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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Partner country

Republic of North Macedonia

## Contracting authority

First Children’s Embassy in the World - Megjashi

## Country background

*Children* have the right to be heard and the right to influence matters of importance to them. They are directly affected by the decisions local leaders make in education, environment, child and social protection and urban planning, but are often excluded from the decision-making. Worryingly, 6 out of 10 young people in the country believe they cannot have any impact on the way authorities work, while 85% of them have never been consulted by authorities.[[1]](#footnote-1) Children point out that the underestimation of their opinion by adults is one of the main obstacles due to which they cannot change the things that matter to them, while some point out the lack of experience, lack of information, insufficient help from adults, systemic obstacles and social norms that restrict child participation.[[2]](#footnote-2) Thus, adequate platforms for children’s participation should be developed, alongside the provision of substantive support and awareness-raising to facilitate children’s participation at a local level. While both younger and older children can participate, different age groups will require different communication approaches and have different facilitation needs and varying interests. Megjashi's 2020 research found that the municipalities across the country consider that they have insufficient human, technical and financial resources for the development and implementation of robust action plans for children’s rights. Significant investment in capacity development and training for *local government representatives*, alongside the creation of political will are acknowledged as vital prerequisites for meaningful strategic planning for children and children’s participation in local governance.[[3]](#footnote-3) By training administrative staff, not only council members, as well as by mainstreaming the training of local government representatives through local government associations, such as *ZELS* would ensure that the knowledge and capacity can be maintained following elections and scaled up. *School and ECEC staff* have extensive experience of working with children and are in a favourable position to facilitate children’s participation activities and build constructive relationships with local government on a long term. However, they lack knowledge of local government processes, expertise in children’s participation and skills for supporting children’s development in areas such as leadership, decision-making, communication, problem–solving and advocacy, which are key to their effective participation in municipal development planning. Successful realization of children’s rights requires active engagement by the full range of local duty bearers, including *CSOs working on children’s rights, children’s human rights defenders, academic institutions, researchers, groups of professionals working with children, parents’ organizations, the private sector and media.* While these partners can contribute with valuable, highly place-specific operational knowledge across a diverse set of localities, they remain fragmented and their potential in local planning is not realised. Finally, among *the general public* there is lack of interest in children’s rights that needs to be challenged and addressed urgently, alongside the existing social norms that discourage children’s civic engagement.

Technical and management capacities of target groups and local co-applicants: The main target groups and the local stakeholders lack knowledge and capacities in children’s rights, children’s participation and comprehensive local planning for children.

**Megjashi** is a pioneer in children rights and protection in the country. Since 1992, Megjashi has been implementing targeted and tailored to the actual needs projects and initiatives across the country, contributing significantly in advancing children’s rights and in raising public awareness. The President and other employees of Megjashi are members of national bodies established for promotion of children’s rights, such as the National coordination body for Juvenile Justice, the National action plan of children’s rights, the National coordination body for protection and prevention of children from abuse and neglect and the Working group for the National Action plan for fight against children trafficking 2021-2025, and in that capacity they actively contribute to the legal proposals that these bodies work on. Megjashi is a member of [Child Helpline International (CHI),](https://childhelplineinternational.org/north-macedonia-alo-bushavko/) [ECPAT International,](https://ecpat.org/country/macedonia-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of/) [End Violence against Children](https://www.end-violence.org/members/first-childrens-embassy-world-megjashi-republic-macedonia). Megjashi has been cooperating regionally with regional partners on many projects.

**KMOP Skopje** has extensive experience in national and international projects aimed at improving the quality of social and educational services for children, as well as capacity-building of parents and professionals working with children, including through development of a diversity of learning resources and digital platforms.

## Current situation in the sector

N. Macedonia has ratified the CRC in 1993 and as stated in the last N. Macedonia 2023 Report of the European Commission [1], “various legislative, institutional and policy measures protect the rights of the child in line with international standards and EU *acquis”*, though “better legislative framework, more funding and more human resources are needed across most sectors.” The Commission recommends that “children need to be more involved in the making of policies related to or affecting children’s rights”. Alike, in the last report of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the CRC, urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programs “

The First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi [2], founded in 1992 operates on local, national, regional and international level, being a member of many international networks and associations.

It is committed to respecting the child's personality by protecting their rights, advocating for children's interests and enriching life with content that makes childhood safe and creative. Strengthens the NGO movement for the rights of the child, developing a voluntary approach to work and ensuring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Megjashi carries out its mission and vision through:

· Psycho-social, legal, and other support for all children;

· Monitoring of children's rights, reporting and promotion of children's rights [3]

· Initiating advancement of the child rights legal regulation

· Peace building and non-violent conflict resolution

**Practicing children’s participation in own work and in the projects**

Megjashi has established a Children’s Council, an advisory body to the Megjashi’s General Assembly in February 2020 that would inform the Assembly what are their concerns and where should Megjashi direct its work.

In many projects and activities Megjashi is promoting children’s participation – in the City of Skopje’s Strategy for children’s rights, a working group consisted of 15 students from several highs schools from Skopje was part of the development process of the Strategy; in the Local governance for child-friendly cities and communities children’s participation is one of the topics of capacity building activities for local government officials and educational specialists, while children’s participation is obligatory part of the process of development of the local strategies for children’s rights. Furthermore, in all its public events that concern children in any way, children are actively involved in them, either as speakers at conferences, as leaders of processes and/or peer trainers or coordinators.

## Related programmes and other donor activities

**Projects related to children rights**

Megjashi in the last three years has implemented or is still implementing children’s rights related projects. In 2021, Megjashi implemented a short project, funded by the budget of one Skopje’s municipality, aiming at assessing the state of the children’s rights in the municipality through facilitating a children lead process of conducting the survey and preparing the report. In 2022 Megjashi implemented a project funded by the City of Skopje’s Budget to develop a Strategy for promotion of children’s rights for the City of Skopje.

**Promoting children’s rights through Peace education programme, 2011 - ongoing**

The programme is aimed at building capacities of teaching and professional staff of 30+ schools throughout the country. The focus is on developing sensitivity for violence and violence prevention and response, (non-violent) communication, building team work skills and strengthening team work. The teachers are empowered to transfer the built skills to their students through various activities. Among topics and training offered to teachers are children’s rights.

**Macedonian national NGO coalition for children's rights - monitoring of the state of the rights of the children at national level, 1997- ongoing**

Since 1997, Megjashi has been regularly preparing alternative reports on the state of the children’s rights in the country and submitting them to the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child. Until today, Megjashi has submitted five alternative reports, of which, three are developed by non-governmental organizations from all over the country and two alternative reports are prepared by children themselves. For the purposes of the NGO’s developed reports Megjashi has established and facilitates a non-formal coalition of 30+ NGOs that work in the area of children’s rights and facilitates and leads the process of report development.

**Promoting safe school environment 2023– on going**

Children from 26 primary and 24 secondary schools, enjoy their right to quality education in a safe and participatory school environment. When it comes in mentioning the possible outcomes or results from implementation of the activities that are detailed in the project planning, Megjashi is striving for development on the already existent mechanisms and possible instruments that will aid and support in addressing, preventing and tackling the violence against children in the educational system on different possible levels. For that purpose, the activities that should be implemented by Megjashi are mainly divided into two sections: Child/ student protection against violence and, Child/ student participation in against violence. The project is focusing on the strengthening the collaboration and communication between the school support staff and the parents of the students and the roles of the parents in the whole process in prevention against violence.

# OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

## Overall objective

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part is as follows: *To strengthen local governments’ efforts in advancing children’s rights and children’s participation in local planning*.

## Purpose

The purpose of this contract is as follows:

**WP2: PROMOTING LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS**

* Purpose 1: Support the involved local authorities in developing and operationalizing strategies for children’s rights through a participative process.
* Purpose 2: Stimulate exchange of experiences and practices and enable local governments to learn from leading child-friendly local authorities in the EU that are experienced in local planning for children; Fostering active engagement of the local communities in the local planning processes for children’s rights.

## Results to be achieved by the contractor

The results to be achieved by the Contactor are described below:

* Support the organization of Local Conferences (A2.2.) and support the insurance of successful implementation of activity outputs: 5 half – day Local Conferences; at least 150 key stakeholders; each of the facilitators for their municipality of action.
* Support the organization of Local Children’s Rights Panels (A2.3.); Membership constitution and final membership lists; 5 constitutive sessions of LCRP’s and attendance lists; each of the facilitators for their municipality of action.
* Organize the Consultations with at least 50 children in each of the target municipalities together with the ECEC and school staff (A2.4.), facilitated by the engaged local facilitator from the municipality of action; organization of 5 consultations in each of the targeted municipalities.
* Support the Organization of at least three in person (3) support sessions per municipality (A2.5.).
* Active communication and cooperation with the project team
* Timely Prepared Interim and Final Report

# ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

## Assumptions underlying the project

It is assumed that there is availability of the required expertise is expected.

## Risks

There are no particular risks related to this contract listed in the project document.

# SCOPE OF THE WORK

## General

### Description of the assignment

The purpose of this contract is to facilitate the process of the Local Strategic Planning on Children’s rights WP2 “Promoting Local Strategic Planning on Children’s Rights”. The consultant / the local facilitators should help the Local Strategic Planning expert in securing all necessary needs for developing a planning program and support the carrying out capacities building activities under WP2 and facilitate the drafting of the strategic plans per municipality (5 Municipalities). The organization of the Local Conferences (A2.2.) will be carried out by the expert and the local facilitators organizing the participants and facilitate the overall process in their municipality. The Local Conferences will be aimed to inform local stakeholders of the planned establishment of the Local Children’s Rights Panels and their role in drafting and monitoring the strategies for children’s rights. Also, will participate in organizing the Local Children’s Rights Panels (A2.3.) foreseen to be implemented together with the Local Conferences in the 5 targeted municipalities. The development of a local children’s rights strategy must follow the principles promoted by a child friendly municipality. One of the key principles is children’s participation in issues that concern them, i.e., any activity that relates to children should include ways to involve them. For this foreseen action, are planned Consultations with children (A2.4.), where support from the facilitators will be needed, involving at least 50 children in each of the target municipalities. The consultations will be facilitated by the ECEC and school staff trained within A1.4 Design and implementation of an extensive ToT for ECEC and school staff, and in line with the Consultation Methodology prepared by Megjashi.

The targeted action municipalities are the following:

Gostivar Municipality

Debar Municipality

Kisela Voda Municipality, Skopje

Vinica Municipality

Veles Municipality

In each of the municipalities will be organized Support Sessions (A2.5.), 3 in person supporting sessions per municipality. Covering all the key milestones in the local strategies development, including: i) defining of the priority areas of action which the municipality wishes to influence; ii) defining the aims of the local strategies; iii) development of a logical model (structure of the strategy); iv) setting out the actions that would be taken, expected outcomes and indicators.

### Geographical area to be covered

Republic of North Macedonia

### Target groups

Тhe ***target groups*** of the action are:

1) at least 50 local governments’ and 2 Association of municipalities (ZELS) representatives to benefit from the capacity-building activities in children’s rights and local planning for children;

2) at least 100 education staff from all levels of education to benefit from the training in children’s rights and children’s participation;

3) at least 5 local governments to be supported in the development, operationalisation and monitoring of the local strategies for children’s rights;

4) at least 100 key local stakeholders, including civil society organizations working on children’s rights, children’s human rights defenders, academic institutions, researchers, groups of professionals working with children, parents’ organizations, the private sector and media to be involved in the development and operationalization of local plans for children;

5) at least 250 children to benefit from being consulted on issues of local importance.

The ***final beneficiaries*** of the action are children (aged 3-18) who live in five municipalities included in the project who will benefit from the improved local planning informed on their needs and the more favourable conditions for the promotion, realisation and protection of children’s rights, as well as the local communities in these municipalities that can become more aware of the importance of holistically addressing issues related to the well-being of children and nurturing active children’s participation in the democratic life from the youngest age.

The ***key stakeholders*** of the action include the Municipality of Vinica, the Municipality of Debar, the Municipality of Gostivar, the Municipality of Veles and the Municipality of Kisela Voda (Skopje), the Association of municipalities (ZELS), as well as CSOs working on children’s rights, children’s human rights defenders, academic institutions, researchers, groups of professionals working with children, parents’ organizations, the private sector, the media and the local communities. Consultations have been held with most of these groups (general or during the action’s preparation), since the project partners are cooperating with and/or involving them in the context of their activities. The stakeholders welcome the action, as it supports the key thematic policy documents concerning children’s rights, including the National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence (2020-2025), the National Strategy for Youth (2016-2025) and National Education Strategy (2018-2025).

## Specific work

* Support the organization of Local Conferences (A2.2.) and support the insurance of successful implementation;
* Support the organization of Local Children’s Rights Panels (A2.3.);
* Organize the Consultations with at least 50 children in each of the target municipalities together with the ECEC and school staff (A2.4.);
* Organization of at least three in person (3) support sessions per municipality (A2.5.).

The action is related to the Municipality of action from the targeted Municipalities.

## Project management

### Responsible body

Responsible body for implementation of this contract is the First Children’s Embassy in the World Megjashi, Address: Kosta Novakovikj, No.22а, 1000 Skopje,

email: [placetogrow@childrensembassy.org.mk](mailto:placetogrow@childrensembassy.org.mk);

Responsible person for managing the project and the tasks related to this contract are the Project Manager and the Project Assistant.

### Management structure

The current management structure of the project related to this contrast is as following:

1. Project Manager: Iskra Kacarska from Megjashi, responsible for the overall management of this service contract including the successful and timely carrying out of tasks by the Consultant.

2. Project Assistant: Klementina Dobrevska from Megjashi, will provide assistance to the Project Manager and administrative support for realization of the project activities.

Single Tender Procedure for procurement of services applies for this contract. The documentation for this tender is prepared by the project office in Skopje.

### Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

No facilities are to be provided by the Contracting Authority. However, the CA will provide all available information and will fully co-operate with the Consultant in order to achieve the best results. Access to the existing records, any useful information and/or documentation which may be relevant to the performance of the Contract will be provided upon request.

# LOGISTICS AND TIMING

## Location

Republic of North Macedonia

## Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 08.04.2024 the period of implementation of the contract will be 9 months from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

# REQUIREMENTS

## Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

### Key experts

Key experts are defined, and they must submit CVs.

5 consultants responsible for provision of expertise in facilitating the process of local strategic planning working groups from each of the targeted municipalities:

* Municipality of Veles
* Municipality of Gostivar
* Municipality of Debar
* Municipality of Vinica
* Municipality of Kislea Voda

***Qualifications and skills***

* has a professional background in Local Authorities Staff or ECEC school staff;
* has a knowledge in Local Strategic Planning programs on municipal level and/or related relevant documentation of the topics in this field;
* knowledge of English language;
* has participated on extensive training for active children’s participation in local planning;
* excellent performance related to preparation and organization working groups on municipal level; professional municipal support in drafting Local Strategic Plans; strong project management abilities.

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

### Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

## Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

## Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

## Equipment

**No** equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

# REPORTS

## Reporting requirements

The contractor will submit the following reports in Macedonian or English in one original.

* **Draft final report** of maximum 20 pages (main text, excluding annexes). This report shall be submitted no later than one month before the end of the period of implementation of tasks.
* **Final report** with the same specifications as the draft final report, incorporating any comments received from the parties on the draft report. The deadline for sending the final report is 10 days after receipt of comments on the draft final report. The report shall contain a sufficiently detailed description of the different options to support an informed decision. The detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations will be presented in annexes to the main report. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

## Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## Definition of indicators

n.a

## Special requirements

n.a

1. UNICEF (2021). Children and young people are counting on local elections. <https://uni.cf/3AaNtCe> [Accessed on 09.08.2022]. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Megjashi (2020). Alternative report of non-governmental organizations on the state of children’s rights in Macedonia. <https://bit.ly/3A8Kyd4> [Accessed on 09.08.2022]. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNICEF (2019). Child Participation in Local Governance. <https://uni.cf/3p5Rv8D> [Accessed on 09.08.2022]. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)