

## FIRST CHILDREN'S EMBASSY IN THE WORLD-MEGJASHI REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



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### **1. NEW CHILD AMBASSADOR CHOSEN**

The First Children's Embassy in the World - Megjashi, Republic of Macedonia, decided to nominate Stefan Pleskonik as child ambassador for the next four years at yesterday's staff conference. Stefan is a famous world artist with many rewards and recognitions. He is going to promote the embassy's activities and represent and spread its idea in the upcoming period.

At the same occasion, The First Children's Embassy in the World-Megjashi is going to present Stefan with diplomatic passport as a child ambassador.



## 2. DONATIONS

Donated packages and seasonal greeting cards additionally enhanced the joy and pleasure among the children in our shelter during the New Year holidays. We would like to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to: QBE Macedonia, Genel dooel, Okta, Peksim, Factory Evropa, who supplied New Years packages for the children, thanks to Jana Velinova - Video Data for donating a TV and video to one of the IDF<sup>1</sup>.

The embassy Megjashi, within its activities, helped six socially deprived families as well as families treated in our shelter. We would therefore like to thank the following donors: Rudine - Skopje (canned food); Milk factory Zdravje Radovo - Strumica (cheese); Mill Kadino - Skopje (flower); Gica - Ohrid (eggs); Pilko - Skopje (poultry); Agriprom - Kumanovo (eggs); Ekstra Mein - Kumanovo (meat products); Brilijant - Stip (cooking oil); Vipro - Gevgelija (canned products); Hart - Prom - Skopje (toilet paper and detergent); Kontimpeks - Skopje (tea, vinegar); Mile market - Skopje (macaroni, tea); Vitaminka - Prilep (food products); Alkaloid - Skopje (hygienic products); Laura cosmetics - Skopje (hygienic products); Energo market - Skopje (food products); Agripro - Valandovo (eggs); Podravka - Skopje (soups, mayonnaise, food for children); Dauti komerc - Skopje (macaroni, shampoo, food for children); Sentis Dzepciste - Tetovo (cheese); Bosta - Skopje (milk, shirts); Metro - Skopje (pate, sardines); Viva - Skopje (fruit juices); Rimes - Skopje (meat products); Teha - Tetovo (toilet paper); Ino Spektar - Skopje (juices); Droga - Skopje (coffee, pate); Euromilk - Al maks - Strumica (cooking oil); Eko Sar - Tetovo (cheese); Malami; Dalas Sara; Aktiv - Skopje; Zito Polog - Tetovo (flower); Geoprom Kruger - Skopje (vitamins tablets); Fruktal - Skopje (juices); Eterna Qvatro - Skopje (margarine); C & T - Skopje (detergents); Qvatro (milk); ZTPP - Siroka Planina - Mrsevci (flower); Holid company (sweets); Mis Globus - Skopje (meat products); Sugar factory 4 Noemvri AD - Bitola (sugar).

## 3. PROMOTION OF A BOOK ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi continuously works to improve the protection of children in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as to enable them to efficiently practice their rights guaranteed in the Convention on Children Rights. The embassy has printed the following books in order to inform children about their rights: "The rights of the child" and "My rights." In addition to informing children and youth, the embassy monitors the implementation of the Convention on Children Rights, acts upon violations of the rights guaranteed in the Convention, and informs the Committee on Children Rights in Geneva as to the status of children rights in Macedonia.

The book "Protection of children rights" is a compendium of the situation regarding children in the Republic of Macedonia, wherein the author Milica Paneva suggests certain recommendations aimed at improving the situation of children rights in Macedonia. Paneva is a member of the team of the Children Embassy, and former Assistant to the Minister and Councillor in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The printing of the book has been financially supported by **World Learning**.

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<sup>1</sup> Internally displaced families

#### 4. EVENTS

Based on the need for a larger contribution of the civil sector in the faster development of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the need for a greater participation of the civil sector in the development of democratic intercourse and the achievement of current and strategic interests for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, the First Children Embassy in the World – Megjashi, the Association of Revenue Employees, and the European Centre of Not-For-Profit Law organized a conference “Financial sustainability of the civil sector, philanthropy and taxation,” where the practice and experience in the Republic of Macedonia were compared to that of other countries.

The conference was financially supported by: MCNP USAID – Macedonia, NIOK Budapest, ECNP Budapest, The Hungarian Embassy in Macedonia, The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia, Mobimak – Skopje, The Centre for Institutional Development and the Open Society Institute – Macedonia.

The conference took place on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2005.



#### 5. CASES OF VIOLATION OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

According to the Statute of the First Children Embassy in the World Megjashi, Article 2, 3, 4 and 5, as well as the Convention on Children Rights ratified in the Assembly, Article 19 explicitly states that member states employ all legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical and psychological violence, injuries or abuse, neglect or mistreatment, torment or exploitation, and Article 2 states that measures will also be taken to prevent, establish, reporting, processing, investigation, legal processing, and follow-up of cases of violation of children rights.

❖ Relating to the physical and mental abuse of Ile Vasilev, a pupil in the elementary school “Goce Delcev” Vasilevo – Strumica, inflicted by the Headmaster Nikola Atanasovski, FCEWM was informed by the representative of the NGO Rosa from Strumica, as well as by the newspaper Dnevnik. The Embassy informed the Ombudsman Nevenka Krusarevska, and we have received information that an indictment has been

processed against the Headmaster of the school, in order to stop and prevent further abuse in the school.

❖ The First Children Embassy in the World Megjashi and the Association for Protection of Children Rights filled a criminal case to the Public Prosecutor's Office against persons distributing and selling private amateur porn videos featuring a juvenile from one of the schools in Skopje.

The case has been filed based in information received in printed and electronic media. According to the newspaper Dnevnik, the main actors in the video are a sixteen-year-old student from Skopje and her boyfriend, and the film is selling in Internet Cafés for 100- 200 denars. The scandalous video runs for half an hour, and is abundant in explicit sexual scenes...The criminal case is based on the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 152, Paragraph 1 and 3, banning the unauthorized recording, as well as Article 174 Paragraph 2, against disclosure of intimate and family circumstances.

We have stressed that this is a clear case of serious violation of right to privacy, damaging reputation and personal integrity, and we have called upon the State to act in accordance to the signed and verified Convention on Children Rights. Article 34 of the Convention states the member states shall employ all measures to prevent exploitation of children in pornographic display, videos, and magazines. Article 15 of the Convention also states that no child shall be subject to unauthorized or illegal interference in his/her private life, as well as illegal attacks against his/her reputation of honour. Both organizations expect the Public Prosecutor to act in the line of duty against the perpetrators. Our contacts with the Deputy Public Prosecutor have led to the information that full information from the Ministry of Interior is required before a case can be initiated.

❖ During the election campaign of one of the candidates for the Mayor of Skopje, Mr. Risto Penov, was photographed with a child on one of his billboards. FCEWM reacted to this through the media, stating that "candidates for Mayor should care for the needs of the children by incorporating their needs into their election programmes, but to act to prevent their exploitation in their video ads, billboards or meetings. The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia has ratified the Convention on Children Rights and therefore children should be exempt from any form of political exploitation."

Following this, the Ombudsman Idzet Mehmeti appealed to all political actors involved in the political campaign to ensure the protection of children against political manipulation and exploitation.

After these reactions, the Headquarters of the Candidate for Mayor Risto Penov, announced that all billboards or ads showing children in the course of the campaign will be withdrawn from further use.

❖ Viktor Dimovski, a pupil in the Elementary School Dimo Hadzi Dimov in Skopje, was a victim of physical violence inflicted by an adult within the school. FCEWM was informed in written by the parent of the victim Viktor, Lidija Dimovska of this event.

Megjashi filled a case before the Ombudsman appealing for the enactment of all measures to protect the rights of the child. According to Article 9 of the Law for Protection of Children

and Article 64 of the Law on Elementary Education, physical or mental abuse of children is forbidden.

## **6. CONFERENCE (Training for nonviolent resolution of conflicts)**

The First Children's Embassy in the World-Megjashi has organized training for nonviolent resolution conflicts within the project "Friendship through the multiethnic cooperation in 5 multiethnic clubs in the high schools".

Professors from 5 high schools (from those schools where these projects are implemented) participated in the training: DSMU PanceKaragozov(Skopje). DSMU NikolaStajn(Tetovo),DSU Nikola Karev (Skopje),Cvetan Dimov(Skopje),DSU Nace Bugoni (Kumanovo)

The training was intended for the professors who are motivated towards involvement in activities for building peace, protection of the human rights, the rights of minorities, gender equality, work with the children and juveniles, connecting different national and ethnical groups and organizations, and the strengthening of their mutual understanding and trust.

During the training, the following themes were discussed: the meaning of violence and non-violence, prejudices, understanding of conflicts, non-violent communication, identities/national identities, team work, the role of gender and origin in the society, power, building peace.



The training team was formed from the following trainers: Gordana Pirkovska-Zmijanac (FCEW-Megjashi-Skopje), Blerim Jasari(CBS Ljoja-Tetovo), Ana Bitoljanu (FCEW-Megjashi-Skopje), Nenad Vukosavljevik (CAN Belgrade).

The main purpose of the project is the development of ethnical dialogue and the improvement of the cooperation between the teachers and the high school pupils from different ethnic backgrounds; and the strengthening of the capacities of the 5 multiethnic clubs in the high schools.

The project is financed by the European Commission

## **7. SOS PHONE FOR CHILDREN AND JUVENILES**

телефон за деца и млади



02 246 6588



Since the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 several activities have happened and as have changes in the working of the phone line.

**SOS phone for children and juveniles** became a number of CHI (Children Helpline International), and our representatives took part in the regional meeting of SOS phone lines for children, held in Zagreb and at the international conference of SOS phone lines for children and juveniles in the Netherlands.

From the 3rd till the 5th December an NGO Fair was held where we promoted our calendars and pens, as well as existing promotional material, and these were given throughout schools in Macedonia.

At the end of the year, we held a press conference during which we introduced journalists to our work and the problems we have, we promoted the brochure for work of the SOS phone line which was made by its supervisor Stanislav Petkovski.

Starting from the New Year the working time of the phone was extended, and it now operates from 8.30 till 20.00.

We have engaged a further member, Maja Korubin who is a psychology graduate. Maja is in charge of ensuring the continuity of the project.

Contacts with the media is on-going. In the last period 9 interviews were given for different printed and electronic medias: radio Slobodna Evropa, Macedonian radio, Vest, Dnevnik, Utrinski Vesnik, Pogled i Vecer.

The project is financed until the end of April, by BCYF (Balkan Foundation for Children and Youth). At the moment we are searching for a sponsor who would help in the continuation of the work of the SOS phone line for children and juveniles.

Below you can read about one of the calls that we had in the past period on the SOS phone line for children and juveniles, and about the help given from our side.

A sixteen year old girl was under stress because of violence in her home and asked us for help. The girl and her brother live with their father but they are constantly physically and emotionally molested by him (he constantly shouts, threatens and hits them). The mother has been thrown out of the house by her husband and is helpless. The children would like to live with their mother, because the terror the father brings is unbearable. We had a deal –the mother should call the Center for protection of the children's rights and obtain information about the procedure to get custody of them and in the meanwhile they would try not get into quarrels with the father. After few days we had another call from the same person, were informing us about the progress of events and that there is a case going on in the Center for protection of the children's rights.

## 8. SHELTER FOR CHILDREN IN CRISIS

“Almost three and a half years have passed since we first came to stay at The First Children’s Embassy in the World-Megjashi. Apart from bad memories from before, we pass our time here with pleasure and happiness. Different activities help us to forget the bad moments of our life. Here we have found lots of paths have been opened up that can lead us to the future. The humanity that was given to us from the people here has inspired us to become good people in the future. Besides that, we owe much to aunt Gorde and uncle Dragi who have been like our second parents for all these years.”-said Ivana and Sanela, two thirteen year old girls from our shelter.

We also send our gratitude to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy who are providing us with the necessary financial resources for the families.

## **9. CONSOLIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FCEW-MEGJASHI**

Within this programme strengthening of the organizational working with supplying of the human and material resources has been planned, advertisement of the independent auditor’s report in the daily press, as well as the printing of the annual and financial reports prepared by independent auditors.

We would like to welcome Tatjana Palcevska-our Accounts Officer and to Emilija Milevska-Programme Assistant who are both actively involved in the activities of FCEW-Megjashi. Thanks to their work, preparation of the financial report was very quickly and successfully finished.

The FCEW-Megjashi team has one more colleague Jasminka Bozinovska-the technical leader of the office.

This programme is financially supported by the Macedonian Center for International Co-operation.

## **10. THE CHILDREN’S WORKSHOPS**

Within this project several workshops are being held: English, French, computer education, education about human values, art, journalism and origami, every working day from 16.00-20.30. The groups consists of children aged from 4 to 14 , and each group consists of 10-12 children.

The good thing about the workshops is that the children who are beneficiaries of social security can become our members without paying membership, just by showing the cheque for social security that their family receives. For all others the membership is a symbolic: 250 denars.

This kind of informal education has generated big interest in the printed and electronic media, for which we have given interviews. For example for the daily newspapers Vecer and Vest,as well as for Macedonian National Radio. Through this media, the wider public has been introduced to the work of our workshops.

This project was financially supported by Embassy Megjashi itself until February of this year, and from March till June The Children’s Workshops will be supported by the Australian Embassy in Belgrade. In the future we also hope to find another donor who will supply the children of our Children’s workshops with some kind of snack.

The number of children visiting the workshops is 110. Each volunteer has a class once as week that lasts for 90 minutes. This year as a result of the great interest and participation, the workshops are held in three classes per day, from 16.:00 to 17:30, from 17:30 to 19:00 and from 19:00 to 20:30.The Children’s Workshops are being coordinated by Tamara Radulovik-Jovanovska



Goodbye - until the next edition!

Kind regards

from the team of **The First Children's Embassy in the World-Megjashi Republic of Macedonia**