MCIC Bulletin

Strategy for civil society

MCIC STARTS A NEW PROGRAM

Finally the Government of Republic of Macedonia will design a Strategy for cooperation with the civic sector. It will be drafted in collaboration with the civil society organizations in Macedonia based on the local needs and taking into account experiences form other transition countries.

Since December 2005, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation has began the implementation of the new Civil Society Strategy Program. MCIC and Intrac from Great Britain are partners in the program and part of the consortium in which leading organization is COWI from Denmark. The program will continue until 2007 and is fully financially supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR).

The goal of the program is to provide support to the Government of Republic of Macedonia, the General Secretariat and the newly established Department for civil society cooperation in the development and implementation of a strategy for cooperation with the civic sector.

The program consists of four components and key activities: providing support and advice to the Government in the development of a coherent Strategy for cooperation between the government and the civic sector and providing support and advise to the Government in undertaking steps for implementing this Strategy with recommendations for legal reforms, procedures and other activities linked to the civic sector; developing and implementing measures for building the capacity of the personnel of the Department and the responsible civil servants in other government institutions which communicate with the Department with regards to the necessary communication skills for cooperation with the civil society; development and support in implementing specific measures for public relations in order for the Department to become an accessible and visible structure within the Government for cooperation with the civic sector and support in the development and implementation of transparent criteria and procedures for selection, for providing government support to the civic organizations on a competitive basis.

In the implementation of these activities the following results are expected:

- A **Strategy** of the Government for cooperation with the civic sector, including mapping and comparison with similar processes in other transition countries with regards to the cooperation between governments and the civic sector. On the basis of the mapping and the comparison, the Strategy would include the recommendations for the specific country context;
- Developing a **training and capacity building plan and its implementation** in which would be taken into consideration the needs for capacity building of the personnel of the Department and the responsible civil servants from other government institutions;
- Developing and implementing **visibility measures** in close cooperation with the personnel of the Department. These visibility measures would include publications, promotional material, networking activities, conferences and other activities in order to include the civil society in the country (for ex. Website, e-bulletins etc.);
- Development of recommendations for transparent criteria and procedures for granting government support to the civil society organizations on a competitive basis. As a result of these recommendations a proposed system for budget allocation will be prepared for the government's support of the civil society organizations.

The activities will be implemented by a team of domestic and international experts with specific tasks for each of the components.



NGO Fair Forum

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- "My opinion on the civic sector changed"

VISIT TO THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTIES IN MACEDONIA

Representatives of the Faculty for Islamic Sciences and the Catholic Church in Kosovo visited the theological faculties in Macedonia

On December 12th and 13th last year, within the project "Visit of theological faculties", a visit to the two theological faculties and the Catholic Church in Macedonia took place. A total of twenty representatives from the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Kosovo, as well as four representatives from the Catholic Church in Kosovo participated within the frameworks of this visit.

During the visit to the Faculty for Islamic Sciences the representatives were met by the Dean, Ismail Bardhi, who greeted them and gave an address about the importance of inter-religious dialogue. The students and professors, as well as the members of the religious communities in Kosovo had the opportunity to meet the students of the two theological faculties from Macedonia and to discuss various issues.

After the visit to this Faculty, the guests were directed towards the Catholic Church where they were greeted by Monsignor Antun Cirimotik. He explained the catholic doctrine and the students had the opportunity to pose all kinds of different questions to him. They had the possibility to visit the humanitarian organization of the Catholic Church – the Macedonian Caritas where they were explained the role of Caritas, its global presence and immediately after that the employees of Caritas involved them in their daily jobs explaining the activities they implement.

The second day the guests visited the Theological Orthodox Faculty where they were met by the Dean, Jovan Belchovski and from the students of the faculty. The representative of the Catholic Church from Macedonia, Monsignor Antun Cirimotik, spoke about ecumenism, dialogue and tolerance. Also, the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences form Kosovo, Kjemail Morina had an address, pointing out that this type of visits among the theological faculties are really important, as in view of the exchange of experiences and knowledge, also in regards to glorification of the inter-religious dialogue. He emphasised that he is amazed by what is going on in Macedonia in the field of inter-religious dialogue and also expressed interest for organizing this kind of visit to Kosovo as well.



Introduction from dean of the Islamic Faculty, dr. Ismail Bardhi



The guests from Kosovo had opportunity to visit the Catholic church in Skopje

PUBLICATION

This publication emerged from the selected essays written by the pupils from the elementary and high schools on the competition announced by the Ministry for Education and Science on the occasion of April 8th - Global Roma day. The essays arriving from the schools were assessed by a commission consisting of representatives from the Ministry and the involved elementary and high schools and civil society organizations. Starting from the important dates which people celebrate, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Directorate for development and advancement of education in the languages of the members of communities, the Bureau for development of education, MCIC and the Open Society Institute in Macedonia gave their contribution in the celebration of this significant date for the Roma by including both pupils from elementary as well as high schools in the Republic of Macedonia. "To be a Roma: at home, at school, in society" and "The Roma in 21 century: how they live and how others perceive them" were the topics on which the pupils wrote and in which were displayed the creative spirit, the good thought and the sincere word. In part of the essays the realistic, hard life which Roma children face has been painted. The publication was published by the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation.



"MY OPINION ON THE CIVIC SECTOR CHANGED"

"In discussion with people I try to contest their statements which are very similar to my previous stances", says Ema Struzanche

For several years now, MCIC has been conducting on-the-job training for both representatives of civil society organizations as well as other interested, mostly young people.

The idea behind the on-the-job training is for these people to get to know the way of functioning of civil society organizations, their systems and procedures, simply to get to know the civic sector from the inside. Besides being introduced to the work of the civil society organizations by undertaking practical work on programs and projects they have a possibility to gain knowledge and skills in areas of project cycle management, institutional development and organizational strengthening and office and administrative work.

In January a new cycle of on-the-job training in MCIC began. The six candidates began a three-day orientation program through which they could get introduced with the sectors of work in MCIC and the programs which are implemented in these sectors. Only after, did they have the opportunity to choose a field of interest or where they would like to spend the time of on-the-job training.

On-the-job training in MCIC functions on the principle of mentorship, that is, one employee of MCIC is a mentor to one of the trainees during his/her full stay in MCIC.



The obtained knowledge skills they will apply in the daily work

"Besides the work we did with the mentor, a short training for project cycle management was organized for us", says Darko Madzoski. "We had the training in phases and it is ongoing. I think it was very useful for us. What we need is to do these things in practice. I hope that this will be done in the next period of the training", Madzovski adds.

"When I came to MCIC I didn't know how a civil society organization works or how the civic sector functions", says Biljana Mitrovska. "I was one of the sceptics when this sector is under question and that was probably normal when I had so little information. In MCIC I decided to choose the Bridging Religions in Macedonia Program and through it to get introduced to the systems and procedures as well as with the activities in this segment of the work of MCIC. I can say that my opinion about the civil society sector has changed. My scepticism disappeared and now I try to "con-



The volunteers had opportunity to attend some of the MCIC trainings

vert" the sceptics, explaining to them what MCIC is doing regarding the issues of inter-religious dialogue. I feel more enthusiastic than before, I think I believe more that things can be improved", says Biljana Mitrovska. "I had the opportunity to assist in the finalization of some activities not only with my mentor, but also in other programs. I had some perception about MCIC before I came here and it has been confirmed. I was persuaded that this organization functions well. I believe that we need more time to be able to better cover all things and to make better use of this opportunity", thinks Aleksandar Jovanovski.

For Ema Struzanche too this is a first experience in the civil society sector. "I chose to be in the program "Applied education for young Roma", she says. "Before I came here when I would hear some information about Roma civil society organizations I was convinced that they are organizations which are being established to gain some money and not for some effect in the Roma education to be made. Now I can say that I completely changed my mind. Now when I have the opportunity to see reports about what has been done for the Roma children to be kept in school I understand I was deceived. In discussion with people I try to contest their statements which are very close to my previous stances", Struzanche says.

We hope that the young people which are part of MCIC's on-the-job training will have the possibility to use their new knowledge and gained skills and that when they leave MCIC they will continue to contribute to the development of civic sector in Macedonia.

HOW TO APPROACH THE EU FUNDS

The civil organizations are facing the problem of reduced donations. The main orientation for mobilizing funds should be the EU funds.
MCIC has prepared a guide called "The external help from the EU and Macedonia", for making out more easily in the EU aid labyrinths.
The guide offers information on the key EU institutions related to the aid, how to manage the funds, the EU project cycle, the frameworks for EU cooperation with Macedonia, the EU programmes and its financial instruments and many other useful information.
You can buy the guide at the MCIC for the price of 150 MKD.
Use the information, use the EU funds.



Bodies and parts of MCIC

GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Governing Board of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation held its regular 1st session on February 2nd, 2006.
At the session the GB approved the Draft-program Civil Society Strategy (SGO) 2006-2007 as well as the final reports for the projects: Comparative translations no. 05 10 MSM 301; Sanitation of the village of Choloshevo no. 05 08 VS3 103; Water-supply of the village Uzem no. 05 08 VS3 104; Water-supply of the village Kundino no. 04 08 VS3 109; Water-supply well for the village Milino no. 05 08 OZI 112; On the job training for young Roma no. 05 08 POR 116; Research regarding the educational condition of the Roma no. 05 08 POR 301; Bilingual school materials no. 05 08 POR 302; Roma in the Danish public no. 05 08 POR 402; Capacity building of youth organizations – phase 2, no. 04 10 GKG 202; Civic World, magazine and website no. 05 10 GSV 101; Publishing pages for mutual understanding no. 04 10 SMR 102; Technical support of religious communities no. 05 10 MSM 104; Inter-religious calendars no. 05 10 MSM 202; Follow-up consultations on EU issues no. 05 12 BNT 102; Fundraising and support training no. 05 12 BNT 104.

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