in Albanian language;
- ▶ To train the teachers and the non-teaching professionals in applying the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention tool* and to survey the acceptability of the tool within the school setting, in both Macedonian and Albanian languages.

- ▶ **DONOR:** [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

Sensitisation training on applying the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention tool* (Skopje)



Multisectoral training on applying the *Flag System for Sexual Violence Prevention tool* (Skopje)



Specialised Counselling Facilities on Local Level – the Key to Women and Children Affected by Violence



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The National [Action Plan](#) for Implementation of the Istanbul Convention provides for the establishment of at least 10 counselling facilities for psychosocial support to victims of violence across the country;
- ▶ Although stipulated in the Istanbul Convention recommendations, the country lacks sufficient number of trained experts and sufficient number of counselling facilities providing support to victims of gender-based violence that are run by the civil society organisations.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We have provided direct services to support women victims of domestic and gender-based violence in the opened specialised counselling facilities in Štip and Strumica;
- ▶ We made a situation analysis of the specialised services for victims of gender-based violence in the municipalities outside Skopje which helped us identify 24 organisations operating in the area of gender equality and protection against violence;
- ▶ We delivered a series of 3 trainings on strengthening the know-how of professional staff in civil society organisations and in the Social Work Centres of Kumanovo and Sveti Nikole;
- ▶ We provided technical assistance for the development of local action plans in the Municipalities of Štip and Strumica to ensure they deliver programmes and budgets for services related to protection against violence.



RESULTS:

- ▶ By October 2022, a total of 249 women victims and their children received 548 free counselling and legal services in the specialised counselling facilities run by the civil society organisations EHO from Štip and “Skaj Plus” from Strumica;
- ▶ 9 psychologists and social workers from the Kumanovo Social Work Centre and from the civil society organisations National Roma Centre of Kumanovo and the Organisation of Sveti Nikole Women were trained to provide psychosocial support to victims of violence;
- ▶ Municipality of Strumica adopted its Action Plan for Programming and Budgeting Services Related to Domestic and Gender-based Violence.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To strengthen the capacities of local civil society organisations and of institutions to provide psychosocial counselling services to women and children affected by violence.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [UN Women](#) / European Commission



Should love hurt?
- topic of the
youth workshop
organized by EHO

IN NUMBERS: SERVICES PROVIDED BY HERA AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN 2022







STATIONERY SERVICE FACILITY









MOBILE SERVICE FACILITY



PARTNERS' STATIONERY SERVICE FACILITY

NAME AND TYPE OF THE SERVICE FACILITY	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	NUMBER OF CLIENTS DIVIDED BY TARGET GROUPS	NUMBER OF WOMEN	NUMBER OF VULNERABLE GROUPS	NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-24
The First Family Centre 	244	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 98 victims / survivors of domestic and gender-based violence ▶ 57 perpetrators of domestic and gender-based violence ▶ 35 minor children victims of violence ▶ 54 parents and other family / partners affected by violence 	101	133	43
The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health at Vodno 	771	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 275 socially excluded persons (including 111 gay, bi and other men who have sex with men (MSM), 16 male or female sex workers (SW) and 3 people who inject drugs (PWID)) 	293	275	74
The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Šuto Orizari 	1118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 836 socially excluded persons (including 5 gay, bi and other MSM, 433 SW and 3 PWID) 	866	806	220
The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre in Kumanovo 	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 58 young people 	28		58



<p>Gynaecology Outpatient Clinic</p> 	266	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 266 women (including 152 women sex workers, 9 women from rural areas, 69 women who use drugs and other vulnerable and excluded persons) 	266	152	47
<p>Stationary and mobile (onsite) HIV testing</p> 	1444	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1,119 gay, bi and other MSM, 379 SW and 282 PWID 	461	1266	386
<p>HIV Self-testing (via the Internet/ people from the community)</p>	663	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 504 gay, bi and other MSM, 85 SW and 44 PWID и 30 others 		633	
<p>HIV Counselling Facility at the University Clinic for Infectious Diseases and Febrile Conditions</p> 	371	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Persons living with HIV 	47	350	18
<p>Counselling Facility for Medical Abortion at the University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics</p> 	385	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Girls and women of reproductive age 	385	56	72
<p>Counselling Facilities for Domestic and Gender-based Violence in EHO – Štip and “Skaj Plus” – Strumica</p> 	249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 249 women victims / survivors of violence ▶ 21 coming from rural areas, 4 persons with disabilities, 2 minor children 	249	249	2
<p>Sexual and reproductive health services provided in family doctors' medical offices within the Community Health Centres of Radoviš, Delčevo, Makedonski Brod and Resen</p> 	3469	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2,777 women, of which 1,847 from marginalised and socially excluded groups (women from rural areas, women with disabilities and Roma women) ▶ 692 men 	2777	1847	1482

Even in Crisis We Persist in Providing HIV Testing Services



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ According to [experts](#), the number of people living with HIV who were aware of their HIV-positive status in 2018 stood at some 65% only, indicating that the country is failing to demonstrate progress in diagnosing the people living with HIV;
- ▶ The increasing rate of late diagnosis in the newly detected HIV cases is concerning; timely detection of HIV is essential for the successful treatment of people living with HIV.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We extended the 12-year-long continuous provision of free and confidential HIV testing and counselling services in 9 towns in cooperation with 12 civil society organisations through a mobile outpatient clinic specially equipped for this purpose in the organisations' stationary centres;
- ▶ We piloted the Web-based HIV Self-testing Programme with a home-based HIV oral fluid test among gay, bi and other men who have sex with men (MSM);
- ▶ To make the HIV testing even more accessible, we expanded the home-based HIV self-testing services also to women sex workers / people who inject drugs and other vulnerable groups across the entire territory of the country.



RESULTS:

- ▶ A total of 2,286 HIV tests were performed in 2022 among people living at risk from HIV, of which 663 used the home-based HIV self-testing models, through the HIV testing mobile and stationary service facilities, in cooperation with partner organisations;
- ▶ A total of 5,639 condoms, 2,814 lubricants and 1,284 information and education materials on HIV prevention were distributed;
- ▶ We piloted the Web-based HIV Self-testing Programme which expanded the home-based HIV self-testing service among all groups affected by HIV;
- ▶ A total of 8 persons learned their HIV-positive status through the HIV testing services provided by civil society organisations, 4 of which used the HIV self-testing models.

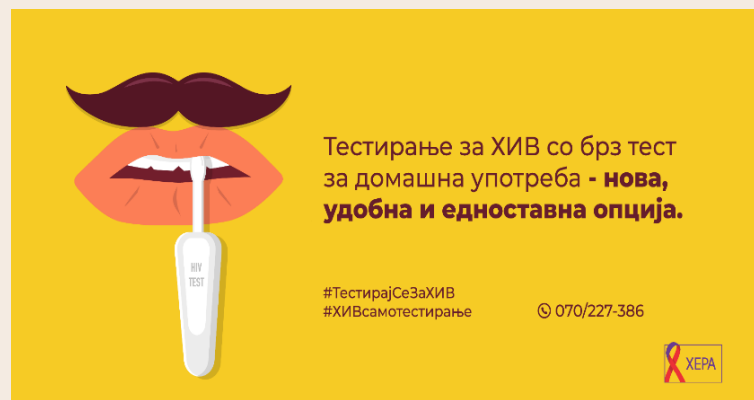


FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue providing HIV testing mobile (onsite) and stationary services, including home-based HIV self-testing;
- ▶ To raise the awareness about the importance of HIV testing and spread the message that today one can have a quality life with HIV if detected on time.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [Ministry of Health](#) and [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

Promotional banner used for piloting the web-based HIV self-testing



Confidential and Free SRH Services in the Mobile Gynaecology Outpatient Clinic



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ For 9 years now HERA has been providing free and confidential services to women from rural areas and to socially excluded groups of women who lack gynaecological healthcare through the mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic;
- ▶ Women sex workers and women who use drugs recognise the mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic as a safe and friendly place where they can receive services tailored to their needs and in their immediate vicinity.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We provided diagnosis and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections, ultrasonography examinations and Pap smear tests across the country through the mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic;
- ▶ We provided services for emergency and modern contraception (oral pills and IUDs) and counselling for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections;
- ▶ We distributed condoms, lubricants and information materials about protection of women as part of their sexual and reproductive health.



RESULTS:

- ▶ A total of 266 women received gynaecological services, including 152 women sex workers, 69 women who use drugs, 9 women from rural areas and other vulnerable and excluded persons through the mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic;
- ▶ A total of 160 women from vulnerable groups received Pap smear tests;
- ▶ A total of 2,255 condoms were distributed, 45 women received oral contraceptives, and 5 women were administered IUD.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue providing sexual and reproductive health services through the mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic to vulnerable groups of women who are excluded from the healthcare system.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [Ministry of Health](#) and [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

This is what our mobile gynaecology outpatient clinic looks like



Friendly Youth Centres in Skopje – Places where the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Those Most Vulnerable is a Priority



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ Key populations affected by HIV report a range of barriers related to stigma and discrimination when seeking sexual health services within the healthcare system;
- ▶ For more than 20 years, through the “I Want To Know” Centres at Vodno and in Šuto Orizari, confidential and free health, HERA has been providing social and psychological sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for young people and marginalised communities.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We provided gynaecological and dermatovenerological services for diagnosing and treating sexually transmitted infections (STI), ultrasonography, modern contraception and HIV testing in the “I Want To Know” Youth Centres;
- ▶ We carried out peer education sessions with young people and key populations affected by HIV and we ensured the services from a social worker and a psychologist;
- ▶ We distributed condoms, lubricants and information materials.



RESULTS:

- ▶ In 2022, a total of 1,324 users from the vulnerable groups received 4,194 free SRH services in HERA Youth Centres;
- ▶ 116 women received modern oral contraceptives and 21 women were given advice on application of IUD;
- ▶ 117 users got tested to STIs (syphilis, trichomonas, gonorrhoea and chlamydia);
- ▶ A total of 224 HIV tests were performed, including 40 home-based tests; 275 young people and persons at risk received peer education;
- ▶ A total of 120 socially excluded persons received services related to enjoying their social rights from a social worker;
- ▶ A total of 4,203 condoms, 2,418 lubricants and 1,230 education materials were distributed.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue providing free and confidential SRH services for young people and groups at risk from HIV.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [Ministry of Health](#) and [International Planned Parenthood Federation](#)

Gynaecological office at the “I Want To Know” Youth Centre in Šuto Orizari



The First Family Centre – a Place for Support and Strengthening of Families and Partnerships facing Violence



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ The official statistics show that, out of the total of 1,051 reported victims of domestic violence in 2020, 839 or 89% were women;
- ▶ In the 2017-2020 period, 26 women were killed in the country, of which, 22 murders or 84% were femicides;
- ▶ In 2022, 1,025 perpetrators of domestic violence were reported, of which, 930 perpetrators or 90% were men; and 52% of the male perpetrators were husbands or unmarried partners.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ We provided specialised services for psychosocial support to women and children victims of domestic and gender-based violence;
- ▶ We provided services of psychosocial treatment to perpetrators of domestic violence referred from courts and social work centres;
- ▶ We provided counselling from a jurist and support from a lawyer to victims of domestic and gender-based violence.



RESULTS:

- ▶ A total of 244 clients received 1,189 counselling and support services in the First Family Centre in 2022;
- ▶ 98 women and 35 minor children victims of violence received psychotherapeutic support, and additionally 54 parents and other family / partnership members affected by violence were involved in counselling;
- ▶ 57 persons were involved in the treatment programme for perpetrators of violence;
- ▶ 13 clients received legal advocacy and services from a lawyer, while 20 women were referred to free legal aid.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue providing specialised psychosocial support services to women and children who have survived gender-based violence;
- ▶ To provide treatment to perpetrators of gender-based violence.

▶ **DONORS:** [City of Skopje](#) and [The Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)



IF YOU ARE SCARED OR LIVING IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP,

SEE US AT OUR FIRST FAMILY CENTRE.

☎ (02) 3200 007 / 070 249 596

✉ infopsc@hera.org.mk

🌐 www.hera.org.mk/servisi/psc/

DO YOU WANT TO GET TESTED FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS?

DO YOU NEED FREE CONTRACEPTIVES? A SESSION WITH A PSYCHOLOGIST?

OR COUNSELLING FROM A SOCIAL WORKER OR A LAWYER?



"I WANT TO KNOW" YOUTH CENTRES

📍 Vodno - (02) 3176-950

📍 Šuto Orizari - (02) 2651-955

📍 Kumanovo - 078 736 819

🌐 www.hera.org.mk/servisi/mc-sakam-da-znam/



If you want to do an HIV test, make an appointment at (02) 3176-950 or order a rapid HIV Self-Test kit at 070 227 386.

ALL OUR SERVICES ARE FREE OF CHARGE AND CONFIDENTIAL. NO NEED TO BRING YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE CARD!

Promotional banner for the First Family Centre

CASE STUDY OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM FROM THE FIRST FAMILY CENTRE



The client is a 37-year-old Macedonian woman who is a victim of physical, psychological and economic violence.

The husband's violence started from the very beginning of the marriage, which has lasted for 14 years now, and in which they got 2 children, aged 14 and 12. On account of his aggression and misconduct, the husband has been fired from several different jobs, placing the burden of financial sustenance solely on the client. After a while, the husband gave up seeking any jobs, started using the scarce financial resources primarily for himself, leaving the client with a limited daily amount of money, becoming verbally and occasionally physically violent when she would fail to demonstrate where and how she had spent the money.

The client managed to escape the violent environment, despite the threats that she will never see her children again if she leaves. For one month she stayed with friends and relatives, without the necessary personal items; feeling hopeless and desperate, she called the First Family Centre. The client was immediately involved in the counselling process with psychotherapists for victims of violence; and was additionally provided with free legal aid in cooperation with other civil society organisations. In the course of the counselling process, she was encouraged to file for divorce and report the case to the Social Work Centre. With the help and the support from the counselling process, she managed to re-establish the communication with her children and to return to work; she was empowered to live alone, and gradually normalised her everyday functioning.

The client is still engaged with the First Family Centre's counsellors in overcoming the trauma and improving her mental health and emotional wellbeing.

With Support from the Drug Use Prevention Counselling Facility to Making the Right Decisions about a Healthy Future



BACKGROUND:

- ▶ A 2019 research showed that 19% of young people aged 15-24 have tried an illegal drug;
- ▶ Since 2013, with the help from the City of Skopje, HERA has provided preventive counselling and support to young people and parents dealing with issues related to drug use.



ACTIVITIES:

- ▶ The Counselling Facility's psychiatrists provided substance risk prevention and substance use protection counselling at the "I Want To Know" Youth Centres in Skopje.



RESULTS:

- ▶ In 2022, a total of 245 users, of which 125 young people, 115 parents and 5 partners/professionals received counselling services for prevention of drug use at the Counselling Facility.



FUTURE STEPS:

- ▶ To continue providing substance risk prevention and substance use protection counselling services to young people, parents and partners.

- ▶ **DONORS:** [City of Skopje](#) and [The Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)

Promotional
banner for
the Drug Use
Prevention
Counselling
Facility

Справувањето со зависноста од супстанции не е лесно ни за најблиските! Токму затоа Советувалиштето за заштита од ризици и употреба на супстанции нуди групна психотерапија, вклучително и брачни советувања!

Услугите се бесплатни,
доверливоста клучна!

Закажете сесија со психијатар:

Младински центар
„Сакам да знам“ - Водно
(02) 3176 950

Младински центар
„Сакам да знам“ - Шуто Оризари
(02) 2651 955



MEDIA AND CAMPAIGNS

EXPERT COMMUNITY SAID **“YES”** TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS!

Last year was definitely marked by the signing of the [Declaration “With Sexuality Education in Schools to a Healthier and Safer Youth”](#) with which 15 professional associations and relevant civil society organisations demanded from the Government and the Ministry of Education and Science, pursuant to the political commitments made and their responsibilities, to make sure that **every child in the country could enjoy their right to comprehensive sexuality education** and acquire valid knowledge, attitudes and skills for the protection of their health, wellbeing and dignity.

DECLARATION

With sexuality education in schools to a healthier and safer youth

“Comprehensive sexuality education will equip the young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realise their health, wellbeing and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights related to sexual and reproductive health.”

UNESCO, 2018

Considering that the number of adolescent births in the Republic of North Macedonia is almost three times higher than that of the European Union countries;

Aware that the young people in our country report having their first sexual intercourse at a relatively younger age than their peers from the Western European countries;

Considering that the Republic of North Macedonia is among the last-ranking countries in Europe when it comes to using modern contraceptives, where only 14% of the young people aged between 20 and 24 use any of the modern contraceptive methods, whereas majority of them (36%) relying on interruption of the sexual intercourse as a method of protecting themselves from unintended pregnancy;

Aware that 52% of our girls aged 15 and 29% of our boys of the same age experience a number of psychosomatic symptoms simultaneously, several times a week;

Aware that 50% of the young people aged 15 attending Albanian language classes and 25% of the young people attending Macedonian language classes accept the traditional gender roles, for example, that the man should be an authority in the family, whereas the woman should be guided towards becoming a good mother and wife, at the expense of advancing in her career;

© Galić D. et al. (2018). UNFPA Country Programme Evaluation Report Period covered by the publication (2012-2018). The Republic of North Macedonia. UNFPA. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/20180920-CPE-Report-2012-2018-RNM.pdf>

SIGNATORIES

- Association of Social Workers of Macedonia (ASWM) 
- Association of Albanian Medical Doctors of Macedonia 
- Association of General Practitioners/Family Physicians 
- Institute of Marriage, Family and Systemic Practice – “Alternative” 
- Coalition “Margins” 
- Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians (MAGO) 
- Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) 
- Macedonian Medical Society – MLD and Professional & Specialist Associations of MLD 
- Psychological Centre “Alternative” 
- Federation of Special Educators and Rehabilitators of the Republic of North Macedonia 
- Subversive Front 
- HERA - Health Education and Research Association 
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights 
- Centre for Psychosocial and Crisis Action – “Mallinska” 
- Centre for Family Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje 

“Comprehensive sexuality education should be launched as soon as possible”, representatives of professional associations **called for** at the eponymous conference held in September, indicating that the situation in the field has been long alarming.



Mr. Hugo Bechtel, Counsellor for Cooperation and Culture with the Embassy of France, and Mr. Dirk Jan Kop, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Macedonia, gave their support, reminding that **good and quality sexuality education is based on science and teaches us of self-confidence, tolerance and, most importantly, personal responsibility.** That #CSEatSchooldesks [#CCОнаКлупа] works is undoubtedly **reaffirmed with the Dutch example!**



Finally, the Declaration **was supported by representatives of the political parties** SDSM, DOM, LDP, DUI and the Alliance for the Albanians. For them, comprehensive sexuality education is more so important in today's circumstances, when the anti-feminist movement protects the harmful patriarchy with disinformation about sexuality education, spreading panic and fear and encouraging hate speech.



“We use the word ‘shame’ way too often and employ it in an attempt to inhibit behaviours we do not agree with. However, we forget that we inhibit the communication at that point, too. We, as adults, have responsibility for the youngest ones to be their mentors or guides, which we ourselves most likely never had.”

Arbana Pasholli,
DUI MP

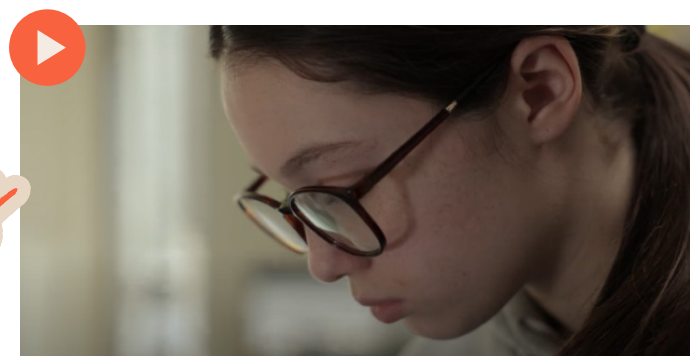
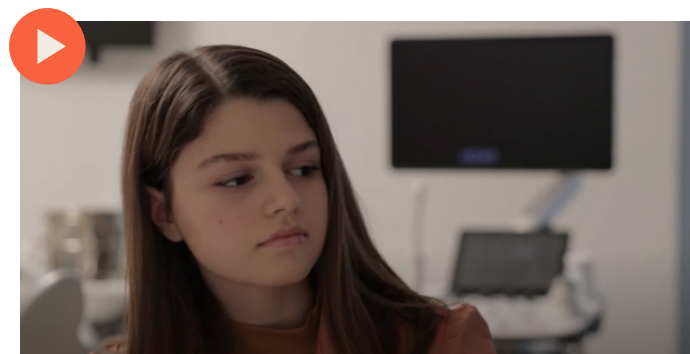
*Sexuality
Education in
Schools!*

VIDEO CAMPAIGNS FOR #CSEatSchooldesks

We can change the things for the better with comprehensive sexuality education.

To raise the public awareness about the benefits from CSE, we shot two videos – in Macedonian and in Albanian languages – which show only a segment of the challenges that young people in our country, but also their parents, encounter daily in a society which is still not providing timely access to accurate and comprehensive information about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

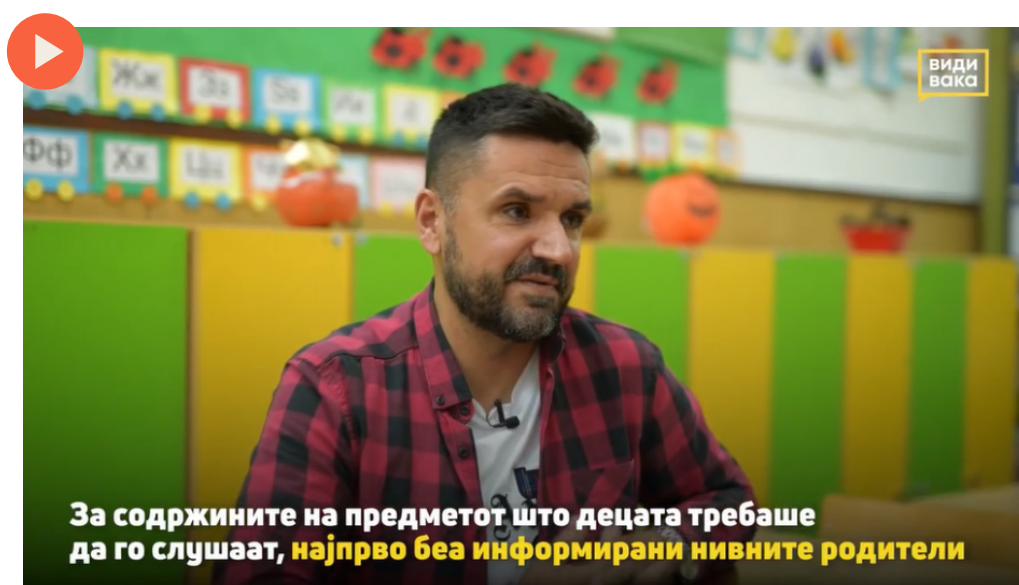
If we want young people to be healthy, the internet must not be the only place where they will search for answers to their questions. “Because, people can read all sorts of things there, and do something they ought not to, even start panicking.” They should neither be left alone when they are faced with peer violence. Violence, too, must be discussed both at home and in schools – as this is the only way that it will happen less!



#CSE
atSchooldesks

The evaluation of the CSE Pilot Programme, which was implemented by the Education Development Bureau last year, showed that the involved pupils knew much more about their sexual and reproductive health and rights and have more positive attitudes around these issues than their fellow-pupils in other schools across the country.

Young people have every right to demand having CSE at their school desks. **But, what do parents have to say about this?** More than 160 thousand people saw the video where Slave Pavlovski explains most frankly why he agreed his 15-year-old daughter to attend CSE and what #CSEatSchooldesks really looks like!



#CSEatSchooldesks

#CSEatSchooldesks WORKS, THE PILOT PROGRAMME EVALUATION SHOWED!

After one semester and 36 lessons in comprehensive sexuality education, the results are indisputable: pupils have better knowledge of CSE-related topics and significantly more positive attitudes to its components. Moreover, both pupils and teachers believe that the results would be even better when this elective subject was instructed in the course of two semesters, with twice as many lessons!





The key findings from the evaluation were presented by the evaluator **Sheruze Osmani Ballazhi**. She pointed out that the pre-pilot trainings were extremely important for the teachers who gave these lessons, but that teachers need additional knowledge and support, especially when discussing contraception, teenage relationships and marriage, sexism and sexual orientation.

What makes us particularly happy is that more than 1,650 of teachers covered with the research into the teachers' attitudes about the introduction of CSE in primary education, before and after piloting the programme, would like to get trained so as to be able to teach these contents. Why? Because they believe that information, attitudes and skills the pupils would acquire with this instruction would be extremely beneficial for the pupils.

#CSE
at Schooldesks



According to Professor Nikolina Kenig, one of the researchers, “The teachers and the associates have identified barriers to the successful realisation of the programme mostly in factors outside the schools, that is, in the unpreparedness of the community or of the parents to accept the systematic education of their teenagers in the area of sexuality”.

CONFERENCE: “MODERN CONTRACEPTIVES AVAILABLE TO ALL: WHY ARE WE NOT READY YET?”

People engage mostly in unprotected sexual intercourse, and not a single modern contraceptive can be found on the Positive List of Medicines. This was a motive enough to mark the 26th of September – World Contraception Day – with a conference where we shared the alarming data gathered in the field and we demanded that the Government should fulfil their promise as soon as possible!




In her address, among others, Prof. Dr. Ana Daneva-Markova, President of the Safe Motherhood Committee, reminded that modern contraceptives can reduce the maternal mortality rates by 25%, and that of newborns by 20%. Irina Lučeska, MSc, reported that the need for family planning is far from being met with the modern contraceptive methods, adding that the number of family planning advice sessions provided in the primary healthcare was halved in 2020.




On the other hand, Marija Risteska, PhD, Executive Director of the Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) pointed out that, according to the analysis made, decision-makers agree that condoms should be made free and available to everyone through health facilities, and that contraceptive pills should be added to the Positive List of Medicines.

The most important information from the conference found its way to the broader public through the social media.



Во Македонија, само **14 % од жените** на возраст од **15 до 49 години**, кои се во врска или во брак, користат модерна контрацепција.

Најчесто користен метод на контрацепција е методот на „извлекување“ (прекинување на сексуалниот однос пред ејакулацијата).




На исклучително мал процент на луѓе во земјава им е задоволена потребата за модерна контрацепција. На светско ниво, ситуацијата е позагрижувачка само во Албанија, Јужен Судан, Сомалија и Чад.

Во 2020 и 2021 година, државата им поделила **бесплатни контрацептиви на само 50 жени**, и тоа само преку здравствените установи на секундарно и терциерно ниво.



На Позитивната листа на лекови нема ниту едно модерно контрацептивно средство - а Владата вети дека ќе има уште во 2017 година. **Па така, ако за лекови плаќаме дури 42 % од вкупната сума, за модерна контрацепција плаќаме 100 %.**



HERA IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA

2021
Y e a r

2022
Y e a r



Facebook
(supporters)

20.246

20.900



Twitter
(followers)

1.931

1.946



YouTube
(views)

15.800

16.170

PUBLICATIONS



ВРАБОТЕНА РОМКА - СИЛНА РОМКА

*Мониторинг на
ИСКРИСТЕНОСТА
НА АКТИВНИТЕ
МЕРКИ И УСЛУГИ
ЗА ВРАБОТУВАЊЕ
ОД СТРАНА НА
РОМКИТЕ ЗА
2021 ГОДИНА*

Monitoring of the Utilisation
of the Active Employment
Measures and Services
by the Roma Women in 2021



ВРАБОТЕНА РОМКА - СИЛНА РОМКА

*Мониторинг на
ВРАБОТУВАЊЕТО
РОМКИ ВО
ДРЖАВНИТЕ
ИНСТИТУЦИИ
ВО РЕПУБЛИКА
СЕВЕРНА
МАКЕДОНИЈА
ВО 2021 ГОДИНА*

Monitoring the Employment
of Roma Women
in Public Institutions in
RNM in 2021

SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF
NORTH MACEDONIA

ENLARGEMENT
REVIEW 2022



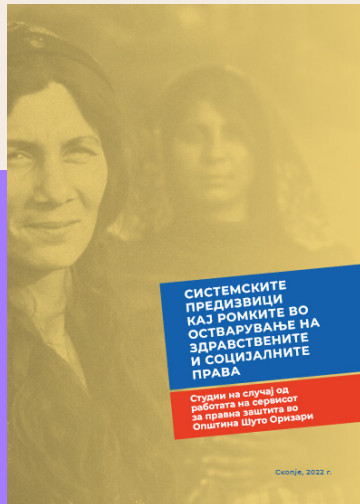
Addressing the EU Expansion in
2022: Sexual and Reproductive
Health and Rights

ROMA REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL
WELLBEING IN THE
REPUBLIC OF NORTH
MACEDONIA

ENLARGEMENT
REVIEW 2022



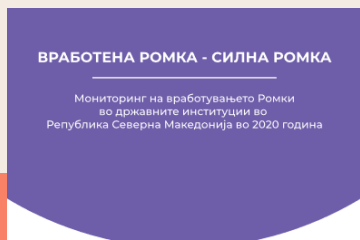
Addressing the EU
Expansion in 2022:
Reproductive Health
and Social Wellbeing
of the Roma



Systemic Challenges of Roma Women in Enjoying their Health and Social Justice



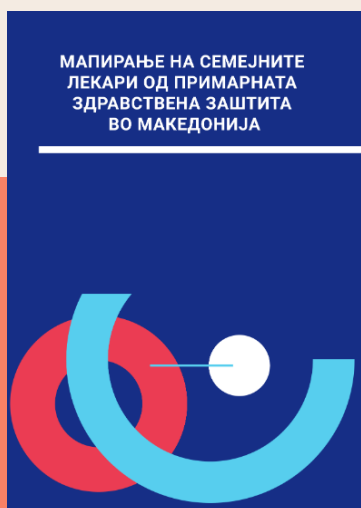
2021 Community Score Card



Monitoring the Employment of Roma Women in Public Institutions in RNM in 2020



Monitoring of the Utilisation of the Active Employment Measures and Services by the Roma Women in 2020



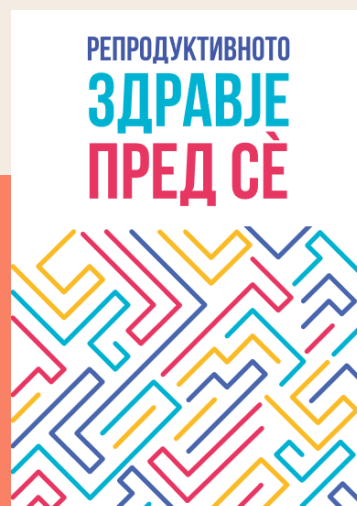
[Mapping the Family
Doctors in PHC in
Macedonia](#)



[National Plan for Sexual and
Reproductive Health Service
Provision in the Area of Family
Medicine](#)



[Recommendations for SRH
Service Provision by Family
Doctors](#)



[Brochure:
Reproductive
Health Above All!](#)

*available also in Albanian and Romani languages



Young People's Access to Information about Sexual and Reproductive Health, Education and Care in Macedonia in time of COVID-19



Public Policy Document: Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Time of Pandemic



Analysis and Public Policy Document on Access to Contraceptive Methods and Family Planning Health Services



Public Policy Document: With a Better Access to Contraception and Family Planning Services to Universal Healthcare

Прирачник за врсничка
едукација по сеопфатно
сексуално образование



Manual on Peer Education
about Comprehensive Sexuality
Education

ИЗВЕШТАЈ

ОД СПРОВЕДЕНИОТ
МОНИТОРИНГ НА
ИМПЛЕМЕНТАЦИЈАТА
НА АКЦИСКИОТ ПЛАН
ЗА СПРОВЕДУВАЊЕ
НА КОНВЕНЦИЈАТА
ЗА СПРЕЧУВАЊЕ
И БОРБА ПРОТИВ
НАСИЛСТВОТО
ВРЗ ЖЕНИТЕ
И СЕМЕНОТО
НАСИЛСТВО

со одржт кон
вредностите на
сервиса за
реинтеграција
на заштитата
на жртвите
од семејно и
родно базирано
насилство

Report on the Conducted Monitoring
of Implementation of the Action Plan
for Implementing the Convention on
Preventing and Combating
Violence Against Women and
Domestic Violence



Manual for Service Providers
in the Counselling Facilities
for Victims of Violence



Concept on Men's
Counselling and Support
Centres in the Republic of
North Macedonia

FUNDING

List of Donors and Revenue in 2022

REVENUE				
		Amount in MKD	Amount in USD ¹	%
1	BILATERAL DONORS	1.380.364,00	23.942,41	3,94%
	Association for Men and Gender Issues of Styria [<i>Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark</i>] / Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria	1.380.364,00	23.942,41	3,94%
2	INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS	24.794.216,00	430.055,69	70,76%
	Foundation Open Society Macedonia	1.435.656,00	24.901,45	4,10%
	International Planned Parenthood Federation	13.329.017,00	231.191,81	38,04%
	Kvinna till Kvinna	2.039.917,00	35.382,36	5,82%
	The Sigrid Rausing Trust	7.062.000,00	122.490,40	20,16%
	International Youth Health Organisation	477.077,00	8.274,90	1,36%
	Austrian Family Planning Association / Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria	335.415,00	5.817,77	0,96%
	National Democratic Institute – North Macedonia	115.134,00	1.997,00	0,33%
3	MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS	2.631.904,00	45.650,38	7,51%
	UN Women / European Commission	2.631.904,00	45.650,38	7,51%
4	GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	5.843.803,00	101.360,77	16,68%
	City of Skopje	1.200.000,00	20.814,00	3,42%
	Ministry of Health	4.643.803,00	80.546,77	13,25%
5	INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIP FEES	18.500,00	320,88	0,05%
6	INCOME FROM ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	30.375,00	526,85	0,09%
7	OTHER INCOME	339.132,00	5.882,24	0,97%
TOTAL REVENUE		35.038.294,00	607.739,24	100%

¹ 1USD = 57.6535 MKD (as on 31.12.2022)

EMPATHY



www.hera.org.mk