



IRIS NETWORKing

CSOs for protection sensitive
migration management



Financed by the European Union

SMALL GRANTS OF THE IRIS NETWORK 2019-2021

Within the project "IRIS Networking"





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ABOUT IRIS NETWORK

What is IRIS Network?

Founded in 2012, IRIS Network is the unique regional network that brings together more than 200 CSOs social service providers in South East Europe. The Network is based on vision of equal rights and opportunities for decent living for all. It is created to ensure the social inclusion by enabling the environment for the provision of high quality services through support to the developmental policies focused. Important part of Networks' mission is to support the national members and decision makers in creation of developmental policies, lobbying and advocacy focused on ensuring access to quality services. IRIS Network has five national secretariats in SEE.

WHAT WE DO?

- ▶ Connecting different social service providers from SEE region
- ▶ Promoting non-profit service providers, lobbying for better solutions among stakeholders
- ▶ Providing members with most relevant information in the field of social inclusion and social services providers
- ▶ Offering access to financing and knowledge to our members
- ▶ Providing development support through training and expert services



IRIS NETWORK

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- ▶ **1 regional NETWORK** with more than **200 member organizations**, serving 10 000 beneficiaries, implementing **75 grass root projects**
- ▶ supported **30 CSOs** with licensing process
- ▶ **61 CSOs** received **small grants**
- ▶ **5 NATIONAL NETWORKS** - Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ▶ **50+** conferences and advocacy **events**, with **500+** decision makers
- ▶ **25 journalists** from **5 countries** participated in **media caravan**



SMALL GRANTS SCHEME OF THE IRIS NETWORK

IRIS Network has conducted the Small Grant Scheme (SGS), through which 25 local initiatives for long term improvement of social services provision and delivery were supported in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. Grants in amount up to € 8,000.00 were awarded to IRIS Network members in order to strengthen their organizational, communicational and advocating capacities to influence policies, as well as to assist the grantees in delivery of appropriate services in their countries.

Objectives of the granting scheme was:

- a) to achieve greater commitment of CSO networks to give citizens a voice and influence public sector reform processes through analysis, monitoring and advocacy, contributing to the better assistance/integration of the migrant population at the local level;
- b) to strengthen the CSOs capacities for the protection sensitive migration management in order to improve overall service delivery.



TABLE OF GRANTS AWARDED IN 2019

LEAD APPLICANT	PROJECT	COUNTRY
Association Women from Una	Alternative Measures for Social Protection of migrants and refugees	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Sigma Plus	Route Services	Serbia
Center for activism Vranje	Capacity Building of Vulnerable Groups in Vranje, Bujanovac and Presevo Municipalities	Serbia
CRPC	Support to LGBT Sensitive Migration	Serbia
Tirana Legal Aid Society	Increasing the social inclusion of migrants through access to justice	Albania
Partnere per Femijet	Reachable Services for Returnees and Marginalized Communities in Kukës Municipality	Albania
SHIS	To prevent illegal emigration, through promoting the education and the family strengthening	Albania
Association Center for Educational Support Dendo vas	We are prepared to go in school	North Macedonia
Citizens association for promotion of Roma Education Otaharin	Protecting the rights of the families in the move	Bosnia and Herzegovina
SOS hotline for women and children victims of violence Berane	IRIS network for more inclusive society for migrants in Montenegro	Montenegro
Open Centre Bona Fide	Open community on migrant route	Montenegro
JRS	Integration for the future	Serbia
Organization Youth Alliance	Tetovo For better social inclusion of migrants in society	North Macedonia
Association Humanitarian organization Altruist	Family group conferences as an innovative model in dealing with families in crisis	Bosnia and Herzegovina
SHKEJ	Youth Empowerment Models for Human Rights Education and in Support to Positive Reintegration	Albania
Accessibility Audit Association in Serbia	Accessibility for all	Serbia
Education Centre SMILE	Improving CSO capacity to manage migration	Serbia
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association	Assessment of engagement of local units with foreigners residing within their territory	North Macedonia
Association of citizens LEGIS	Improved non-formal learning opportunities for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the Republic of North Macedonia	North Macedonia
Citizen association Here is The hand	Food and Soul Connection	Serbia
Association for the rights of children and youth with special needs Lastovica	Analysis of the needs, interests and skills of young migrants as a prerequisite for successful social inclusion through employment	North Macedonia
Refugee aid Serbia	Routes Festivals	Serbia
Refugees Foundation	There are no limits for an active child	Serbia
Think Global Act Locally	International Social	Serbia
Association of muscular dystrophy and neuromuscular diseases of Toplica District	Preparation of the Day-Care Sunce Prokuplje, for acceptance and accommodation of migrants	Serbia



DECENT LIFE STANDARDS AND SUPPORT ON EVERY STEP OF THE JOURNEY

In search for a better life, migrants are often forced to restrain themselves from the basic commodities, hoping that life as they know it will continue when they finally arrive to desired destination. This was the guiding idea when planning the equipment of the "Sunce" - Daily Stay in a village near Prokuplje - to provide the accommodation for migrants passing through Toplica district and make their short break there meaningful. The action was implemented within the project "Preparation of the Day-Care Sunce Prokuplje, for acceptance and accommodation of migrants". The space can accommodate 6-8 persons and consists of one bedroom, fully equipped with inventory for sleeping or daily activities, dining room with fully equipped kitchen, where meals were served or migrants were encouraged to prepare meals themselves, making it more enjoyable through connection and socialization.

Additional services included psychological and pedagogical support, help through working with expert team in finding occupation activities in greenhouses or maintenance of courtyards, as well as attendance to elementary school for both children and adults.

This service remains available for the migrants in future, in accordance to the national and local migration policy.



JUSTICE AND EDUCATION, NOT CONDITIONED BY THE SOCIAL STATUS

Within the project “Increasing the social inclusion of migrants through access to justice”, implemented by TLAS legal assistance was offered to migrants and local population. The project took place in Albania, in Fier and Berat district. Returnees from EU countries and domestic migrants that travel within Albania, in search for work are usually exposed to economic and legal vulnerabilities and in need of professional guidance in overpassing marginalization through regaining legal residence, right to work and participation in existing educational system or free social programmes offered by the state or local structures.

20 legal cases were successfully solved, addressing various problems including transfer of residency, divorce, custody for children, lack of birth registration, parental responsibility.

36 administrative cases were solved as well, all related to non-existing birth registration of children born outside Albania, without an identity, at risk of being stateless and excluded from social programmes offered by the state.

60 professionals from state institutions were trained with the purpose of strengthening the cooperation and increasing their knowledge on the amendments of Civil Status Law, Sub legal acts of Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child, sub legal acts of Criminal Justice for Children Code and the new Law on Asylum and Citizenship. As a part of raising awareness and informing the target group of migrants, 6 Street Law Actions were organized by the group of Interns.



SETTING THE LONG TERM INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE BRIGHT FUTURE

Displacement from the country known as home, to a "home country" is emotionally difficult enough, but it is not the only gap needed to be bridged. Integration into society, especially in the field of social protection is the next crucial step, towards the decent future in the local community.

The first stage of the project "Capacity Building of Vulnerable Groups in Vranje, Bujanovac and Presevo Municipalities" was a thorough research that resulted in creation of information brochure that will help the readmitted persons to get more detailed information about their rights to social care services and how to exercise them.

Centre for activism Vranje organized round table discussions with 20 participants -representatives of local authorities, Local Trustee for Refugees and Migration, media and NGO's, with the aim to determine past and planned actions in the field of social protection, in order to improve the conditions and the way of life of the readmitted persons.

After the in-depth survey with 500 returnees, project team organized a training for 40 people, mastering in-depth interviewing techniques, as well as training in work with socially vulnerable categories. Through the project, more than 90 vulnerable families were informed on their right to inclusion in the social welfare system and the types of services provided by the social welfare system.

EMPOWERMENT ON THE LONG RUN, THROUGH INCREASING CAPABILITY TO RESPOND

Within the project "Support to LGBT Sensitive Migration" Crisis Response and Policy Centre (CPRC) designed activities with goal to create a network of comprehensive assistance and protection for LGBTI migrants. This was done following two streams of activities, one directed to empowerment and education of beneficiaries on their rights and access to services, and other, directed to capacity building of CRPC and other actors in the area of migration and protection of LGBTI people.

Through nine specialized empowerment workshops, facilitated by expert trainers, LGBTI migrants were empowered and informed about their human rights in Serbia, networked with local LGBTI organizations and service providers and encouraged to share their knowledge among migrant population, state organizations and service providers. Three lecturers were LGBT migrants, who shared their experience on migration in the country of origin, as well as in Serbia.

Within the scope of the action, 90 representatives of LGBTI organizations and service providers, as well as representatives of state institutions were informed, sensitized and trained on the topics related to LGBTI status of migrants and problems they face in the country of origin and during migration.





IF EMPATHY GROWS, SO WILL THE CAPACITIES TO UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND IN TIME

Since the beginning of 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced a drastic increase in the number of migrants and refugees entering the country and although accommodation capacities were increased in 2018, humanitarian capacities are critical in Una-Sana canton.

Within the project "Alternative Measures for Social Protection of migrants and refugees", "Women from Una" provided tailor made, comprehensive and high-quality social services and support to the most vulnerable categories of migrants and refugees, particularly victims of sexual and gender based violence, including unaccompanied children and separated minors.

EDUCATION CREATES HEALTHIER BONDS AND BRIGHTER FUTURE



The project aim was to prevent the illegal migration of the youth, by promoting education and strengthening the family support, in Kombinat, one of the poorest and most problematic areas of Tirana, inhabited in a large part by migrants from rural areas of North and South Albania. Most of the families in the area face daily economic difficulties, prejudices and social exclusion.

During the project "To prevent illegal emigration, through promoting the education and the family strengthening", implemented by International Association for Solidarity – SHIS, the only high school of the area was turned into a supportive place where youth could gather and socialize in after school activities.

Advocacy Youth Group was created, with the idea that education prevents immigration, by giving voice to young people to advocate for the needed social services that should be provided by the state. Special attention was given to raising awareness among parents living in a difficult situation, on available social services in the home state, as well as illegal emigration and problems that most migrants face in a destination state when they travel unprepared.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILIES IN THE MOVE



The project “Protecting rights of the families on the move” implemented by Otaharin was targeting the issue of the inadequate systematic support for the migrants outside of the main points of the migrant crises. It was focusing on the issues that citizens face after unsuccessful applications for asylum in European countries. Activities of the project targeted four local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and were conducted in partnership with local civic organisations which have experience in offering social services to the migrants. Throughout empirical research analyses of the current situation in regard to prevalence of the migration, partners gathered data, developed conclusions and recommendations for the joint plan of the advocacy. Campaign was directed to local population in order to raise awareness in regards to negative impact of the migration such as: increasing of poverty, danger to become victims of trafficking, violation of human rights, and obstacles for inclusion in native community once they return etc. Furthermore, Otaharin continued to offer legal aid through operating Info point, providing potential migrants and returnees enough information about their rights and available social services.

As a part of the policy influencing activities, project partners meet local decision makers to give recommendation for the improvement of the cooperation of local institutions and civil society organisation in order to improve social services for migrants. The advocacy campaign scaled up to the relevant ministry and cantonal governments who were encouraged to distribute more financing to the social service programmes for the migrants and returnees.

OVERPASSING GEOGRAPHICAL OBSTACLES IN FIGHT FOR INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

The idea for the project "Reachable Services for Returnees and Marginalized Communities in Kukës Municipality" was developed by the Partnere per Femjet, around a need for available information and activities on a regular basis in four rural and remote areas in these Albanian municipality. One trained advisor and 5 specialists from Social Service Department as a part of the Mobile Resource Service provided information on social services, employment and education opportunities for returnees, like vocational education trainings, or life skills programme for youth.

The Mobile Resource Service connected professionals with communities, as well brought innovation in information sharing and education. MRS had reached approximately 150 young people, women, returnees and other marginalized groups in all four project areas and enhanced their level of information and understanding on social services. In addition to that, 20 specialists of social services, education, and employment department have improved their approach and service provision to vulnerable and marginalized groups.



EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES WHOSE INTERNAL SYSTEM IS SHAKEN

Organisation Altruist had recognized the need to help families on the edge of social exclusion, by provision of crucial services through the project "Family group conferences as an innovative model in dealing with families in crisis".

The Family Group Conference model was presented in different municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, through workshops named „Justice for each child“, reaching the representatives of Ministry of Labour, Health and Social care and refugees, representatives of the Centres for Social work and schools.

Within the project, the capacities of 3 NGO organizations were strengthened, so they can continue helping families in need. Also, 5 families were strengthened, 5 children were enrolled into Daily Centre, 5 children have improved their results in school, 6 children have improved their behaviour, 1 child has established the contacts with the family members and has moved with them in Serbia, 1 parent had reconciled and re-established joint living with the family.

EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCES THAT MAKE US EQUAL

"Routes Festivals" was organized by Refugee Aid Serbia, in order to bring disparate groups together, involved in the activities that help inform the local population about the refugee crisis and give them an opportunity to engage with migrants.

The festival was organized in 2 cities. Routs Festival Subotica engaged 31 beneficiaries (including children) and 20 members of the local community. They all attended a film screening and arts and crafts workshop, along with an open discussion with film directors and NGO workers about the refugee crisis in the Balkans and in Subotica in particular.

In Sjenica, 21 residents of the camp and 10 locals competed in a sporting manner for over 90 minutes in the local sports hall, with another 17 camp residents. Day after, 33 camp residents and 47 locals enjoyed in a display of national dance, dress, and song, presented by local folklore societies.

ROUTES festival

07/03/2020

14:00-19:00

@ Ustanova Kulture
Sjenica, Trg Svetozara
Markovica 8





INTEGRATION FOR THE FUTURE

The project "Integration for the future" by Jesuit Refugee Service took place in Belgrade, Serbia, with focus on provision of education for 30 unaccompanied and separated boys accommodated in Integration House "Pedro Arrupe".

During the project JRS had provided IT classes for children twice a week and Serbian classes 3 times per week. IT lessons included basic level of computer use (such as typing, writing an e mail, using Word, Paint, PowerPoint presentation, safe surf on the internet etc.).

During the pandemic, formal and non-formal classes were more frequent (totaling 138 classes), since children were spending more time inside the Integration House. Additional Serbian language and IT lessons were very welcome, which resulted in reduction of learning difficulties with school curriculum and overall improved communication.

THE WATCHDOG IS ALWAYS ON GUARD



SOS Berane project "IRIS network for more inclusive society for migrants in Montenegro" aimed to train and educate IRIS staff members on human rights monitoring methods and techniques, creating so called "Watchdog team". Two-day training was attended by 6 members, where they addressed topics like: migrant rights, human rights monitoring mechanisms and institutions, subjects of monitoring, strategy of action, techniques for collecting and processing information for monitoring report.

The participants were able to better understand how monitoring is an instrument of change and thus share individual roles and responsibilities inside the Watchdog team level.

As the result - the Monitoring of implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Migration Management 2018-2020 was prepared and it is waiting for the public presentation, post pandemic.



ACCESSIBILITY DESPITE LIMITATIONS

According to data from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, in January 2019, a total of 3,492 asylum seekers were housed in the Asylum Centres in Serbia. By statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO), people with disabilities (PWD) make up about 10% of the population. In this context, it can be assumed that at least 300 PWD are among migrants and refugees from war-affected areas, which was the leading idea for the project "Accessibility for all", implemented by Accessibility Audit Association in Serbia. The project contributed to the strengthening of the migration and asylum management system, promoting a comprehensive, holistic approach to migration management and continued commitment to rights of persons with disabilities. Through various project activities, research experts had the opportunity to visit almost all major reception centres in Serbia and get acquainted with the situation when it comes to accessibility. The project was included as an example of good social marketing through Belgrade Ignite Festival organized online.



WHEN THERE IS A WILL – THERE IS A WAY

The idea behind the project “We are prepared to go in school” is that children from the returned families from EU countries need help adjusting to the school system in the destination country.

Association Centre for Educational Support Dendo Vas had identified 40 children aged 5-6 years in the community Suto Orizari in Skopje, North Macedonia. 20 boys and 20 girls were enrolled in a preschool program and were attending lessons each day. Each child had portfolio with the basic information about the child and parents, including materials and handcrafts produced by the child during the project.

Due to pandemic restrictions, part of the workshops had to be done in house conditions, with material being handed over regularly to children and parents who were willing to participate, followed by explanation by lecturers. All 40 children who attended the programme were successfully enrolled in the first grade of the primary school.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Organisation "Here is the Hand" within the project "Food and Soul Connection" directly supported children with disability and their parents through sports activities, which aimed to improve motor skills of children and their inclusion in the wider community. At the same time valuable volunteering contribution was made by the local community that took part in those activities.

Volunteers and targeted beneficiaries attended international evenings that brought together different cultures, customs and food closer to the local community attracting new volunteers to help the organisation's cause.





THERE ARE NO LIMITS FOR AN ACTIVE CHILD

The project "There are no limits for an active child" was conducted by the Refugees Foundation, at the Reception Centre "4th kilometer" in Pirot, Serbia. Project designed sports and educational activities tailored to the needs of migrants in the reception centre, providing support for active inclusion in the formal education system, language learning and establishing their confidence in communication with the local community.

67 lessons were organised and attended by 41 students. Curriculum was developed and adjusted to the specific groups of the beneficiaries. Four newsletters were published that depict project activities. Through them, relevant institutions, civil society organizations and beneficiaries were introduced to the project and examples of good practice.

In cooperation with the network member Sigma Plus form Nis, Refugees Foundation organized a sports tournament in Pirot. In order to facilitate communication between migrants and local community, language café was organized as a model of exchange between cultures.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIZING

Main project goal of the "International Social" implemented by NGO "Think Global Act Local" was identification of interested young people (residents of Sid and migrants) for participation in the work of the volunteer network. The project demonstrated that it is possible for young people from Serbia and young migrants to work together, for the good of the two communities, even in the most difficult times and despite the most difficult possible restrictions. Total of 26 workshops was held, covering topics of volunteerism and civil society. Result of the workshops were joint actions of small works fixing local park benches, painting and cleaning communal spaces.

The project increased awareness in local community and still serves as valuable promoter of the idea and practice of tolerance between migrant and local community.

BETTER MIGRATION MANAGEMENT THROUGH CSO CAPACITY BUILDING

The overall objective of the project "Improving CSO capacity to manage migration", implemented by education centre "Smile" was to contribute to building mechanisms for alleviating poverty and social exclusion of migrants. Project improved capacity of 3 local CSOs to develop support services for the most vulnerable groups of citizens – migrants and socially vulnerable persons, whose number is estimated to 4.000. Upon completing training participants received additional 7 hours of consultation with the expert, enhancing their capacities to continue working with migrant beneficiaries.

Based on the "Report on the survey of the satisfaction of beneficiaries with social protection services", organisation Smile developed report for increasing the capacity of CSOs to work with migrants and recommendation for improving public policies in the field of social protection and migration. Findings of all baseline documents, including recommendations were communicated with the local government.

SERVICES FOR FOREIGNERS

The objective of the project "Assessment of engagement of local units with foreigners residing within their territory", implemented by Macedonian Young Lawyers Association - MYLA, was to conduct a research and prepare an Assessment Report on existing national and local policies for third country nationals residing in the country. Additionally project assessed existing local services and practices for disadvantaged third country nationals and refugees residing in municipalities with major concentration of foreigners.

Taking into consideration the European practices of decentralization of services which are provided both to domestic and foreign nationals, the project secured data and observed whether local municipalities have developed services for third country nationals, have they adopted strategies for local integration, and how frequent municipalities communicate with foreigners to help them establish sustainable relation with the local communities.

With the data provided from the institutions, MYLA was able to understand the context and developments in direction of services developed for third country nationals in North Macedonia. The analysis and policy papers developed and prepared within the project helped to understand and spot the gaps in the country which will be used to advocate for planning and development of better services and assistance to foreigners residing in the country.

REGIONAL APPROACH



Within the project "Route Services", organisation Sigma Plus in regional partnership with the organisation New Generation aimed to survey situation in service provision to the migrants in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to develop baseline material for advocating improvement of the services for the migrants.

Recommendations for CSOs in providing services to migrants on the Serbia – Bosnia route was developed through interviewing migrants, institutions and civil society organisations in both countries. Recommendations were communicated through direct contact, conferences and social media in form of clear messages directed to the stakeholders.



POSITIVE COMMUNITY CHANGES

Main goal of the project "For better social inclusion of migrants in society" implemented by Youth Alliance was to build the capacity of small grassroots organizations at local level to provide advocacy services at local and national level to create a more solid and inclusive society that will create positive community changes.

Research on the social inclusion of the migrants was presented in form of brochure and short video clips with the purpose to raise awareness and sensitize wider population on the issue of migration. Local media and social media were used as a main channel for communication of research recommendations.



STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSE

The action "Improved non-formal learning opportunities for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the Republic of North Macedonia", implemented by LEGIS, raised awareness among the key stakeholders on the need to diversify the methodology used in non-formal learning activities with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and involved them together to work on improved non-formal learning opportunities.

The action has contributed to improved capacity of the CSOs and the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers to plan, develop and introduce new learning opportunities to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in North Macedonia. Total of 15 frontline workers, educators and cultural mediators from 6 local CSOs, IOM, UNHCR, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and staff members of the Reception Centre for Asylum seekers acquired advanced competences on how to implement innovative methods and tools of non-formal education with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

LEGIS started implementing new methods and tools in non-formal learning activities with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The activities initiate critical thinking among the participants, providing them the opportunity to acquire/improve transversal skills that will be of use in their everyday life – from deconstructing extreme narratives and media literacy to enhancing their employability. On the basis of the feedback received by the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, LEGIS has developed concept for training and mentorship program that will support asylum seekers in accessing the labour market

YOUTH GROUP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

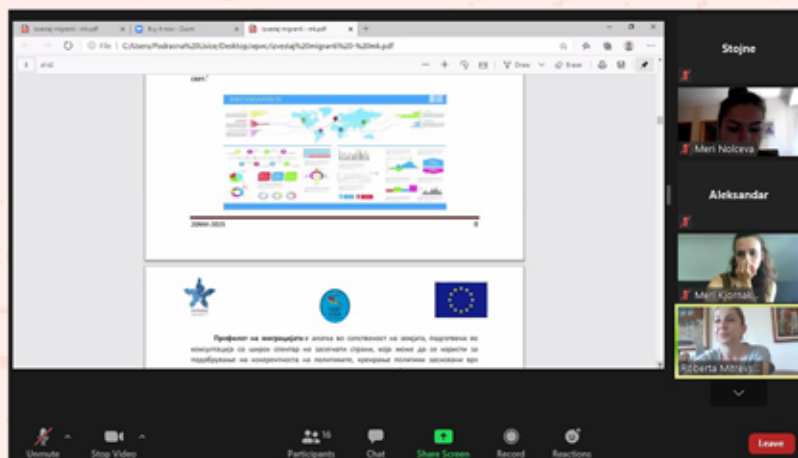


The project “Youth Empowerment Models for Human Rights Education and in Support to Positive Reintegration” was designed with focus on development the human rights knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours among youth that are important for building rights-respecting, inclusive communities. Organisation SHKEJ developed series of trainings for the 210 youth introducing following topics: understanding rights and responsibilities, mastering skills such as critical thinking, empathy, leadership and effective communication, changing attitudes etc.

Advocacy Youth Group (AYG) had been formed of youth leaders selected amongst peers. In collaboration with the existing youth group ‘Milingona’, under the supervision of one of SHKEJ community centre EDEN, AYG continues to be supported to work in community centres.

UNDERSTAND ME BETTER, HELP ME INTEGRATE

Project “Analysis of the needs, interests and skills of young migrants as a prerequisite for successful social inclusion through employment”, conducted by the Association of the rights of children and youth with special needs LASTOVICA and Association for education development for children and youth Afriel - Pozitiva, was one of the most important studies that showed the current situation of migration in North Macedonia in the period from July 2019 to July 2020. The project analysed the socioeconomic profile of migrants and refugees who stay (periodically or long-term) in North Macedonia in two temporary transit centres in Kumanovo and Gevgelija. Research report was developed based on the interviews with more than 200 migrants passing through the centres. Due to the pandemic situation, advocating on research recommendations was made online with presence of representatives of the relevant institutions and civil society.





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