



Issue I, August 2016 - 31 March 2017



Newsletter

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE USAID’S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (CEP) NEWSLETTER. WE INTEND TO MAKE THIS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION AND USE IT TO SHARE WITH YOU NEWS, STORIES, AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO CEP’S WORK.

In every edition, we will:

- update you on activities and events completed during the previous quarter;
- share stories that demonstrate the impact of CEP’s support on improving citizens’ life in Macedonia;
- highlight new developments and grant opportunities under CEP components, and
- inform you about upcoming events for the following quarter.

We hope you will find this newsletter to be a great source of useful information.

There have been a lot of exciting developments at CEP in the first months of its implementation. Since its inception, back in August 2016, the project team has worked hard to launch and implement various programs and activities. These include organizing CEP’s Launching Event on November 18, 2016; as well as developing and publishing Calls for Applications for CEP’s Partnership Grants, Strategic Support Grants, Youth Engagement Support Grants, and its Linking, Engagement, Advocacy, and Development Program in Macedonia (LEAD MK). In November, we organized the Consulting for Consultants Workshop as the first step in preparing for the LEAD MK Program and completed the first round of CEP’s public information sessions throughout the country. You will be able to read more about these activities below.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this and future issues of CEP Newsletter.

Thank you,

Ana Drakic
CEP Chief of Party



CEP Launching Event, November 2016, Skopje



CEP’s Consulting for Consultants Workshop, December 2016

Editor’s Note

We would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions about this newsletter and CEP’s work. Please, send us your feedback any time by writing to: cepmk@ewmi.org and follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/CEPMacedonia/>

CEP's Objectives and Programs

CEP is a five year USAID-funded program in Macedonia that works to achieve two objectives:

- strengthen the constructive engagement by civil society organizations (CSOs) on policies and issues of public concern, and
- increases and sustains youth involvement in public life in Macedonia.

CEP's main goal is to enhance the capacity of CSOs and youth groups to advance public policies, improve public services, promote good governance, and contribute to improving the standard of living in Macedonia. CEP is committed to gender equity and the protection of the rights of socially excluded groups in the country.

CEP began its work in August 2016. It is implemented by East West Management Institute (EWMI), in partnership with four local CSOs: the Foundation for Internet and Society "Metamorphosis", the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI), the Foundation "Open Society in Macedonia" (FOSM), and the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM).

EWMI is a New York-based independent, not-for-profit organization that works to strengthen democratic societies by bringing together government, civil society and the private sectors to build accountable, capable, and transparent institutions that serve the people's best interest.



LEAD MK Information Session in American Corner, Struga



General Development Office (GDO) Director, Edward Gonzalez gives media statement in Gostivar

To achieve its objectives, CEP implements activities under four components:

- √ Strengthen CSO alliances, implemented by "Metamorphosis";
- √ Strengthen CSOs, implemented by "Metamorphosis" and ADI;
- √ Strengthen youth engagement, implemented by NYCM, and
- √ Strengthen youth activism, implemented by ADI.

FOSM is responsible for coordinating CEP's capacity development assistance for all CEP grantees.

For more information about CEP's work, see CEP's Fact Sheets online at:

- http://metamorphosis.org.mk/proekti_arhiva/proekt-za-gragjansko-uchestvo-cep/
- <http://www.nms.org.mk/en/ongoing-projects/>
- <http://www.adimacedonia.org/category/programs/civic-engagement-project/>

or request a leaflet by writing to: cepmk@ewmi.org

Grant Opportunities

CEP provides multiple opportunities for grant support to Macedonia's CSOs and CSO alliances, including youth CSOs, as well as to individual young men and women. These opportunities include:

- **Partnership Grants (PGs)** that support CSO alliances to: become leaders in shaping and constructively engaging in issues of public concern; enhance their capacity to engage citizens, the media, government institutions, and other stakeholders in advancing

public wellbeing; and strengthen their institutional capacity.

- **Strategic Support Grants (SSGs)** that support CSOs, including think tanks, that work to promote good governance, public service improvement, rule of law, anti-corruption, human rights, economic growth, business enabling environment, and monitoring and oversight of public institutions.
- **Youth Engagement Support Grants (YESGs)** that support initiatives by formal and informal youth groups that focus on: educating youth about their rights and opportunities for public participation; engaging

youth in using existing mechanisms for civic participation and accountability to advocate with public institutions regarding issues of priority concern for youth or the community at large, as well as to monitor public institutions; providing youth with opportunities to give back to communities and the society, and prioritizing issues that might impact their lives.

- **LEAD MK Annual Fellowship Program** that will equip Macedonian young people with skills, knowledge, and networking opportunities that will enable them to become leaders in advancing public interest at the community, regional, and national level.

PREVIOUS CALLS

During October – December 2016, CEP issued Calls for Applications for all its grant programs and received:

- **14 applications for its Partnership Grants;**
- **66 applications for its Strategic Support Grants;**
- **33 applications for its Youth Engagement Support Grants; and**
- **Applications by 22 young men and women for CEP’s LEAD MK Program.**

During January – March 2017, CEP staff and experts carefully reviewed these applications and awarded, as planned, two Partnership Grants and selected 17 young men and women to participate in the LEAD MK program. CEP also completed the first selection steps for Strategic Support Grants.

UPCOMING CALLS

In April, CEP will solicit Applications for the first round of targeted Rapid Response Grants. These grants will support initiatives by registered CSOs or non-registered organizations and groups of citizens to raise public awareness, conduct rapid policy analysis or formulation, mobilize citizens, and other initiatives to address unanticipated and important policy developments.

During April - June 2017, CEP plans to award six Strategic Support Grants, four Youth Engagement Support Grants, and four Rapid Response Grants.

News and Stories

CEP Information Sessions Tour

During November–December 2016, CEP staff and representatives of CEP’s implementing partners – Metamorphosis, ADI, FOSM, and NYCM – organized six information sessions throughout Macedonia to inform civil society, the private sector, media, and citizens about CEP’s goals, approach, and activities. More than 100 people attended CEP’s information sessions held in Skopje, Struga, Shtip, and Gostivar. CEP staff held three additional information sessions at American

Corners in these towns targeting young men and women that were invited to apply for participation in CEP’s LEAD MK Program and seek support for their civic initiatives from CEP’s Youth Engagement Support Grants. CEP’s Chief of Party, Ms. Ana Drakic, and USAID representatives in Macedonia addressed the participants at the information sessions and encouraged them to seek CEP’s support for their civic engagement initiatives at the community and national level.

“Citizen engagement is not a one-time thing. We are all responsible for making

sure that we are actively working to improve not only our own lives but also the lives of our community. We highly encourage you to be active, because the only way that our communities will become better is if we all participate and are actively engaged in improving the lives of ourselves, our family, and our community” - Edward Gonzalez, General Development Office (GDO) Director, USAID mission in Macedonia.

CEP will continue the Information Sessions Tour beyond March 2017 to reach out to more communities in Macedonia.



General Information Session in Struga



USAID’s Facebook page life streamed CEP’s Information Session at the American Corner in Shtip

Idea Competition Event

By January 2017, 33 youth CSOs and informal youth groups submitted Project Concept Ideas in response to CEP's Call for Applications for the Youth Engagement Support Grants. 11 of these groups met the basic grant eligibility criteria and were invited to present their project ideas at CEP's Idea Competition Event organized by ADI. This public event was held on February 9 at NYCM

premises. Representatives of 11 youth CSOs presented their ideas in front of CEP's Grant Review Committee members, who provided constructive feedback on improving the proposed interventions. 24 young men and women representing CSOs from Skopje, Tetovo, Krushevo, Bitola, and Prilep presented a wide variety of interesting ideas for engaging youth in addressing priority needs at the community level, but also undertaking

advocacy initiatives that include interaction with central government institutions.

Upon completion of the Idea Competition Event, CEP invited the CSOs that presented the most effective and creative project ideas, to submit the full project application to CEP by the end of March 2017. CEP plans to award grants to the best applicants during the next quarter.



Members of the CEP's Grant Review Committee (GRC)



Representatives of youth CSOs register for the Idea Competition Event

"This is a life changing opportunity for me - to be able to give back to my community," said the representative of one of the youth CSOs that participated at CEP's Idea Competition Event.

Upcoming Activities

- In April, CEP will organize the LEAD Academy with the participation of 17 young men and women;
- In April, CEP will solicit Applications for the first round of targeted Rapid Response Grants;
- In May, CEP will issue the Call for Applications for the second round of its Youth Engagement Support Grants;
- In May, CEP will issue the Call for Nominations for the Youth Civic Engagement Award.

This Newsletter was produced by the USAID's Civic Engagement Project, with support from the United States Agency for International Development. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of East-West Management Institute, Inc. and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.