



Youth Guarantee

In order to overcome the challenges related to youth employment at the national level, the Government of Republic of Macedonia and the social partners started with the development of a Youth Employment Action Plan(s). The first such Action Plan was prepared in 2012 for the period until 2015, followed by the preparation of a new **Youth Employment Action Plan 2016-2020**. The current Action Plan will be implemented by 2020 and it is mainly focused on areas that are essential for promoting youth employment. The goal of the National Action Plan for Employment of Young People 2020 is to promote more and better jobs for young men and women, with specific objectives mainly focused on improving the matching of skills supply with labour market demands; promoting creation of new jobs led by the private sector and facilitating the transition of young people to the world of work.

The first periodic revision of the Action Plan for Employment of Young Persons 2016-2020, was prepared defining the activities and goals foreseen for realization until 2020, and the Plan was also supplemented with a separate section "**Youth Guarantee**". The concept of the Youth Guarantee represents a systemic approach in the medium term to tackle the unemployment of young unemployed persons aged up to 29 years.

The first Master plan for implementation of the Youth

Active donors/development partners:

- *ILO-International Labor Organization (creating first Master Plan for implementation of Youth Guarantee)*
- *IME - Program financed by the Swiss Embassy (preparatory activities for successful implementation of the pilot phase of Youth guarantee - training youth workers from Youth NGO, as well as representatives from three pilot Centers for employment for improving their skills)*
- *USAID (comparative analysis for creating draft version of the Internship law.*

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- *Support to the successful implementation of the pilot phase in the selected municipalities (2018);*
- *Upscaling the implementation throughout the whole territory of the Republic of Macedonia*
- *Increasing and strengthening the capacities for successful implementation of outreach activity in the second phase (on the territory of the RM)*
- *Increasing and strengthening the capacities of the local centers for employment for successful implementation of the implementation of ALMM, as well as services for unemployed persons, as part of the Youth Guarantee Plan*
- *Support for amendments in the existing legislation related to the employment policies and public employment services, to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee*
- *Development of new Internship Law.*

Guarantee in the Republic of Macedonia was developed, which defined the institutions involved in the implementation and their obligations, and a Coordinative body was established in charge of implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee. The plan will be implemented in two phases, with the first (preparatory phase) to be implemented in the period 2018/2019 and the second phase 2020/2022.

In the first phase, the Youth Guarantee will be piloted in three municipalities - Strumica, Gostivar and Skopje, whereby the progress and the success of the implementation will be regularly monitored and analyzed and the timely preparatory activities will be undertaken for implementation of the Youth Guarantee on the territory of the whole country in the second phase.

Until now the internship is not regulated by law, except as an active labor market measure, on an annual basis. The coverage of unemployed persons is limited by this

measure. The establishment of the legislation that will regulate the internship, it will allow the extensive implementation and also the bigger number of persons to be able to obtain additional working experience. That will help them to be included more easily on the labor market.



Social Entrepreneurship

The activities for development and support of the social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia are being intensively implemented, aiming to lead to creation of jobs for those who are furthest from the labour market. It will also contribute in promoting the systems for professional rehabilitation and support of people at risk at the job place.

Active donors/development partners:

- *EU - IPA (Fostering social entrepreneurship, 2017; TA and financial support for social enterprises – in preparation, 2019)*
- *UNDP (assistance in the implementation of ALMM from the Operational plan for active labor market programs and measures for 2017 that include support for "social entrepreneurship");*

within the IPA programme, in order to help and support the existing civil society organizations that are now working in the field of social economy, to increase and strengthen their capacities and opportunities for new employments of vulnerable categories of citizens. The Strategy for development of Social Entrepreneurship is planned to be developed.

These efforts will also lead to introducing a new value in the running of businesses, that is, in addition to the profits of the companies themselves, their social impact will be measured. Piloting of measures and stimulating incentives was realised/implemented within the active employment measures for 2017, as well as through project activities funded

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- *Development of Strategy on SE (defining the main characteristics of the social entrepreneurship, mission, functionality, defining the status and recognition of the social enterprises)*
- *Mechanisms for supporting and development of the social enterprises (consultancy, expert support, financial support)*
- *Support to implementation of Grants (financial assistance) for start-ups (2019/2020)*

Green Jobs

Informal waste collectors are unregistered and unregulated in Republic of Macedonia, with the majority of collection activities usually being carried out by individuals from the Roma communities. These informal waste collectors traditionally perform the majority of waste collection and waste sorting and they are underpaid since they are in the bottom of the recycling chain.

The possibility for creating the modalities for employment through integration the informal waste collectors into the waste management system was a priority for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to include "green jobs" in some of the active labor market measures in the Operational plan for active labor market programs and measures and services for 2018. For that purpose, the trainings are planned for improving qualifications that lead to green jobs. The existing legislation does not regulate the informal waste collectors. Additionally an issue on the capability of existing waste management system is still open.

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- *Support for creating mechanisms for integration of informal waste collectors into the formal chain of waste collection (process of identification, regulations etc.)*
- *Support for the programs for creating social enterprises for informal waste collectors*



Professional Rehabilitation

With the purpose of supporting the deinstitutionalization process and the process of social inclusion through employment and transition from institutional care to community-based social services, activities are being implemented in the field of developing the professional rehabilitation services.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy under its 2018 program activities for the employment of people with disabilities is proposing to implement a project for vocational rehabilitation of this group of citizens.

During the preparation of this project proposal, the experiences of the Project "Promotion of Social Services for Inclusion" under the IPA Component IV Human Resource Development were used.

Active donors/development partners:

- EU - IPA (Promoting social inclusion services, 2016/2017)
- UNICEF (promoting the ICF)
- UNDP (assistance in the Banja BANSKO - Strumica 2017 – promoting the work-oriented rehabilitation);

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- Development of a system for implementation of professional rehabilitation (2018);
- Development of Reha Centers in Skopje and Strumica (2018/2019);
- New Law for Employment of persons with disabilities

The implementation of this project will start in the first half of 2018. Given that vocational rehabilitation is not contained in the current Law on Employment of Disabled Persons, in 2018, legislative changes will be made in order to introduce this measure and define funds from the Special Fund for Employment of Disabled Persons.

Also, the possibility of including vocational rehabilitation through social entrepreneurship will be considered in the coming period.

The Development of Vocational Rehabilitation centers in Skopje and Strumica are planned during the period of implementation of the Project





Reforms of the Social Protection System

In order to overcome the identified weaknesses and shortcomings, significant and comprehensive reform of the social protection system is planned to be undertaken in the following period, in the direction of creating opportunities for efficient response and dealing with the identified challenges in the area of social protection, poverty and social exclusion.

The reform of the social protection system will focus on ensuring proper and adequate targeting/directing of the social benefits to persons and families who are at a social risk of poverty and social exclusion. The adequacy and efficiency of cash benefits for the most materially endangered families are planned to be ensured through the introduction of a programme for minimum adequate income, which will enable families in a state of social risk to receive financial compensation in addition to the income to the poverty line. It is planned to introduce family packages and grouping of the rights to social and child care. Part of these transfers will have to be conditioned by entry into the labour market for users who are capable of working and by strengthening their work capacities. Such planned measures will have a direct impact on poverty and social inclusion of vulnerable categories of citizens.

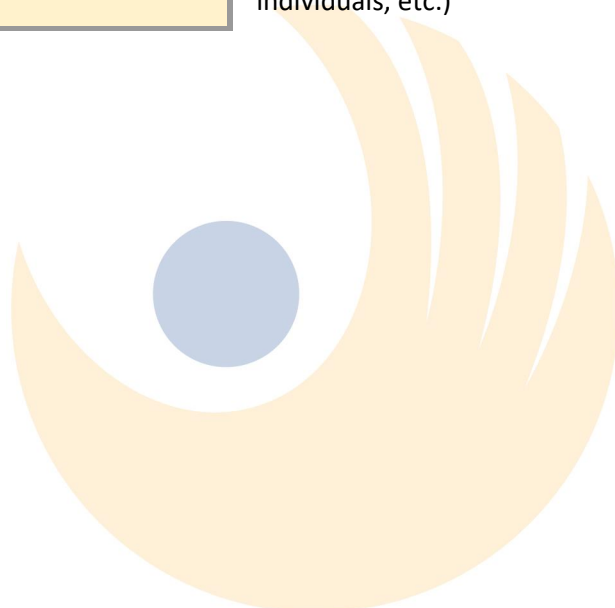
Active donors/development partners:

- World Bank (Project on CCT 2017 and SSIP 2019-2024)
- UNICEF (supporting the development of technical specification for data base - 2018)
- UNICEF and UNDP (strengthening the capacities on case management for CSW and CE - 2018);
- GIZ (development of the Methodology for determining the costs for social services)

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- Development of New draft Law for Social Protection (July 2018);
- Development of new Software for administering the social cash transfers and social services
- Increasing the capacities of public servants in CSW and Employment centers - development of a Training Center for professionals
- Development the system for social contracting

In parallel to the activities for reforming the system of cash benefits in the social protection, the work will also be done on substantial improvement in the part of social services, their type, scope, ways of delivery, inclusion of other providers, etc. Activities will be undertaken for redesigning the social services system, within which a more comprehensive model of social contracts will be developed, covering wider range of social services. This will encourage pluralization of the activity and will open up the possibility of delegating social services to external providers (civil society organizations, private companies, individuals, etc.)





Deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization is transformation of segregating long-term residential institutions into a humane and effective system of community-based social services, which provide adequate and timely support in response to user's personal needs, thus respecting the human rights and dignity of persons in need and promoting social inclusion.

Active donors/development partners:

- *EU (Development of Strategy on Deinstitutionalization, 2017/18)*
- *UNICEF (Development of Transformation plan for the following institutions: 11 Oktomvri, Ranka Milanovic, 25 Maj, Topaansko Pole, and Majchin Dom-Bitola, 2018)*
- *UNDP (Development of Transformation plan for the following institutions: Demir Kapija, Banja Bansko, 2018);*
- *UNICEF (fostering promotional campaign, 2018);*
- *Development of social services costing methodology (GIZ, 2018)*
- *World Bank (Creating legal framework for standardization of services, accreditation and licensing of service providers, social contracting, 2018)*

Deinstitutionalization in Macedonia began in 2000, when 30 children with intellectual disabilities were transferred from an institution to foster families.

While implementation of the first National Deinstitutionalization Strategy (2008-2018) was inconsistent, it led to the creation of the first community-based supported housing service provider, which has continuously ensured care for over 80 persons with intellectual disabilities. Thirty-two day care centers for children and adults with disabilities were created and a moratorium on admission of persons with disabilities in institutions was introduced and largely (albeit not entirely) observed.

In mid 2017, the MoLSP, with the EU support, began the participatory development of a **new national strategy**.

Decentralization and **pluralisation** of service provision have been determined as the key directions of the deinstitutionalization. The draft strategy, along with an action plan, will be finalized by mid March 2018.

Following wider public debate, the document will be enacted by the Government in May 2018.

In January 2018, the Government allocated 12 state-owned apartments in seven municipalities for the deinstitutionalization. The decision set the legal procedure for use of state-owned 'social apartments' for development of supported housing services. Renovations and adaptations of the 12 apartments will be completed within the first half of the year.

In 2018, preparations began for development of transformation plans for seven institutions. The plans will provide overviews of activities, funds and timetable, needed for the institutions to transform into new alternative non-institutional social service providers. All plans will be completed by the end of 2018.

Work has also commenced on preparation of methodology for costing of social services and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2018.

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- *Identifying and capacity strengthening of community-based supported housing service providers (2018/19);*
- *Establishing new social services at local level through existing or new service providers (2018 and beyond);*
- *Providing adequate apartments, including renovations, adaptations and initial equipping, for community based supported housing (2018 and beyond)*
- *Launch the establishment of new community based supported housing services for children without parents or parental care and for persons with disabilities (mid 2018)*
- *Successful implementation, including additional investments and staff training, in transforming, where appropriate, current institutions into providers of new and innovative social services (2018 and beyond)*



Basic legal framework for standardization of social services, accreditation and licensing of social service providers, as well as for social contracting will be created within the preparation of new legislative framework for the social protection system by the end of 2018.

Capacity building of (potential) service providers remains a high-priority challenge. This not only refers to supported housing, but includes wide range of community-based services that foster social inclusion and activation (i.e. access to education and the labour market) and/or support biological or foster families.

Within the first half of 2018, the Government expects that the new community-based housing services are established and begin providing care for children without parents or parental care, and for persons with disabilities.

By 2020, the Government is firmly committed to put to an end to the placement of children under the age in institutions, as well as to complete the transformation of the Demir Kapija Special Institution. By 2028, all institutions for children, persons with disabilities, elderly, and persons with mental health issues will completely be transformed.





Early Child Development

One of the main issues in this area is the existence of available capacities/services for preschool education and children care, which, among other things, would contribute to creation of conditions for facilitating access to the labour market and employment for parents.

In this respect it should be highlighted that less than one third of children up to 6 years of age in Macedonia are covered by any form of preschool childcare, while in the case of poor children, children from marginalized groups, as well as children from rural areas, the possibility of inclusion in some form of preschool education is significantly lower.

In the existing preschool childcare system mostly consisted of kindergartens and the early childhood development centres, certain weaknesses have been identified.

In order to improve the coverage of children, the MoLSP is intensively working on increasing the number and capacities of the institutions responsible for preschool childcare. At the moment, Republic of Macedonia has a total of 65 public childcare facilities – kindergartens and 4 public early childhood development centres with a total of 263 facilities located in 59 municipalities as well as 37 private facilities. Thus, the activity is realized in a total of 309 facilities, 66 of which are in rural areas and provide preschool childcare for children from rural areas as a special target group.

Active donors/development partners:

- World Bank (on going CCT Project, SSIP project 2019/24)
- UNICEF
- EU - IPA (Promoting alternative child-care services 2016/17 ; Improving the quality of child-care education, planned for 2019/20)

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- Support in professional staff licensing process
- Support in process for inclusion of children with disabilities (needs assessment, adaptation of space, personal assistants, trainings, assistive technology and learning materials, campaign etc.)
- Support in development of alternative forms for care of pre-school children

In the following period, activities will continue to further expand the network of institutions for preschool childcare, primarily by increasing the investments intended for reconstruction, adaptation and construction of new kindergartens, etc. In the coming four-year period, these activities are expected to additionally increase the coverage of children in preschool education by 50%.

Preparation of the new World Bank project "Social Services Improvement Project" has been started and it is expected that the project would be effective in the first quarter of 2019. The goal of the project is to improve the access, quality and effectiveness of the early childhood care and education system. The duration of the project is 5 years (2019 - 2024).

The World Bank and UNICEF shall work together on:

1. Diversification of learning programs,
2. Providing quality pre-school care and education; and
3. Identification of policy gaps, defining priorities in early childhood development and strengthening pre-school education

A UNICEF program for 2018 signed with MLSP covers continuation of support in the reforms of the professional development national system, opening of early childhood development centres, providing support for the functioning and usage of the national data base data, etc.



Gender Equality

On 22 December, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence from 2011 (the so-called Istanbul Convention). In the meantime, three Sexual Assault centers and one Rape crisis Center are in the process of being fully equipped and functional as of the second quarter of 2018. Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector is being strengthened through direct support provided to service providers in the Skopje area and through improved coordination with CSOs that are benefiting from external support with the aim to strengthen protection of survivors. Further support is needed in establishing the required services on national level, according the Convention (at least 25 shelters; 5 rape crisis centers; 3 shelters for victims of sexual violence and 20 psychosocial support centers).

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

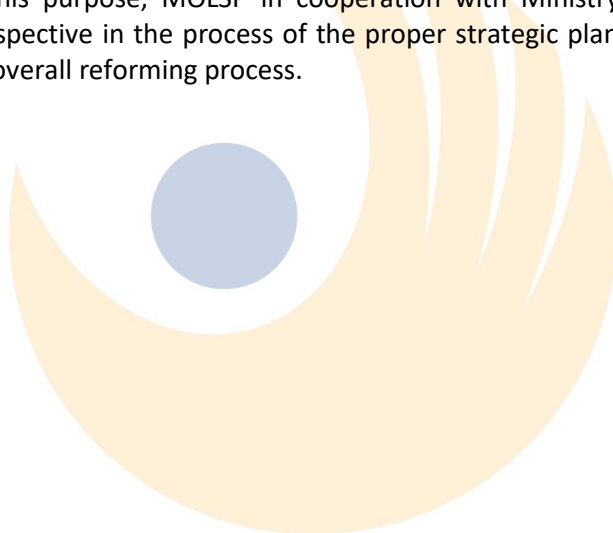
- *Strengthening of the Gender Equality Machinery;*
- *Institutionalization of the process of mainstreaming gender perspective in the process of strategic planning and budgeting;*
- *Legislation amendment and improving of availability and quality of services for survivors of gender based violence.*
- *Addressing gender based discrimination and improved access to assets and services;*

In order to address factual inequalities women face with regards to men in property owning, in income generation (gender pay gap), labor market participation, MOLSP will focus on improving women's access to assets. Adopting measures for equal execution of rights to property, for reducing and re-distributing the unpaid care services, and equal execution of the rights to social benefits should lead to more opportunities for supporting women's entrepreneurship and redressing the negative trends in economic independence of women with regards men and the power relations that are generated as consequence.

Active donors/development partners:

- *UN Women (Project on Gender Responsive Budgeting and „Implementing Norms, Changing Minds“ in support of addressing violence against women)*
- *UN Women (Project „Advancing the institutionalization of GRB by systematic integration of gender perspective in the strategic planning and programming of the MoLSP“)*
- *UNDP (Project: „Preparation for ratification of the Istanbul Convention: Adoption of better policies and practices for the elimination of violence against women“);*

process is needed. For this purpose, MOLSP in cooperation with Ministry of Finance will work full integration of gender perspective in the process of the proper strategic planning and budgeting, which will serve as basis for the overall reforming process.





Persons non-registered within the Birth Registers and Non-discrimination

The issue of the persons non-registered in Birth Registers is a regional one. Almost all neighborhood countries are faced with this issue. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia established working body consisting of representatives from MoLSP, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, the Directorate for books registration and Roma NGO, responsible for addressing this particular issue. The mobile teams for informing persons non-registered in books for registration were also established. This teams were directly involved in the process of identification of this group of persons. On the ground, 650 persons were identified, 100 of them were registered following the checking (verification) of data between the Ministry of Interior and Directorate for books registration. The MoLSP also provided financial support for 100 DNA analyzes for determining relation between mother and her children.

Key challenges/priorities in the area:

- *Amendments in the legislation;*
- *Coordinated on-field activities between Ministries and NGOs;*
- *Establishing of Register for persons that are not registered in Register of births.*

Active donors/development partners:

- *OSCE Mission in Skopje*
- *UNHCR*

In January the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has prepared Information for the Government with concrete proposals for some Ministries for the following period, about the activities that have to be undertaken with the purpose of properly address and resolve this issue of persons non-registered within Birth Registers.

Within the framework of a wide consultative process, with the involvement of representatives of the relevant state institutions, non-governmental and international organizations, a draft text of the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination was prepared, aimed at ensuring greater efficiency in the protection against discrimination. The new draft law is in line with EU law and international standards. In December 2017 the Law was sent for consideration and submission of remarks and comments to the Venice Commission, the EU Delegation in Skopje, ODIHR and OHCHR. Last month, the representatives from the Council of Europe were in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and discussed issues related to this Law. We are expecting to receive the opinion and comments of the Venice Commission, on the submitted text of the Law. One of the main challenges in the next period, related to this law, will be to strengthen the capacities of the members of the Commission for protection against discrimination.

