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Dear readers,

2025 was a year that clearly showed us that our work is not only needed but is necessary and urgent.

In conditions of increased challenges such as violence, disinformation, limited access to services, growing distrust among young people towards institutions, HERA remained where it matters most: on-site, with citizens.

Thousands of people received services, support and information. Young people were not only beneficiaries, they were partners: vocal, active and equally involved in the processes of change. Through advocacy, we succeeded in maintaining some of the key policies for sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality, but some were set back despite our efforts.

This does not happen in a vacuum! We operate in a context where rights are being questioned, where disinformation spreads faster than facts and where the most vulnerable most often stand last in the queue.

HERA in 2025 was not only an organisation that offered services. It was a line of defence of gender equality. We were vocal when it was unpopular.

Behind every number in this report stands a person. A woman who received support. A young person who found space to speak. A community that became stronger.

That is the strength of HERA: to turn care into action, and values into real change. We do not only respond to injustice, we lead the changes.

And that is why we continue. Not because it is easy, but because it is necessary.

With greater commitment and with a clear vision that rights are not negotiated. They are defended. And they are lived.

Yours sincerely,
Rumena Gerdoska Kojčeski
President

Dear readers,

At a time when rights are not taken for granted, but are once again being contested, our work becomes more than a programme or project – it becomes a stance.

This report tells the story of HERA as an organisation that does not retreat. An organisation that for 25 years now has stood with those whose voices are most often not heard: young people, women, vulnerable communities. And even more importantly, this is a story of how a civil initiative builds systemic impact in policies, in institutions to a positive democratic impact in society as a whole.

Today, as we witness intensified anti-gender and anti-democratic narratives, when disinformation becomes a tool for control rather than for informing, HERA chooses to stand clearly for rights, for science, for freedom.

Our results are not just numbers. They are proof that it is possible to provide services for those who are left on the margins. That young people can be drivers of change, if they are given space. That policies can be advanced, when there is persistence and partnership.

This report is also a reminder that none of this comes easily. Progress requires continuity, solidarity, clear values and vision.

Therefore, our message is simple, but strong:

We will continue to build a society in which every person has the right to choice, access to services and a life with dignity.

Yours sincerely,
Mila Carovska
Executive Director

25

YEARS OF HERA

Over the past 25 years, HERA opened services for young people, women and vulnerable communities, which are integrated and sustainable:

In 2025, together with our partners, we marked **25 years of struggle, love and vision for a more just society!** From a modest initiative to a national and regional leader, HERA has remained consistent with its mission: **to listen to the quiet voices, to open spaces for trust, and to bring change where it is most needed.**

The first to provide support to people living with HIV. The first to speak about comprehensive sexuality education. It created safe spaces for young people, women and marginalised groups.

Over the past 25 years, HERA opened services for young people, women and vulnerable communities, which are integrated and sustainable:

2005

year

- Counselling Service for Support of People Living with HIV at the Infectious Disease Clinic

2005

year

- The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre at Vodno

2006

year

- The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre in Šuto Orizari

2007

year

- The First Mobile HIV Testing Clinic

2012

year

- Counselling Service for Drug Prevention

2012

year

- Mobile Gynaecology Outpatient Clinic

2013

year

- The First Family Centre for Support for Victims of Gender-Based Violence

2021

year

- Counselling Service for Medical Abortion at the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Clinic

2024

year

- The First MM Centre for Mental Health of Boys and Men

We trained over

2000
6300

YOUNG PEOPLE

WHO COMPLETED
ALL SEVEN
MODULES OF CSE

YOUNG PEOPLE

WERE REACHED
THROUGH BASIC
EDUCATION
SESSIONS



CSE is part of the concept note on primary education

We advocated for laws on reproductive rights and for the integration of services into national budgets: Since 2018, HIV services provided by civil society organisations have been financed by the Ministry of Health. The new Law on Abortion from 2021 guarantees a woman's reproductive freedom.

This anniversary is more than a number – it is a testament to the perseverance, vision and unity of hundreds of activists, volunteers, partners and friends. With gratitude to all those who walked this path together, HERA continues the struggle with the same energy and dedication. Because our society still needs organisations that are not afraid to speak out, that see a human being in every individual – not a statistic.

In times of division and uncertainty, HERA believes in values that know no boundaries: **respect, love, acceptance, care and solidarity**. 25 years of HERA – because every voice matters. Because every person deserves care. Because every young person who believes in change should be supported.



Video: 25 Years of HERA





HERA's 25-year anniversary, April 2025, Skopje



OUR SERVICES

The "I Want To Know" Youth Centres for Sexual and Reproductive Health
Outpatient Clinic at Vodno
 ul. „Elisie Popovski“ br. 2
 (02) 3176 950
Outpatient Clinic in Šuto Orizari
 ul. „Šuto Orizari “ b.b.
 (02) 2651 955
MM Centre – Men's Counselling and Support Centre
 ul. „Elisie Popovski “ br. 2
 070 299 026
man.mind.skopje
The First Family Centre of the City of Skopje
 ul. „Ivo Agovski“ br. 11/2-3
 infopsc@hera.org.mk
Mobile Outpatient Clinic for HIV Testing and Counselling
 hivtest@hera.org.mk
Mobile Gynaecology Outpatient Clinic
 hera@hera.org.mk

HERA ONLINE

Websites:

Website:
www.hera.org.mk

Comprehensive Sexuality Education:
www.seksualnoobrazovanie.mk

Everything about Contraception in One Place:
www.kontracepcija.mk

Support for Parents on CSE-related Topics:
www.roditelska.mk

Social platforms:

 @hera.macedonia
 @heramladi
 @hera_assoc
 @HERAMacedonia

MEMBERSHIP IN NETWORKS AND RELEVANT BODIES

National Networks

- + National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
[founder & member]
- + Gender Equality Platform
[founder & member]
- + Coalition "Margins"
[founder & member]
- + Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform
[founder & member]
- + Platform for Sustainability of HIV Prevention and Support Services
[founder & member]
- + Network for Protection against Discrimination
[founder & member]
- + National Network against Homophobia and Transphobia
[founder & member]
- + National Youth Council
[member]
- + Social Service Providers' Network
[founder & member]

International Networks

- + International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) – full member since 2009
- + European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights – host organisation of the Secretariat for North Macedonia
- + EN WWP – European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence
- + ASTRA Network
- + Y-SAFE Network
- + AIDS Action EUROPE
- + ALDA Europe
- + ILGA Europe
- + IRIS Network
- + ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Türkiye
- + COBATEST Network

National Bodies:

- + Member of the National Coordinating Body for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
- + Member of the Council for Open Government Partnership
- + Member of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society
- + Member of the National HIV Commission
- + Member of the sectoral group for EU integration in the field of health



TRAININGS

103

63 ▶

trained professionals for

**PROVIDING DIRECT
SERVICES AND EDUCATION**

from social and educational institutions, and civil
society organizations (psychologists, pedagogues,
teachers, social workers, and legal professionals)





**103 TRAINED
PROFFESIONALS in
2025:**

40

TRAINED PROFESSIONALS from the Constitutional Court and six local self-governments from the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina for

**PROTECTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED
DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE, AND HATE SPEECH, AS
WELL AS POLICY-MAKING FOR GESI**

- gender equality and social inclusion.



SERVICES

Name of the Service	Type of Service	Number of Clients	Breakdown of Number of Clients by Target Group
The First Family Centre	 Stationary	322 clients	77 victims of domestic and gender-based violence, 80 perpetrators of violence, 35 children, 10 parents and other family members affected by violence and mental health, 19 LGBTI persons and human rights defenders, 101 persons with trauma affected by the tragedy in Kočani
MM Centre for Boys and Men in Crisis	 Stationary	55 clients	46 boys and men 9 young girls
Youth Centre Šuto Orizari	 Stationary	342	48 SW, 294 other groups of women
Gynaecology Outpatient Clinic	 Mobile	364	185 SW, 68 PWID, 111 vulnerable groups of women
HIV testing	 Stationary / mobile / community-based and web-based access to HIV self-testing	1.045	470 MSM, 244 SW, 128 PWID, 203 other vulnerable categories
HIV Counselling Facility at the University Clinic for Infectious Diseases and Febrile Conditions	 In partnership* (Stationary)	719	448 people living with HIV and 271 people affected by and at risk of HIV
Medical Abortion – University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics	 Stationary (in partnership)	642	642 vulnerable categories
Total		4178 clients	



Stationary
service



Mobile
service



Partner
stationary
service

Number / %
of Women

Number / %
of Vulnerable Groups

Number / % of Young People
aged 10–24

160/49 %

176/54 %

51
or 16 %

9/16 %

100 %

10/18 %

342/100 %

342/100 %

122/36 %

364/100 %

364/100 %

53/15 %

263/25 %

842/81 %

197/19 %

53/10 %

509/71 %

27/5 %

642/100 %

62/10 %

/



YOUTH PARTICIPATION

HERA invests in and believes in strong young people
who drive social change.

In North Macedonia and the Western Balkans, youth participation in democratic processes is low, and trust in institutions is undermined due to corruption, nepotism and limited mechanisms for influence.

IN THIS REGARD

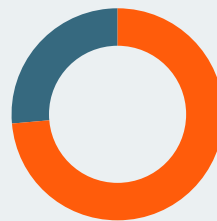
51,4 %

of young people believe that the authorities do not care at all about their needs and problem



73,7 %

of young people have not been involved or consulted by local or national institutions in decision-making processes so far



Civil society organisations and youth activists often operate in isolation across countries, with insufficiently developed regional platforms for joint advocacy.

Moreover, young people face a lack of entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities. There is still a high level of misinformation in the public regarding the content of comprehensive sexuality education and gender equality. The education system, although comprehensive sexuality education is part of the Concept Note on Primary Education, is slow in adopting modern content in line with the needs of young people. Teenage pregnancies continue to remain a challenge, while young people still face stigma and insufficient support for the use of modern contraceptives. In recent years, the increase in problems related to violence, youth mental health and limited access to information on sexual and reproductive health indicates the need for even more intensive engagement in this area.

PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



"THE SEXY NEIGHBOURHOOD" PODCAST

During 2025, "The Sexy Neighbourhood" Podcast continued to function as a youth podcast platform where complex and often marginalised social issues were opened from the perspective of young people. The podcast, **prepared and hosted by HERA Youth**, addressed topics related to **discrimination in democratic societies, apathy among young people and their role in social change**, as well as the contemporary characteristics, everyday rituals and romantic relationships of the **Gen Z** generation.

Through open conversations and carefully curated content, "The Sexy Neighbourhood" Podcast also addressed issues related to **personal development, mental and physical health, activism, volunteering and the development of skills relevant**

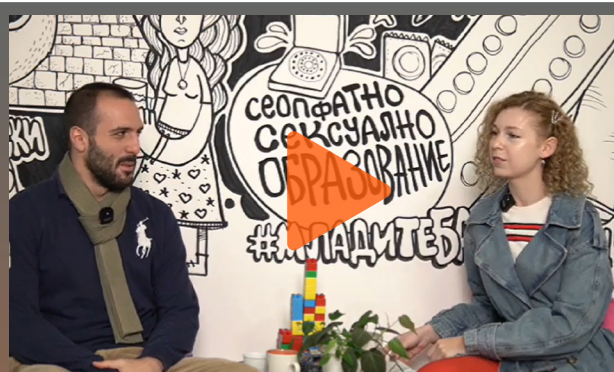
to young people – from "volunteer currency" and how to learn, to **career development and the positioning of young people in the digital and professional space**.

At the same time, the podcast opened space for discussion on comprehensive sexuality education from different perspectives, sexual and reproductive health, consent, as well as menstrual justice.

With such thematic coverage, "The Sexy Neighbourhood" Podcast contributed to strengthening **critical thinking, informed decision-making and the active participation of young people** in building a fairer, more inclusive and solidaristic society.



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Discrimination in Democratic Societies



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Apathy among Young People in Society



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Characteristics of Gen Z



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Everyday Rituals of Gen Z



The Sexy Neighbourhood
CSE from Another Perspective



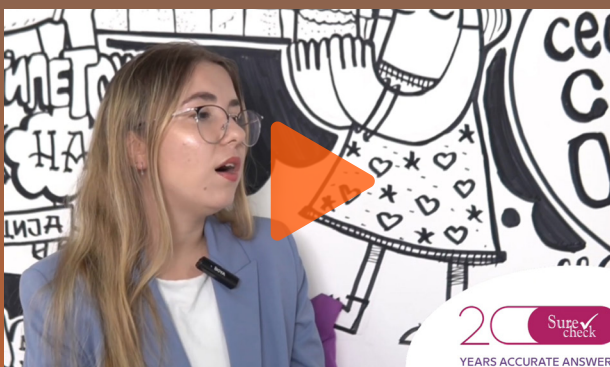
The Sexy Neighbourhood
Fitness in Small Steps



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Pain and Dysfunctions in Sex



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Sexy Consent



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Period Poverty



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Volunteer Currency



The Sexy Neighbourhood
LinkedIn and Launch Yourself



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Learning to Learn



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Through Activism to
Revolution



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Gen Z Romantics



The Sexy Neighbourhood
Exploring the Shadow

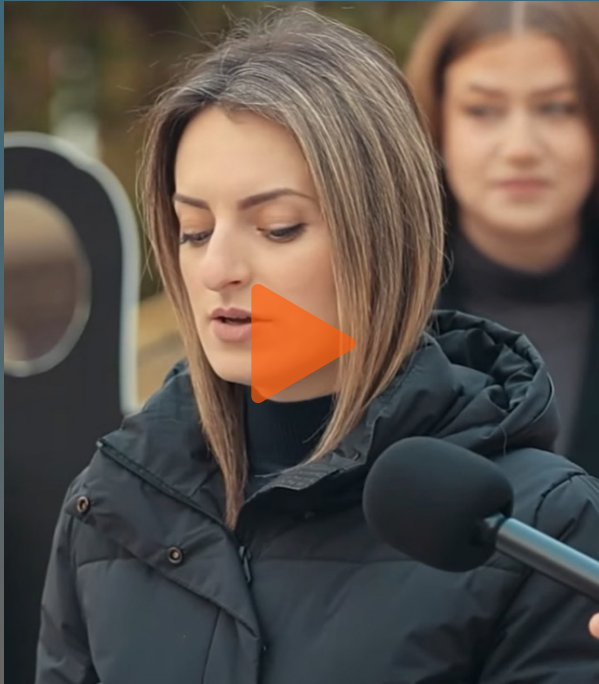
THROUGH CULTURE TO YOUTH MOBILISATION AND ACTIVISM

During the international campaign “16 Days of Activism against Violence”, young people, through a **guerrilla action** and a **press conference**, sent a clear message: “We do not need 16 days of symbolism – we need 365 days of responsibility!”. For this action, they received the **ŽENSKI TRN 2025 Award**. During the campaign, we organised 10 public events – panel discussions, debates and forum theatre performances in the municipalities of Skopje, Probištip, Krivogaštani and Kičevo, attended by 320 participants. The activities were aimed at raising public awareness, promoting available support services and strengthening knowledge on the prevention of and protection from violence.



HERA Youth received the ŽENSKI TRN 2025 award for the action “We need 365 days of activism, not 16 days of symbolism” – for their continuous, systemic struggle for women’s rights, bodily autonomy and gender justice, December 2025, Skopje

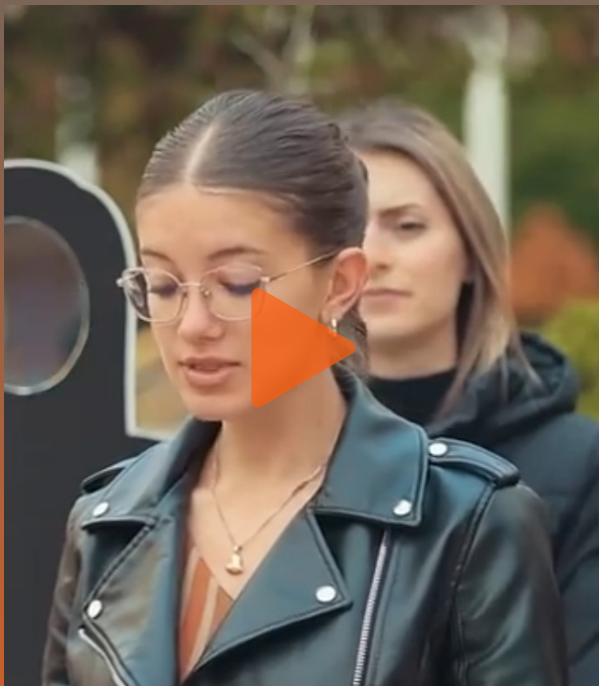




Statement by Marija Ćorgjevska,
press conference marking the launch of
the campaign "16 Days of Activism against
Gender-Based Violence", UKIM, Skopje



Statement by Savče Ćoševa,
press conference marking the launch of the
campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-
Based Violence", UKIM, Skopje



Statement by Ilarija Dimulkova,
press conference marking the launch of the
campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-
Based Violence", UKIM, Skopje



Statement by Anastasija Trošanska,
press conference marking the launch of the
campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-
Based Violence", UKIM, Skopje

On **International Youth Day**, they carried out a guerrilla action and sent the message that they are not a hashtag, but a priority. On the same day, they were also present in **Probištip** at the invitation of the town's Youth Centre. HERA Youth were in the front lines of the International Women's Day march with a strong **message**. 549 young people attended the forum theatre performances that we organised with the association "Rubikon" in the municipalities of **Gevgelija**, **Rosoman**, **Kumanovo**, **Probištip** and **Krivogaštani** and participated in discussions on peer violence, relationships and relations in adolescence, and body and body image.



Forum theatre, April 2025, Gevgelija



Forum theatre, April 2025, Rosoman



Forum theatre, May 2025, Kumanovo



Forum theatre, December 2025, Probištip



Forum theatre in Krivogaštani

Through workshops on **photography, clay work** and **dance**, 42 young people discussed mental health and expressed themselves through creative artistic products. At a donor auction selling artistic products, financial resources were raised to support youth services at the MM Centre for Boys and Men.



Clay workshop, 18 May 2025, The "I Want To Know" Youth Centre at Vodno

Moreover, HERA Youth took part in the Symposium of the Faculty of Medicine at UGD, the **fair of NOVA Secondary School**, the **surgical symposium** organised by EMSA and the Young European Ambassadors at the Faculty of Medicine at UKIM, the **first academic class** at the UKIM Plateau, the birthday of "Studentarija", and the **interdisciplinary Student Conference** organised by UKIM's University Student Assembly.

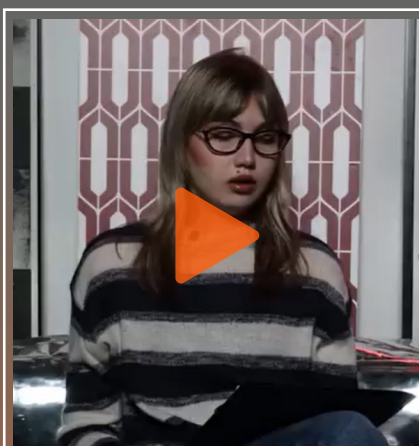
Participation in **D-Fest 2025** continued in 2025 in Štip, with an educational and creative stand and a series of interactive workshops aimed at informing and mobilising over 200 young people on topics related to sexual and reproductive health, healthy relationships and body acceptance. Through games, discussions and artistic expression, the activities created a safe and accessible space for learning, dialogue and positive youth energy within the festival atmosphere.

WE FIGHT FOR ACQUIRED RIGHTS IN ORDER TO PROTECT AND ENJOY THEM

What Did Young People Say, Where Did Feminism Fall Short?

Young people from the Western Balkans, Europe and Africa, through the joint campaign “Failed Feminism”, highlighted historical and social stories that reveal the gap between women’s individual achievements and the absence of systemic gender equality. The stories were collected through a public call for sharing experiences, complemented by targeted communication with local and marginalised communities.

The campaign aimed to critically reexamine the limitations of feminism when it remains symbolic, elitist or deprived of institutional support, emphasising the need for an inclusive and intersectional approach.



The story of
Draga Ljočić



The story of
Regina Bishingti



The story
of Kallirroï Parren



The story of
Elena Ceașescu



The story of
Olympe de Gouges

Feminism Is Not Imported, It Is Part of Our Cultural Heritage in the Balkans

Following the signed **declaration** "Together We Lead: Youth Are a Force in the Balkans", young people from the region continued joint action and cooperation to advance youth rights in their countries. We organised a **regional youth training** on feminism as cultural heritage with participants from North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania. 25 young people gained advanced knowledge and skills in feminist cultural mapping and the development of entrepreneurial ideas in culture.

Subsequently, through three workshops in each of the three countries, 48 young people were prepared both **theoretically** and **practically** for the mapping, research and documentation of feminist cultural and historical sites and stories. The process was led by national experts and mentors to ensure historical accuracy, methodological support and academic validity of the research. Through this initiative, the structure of the Regional Feminist Tourist Guide was developed and cross-border cooperation between young researchers and experts was established. Moreover, a regional youth working group for coordination proposed 18 feminist cultural sites and stories for further development and inclusion in a regional feminist tourist guide to be published in 2026.

Youth workshop for the preparation of the Regional Feminist Tourist Guide, October 2025, Skopje



Regional youth training on feminist cultural heritage and entrepreneurship, June 2025, Struga

MOBILISATION AND IMPACT



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE DRIVING FORCE FOR DEMOCRATIC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The regional youth **conference** held at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje brought together 210 participants from North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Albania – young activists, representatives of civil society organisations, institutions, the academic community and the international community. The conference served as a key platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences and joint advocacy for advancing youth policies and democratic participation in the region. Through **panel discussions** and **five thematic workshops** (education, healthcare, employment, culture and environment), young people actively participated in developing recommendations and joint initiatives. The **Joint Declaration on Youth Empowerment and Policy Commitment in the Western Balkans** was also presented and adopted at the event, making a significant contribution to strengthening regional cooperation and youth advocacy. The event also opened a structured debate between young people and institutions. The Youth Advisor to the Government, the State Secretaries of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, as well as representatives of the academic and international community, took active part in the event.



Regional youth conference "Together We Lead: Youth Are the Changing Power of the Balkans!", February 2025, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Skopje

Regional youth conference
"Together We Lead: Youth Are
the Changing Power of the
Balkans"



Workshop "No Planet B: Youth as Leaders in the Fight
for Climate Justice"



Workshop "Culture as a Voice: Art in Service of
Youth Needs and Emotions"



Workshop "Education 2.0: Adapting the Educational
System to Modern Generations and Technological
Advancement"



Plenary Session



Workshop "Work & Growth – Youth Employment in a
Changing Economy"



Workshop "Health is Wealth – Building Resilient Health
Systems that Respond to Youth Needs"





Statements from the moderators of the workshops on healthcare, employment and environment

THE "SILENT NOISE" PODCAST

The "Silent Noise" Podcast **continued to be a podcast space in which topics that society still often remains silent about are opened up loudly.** During 2025, the podcast was dedicated to deepening public debate on comprehensive sexuality education, mental health and a range of social taboos that directly affect the wellbeing and development of young people and the wider community.

The "Silent Noise" Podcast offered professional, personal and critical perspectives on complex social issues. The conversations were hosted by Petar Mladenovski – Pece, while the guests were most often public figures, healthcare and social workers, psychologists and other relevant experts. Each episode contributed to breaking down myths and stereotypes, strengthening awareness and encouraging open and well-argued dialogue on topics of essential importance for personal, but also social, development.



Silent Noise
Women's Rights



Silent Noise
Violence



Silent Noise
Conversation



Silent Noise
Homophobia



Silent Noise
Gender (In)equality



Silent Noise
Love and Jealousy



Silent Noise
Body Image



Silent Noise
Family Planning and Contraception

YOUTH VOICE IN PUBLIC POLICIES

Young people provided concrete proposals in the preparation of the **2026–2027 Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2023–2027** and the **Education Strategy 2026–2032**. The proposals included improving models for youth participation, recognising and expanding youth-friendly services across more municipalities following the model of HERA's "I Want To Know" Youth Centres, sexuality education in schools, mental health services, prevention of and protection from discrimination and violence, and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION



THROUGH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO EQUALITY – THE PATH TO A YOUTH SOCIETY!

The **National Youth Conference on Education** “Through Inclusive Education to Equality – The Path to a Youth Society!”, brought together 120 participants – teachers and non-teaching school professionals, young people, representatives of civil society organisations, institutions, the academic community and the international community. The conference delivered a clear message: education must prepare young people for real life. **At the first panel, “Breaking Taboos”**, we discussed the importance of experiential learning and the impact of quality sexuality education on the development of young people. **At the second panel** of the conference, the focus was on creative and non-formal approaches in education as powerful tools for building a safer and more inclusive environment for young people. The conference **programme** opened an important public dialogue on access to inclusive education, comprehensive sexuality education and the protection of young people from violence and discrimination. Through this event, dialogue between young people and institutions was ensured. The event was supported by the **State Secretary at the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth**, the **Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** and the **French Ambassador**. **Certificates** were awarded at the conference to 42 teachers trained to deliver sexuality education in primary schools.



National Youth Conference “Through Inclusive Education to Equality – The Path to a Youth Society!” – First Panel “Breaking Taboos”, April 2025, Skopje



National Youth Conference "Through Inclusive Education to Equality - The Path to a Youth Society!" - Opening Remarks, April 2025, Skopje



National Youth Conference "Through Inclusive Education to Equality - The Path to a Youth Society!" - Second Panel, April 2025, Skopje



National Youth Conference "Through Inclusive Education to Equality - The Path to a Youth Society!" - Awarding of Certificates together with the Education Development Bureau to primary school teachers, April 2025, Skopje



National Youth Conference "Through Inclusive Education to Equality - The Path to a Youth Society!" - First Panel Discussion, April 2025, Skopje

MOTIVATED TEACHERS AND ENGAGED STUDENTS – SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In partnership with the Education Development Bureau, we worked on the **development of teaching materials for the smooth implementation of sexuality education** in the formal education system. In 2025, 26 teachers from primary schools in **Veles**, **Gostivar** and **Struga** successfully completed the sexuality education training. A total of 82 students in 4 schools were reached with sexuality education in schools through an extracurricular activity. The principals of 9 primary schools from Tetovo and Gostivar expressed support for the sexuality education content in line with the needs of young people.



Training on CSE for primary school teachers, May 2025, Veles



Training on CSE for primary school teachers, August 2025, Gostivar



Training on CSE for primary school teachers, Struga

YOUNG PEOPLE EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE: PEER EDUCATION ON COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

We continued the implementation of the Informal Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programme across the country, in Macedonian and Albanian. A total of 252 young people were reached through CSE workshops (149 completed all seven modules), from urban and rural areas, as well as young people from vulnerable communities. We expanded the network of trained and certified peer educators with **8 new young educators**. We participated in the **European research** "Young People's Preferences for Comprehensive Sexuality Education" with four young researchers.



Training for peer educators on comprehensive sexuality education

DONORS: Western Balkans Fund, International Planned Parenthood Federation, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, British Council

PARTNERS: Education Development Bureau, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at UKIM, Centre for Population Policies and Sustainable Development – IPPF Serbia, Organisation for Improving the Quality of Education ORKA – Kosovo, Civic Resistance – Albania, Albanian Centre for Population and Development, Association "Rubikon", National Youth Council of Macedonia

GENDER EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY

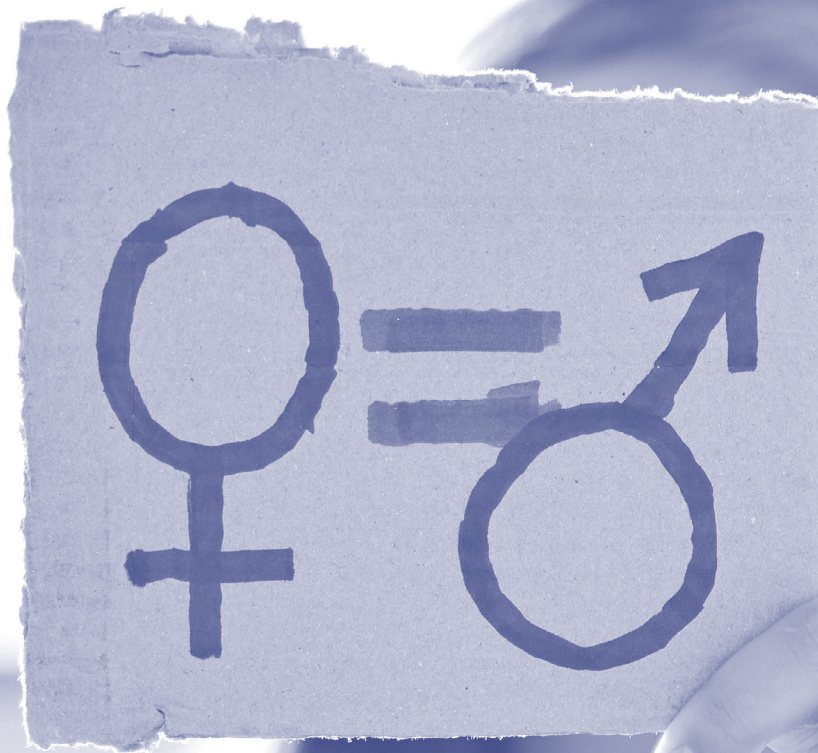


Promotion and defence of gender equality
and democracy through resilient communities
and strong institutional partnerships

From 2019 to 2023, a total of USD 1.18 billion was channelled to fund 275 organisations involved in anti-gender initiatives in Europe, as shown in the report “The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Regaining Power” by the European Parliamentary Forum. Disinformation and hate speech intensify gender-based discrimination and violence against girls, women, the LGBTI community and other vulnerable groups. Only 8% of directors of public enterprises at the local level are women, and only 5% of elected mayors in Macedonia are women. Women perform 72.5% of unpaid work in the home and in childcare, which significantly affects their opportunities and time to engage in paid work. The low rate of women’s participation in the labour force means that the state does not utilise the potential of approximately half of working-age women, who are not active job seekers and are not participating in the labour market. National and local policies and budgets in the Western Balkans still do not take into account the different needs of women, young people and marginalised groups.



GENDER EQUALITY AS A BENEFIT OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES



STRONG INSTITUTIONS AS A RESPONSE TO ANTI-DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCES

We organised a workshop with the **Constitutional Court** at which a total of 23 participants – constitutional judges and administrative staff – strengthened their capacities for the application of **international standards in addressing hate speech, gender-based discrimination and violence**. Moreover, we organised a **study visit to Austria** for the **exchange of knowledge with the Austrian Public Prosecutor's Office** on effective and sensitive handling of victims of violence in the future.



Training with the Constitutional Court
"Constitutional Court Protection of Human Rights, Equality and Gender Discrimination in Accordance with Article 110 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia", April 2025

Six institutions – the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Public Administration, the General Secretariat of the Government and the Assembly – actively participated in adapting and preparing the **GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – Methodology** – for the development of new policies. The three line ministries – the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, and the Ministry of Education and Science – strengthened their capacities for applying the tool and tested its application on the **Law on Health Insurance**, the **Law on Child Protection** and the **Law on Secondary Education**. The **Ministry of Public Administration** provided a positive opinion on the integration of GESI into the RIA – Regulatory Impact Assessment – process.



Meeting with the institutional group for integration of GESI into national policies, Berovo

Together with the **Institute of Gender Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at UKIM**, we developed a tool with artificial intelligence for the assessment and integration of the GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – Methodology into public policies.

The positive experience of piloting **GESI** at the national level in Macedonia enabled the **expansion of its application at the local level in the municipalities of Gostivar and Valandovo (North Macedonia), Kanjiža and Vršac (Serbia), and Bijeljina and Višegrad (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**. We conducted 11 consultative meetings and visits with representatives of the six municipalities to identify entry points for integrating gender equality and social inclusion. We organised a three-day training in Veles to strengthen capacities, networking and the application of the GESI tool in policy-making, budgeting and strategic planning processes at the local level. **The GESI methodology was piloted on six local policies, and for each municipality, reports with recommendations and follow-up action plans** for further implementation were prepared.



Regional training for strengthening the capacities of municipalities from the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Methodology, June, Veles

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND DEFENDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES

We held the **National Conference "You and I in One Voice for Gender Equality"**, at which we opened a dialogue with representatives of institutions, the business sector, the expert public and civil society organisations on the importance of gender equality as a democratic benefit and the importance of women's economic empowerment for social and economic development. It was pointed out that **equalising employment between women and men would bring economic benefits estimated at around EUR 2.5 billion, that is, the equivalent of eight years of gross domestic product growth**. At the conference, it was emphasised that expanding accessible and quality care services for children and older persons is a key precondition for greater participation of women in the labour market. It was pointed out that the national research showed that as many as **93% of citizens recognise that gender inequality exists, while 60% consider gender equality to be an important value in the process of European integration**. The conference ended with a joint call for the development of inclusive policies based on the real needs of women and vulnerable groups.



Final conference "You and I in One Voice: Gender Equality – Our Shared Mission", Skopje, 24 April



Final conference "You and I in One Voice: Gender Equality – Our Shared Mission", Skopje, 24 April

Towards building local partnerships, **four civil society organisations were sub-granted and implemented local field actions for increasing awareness and capacities for gender equality** in Skopje, Kičevo, Prilep and Tetovo. We continued to work with the Leadership Group for Gender Equality composed of media, the business sector, the academic community, political parties, civil society organisations and religious communities. At the [meeting of the Leadership Group for Gender Equality](#), the findings from the **representative research "Changing Perspectives: People's Attitudes and Perceptions about Gender Equality"**, on [Civil Society Organisations](#) and on [Politicians and Political Parties](#) and the [Analysis of the Representation of Women in Senior Management Positions](#) – Trends and Challenges in the Last Ten Years were presented.



Meeting of the Leadership Group for Gender Equality, Berovo, February

The protection of democratic values is possible only through support of the European integration path of the country, precisely for that reason this year as well a contribution was given to the preparation of the European Commission [Report](#) on the progress of the country in the European integration process. Moreover, participation was taken in the **Gender Equality Forum** in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the **Civil Society Forum** in Montenegro as part of the Berlin Process and the importance of civil society and gender equality in the European integration process in the country was highlighted. Participation was also taken in the **Western Balkans Civil Society Forum: Accelerating Socio-Economic Convergence with the EU for a Better Life**, organised by the European Economic and Social Committee, where a Final Declaration addressed to the national authorities and the European institutions was adopted. The [Declaration](#) also calls for greater and more effective implementation of the laws and strategies that will enable advancement of gender equality.

In partnership with the **Gender Equality Platform** and the **Network for Protection against Discrimination**, we were on the line of defence of gender equality in the laws on education (the Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education and the Law on Textbooks and Teaching Aids in Primary and Secondary Education). Although, after strong reactions, the parliamentary majority decided to delete gender equality and the grounds for protection against discrimination from the laws, still in the public it remained noted that only civil society organisations consistently and unequivocally stood behind gender equality.

HERA, in the efforts for cooperation and advancement of the capacities of the Constitutional Court for defence of human rights, together with the members of the Network for Protection against Discrimination, submitted three initiatives for challenging three laws – the Law on Religious Education, the Law on Primary Education and the Law on Textbooks and Teaching Aids in Primary and Secondary Education, which interfere with constitutional freedoms.



Berlin Process: Civil Society Forum,
Podgorica, Montenegro, 22–23 September



Berlin Process: Gender Equality Forum, Sarajevo, 12 September

We were among the four selected associate members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation globally, participating in the development of a transformative programme for feminist leadership. The programme aims to invest in inclusive and sustainable leadership skills to develop leaders within the Federation.

Co-Creation Lab, 2025, Bangkok, Thailand.



We were part of the donor annual meeting of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. At the meeting, together with partners and donors, it was concluded that in a time of profound global changes, marked by a rise in authoritarianism, intensified rhetoric against human rights, attacks on democracy, increased militarisation and a reduction in foreign aid, joint action, support and investment in organisations that defend human rights and democracy are of utmost importance.



Donor Annual Meeting of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, London, 2025.

HERA, together with the National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Coalition "Margins", SIGA, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, "Reactor" and the Centre for Equality and Justice, organised a strategic meeting on gender equality with donors and partners. Representatives of the international community in the country participated in the event, including the embassies of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Austria, as well as the United Nations. At the meeting, priority actions for gender equality were presented by civil society organisations and a discussion was opened on joint action and partnerships in the future.



Strategic meeting with partners and donors on gender equality, February 2025, Skopje.

DONORS: Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia, British Embassy Skopje, The German International Cooperation Society – GIZ, The Sigrid Rausing Trust

PARTNERS: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Public Administration and the General Secretariat of the Government and the General Secretariat of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Institute of Gender Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at UKIM, municipalities of Gostivar and Valandovo from North Macedonia, Kanjiža and Vršac from Serbia and Bijeljina and Višegrad from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia, Public Prosecutor's Office, Coalition "Margins", National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Reactor



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

Young people, women and marginalised people are aware of their rights, have access to safe services and enjoy the benefits of progressive SRHR policies

HERA's The "I Want To Know" Youth Centres at Vodno (since 2005) and in Šuto Orizari (2006) are the only ones in the country that provide free and confidential health and social services for young people and marginalised communities. Key populations affected by HIV face stigma and discrimination, and within public health facilities there is a lack of confidential services tailored to their needs. Since 2013, through the Mobile Gynaecological Outpatient Clinic, HERA has been providing gynaecological services to women from rural areas and other vulnerable groups with limited access to healthcare services. It is estimated that around 620 people in the country are living with HIV, but only 71% of them are diagnosed, which means that 3 out of 10 people do not know they have HIV. Stigma, disinformation and fear of discrimination still deter people from using HIV services. HERA offers free HIV testing through the mobile outpatient clinic (since 2007), stationary services (since 2005) and self-testing (since 2021) – web-based and through community contact persons in cooperation with partner organisations.

Perimenopause is a poorly recognised period in the reproductive life of women, with limited guidelines for diagnosis and treatment in primary and secondary healthcare. Women often move between different specialists for years without a coordinated approach, resulting in delayed diagnoses and reduced quality of life. The rate of use of modern contraceptive methods is estimated at around 21%, placing the country among those with the lowest coverage in Europe. Still, not a single modern contraceptive method is on the positive list, and limited access to contraception has a direct negative impact on reproductive health, gender equality and the economic security of women.

MODERN AND INTEGRATED HIV AND SRH SERVICES



Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

We provided gynaecological and dermatovenereological services, ultrasound examinations, PAP tests, diagnosis and treatment of sexually and blood-borne infections, modern contraception (oral pills, intrauterine devices and condoms) and distributed informational materials in the “I Want To Know” Youth Centres and the mobile gynaecological outpatient clinic. The centres offer safe and confidential services for people from **key populations affected by HIV, sex workers, LGBTI persons, young people, Roma women, victims of domestic violence, women from rural areas, victims of violence, women with disabilities and other marginalised groups**. **A total of 716 gynaecological and ultrasound examinations and 421 PAP tests were carried out in the two youth centres** among vulnerable and marginalised communities. **438 users were tested for sexually transmitted infections** (syphilis, trichomonas, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, hepatitis B and C) in the youth centres and the mobile clinic. 150 young people and vulnerable groups were reached through peer education in the youth centres on topics related to sexual and reproductive health, mental health and violence.

We marked the **spring** and **autumn** European HIV Testing Weeks by promoting free dermatovenereological examinations and testing for HIV and STIs (**gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia, hepatitis B and C**). We organised an HIV and STI testing action in the “I Want To Know” Youth Centre and implemented a campaign to raise public awareness of the importance of **timely HIV testing** and the use of **condoms** and **oral contraception**.



HIV Testing Services

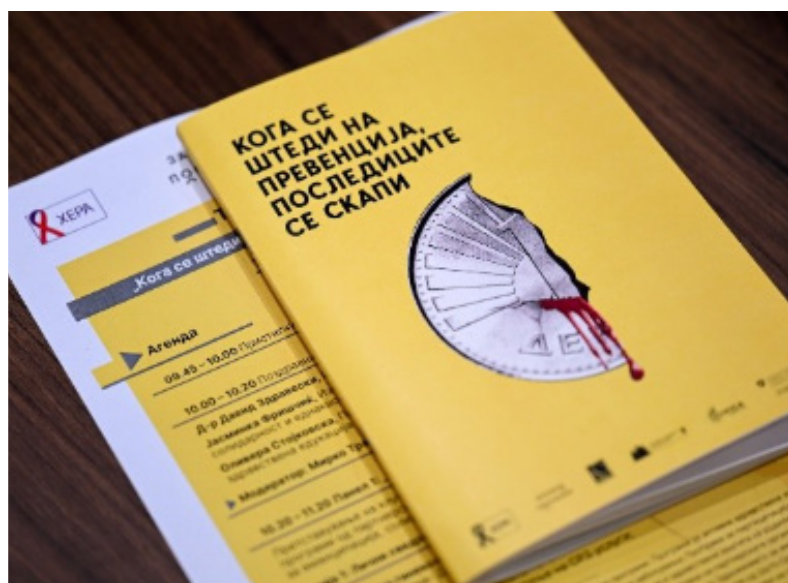
We continued to provide free and confidential HIV testing for young people and key populations affected by HIV through stationary and mobile services, web-based and community-based HIV self-testing (with support through telemedicine). In 2025, a total of **1,045 HIV tests** were conducted among key populations and other people at risk of HIV, of which 592 through HIV self-testing (web-based and community-based), **306 through stationary services** and 147 through the mobile HIV testing clinic. A total of 509 people living with HIV received psychosocial support and treatment at the counselling service of the partner clinic – the University Clinic for Infectious Diseases and Febrile Conditions.

SUCCESS STORIES ABOUT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOMS



When Prevention Is Underfunded, the Consequences Are Costly

Through the national campaign "When Prevention Is Underfunded, the Consequences Are Costly", we called on institutions and raised public awareness of the importance of health prevention. Key professional health associations, civil society organisations and communities took part in the campaign. The campaign delivered a clear message that prevention must be a strategic priority of the healthcare system, as investing in early prevention contributes to better health of citizens and more sustainable public policies. As part of the campaign, we organised a thematic forum "When Prevention Is Underfunded, the Consequences Are Costly", which brought together 75 participants from healthcare institutions, the expert public, civil society organisations, communities and the media. The event opened an important dialogue on a systemic approach in the development of health policies and the strengthening of intersectoral cooperation in advancing preventive programmes.



Thematic forum "When Prevention Is Underfunded, the Consequences Are Costly", 15 October



Thematic forum "When Prevention Is Underfunded, the Consequences Are Costly" – Panel 2: Institutional Response

At the forum, personal experiences were shared regarding barriers in access to a gynaecologist in rural areas, access of young people and Roma women to sexual and reproductive health services and HIV prevention, and the need for stronger institutional commitment to preventive programmes was highlighted, with a focus on the needs of women, girls and vulnerable groups. Through communication and information activities, the campaign highlighted the public health and economic aspects of prevention, emphasising that investing in timely prevention contributes to reducing treatment costs, improving health outcomes and better protection of the most vulnerable groups.



КОГА СЕ
ШТЕДИ НА
ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА,
ПОСЛЕДИЦИТЕ
СЕ СКАПИ.

Prof. Dr Katerina Stavić



КОГА СЕ
ШТЕДИ НА
ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА,
ПОСЛЕДИЦИТЕ
СЕ СКАПИ.

Dr Milena Stevanović



Prof. Dr Goran Dimitrov

**КОГА СЕ
ШТЕДИ НА
ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА,
ПОСЛЕДИЦИТЕ
СЕ СКАПИ**



**ПОТРЕБНИ СЕ
ПОГОЛЕМИ
ИНВЕСТИЦИИ ВО
ЗДРАВСТВЕНАТА
ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА**



Проектот „Унапредени здравствени права на децата, жените и ранливите групи“ е поддржан од Владата на Шведска преку Шведска мисија.

**ТРОШКИ ЗА
ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА**



**Здравствениот систем
не може да функционира
со ситни пари.**

**Потребни се поголеми инвестиции
во здравствената превенција!**

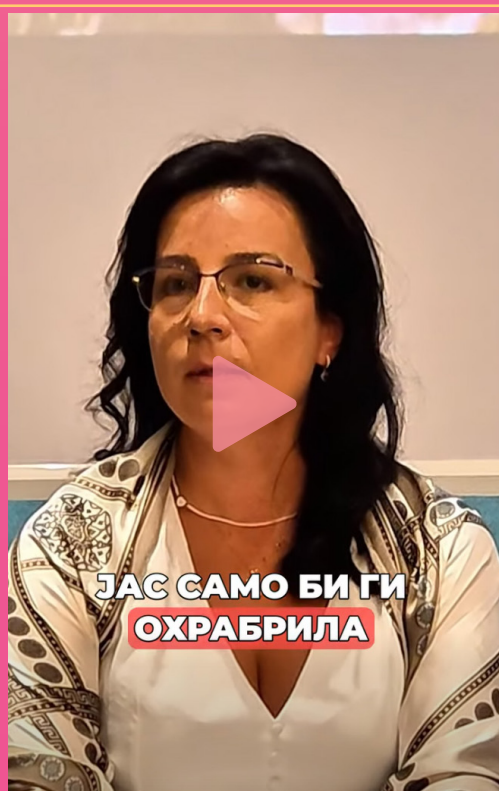


Проектот „Унапредени здравствени права на децата, жените и ранливите групи“ е поддржан од Владата на Шведска преку Шведска мисија.

Our Bodies, Our Rights – A Legacy of the Struggle that Must Endure

On key international days related to women's health and reproductive rights – **Contraception Day**, **Safe Abortion Day**, **Menopause Day** and the **Health Day** – we highlighted that:

- ▶ Contraception and safe abortion are an **essential part of the right to family planning**.
- ▶ Better access to **modern contraception and safe medical abortion prevents unintended and risky pregnancies**, reduces the number of unsafe abortions and enables women to plan their lives and future.
- ▶ It is necessary to increase budget financing for medical abortion and to enable this service **to be available in other towns across the country, in addition to Skopje**.
- ▶ It is important for **perimenopause to be systemically and institutionally recognised**, in order to enable women access to quality care, timely recognition of symptoms and appropriate medical information and services for coping and support.
- ▶ **Increasing investments in health prevention and quality healthcare** is key to improving the health of women, children and vulnerable groups



**ЈАС САМО БИ ГИ
ОХРАБРИЛА**

Dr Borislava Nastovska



**ПЕРИМЕНОПАУЗАТА
Е ЕДЕН ПЕРИОД КОЈ**

Prof. Dr Gligor Tofoski

ADVOCACY WITH COMMUNITIES AND TOWARDS INSTITUTIONS



Perimenopause – an Important Part of Comprehensive Healthcare



Establishment of the National Expert Working Group on Perimenopause

We established the first National Expert Working Group on perimenopause, composed of gynaecologists, general practitioners, an endocrinologist, a psychiatrist and an orthopaedist. Through a multidisciplinary process **in cooperation with MAGO, we prepared the first National Guideline on Perimenopause**, based on the latest scientific evidence and clinical practices. The Guideline provides clear guidance for **primary care gynaecologists and family doctors on the recognition, treatment and support of women in the period of perimenopause**. **The Guideline on Perimenopause was presented at the XXI Congress of the Macedonian Medical Association**, among 120 healthcare professionals and experts. At the event, it was emphasised that perimenopause is a natural life stage that every woman goes through, but which has so far been insufficiently recognised in the healthcare system. The promotion opened space for dialogue on advancing policies and healthcare services related to perimenopause, with the aim of ensuring that women receive timely, quality and comprehensive healthcare.



Promotion of the first National Guideline on Perimenopause, Congress of the Macedonian Medical Association, 13 September



Promotion of the first National Guideline on Perimenopause, Congress of the Macedonian Medical Association, 13 September

Contraception on the Positive List

We issued a **Report from an Adapted Health Technology Assessment: Use of Modern Methods for Family Planning, with a Focus on Oral Contraception**, which includes budget projections for the integration of modern contraception into the positive list of medicines at the Health Insurance Fund. **The Report provides a basis for making informed policies and sustainable financial solutions for improved access to contraception**, as part of healthcare for women. The analysis showed that providing partial coverage of the costs for oral contraception for all women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years), in the amount of the cheapest registered contraceptive, would result in a negative impact of MKD 25.6 million on the budget of the payer of healthcare services, namely the Health Insurance Fund. **It has been projected that over a period of three consecutive years, the Fund would invest MKD 42.5 million for the investment**, which would result in an **increase in the use of oral contraception by around 70% (from 5,300 to 8,500 users in 2028)**. This would enable **savings/avoided costs for the healthcare system of MKD 16.8 million**, which would arise from prevented medically induced abortions, high-risk pregnancies and consequent births, as well as newborns with low birth weight and complications arising from it.

National Conference on HIV

On 1 December – World AIDS Day, at the **National Conference on HIV**, where **77 participants** from institutions, civil society, international organisations, healthcare institutions and the Parliament were present, we delivered a clear message that ending the HIV epidemic is possible, with full involvement of civil society and sufficient financial investments in prevention and treatment. At the conference, it was highlighted that **civil society organisations detect new HIV cases 12 times more effectively than the healthcare system**. This fact shows how important the legal regulation of the involvement of civil society organisations in providing preventive healthcare services is, which will guarantee timely prevention for the most marginalised citizens.

At the event, **national experts and WHO experts** highlighted:

- ▶ that **timely testing represents the most important tool for achieving the goal – elimination of HIV by 2030**, since early detection means timely access to therapy and interruption of further transmission of the virus.
- ▶ that there is no excuse in 2025 for someone to become infected with HIV, and if this happens – not to be timely diagnosed and placed on therapy, **while the country has the potential for rapid control of the epidemic through strengthening existing and developing innovative approaches in prevention, which include civil society organisations**.

The event was supported by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health, the Head of the World Health Organisation Country Office and the Swiss Ambassador



Opening Remarks



Dr Akeem Ali, representative of the World Health Organisation



Opening Remarks



Christoph Sommer, Swiss Ambassador to North Macedonia



Opening Remarks



Jovica Andonovski, Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of North Macedonia



Opening Remarks



Olivera Stojkovska, Programme Manager at HERA



National Conference on HIV, 1 December 2025



Panel 1



Progress towards Ending the HIV Epidemic – Global and National Challenges and Solutions, Dr Milena Stevanović, National HIV Coordinator



National Conference on HIV, 1 December 2025 – Panel 2: HIV Prevention in the Field: Prevention, Diagnostics and Linkage to Care



Preventive Health Programmes under the Spotlight

We prepared monitoring analyses of four programmes – the Programme for Active Healthcare Protection of Mothers and Children, the Programme for Protection of the Population from HIV Infection, the Programme for Early Detection and Screening of Malignant Diseases, and the Programme for Co-payment in Healthcare Services – based on which we published the Report **“Preventive Health Programmes under the Spotlight – How to Achieve Better Results”**. As a result of the Report and the advocacy efforts, the public call for a two-year procurement of HIV therapy was published in a timely manner, ensuring longer-term treatment compared to previous provision, and a call was announced for the implementation of the Preventive HIV Programme in cooperation with civil society organisations. Together with partner organisations> “Stronger Together”, ESE and the Association for Women’s Rights from Šuto Orizari, **we provided technical support to the Ministry of Health in the preparation of the annual preventive programmes.**

The preparation of the Report and the advocacy were carried out in cooperation with communities through **3 forums on health rights with the Roma community, organised in Skopje, Štip and Kumanovo, with over 100 participants.** Moreover, we organised two advocacy events through creative activism – **“Scratch for Health”** and **“Citizens Choose: Health for All!”** – through which Roma women proposed solutions to the everyday challenges they face and highlighted the importance of equal access to quality healthcare.

As in the past 12 years, with the new composition of the Parliament **we re-established the All-Party Parliamentary Group on SRH and HIV**, comprising a total of 16 Members of Parliament from nine political parties. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) is a member of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, which includes parliamentary groups from across the European region. In 2025, members of the group actively participated in the meeting of the Council of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, held on 23 and 24 October in Paris, France. As part of supporting the country’s EU integration process, we continued to participate in the sectoral group on health, where we continuously provide proposals for improving health policies and emphasise the importance of the involvement of civil society in all EU integration processes. Within the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, we continued to represent organisations in the field of healthcare and to raise issues and propose solutions for health policies affecting the constituencies we represent.

DONORS: Ministry of Health, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation / Government of Switzerland through the Civica Mobilitas programme, The Sigrid Rausing Trust.

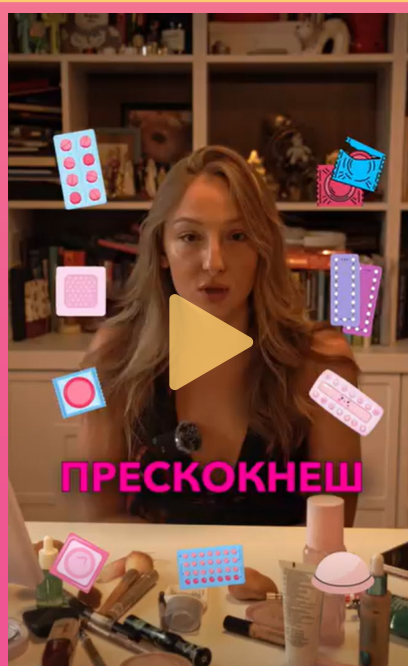
PARTNERS: Association for Support of People Living with HIV – “Stronger Together” Skopje, Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women – ESE, Association for Women’s Rights from Šuto Orizari, MAGO – Macedonian Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, Family Medicine Centre, Macedonian Medical Association, STAR STAR, HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje, “Opcija” Ohrid and “Help” Gostivar, PHI University Clinic for Infectious Diseases and Febrile Conditions Skopje, PHI University Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics Skopje.



Consultative workshop for the Preventive Active Healthcare Programme for Mothers and Children, 21 October



Timely HIV Testing



Use of Condoms



Use of Oral Contraception

Нешто те боцка?

Тестни се!

Прегледај се бесплатно, доверливо и безбедно.

**НЕДЕЛА НА ТЕСТИРАЊЕ
ЗА ХИВ И СПИ
27 - 30 мај**

Секој ден од 15 - 18 часот
**Младински центар „Сакам да
знам“ Водно 02/3176 - 950**

Резултатите од брзите тестови за ХИВ, сифилис и
гонореја се готови за најмногу 30 минути!

Нешто те боцка?

Тестни се!

Прегледај се бесплатно, доверливо и безбедно.

**НЕДЕЛА НА ТЕСТИРАЊЕ
ЗА ХИВ И СПИ
17 - 21 ноември**

Секој ден од 15 - 18 часот
**Младински центар „Сакам да
знам“ Водно 070 227 386**

Резултатите од брзите тестови за ХИВ, сифилис и
гонореја се готови за најмногу 30 минути!

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Promotion and defence of feminism as an accepted and practised social value in the protection against and prevention of violence



It is estimated that 30–40% of women have experienced some form of violence, indicating that the actual scope is significantly higher than the recorded one. Data from the State Audit Office show that in the period 2018–2023, a total of 6,242 criminal offences related to domestic violence were recorded, of which 61% relate to bodily injury and 35% to endangering security, indicating a high rate of violence. The limited availability of specialised services for protection against violence, particularly for women, children and young people at risk, indicates the need for their further expansion and strengthening. Women and children exposed to violence, boys and men in crisis, as well as young people at risk, require specialised services for appropriate and timely support. Peer violence leaves deep consequences on the mental health of young people. Increasingly, we are faced with cases of anxiety, depression and isolation among children and adolescents, caused by insults, exclusion or violence from peers – both at school and online. 53% of girls and 19% of boys aged 15 have a depressive mood, according to data from the HBSC study. Joint action by parents, schools and institutions is needed to create a safe and supportive environment where young people will feel accepted and receive timely psychosocial support.



POLICIES AND LAWS



We prepared an **Analysis for Assessing the Needs and Resources** of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and the Cybercrime Department within the Ministry of the Interior. In cooperation with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office, we established a working group for the development of multisectoral guidelines for public prosecutors for the protection of survivors and victims of sexual violence and held five consultative meetings with institutions. HERA was selected as a member organisation of the working group for the preparation of the **National Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2026–2033**. Moreover, HERA was **reappointed** as a member organisation in the **National Coordinating Body for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**.



Study visit to Vienna, Austria, 2–4 June 2025

QUALITY SERVICES



The First Family Centre

HERA's First Family Centre continued to be the **only licensed centre providing integrated services for women survivors of gender-based violence, children victims and perpetrators of violence**. We expanded counselling services for mental health among other vulnerable groups. A total of 221 beneficiaries were included in the programmes (77 women victims of violence, 80 perpetrators of violence, 35 children, 10 other members affected by violence and mental health issues). Moreover, the services of the PSC were used by 19 persons belonging to the LGBTI community and human rights defenders. Through the First Family Centre, we provided 1,993 counselling sessions for victims of domestic violence, children and vulnerable groups, as well as perpetrators of domestic violence.

Moreover, we implemented **24 workshops** for emotional and social development of children and young people at risk, as well as activities for life skills and health. We held **40 mentoring sessions** for professional staff working on supporting children. We provided **26 psychiatric field visits** to support children and young people at risk, in cooperation with the Psychiatric Clinic in Skopje.

MM Centre for Mental Health of Boys and Men

Support for boys and men in crisis and persons from marginalised communities continued in 2025. A total of **55 clients, including 46 boys and men and 9 young women**, used the services of the Centre. Through the MM Centre for Mental Health, we delivered 255 sessions for boys and men in crisis. Moreover, we conducted **workshops on mental health** and prevention of violence and addictions with **children, parents** and **non-teaching school professionals** from primary schools in the Municipality of Centar.

Counselling Service for Prevention of Drug Use

Through the licensed counselling service for drug prevention, we continued to provide services by trained psychiatrists to support children and parents at risk. A total of 176 clients, including 93 parents and 83 children and young people, received 389 services at the counselling service.

The First Crisis Intervention and Trauma Services In Kočani

Immediately after the tragedy in **Kočani**, in cooperation with the General Hospital in Kočani and the PHI Psychiatric Clinic in Skopje, HERA **established the first crisis intervention and support for coping with trauma**. A total of **300 counselling sessions were delivered to 101 persons** affected by trauma. Moreover, beyond working with the community, based on the situation on the ground it was identified that work with professionals was also needed. **A total of 33 participants** – healthcare workers, psychotherapists and activists from the youth centre “Gnezdo” and the hospital in Kočani – **completed training on trauma response and support**.



Workshop with parents from primary schools in the Municipality of Centar – Parenting Challenges in Contemporary Life, October 2025



Workshop – Prevention of Burnout Syndrome with teachers from primary schools in the Municipality of Centar, October 2025



Educational workshop with young people at the “I Want To Know” Youth Centre in Šuto Orizari



Training for social service providers from social work centres and civil society organisations, 5-6 November 2025, Strumica



Development of Social Services in Partner Local Organisations

HERA provided financial and programme support to local organisations **“Žena”** from Delčevo, **“Stanica Pet”** from Prilep and **“Vizija”** from Kavadarci in **developing and delivering social services for counselling on gender-based violence** for women and vulnerable groups at the local level. The organisations received **training for counselling** in cooperation with the **Institute for Social Activities and Coalition “Margins”**. In order to strengthen networking among local civil society organisations as service providers, we organised a training attended by **11 professionals from social work centres and 10 representatives from local civil society organisations from the three municipalities**. The aim of the training was to build knowledge and skills for providing specialised counselling services for violence, as well as cooperation and referral between organisations.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE



Campaign – Men's Mental Health in Focus of Shared Care

In 2025, HERA continued to promote the **importance of men's mental health and the need for timely psychosocial support**. The campaign was aimed at reducing stigma, encouraging boys and men to seek help and raising public awareness of emotional wellbeing as a key aspect of overall health, as well as promoting the services of the first MM Centre for Mental Health of Boys and Men in Crisis. The cooperation with the **Institute of Social Work and Social Policy** also continued, through exchange of experience with students of social work.



Visit of students from the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy to the MM Centre for Mental Health of Boys and Men

We implemented over 30 promotional and educational activities in the community. A total of 52 persons attended the **online conference** on mental health and work with boys and men in crisis, with **participation of international experts on mental health and work with boys and men**. We also organised an initiative meeting **"Transforming Gender Norms: Preventing Gender-based Violence through Engaging Young People in Albania and North Macedonia"**, aimed at transferring the model and experiences from Macedonia to Albania.



Campaign – Silence Is Not the Answer: Share and Seek Support for Peer Violence

As part of the cooperation with the **Municipality of Centar**, we implemented a campaign to **raise public awareness of mental health and prevention of peer and gender-based violence** among young people. The campaign informed students, parents and teachers about the free psychosocial services and counselling provided by HERA's counselling services. As part of the campaign, and on the occasion of HERA's 25th anniversary, **a mural was created at the primary school "Kočo Racin" by the artist Nenad Tonkin**, carrying a message of solidarity, encouragement and open dialogue on mental health and prevention of peer violence.



Vesna Matevska –
Programme Manager at
HERA



Ana Pop Rizova, school
psychologist and member of the
Governing Board of HERA



Gordana Janevska,
Principal of "Kočo Racin"
Primary School

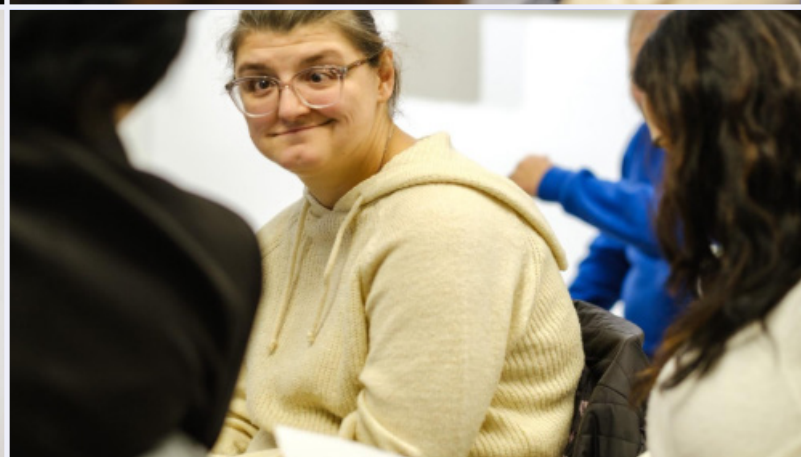


The Ombudsman and HERA in Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

With the aim of improving awareness and practical support for families with children with disabilities, HERA organised **three events during the year in cooperation with the Ombudsman in Kumanovo, Gostivar and Skopje**, focused on strengthening the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities. The activities focused on the **application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on encouraging citizens to actively use the existing human rights protection mechanisms**, including the Ombudsman as an independent institution for the protection of the rights of children and persons with disabilities, which acts upon complaints of human rights violations.

DONORS: Municipality of Centar, Association for Men and Gender Issues of Styria and Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria, Delegation of the European Union to North Macedonia / National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth, UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund, The Sigrid Rausing Trust

PARTNERS: PHI University Clinic for Psychiatry, General Hospital – Kočani, Institute for Social Activities, Probation Sector – Directorate for Execution of Sanctions, National Network against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Reactor, Ombudsman



Public event on the rights of persons with disabilities, 28 November, Skopje

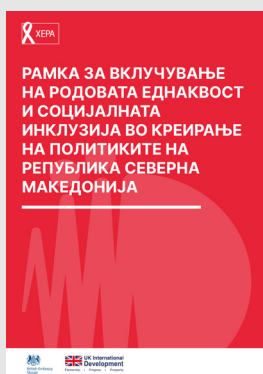


Public event on the rights of persons with disabilities, 24 October, Gostivar



Public event on the rights of persons with disabilities, 30 September, Kumanovo

PUBLICATIONS IN 2025



The publication is available in
Macedonian and **Albanian**.



The analysis is available in
Macedonian, **Albanian** and **English**.



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Macedonian, **Albanian** and **English**.



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The publication is available in
Macedonian.



The publication is available in
Macedonian.



The publication is available in
Serbian.



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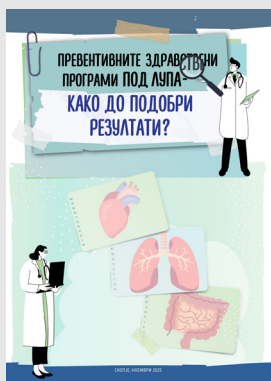
The publication is available in **Bosnian**.



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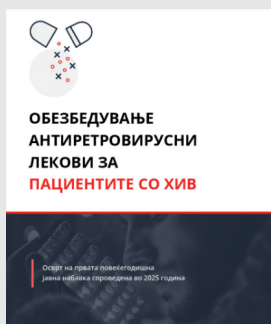
The publication is available in **Macedonian**.



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Macedonian.



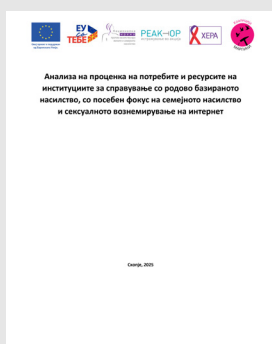
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The publication is available in **Macedonian**.



The publication is available in **English**.

BUDGET

Donor Name	Amount in MKD	Amount in USD	%
a) International Foundations and Non-Governmental Organisations	24.498.217,00	468.372,37	45,26 %
International Planned Parenthood Federation	13.257.028,00	253.456,23	24,49 %
European Commission – We Care	1.978.706,00	37.830,15	3,66 %
Metamorphosis	99.602,00	1.904,25	0,18 %
ALDA - Association Europeenne pour conseil de l'Europe	1480.392,00	28.303,07	2,73 %
Danish Family Planning Association	740.758,00	14.162,28	1,37 %
The Charities Aid Fondation CAF	3.516.770,00	67.235,83	6,50 %
RYCO	783.981,00	14.988,64	1,45 %
Nebula Fund	2.640.980,00	50.491,92	4,88 %
b) Bilateral / Foreign Governments (Embassies, Missions)	17.886.143,00	341.958,57	33,04 %
German Agency for International Cooperation	2.540.517,00	48.571,21	4,69 %
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	1.124.788,00	21.504,41	2,08 %
British Embassy	3.414.207,00	65.274,96	6,31 %
Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Austria	2.423.052,00	46.325,44	4,48 %
Sigrid Rausing Trust	7420.686,00	141.873,36	13,71 %
Koalicija "Margini" [Coalition Margins]	809.150,00	15.469,84	1,49 %
Western Balkans Fund	153.743,00	2.939,36	0,28 %

Donor Name	Amount in MKD	Amount in USD	%
c) Multilateral Agencies and Organisations	1.606.763,00	30.719,11	2,97 %
UNICEF	1.606.763,00	30.719,11	2,97 %
c) Local / National Foundations or Non-Governmental Organisations	5.720.000,00	109.358,57	10,57 %
Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation / Government of Switzerland through the Civica Mobilitas Programme	5.600.000,00	107.064,33	10,35 %
SOS Children's Villages	120.000,00	2.294,24	0,22 %
e) Governmental Institutions	3.488.531,00	66.695,94	6,44 %
Ministry of Health	2.488.531,00	47.577,31	4,60 %
Municipality of Centar	1.000.000,00	19.118,63	1,85 %
f) Private Sector	104.882,00	2.005,20	0,19 %
Sure Check	104.882,00	2.005,20	0,19 %
e) Membership Fee	14.917,00	285,19	0,03 %
l) Revenue from Social Services	809.150,00	15.469,84	1,49 %
TOTAL REVENUES	54,128,603.00	1,034,864.79	100.00%

