

Newsletter – No. 12

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First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi – 1992-2002

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1. Immediate action required: Violence against a Child

Last month, a very sad act occurred in Macedonia, an act that is against all human values and principals, an act that is violation of the UN Child Rights Convention. Two year old girl from Stip died in the Children's hospital because she was deadly beaten by her mother. And this was not the first time; she had been beaten since she was born. Our Embassy Megjashi reacted immediately by making a number of public appeals expressing our revolt and concern. We believe that this life was lost because of the neglect of the parents and the state agencies, which did not react on time. We could not bring the little girl's life back, but we hope that cooperating with the parents, NGOs and the state agencies, we could raise the public awareness about the need of better care and responsibility for the children and their best interests.

2. SOS training

In the period of last tree months of the implementation of the SOS project, financed by Balkan Children and Youth Foundation, there have been some changes of the present activities, which are worth to be mentioned. We have all these changes in order to make better the quality and capacity of the SOS phone service.

We are very pleased to announce that we have new SOS phone line:

466-588, which works from 12.00 to 20.00 every working day. Also, the

children and youths could contact us on our e-mail:

sos@childresembassy.org.mk. The number of volunteers is increased from 7 to 15. There is training for SOS volunteers, which is made by professionals

from different areas (psychologists, pedagogists, psychiatrists...) The training is made in several sessions. So far the sessions were:

- Workshop for non-violent action;
- Goals and functions of SOS phone;
- Communication and barriers of the same process;
- Active listening;
- Adolescence - identity (psycho-sexual);
- Promotion of healthy-sexual behaviour;
- Drug abuse prevention;
- Transactional analysis (principals of communication).

For the first time there is a supervisor of SOS service, Mr. Stanislav Petkovski, who is medical psychology expert. At the moment, we are preparing the campaign for promotion of the SOS phone line, for which you will be informed in the next newsletter.

3. Children's workshops

After a long time of voluntary work, the World Bank is financing our project Children's workshops. We will start with its implementation from April. The idea of the project is the same – two workshops a day in the area of Languages and creative skills, but new is the cooperation with the Centre for Social Work. The project will cover about 120 children from the Centre that is the children who live with tutors, those who have committed petty criminal acts and children from poor families. Our intention is beside the basic knowledge in specific field to show them the equal opportunities they could have, as the other children, in the processes of the further civic engagement and respect in multiethnic society.

We are grateful for the two computers for the workshops from National Bank that we hope will be very useful for some kids who maybe never had an opportunity to work with computers.

5. Mak Action

The First Children's Embassy is a partner organization to CSHI-Community Self Help Initiatives for implementing the project Macedonian Action Volunteers. The main goal of MAV is encouraging volunteerism to promote the quality of life in local communities. Other goals of the MAV project are: Improving the functioning of local volunteers' clubs through their capacity building and increasing the number of activities in local community; and promotion of multi-ethnic collaboration.

This is the 2nd phase (transitional phase) of the project during which the project will be transferred to FCEWM.

In March three towns came under FCEWM's management.

6. Meeting of the Collegium

On 10th March was the Annual meeting of the Collegium of our Embassy. The members of the highest body of our Embassy were informed about the new activities, projects and programs, which we intend to realize. For the first time a Supervisory Committee was formed and three new members of the Collegium were chosen. The new members are: Ana Bituljanu, Blagica Siljanovska and Lidija Baltovska. Because our work is changing and spreading more and more, Collegium decided to be made some changes of

the Statute. Until the end of March, the special formed commission accepted the changes and additions. The report of activities and financial report for 2002 were also accepted.

It was a great pleasure to hear the wonderful words and greetings from the members. We sincerely hope that we will accomplish our expectations for the next year too.

7. Advocacy actions

Our social service gave their best helping the three families accommodated in the refugee Camp in Cicino selo. These are the Macedonian social disadvantaged families who live there without the "privileges" of the other families, who are Roma refugees from Kosovo. Together we manage to provide supplies and goods for the next two-three months. We would like to thank Samantha, Tineks, EuroMilk, Zito Luks, Rimes and Rudine for the cooperation.

Since we got two computers for the workshops from National Bank, we have decided to give one of ours to poor family Mircevski who helped in several occasions and support our Embassy during the past years.

6. Disarming

On 23rd of February we organized an action of disarming with cooperation of the Association of journalists for Children's rights protection, in the yard of our Embassy. It was symbolic action: more than 100 children came to give us their toy-weapons in change for a book. The purpose was to make the responsible persons in the Assembly and the Government to speed up the process of passing the Law of Disarming and to take concrete measures for disarming of all who posses weapon without licence. We believe that this will provide a more safe and secure environment for the children.

8. Families in our Shelter

We are still living like one family with people at our Shelter for children in crises. Four displaced families from Aracinovo are here almost two years. Every day we struggle to help them, sincerely hoping for a more appropriate solution for their further accommodation.

We would like to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to all who helped us especially to Rotar AK that donated a washing machine for these families.

Thank You!

9. Participation in international conferences/trainings

Our Executive Director and co-founder Dragi Zmijanac, together with other representatives from Macedonia, made a visit, organized by MCIC – Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation, fro 13th to 15th February, of the NGO fair, Days of Civic Associations in Zagreb, Croatia.

On 14th February, our Program Manager and the founder Gordana Pirkovska Zmijanac took part in international conference about Deinstitutionalization of the Social Welfare Systems, organized by the Institute for Social Policy and Social Work with cooperation with the University of Stockholm. The purpose was to share the regional experiences that could help the preparation of the World conference about the new strategies for the New Millennium.

10. New members of Diplomatic Core

In the last newsletter we informed you about the new members of our Diplomatic Core and moreover we feel very honoured and happy that the membership is increasing, which shows us that our ideas, vision and mission are spreading all over the world. The new members are:

H.E. Baron Gennaro Cirilo Di Castelsangiorgio, Consul General in Napoli - Italy

H.E. Dr. Valerio Ciavolino, Vice Consul in Napoli - Italy.

Until the next time warm regards from Embassy team.