



**Association for action against violence
and trafficking in human beings
OPEN GATE/ LA STRADA Macedonia
NEWSLETTER –4
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Open Gate is proud to present the fourth edition of the e-news letter for 2011. This issue outlines the activities conducted by Open Gate for the period of October to December, in terms of lobbying, prevention and immediate support for victims of human trafficking.

18th October- EU Anti-Trafficking Day

Several of the identified problems which impede the prevention of human trafficking are the following: the lack of implementation of local-level activities, and poor collaboration and synchronization of activities among key government institutions and NGOs. Therefore, in light of **18th October- EU Anti-Trafficking Day**, and in collaboration with the EU Delegation in Macedonia, Open Gate organized a series of events in answer to curbing human trafficking:

-Workshop entitled *Developing Local Action Plans for Curbing Human Trafficking*, which took place at the Stone Bridge Hotel in Skopje, on 14th October, 2011. The event was attended by the NGOs which are part of the National Network for Curbing Human Trafficking-



Budnost, as well as representatives from the local government and the 10 Prevention Councils within the Sector of Interior Affairs, all from various parts of Macedonia.

The goal of this workshop was to create local action plans which shall have the following effects: contribute to a coordinated and multi-sector collaboration on local level, foster the synchronization of local-level activities with the National Action Plan, and intensify all efforts



invested in curbing human trafficking.

A statement issued by the National Network for Curbing Human Trafficking- *Budnost* in order to remind the relevant institutions as well as the wider public of the presence of human trafficking in the Republic of Macedonia.



The statement has been published in the print media, on Open Gate's web site (www.lastrada.org.mk), and has been posted on various other web pages.

-- Distribution of educational literature

Another event organized by Open Gate in order to mark the EU Anti-Trafficking Day was



the distribution of educational literature in the State Secondary School of Medicine *Panche Karajozov*. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Open Gate distributed educational brochures to underage teenagers, who are the most common target of human traffickers.



The brochures were designed in a manner to educate this critical age group about the harrowing crime of trafficking in humans.

The Minister of Interior, Miss Jankuloska, who took active part in this activity, pointed out that this problem is present in all countries, but it is of utmost importance to discuss about it openly, because prevention and proper education are the key instruments in reducing the number of victims.

-In order to raise public awareness about the problem of **trafficking in humans**, Open Gate distributed a large number of preventive brochures at various high-frequency spots in the City of Skopje.

The brochures were produced and distributed by Open Gate, and were designed primarily for the younger population, as an age group most susceptible to human trafficking.

-**Maintaining contact** with media representatives is a vital means of informing the public of the issue of human trafficking, its rampant spreading, the potential risks and outcomes associated with it, as well as all the possible preventive measures.

Therefore, Open Gate was present in various print and electronic media, giving interviews, especially on the EU Anti-Trafficking Day.

Some of these interviews can be found on the following links:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGDXGGINVJ018

* <http://www.vecer.com.mk>

ItemID=7E1793B4665B9643B7894AF148AA7891

* <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?>

ItemID=2AF2F10C95122040BC3B325C6F1E14C2

* <http://www.mia.mk/default.aspx?mId=2&lId=1>

* <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=9121194561&id=12&setIzdanie=22378>



Daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija* (dated October, 19, 2011). Article entitled: *Between the period of 2002 to 2010, 450 victims of human trafficking have been registered- 9 were registered only this year, eight of which were minors.*

National Anti-Trafficking Week- Marking the Occasion

As part of the Local Response to Human Trafficking- a project funded by the EU, the Open Gate NGO conducted a series of events to mark the National Anti-Trafficking Week, 2nd – 9th December, 2011.

These activities were partly conducted in Skopje, but some took place in collaboration with the National Network for Curbing Human Trafficking- *Budnost*, in the following towns: Sveti Nikole, Strumica, Struga, Tetovo, Kicevo, Bitola, Delcevo and the Reka Region. The activities were designed for various target groups in order to draw the attention of the youth, the public and the professionals to the issue of human trafficking.

In organizing preventive activities for the younger population, the NGO included 15 primary and secondary schools. The activities included 17 preventive lectures, 14 forum theatres, one art and a few literary competitions in the above mentioned towns.

The aim of these activities was to educate the young about human trafficking and to teach them how to protect themselves from this horrendous crime.

Furthermore, a few of the activities included the numerous professionals who have a crucial role on local level when it comes to the issues of protection and dissemination of preventive measures among target groups. This meant organizing round tables, coordinative meetings and forums in 7 towns. These events were attended by representatives from: the local government, the police, social workers, NGOs, the Labor Inspectorate, the media, health care workers, the Prevention Unit from the Ministry of Interior, customs officials, the border patrol and the Prosecution. Depending on the specific problems that municipalities face, a program was designed for every single activity, while part of these activities were aimed at creating, reviewing and adopting local action plans.

In order to reach out to the wider public and to raise awareness of the issue of human trafficking, during the National Anti-Trafficking Week Open Gate actively collaborated with national and local print and electronic media. The message was sent by various debates and interviews, as well as by screening of the documentary film *You Are Alive*. At the same time, volunteers from all NGOs- members of the *Budnost* network took part in distributing preventive literature on various frequently visited spots in 9 towns in Macedonia.

Major Challenges in Curbing Human Trafficking

The National Anti-Trafficking Week in the Republic of Macedonia was also marked with a forum entitled *Major Challenges in Curbing Human Trafficking*, which took place on 5th October, 2011.

The forum put much attention to the relevant institutions and organizations, in terms of the major challenges they face in the process of identification of the victim and the provision of protection services for the trafficked person. The event was attended by representatives of various institutions, international and local organizations, trade unions, the media, etc.

The following issues were discussed:

- *Proper legislature, procedures and programs versus the impediments in their application,*
- *Is the number of trafficked persons really decreasing in the Republic of Macedonia, or this is merely the result of poor identification of victims of trafficking, and*
- *Who is responsible for the financial sustainability of the state shelter and the main services for trafficked persons?*

One of the key conclusions of this forum was that state institutions need to develop greater responsibility in terms of financing the services offered to victims of trafficking (medical services, legal aid, psycho-social support). To this day, such services are solely provided by Open Gate.

In addition to this, various international organizations, NGOs and trade unions expressed deep concern that the actual number of trafficked people in the Republic of Macedonia is much higher in comparison to the official statistics.

Another conclusion drawn from this event was that it is necessary to develop a proactive identification mechanism for victims of labor exploitation by strengthening the capacities of the relevant local-level institutions, as well as to include other institutions in this process, but above all the Labor Inspectorate and trade unions.



NGO Ezera-Struga



NGO Prodolzen zivot- Strumica



H. Holiday Inn-Skopje 05/12/2011

A Study Visit of the Netherlands



Although there are clear indications of the presence of labor exploitation in the Republic of Macedonia, there are very few identified cases- very few victims have been identified and given the needed protection, and very few perpetrators have been prosecuted and convicted- in contrast with the assumptions/suspicions that the actual number is by far higher.

Therefore, Open Gate, an NGO which has in the past 11 years been working on prevention and immediate support to victims of human trafficking in Macedonia, took part in a study visit of the Netherlands, organized by La Strada International.

The visit took place between the period of 12th- 15th December, 2011 and included 7 meetings with representatives from the following institutions: the Querido/Roggeveen NGO, which is the largest shelter for victims of human trafficking in the Netherlands, the Fair Work NGO, which focuses on prevention of human trafficking for labor exploitation, The Ministry of Social Work and Employment, the Bureau of the National Reporter on Trafficking in Human Beings, CNV International- an organization which provides support for trade unions and advocacy organizations pursuing workers' rights, and CoMensha- an NGO which serves as a link between state institutions identifying victims of trafficking and NGOs which provide shelter and immediate services to trafficked persons.

The point of this visit was to strengthen the capacities of Open Gate staff in giving the proper response and in combating trafficking in humans for labor exploitation. This meant learning about the victim's needs, the role of The Netherlands and the preventive measures employed by the Dutch officials, the overall scope of activities of the NGOs, exchanging best practices, the influence of the trade union in the protection of workers from labor exploitation, and an analysis of the services provided for victims of labor exploit.

Certificate of Commendation to Open Gate



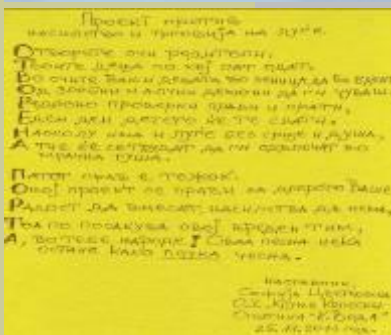
Having invested so much work and effort in curbing human trafficking all these years, Open Gate has been awarded numerous acknowledgements.

On 2nd December, The Astra NGO from Serbia celebrated a milestone: its decade-long work of actively curbing human trafficking. On that occasion, the NGO organized a meeting in Belgrade, inviting representatives from various partner organizations in the region and key stakeholders in the process of preventing human trafficking.

At this event, Open Gate, a long-term associate and partner of the Astra NGO, was awarded a Certificate of Commendation for its professional work, openness and support.

These acknowledgements for the committed work further motivate the staff at Open Gate to keep up the good work.

Therefore, the staff at Open Gate wishes to extend their gratitude to all relevant factors that have immensely contributed and supported the work of this NGO.



Training for Volunteers at SOS Hotline- Enabling Social Assistance and Help for Victims of Human Trafficking

As part of the established collaboration and the signed Memorandum of Understanding between Open Gate and the Faculty of Philosophy- Skopje, for the second time this year 10 students have been offered the opportunity to participate in a three month internship program at Open Gate. The program, which has been funded by OSCE, complements students' theoretical knowledge and enables them to hone their practical skills in the area of social work and social policy, paying particular attention to human trafficking. Open Gate, among other things, has organized numerous training sessions for students. On 8th November, 2011, Open Gate launched its first scheduled training entitled *Working on the SOS Hotline for Victims of Human Trafficking*. During this training, students were acquainted with the manner, methods and techniques relevant for working on the SOS hotline. They also had the opportunity to practically observe the role of the SOS hotline operator. In the following months, these students were actively engaged in the operation of the hotline as SOS operators, and also participated in various other programs and activities organized by Open Gate.

The same group of students attended yet another training organized by Open Gate, which took place on 27th December, 2011 and was entitled *Provision of Social Assistance to Trafficked Persons*. This training was an excellent opportunity for students to get acquainted with the manner, methods and techniques of working at a shelter, and to learn about the role of the social worker via a more practical approach.

Training for Working with High-Risk Children Aged 12-18

One of the activities of the Open Gate NGO for capacity strengthening of the organization was the training which took place in Skopje from 30th November until 2nd December, 2011. The training was entitled *Working with High Risk Children Aged 12-18* and the participants were given the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in working with adolescents, particularly those from institutions.

The training tackled: aggressiveness and anger in these children, active listening and types of communication, coping with Professional Burnout Syndrome, supervision in the assisting professions, etc. The event was facilitated by a trainer from the NGO Animus Association/La Strada Bulgaria. Capacity strengthening of the Open Gate staff shall contribute to a professional and efficient response to the needs of the target groups.

Strategic Planning

Open Gate/ La Strada NGO prepared a strategic plan for the organization's development. This was done in order to determine clear guidelines for the development of the organization accordingly the needs of the service recipients, as well as the trends on local, national and international level in curbing human trafficking.

The new strategic plan is designed for the period of 2012-2014 and contains an outline of the goals and activities through which Open Gate shall build an image and a role of a key organization in the civic community when it comes to the issue of trafficking in humans. This plan shall foster and increase staff productivity and efficiency.

The process of strategic planning was developed through a four-day workshop in Bulgaria, in the period of 24th-28th October, 2011. Open Gate staff actively participated at the training. Considering the fact that strategy building is the basis of a successful development of any organization, Open Gate is committed to executing this strategy plan in the years to come.



„We would particularly like to thank Civica Mobilitas- implemented by CIRa and funded by SDC, which sponsored the workshop on Strategic Planning “



Literature- Prevention of Human Trafficking with Particular Attention to Labor Exploitation



Open Gate prepared and printed 20 000 copies of preventive literature on human trafficking for labor exploitation.

This activity was part of the project *Prevention of Human Trafficking with Particular Attention to Labor Exploitation*.

This literature is to be distributed all over the country among workers in the following business sectors: the civil engineering industry, agriculture, mining, the textile industry, tourism and catering, etc.

In return, this venture shall contribute to raising public awareness about forced labor and workers' rights. This project has been funded by CNV International.

Prevention and Education for Pupils

Open Gate NGO places a lot of importance on prevention and education as the first prerequisite in protecting the youth from human trafficking. In the past three months, Open Gate has conducted 5 preventive workshops, 2 forum theatres and one peer-to-peer training.

All these activities have acquainted 315 elementary and secondary school pupils with the problem of human trafficking. The following are some of the preventive workshops organized by Open Gate in the past three months:

On 20th October, 2011, Open Gate held a preventive lecture at the *Jan Amos Komenski Elementary School* in Skopje in order to raise pupils' awareness about human trafficking and ways to protect from it. The lecture was attended by 30 pupils and the school counselor.



On 6th December, 2011, during the National Anti-Trafficking Week, Open Gate proudly presented the forum theatre at the *Jan Amos Komenski Elementary School*.

Around 40 pupils from the seventh and eighth grade learned about the fundamental human



rights, possible ways of falling prey to human trafficking and preventive measures, as well as services offered by Open Gate.

One of the activities planned to mark the National Anti-Trafficking Week included a preventive workshop at the *Boro Petrusovski Secondary Vocational School*.



The workshop was held on 9th December, 2011 and included 39 pupils.



On December 21-22 in Skopje, Open Gate launched a two-day training on the prevention of human trafficking. The target audiences were 17 representatives from 8 secondary schools in Skopje.

The training was developed in order to raise students' awareness and sensitivity to trafficking in humans, and to strengthen their capacity and abilities for peer education. The participants had a unique opportunity to get acquainted to the problem of human trafficking, the current situation in Macedonia, its cause and predicament, all the possible ways of falling prey to it, preventive measures, as well as all social services this country has to offer to victims of trafficking in humans.

On the other hand, special attention was paid to the prevention of human trafficking, including the ways, the methods and the role that peer-educators have in educating their classmates.

By using various techniques, such as a presentation of the film *You are alive*, as well as by incorporating group and individual tasks, and a forum theatre, the students were motivated to take active part in the course of the training, all the while resorting to their creativity. They agreed to disseminate the acquired information and to implement specific activities in their schools in order to raise students' awareness about human trafficking. This activity was part of the annual program at Open Gate. Furthermore, it was sponsored by CIVICA Mobilitas, implemented by the Centre for Institutional Development (CIRa) and funded by SDC.

On the list of Open Gate preventive activities for the past period is the training ***Involving Primary School Teaching Staff in the Identification, Referral and Prevention of Cases of Trafficking in Humans***. The training was held on the 25th November, in the National Red Cross Office in Skopje. The one-day training on prevention of trafficking in humans was designed for professionals from several elementary schools in the municipalities of Kisela Voda and Aerodrom. 21 representatives from 15 elementary schools attended the training. Among the attendees were school teachers, special education teachers, counselors and student advisors. The goal of the training was to raise awareness and sensitivity of school staff about the issue of human trafficking, as well as to include them in the process of identification, referral and prevention of cases of trafficking in humans.



The participants learned about human trafficking and its current issues in the Republic of Macedonia, the cause and effect, ways of falling prey to it, as well as preventive measures and services available for trafficked persons in this country.

The training was conducted via several techniques: screening of the documentary film *You Are Alive*, as well as group and individual work. Schools are a lot more than just a place where pupils acquire their basic education.

Namely, they are a place where students socialize, learn about manners, share problems with their peers and teachers, but above all, they make joint decisions about key moments of their lives.

Through its program for prevention and education, Open Gate has immediate influence on reducing the susceptibility of the youth, as well as on increasing the level of involvement of the professionals in the process of identification, referral and prevention of human trafficking.

Therefore, this training put much attention to the ways and methods used for the prevention of human trafficking, considering that teachers have a unique opportunity to reach the youth: to educate and inform them how to protect themselves from this horrible crime, and how to make educated decisions about their future. All participants agreed to practice what they learned at this training, and in the school syllabi. The participants promised to integrate the topic and curricula. The participants further promised to implement specific measures at their schools in order to raise students' awareness about human trafficking. This training was prepared in collaboration with the officials at the municipalities of Kisela Voda and Aerodrom, and is part of the annual program of Open Gate- enabled by CIVICA Mobilitas, implemented by CIRa and financed by SDC. Through its program for prevention and education, Open Gate has im- mediate influence on reducing the susceptibility of the youth, as well as on increasing the level of involvement of the professionals in the process of identification, referral and prevention of human trafficking.



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Open Gate is a local nongovernment organization and member of the European Network La Strada, which aims at raising public awareness, prevention and provision of psychological and emotional aid for victims of human trafficking. Open Gate strives at improving the status of victims of human trafficking, promoting and protecting victims' rights, including their right to life and existence, their right to dignity and safety, the right to equal treatment at work, the right to medical assistance, the right to equal treatment and the right to recognition as a person, as well as the right to compensation.

