

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
OF THE ALLIANCE MACEDONIA
WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION
FOR THE PERIOD 2010-2012

SKOPJE, NOVEMBER 2009

Strategy and Action Plan of the Alliance

“Macedonia without Discrimination” for the period 2010-2012



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADI	–	Association for Democratic Initiatives;
EU	–	European Union;
LPPD	–	Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination;
IRC	–	Islamic Religious Community;
IPPG	–	Inter-Partisan Parliamentary Lobby Group for disabled people;
MWDA	–	“Macedonia without Discrimination” Alliance;
MIM	–	Macedonian Institute for Media;
MOC	–	Macedonian Orthodox Church;
MCWR	–	Macedonian Center for Women’s Rights – shelter center;
MCIC	–	Macedonian Center for International Cooperation;
UWOM	–	National Women’s Council of Macedonia – Macedonian Women’s Organizations Alliance;
HRCRC	–	Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Center.

PREFACE

In cooperation with a number of civil society organizations, active in the human rights arena, we joined our forces in order to call the public's attention to the issue of discrimination in the country. Issues were identified in the socio-cultural context, the legal framework and the institutions. The programme "Macedonia without Discrimination" was developed based on these findings.

The needs emerged, on one hand, because of the people who did not know how and where to achieve their rights in the absence of systemic solutions and effective mechanisms, and on the other – for the purposes of harmonization of the Macedonian legislation with the EU acquis, as well as with other international norms and standards.

Therefore, the member organizations of the "Macedonia without Discrimination" Alliance embraced this task with a single vision: to contribute to a fair society, without discrimination, where all people enjoy both the right to equal opportunities and the benefits of diversity. MWD was registered as an alliance of citizens' associations in July 2009.

During the period 2007-2009, active work was done on developing an enabling environment for equal opportunities for all people, i.e. for non-discrimination in Macedonia. The focus was placed on improving the situation of certain target groups, discriminated against on one or several grounds. In Macedonia, people who live in poverty represent an additional target group, which is being discriminated against.

Taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations that resulted from the National Conference on evaluation of the programme "Macedonia without Discrimination 2007-2009", held on 27 October 2009, as well as the numerous meetings and workshops of the member organizations of the MWD alliance, priority activities for the next three year period have been identified.

Matching the progress made hitherto in the field of action with the momentum, the member organizations developed their Operational Strategy for the period January 2010 - December 2012.

Founding members of the Alliance “Macedonia without Discrimination”:

1. Association for Democratic Initiatives;
2. “El Hilal”;
3. Macedonian Center for Women’s Rights – shelter center;
4. Macedonian Center for International Cooperation;
5. National Women’s Council of Macedonia – UWOM;
6. Polio Plus - Movement against Disability;
7. First Children’s Embassy in the World “Megjashi”;
8. Humanitarian and charity Roma association “Mesechina”;
9. HOPS – options for healthy living - Skopje;
10. Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution;
11. “Third age University”.

Executive summary

The member organizations of the “Macedonia without Discrimination” Alliance crowned their joint efforts hitherto in the fight for equality and non-discrimination with the formalization of this alliance, after three years of joint operations and action.

A positive step forward in this direction was made as late as in 2007 when a broad exchange of opinions started, and the process became discernibly more coordinated and more transparent. The process of drafting a Law on Protection against Discrimination started under the influence and strong pressure by the civil society and with great support from the international community, with the adoption of this law being projected for 2009.

The issue of discrimination finds it very difficult to penetrate into the system of values of the everyday living in the Republic of Macedonia. Traditional perceptions targeted at particular groups, as well as both the old and the new stereotypes and prejudices, were never challenged at a more general level, nor have coping mechanisms been developed.

The absence of a special body with a broad mandate to act in relation to discrimination and the lack of promotion of equality are increasingly felt as a deficit, both in terms of providing individual assistance to victims of discrimination, as well as in the fields of education, public awareness raising, monitoring and consultations in the process of harmonization of the national legislation with the EU acquis.

The establishment of the “Macedonia without Discrimination” Alliance resulted in harmonized positions of the organizations working with vulnerable groups and in defining a common platform for future action. Most importantly, MWD emerges as a strong mechanism for cooperation and dialogue with the institutions on the one hand, but also as a tool for pressure and negotiations about the needs of the citizens and the civil society sector that works in the field of human rights and non-discrimination on the other.

The increased intensity of activities is also reflected in the progress made with regard to the drafting of the Law on Protection against Discrimination. The active participation by the civil society organizations is achieved both through the direct involvement in the work of the Working Group under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and through the establishment and the functioning of the Coordination body for exchange of information for the purpose of developing the anti-discrimination concept.

The members of the alliance are building their relations based on the principles of mutual respect and trust, equality and democratic governance and management of the alliance.

The strategic goals have been set in accordance with the areas of action:

- Legislation: devising anti-discrimination policies and legislation by way of exerting influence in the competent institutions and providing support for an effective implementation thereof.
- Public awareness: increasing the public awareness through a series of campaigns and educational activities, as well as through cooperation with the media.
- Institutional development: development of the MWD alliance and institutional development through cooperation, partnership and strengthening the capacity of the relevant stakeholders and interested parties.
- Situation monitoring: collecting data from the field, making analyses and establishing mechanisms for action in cases of discrimination.

Members in the MWD alliance are organizations involved in strengthening of the capacity of the civil society sector and institutions, as separate target groups, which contributes to effective attainment of the pre-defined goals.

The MWD alliance works with different target groups. Therefore, the primary focus is on general promotion and protection against discrimination, and then on the rights of their own target groups, due to their experience and knowledge hitherto. However, the MWD alliance also deals with the protection of other groups that are susceptible to discrimination, especially when they are not subject of anyone's interest and have no representatives of theirs in the public life.

The MWD alliance acts on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, both nationally and locally, building upon the capacities of the organizations that have networks of their own. The alliance also aspires to create partnerships at regional level, as well as to link with international networks and organizations working in the field of discrimination.



I. CONTEXT



I. CONTEXT

Legal framework

Equality and prohibition of discrimination are constitutional categories in the Republic of Macedonia and they are included in a number of primary and secondary legislation acts at national level. In the period since the independence (1991) until present, a number of steps to further develop anti-discrimination policies and legislation have been taken, both through the ratification of international legal instruments and by upgrading the national legislation. The majority of the changes refer to non-discrimination on ethnic ground (amendments to the Constitution and to a wide range of laws), but significant changes were also introduced into the labor legislation (introduction of a separate chapter addressing the problem of discrimination and the amendments relating to mobbing at work), in the laws related to education, in the Criminal Code (of special importance is the decriminalization of homosexuality) and the enlarged powers vested in the Ombudsman. The adoption of the Law on the Equal Status of Women and Men is particularly important.

The most serious stagnation in the standardization of the prohibition of discrimination is related to the adoption of the global framework of the anti-discrimination legislation. The identified shortcomings of the existing legislation (lack of uniform terminology, partial solutions, gaps in the provisions in certain areas and with regard to certain grounds of discrimination, and inappropriate protective mechanisms) were not perceived by the authorities and were not accepted as arguments in favor of the need for passing a Law on Protection against Discrimination.

A positive step forward in this direction was made as late as in 2007 when a broad exchange of opinions started, and the process became discernibly more coordinated and more transparent. Process of drafting of a Law on Protection against Discrimination started under the influence and strong pressure by the civil society and with great support from the international community, with the adoption of this law being projected for 2009.

Socio-cultural context

The issue of discrimination finds it very difficult to penetrate into the system of values of the everyday living in the Republic of Macedonia. Traditional perceptions targeted at particular groups, as well as both the old and the new stereotypes and prejudices, were never challenged at a more general level, nor have coping mechanisms been developed. The 2001 conflict brought into the forefront the ethnic affiliation as a ground for discrimination, whilst the Roma Decade has introduced the dimension of multiple discrimination; however, at no moment was an awareness about the global problem of discrimination built, nor was political will to address this problem in the everyday life demonstrated.

The few surveys¹ carried out in this area show an extremely low level of tolerance of certain marginalized groups in particular (people with a different sexual orientation, Roma), stigmatization of others (users of psychotropic substances, HIV positive and people with AIDS), and declarative acceptance of certain groups which is not manifested in terms of changed practices (people with disability, women, senior citizens). According to the “Eurobarometer” poll (the latest survey in this area), the strongest perception is the one of discrimination on the ground of partisan affiliation, but the perception of discrimination on the ground of ethnicity still persists as a very important perception. The absence of a significant perception of discrimination on the ground of sex, as well as the very low level of perceiving the discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation require further analyses in order to ascertain the actual reasons.

Even the positive attitude declared in the polls towards specific groups of citizens who in practice are exposed to exclusion and discrimination (like the people with disability), is actually much more due to the social security rather than to the creation of conditions for equal enjoyment of the rights and freedoms by the people with disability.

As regards the situation of children’s rights, surveys have shown that almost one half of the children have basic knowledge of their rights, but it is a worrisome that they receive very little of that knowledge from their parents. Discrimination is especially conspicuous towards children of another ethnic/racial community, as well as towards disabled children. Unfortunately, there have been no special surveys about the inclusion of the children in the educational process in the light of the protected grounds, but the actual situation, especially the low inclusion of the abovementioned groups, witness the reality in the educational process.

What can be inferred on the basis of the available data is that the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are oblivious of their rights (despite the fact that this has been much discussed) and that they do not know or use the existing protective mechanisms (either because they are not available, or because the protection they are supposed to provide is inappropriate, or because they have no trust in the existing institutions or are simply afraid to initiate proceedings).

Media still appear more in the role of generators of discrimination rather than being a tool in the fight against discrimination. Some headlines in certain media fall under the category of hate speech, with a large number of articles just relating about events and developments, without being analyzed through the prism of the discriminatory behavior present. When an attempt was made to make an analysis of the media in 2008, only one article was found in which discrimination on one of the protected grounds was mentioned – in August 2008. The other articles found were a result of the activities of civil society organizations and the source thereof were their websites. A noticeable change was observed in the second half of 2009 when the interest of the media in discrimination issues started to increase gradually (primarily in the context of the adoption of the Law on Protection against Discrimination).

Discrimination has continuously been of interest for a number of citizens’ associations; however, the need for exchanging information about the concept of non-discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia between the various players and vulnerable groups was identified as late as in 2007.

Institutions

The institutional framework for the protection against discrimination is the weakest link in coping with discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia. The judicial system does not have the capacity to act in discrimination cases (because of the lack of exact procedures and bylaws, insufficient knowledge and political influence on the judiciary), whereas the other institutions (Ombudsman, Standing Inquiry Committee for Human Rights and the Anti-corruption Committee) have only a limited authority in this area.

The absence of a special body with a broad mandate to act in relation to discrimination and the lack of promotion of equality are increasingly felt as a deficiency, both in terms of providing individual assistance to the victims of discrimination, as well as in the fields of education, public awareness raising, monitoring and consultations in the process of harmonization of the national legislation with the EU acquis.

The civil society sector (especially the organizations allied in MWD) is an active player and catalyst in this period of building of anti-discrimination policies and legislation; however, the link which is supposed to be embodied by the independent body for equality (or for protection against discrimination) is missing, thus preventing the achievement of real and durable results in this field. The establishment of such a body is also aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the stakeholders and opening room for a dialogue and for making the key decisions in this area jointly.

Prior activities

Since 2001, there has been a constant increase in the interest of citizens' associations in discrimination matters, which has led to more training, development of observation tools and mechanisms, initiation of campaigns, lobbying and production of a number of handbooks designed to help to identify discrimination, define vulnerable groups, cope with stereotypes and prejudices and promote inclusion.

The activities of the civil society organizations gained momentum in the context of the year 2007 – European Year for Equal Opportunities for All. A series of activities were undertaken in this period in the Republic of Macedonia, targeting both the general public (through an intensive one-month campaign in December 2007) and mapping the existing policies and laws, including the international standards. Moreover, the needs of the institutions from a capacity building perspective were identified in consultation with them, especially regarding civil servants and public administration, touching also upon the future interventions with the other institutions working in the field of non-discrimination, such as the courts, the Public Prosecutor's Office (in certain cases) and the Academy for Training of Judges and Public Prosecutors (as an institution that produces competent staff). One also identified the need to strengthen the capacity of the organizations active in the field of human rights and non-discrimination, despite the fact that the

activities undertaken hitherto were aimed at specializing the staff from these organizations so as to be able to respond to the challenges in the field of non-discrimination. These activities culminated with first the informal and then formal unification of citizens' organizations into an alliance of citizens' associations, gathered around the idea for "Macedonia without Discrimination".

The increased intensity of activities is also reflected in the progress made with regard to the drafting of the Law on Protection against Discrimination. The active participation by the civil society organizations is achieved both through the direct involvement in the work of the Working Group under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and through the establishment and the functioning of the Coordination body for exchange of information for the purpose of developing the anti-discrimination concept. The establishment of the Coordination body improved the communication between the institutions and the civil society organizations, with a solid partnership established with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2008 for implementation of the activities planned in the Strategic Joint Action Framework for Fighting Discrimination, which was reaffirmed with the support obtained from the European Commission through the EU's PROGRESS Programme on Employment and Social Solidarity.

As a means to assist in the formulation of the legal and institutional framework for equality in the Republic of Macedonia, comparative analyses of the specialized bodies for equality were prepared, as well as recommendations for the creation of a body for equality in the Republic of Macedonia.

In the context of all these activities, an exceptionally important precondition for future progress is the support provided by the international community (both financial and in terms of sharing the experiences and advocating the implementation of the merit concept that brings the Republic of Macedonia closer to the EU member states).

The establishment of the "Macedonia without Discrimination" alliance provided for harmonized positions of the organizations working with vulnerable groups and in defining a common platform for future action. Most importantly, MWD emerges as a strong mechanism for cooperation and dialogue with the institutions on the one hand, but also as a tool for pressure and negotiations about the needs of the citizens and the civil society sector that works in the field of human rights and non-discrimination on the other.

In this way, we think that the issue of discrimination has already been raised at different institutional levels, and the civil society organizations have been perceived by the authorities as a very important partner in the efforts to build equality, which is considered as basic principle of the future development of the country.

Activities of certain civil society organizations – members of the Alliance

Individually, the MWD member organizations undertake a series of coordinated activities targeting different actors with a view to educating and sensitizing them to non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

The Association for Democratic Initiatives – ADI monitors the human rights situation by collecting data from the field and producing reports, and keeps track of specific cases of discrimination of the ethnic communities. In addition, repatriation, adaptation and reintegration of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons are the priorities of ADI's programme. Currently, ADI is working in partnership with other members of the MWD on the preparation of reports on the topic of discrimination.

“El Hilal” is an organization focused primarily on improvement of the status of the Muslim population and assisting the most vulnerable families. As a citizens' association that works specifically with citizens of the Islamic religion, MWD works on strengthening the capacity of the organization in the field of non-discrimination by involving “El Hilal” in the joint activities.

The Macedonian Center for Women's Rights has made an analysis of the legislation related to the instruments for protection against violence and discrimination and issued the publication “Analysis of the legal acts and mechanisms against marginalization and discrimination of women”, as well as a comparative analysis of the respective situation in a number of countries within the region and in Europe. In addition, this Center deals with monitoring of certain court proceedings before the competent authorities, which are cases related to the rights of women and the implementation thereof in the legal system. This and many other pieces of information are subject of yearly and half-yearly reports.

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation has already delivered a series of training events for representatives of civil society organizations representing vulnerable groups on how to recognize and cope with discrimination. The training was designed as both basic and advanced. Training of trainers with international experts was also delivered, and the European Commission's handbook “Combating discrimination” was translated into Macedonian for this purpose. A survey was carried out by following the methodology of the Eurobarometer for non-discrimination, the so-called Barometer for equal opportunities. MWD, as one of the MCIC programmes, will continue to be implemented together with the other member organizations of the MWD alliance.

The National Women's Council of Macedonia – MWOA has defined a vision of gender equality, guaranteed women's rights, elimination of discrimination of the women in society and family, development and peace.

This organization carries out its mission by way of: creating new relationships in the society; increasing the participation of women in the public life and decision-making processes; cooperation and mutual support; advocating and promoting women's rights and the fight against violence, abuse and trafficking in women; promoting and guaranteeing equal opportunities and participation of women in all spheres of society; encouraging tolerance and dialogue; promotion and protection of peace in the region and of an increased participation of women in government

and in decision-making; improving the socio-economic status of women and developing entrepreneurship; contributing to the mainstreaming of the gender concept into the laws of the Republic of Macedonia and approaching the European standards.

“Polio Plus - movement against disability” initiated the establishment of the Coordination body for exchanging information for the purpose of developing the concept of non-discrimination in Macedonia and the involvement in the marking of the year 2007 – European Year for Equal Opportunities for All. As a leading partner in the activities supported by the European Commission’s PROGRESS programme, they undertook a series of campaigns and other activities during the last two years. Over the past three years, “Polio Plus” has been responsible for the coordination of the majority of the MWD activities, serving as a Secretariat of the informal coalition, and now as an executive office of the MWD alliance. Moreover, they are responsible for coordinating the activities of the national coordination body for non-discrimination. In its respective field of action, “Polio Plus” is lobbying, through the IPPG, for ratification of the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The First Children’s Embassy in the World “Megjashi” explores the situation of children’s rights, discrimination and violence against children, as well as discrimination of street children, more specifically the children that are outside of the educational process or have no personal identification documents.

The Children’s Embassy “Megjashi” also prepares an Alternative report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Macedonia, which will be presented before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Association for Integration of the Roma “Mesechina”, which is responsible for coordinating one part of the MWD activities, works on the promotion of the rights of the Roma population, and also prepares situation reports based on monitoring and documenting cases of discrimination in the media. “Moon” focuses on educational, housing and health issues of the Roma population, but it also attempts to resolve one of the most bitter issues of the Roma population – the status of the persons without personal identity documents in Macedonia.

“HOPS – options for healthy living” works on harm reduction of drug abuse, and provides support to drug users and sexual workers and their families through its programmes. The goal of the organization is to strengthen the target groups, which are among the most marginalized ones in the society, through activities for elimination of the stigma and for social inclusion of drug users and sexual workers in the society, protection of their human rights and promotion

of the principle of equality. The organization has continuously monitored the situation of these persons out in the field and has documented cases of human rights violations and discrimination of drug users and sexual workers, who have suffered from multiple discrimination in many cases.

The Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution is an organization primarily dealing with research and education with a view to helping the citizens to assume an active role in the resolution of seemingly insoluble conflicts that are rooted in ethnic and other differences, and with promotion of the concept of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Comparative research was conducted over the past period in order to define the model of the body for equal treatment, as a basis for establishing such a body in the Republic of Macedonia. The Center is intensively working on the development of curricula for human rights education and participates in the creation of the educational policy on inclusion, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The "Third Age" University works on the improvement of the status of the elderly through regular education on various topics, as a form of lifelong learning. The organization is involved in the MWD's current activities in order to have their capacity for protection of their target group against discrimination strengthened.

During this period, the Helsinki Committee in Macedonia was doing monitoring and representing identified cases of discrimination, and in 2010 the Committee will conduct a survey about discrimination at local level.

The Euro Balkan institute is focused on advanced education on non-discrimination, with the emphasis placed on the region, by organizing non-discrimination schools.

The Foundation Open Society Institute is carrying out its campaign "Under the same Sun", with the emphasis on the minority groups. The campaign is decentralized and implemented in partnership with local organizations.



II. VISION, MISSION VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

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VISION

Our vision is to contribute to a fair society, without discrimination, where all people enjoy equal opportunities and equal treatment, as well as benefits of the diversity.

MISSION

“Macedonia without Discrimination” is an alliance of civil society organizations united with a view to promoting equality and providing equal treatment for all people in the Republic of Macedonia.

MWD is an active player and a catalyst for changes in the society in the direction of creating and improving the anti-discrimination policies and legislation. MWD exerts influence on the institutional development through cooperation and partnership, and works continuously on raising the public awareness, while carefully monitoring the situation of the vulnerable groups.

MWD is openly standing for overcoming and eliminating the discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia and is representing the interests of different groups and individuals in cases when their rights have been violated or threatened on any of the grounds of discrimination.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The members of the alliance are building their relations based on the principles of mutual respect and trust, equality and democratic governance and management of the alliance.

INDEPENDENCE – the members of the alliance are independent in their work and in the implementation of their activities.

Every member of the alliance upholds these principles in its own work and functioning, and by no activity of its own will it promote, support or enable discrimination on any of the grounds specified in the Constitution, international treaties and national laws.

COOPERATION - the members of the alliance cooperate with each other. In order to achieve its goals, the alliance also cooperates with other relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions. The cooperation is based on the common interest of the organizations in protection against discrimination.

PARTICIPATION – all members participate in the process of decision-making and work of the alliance.

In its activities, in the internal organization and in any action of its own, the alliance will be guided by the basic principle of non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

TRANSPARENCY – the work of the alliance is transparent in relation to its members and the overall public, and will be open vis-a-vis the other organizations and institutions the goal of which is protection against discrimination. The alliance is open towards those processes in the society which imply advancement of equality and protection against discrimination.

EQUALITY – all members of the alliance are equal. The alliance will respect this principle internally and will promote it as a basis for building a discrimination free society. It will treat everybody under equal conditions and without discrimination and favoring of specific groups.

The alliance is committed to building a society in which all people will have equal opportunities for exercising and protecting their basic rights and freedoms and for combating discrimination.

SOLIDARITY – in its operations, the alliance will protect and promote the human rights and will provide protection against discrimination on any ground under equal conditions. This means that the target group of every member organization in the alliance is a target group for protection against discrimination of the alliance.

By no activity or document of its own will the alliance promote, support or accept in any way discrimination on any of the grounds specified in the Constitution, international treaties and national laws.

TOLERANCE – the members of the alliance respect and support the differences by enabling equal opportunities for all groups. The alliance cherishes the tolerance of marginalized and vulnerable groups whose status is susceptible to discrimination.

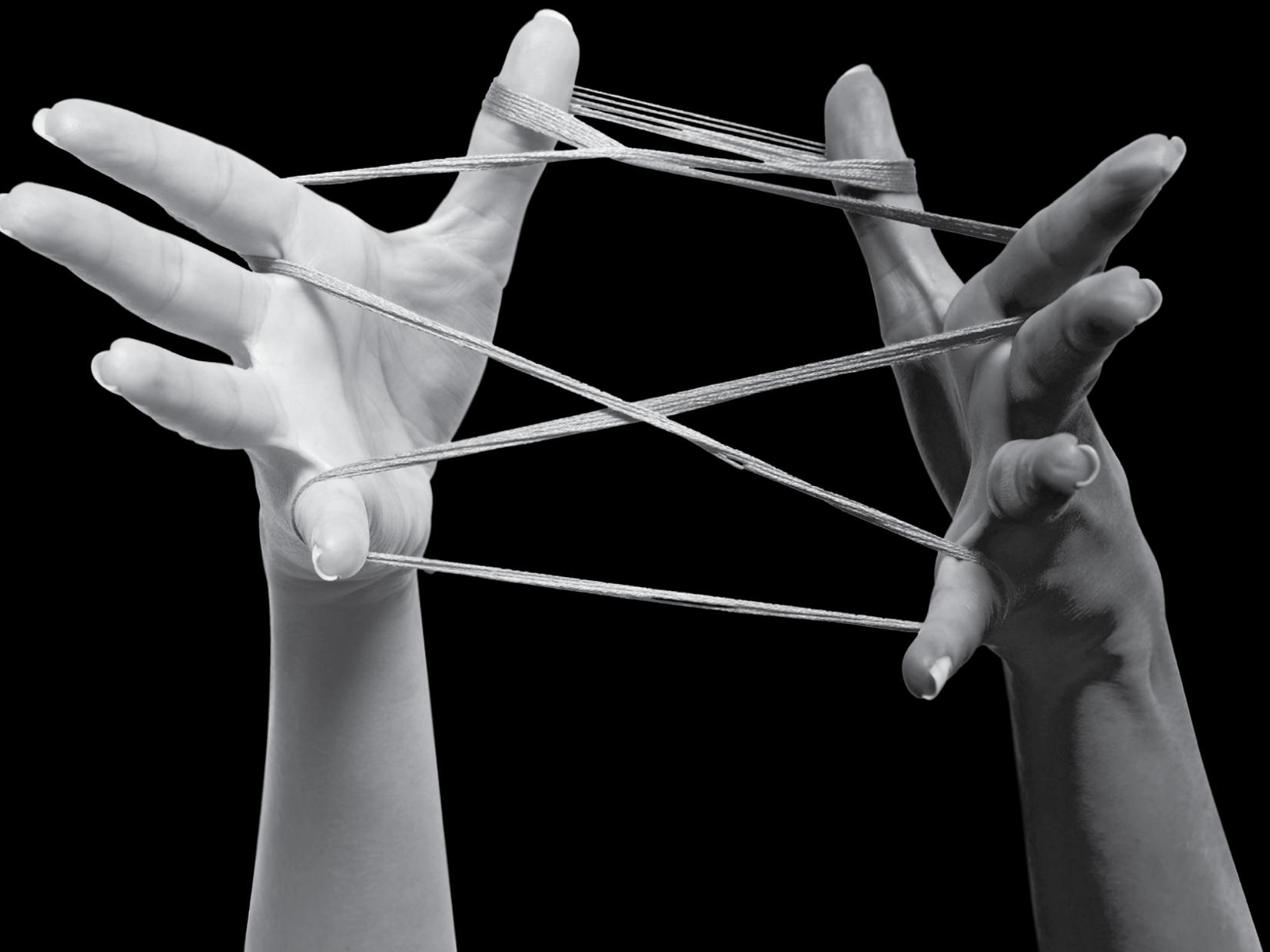
The alliance is supportive of the free exchange of ideas and opinions and promotes the respect for the differences.

The alliance will cherish tolerance, sensitivity and mutual respect among its members.

DEVELOPMENT – the alliance will encourage and enhance, through its work, the processes of promotion of non-discrimination as a basic value of the society.

The members of the alliance are open for a dialogue between each other and willing to cooperate while sharing common values based on the common vision and on the principle of non-discrimination, culture of dialogue, constructive criticism and fight against injustice.

The alliance is willing to change, develop, learn and adjust not at the request of donors and current politics, but as a response to the actual needs of the society.



III. AREAS OF ACTION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

III. AREAS OF ACTION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

In accordance with the pre-defined priorities and suggested approach, the alliance “Macedonia without Discrimination” will act in four areas: Legislation, Public Awareness, Institutional Development and Monitoring of the Situation.

The strategic goals have been set in accordance with the areas of action:

- Legislation: devising anti-discrimination policies and legislation by way of exerting influence in the competent institutions and providing support for an effective implementation thereof.
- Public awareness: increasing the public awareness through a series of campaigns and educational activities, as well as cooperation with the media.
- Institutional development: development of the MWD alliance and institutional development through cooperation, partnership and strengthening the capacity of the relevant stakeholders and interested parties.
- Monitoring the situation: collecting data from the field, making analyses and building mechanisms for action in cases of discrimination.

Target groups – MWD is an alliance of citizens’ associations and foundations that work with different target groups. Therefore, its primary focus is on general promotion and on protection against discrimination, and then on the rights of their own target groups, due to their experience and knowledge hitherto. However, the MWD alliance also deals with the protection of other groups that are susceptible to discrimination, especially when they are not subject of anyone’s interest and have no representatives of theirs in public life. In this regard, the MWD alliance, through its organizations, covers the following grounds of discrimination: ethnicity and race, gender/sex, age (children and elderly), disability, religion or belief, as well as specific groups such as victims of family violence, users of psychotropic substances, sexual workers, refugees, migrants etc. Member organizations of the MWD alliance also include organizations that are involved in strengthening of the capacity of the civil sector and institutions, as separate target groups, which contributes to an effective attainment of the predefined goals.

Target area – the MWD alliance acts on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, both nationally and locally, building upon the capacities of the organizations that have networks of theirs. The alliance also aspires to create partnerships at regional level, as well as to link with international networks and organizations working in the field of discrimination.



IV. RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES

III. Results and activities

In conformity with the identified areas of action and the strategic goals, what follows next are the expected results for each of those areas and goals as well as the activities (more details about the activities are included in the Action Plan attached to this Strategy).

1. LEGISLATION

In the first area of action, titled as Creation of anti-discrimination policies and legislation, the emphasis is placed on the achievement of several objectives:

1.1. Adoption and implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (LPPD)

The adoption of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination (hereinafter LPPD) is currently in the focus of the attention of the MWD Alliance, as well as of several other interested parties, such as the organizations that are active in the human rights field, but also the Government (being one of the more important laws from the National program for European legislation adoption) and the international public. The MWD Alliance shall continue to be active in its efforts for the law to be enacted as soon as possible and to provide for its application and implementation, as well as for continuous improvement of the envisaged measures, in accordance with the international standards. In this regard, it is very important for the equality body to become part of the legislative solution and the MWD Alliance shall continue with its efforts, both through lobbying for such body and also for its further development.

Therefore, the main activities aimed towards achieving this result shall be as follows:

- 1.1.1 Enactment of LPPD
- 1.1.2 Providing support for effective implementation of the LPPD at national and local level
- 1.1 Creation and implementation of a National strategy of the Republic of Macedonia for combat against discrimination

At the beginning, the Strategy prepared by the MWD Alliance may serve as the basis, at the same time inviting other interested stakeholders to participate in its preparation (institutions and the overall civic sector, like the trade unions for instance). In order to provide for greater participation, debates shall be organized at the local level, especially in the areas with a larger number of members of other ethnic communities, but also at the centers for rehabilitation and extended stay, as well as in hospitals and retirement homes, in order to hear what are the needs of different groups

that are most frequently exposed to discrimination (for instance: handicapped individuals, users of drugs and other psychotropic substances etc.).

Having in mind that an effective implementation of the policies and laws can only be ensured if one provides for an extensive participative process of consultations, through the process of preparation of its strategy, MWD will engage in a dialog with trade union representatives, with special emphasis on the Employment Equality Directive.

After the situation has been comprehended, a mixed working group shall complete the Strategy that is to be adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.

Following the enactment of the National Strategy, MWD shall monitor its implementation and prepare regular (annual) reports accordingly. The monitoring of the implementation is rather important, because it provides the grounds for measurement of discrimination and serves as an indicator of the progress in the combat against discrimination.

In this regard, the activities shall be as follows:

1.1.1 Drafting a National Strategy for Non-discrimination

1.1.2 Monitoring the implementation of the Strategy

1.2 Creation of other policies and legislation, relevant for the groups that are exposed to discrimination

The enactment of the Law may serve as a catalyst for faster ratification of certain international instruments, such as the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the ratification of the Convention on the Use of Languages, the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child, but also for the implementation of the Framework Agreement, the development of the Strategy for Social Cohesion in the Republic of Macedonia, based on EU experiences, as well as for the enactment of other legal instruments that MWD is going to lobby for in an open fashion, depending on the needs and initiatives of its members and other marginalized / vulnerable groups.

The activities shall include the following:

1.2.1 Ratifying relevant international instruments (documents, agreements, conventions, protocols)

1.2.2 Drafting law proposals and secondary legislation on specific forms of discrimination or target groups

1.2.3 Harmonization with relevant policies that promote equality and equal treatment

1.3 Establishment of an Equal Treatment Body

During the past period, MWD Alliance has lobbied for the establishment of a specialized body for equal treatment, as part of the LPPD. Having in mind that the political will required for the establishment of such body exists, MWD shall continue, on one hand, to lobby for its establishment and provision of the necessary financial means for its operation, and on the other, in cooperation with the Government, it shall work on its promotion amongst the citizens, as well as towards its future accreditation with the international institutions.

- 1.3.1 Agreeing on the proposed model for the equal treatment body with the interested stakeholders
- 1.3.2 Provision of funds for the establishment of an equal treatment body
- 1.3.3 Strengthening the capacity of the newly established equal treatment body

1 PUBLIC AWARENESS

In its second area of action, that is Public Awareness, MWD Alliance focuses on the promotion of the equality concept, with special emphasis on the education and the media.

1.1 2.1 Promotion of the equality concept amongst the citizens

Promoting the benefits from equality and multiplicity amongst the citizens, as well as the actual Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination is very important, both for the purpose of identifying discrimination, when they are the victims of discrimination, but also for the purpose of prohibiting discrimination. In this regard, actions will be taken to promote the protected grounds of discrimination, for the purpose of better understanding of the definition (regardless of whether it is going to be expanded or open). Of course, besides the new ones (depending on the mechanism provided for in the LPPD), one would have to promote the existing mechanisms for protection also, and for that purpose one may cooperate with the Ombudsman and the Standing Inquiry Committee for the Protection of Citizens' Rights, as well as with the Committee on Equality between Men and Women at the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.

The activities are as follows:

- 1.1.1 Thematic campaign for promotion of the equality concept and more specifically the LPPD amongst the citizens
- 1.1.2 Producing an easy to read version of the LPPD for the citizens discussing the benefits from the Law
- 1.1.3 Producing brochures for different topics and areas
- 1.1.4 Promoting the LPPD as well as other policies amongst the public through web pages and other social media

1.2 Equal access to education providing equality for all

A satirical theatre play shall be prepared in cooperation with an amateur theatre company, which is to promote equal access to the educational system for all. It can be performed at the schools or at the local cultural centers, in cooperation with the local self-government.

1.3 With the media – together towards equality

Discrimination becomes a more frequent topic in the media, however, one can note the lack of understanding for the issue, even during the actual reporting about the existence of discrimination. For these reasons, one has to take actions on several different levels, through regular monitoring, but also by strengthening institutional capacities. It is extremely important to establish a good partnership with journalists' associations and the Court of Honor, since they are the first in line, monitoring the editorial policies of the media.

In order to achieve this result, it is necessary to perform the following:

1.3.1 Regular monitoring of the media

1.3.2 Identification of discrimination in the media

2 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In its third area of action, that is Institutional Development, MWD Alliance focuses on its own development, as well as on the strengthening of the relevant institutions and other stakeholders and the cooperation between them and MWD.

2.1 Strengthening the capacities of MWD and the wider civic sector

Following the enactment of the Strategy and the Action Plan (2010-2012), MWD shall focus itself on the regulation of the internal relations and coordination with the members, as well as on establishing proper relations with the wider civic sector, relevant in the field of promotion of equality and protection against discrimination.

Improvement of the internal coordination of activities through harmonization of the operational principles and methods shall be achieved by enacting all other acts that originate from the Statute, as well as by establishing other agencies and bodies, as provided for in the Statute, such as the Human Rights Committee (a working group for the LPPD existed in the past, but it was operating ad hoc and without a specific program).

Providing sustainability for coordination of MWD. In order to ensure the perseverance of MWD coordination, one has to define the manner of funding by the members, as well as the scope of activities to be implemented within such a financial frame. The majority of the activities will be funded through donations, but funding from the State Budget is also possible, pursuant to the dynamics of implementation of the Strategy of the Government with the civic sector.

Inclusion of new members in MWD. MWD has identified several civic organizations as potential members, who might receive full or associative membership. Their active inclusion and participation is planned prior to the enactment of the Rules of Procedure and all other acts of MWD.

All this is going to require activities for the following:

2.1.1 Development of MWD

2.1.2 Strengthening of the capacities of MWD and the broader civic sector for identification of discrimination cases

2.2 Established social dialogue, partnership and cooperation with other stakeholders in the society

Discrimination is a phenomenon that is part of everyday life, and for that reason, a much broader action on the part of society is required for its eradication, or at least for its alleviation. The first thing to be done is to conduct a research on the perception of discrimination amongst different target groups.

In addition, discrimination has to be understood by all stakeholders in the society, i.e. by the business community, trade unions, as well as by all other groups (for instance, religious communities). Within the framework of this result, MWD will be developing its cooperation with all of them.

2.3 Networking and cooperation of MWD with other regional and international organizations and institutions

The partnership and cooperation with the European and international networks and organizations is one of the key areas for exchange of good practices and experiences with the stakeholders that are active in the field of non-discrimination.

Although the majority of the members of MWD are part of networks that have been established at regional and international level according to the groups they represent or the particular area of their action, the field of non-discrimination is not properly tackled, although it gets an ascending attention during the last nine years, especially within the EU.

The MWD Secretariat has established contacts with the Network of independent legal experts in the field of non-discrimination in the EU back in 2007. In addition, contacts have also been established with the EQUINET network, although the membership in this network is reserved only for equality bodies from the EU. The visit to the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna has provided for additional contacts and closer introduction to the work of the European equality institution.

Bearing in mind that there is an initiative to establish a regional network on equality and non-discrimination, MWD will take active participation in its creation.

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country for membership in the EU, is waiting to be included in the reports that are being produced at the EU level through the Network of independent legal experts in the field of non-discrimination, where MWD has been assigned as a contact point.

2.4 Establishing a mechanism for cooperation with institutions for protection against discrimination

Strengthening of the National Coordination Body for Non-discrimination (NCBND) as a coordinative mechanism for cooperation with other institutions, which exists since 2007, is the main activity in this part.

2.5 Identifying the training needs of competent institutions and other stakeholders

2.5.1 Defining the needs of all institutions that work with vulnerable groups, susceptible to discrimination

Although work is being done to strengthen the capacity of all institutions, due to the non-existence of an appropriate legal framework, it is still difficult to recognize and identify the presence of discrimination, both by the victims and employees in the institutions, as well as by all other stakeholders and service providers. Identification is to be carried out at the regional offices of the line ministries as well.

In order to measure the level of knowledge, anonymous questionnaires are going to be prepared, with information about the person and the institution that he or she comes from, position, questions regarding identification of discrimination, situations in which the person has recognized the presence of discrimination or has actually discriminated against another person etc.).

The very same questionnaire, with slight modifications in the general data (the area of operation, job position) shall be used also for other service providers, in order to have comparable data.

2.5.2 Creation of a reference list of required training for the institutions and other stakeholders

During the forthcoming period, according to the identified needs i.e. identified level of knowledge, a reference list of required training shall be defined, which can further be used by the relevant institutions for strengthening of their own capacities.

2.6 Strengthening the capacities of all interested parties

A large portion of the activities for institutional development shall relate to the training of all involved stakeholders. Those shall include the following:

2.6.1 Specialized training for lawyers and other stakeholders with legitimate interests

2.6.2 Specialized training for judges and public prosecutors

2.6.3 The role of the Ombudsman and other bodies that originate from the LPPD

2.6.4 Strengthening of capacities through training and study visits for representatives from the institutions at all levels.

3 MONITORING THE SITUATION

In its fourth area of action, that is Monitoring the situation, MWD focuses on the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring of discrimination in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as on the trends in this field at the international level.

3.1 Establishing a mechanism for monitoring of discrimination

3.1.1 Monitoring cases of non-discrimination

At the beginning, the monitoring of this process is planned to be conducted by an expert group from MWD, i.e. the so-called Human Rights Committee, established in accordance with MWD's Statute.

3.1.2 Processing "test" cases before competent bodies

3.2 *Monitoring the situation at international level*

So far, MWD has regularly monitored and reported on any new initiatives coming from the international organizations and institutions, and it shall continue performing this activity continuously in the future, in order to provide for comparable data and to continue with further development of the policies and legislation. Within the EU, regular periodical reports (most commonly six month reports) are being produced regarding the current situation in this field. The reports are drafted according to protected grounds, or by placing the emphasis only on certain grounds and practices. The networking of MWD with the networks that prepare those will provide for relevance of the collected data, not just at the international level, but also before the domestic institutions. In addition, within the EU framework, the work of the equality bodies is also being monitored and they are the subject of a common report. MWD will observe this model.



ANNEX 1: ACTION PLAN



Macedonia Without Discrimination Alliance

ACTION PLAN 2010-2012

AREA 1: LEGISLATION				
Results	Activities	MWD Alliance	Institutions involved	Period
1.1. Adoption and implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (hereinafter LPPD)	1.1.1. Enactment of the LPPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintaining participation in the Working Group at the MLSP - drafting comments on the proposals received and giving own proposals - lobbying towards adoption of the solutions proposed by the Alliance 1.1.2. Providing support for effective implementation of the LPPD at national and local level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - producing a Guide for the institutions regarding the practical implementation of the LPPD 	Polio Plus MCIC HRCRC ADI HOPS MWOA	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	2010-2012
1.2. Creation and implementation of a National strategy of the Republic of Macedonia for combat against discrimination	1.2.1. Drafting a National Strategy for Non-discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion of civic organizations and other interested stakeholders (trade unions, chambers, etc.) in the strategy creation process - improvement of the MWD Alliance's strategy - public debates at local level 1.2.2. Monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Non-discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishing a mixed working group (comprising representatives from the civic sector and the MLSP) - producing (annual) reports on the implementation 	Polio Plus MCIC HRCRC ADI HOPS MWOA	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	2010-2012
1.3. Creation of other policies and legislation relevant to the groups that are susceptible to discrimination	1.3.1. Ratifying relevant international instruments (documents, conventions, protocols etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Convention on the Use of Languages - Optional Protocols on the Rights of the Child 1.3.2. Drafting law proposals or secondary legislation on specific forms of discrimination or target groups (for instance Roma). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of the existent legislation - identifying the need for new legislative initiatives - producing a legislative registry - establishment of a mixed working group - formulating specific proposals to state authorities - enactment of certain specific laws (for instance: the Law proposal on the protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities or for the Roma population) 1.3.3. Harmonization with relevant policies that promote equality and equal treatment (for instance: Framework Agreement, Roma Decade, Strategy for Social Cohesion etc.)	Polio Plus MCIC HRCRC ADI HOPS MWOA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament and other state authorities relevant for the topic	2010-2012
1.4. Establishment of an Equal Treatment Body	1.4.1. Agreeing on the proposed model for the equal treatment body with the interested stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordination of the proposed model with the other relevant institutions and the relations between the new body and the existing mechanisms for protection against discrimination; - approximation to the recommendations from the international organizations and institutions on the model of the specialized body (from the financial and structural point of view). 1.4.2. Provision of funds for the establishment of an equal treatment body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment of the financial means required (human resources, essential funds for proper functioning); - drafting applications / projects for funding of the body 1.4.3. Strengthening the capacity of the newly established equal treatment body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comparative review of the relations of the new body with the other institutions in the system and EU authorities (Ombudsman, judiciary, state administration bodies etc.). - lobbying for inclusion of MWD representatives in the new equal treatment body. 	All parties concerned		2010-2012

AREA 2: PUBLIC AWARENESS				
Results	Activities	MWD Alliance	Institutions involved	Period
2.1. Promotion of the equality concept amongst the citizens	2.1.1. Thematic campaign for promotion of the equality concept and more specifically the LPPD amongst the citizens - TV spots to raise the awareness - short promotional films (10 minutes) 2.1.2. Producing an easy to read version of the LPPD for the citizens discussing the benefits from the Law - Guidebook for the citizens for better understanding of the LPPD 2.1.3. Producing brochures for different topics and areas - producing brochures on the accessibility of services, education, housing, etc. 2.1.4. Promoting the LPPD as well as other policies amongst the public through web pages and other social media	Mesechina Polio Plus MWOA MCIC HRCRC	Ministry of Labor and social policy and other state authorities	2010-2011
2.2. Equal access to education, providing equality for all	2.2.1. „Equal access to education for all“ - production of a theatre play, on the topic of equality - organizing a travel caravan - library - education for the young on the topic of equal opportunities and equal treatment	Polio Plus Mesechina MWOA ADI	Ministry of Education and Science and other state authorities	2010-2012
2.3. With the media – together towards equality	2.3.1. Regular monitoring of the media - strengthening media capacities - building partnerships with journalist associations - monitoring of media (press and electronic) to identify discriminatory editorial policies 2.3.2. Identification of discrimination – correctness and professionalism - training for current and future journalists	ADI Polio Plus Mesechina MWOA	Associations of journalists in the Republic of Macedonia, Court of Honor, Macedonian Media Institute	2010-2012
AREA 3 : INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Results	Activities	MWD Alliance	Institutions involved	Period
3.1. Strengthening the capacities of MWD and the broader civic sector	3.1.1. Development of MWD - establishing other agencies and bodies, as provided by the Statute - establishment of a Human Rights Committee - enactment of Rules of Procedure for the operation - enactment of other legal acts originating from the Statute - establishing a procedure for monitoring discrimination cases - defining public relations policies - establishing cooperation with the broader civic sector - establishing mechanisms for internal coordination of activities - providing sustainability for MWD coordination - defining the manner of funding by the members - inclusion of new members in MWD 3.1.2. Strengthening of the capacities of MWD and the broader civic sector for identification of discrimination cases - acquiring knowledge and skills for identification of cases by the members of MWD - advanced training on testing discrimination cases	MCIC Polio Plus Mesechina HRCRC MWOA	NGOs active in the field of non-discrimination and potential members of the MWD Alliance	2010-2012
3.2. Social dialogue, partnership and cooperation with other stakeholders in the society	3.2.1. Researching the perception of discrimination amongst different target groups 3.2.2. Cooperation with trade unions 3.2.3. Cooperation with the business community - promotion of the employment of marginalized groups - creating provisions for “self-regulatory internal code of ethics” - improvement of the access to the services provided (for example: inapproachable facilities, prohibited entry for certain groups etc.)	Polio Plus MCIC HRCRC MWOA	Religious communities, trade unions, economic chambers and companies	2010-2012

3.3.	Networking and cooperation of MWD with other regional and international organizations and institutions	3.3.1 Establishment of a regional network for equality and non-discrimination 3.3.2 Inclusion in the reports produced at the EU level through the Network of independent legal experts in the field of non-discrimination	Polio Plus MCIC MWOA	Civic organizations from the Balkans and the EU	2010-2012
3.4.	Establishing a mechanism for cooperation with institutions for protection against discrimination	3.4.1. Strengthening of the National Coordination Body for Non-discrimination (NCBND) as a coordinative mechanism for cooperation with other institutions - defining the scope of work and methods of influence by the NCBND - created for the operation of the NCBND - establishing thematic groups within the NCBND to monitor the situation	MCIC Polio Plus Mesechina MWOA	MLSP, Secretariat for European Affairs	2010-2012
3.5.	Identifying the training needs of competent institutions and other stakeholders	3.5.1. Defining the needs of all institutions that work with vulnerable groups, susceptible to discrimination - Drafting a questionnaire for the institutions, service providers and employees in educational institutions 3.5.2. Creation of a reference list of required training for the institutions and other stakeholders - defining a reference training list	HOPS ADI MCWR Polio Plus Megjashi MWOA	Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of education and science	2010-2012
3.6.	Strengthening the capacities of all interested parties	3.6.1. Specialized training for lawyers and other stakeholders with legitimate interests - designing training for lawyers and other interested parties 3.6.2. Specialized training for judges and public prosecutors - designing specialized training for judges and public prosecutors - providing continuous professional development, through courses at the Academy, as well as through exchange of experience at the European level 3.6.3. The role of the Ombudsman and other bodies that originate from the LPPD - establishing regular communication between the Ombudsman and the Sector for equal opportunities and the bodies with a new mandate - strengthening the capacities of the Sector for equal opportunities and the bodies with a new mandate through specialized training 3.6.4. Strengthening of capacities through training and study visits for representatives from the institutions at all levels (national, local) - specialized training for existing and new institutions, authorities and bodies that will be established with the new LPPD	MCIC Polio Plus Megjashi ADI MWOA	Academy for judges and public prosecutors, Secretariat for European Affairs, Ombudsman, the new equality body	2010-2012
AREA 4: MONITORING THE SITUATION					
	Results	Activities	MWD Alliance	Involved institutions	Period
4.1.	Established mechanism for monitoring of discrimination	4.1.1. Monitoring cases of discrimination - establishment of an expert group within MWD, i.e. the so – called Human Rights Committee, established according to the MWD Statute - analysis of data collected in the field, defining and publication of positions - producing periodical reports with statistical data on the legislation, specific cases and presentation of most typical cases 4.1.2. Processing “test” cases before competent bodies	Megjashi Polio Plus ADI MCWR	Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MLSP	2010-2012
4.2.	Monitoring the situation at international level	4.2.1. Networking of MWD with the networks that prepare the reports will provide for relevance of the collected data 4.2.2. Monitoring the work and exchange of experience amongst equality bodies	ADI HOPS Polio Plus	Secretariat for European Affairs, MFA, MLSP	2010-2012