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ANNUAL REPORT

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES MACEDONIA 2018



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SECTION ONE
ANNUAL REPORT

1.1. SUMMARY OF “SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES MACEDONIA” WORK IN NORTH MACEDONIA

Political situation

The new SDSM-led government has the support of most ethnic Albanian parliamentarians, giving it a majority of 67 in the 120-member parliament. The name agreement negotiation process with Greece and unlocking EU and NATO accession has dominated the political scene but also economical. The two-year political crisis has negatively affected the economy. In the medium term, despite infrastructure investment, joblessness and poverty will remain major problems. The prolonged political crisis for more than 2 years has affected every cell of the society. The institutions were blocked and barely functional, which influenced the business community, NGOs sector and the citizens in this country.

2019 February- Name change to North Macedonia comes into force, opening the way for Greece to stop blocking the country's bid to join EU and Nato. Implementation of this significant change touches every part in the society and should take place in the next 5 years. Implementation will not be easy. Many Macedonians feel humiliated by the compromise with 60% failing to vote on the issue when put to referendum in September.

Presidential election are planned for June 2019 which again stopped a lot of local and national process that are important for economy and normal everyday life of citizens (public procurements, employment in public institutions is blocked, contracts and investments, etc) In June 2018, EU set June 2019 as a date for starting negotiations with Macedonia, conditioned with key reforms results.

For the future financial sustainability of our organization but also of the improvement of social climate in the country, the key preconditions are the adoption and implementation of the new Social law which has been stuck in the Parliament for 6 months now due to political challenges between the government coalitions on key social issues. The new Social law should resolve some social problems but it is still not clear if this law will allow social pluralization or will centralize government position in provision of social services.

1. Laeken Poverty indicators

The State Statistical Office, based on the Survey on Income and Living Conditions, which is carried out in accordance with European Union recommendations, calculated Laeken poverty indicators for 2018. The source for poverty calculations is incomes and the poverty threshold is defined at 60% of median equalized income. According to the data, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in the Republic of Macedonia was 22.2%.

Analyzed by household types, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in households of two adults with two dependent children in 2017 was 20.0%. According to the most frequent activity status, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for employed persons was 9.0%, while for pensioners it was 7.7%. The Gini coefficient (measure of income distribution inequality) was 32.5%.

2. Average monthly net wage paid per employee, December 2018

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, the index of the average monthly net wage paid per employee in December 2018, compared to December 2017, was 108.1. This increase is caused by the increase of the average monthly net wage paid per employee in the sectors: Information and communication (28.0%), Arts, entertainment and recreation (24.3%) and Mining and quarrying (20.9%). The average monthly net wage paid per employee in December 2018 was 25 784 denars or **419** euros.

3. Minimum wages / Minimum Wages in Macedonia increased to 12165 MKD/**197** eur/ in 2018 from 12008 MKD/**195** eur, in 2017

4. Unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in Macedonia decreased to 19.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 from 21.9 percent in the same period of the previous year. The number of unemployed persons fell by 22.7 thousand to 185.8 thousand and the number of employed rose by 26.6 thousand to 771.8 thousand. Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate increased to 56.9 percent in the three months to December from 56.8 percent and employment rate increased to 45.9 percent from 44.3 percent. In the third quarter of 2018, the jobless rate was higher at 20.8 percent.

5. Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment is 47.23 which is 15% more than Albania and 14% more than Serbia.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=MK>

Country	1991	2018
Macedonia, FYR	61.99	47.23

6. Gross Domestic Product, fourth quarter of 2018

According to the estimated data, the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the fourth quarter of 2018 was 3.7%.

In this quarter, the biggest increase was recorded in sections: F - Construction by 19.6%; R, S and T - Arts, entertainment and recreation; Other service activities; Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use by 14.0% and G, H and I - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; Transportation and storage; Accommodation and food service activities by 7.9%.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, Household final consumption, including Non-profit institutions serving households, increased by 6.3% in nominal terms, and its share in the GDP structure was 62.4%.

In the same period, Export of goods and services increased by 23.0% in nominal terms, while Import of goods and services increased by 21.5%.

7. Human Development Index according to UNDP data is 0.757, which is below Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

8. According to Child Rights Environment index for Central and Eastern Europe made on bases of following indicators:

- Non-discrimination
- Best interest of the child
- Respect for the views of the child/child participation
- Enabling legislation
- Best available budget
- Collection and analysis of disaggregated data
- State-civil society cooperation for child rights

Macedonia is ranked between 85-95 places (page 149) with score Child Environment score with **0.571** in the same group with Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco and Swaziland. Just for comparison with other Balkan countries Bosnia and Herzegovina is scored 0.643 (ranked 64-78), Serbia 0.643 (ranked 64-78) Croatia and Slovenia 0.714 (ranked 41-53).

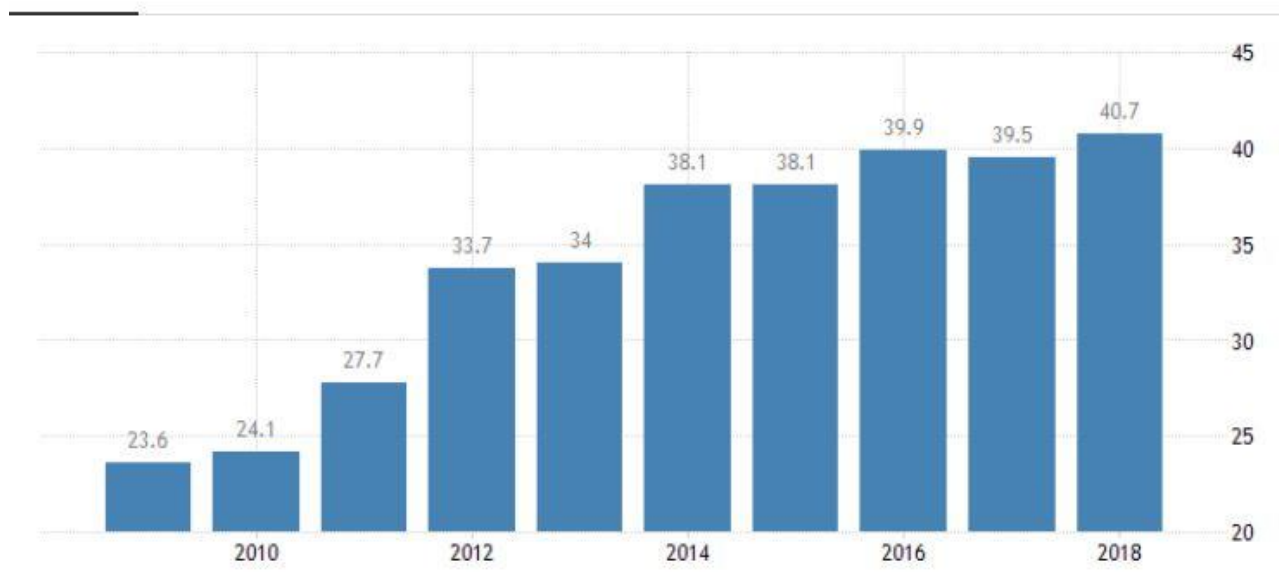
9. Violence against children

SOS CV Macedonia conducted a prefeasibility study (conducted in March-May 2017) in primary schools for the implementation of "Stop the violence against children" project. Although the primary target group of SOS CV Macedonia are children without parental care or at risk of losing it– the project is focused in the primary schools because there one can find all the children, including children with special needs and disabilities. The results in the study show that the most frequent form of violence among children is the verbal aggression towards employees (61.1%), fights among children in the school (66.7%), mockery (54.2%), spreading lies and rumors (44.4%). The most frequent forms of violent behavior include forced kissing (94.4%), forcing sexual intercourse (91.7%), forcing someone to sell and use drugs (97.2%).

10. Government dept. to GDP

Macedonia recorded a government debt equivalent to 40.70 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2018. Government Debt to GDP in Macedonia averaged 35.91 percent from 1999 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 57.20 percent in 2000 and a record low of 20.50 percent in 2008.

Historical Data API



11. Labor and unemployment

Macedonia Labour	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest
Unemployment Rate	19.40	20.80	38.70	19.40
Employed Persons	771806.00	759445.00	771806.00	498867.00
Unemployed Persons	185803.00	199325.00	330724.00	185803.00
Wages	37704.00	36017.00	37704.00	20029.00
Population	2.08	2.07	2.10	1.38
Part Time Employment	24.50	26.60	50.20	21.70
Wage Growth	4.90	3.30	19.60	-4.50
Job Vacancies	8459.00	7199.00	8459.00	4604.00
Labor Force Participation Rate	56.90	56.97	57.80	50.30
Long Term Unemployment Rate	15.90	15.50	30.90	15.30

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY

However, in spite of the government commitments in this area, external consultant Bep van Sloten compiled an independent report on assessment of the quality care system of Macedonia. She pointed out that the social protection system in the country lacks services at ground level to support families to stay together and to prevent the separation of children from their parents through placement in care.

According to the report, the services that support children on the street or street children and families in need (many from the Roma community) are private providers who lack funds to help all needy families. The day care centre for street children and children on the street, expressed its priority need for additional staff, for funds to buy materials for activities and for money to sustain the service. Due to the lack of sufficient staff, psychotherapists are carrying out activities better done by educators or caregivers; they are thus unable to provide sufficient therapy for the severely traumatised children in their centres.

CSOs and other religious organisations play an important role in prevention. However, the civil sector does not receive, or receives only insufficient government subsidies to provide for all families in need.

As for the children with disabilities in institutional care, where the number is high it is important to set up more specialised services to assist parents not to give up their disabled children.

There is a relatively small but substantial number of residents living in institutions as compared to the total number of social service users. This Strategy also takes into account and consideration the people in need of support and services who are not in contact with social services.

Group	Number of residents in institutional care	Number of registered users	Estimate of number of people with difficulties without contact with social services	Estimate of people in need
Children with disabilities	42	7346 ¹⁵	700	8000**
Children with social difficulties ¹⁶	200	8176	800	9000**
Children without parental care	146	1034		
Children with social and educational difficulties	54	5132		
Children in conflict with law		2010		
Adults with disabilities (under 65 years)	356 + 122 ¹⁷	19.202	6.400-9.600	21.000**
Adults with long-term mental health difficulties or distress	650 beds	2000-3000**	1.000	4000**
Old age	988	11.544	42.600	54.397*
Total	2358	57.202	700	96.397**

It is estimated that about 6.400 up to 9.600 persons with disability between 18 and 65 years of age are not in contact with the social services (i.e. between 1/3 and 1/2 of the number of registered persons). There are no available statistics regarding *long-term* mental health users. A rough estimate is that there about 3000 people with long-term mental health difficulties who are in touch with social services. At least a quarter more of population with mental health difficulties are not in contact with social services but are in need of help and support other than purely medical treatment.

The social protection of citizens is carried out in accordance with the principles of social justice, which is one of the constitutional values of the country. To that end, the state establishes the system of social protection and ensures its functioning, provides conditions and measures for conducting social protection activities and develops forms of self-help. Legally recognized social service providers in the county could be grouped into two categories: 1) state providers of social services 2) non-state providers of social services. When it comes to the state providers of social services,

The Centres for Social Work are key institutions in identification of and support of children at risk. CSW have a wide range of responsibilities and tasks and a very heavy workload, partly due to bureaucracy, but also related to the high number of cases and the many different tasks each staff member is required to perform. According to the law they are responsible to recruit, assess and train foster parents and, after approval, to place children in care and support and supervise the family. They also work with the biological families, arrange reintegration and take decisions as the legal guardian of the child. It is widely recognised that their workload is too high and it would be better to outsource some of the tasks via social contracting. Recruiting and training foster parents and multidisciplinary support to foster parents could be outsourced to an CSO with experience in family-based care. CSOs could even contribute to supporting the biological family and aiding reunification. The CSOs are recognized as social service providers, but their work is subject to fulfil certain criteria set out by the MoLSP. However, their scope of services they can provide is limited to "some" services to people in social risk and in need.

As for the protection and care of the children in the target groups (children without parental care and children in risk of losing parental care), in spite of the government commitments in this area, an independent report on assessment of the quality care system of Macedonia, compiled by Bep van Sloten, has pointed out that the social protection system in the country lacks services at ground-level to support families to stay together and to prevent the separation of children from their parents through placement in care. According to the same report, the services which support children on the street or street children and families in need (many from the Roma community) are private providers who lack funds to help all needy families. The day care centre for street children and children on the street, expressed its priority need for additional staff, for funds to buy materials for activities and for money to sustain the service.

Analysis of the relevant regional and national strategies and policy documents reveals that the national "soft law" does not provide one comprehensive national strategy to ensure the respect and practice of the rights of the child as set in the UN Convention related to the social system, services delivery, De-I, child care/protection, children and young people, family support, demographic development. Furthermore, in the area of health care, with exception of Roma children, there are no strategic documents that specifically regulate the health rights of children and youth at risk. As a conclusion, the large number of legal acts, especially soft law that intertwines with regulations in relation to the same category of persons, makes phenomenon over regulated. This complicates the implementation, while at the same time the lack of specific standardized operating procedures interrupt parts of statutory rights to be realized in practice.

There is an evident lack of adequate services for children in terms of: availability and accessibility; coverage of all categories of children in risk; standardized quality of care; as well as integrated services. The extent and quality of available services depends to a large extent on the geographical location. Rural families face additional costs for accessing social services offered in urban areas. The lack of access to information is also an obstacle to fair access to basic social services. For adequate development and growth of children, it is necessary to ensure a fair distribution of services and goods, which will reduce the gap among the children from rich and from poor families, among children living in urban and rural areas environments, among children of different ethnic background or different abilities, as well as among girls and boys.

In order to prevent institutionalisation and stay in the home environment, social services should ensure the availability in the place of user's residence. Some of the identified issues in the area of delivery of social services for children are related to the low quality of services, especially when state-run, inadequate coverage in response to the needs of different socially vulnerable groups as well as financial sustainability issues generated by frequent project funding and weak state support to the non-governmental sector active in the domain of social services. One of the most needed service is provision of service for children who are abusing psychotropic substances. In addition, considering the ongoing process of deinstitutionalization service for training and permanent support of caregiver in foster families is needed. Additional services needed are: halfway house, group home, therapy group home, centres for family preservation, family counselling centres, crisis centres, day care centres, centre for resocialization, SOS help line, educational centres, centre for legal aid and advocacy, etc.

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the need to significantly strengthen and improve the monitoring mechanisms and quality assessment of services and care that users receive in the institutions and in other forms, especially in case of providing care for persons with disability. In the process of de-institutionalization it is necessary to work on additional and continuous strengthening of the capacities as well as on professionals working in the accommodation institutions.

The role of CSO sector is on low level. Besides the available legal provisions the state fails to recognize the significant role that the CSOs may play in child protection. Most of the organizations provide their sustainability through grants and financial aid from foreign donors. Currently, the Republic of Macedonia is drafting the model of social contracting that will enable decentralization and pluralization of social service delivery on regular bases.

The social service delivery organizations are however not organized in a network and though they cooperate and coordinate actions, they are not advocating jointly. One prominent example is in the area of social contracting where three organizations are doing important complementary work which if united can have a greater effect than pursued individually. Namely, the advocacy for social contracting in social policy area is instigated by the SOS Children's Village Macedonia, in health policy area social contract is instigated by HERA; whereas in parallel the Centre for research and policy making is advocating for standardization of governance practices in particular for service delivery organizations which has been identified as an important pre-condition for social contracting to happen. In this regard it is recommended that the organizations working on social contracting initiate an advocacy coalition and advocate together with other potential beneficiaries of the introduction of social contracting (i.e. Roma organizations, youth organizations, women's organizations and disability organizations).

OVERVIEW OF DEINSTITUTIONALISATION PROCESSES IN MACEDONIA

The process of de-institutionalization is one of the Government's key priorities for which a National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization in the System of Social Protection in the Republic of Macedonia (2008-2018) was adopted. The Strategy goals are focused on the following target groups: children without parental care, children with upbringing and social problems and children with behavioral problems, children with impairments in intellectual or physical development up to 26 years old and persons with impairment in intellectual or physical development older than 26 years. Also the process of deinstitutionalization is elaborated in the Program for Reforms in the Employment and Social Policy 2020 adopted in August, 2017. This Program confirms the priority of the process of deinstitutionalization, with the focus on persons with disabilities. The Program emphasizes continuation of the process of deinstitutionalization of the institutions for protection of children without parents and parental care, for children with disabilities and for children with upbringing and social problems through transformation of the institutions, in direction of realization of forms close to family living and programs for supporting children for acquiring knowledge and skills for personal care and independent living; and strengthening of the foster families through continuous support to foster parents, the development of specialized, temporary and emergency foster families, and providing support in the care for fostered persons and a greater awareness of the general public in the community. One of the priority directions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is to expand the network of day care centers in municipalities where such forms of non-institutional care for children with special needs are still not available.

Macedonia has a vision to transform the alternative care system and to that end the country has adopted strategic plan to transform the support of vulnerable groups away from institutionalising children towards family-based alternative care. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 20 prescribes that alternative care should be provided when a child is "temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment". In Macedonia from the total number of children without parents and parental care 668 or (50.72%) are placed in informal alternative care with close relatives. One of the most striking findings, when it comes to alternative care, is that in the country there is only one specialized foster family for children with special needs. However, the number of children with special needs placed in foster families is 112. This means that large number of children are placed in foster families that are not specialized to provide adequate care.

There has been an important experience of deinstitutionalisation over the last twenty years. The results included resettlement of over hundred residents resettled and the creation of a number of new day centres, group homes and of a network of foster carers. Yet the process was of uneven development. The resettlement from the institutions stopped and started a few times and has considerably slowed over the past few years. The goals set ten years ago were not accomplished in terms of numbers of resettled residents, furthermore none of the institutions were transformed completely nor were personalised services or the response by the community adequately developed.

It is very important to proceed with determination and expedience in the resettlement and creation of new, culturally adequate services since the need for such support is growing – not only due to an ageing population, but also as a consequence of atomisation or individualisation in society with reduced patterns of traditional family and community level solidarity.

The civil sector has been, in many ways, the carrier and main force of change. Still, CSOs role largely depends on support from international agencies, as well as government decisions. On the other side there is, among the actors and stakeholders, a lot of optimism, enthusiasm and good will to make things happen for deinstitutionalisation.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES IN De-I

There are two possible conceptual models of transition from institutional to community care – conversion – when existing institutions are converted into community services and substitution – when institutions are closed (liquidated) and substituted by new services by other providers in the community. In both models institutions are transformed into the community services and institutional spaces are not used for residential care anymore. For Macedonia, it is appropriate to use a mixed model: in regions where institutions already exist, new services would be established by conversion of institutions into new service provider. Where institutions do not exist, or where they are too small, new community services would be created and residents originating from the region would be resettled back into the community by local providers.

In the deinstitutionalisation process, all the residents would move to the community. The majority will live independently, with support by and from the staff and professionals from the transformed institution as well as with support from other social service providers. Some residents would move to their original home environments outside the region covered by the institution.

The programme of transition to the community will take into account the virtues of the present system, the experience of introducing innovations and resettlement in recent years, and will upgrade those good practices with the necessary changes.

The main risks of the process of deinstitutionalisations are related to decline or loss of political will for deinstitutionalisation, inconsistency in its implementation, resistance from employees in institutions or the community environment. Solutions that reduce those risks are: consistent and good management and an effective on-going monitoring process, a broad coalition of actors for change, dialogue with the community and all stakeholders and support for the change. Implementation of change requires an intensive cooperation and mobilisation of actors at all levels. At the level of the user and the community, it is necessary to activate the relevant stakeholders, to set up local initiatives and plans for new services and community projects. Existing services and service providers must have a stronger contact and relationship with the community, to be present there at local level and in constant dialogue with the community members.

At local and regional levels, centres for social work, existing institutions and day centres (which need to become more community oriented) and, of course, CSOs all have a pivotal role in the deinstitutionalisation process. These stakeholders should be oriented towards the community and will have to change their ways of working in order to respond to the needs of users effectively and efficiently.

SOS ROLE IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

SOS CV Macedonia has been recognised by the state as a serious partner in planning social reform in the care for children who have lost parental care. SOS CV Macedonia was invited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to participate in training and establishment of Case Management in the PI Centres for social work and the Employment Centres all over Macedonia.

For this purpose, Mario Janchev NPDD and Jagoda Naskovska the social worker from the CV program for supporting foster families and child development were directly involved as trainers. At the national level, 32 trainers trained more than 850 professionals in the mentioned public institutions. These trainers will be a support in the future to implement Case Management in public institutions.

In addition to this major and significant reform, SOS CV Macedonia, in partnership with UNICEF, was engaged to participate in the awareness raising campaign for increasing the number of foster families and promotion of foster care in the Republic of Macedonia.

In February, the process of elaboration of a methodology for defining prices for social services in the alternative models of care began. In this process, SOS CV Macedonia took part and gave its contribution. This is especially important because it is the basis for defining the subsidy we require from the state to be provided for youth care programs in SOS CV Macedonia.

We participated with a representative in the workshop organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the De-I project in the Republic of Macedonia to develop a strategy for De-I. At this meeting, we tried to ensure that all proposals from our side are part of the strategy and thus influenced the quality of the strategy. Based on the given proposals, the De-I project team made changes and alignments. At this meeting were representatives of various Ministries of the Republic of Macedonia, public institutions, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and NGOs.

As members of the working group for elaboration of a strategy for deinstitutionalization in the Republic of Macedonia and members of the board of this project funded by the European Union and members of the De-I working group of social institution "25th May" and the "Ranka Milanovic Institute", we actively contributed to creating better social protection in R. Macedonia. In the De-I working group of the institution "25th May" and the "Ranka Milanovic Institute", we contributed with sharing of tools for assessment of children in the process of De-I. We participated and seriously contributed to the development of a program of work for a small group home for children with educational and social difficulties and we contributed to the creation of an employee training program that will work in these small group homes. PRIDE became part of this training program for foster and professional staff in these small group homes.

In this process, Minister of Labor and Social Policy in cooperation with UNICEF organized a multi-day workshop, which was attended by key stakeholders in the field of social protection, children's rights and representatives from the international community. Our organization also took an active part in this workshop, where the priorities for rapid transformation of some of the institutions for alternative care for children in the Republic Macedonia were developed.

This year, the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia announced a call for proposing representatives from the civil sector to the national council for cooperation with and development of civil society organizations. Mario Janchev, Director of Program Development, was appointed as our official representative. This body has already held its constituent session and is in the process of adopting a rulebook. It is important that this body can be a good basis for promoting our "social contract" initiative, which has been submitted to the MoLSP and is in the priorities for implementation in the coming period.

1.2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2018

SI 1	Innovate alternative child care
SI 2	Strengthen families
SI 3	Empower young people
SI 4	Advocate for children
SI 5	Create a movement
SI 6	Simplify SOS
SI 7	Invest for funding growth



Link to strategic initiative	Objective number	2018 objective	Description of 2018 objective
SI 1	1	Increase the number of children in foster families by strengthening the quality of care in Skopje	Reorganizing the Location team for adequate support of the foster families on location Skopje; Alignment of the foster care concept with the legal framework; Recognition of the PRIDE methodology in the legal framework; Introducing quality care standards within the alternative care system; Strengthening capacities of foster parents following PRIDE methodology (pre and in service) in Skopje; Establishing of the foster parents network; improve of energy efficiency of SOS premises; Alignment of service portfolio with legal framework; Signed contract with MLSP for services that PI SOS CV Skopje provides; Developing concept for Therapeutic Centre; Developing a methodology care givers for work with children with disability;
SI 2	2	Increase the number of self-reliant families of origin in Skopje	Enlarge partnerships with local community authorities and associates for comprehensive child and family support; Strengthening the employability of youngsters and adults; Sharpening criteria for entering and exiting the program; Developing and introducing parenthood methodology on program location; Strengthening the HR capacities of the programs
SI 3	3	Strengthen young people development to reach self-reliance	Implementing methodology for mentoring young people leaving alternative care; Strengthening the employability of youngsters; Strengthening the work with youths affected by trauma and behavioral problems; Enlarging and maintaining partnership in the field of employability of youths; Strengthening the HR capacities of the programs;
SI 7	4	Increased % of self sufficiency	Implement strategy for maximizing government contributions Strengthening the cooperation between PD, FDC, FM, CVPD and apply all procedures; Strengthening the HR capacities for fund development; Establish Fund Development Department and pilot individual giving

SI 6	5	Strengthen the organizational systems and resources for ensuring MA's programme sustainability	Strengthening leadership cross-competencies; Developing and implementation national standards for HR budget; Strengthening the competencies of care givers and supporting staff in specialized care; Develop and implement retention and retrenchment policies; Strengthen HR capacities of MA; Implementing the RBM system in the organization; Developing integrity and compliance policy; Strengthen performance management.
SI 6	6	Optimize ICT Infrastructure and empower via ICT4D	Upgrade existing ICT Infrastructure in order to be in line with current regional standards, gain competitive advantage and streamline day-to-day operational activities. In 2019 we would like to apply for implementing ICT4D project – Digital village which, based on pilot results, should increase computer literacy amongst core care co-workers and provide additional value to youth and children. In 2020 we would like to apply for implementing ICT4D project – Youth links which already proved great results in other countries and will increase job market penetration for youngsters and young adults

During 2018, SOS Children's Villages Macedonia was implementing and supporting the following programs:

Family based care program:

- ✓ SOS Children's Village Skopje, supporting 15 SOS Foster families taking care of 62 children

Youth Care Program

- ✓ Organised living with support – 2 units, Radishani, taking care of 16 youngsters
- ✓ Organised living with support -2 units, Bardovci, taking care of 17 youngsters
- ✓ Semi-Independent Living Programme – after care – supporting 35 young adults

Family strengthening Program

- ✓ Counselling Centres for parents and children at social risks – Gazi Baba and Shuto Orizari supported 113 children, 69 adults or 39 families

Other Public funded Projects

- ✓ **"Better Care for children"– partnership with UNICEF and Ministry of labour**
- ✓ **Social inclusion and economic empowerment of youngsters and young parents at risk** with income generating measures; (309 young and young adults)

In 2017, SOS CV Macedonia was positioned as a pilot country for the implementation of the **results-based management system (RBM)**. Prior to the appointment, a process of analysis and assessment of the readiness and possibilities for implementation of such a system was followed. At the end of 2017, an initial workshop was organized from which a multi-annual implementation plan was prepared.

In 2018, this plan was verified and approved by the international organization, which officially started the piloting process. In the first quarter a national implementation team was established composed of: Juliana Gapo, Mario Janchev, Aleksandra Ivanovski, Snezana Serafimovska and Zoran Bogdanovski. By the end of this year, it is a priority to elaborate the outcome frameworks for all program units related to alternative care, awareness-raising and understanding of results-based management (RBM), training key positions for RBM and advancing practices for monitoring results. Information workshops were conducted with all employees in the organization in order to raise awareness and understanding of RBM.

After the workshops, preparation of results framework has started, which defined the framework of objectives and results for the foster care program and the youth care program. A comprehensive result framework for family foster care was developed and presented to the location management team, and also shared with regional program development advisors. The received impute, that was very useful, is to be incorporated and minimum requirements for RBM for foster family and youth care program will be finalised in the first quarter of the next year. The development of adequate M&E tools will also contribute towards providing effective and simplified reports and will provide relevant measures on the effects of the programs.

The result framework is perceived as very useful tool in providing objective measures of the quality of the alternative care. However, it is necessary to work on building common understanding about the need and the benefits of its implementation in order to achieve acceptance by all as an organisational *modus operandi*.

In accordance with the process of promotion of the **program database** and alignment with the new program structure, participation in an international workshop was organized in Skopje. At this meeting, with the support of the international advisers, we were guided in the process of restructuring the program units into the electronic database and defining the new program structure.

In 2018, SOS Children`s Village continued providing **emergency admission** of children in one emergency foster family on CV location Skopje, addressing the needs of the community and the wider region, being the first and only such service. In the alternative care system, need for even more emergency admissions exists.

A **foster family** contracted by SOS Children`s Village, living in apartment outside of the village in the **local community** - property of SOS, was also supported in 2018. **Additional foster family** in the Community without contract is supported as piloting service. In the beginning of 2018 the foster family was referred to SOS Children's Village, by the Center for Social Work with request for expert support. The family was supported by the team and caseworker was appointed to lead the care plan of the children. The cooperation was successful and will continue in the next year.

In addition, the preparation of **methodology for supporting the independence of young people** and **methodology for psycho-pedagogical work with young people** has also started. The development of these methodologies has been initiated after several years of monitoring the work of the Youth Program and the effects of the current approach to youth care.

In 2018 several activities were undertaken **for strengthening the approach in the youth care**.

External consultants in close cooperation with SOS CV Macedonia staff were working on development **methodology for supporting the independence of young people** – “Manual for Mentoring Young People Leaving Care”, “Guide for Young People Leaving Care”, as well as concept for “Transition Plan For Preparation For Leaving Care” were developed. In addition, in order to stimulate the youth participation in the process of planning individual developmental goals, a “Workbook for the Youth - My Plan” was developed. Participation of the youth was obtained through the whole process and completed with two youths illustrating the *Guide* and the *Workbook*.

Another methodology – **methodology for psycho-pedagogical work with young people** was developed in close cooperation with external consultants. The methodology is based on the attachment theory and on the theories of identity formation and social development with special emphasis on the changes and opportunities in the adolescence.

The methodology offers unique model derived from the theory and combined with practical experiences of structuring the everyday communication of the care co-workers with the young people. The approach defines basic guidelines on how to apply the two essential types of interventions in the process of providing care – simulative interventions (support and granting autonomy) and structuring interventions (control) in order to help young people navigate through their development towards self-independence.

In order to meet the needs of caregivers and youth care co-workers in more effective coping of aggressive behaviour of children and youth, we decided to develop a brochure for caregivers and co-workers to secure appropriate response in such situations with which will ensure safety for children and adults who care about them. To this aim, an experienced mental hygiene specialist was involved to prepare “Guide for Psycho-Pedagogical Support for Children and Youths with Difficult Behaviour”. The *Guide* consists of theoretical part and practical guidelines on how to support youth with difficult behaviour caused by certain mental health conditions embedded in the early attachment challenges and trauma exposure, and the expert and will train the staff in 2019 to practice it.

Prior to the development of the methodologies, small scope qualitative baseline research and needs assessment was carried out through focus groups and interviews. Participative approach of the care co-workers and youth in the development of the methodologies was further secured by incorporating their comments and recommendations in the pre-final documents developed by the experts.

After several months of preparation and negotiations with the copy rights owner of the Strengthening Families Program (SFP), the introduction of the new **methodology for work with biological families** started. SFP is evidence-based family skills training program aiming to improve parenting skills and family relationships, reduce problem behaviours, delinquency and alcohol and drug abuse in children and to improve social competencies and school performance. The training involved 13 professionals from the national office, the social prevention program and the program for supporting foster families and child development. All obtained a certificate for trainers. This will allow them to use the methodology in their work with children and their families. By introducing this methodology, the organization will strengthen and systematize the approach in dealing with families at risk and will increase the effects on the work. The SFP is planed to be implemented in 2019.

Another activity for strengthening the youth started in 2018 in the field of **youth participation**. "Youth participation" training at program and advocacy level (for staff and young people) was organised in Struga and one advocacy activity was initiated afterward.

Significant cooperation between the programs/projects in 2018 was recorded among the project - Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment of Youth and Young Parents at Social Risk via Income Generating Measures in Gazi Baba – Skopje with the Family Strengthening Program, Foster Care Program and Youth Program.

The cooperation was trough provision services for professional orientation, career counselling and strengthening the employability skills of the youth leaving care and unemployed beneficiaries form FSP Shuto Orizari and Gazi Baba. This cooperation, although significantly contributed towards economic empowerment - especially through the process of coordinated cooperation of the career councillors from the Project and family advisors from FSP, requires further adjustments to the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries

In order to ensure the quality of work and monitor the key indicators of the programs, the Program Development Department on a quarterly level assessed the situation with the quality of data entered in the program database. The information were sent to the managers of the program units and feedback was requested but also support offered.

According to the action plan for promotion of the Child Protection Policy, the program development department delivered to all managers content from the Policy for protection of children and the measures for the safety of the children. This should ensure that this content is included in the agreements that we conclude with the relevant partners and it will raise the awareness and responsibility of these people during their cooperation with our organization.

In close cooperation with the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), SOS Children's Village Macedonia has put strong emphasis both on promoting the PRIDE model of practice in the social protection system in Macedonia and on building the capacities of the institutions. SOS offered content and expertise to cover the existing gap in the training and sub legislation concerning the quality of the care in the foster families in Republic of North Macedonia.

On the end of the year, the workshop for internal control was conducted. The workshop was planed under the AF6.6 Programme management (new PDB and RBM).The aim of the workshop was to provide SOS CVP Skopje management and programme co-workers with relevant knowledge and skills to establish an internal control system. Internal control is defined as systematic measures to ensure that the organization's activities are planned, organized, executed and maintained in accordance with the requirements established under the Child Welfare laws and regulations.

The workshop was based on internal control guidelines developed by external consultants for SOS IOR EUCB and was conducted by Zoran Relic – CVPD Ladimirevci, Croatia and Maria Dantcheva – HoP in IOR EUCB, Programme department.

The participants of the workshop were employees form national office like ND, NPDD, NPDA and from the location there was a participation from AC units, FS units and CVPD.

The needs listed for further consideration and development were Presentation of the Strategic Initiatives, the need for "**peer support**", the **SOS Care Promise** и **Family first document** are not presented, there is no optimization of the reporting system.

Also in the beginning of the 2018 new PDA was selected and joined the organisation several months after the previous one resigned. On-boarding plan was developed and implemented accordingly for all of the new staff.

Invest for Funding growth

During 2018, we collected local income from several main sources: government subsidies, corporate financial donations and donations in kind, fundraising campaigns, corporate direct mailing campaigns, merchandising such as Christmas card campaign and some indirect cost from Public funding Projects. The local income flow during the year was according to what was planned and due to increased dynamic in the last quarter, set targets were overreached both in Corporate and Public funds.

- **Gross fundraising income** that includes Fundraising cash and income from Public Funding was targeted at 109.414 **EUR** in Annual Plan, and we managed to achieve **147.490 EUR**, due to overreaching both the target for Fundraising cash. In total, our Gross fundraising income reached **134%** in comparison to the target.
- The target for Fundraising cash was set at **89.414 EUR**, and we had a 115% of realization with collected **102.181 EUR** and we had a 43% increase in comparison with the income from 2017.
- Our Donations in kind target for 2018 was **84.446 EUR** and we have managed to overreach the target by **11%** and collect **93.729 EUR** from companies, individuals and public institutions, which is **37%** increase in comparison with the income from 2017.
- **Public funding targets were budgeted** of amount of **20.000 EUR** according to very certain projects but due to additional contracts signed, our collected amount by the end of the year 2018 was **45.610 EUR** or **229%** in comparison to the target.
- The target for **Government subsidies** was **53.301 EUR** and we reached only **5.898 EUR** or **29.49%** as we did not succeed with several applications to get positive results. Under Government subsidies, we did not calculate family budgets for foster families and the SIL program that are paid directly to families and to youth. The subsidies for Youth programs are paid directly to SOS under the alternative form "Organized living with support" and only this amounts are calculated.

In total, the Local income for 2018 reached 294.787 EUR.

In 2018, we made significant progress in conducting fundraising activities, we finished the year with positive results overreaching all set targets, and we believe that we have managed to work on preparation of solid ground for expanding corporate and individual fundraising potential through more planned and strategic communication and through improved organizing of the FR activities.

In accordance with the annual plan of the organization, in 2019 a Fund development and communications department was established. During the second quarter, a recruitment and employment process was carried out for a new member of the Department, in order to strengthen the capacities for provision of funds. The department is now consisted of Head of FDC, FDC expert, Individual fundraiser and IDS coordinator.

As part of the Annual plan, in the first quarter we started with procurement of software and database for Individual and Corporate giving "Salesforce". We conducted the preparatory phase during 2018, whilst the actual implementation was scheduled for the first half of 2019.

During the second quarter, with help from an agency we started with development of a Digital strategy aimed for improvement of the brand visibility of the organization and its activities in the Social media. Thus, improved FB and Instagram profiles were developed. Additionally, a new WEB site of the organization was developed and is fully functional since the third quarter.

Additionally, during the third quarter we hired an external consultant to help us develop a Communication Strategy for the period 2019-2021. The Draft of the Strategy was prepared and presented during December and during January 2019 it is expected to have final version together with an operational plan for 2019.

Corporate Fundraising

During this year, we continued to strengthen the communication with corporate partners securing funds through one on one interaction; we piloted direct mailing campaign, started the first more significant CRM campaign and introduced new products in our Christmas campaign. We signed a contract for CRM campaign

with the biggest insurance company in MK, Makedonija Osiguruvanje. For each Household insurance policy sold 50 mkd (close to 1 eu) is donated for renovation of one family home in the village. The campaign is set to finish in May this year, and we expect a prolongation of the partnership agreement with new activities and cash donation.

We piloted the first corporate direct mailing campaign in August as "Back to school" campaign with great success, and we repeated it for NY as well under the "Replace the Irreplaceable campaign". We had more than 140 companies who donated and average amount of 120 euros, and a number of companies that donated in both campaigns.

Second year in a row we organized the campaign "Places with heart" with restaurants and this year 50 places with an average donation of 150 euros, joined the campaign. We plan to strengthen and grow this campaign with several different activities throughout the year.

Despite the fact that e-cards are replacing more and more printed cards, this year we decided to engage two artists who designed five unique printed Christmas cards for our Christmas campaign. In addition to the personalised Christmas cards, we have also launched NY calendar with the possibility to for barning according to companies preferences.

Apart from the above-mentioned traditional Christmas campaign products, we have launched for the first time our unique and brand new product, the personalised "Star Planner "containing interactive pages, motivational messages, personalised space for creative ideas, colouring sheets, origami, stickers and much more. We are proud that our NY products were not only unique in their design, layout and content, but they are also printed on recycled paper showing our care for the environment.

We also overreached the target for Donations in kind with a support of companies and individuals. DIK were mainly in different services > maintenance, home appliances, and activities for children, summer holidays and excursions. We have set a stabile network of partners who continuously support us with donations in kind.

Individual Fundraising

2018 was marked in the spirit of preparations and planning for the introduction of individual giving in the country and raising the awareness among the public about it.

Since market research is always, the basis for promoting new concepts, the Individual Giving Survey on the topic "Donating in the country and willingness to help" was conducted in September 2018. It included more than 1500 direct respondents with different demographic characteristics, where the use of various tools (telephone poll, on-line poll, false rain and focus groups) enabled the coverage of "Macedonia in a Nutshell". The main goal was to create a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the extent to which Macedonians as a nation are really prepared and willing to donate or not willing to donate and how much are they willing to extend a helping hand, generally, in certain situations, to individuals who need help. The results obtained from the survey are of great benefit, in terms of the planning of future promotional and donor activities.

"Replace the Irreplaceable" was the first pilot Campaign for individual giving conducted in the course of 2018. The two basic objectives were clearly defined in advance: Brand awareness and Call to Action. Corporate video was showing in Cineplexx cinema before each movie projection during November and December last year, while cash boxes were setting in the hall of cinema. The branded backdrop had been placed and hostesses were wearing branded t-shirts. Visitors were asked to donate for SOS Children's Villages end they received branded stickers that could be pasted on a backdrop with their own message written down.

As a part of the pilot campaign, we have adopted landing page Starry Sky and donors got opportunity to donate on line. Using our date base, digital newsletter was sent to leads and contacts. During the pilot campaign, all SOS employees used the gif signature Replace the Irreplaceable. We used posters for branding city buses, city lights, and mega lights as well. The pilot campaign was shared on Social Media (Facebook and Instagram) as well.

There was a PR support by PR Agency by publishing posts on famous blogs, magazines and newspapers. Although we believe that we have to improve our approach towards individual donors, we have completed last year with 2000+ contacts in our data base.

Promotional activities

In order to promote the organization and boost fundraising activities, we used all of the major organization's public activities such as campaigns, conferences and meetings to promote the Organization's work and strengthen Brand awareness in the country. Campaigns and events such as the Closing conference for ERP

project, 1 June-National foster care givers day, "PRIDE closing event- Every child needs a family", "Starry Sky", "Replace the Irreplaceables", "Places with heart", "Social Friday", and many others were followed by promotional media appearances giving us the opportunity to share news and plans with the public.

During the third quarter of 2018, a corporate video was shot, that aimed at raising the brand awareness. The video entitled "Did You Say I Love You Today to Those That Mean the World to You?" was screened at Cineplexx Cinema in November and December 2018. It was shown prior to the screening of each movie on the regular repertoire. In addition to this, the Video was also broadcasted on two National Televisions, two National Radio Stations as well as on the digital media (You Tube, FB and Instagram).

Public funding activities

In 2018, SOS CV Macedonia applied with 9 projects to different donors, including EU/IPA funding opportunities with distinguished partners. The following is a list of applied projects:

1. A project "Building a better future for children" was submitted and approved to the City of Skopje. The aim of the project is Increased socio-educational inclusion of children without parental care and children in social risk, with a value of 7,800 euros, out of which 4,000 euros are requested by the City of Skopje, and the rest is our participation.
2. Project "Strengthening young people from alternative care" submitted to the US Embassy. The project in the first phase is over, it is applied with full application and a response is expected during May-June. The aim of the project is to enable young people to alternate care through acquiring skills and researching the opportunities for their sustainable integration in the Macedonian society, with a total value of 14,200 euros, out of which 8,660 euros are requested from the US Embassy, and the rest is our participation. The project was rejected.
3. Concept for the project "Legal support for vulnerable victims of violent crimes" submitted to the EU / IPA in partnership with Young Lawyers. The project's goal is to improve access to justice for victims of violent crime by establishing a legal assistance service for victims at the national level. The total value of the project is 176,000 euros. The concept note was accepted in the second quarter and submitted to the donor. The project was approved in the September and the start of implementation is foreseen for January 2019.
4. On the recommendation of the Football Federation of Macedonia, an application for a prize of 50,000 euros has been prepared and sent to the UEFA Foundation. It is expected to receive the results of the selection during June. The project was approved and started with implementation during October 2018.
5. Preparation a regional project in cooperation and partnership with SOS International and four Balkan countries (SOS Albania, B&H, Kosovo and Serbia) started in the first quarter. The project is entitled as Youth Employment Enabling Prospects - YEEP! With a goal to support the employment of youth without parents and youth in social risk. The total value of the project is over 3.000.000 EUR. For this project, a prefeasibility study in all five Balkan countries was conducted in order to re-confirm the need and the feasibility of the project.
6. At the first and second quarter, a regional project focused on strengthening the capacities of children and professionals for dealing with trauma and loss was developed in a form of concept note. The project is entitled as "Growing through Challenge" and was applied in partnership with SOS International and 14 members of the SOS network to the EEA Fund (Norwegian Government and the EU). The total value of the project is 4.750.000 EUR. The application is still pending for approval.
7. During September, SOS Children's Village Macedonia applied as part of a consortium on the EU call for support of the process of de-institutionalization in the Republic of Macedonia by submitting a letter of interest. The value of the entire project is 1.300.000 Euros, and the carrier of the application and project leader is WYG Consulting - a well-known consulting company from Croatia, part of the international organization WYG, which is a global organization that operates from more than 50 locations across the UK, Europe, Africa and Asia. It is expected to receive the final decision in January-February 2019.
8. During the third quarter, the SOS team developed and submitted a project for continuation of the BMZ funded project for employment of youth until the end of the 2019. The project with total value of 65.000 EUR was approved by HGFD.
9. During December, SOS Children's Village Macedonia applied for a project "Inclusive Childhood" to Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) – Macedonia. The total value of the project was 8.000 EUR. The project that was approved and implemented in December encompassed renovation of the inclusive playground in the SOS Children's Village Skopje.

The approved project application for the project “Better Care for Children” by UNICEF Macedonia with a total amount of 64.058 EUR, started with implementation in 2018. The goal of the proposed project was to strengthen the fostering system in Macedonia through improvement and development of legislation regulating provision and support of foster care.

In the third quarter, SOS Macedonia staff conducted several meetings with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNDP in Macedonia. SOS staff related to the development of SDC’s new programme, initiated dialogue for a possible project that will provide support to the SOS Counselling centres and in particular, the continuation of the employment project in the coming years. Additional meetings were arranged with their consultants during October and November.

Governance and Management

During 2018 the Board of SOS Children’s Villages Macedonia has conducted 4 regular and 2 Extraordinary Board meetings in order to support the development of the organization. Furthermore in April 2018 the Board had an exchange meeting with SOS Children’s Villages Kraljevo to share experience about challenges with foster parents and other similar topics that were of interest of both organizations.

In June 2018 Regular General Assembly was organized and in December additional Extraordinary Assembly was organized in order to support significant statutory changes of the organization. During 2018 the organization was focus on alignment with International Statute but also very serious process were conducted in terms of legal recognition of existing programs in the frame of social protection law. Considering that SOS Children Villages Macedonia has formed two legal bodies, Non-Governmental association and Private Institution, there are two Statutes that has to be aligned and updated: First one with SOS Children’s Villages International Statute and the second one with local legislation.

Data protection trainings were also conducted during the year in order to gain more knowledge about the impact of this new restriction in our everyday work in every field of our work. End of the year we made agreement with legal office to support us in this process.

In order to support the sustainability of the organization 2018 was a year with focus on reorganization of National office, supported by the NMT, Board and external HR consulting company. Considering the fast growth in the last 3 years, new public funding projects plus Emergency project for almost 3 years, it was clear that the HR resources can’t cope anymore and provide stabile and effective management. Because of that new organizational structure was set, job descriptions were revised and clarified and there was strong focus also on establishment on internal and legal procedures. National office has established 4 core departments (HR, Finance, Program and Fund Development) and also strengthen with 3 new employees. We have new HR Manager position, finance assistant and additional fundraiser.

Due to the fact that there were also 2 voluntary exits the team has become almost 50% of new stuff which was good change and new and fresh perspectives. Change management training was conducted for the management team in order to refresh or enable better understanding of the Change management process and challenges that management needs to consider in the future strategy of the organization where a lot of decision needs to be made. Additionally we have organized joined workshop with special SDI methodology in order to work on the cohesion of new and old stuff but also to understand different perspective and communications models for better cooperation of the team.

Additionally, we had a long process of identifying new premises of the National office which was supposed to provide normal and better working conditions as we have work almost 10 years in the same premises when we started as 5-6 employees.

Leadership conference in June 2018 was new and interesting experience for the team, as in the past we have never had the opportunity to hear same communication messages from regional and international level and contributed to better cohesion and trust.

TIME SCHEDULE OF MAJOR EVENTS FOR 2019

JANUARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Holliday's (Orthodox Holiday) and traditional activities and celebrations • Winter Holliday for the youngsters from the Youth Programs • Final Conference of the Social inclusion and employment of youth
FEBRUARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Event "Every child deserves a family" – partnership with UNICEF and Ministry of Labor
MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal opening of new National office premises • 8th Mother's Day Celebration • Midterm planning -2019-2021
APRIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st – April Carnival traditional activities and celebrations • First Regular Board meeting • 6-9 Orthodox Easter • Final Conference of the Social inclusion and employment of youth -BMZ
MAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st – Labor Day (Holiday) - traditional activities and celebration • ND Conference in Sofia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of the International Mother's day with traditional partners • 15 International day of families-activities marking the week • UEFA Project – opening of new playground and promotional sport activities
JUNE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th Graduating celebrations for graduated students from elementary school • 23rd – Mr. Herman Gmajner Celebration • 15th first day Ramazan Bajram - traditional activities and celebrations • Second Board Meeting and General assembly
JULY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startup of Pre-dialogs plans for 2020 • Summer Holidays for the children in Caldonazzo and Ohrid lake • Come Together Conference in Vienna
AUGUST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Holidays for the youth from YF and application to Universities
SEPTEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st school day and traditional celebrations • Transfer of the children from the SOS families to the Youth Programs and high school applications • Transfer of youngsters to SIL program and University applications • Annual planning workshop 2020
OCTOBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's week-traditional activities • Budgeting Process for 2019 • Third Board meeting
NOVEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan and budget approval for 2019 • Participation of SOS Children's Village children in the Halloween parade
DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th Universal Volunteer day- Certificate ceremony for volunteers • Christmas cards selling Campaign • 15th -31th - New Year's traditional visits, celebration and activities • Fourth Board meeting

SECTION TWO

FACILITY (LOCATION'S PROGRAM) REPORT

2.1 SOS Children's Village SKOPJE – Location

SOS Children's Village was providing services in its three core programs on Location Skopje.

In 2018th, it has been providing various services for 126 children in alternative care and 117 children in the family strengthening program.

2.1.1 SOS Foster care program

In December 2018, there was **64 children in the Foster Care Program Skopje**, out of which 62 children are aged 3 to 17 and 2 young adults facing developmental challenges over the age of 18 years. 15 foster families have provided the care for the children.

One of these families is specialized for emergency intervention care for children in a limited period of 30 days. The expert team gives a firm and continuous support for the caregivers.

The **programme team** is consisted of 13 employees (1 manager, 1 senior child development co-worker, 1 social worker, 1 psychologist, and 1 youth care co-worker, one pedagogical assistant, 7 family assistants plus 14 foster caregivers). Twelve SOS foster families and the intervention SOS foster family are placed at one location-Chento. The location have a common multifunctional courtyard and a playground that is used for football, basketball and other recreational games, not only for SOS families but for the families in the community as well. Since it is, the only well arranged and child safe place in the neighborhood, many families from the community are regularly spending their free time in it. It is a great possibility for the social integration in everyday life for SOS families and children in general. In 2018, the program also provided support for **one integrated SOS foster family** in the municipality of Aerodrom and a foster family in the municipality of Shuto Orizari, the municipality of Roma population in Skopje. In our program, in 2018 we provided care for **32 boys and 32 girls**. Four percent of children attend pre-school, 81% attend elementary school, and 15% are in secondary school. The children have tutoring provided by the village pedagogue in the program, volunteers and interns, and it resulted by improving school success and school achievements in the 2018 school year. The Municipality Skopje financially funds this educational program.

There were 31 admissions in 2018, which were realized in cooperation with the Centers for Social Work from all over the country, with which we have functional communication and cooperation. Seventeen of them were children admitted in the intervention family. Seven of them were transferred to SOS foster families, which is a positive practice in terms of gradually adjusting newly admitted children to new SOS families. In 2018, SOS foster care left **14 children**, six children left SOS foster care and moved to the Youth Care Programs, seven children were reintegrated in their biological families, and one child was adopted. In 2018, a program for semi-dependent living continued as well for the youngsters who are leaving care directly from SOS families. During the whole year, we provided the needed support for seven young people. Children with **health and psychological challenges** receive adequate medical and psychological support, they also receive support from public health organizations, and psychologists outside the program if needed. Children with developmental challenges (physical, sensory or mental disabilities) received the necessary treatment according to their disability and needs for support. For children with speech challenges, they a speech therapist was provided. The program has a special speech therapist with children who have hearing devices and speech challenges. She is also a special educator that works with children who are facing with challenges in school. In the program, there is a child with epilepsy and a child with Down syndrome who works with this special educator. There are gradual but are visible results.

Social and economic changes in the country lead to an increased number of children who need care in foster families. It also affects young people finding jobs more difficult because of this situation in the country.

As a background of all **newly admitted children** was dysfunctional relationships in the family of origin, leaving families by one of the parents (most often the mother leaves the family), increased violence, the absence of one of the parents because of treatment in a psychiatric institution or the serving of a jail sentence. In order to help the children adjust to family life in the SOS Children's village we are providing **well organized admission process** with the participation of the child, the foster parent and legal guardian, according to the PRIDE standards of care. For every newly admitted child in the SOS family, a genogram and an eco-map is being prepared. Children usually come with health challenges, which is why they are immediately brought to a general medical examination, and if necessary, additional specialist examinations and treatments. A challenge in the program is that they have no immunization according to national and international standards.

Some of the **of** offered activities for the children were, sports and educational activities, such as: acting, ballet, taekwondo, football, basketball, creative workshops,, and English lessons provided by our Peace Corps volunteer. One of our girls, Dushica, was attending this year Eurochild conference for Child participation in decision-making process.

During the **summer holiday**, the children together with the SOS foster parents had organized vacations in Macedonia, where they spent unforgettable 14 days swimming, socializing, and organized activities.. In the period from July 24th to August 7th a group of 14 children, accompanied by two employees, went on summer holiday in the camp of SOS Children's Villages in Caldonazzo, Italy. The children took part in many activities organized by the camp, such as: sports games non-borders, children's creative festival, creative workshops, etc. Children had a chance to gain new friendships with children from other Children's Villages and through common activities; they develop the spirit of friendship and unity. Additionally, this year we implemented **supportive educational activities for the foster parents** and staff, including one PRIDE IN SERVICE sessions for positive discipline, individual supervision, group team building and holistic trauma healing workshop.

*We are very proud of **Radica**, a child in the village, eight-year-old and a primary school student. She is a hardworking student and has excellent grades. She is positive, calm, and smart girl that always seem happy and smiling at the people around her. Science and art are her favorite subjects in school. She loves to be outdoor involved in activities such as riding a bicycle or playing in the village yard with other children. Radica goes to ballet classes. She is not just a delicate and fluffy little ballerina; she is equally talented with her roller skates. Nevertheless, Radica is supportive sibling with high level of empathy toward her bigger brother, who has developmental delays and challenges. She is the one who is very much influencing and helping his integration in the SOS family but in the school environment as well.*

***Ljupco** is a young man and he is 25 years old. He came to the SOS Children's Village when he was nine-years-old. He has gone through all the stages of the program, first he lived in a family house with a SOS mother in the village, and then moved to the Youth Care Program, and after completing his secondary education for culinary, Ljupcho was included in the Semi-Independent Living Program, before moving to independent living. Ljupco strongly associates with SOS Children's Villages, and as a testimony for this are the two bicycle tours across several countries he was involved in. Today, Ljupco is a parent of a one-year-old son whom he cares for with his wife. They live in a village near the city; they cultivate a garden and keep animals. Unfortunately, they rent the house they live in and they need a permanent home for the security of their family. Ljupco currently works as a custodian in the Museum, but the income is low. Last year, he completed the PRIDE training for foster careers; he wants his family to be the home of children who are in the same situation as he was about twenty years ago. Ljupco is a story that motivates all of us who are employed in this organization to accomplish our mission and determination.*

2.1.2 SOS Youth Facility / SOS Youth Programme

SOS Youth program includes three program units, two of them provided **direct care for 33 minor youngsters** and **semi-independent program unit** providing after care mentoring support towards independence for **35 young adults in 2018**.

The programme team includes fourteen employees (two coordinators, eight youth care co-workers, two educators and two cooks). The First Youth Program unit, opened in 2007, is located in the community of Radishani in Skopje. The house is own by SOS Children's village Skopje donation from C&A Youth Program unit 2 was opened in 2012. It is situated in a rented house in municipality of Karposh, Skopje.

The **first criteria for admission** in the youth care are absence of opportunity for reintegration or adoption. Legal guardians, with the participation of the youngsters, always make the final decision for this type of care settlement. 50% of these cases admitted in youth care units in 2018 were directly caused by **crisis in foster families**. Specific challenges facing the foster parents in general to provide quality care for teenagers are the main reasons for emergency in the family and consideration of other alternative care solution, as youth care. During 2018, youth care program units became a home for **7 youngsters**. The process of **care leaving and preparation for independence with mentorship** is one of the most important service in youth care programs. This year, **seven young people left direct care**. In the care leaving process, it's an outstanding challenge supporting young people with **specific developmental challenges**. It is necessary for those youngsters to have a specific individualized type of support and prolonged care. In 2018, the employees from the program provided mentorship and additional support for **33 young adults toward their independence**. Majority of the care leavers are University students, but some youngsters are working as well. University students receive regular financial support from the state. **Educational support** of these young people in the program units is continued for achieving better educational results. This year **15 young people in care and 20 in Semi-independent leaving** are receiving state school scholarship. Beside educational support, we are providing opportunities for the young people to engage in extra-curricular activities, seasonal work engagement, courses and hobbies.. Knowing the importance of these segments, there are continuously possibilities for workshops, individual and group counseling for young people in order to improve their work competences, soft skills and strengthen social inclusiveness. There is a strong cooperation with other service providers, especially NGO for successful integration of the young people in care.

In the Semi independent program, 10 young people are engaged in full time employment for a certain period of time, while others get their monthly incomes with occasional and seasonal working engagements. Most of our youngsters are receiving the additional support of BMZ project on individual level and according to theirs specific need. During this year, **eight youngsters achieved their independence**; being employed and ready to continue their successful life without formal support from SOS. However, the bondage with all caregivers and SOS staff remains forever, since is full of warm memories and long lasting relationship.

This year we are proud of achievements on a higher level of youth participation on each level. Twenty six young people participate in Youth Participation workshop I Struga. After the workshop, they all were inspired in different way, but Cece in particular. Cece is 21-year young girl who left care for SOS Children Village 2 years ago. She is now support by SIL SOS program. Nowadays she is working in one web portal, and her goal is to run her own portal. She receive support for BMZ project for this particular idea. She has the idea on her portal to have one part that addresses the issues of the young care leavers, families living in social risk, alternative care children. The motivation of raising awareness on this issues is something that she became interested in during our advocacy youth participation training in Struga. The practical part of the training was a quite learning opportunity for her. After the training, she took the initiative to organize a meeting with management from SOS Children's village Macedonia and address the youngsters need for housing support as well as some other legal issues that they are facing in Macedonia. She was active in the media, as well; she did one interview speaking the care leavers' issue. She publicly told her story on the final PRIDE conference, organized by SOS Children's village Macedonia, she even do the interview for the web portal she is currently working in, talking with one SOS mother about how it's like to care for a children without parents.

This year we are also very proud of one youngster who is in the semi-independent program, social work student, who was part of the Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform. He participated in the 17th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, which took place on 7-8 November in Brussels. The European Commission - EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network) organizes the event. One more social-work student was involved as a terrain researcher in the UNICEF Project in city of Skopje. Three young people had continued their postgraduate studies, , two in HR and one in Criminal Science.

2.1.3 SOS Family Strengthening Programme

Family strengthening programme includes two Counselling Centers, the first one is located in municipality of Gazi Baba and the second one is located in the largest Roma community on Balkan – municipality of Shuto Orizari. As of December 2018, the program supported a total of 113 children, 4 young adults, 69 parents, and 39 families. 8 families and 24 children left the program based on “Self-reliance”. The programme team includes six employees (1 manager/coordinator, 1 coordinator/family advisor, 1 social worker/family advisor, 2 psychologists/family advisors and 1 educational co-worker). The **major achievements with the children are that** 86% of the school age children are enrolled in school and 75% of them are attending school regularly; 84% of the children are with improved social and communication skills.

We are also proud of the **success of our parents**: 62% of the exited families attained self-reliance; 42% of the parents are with improved social and communication; 80% of the families received housing/living condition support; 68% of the parents are with improved knowledge's for child care & parenting; 51% of the parents gain knowledge about Children rights; 53% of the parents received economic support (21% of them completed vocational trainings and have strengthened skills for finding job, 55% of them have access to social security rights, 35% started earning income through employment or self-employment).

The two Counselling Centers were open to **support the children from the SOS foster families and the local community**. The centers provided organized **group** activities, excursions, summer camps and vacations, sports and recreational activities, socio-cultural events, educational and creative workshops as well. Through joint activities, the children from alternative care and the community had the opportunity to increase their living and social skills. It is important to mention that we had an intense and constructive cooperation with the SOS BMZ project. We had regular and active **cooperation with the neighborhood**.

One of the main activities toward community empowerment lead by FSP is the Informal local network for supporting children and families at risk in the municipality of Gazi Baba. This year we organized two coordination meetings and one training on the topic "SOS policy to protect children from abuse". These working meetings were being held with the Mayors of the two municipalities where the Advisory Centers functions.

The FSP Shuto Orizari Coordinator actively participated in the Local Coordination Body within the municipality, where a Local Action Plan for development was prepared. The FSP manager participated in a coordinative meeting with the Mayor, along with representatives from the civil sector exchanged information on projects, services and opportunities for cooperation. The contributors provided free services for children and parents (health prevention educations for parents and children by partners NGO HERA and Health Center Skopje - Organizational unit Gazi Baba; legal advices and advocacy by partner NGO MYLA; training for responsible parenthood by associate ALTERNATIVA; educational workshops and English classes for children by Association of students-AIESEC).

SOS Children's Village is the only one organization, that implements preventive program for the families in social risk in North Macedonia with the holistic approach in the process of addressing family needs. This is possible thanks to good assessment and planning; strong enrolment of program beneficiaries in all stages of support and active participation from key stakeholders in local communities.

SECTION THREE

PUBLIC FUNDED PROJECTS REPORTS

3.1. BETTER CARE FOR CHILDREN – Partnership with UNICEF and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

According with the approved Project Application and budget frame by the donor UNICEF, SOS Children's Village Macedonia started preparations for the realization of the project "Better Care for Children". This Project was in Partnership with UNICEF but also supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and it was a supporting activity to ongoing DEI process of closure of two government institutions. The aim of the Project was to promote the fostering and to attract potential foster parents in order to provide more family based forms for care in the country.

2 PRIDE trainers from SOS Children's Village Macedonia were appointed to guide the campaign process and to conduct the trainings for future foster parents.

One of the first activities was to establish an open free telephone line for informing citizens about foster care, with number that it is communicated through the whole process of the Promotional campaign. Additionally we have prepared "Manual for Foster care" for the people answering this telephone line which were engaged through the Ministry of labour.

The communication with the public was through various communication channels and in the first quarter have we succeed to motivate and involve nine foster families or 15 participants in the pre-care process for the purpose of assessment of their child care competencies.

The training was conducted from April to June 2018. From this training, 5 foster families received a positive outcome by which they could apply for registration to the Centar for Social Work and after the CSW assessment they became caregivers.

In June 2018, in the process of preparing the foster care motivation campaign, Project members in cooperation with the donor, developed a scenario for the events that were part of the campaign, which enabled a unified approach in providing information to the public.

In this regard, the informative meetings with the Centres for Social Work, where conducted and participants were introduced to the structure and content of the campaign, their expectations in support of the campaign and specific responsibilities of all involved parties. At this meeting, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Ms. Mila Carovska addressed the audience with a clear message for active participation and support of the campaign "Every child needs a family".

The campaign was officially launched in June in the city of Skopje, inviting all citizens to contribute to the care of children who were left without parental care.

As part of the National campaign titled "Every child needs a family", from 13th of June to the 10th of August, 30 events were organised in 30 different cities and locations in the country.

In the preparatory period, before the start of the Campaign, we have conducted training with four employees at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and few operators of the telephone information line. The aim was to provide a unified provision of quality information and inform the public about the criteria and conditions for becoming a foster parent. In the period from June 1st to August 31st, 2018, every working day from 8:00 to 20:00, the telephone line was opened for the information's of the interested citizens.

Furthermore, the campaign was mass supported by a large number of NGOs, local authorities, the business community, public figures and citizens throughout the country.

The events were emotionally infused with the genuine personal life stories and testimonials of a large number of foster parents with many years of experience in foster care. Their speeches sparked attention and a storm of emotions, which was another motivating moment.

A significant number of citizens interested in becoming adoptive parents, who attended events and supported the campaign, were quite active in the events, with their discussions, suggestions and proposals.

In the period from 17.09.2018 until 16.11.2018, in the Resource Centre of SOS Children's Village Macedonia - the Youth Club in Skopje and the Daily Centre for Children with Special Needs in Prilep, PRIDE trainings were conducted with the aim of inclusion of new foster parents in the foster care system. 42 candidates for caregivers initially applied for the training and 37 participants successfully finished the training and got certificates.

All the families involved in the training were visited and evaluated by expert associates from the relevant local SWCs, that is, the expert associates who estimated the families as fit for participation in the training. Families that met the conditions specified in the law on social protection, were invited to the training. They were informed and directed to SWCs for submitting a request for foster parents.

During the training, according to the PRIDE program for foster parents, 9 sessions were realized. The duration of the session's was from 3 to 3.5 hours, depending on the dynamics of the workshop.

PRIDE Training intended to provide participants with specific competencies (knowledge and skills) needed for successful fulfilment of foster care tasks. In addition, this training should help future foster parents to self-assess in the context of a competent foster parent and to make an informed decision about themselves and their future engagement.

SOS Children's Village Macedonia was recognised as important partner in this campaign but also in the whole DEI process in the country.

3.2 Project for Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment of Youth and Young Parents

The project during 2018 continued working with beneficiaries in both modules – employment and self-employment. During this year, almost all new beneficiaries came on recommendation by friends or family members who shared positive experience from their participation in the project. The number of beneficiaries reached total of 309 beneficiaries.

Out of them 67% were women and 22% were Roma. The number of Roma involved in the project had steadily on the rise throughout the year mostly due to positive outcomes with employment of Roma youth at the beginning of the year that caused ripple effect in the community and flow of new Roma beneficiaries.

In the course of 2018, the number of employed beneficiaries reached 106 youth, out of whom 66% are women and 25% are Roma. In addition 66 beneficiaries got paid internship and 224 beneficiaries have increased employability on the labor market, as result of career counseling, trainings in soft skills, trainings in basic IT and language skills, and vocational trainings.

One of the major achievements in 2018 was opening of the Youth Hub as an integral part of the Resource Center. The surface of the new Youth Hub is around 100m² and it was officially opened at the end of March as centre for career and professional development for youth. Starting from April, each month various events, workshops, trainings and self-help groups have been organized in the Youth Hub. Moreover, the volunteers and the community committee members worked more directly with youth from the community. Slowly, the project team worked to transform this place as space for promoting youth-to-youth approach and the values of youth civic participation, volunteerism, proactive behaviour and self-initiative. Students did the interior design of the youth hub from the Faculty of Interior Design from Skopje, located in Gazi Baba. They voluntarily worked for more than one month to come up with a design that blended both formal and informal aspects of the space. More importantly, it sends the message from-youth- to- youth and portrays the values that underpin the aim of the Youth Hub.

The SOS Regional Office produced two videos of the small businesses supported with project grants. The choice was made to present businesses that clearly demonstrate youth proactivity and sustainable change. The first video promotes business ran by rural woman and it's about production and selling of quill eggs. The second video is promoting small donner shop owned by young Albanian who strives to stay in the country and earn his living in Macedonia. The promotion of the videos took place at the opening of the Youth Hub and they were posted on the social media and widely used for promotion of the project.

In 2018, the municipal government acted on its commitment to overtake the Early Childhood Development Facility. It started by covering the salary for one pedagogue in order to provide sustainability of this service. The overall takeover by the Municipality, including the full management of the Facility is expected to happen in 2019.

The project continued its extensive collaboration with the business community. The Resource Center was promoted in front of the business community, more specific the first meeting of the Business Club of Gazi Baba in January 2018 took place on the premises of the Resource Center. The project team hosted the meeting, together with the Mayor of Gazi Baba and the President of the Business Club. The business community in Gazi Baba is very important since the biggest companies in the country are located in this municipality. The representatives of the companies, most of whom were owners of the businesses had a tour in the Resource Center and afterword a presentation of the project, including project results was delivered by the project manager. The key topic for discussion was retention of youth on the job and how to overcome the challenge of youth leaving the job soon after they are employed. After the meeting, follow-up meetings were organized with the companies to discuss possibility for signing MoU and employing project participants. As a result, new MoUs were signed with companies.

By the end of December a conference was organized on a topic *From Employability to Employment -- September 2018, challenges and solutions to retain youth at risk*. The Conference was organized for employers and human resource directors, including representatives from the Employment Agency, municipality Gazi Baba, the Director of the Confederation of Employers of Macedonia. The Conference tackled issues of concern for employers and raised the awareness about the situation of youth at risk and the challenges they face on the workplace. Solution of how to overcome the challenges and how to motivate youth to stay on the job were shared. The employers stressed out the gap between the demand and the offer on the labor market. Most of them emphasized the importance of soft skills, elaborating that they can provide the technical in-service training on how to perform the job, but the soft skills are crucial, especially time management, team work, rumor management, conflict management, etc. Best practices in creating positive practice environment by employers were shared. Opportunities for further collaboration with the project were discussed. The conclusions from the Conference were shared with the participants.

In 2018 the number of small businesses supported with project grant reached 50 small businesses. It is expected that 56 small businesses are going to be supported by EoP.

In the second quarter of 2018, the project management drafted a proposal for a no-cost extension of project implementation for four additional months in 2019. The reason behind this decision was to enhance the impact in the community and the available funds in the budget because of delayed start of the work with beneficiaries back in 2016 due to construction challenges with the Resource Centar.

In the request for extension, increased targets were set, including increase in the total number of beneficiaries to 315 beneficiaries, increase in the number of employed beneficiaries to 105 and increase in the number of supported small businesses to 55 small business.

In the proposal submitted to the donor for a no-cost extension, new project activities were added with purpose to increase project effectiveness and impart more substantial skills to the beneficiaries, especially those who already got employment and are striving for professional development.

Those are:

- a) Additional employability trainings in soft skills (time management, stress management, teamwork, rumor management, conflict management); training in self-presentation and public speech, training in sales skills and simulation of job interview
- b) Additional business trainings in online marketing, sales and negotiation skills, accounting and business statistics.
- c) Filming of documentary about the change that participation in the project had created for youth in terms of their personal and professional development
- d) Production of two guidebooks – one on employment and one on self-employment
- e) Promotion of small businesses among the general public by organizing exhibition of the small businesses under the motto Creating Brands. The purpose of the exhibition that took place in September on the premises of the most frequented shopping mall in Skopje was to support the new businesses in reaching to greater number of potential customers and promote their products. More than twenty small businesses took part at the exhibition, which was officially opened by the Mayor of Gazi Baba. The exhibition also got media outlets coverage which increased the impact of the event and at the same time increased the promotion of the project.

