

## **Annual report on implemented activities and projects in 2015 of Defense for children's rights**

It's our pleasure to present you the Annual report of Defense for children's rights Association for 2015. This year we've accomplished many successes and results of our mission and reached a significant advance in our cause. This project "Educational and entertaining daily center for street children" in its tenth year of implementation have provided deep educational support for increasing the enrollment level, maintenance of the regular educational system of street children category. MT-Tinex has provided us continuous help and support for implementation of the activities in the daily center. The Ministry of labor and social policy has supported a project for social protection for the period of May –December 2015. The project "Integration of Roma children of vulnerable category", supported by the city of Skopje was accomplished as well as the six month pilot project "Building educational opportunities for children of vulnerable categories" on a local level (from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to first of May 2015) with the partner organizations (NGO Hera, SOS- Detsko selo, REC-Umbrella, CSI Nadez and PPC-Roma resource center as project's pivot) with the help of Switzerland children foundation- Pestaloci.

Supported by the European Commission and their program Erasmus Plus, the Defense Association have organized and hosted Carina Tomasch, volunteer in the period 01.08.2015-31.07.2016 and she has participated in various activities in the Daily center.

### **Daily center for street children**

The main goal of the street center is to provide children inclusion in society, a psycho-social support and intervention through non-institutional form of social protection. In the frames of the daily center, various services are being offered depending on children's needs. The improvement of the general conditions and their integration is only one part of Defense for children's Rights. The daily center is dedicated to social inclusion and most of all daily care for Roma children so that during the day takes care for them in safe environment filled with various activities which help their growth and development. According to the fact that as Daily center we're close to them, Roma children see us as protection center which contributes to their socialization. They have educational help focused on the basis of mathematics and Macedonian language, as well as development of social and cognitive skills. Their elementary needs have been considered such as personal hygiene, clothes, shoes, meal, non-formal education, health protection, identity, games but also protection from economic exploitation and other kind of violence. Through education workshops, most of the children already know their rights and report their parents who forced them on begging during the weekend.

During this year there were many individual and group parents meetings in order to raise parental care and responsibility for exercising the parenting right.

Maintaining the work of the daily center is exceptionally important for these children so that the effect of the accomplished won't be lost. Children have already formed habits to come in the center and we're pleased to witness an awareness change in terms of education, health and hygiene, which means decreasing of health risks for children coming from substandard living conditions. By applying the hygienic habits in their homes, street children affect on their parents health. Most of them live in improvised homes made of carton boxes and bags, with no electricity, water or sanitary sewers. Due to the bad economic conditions these children are being irregularly fed with low quality food. Even the younger members of the family are coming to the center to take a bath, have a least one meal, spent some quality time building positive habits. At the same time we've helped parents by providing laundry and personal hygiene.

In the youth club various topics were elaborated: Personal development (self-confidence, emotions, success and failure, expressing opinion, family, school) social relations (children's rights, nondiscrimination, support and collaboration, social pressures, responsibilities and positive relations,) healthy living (healthy food, personal hygiene, prevention from diseases, risks of minor marriages and pregnancy) and environmental relations (polite behavior in the environment, environmental hygiene and protection.) The reading corner activity was implemented where literate children creatively and comparatively read in order to understand the meaning of the text. The books were later discussed, both orally and in writing.

### **Children evidenced and looked after**

During the terrain activities in 2015, 23 children were evidenced begging at the traffic lights of Blvd. Patizanski Odredi in front of Zegin pharmacy-Bunjakovec or Shuto Orizari market at the age of 4-13. With parental consent, they were taken into the Daily center. They have undergone a valuation of psycho-physical development, intellectual capacity, systematic check up and first immunization. We've been working on their adaptation socialization, forming cultural and hygienic habits, alliteration and gradually building their work habits.

During the previous year the daily center was visited by 143 children. By 31.12.2015 a total number of 104 children were taken care of.

### **Minor marriages**

Out of 10 minor marriages, with increased activities at the daily center, 7 of them are prevented which include children at the age of 12-14. Minors F.K and R.D with parental permission were taken to Germany while S.R on 26.12.2015 run away from her home at the evening and of her own free will and got married with an adult. Since they're all minors, DCR filed a reported to JU-MCSR of Skopje in order to call their parents and take all the measures according to the legal authority for getting into minor non-wedlock and obstruction of the ongoing educational process. The eighteen year old M.K. with father's permission on 26.07.2015 entered non-wedlock with a minor who lives in Germany.

## **Inclusion in the educational process**

In the year of 2015/2016, 8 first graders joined the program at different age and have successfully passed the exams. In the frames of the health protection, a systematic check up was implemented for the purpose of following their health condition, vaccination for regular immunization as well as receiving a confirmation for vaccines taken which are necessary for registration in the regular educational system. Several dentists' interventions were made with 17 children, as well as checkups necessary for their further registration. Due to the often colds and various infections some children were prescribed anti-biotic therapy. Twenty nine children's hair were cut due to increased hygiene and reducing the skin infections and verminous. At the begging of September 2015 the number of children previously included in the educational system has changed. Ten families have moved from Shuto Orizari and continued their education in others local schools, suitable to their new address.

In the school year 2015/2016, 84 children were included in the educational process while the number of preschool children is 17. The registration of 5 children at school age was prolonged for the following year since they aren't psychologically and emotionally grown while two of them should be included in the elementary school for children with special needs "Idnina". The six teenagers that last year were registered in the training high schools SUGS "Arsenij Jovkov", SUGS "Lazar Tanev" and ASUC "Boro Petrushevski" have successfully continued with their education as well as the two newly registered in SUGS "Lazar Tanev".

A team of experts (coordinator, social worker, psychologist and a head teacher) helped the children to overcome the difficulties they came across during the process of integration- according to their individual and family capacity. In June 2015 there was a shift in the position of psychologist. In the position of Natasha Tnokovska, Daniela Gjorgievska came in.

## **Celebrating important holidays**

Children were introduced to the important dates of the year, through their celebrations in the Daily center and out of it: International week of street sellers, 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 8<sup>th</sup> of April- world Roma day (there was an education for the history of the Roma, their origin, migrations, cultures and customs which caught children's attention and encouraged them to actively participate in the activities.) Children in the frame of the creative workshop were drawing and coloring the Roma flag. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April- April fool's Day, they created masks of their favorite cartoon characters, princesses and queens while the youngest were disguised as cats, mice and rabbits. This activity caused great pleasure and they were happy to participate in each and every part of the celebration. Proudly and with a great joy they presented their masks at the streets of Shuto Orizari in front of the locals. On the occasion of Easter they were making drawings of different materials and took place in the coloring and ornamenting of the Easter eggs. The 12 of April was also celebrated- the International street children day. A particular joy was the celebration of 6<sup>th</sup> of May- St. George Day- which was celebrated in the Daily center. Many stories were told about the meaning of this day, the manners of

celebration, the importance of holidays for bringing people together. The team helped them to make petals headbands and then celebrated with the locals.

A particular attention was paid to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May- International family day which was celebrated through an interactive discussion, photo showing and group work. The children were learning the notions of family life, family, types of families, one-parent family, family with both parents, family with adopters etc. We're also talking about family's roles and the position of children in the frames of a family. Also, the 12 of June was conveniently celebrated that is World's day against children's labor. The association keeps striving to protect the children from the hardest forms of children's labor abuse that is their exclusion of activities that may harm children's health and their security. Yet, the fact that this problem lacks resources and is not fully addressed is quite concerning. In order to eliminate the worst forms of children labor it takes great efforts and dedication in terms of poverty reduce, providing better social care and inclusion of all the children in education. Children's week, International day of girls- 15<sup>th</sup> of October as well as the religious Muslim celebrations like Ramazan Bajram and Kurban Bajra were also celebrated. The association of protection of children's rights continues to work on improving the children's rights in Republic of Macedonia and fights against the worst form of abuse of children labor and sexual abuse. The association celebrated 19<sup>th</sup> of October- World day for prevention of children's abuse and 20<sup>th</sup> of November- World day of Children.

### **International day of Volunteering – 5<sup>th</sup> of December**

On the occasion of celebration of International day of Volunteering, on 04.12.2015, our association for protection of children's rights took active part in NGO's fair of volunteering and active citizenship of city of Skopje. It was successfully organized by the Volunteering center Skopje in cooperation with city of Skopje, MKC and other partners. Around 60 NGO's and citizen associations took part in the event in which activities in favor of the Skopje citizens were implemented. The fair was developing in a parallel with the volunteering forum organized by Civica Mobilitas and MCMS which was visited by more than 600 citizens.

Two youngsters of the Daily center, included in the sale of the street magazine "Lice v lice" were invited to take part in the event called "Living library" which presents an innovative process which includes interaction among people as a tool for prejudice and stereotypes decrease in this society. The idea is that each and every one of us presents a "living" book which can share its story. This collaboration with "Lice v lice" team as an independent media published by "Public", started in 2012 and it contributes to economic and social strengthening of the marginalized groups who sell it and the youngsters of the Daily center and others endangered participants of the marginalized people: homeless people, social care users and other vulnerable categories.

In April 2015, after the ophthalmological check-up by MD Galina Dimitrova, ophthalmologist in the City hospital "8<sup>th</sup> of September" it was confirmed that 6 children need to wear glasses which was funded by the Ministry of labor and social policy.

### **Extracurricular activities**

In May 2015, 20 children visited the stand of the Swedish Embassy on Book Fair and listened to the stories of Pippi the longstocking.

In June 2015, 46 children of the Daily center got the opportunity to watch the movie “Home” at Cineplexx-City Mall.

In June 2015, two youngsters of the daily center, A.R and M.K went in youth exchange program in Buzau Romania, through Erasmus Plus program in the frames of NGO “Volunteer Center” Skopje.

From 20 to 31.07.2015 six French (aged 18-19) scouts helped us to implement the daily activities.

On 24.07.2015 the French scouts together with 40 children of the Daily center visited the Zoo.

On 31.07.2015, 45 children together with the expert team and scouts, went to Vodno where they played ball, Frisbee, jumped ropes, carts and other social games and also used the gondola.

In August, three children of the Daily center took part in the Summer camp in Struga with three others of different nationality (Roma, Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian etc.) from Skopje (Shuto Orizari), Prilep, Tetovo, Tearce, Strumica, Kumanovo and Kavadarci in the frames of the project “Promotion of children’s rights and intercultural communication” of the Coalition of youth organizations “SEGA”. The goal of this summer camp was for the youth to gain skills and knowledge of how to learn about the principles of Intercultural communication, different values and tolerance among children and youths from different cultures as well as how to promote children’s rights.

-On 14.10.2015 in the frames of Children’s week, 35 children of the Daily center took part in the educational workshop on the topic “Children’s rights and healthy environment” which took place in the educational center of Kids Park and Capitol Mall bowling, under the motto “I’m a child, I have my own rights and I want to live in healthy environment.”

In November 2015 several groups of children did some extracurricular activities. Hence, on 12.11.2015 part of them visited the Natural-sciences Museum of Macedonia while on 26.11.2015 the Museum of city of Skopje. On 19.11.2015 part of the children visited Gazi Baba’s park where they collected autumn leaves and wild chestnut which later were used in the creative workshop: making of autumn pencils and different shapes of chestnuts.

In December, 40 children watched a 3D animated movie at Macedonia Kinoteka.

### **Participation in Conferences and Round tables**

On 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2015, representatives of DCR took part in the round table “Strengthening of the cooperation of citizen organizations for protection of children from exploitation” organized by the Association of action against violence and human trafficking- Otvorena Porta. On this round table, the coordinator of the Daily center, Irena Velkoska, presented our

experience through both workshops on the topic “Minor marriages and pregnancy” which took place in 2014 in the Daily center through the project “Don’t take my youth away”.

Representatives of the Association of children’s rights protection on 30.09.2015 participated in the round table organized by Ombudsman’s office in collaboration with the Austrian ombudsman and the Institute of human rights Ludwig Bolcman on the topic: The condition and challenges of street children- how to provide access to their rights. On this round table, besides the appropriate representatives from Austria, the representatives of Ministry of labor and social policy, Ministry of internal affairs, Ministry of education and of the Board of registration office were also present. His personal presentation had the president of the Association Defense for children’s rights, professor PhD Vladimir Ortakovski on the topic: Street children center- prevention of children delinquency.

In the frames of the twinning project Promotion of Ombudsman’s department and strengthening of the institutional capacity, the ombudsman- department of protection of children’s rights and disabled people, as well as their Austrian guests, visited our association on 21.10.2015 and discussed the experience and practice of inclusion of Roma children in the education process.

On 24.11.2015, in order to consider the current situation with street children, forms of their protection and finding better solutions, the state council for prevention of children delinquency on their 16<sup>th</sup> session presented thematic discussion: The condition of street children and their protection in Republic of Macedonia. “The president of DCR, professor PhD Vladimir Ortakovski, held a presentation on Daily center’s activities for street children as well as the role of the state council in preventing children delinquency. In the debate, the member of DCR committee Kire Trajanovski and the coordinator Irena Velkoska also took part in.

From 02 to 04 of December 2015 DCR was invited by the German association for international cooperation to take part in the workshop for activity planning in order to present the frame for the upcoming Regional project for social rights of the vulnerable groups implemented in Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania starting from September 2017. The general purpose of the workshop was to collect the involved parties of different institutions and NGOs in the project region relevant in the field of social rights of vulnerable groups and to offer them an opportunity for more detailed acknowledgement with the general purpose of this project as well as the operating areas and the methods used. On 04 December 2015, 14 participants in the workshop of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina visited the daily center for street children, as citizen organization working in the field of protection of social rights of vulnerable groups in Macedonia.

From the past 2015, we’re active members of the Regional network for children working and living on the street.

### **New Year’s activities**

On 07.12.2015 the embassy of Great Britain invited us together with three other children of the center in their residence on the occasion of a traditional evening where children, whose parents are coming from UK but work here in Macedonia, sang Christmas songs.

On 10.12.2015 the financial director of Ramstore Macedonia, Barish Borahan and the British Ambassador, Charles Garret, attended the daily center show where they had the opportunity to see and hear the sincere children's joy during the holidays and give them 100 Christmas packages as well as 50 shawls and caps.

On 10.12.2015 the daily center was visited by the French ambassador Mrs. Lorens Oear. We're invited to the nomination of Human rights awards of the French Embassy in Skopje. Particularly this award in 2013, first edition theme was the fight against exclusion (fight against discrimination, extreme poverty, minority rights) was given to the DCR in honor of the excellent terrain work, with bravery and consistency by all the members regarding the poorest and most vulnerable children". This reward ever since then takes place at 10 of December on the occasion of Universal declaration of human rights and freedoms.

On 21.12.2015 a new year's performance took place prepared by the children who couldn't wait to present their songs and acting. On this performance, the president and members of DCR as well as representatives of Tinex company who for 10 years loyally donate packages to all the children of the Center.

On 17.12.2015 there was a promotion of the book "Gardens" by the publisher Trendoland and the financial means of the sale were donated on 23.12.2015 as 20 school bags, school supplies, children puzzles, flash cards and numbers.

The medical student association after the action on 24.12.2015 visited the daily center for street children and welcomed the Christmas holidays by giving them self-made packages. Children, on the other hand, sang songs for them and had a good time. That was a useful meeting because children asked the student questions about medicine.

After the call of Father Pimen of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the believers donated toys for the poor families, and around 250 toys were collected and part of those were brought into the center for street children.

The NGO Humanity without borders on the occasion of the humanitarian action donated clothes and shoes or children at 5-18 as well as books, toys and etc.

Traditionally, on the occasion of the New Years' holidays, the staff in Comercialna Bank a humanitarian action was organized in the facility of the Daily center where they donated second hand clothes and toys by Bank's employees. This year they also donated a Christmas tree and ornamented together with the children. In a sign of thanksgiving, the children sang Christmas songs.

Macedonian Red Cross in collaboration with EVN for the fifth time organized humanitarian action" Let's share joy". Hence on 28.12.2015 in the frames of the action 40 children got Christmas presents- school bag, hat, shawl and a chocolate. The gifts were given in Kinoteka

where the children firstly watch an animated movie and then Santa Clause together with a member of the Board of EVN and Sait Saiti Secretary General of the Red Cross of Republic of Macedonia.

On 29.12.2015 the children performed a New Year's play for the Ministry of labor and social policy PhD Frosina Remenski who gave them packages donated by Dainers wishing them joy and happiness. A work meeting took place with DCR president , professor PhD Vladimir Ortkovski who gave information on the work of the Daily center for street children in Shuto Orizari. The center, unique of its kind, is lead by an NGO and achieves the best scores compared to the other centers. He emphasized that the Daily center has a MTMC license for this category and pledges for deepening of the mutual cooperation and widening of the cooperation memorandum.

In the end we'd like to thank to all our cooperators and donators who has been supporting us these past years.

**DCR team consists of:**

Prof. PhD Vladimir Ortakovski, professor at the Faculty of security, president of DCR

Prof. PhD Oliver Bacanovic, Dean at the Faculty of security, vice-president of DCR

Kiril Trajkovski, social worker, member of the committee of DCR

Irena Velkoska, member of the committee of DCR

Daily center for street children people engaged:

Irena Velkoska, project coordinator and educator

Vasilka Jovanovska, social worker

Natasha Gjorgievska Tnokovska, psychologist

Aleksandra Zakevska, head teacher

Maja Bozinovska, pedagogue

Daniela Gjorgievska- psychologist (since June 2015)

Karina Tomash- volunteer

International volunteers included by the volunteer center Skopje:

Tereza Lishkova, Monika Naglova, Jakopo Lend, Marko Nemanik and Simona Tamosiunaite