

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013

In 2013, Reactor's activities were implemented in accordance with the Reactor 2011-2013 Strategy and our annual plan for 2013. This report highlights the main achievements of the organization, both in terms of influencing policies as well as organizational development, and covers issues of financial sustainability and future plans.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF PLANNED OBJECTIVES

GENDER EQUALITY

In 2013 our gender equality program implemented several activities, mainly focused on the local elections and participation of women in politics, and on the monitoring of the first Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020, adopted on February 20th 2013. Additionally, the program was also engaged in an informal pro-choice coalition, initiated as a response to the introduction and later the adoption of a new restrictive Abortion Law by Parliament in June 2013.

The main focus in 2013 was the Gender Reactor (Родов Реактор) website, which visualizes gender disaggregated data to show the status of women in the country. This was our most data-heavy website to date, with data extracted from 25 publications and presented in 140 interactive charts and 10 info-graphics. The collection of data and development of the website was conducted over the entire reporting period, in part because it was data-heavy, but also because, without a pressing deadline for its launch, we used it as training and learning exercise for the junior researchers, who worked under the mentorship of the senior staff. Initial feedback for the website has been very good and we expect that it will have a large variety of users when it is launched in March 2014.

While we dropped the work on the planned policy study "Women in Local Government" due to the rejection of the application for this project submitted to the National Endowment for Democracy, with the support from TTF we monitored the election of female candidates during the local elections as well as the appointment of female representatives in positions of power after the elections. Namely, since we did not have the funding on time, we used our resources to only map the context and monitor the practice of 'voluntarily withdrawal' of elected women in municipal councils. In addition, we partnered with the National Democratic Institute to design a three-year program that will lead to a genuine increase of participation of women in local politics. The program's goal is to research local economies in an effort to pursue political parties to nominate only women candidates in certain municipalities. Additionally, NDI will work on strengthening the political candidates and proposing political party platforms based on the evidence produced by Reactor. In parallel, Reactor was selected to be a mentor to an elected woman that holds local official position, in an effort to transfer knowledge and advocate for more gender sensitive policies. These activities are part of a larger initiative led by women NGOs in Macedonia, and supported by UN Women.

Monitoring the implementation of the first Strategy for Gender Equality 2013-2020 was also one of the key activities in the 2013. The activities were focused on designing the methodology, networking with other NGOs working in the field of gender equality and develop gender equality

indicators for monitoring success, since many of the stakeholders consulted had criticized the indicators contained in the new strategy. The first assessment is expected to be published at the end of February 2014 to coincide with the marking on one year of the implementation of the new strategy.

Reactor was heavily involved in the activities organized by the civil society organizations around the adoption of the Law on Abortion, a process that started in July 2013 and continues today. Namely, Reactor co-organized protests in front of the Parliament, and participated at the Parliamentary hearing in June 2013, as well as led advocacy campaign that resulted with Letters from the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#) and from [Members of the European Parliament to the Macedonian Parliament](#), urging for more transparent and inclusive process of adopting the new abortion law, as well as pointing to European and international standards in this area. The Government's lack of transparency and failure to include gender equality organization was also criticized in the proposed [EP Motion on Macedonia](#). The My Body – My Choice Informal Coalition that Reactor joined has become a strong advocate for women's rights. It was motivated by the lack of transparency in which the Law on Abortion was passed; it is a joint platform of eight formal and informal organizations.¹ The initiative wants to bring closer to the broader public the consequences of the new law, as well as to engage them actively in the actions for the promotion of the right to safe and legal abortion. Within the initiative a documentary film was produced as well as the first number of the newspaper was released in December 2013. In parallel, Reactor led a litigation campaign and coordinated efforts that led to the submission of a Constitutional Court Petition calling for the annulment of several provisions. While the Constitutional Court has not yet reached a decision whether they will take the case or decide that it is not admissible, they have already rejected a separate initiative about the same law (although limited to only one provision), with one dissenting opinion.

Additionally, Reactor was engaged in a few initiatives on the international level with regard to gender equality. Namely, Reactor was consulted and contributed to the development of a [Report on the Status of Women in the Balkans](#) by the European Parliament and campaigned for adoption of a resolution by the EP. Additionally, in a joint effort twenty CSOs,² Reactor submitted a [shadow report within the Universal Periodic Review of Macedonia](#) in June 2013, and our concerns were presented in Geneva in December 2013.

Finally, our annual tradition to mark International Women's Day on March 8th by raising awareness about the disadvantaged position of women in Macedonia was very successful this year. We opted for an online campaign that involved an info-graphic posted on our website and Facebook page, which went viral with a Facebook reach of over 25.000.

Gender equality program products in the reporting period:

Video – Jas nema da goltnam <http://vimeo.com/83306899>

Local election and women – unpublished used for the development of NDI co-sponsored project Constitutional Court Petition against the Adoption Law

Scoping Study on the Violence Against Women in Skopje – second edition

¹ Titled as Matka (Womb) it is composed of Tiiiit! Inc., H.E.R.A – Health and Research Association, Reactor – Research in Action, LezFem - LGBTI Support Centre - Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of Republic of Macedonia, Coalition Sexual and Health Right of Marginalized Communities, Fight like a woman, Way Out Student Organization, Contrapunkt and Zdruzhenka.

² Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, 18th Session, by ad hoc coalition consisted of: Foundation Open Society – Macedonia; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia; Association of journalist of Macedonia; Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women; Civil – Center for Freedom; Coalition All For Fair Trials; Coalition Sexual and Health Rights of the Marginalized Communities; First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi; Health Education and Research Association - H.E.R.A.; Healthy Option Project - HOPS; Institute for Human Rights; Izbor; Macedonian Young Lawyers Association; National Roma Centrum; NGO Infocenter; Open Gate – La strada; Reactor - Research in Action; Republic Centre for Support of Persons with Intellectual Disability – PORAKA; Roma Organization for multicultural affirmation - ROMA SOS Prilep; and Youth Cultural Center.

YOUTH PROGRAM

During 2013 we significantly reduced our activities in the Youth Program, as we slowly transitioned out of a leading and into a consultative role in the Republic of Youth Initiative, allowing youth organizations to take over. We did not plan new projects for 2013, as we had two projects continuing from 2012 (USAID and US Embassy).

In 2013 we were involved in the Civil Society project supported by USAID Macedonia, for which we worked on analyzing and presenting the data collected with the civic engagement survey. In addition to an initial report on the findings, we produced a Civic Engagement policy study. The study is coupled with a short online and visualized version of the findings to accompany the study, which we want to include with all our studies in the future. The civic engagement survey's promotion was organized in cooperation with FOSM and happened on December 4, International Volunteer Day. The debate was used to open issues and discuss various aspects of civic engagement in Macedonia, in particular cooperation and possibilities for influencing authorities, especially on the local level, youth activism and solidarity among Macedonian citizens. The second civic engagement survey identifies stable trends almost in all aspects and indicators measured within the survey.

Additionally, we conducted two assessments of the grant application received as part of the project to identify strengths and weaknesses of the applicant CSOs. Based on those findings, Reactor organized two clinics – workshops to discuss findings and help civil society organizations develop better project to be financed through the USAID Civil Society Project.

We also continued our involvement in the E-democracy project for strengthening the Youth Council of the US Embassy in Skopje. Our web developer mainly coordinated the first half of the activities; working with both the Youth Council in Skopje and in Riga to provide technical assistance. She was also part of a knowledge exchange visit to Riga early in the year. Following the exchange, Reactor supported the Youth Council in the development of an action plan, as well as provided a series of three trainings throughout the country (in Berovo, Debar and Krusevo) on youth unemployment. The initiative was called “The hardest job is to find a job” and included two-day trainings for a total of 112 youth. In addition, we drafted and published a brochure was on soft skills and information about finding employment. The trainings were supported by the local municipalities. Following the trainings and based on the feedback received by the participants, a one day Career Expo was organized on October 9, 2013 at Mala Stanica in Skopje. The event consisted of two parts: the first part involved motivational speeches by successful diplomats, business leaders, and leaders from the non-governmental sector (11 guest speakers in total); and the second was a job fair (52 companies and organizations) and workshops led by 14 youth-oriented NGOs. The [event](#) attracted over 300 youth attendees over the course of the day.

We continued our involvement with the In Defense for Participation coalition towards the establishment of the National Youth Council. One of the junior researchers is assigned to represent Reactor as one of the organizers of the events leading up to the establishment of the council, with our President providing expert assistance and participating only in a consultative role. Our representative was involved in setting up the framework for the council (defining the statute, scope and member eligibility requirements) and the National Youth Council was finally established at the end of June this year. While there were some activities between the Government and the National Youth Council, strong support and cooperation has not been established yet. Based on feedback from Reactor, the European Parliament in its Resolution for

Macedonia welcomed the establishment of the National Youth Council and urged the Agency for Youth and Sport to support and cooperate with the council.

In 2013 Reactor has monitored the process of the adoption of the first Youth Strategy by the Municipality of Skopje. After the consultation process, Reactor monitored whether the written comments made by several organizations³ will be reflected in the adopted Youth Strategy or at least whether an explanation is provided in case these comments are not addressed by the authorities. Reactor's monitoring concluded that the consultations were superficial and that no comments were reflected in the adopted strategy, nor was there a report made available on the consultation process. While the adopted Youth Strategy is available on the [web portal](#), the decision for its adoption has not been published in the Official Municipal Gazette. Reactor requested an official answer from the Municipality at the end of December 2013, and in the next period an advocacy campaign will be developed with other youth NGOs to secure implementation of the strategy.

In the second quarter we were contracted by the Youth Educational Forum to prepare the methodology for one of their studies. We designed the questionnaire and trained 10 CSOs from regional countries on how to conduct a study of youth and media, using multiple research methods to cover all stakeholders (youth, youth organizations, media organizations, and media outlets.) Reactor also provided the analysis of the Macedonian study and the comparative regional study (covering 10 countries). The studies will be promoted at a regional event scheduled for 7-8 February 2014 in Skopje.

Finally, this year we cooperated with the Center for Intercultural Learning (CID) from Kumanovo, in their effort to map civil society organizations and assess their level of development in South-Eastern Macedonia. Reactor conducted an online survey and based on the 65 responses, we produced a preliminary assessment of the situation with the civil society organizations in this region. The report was presented by Reactor in Kumanovo in December 2013 and will serve for the development of training and other capacity building activities to be implemented by CID throughout 2014.

Youth program publications in the reporting period:

Policy memo on the draft Strategy for Youth of the City of Skopje

Civic Engagement Survey

Civic Engagement website <http://civicengagement.mk>

Assessment of civil society sector in South-East Macedonia

“Generation ‘Getting Nowhere’: The Transitions of Unemployed Youth in Transitional Macedonia.” In Eds. Claire Gordon, Marko Kmezic, Jasmina Oparidija. *Stagnation and Drift in the Western Balkans*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2013.

<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seite=ntyp=produkt&pk=65778&concordeid=431152>

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

As planned, we have continued with the implementation of the 2012 project SkopjeRaste funded by OSF IP/TTF through the Policy-relevant Research and Evidence-based Advocacy grant scheme. The project was officially launched in June 2013, so thus far we have been involved in data collection, as well as promotion and advocacy for greater inclusion of citizens in urban development processes. A highlight in this program in the reporting period was the presentation of the SkopjeRaste website at a New York University conference on Innovations in International Development, where it was the only project presented in Innovations in Urban Development. An

³ Among which Reactor, Youth Educational Forum, Youth Can and HERA

additional highlight is that the web platform won third place in the Data Visualizations competition hosted by On Think Tanks.

The first 6 months of the project (that continues in 2014) were highly productive in our efforts to promote the website to the authorities first and then to other stakeholders. In addition to presenting the project at four public events and local municipal meetings with the citizens, we made two high profile meetings with the municipality of Centar to propose several topics to the newly promoted governing body and the urban planning sector. The formal outcome of the meetings was a cooperation agreement, which is expected to be signed at the beginning 2014. This is an important document that will serve as an example for how we approach other municipalities in our efforts to expand the covered area to include new municipalities. What this cooperation agreement includes is the following: our website linked on the official municipal website; access to already processed data before the urban plans realization, access to spatial data, and use of the SkopjeRaste in public presentations of the new proposed detailed urban plans. We believe that what we have already agreed with the local authorities is vital for the long-term future of the project. Additionally, at one of the public presentations the mayor of Tetovo, Ms. Teuta Arifi was present, and after the lecture a follow-up meeting was held to discuss opportunities for implementation of the SkopjeRaste platform in Tetovo. Initial contacts have been established and there are clear prospects of opportunities that we are going to explore in the upcoming period. The municipality showed great interest in incorporating the platform in its urban development, so we are currently in initial negotiations with them about making this happen.

The project team has also held meetings with a number of stakeholders, most importantly with the Faculty of Architecture, to both present the project and collect feedback from all relevant parties. These meetings were assessed as highly productive, as they allowed us to confirm that there is sufficient interest in the products developed as part of the project.

An additional activity in this program took place in December 2013 and was the result of a growing dissatisfaction among citizens in Skopje due to the high air pollution indicators. The public outrage provided a window of opportunity for proposing of measures for the improvement of the air quality in Skopje. Reactor, in cooperation with three environmental organizations, drafted and promoted a policy brief. The policy brief attracted the attention of policy makers and the Minister of Environment invited the organizations for a meeting, following which one of the alternatives proposed by Reactor was incorporated as a policy measure to be adopted by the Government of Republic of Macedonia in an attempt to mitigate high air pollution.

Urban development program publications in the reporting period:

Something stinks: Are institutions ready to save us from pollution?

Non-program publications:

Open Government Initiative Independent Reporting Mechanism: Progress Report for Macedonia
Legal Needs and Paths to Justice in the Republic of Macedonia (FOSM)

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

The activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of the organization for 2013 are in line with the 2011-2013 Strategy.

ESTABLISHING AND NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS WITH CSOS AND A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In the reporting period Reactor participated in three networks. Namely, Reactor became an official founding member of the new Youth Council of Macedonia and participated in two ad-hoc pro-choice networks that stemmed from the process of adoption of the new Abortion Law. In this respect, Reactor will continue to foster the relationships developed thus far and focus on building a more meaningful coalition of gender equality CSOs, for which we have already been granted an IPA grant, with implementation set to begin at the beginning of 2014, for a duration of 15 months. As mentioned previously, in 2013 we also worked as part of an ad hoc coalition of 22 organizations in preparing a submission for the UN Universal Periodic Review.

Furthermore, Reactor was selected by the Open Government Partnership (OGP)⁴ to be an organization that will conduct the independent assessment of the activities of the Government in the first year of the implementation of the OGP action plan. The OGP is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of the activities of each OGP participating country. During the second half of 2013, Reactor conducted the assessment and produced the independent report that will be published for public consultations in February 2014. In parallel, Reactor made efforts to organize think-tank organizations in Macedonia in order to lobby for more active implementation of the measures regarding open access to statistical data, in particular those collected and held by the State Statistical Office (a measure that has not been implemented and was included in the first OGP action plan due to Reactor's advocacy efforts). Securing open access to statistical data will largely improve the context in which think-tank organizations work in Macedonia. These efforts will continue in 2014, when the process of development of second OGP action plan will take place.

In 2013, we continued our involvement in non-project activities aimed at developing relationships with key stakeholders. As a result of our previous and current engagement with the EU Delegation, our president was part of a five-member delegation from Macedonia, participated at a multi-country consultation workshop held in Brussels 25-26 April. The aim of the workshop was to improve, with the contribution of all relevant stakeholders, the guiding principles of civil society support in the enlargement region for the period 2014-2020.

Following these consultations, Reactor led the national consultation, co-organized three validation meetings (in Skopje, Shtip and Prilep) and commentary from the Macedonian civil society to the draft EC Guidelines for Support to CSOs. The commentary was used to develop national indicators and benchmarks for the guidelines that inform the IPA II assistance to CSOs. Additionally, the president of Reactor was invited as a CSO expert to join the Local Advisory Board of the EU funded TACSO project that aims to support civil society development in the next four years. In parallel, Reactor is a part of an informal network of eight organizations that push for greater involvement of CSOs in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the IPA II assistance in the next seven years. As part of this initiative, a policy memo proposing a model for CSOs involvement within IPA II was submitted to the EU Delegation in Skopje as well as the Secretariat for European Affairs. Numerous meetings with the Minister for EU integration as well as with EU officials were held to discuss the model and advocate its acceptance. These efforts will continue in 2014, while the proactive involvement of this informal network was welcomed by the EC and mentioned in the [2013 Progress Report for Macedonia](#).

⁴ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Our focus this year was initially planned to be less focused on staff development and more focused on providing a supporting physical and virtual infrastructure to improve the implementation of the planned activities. In this respect, we invested in improving our new offices, to comply in terms of legal obligations for work safety and work conditions that include lightning, assessment of safety of work places, training on work safety, training on first aid, etc. Additionally, we tested a number of web-based applications (one designed by Reactor staff) to improve efficiency and respond to the expansion of the staff that took place in 2012 and 2013. Based on the experience, Reactor chose and uses [Trello](#) and [Asana](#) for organizational and project management.

In addition to this, we offered two internships this year, in order to try out new program staff (as finding quality program staff has continued to be a problem). Both of the interns became full staff members as of first of January 2014, thus proving that selecting candidates through internship program is a successful approach.

2013 was a problematic year for staff turn-over. Firstly, the financial assistant resigned in June 2013, which was followed by the two IT staff in August and September, respectfully. Both of them received better offers from foreign companies. This has negatively affected Reactor's productivity in terms of producing one of the on-line advocacy tools, initially planned for the last quarter of 2013. The Executive board has assessed the likeliness of turn-over of IT staff and has made a decision to try a different method of engagement of IT staff for 2014. Under this new model, we are currently trying to staff a position for a designer preferably with front-end development skills to work in-house, while back-end web development will be outsourced and paid by product, either individually or by contracting a local business.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

As part of our strategy to conduct economic activities to secure stability and sustainability of the organization we have conducted two surveys on a contractual basis that focused on transparency. The first survey was a representative study of the perception of citizens, while the second survey was a on-line survey targeting official information holders and looked at their opinions, problems and challenges they face in providing access to information, as well as gathered their attitudes towards openness and transparency of the administration. The surveys were analyzed by Reactor, and the produced [final report](#) was published to mark the international right to know day, in September 2013.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY / FUNDRAISING / INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

With two multi-year grants (the core grant and the USAID civil society grant), as well as the service contract for the Justiciable Events Study, we had a good start to the year in terms of financial stability. We continued our fundraising efforts for 2013 in the reporting period, with four grant applications with start dates set for late 2013 (submitted to the National Endowment for Democracy, IPA, EIDHR and IPA Civil Society Facility), of which two were ultimately approved and will be implemented during 2014 and 2015. We also worked on three additional service contracts (transparency survey for FOSM, CSO assessment for CID and a regional youth media study for YEF, the latter only in the preparation of the methodology), thus securing 25% of our 2013 budget from economic activities.

In terms of fundraising beyond 2013, we've had a successful implementation of our fundraising plan for next year and the majority of the fundraising activities for 2014 were finalized before the end of 2013. Other than a submission to extend TTF core and institutional support, no additional grant applications are expected to be submitted for 2014, as all project funding was secured before the end of 2013 (USAID Civil Society Grant, Political Representation of Women at the Local Level, in partnership with NDI and with the support of a new donor, the French Embassy in Skopje, the IPA Gender Equality Council project, and IPA Good Governance and Accountability Network with Metamorphosis). Additionally, it is expected that the USAID Civil Society Grant will be extended for three additional years (2014-2017).