

Access to Justice and Human Rights

Goals

Foster an inclusive society in North Macedonia where women, girls, and LGBTQI+ individuals enjoy equal human rights, access to justice, and societal acceptance.

Duration

January 2024–December 2027

Total Funding

\$1,300,000

Implementing Partners

Coalition Margins in collaboration with the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Health Education and Research Association, and the Association for Educational Development Ekvalis

Key Counterparts

Law enforcement agencies
Centers for social protection
Informal support groups

Contact

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CHALLENGES

North Macedonia ranks last among 32 surveyed European countries in its acceptance of the LGBTQI+ community. Discrimination and violence persist against LGBTQI+ individuals, often unreported due to fear of reprisal. Further, gender-based violence (GBV) remains a major challenge, exacerbated by cultural norms and institutional barriers. In 2022, 517 cases of GBV were reported, but the real number remains unknown due to under-reporting tendencies. Accessing support services and securing justice for survivors remains difficult. There is a need for a comprehensive effort to address systemic issues to protect every person's human rights.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This activity will support improved response to the needs of survivors of GBV and marginalized communities in North Macedonia. Stakeholder engagement across the country aims to strengthen capacity, raise awareness, and enhance services to ensure the rights of LGBTQI+ citizens and survivors of GBV are upheld. In addition, the activity will foster collaboration and partnerships to create social change and promote inclusivity, ensuring every voice is heard and every individual is treated with respect and dignity. This approach not only amplifies impact but also builds stronger diverse communities, leading to a more accepting and just society.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased societal acceptance of marginalized communities.
- Improved effectiveness in the processing of acts of intolerance and GBV.
- Increased number of evidence-based policies related to LGBTQI+ issues and survivors of GBV grounded in relevant and accurate data.
- Strengthened support service delivery from designated national institutions and civil society organizations to vulnerable populations.
- Establishment of a supportive ecosystem for survivors of anti-LGBTQI+ attacks and GBV, prioritizing justice through improved implementation of legislation.

KEY RESULTS

Process Improvements

In the first half of 2024, the activity established a network of service providers and referral mechanisms between the Centers for Social Services and civil society organizations to increase reach and ensure greater coverage of support services to victims in need.



Support Service Delivery



In 2024, from January 2 - June 30, First Family Center served a total of 153 clients: 92 females and 61 males. During this period, clients made 780 visits during which they received a total of 921 services or consultations. From the total number of 153 clients, 25 clients are from the LGBTQI+ community; these clients received a total of 201 consultations or services.

Data Collection



In absence of official data collection, the activity monitored human rights violations against vulnerable communities from January to April 2024; 440 instances of hate speech, predominantly based on ethnic origin (238) instances related to sexual orientation and gender identity (70) were reported. Data will be used to develop policies on safeguarding human rights.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

European Court of Human Rights **confirmed admissibility** and **opened a case** of two female victims of gender-based violence. The case was initiated by the activity.

Upon a complaint made by activity partners, the Public Prosecutor's Office **initiated a case** of gender-based violence against a woman.

Increased capacities of judges and **public prosecutors** to address hate crime.

Built a supportive **community** at the Summer School for LGBTQI+ Youth and Straight/Cis **allies**.

Increased **visibility** and **public awareness** through the fifth Skopje Pride Parade and **Skopje Pride Weekend**.

