



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union



## Report on the Work of the Social Work Centers in Republic of Macedonia

Presented views do not reflect in any case the views of the European Union.  
Institute for democracy "Societas Civilis".  
Tel/Fax: +389 2 30 94 760, [www.idscs.org.mk](http://www.idscs.org.mk), [contact@idscs.org.mk](mailto:contact@idscs.org.mk)



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

**Title:**

Report on the Work of the Social Work Centers in Republic of Macedonia

**Publisher:**

Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje (IDSCS)

**For the publisher:**

Marko Troshanovski, President of IDSCS

**Autors:**

Hristijan Petrushev

Zoran Nechev

**Contact:**

[contact@idscs.org.mk](mailto:contact@idscs.org.mk)

02/3094 760

Ul. Mitropolit Gologanov 42A/3, 1000 Skopje

**Skopje, September, 2016**



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

Thanks to the team of the project financed by the EU *“Technical Assistance in Project Management and Monitoring of the Grant Scheme ‘Fostering Social Inclusion’”* for access to the data of Training Needs Assessment, Training Plan and Training Materials Report as part of "Empowering Relevant Actors for Social Inclusion at Local Level 2\_MK".

## Content

Introduction	3
Context/Methodology	4
Research findings	5
Employees in SWC	5
Equipment and Resources	9
Project Management	10
Cooperation	12

## Introduction

The Republic of Macedonia is a social state, according to the Constitution. In accordance



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

with this definition, the state forms a system for social protection which is directed to perform activities and policies to stop and overcome the basic social risks to which citizens are exposed to throughout his life, decreasing poverty and social exclusion and strengthening his capacity for self-protection.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is a central institution that manages, creates policy and plans in the sphere of social protection. The Institute for Social Activities is an institution for studying the social appearances and problems, as well as social protection improvement. On the other hand, the Social Work Centers (SWC) are institutions for performing activities in the field of social protection. The scope of work of the SWCs include the following activities: providing services to the socially disadvantaged and the population under risk of becoming socially disadvantaged, administering the rights for social financial aid and performing activities directed towards social prevention. In Macedonia there are 30 Social Work Centers. Part of the SWCs are municipal and part are inter-municipal.

## Context/Methodology

This report is prepared as part of the project “Improvement of the Social Inclusion Through Effective Use of EU Funding”. The Report research was conducted from the 11<sup>th</sup> of April to the 20<sup>th</sup> of May.

Subject to this research are the 30 Social Work Centers. The goal of the research is to evaluate the Centers’ capacities regarding the employees, the equipment they have, the ability for project management and cooperation with the key stakeholders. Part of the questions can be answered with yes or no, part on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest, and 10 the highest possible score), part are with fill in the blanks, and most of the questions have space for an additional comment.

In order to gather the data a questionnaire was prepared consisting of 32 questions. The questionnaire was prepared by the project team in consultation with representatives from the Institute for Social Activities. For this research, the team also got a letter of support to implement the research in the Social Work Centers. The questionnaire was sent to the Social Work Centers via email, and 30 of them submitted a completed questionnaire. However, part of the answers were missing and the project team tried to fill them in by contacting the



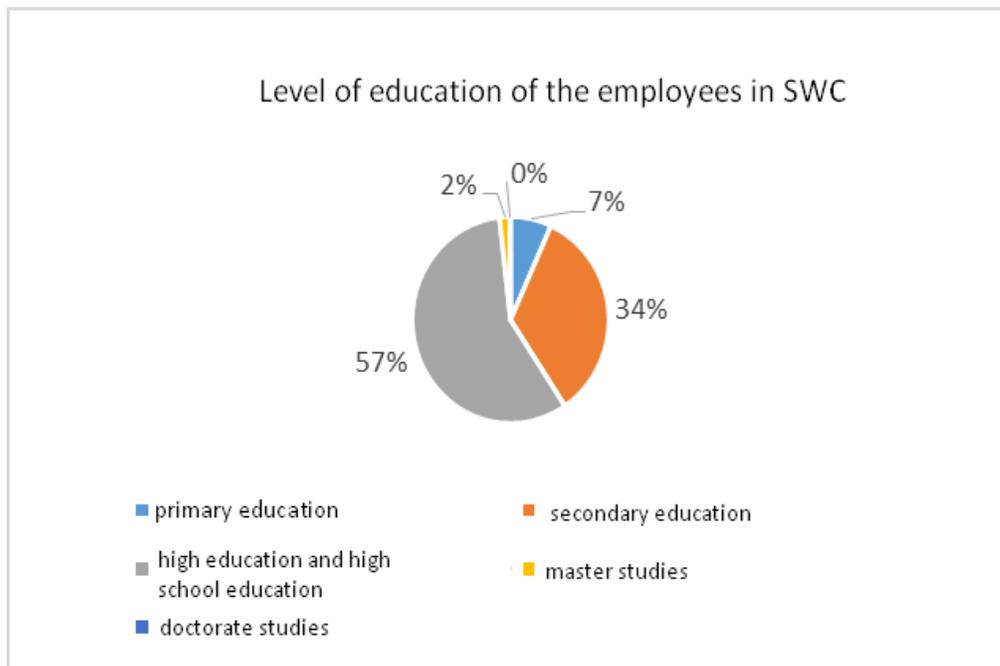
Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

Centers on the phone, which was not very successful.

## Research findings

### Employees in SWC

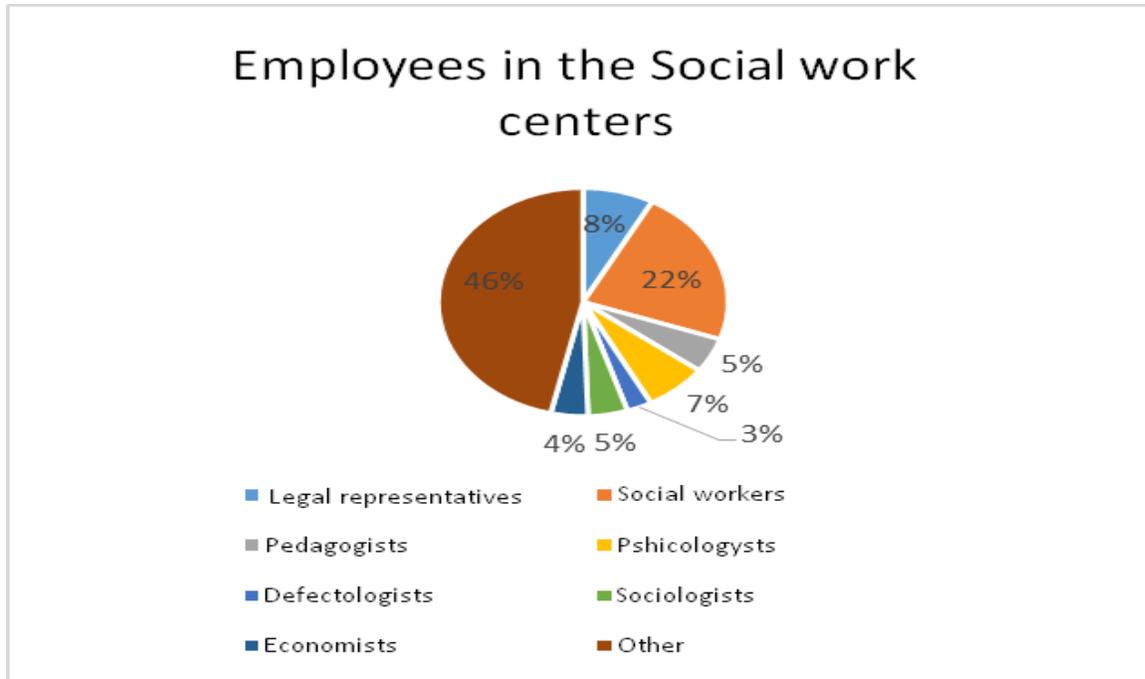
According to the data received from the Social Work Centers (SWC), the total number of employees in all 30 Centers is 1112. According to the number of employees, the biggest is located in Skopje, with 256 employees, and the smallest is in Demir Hisar, with only 8 employees.



As shown on the graphic, most of the employees in the Centers have finished higher or high school education (57% of the total number of employees), while 34% have secondary education, and 7% have only primary education. There is a small percent of employees with postgraduate education (2% of the employees have finished master studies), and one employee has finished doctorate studies.



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union



According to the staff, the data we received from the Centers show that 46% of the employees are in the category “other”, or administrative staff, technical staff and/or other professional staff. The other 56% is the professional staff (lawyers, social workers, pedagogists, psychologists, defectologists, sociologists and economists). This suggests that the ‘Rulebook for norms and standards for space, equipment, professional staff and resources for establishing and commencement of operations for a Public Institution Social Work Center’, which prescribes the professional staff to be represented in a bigger proportion from the total number of employees, is highly disrespected.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, regarding the equipment in the Centers and according to Article 133 of the Law on Social Protection<sup>2</sup>, for establishment of a Social Work Center there must be a minimum

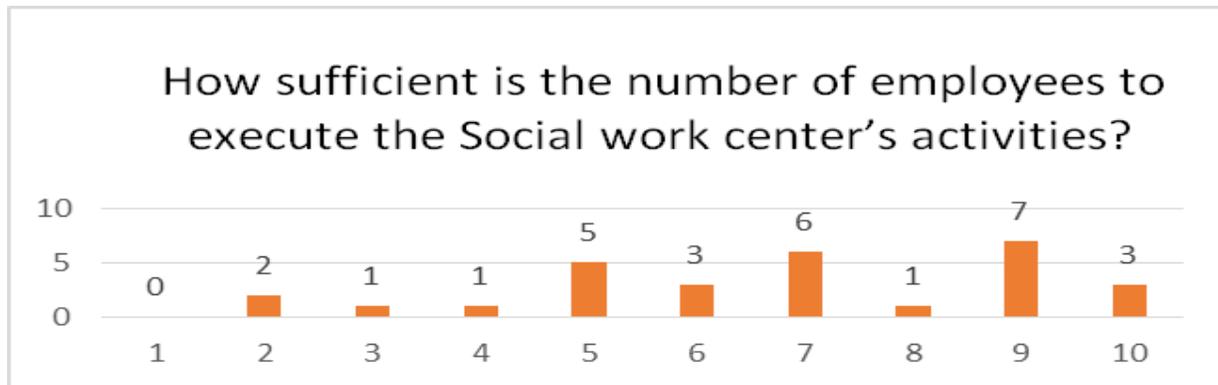
<sup>1</sup> Official Gazette number 2/10;  
<http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/74D2694B503D2642858597B56A6C52CF.pdf>; For illustration: according to the Rulebook, for a SWC responsible for an area of 24000 habitants 7 employees of professional staff and 2 employees of administrative and technical staff are needed, or a ratio of 1:3,5; while the real situation is mostly 1:1

<sup>2</sup> Law on social protection, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, num.79/09; 36/11; 51/11; 166/12;



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

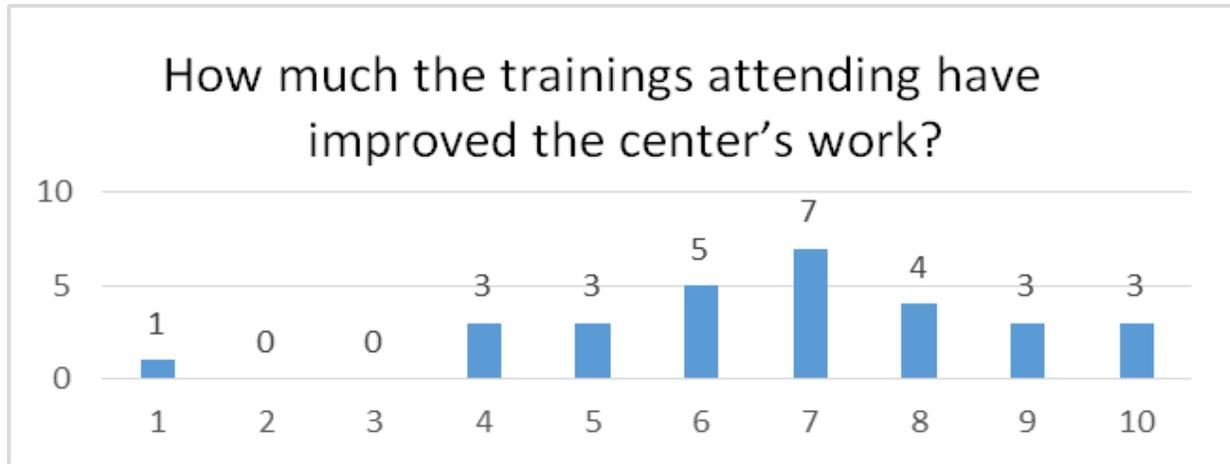
of 4 employees with the following professional profiles: lawyer, social worker, pedagogist and psychologist. In four of out of thirty Centers in the Republic, this condition was not fulfilled at the time of the research. In the SWC Demir Hisar three out of the four obligatory professional staff are missing, in the SWC Makedonski brod, two are missing, and in the SWC Krushevo and SWC Valandovo one employee is missing. The fact that in SWC Demir Hisar, only one of the four obligatory staff present in the Center is a lawyer, an employee who is not working directly with the services recipients, is concerning. The general lack of professional staff within the Centers is again confirmed on a self-evaluation regarding if the staff available is enough to perform the everyday activities.



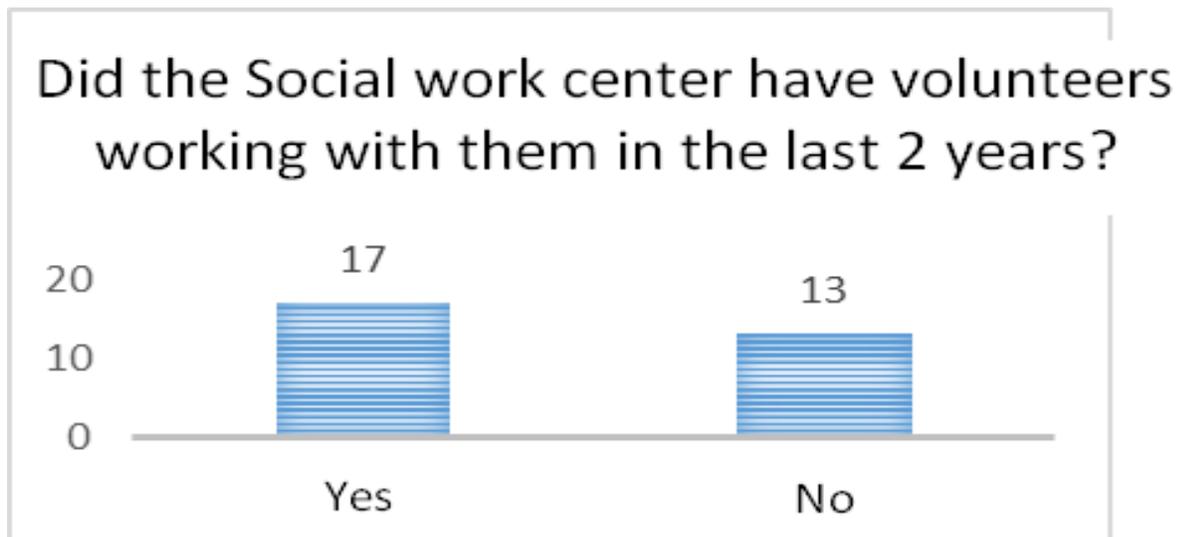
As we can see on the graphic, four Centers evaluated with score less than 5, while the average score is 6,79. Although the average score is not low, in the descriptive part of the questionnaire a high number Centers (19) point out the need of additional professional staff. Thus, we can conclude that the Centers themselves confirm the finding described previously.



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union



On the other hand, the existing staff is constantly improving by attending trainings. The data shows that attending trainings is present in all 30 Centers. On the question how much has attending trainings improved the Center's work, the average score is 6,76, while in the explanations it is pointed out that they are useful for the employees and for improving the quality of the services they are giving.



Out of 30 Centers in total, the participation of voluntary work is present in 17, or a little



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

more than half. In the National Program for Development of Social Protection 2011-2021, the need to increase the engagement of voluntary work is recognized.<sup>3</sup> However, the current situation shows that the voluntary work is still not present in many of the Centers. Thus, we can conclude that there is a need to increase the voluntary engagement, especially in those Centers where there wasn't an engagement of volunteers at all.

## Equipment and Resources

Regarding the resources and the equipment the Centers have, it can be said that there are certain shortcomings. In that direction, the Centers evaluate 'vehicles' with the lowest score, or an average of 3,67, and there isn't any Center that scored this category with a 10. They point out problems such as lack of field work vehicles and vehicles for transport of service recipients. Mostly, the Centers are equipped only with old vehicles, but there are also Centers that don't own a functioning vehicle.

On the other hand, the appropriateness of the facilities of the Centers is evaluated relatively well, with average score of 6,53. There are four Centers with facilities that received a score of 10, and not one Center's facilities received the lowest score. In the descriptive part of the questionnaire, some of the Centers explain that there is a lack of space for work with beneficiaries, such as rooms for individual work and group work. This kind of facility is necessary for proper work and the same need is also noted in the Rulebook for norms and standards for space, equipment, professional staff and resources for establishing and commencement of operations for a Public Institution Social Work Center. This shows that as is also the case with professional staff ratio, the Rulebook is not completely respected in practice.

The Centers consider their computer and communication equipment to be enough for performing their regular tasks. However, considering that this type of equipment has a relatively short lifespan, the notes from the Centers for their computer and communication equipment show the need of renewal, because the equipment they have is obsolete. The average score for the appropriateness of this type of equipment is 6,77.

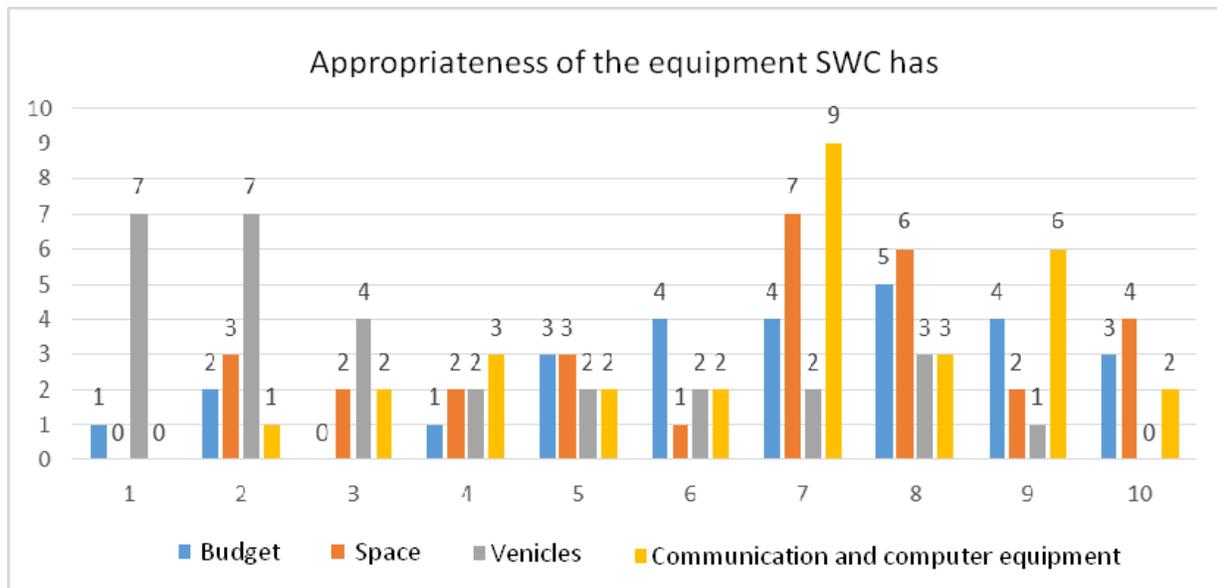
---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/tfyrmacedonia/macedonian/NationalProgrammeSocialProtection.pdf>



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

The budget that the Centers have is calculated according to the number of services they provide, number of employees, population in the region of their authority, the space they have, etc. This means that they have a fixed budget calculated upon the above mentioned parameters. The average score which the Centers gave to the budget appropriateness is 6,74, and out of the four categories from the graph, this category has the least scores lower than 5. However, despite the good evaluation, many of the Centers point out that they are faced with situations where the annual budgets didn't satisfy their needs completely, especially in case of certain unpredicted expenses.



Although minimally present, donations represent a way to provide additional resources. Namely, legal and physical entities have the possibility to submit a donation in form of goods or resources. This way of receiving resources is minimally present, but still there has been at least one donation to five Centers in the last two years, and two Centers have had more donations than one donation during the same time period.

## Project Management

The Social Work Centers have the possibility to get additional resources by applying to



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

projects with foreign donors. There are donors that finance these types of projects and an especially significant opportunity is the European Union with the IPA funds. IPA I mechanism provides use of 14,1 million Euros exactly in the field of social inclusion, where only 6,2 million Euros are used until now.<sup>4</sup> This situation is not favorable because large resources which can improve SWC's work, are not being used. Additionally, IPA II mechanism predicts additional resources for this purpose.

However, the Centers have very limited experience in the field of project management, and even less regarding EU projects. Thus, in the last two years there are five Centers that conducted projects supported by foreign donors, and three of these projects are supported by the EU. It is of note that the Centers which conduct a project supported by the EU (the SWC SPrilep, SWC Makedonski Brod and SWC Skopje) do that in cooperation with civil society organizations. This suggests that the Social Work Centers have limited capacities or possibilities for implementing or applying for projects. The same conclusion is also confirmed in the answers the Centers included in the questionnaires, where they point out they haven't had trainings on project management.

The lack of experience for project implementation also creates difficulties in the implementation itself, and thus, according to the SWC Prilep:

*"We have difficulties with the project implementation and it is still being implemented, and also none of the supervisors can clarify the proceedings on time. The institutions are not well coordinated between themselves."*

To the question as to which trainings are considered needed, most of the Centers don't state the need for project design and management training. However, having in consideration the aforementioned low level of usage of the IPA resources, it can be concluded that there is not a sufficient level of knowledge of the possibilities deriving from working on projects.

In addition to the above stated findings, there is the data from Training Needs Assessment,

---

<sup>4</sup> Национална програма за усвојување на правото на Европската Унија, ревизија 2016-2018  
[http://www.sobranie.mk/content/Dokumenti%20RM-EU/EU/NPAA2016\\_00\\_NARATIVEN\\_17.03.2016.pdf](http://www.sobranie.mk/content/Dokumenti%20RM-EU/EU/NPAA2016_00_NARATIVEN_17.03.2016.pdf)



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

Training Plan and Training Materials Report from 2013, which is part of "Empowering relevant actors for Social Inclusion a local level 2\_MK". The data in this research gives a complete picture on the aspect of getting data by conducting individual interviews with employees in the Social Work Centers. This research shows that around 25% of the interviewees in the Centers have experience in development, implementation and project management area, which shows that there is knowledge of the topic. However, this percentage decreases to around 10% regarding the question whether the interviewee has ever participated in writing a project application. Most of them answered that they participated in two to five projects.

Additionally, considering that the communication with almost all donors is in English, another obstacle the Centers are facing in the continuous work in the field of project management is the employee's insufficient language proficiency. As shown on the graphic, 11 Centers answered that they don't have an employee that has knowledge of the English language, and three of them don't know. Although more than half of the Centers (16) answered positively to this question, still the number of Centers not having employees with this capability is significant.

## Cooperation

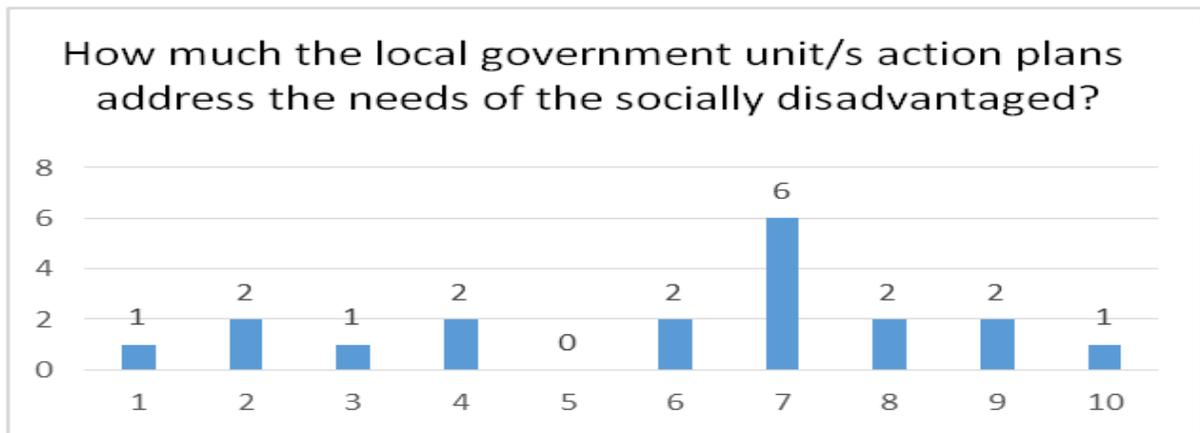
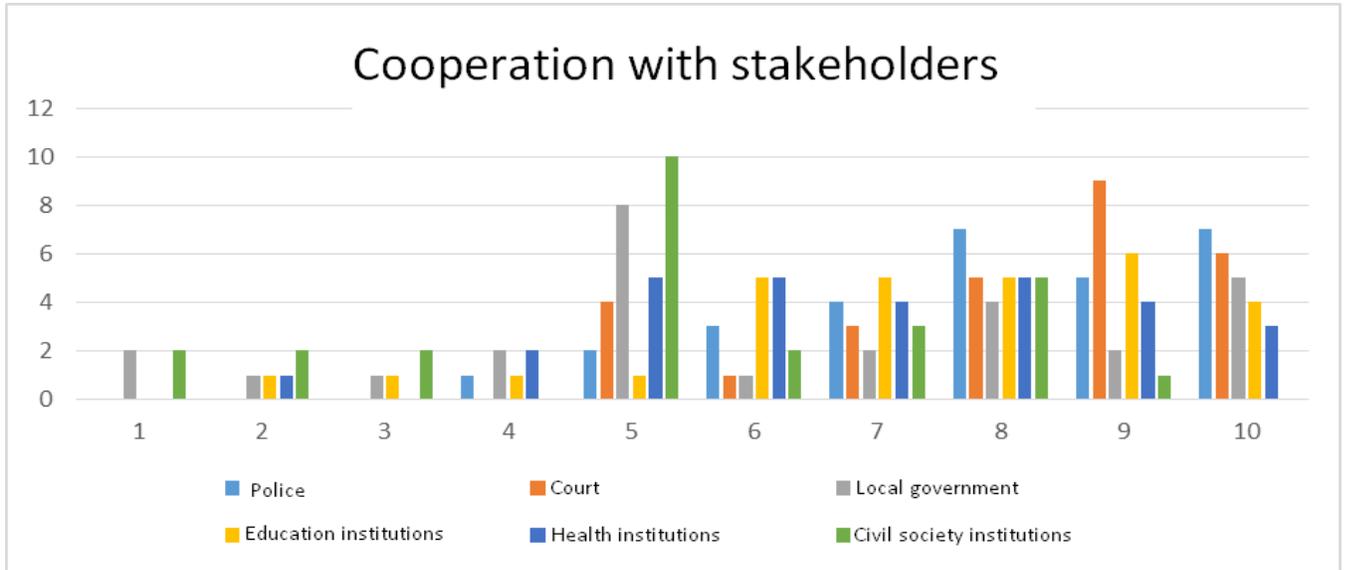
The everyday work of the Social Work Centers consists of cooperation with several stakeholders. Key stakeholders that are taken into account in this research are: the police, the court, the local government, the education and health institutions, and the civil society organizations. This cooperation is primarily important for successful implementation of social prevention.

The cooperation with the court and the police got the best score from the Social Work Centers, the middle score for cooperation with the court being a high 8,14 and with the police a score of 7,97. Second, is the cooperation with the educational institutions which is evaluated with an average of 7,34, and the health institutions with 6,86. Next is the cooperation with the local government, with a lower score, which has an average of 6,25, and the cooperation with the civil society organizations is evaluated with the lowest score, with an average of 5,33. In fact, this is the only stakeholder category which doesn't have



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

even one highest score (10).



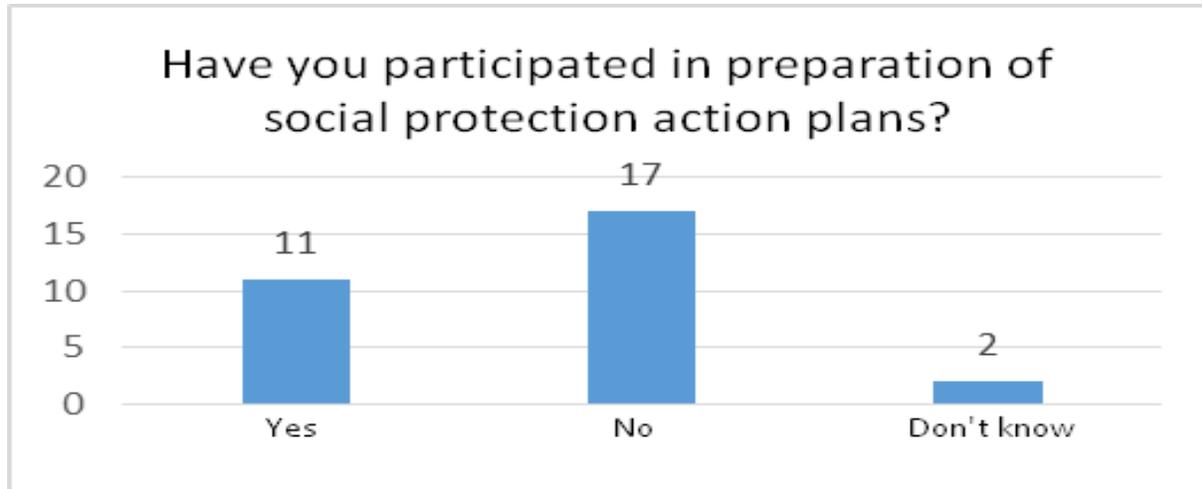
According to the law on local government<sup>5</sup>, the local government units are responsible for social protection on a local level. Thus, they are one of the most important stakeholders for cooperation with the Social Work Centers. One of the tasks they have regarding the social protection on a local level is preparing programs and action plans for social protection. In

<sup>5</sup> Law on local government, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, бр.5/2002



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union

this direction, on the question whether they had participated in preparing action plans for social protection, only 11 Social Work Centers answered positively, while 17 Centers, or the majority, answered negatively. This shows that the level of cooperation between the Centers and the municipalities is not on a satisfactory level.



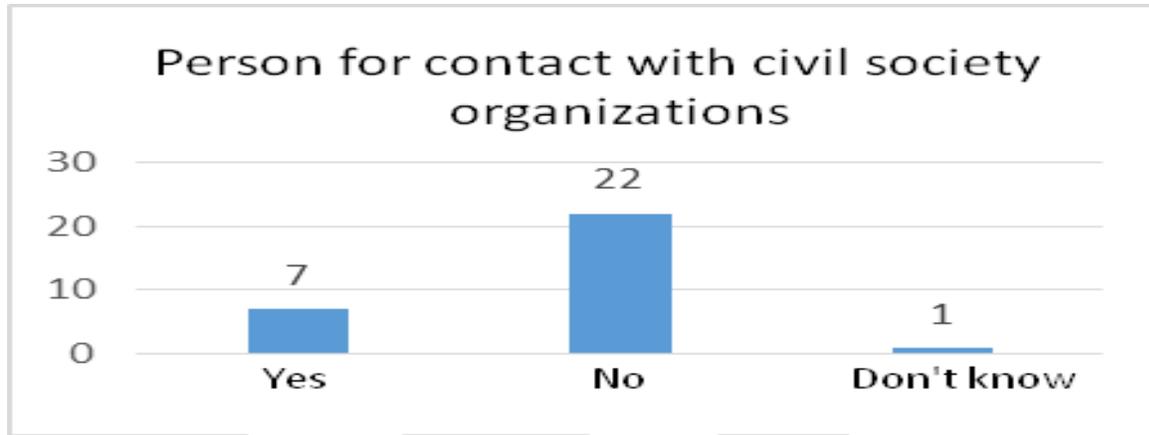
The same can be noticed previously as well, the cooperation with the local government is on a lower level than with most of the other stakeholders. This situation is not favorable for successful performing of social protection because the Social Work Centers are the main actors for implementation of the programs and other associated general acts at the local level. Thus, if they are not included during the preparation, it creates unfavorable conditions for their complete implementation.

Consequently, most of the Centers which are not included in preparation of the action plan indicate that the plan doesn't appropriately address the need of the socially disadvantaged. Although 11 Centers didn't answer this question, including Centers that have not participated in the action plan preparation, still the scores are not so high, the middle score being 6 according to those who answered this question.

Having in consideration that there are many civil society organizations who are also working in the field of social protection, the need of cooperation between the Centers and these civil society organizations is imperative.



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union



This cooperation is especially useful in avoiding duplication of efforts from the two aforementioned sides and maximizing the quality of the services for the recipients. This can be recognized in the National Program for Social Protection Development 2011-2021, where the need for improved information coverage and cooperation between the Centers and the local non-governmental organizations is stated. There also are cooperation mechanisms described in the Program.

In this direction, one of the ways to establish cooperation with civil society organizations is the existence of a person charged to maintain contact with these organizations. To the question "Have the Centers got a person in charge of contact?", only seven answered positively, which shows that this mechanism for contact with the civil society organizations is not present at most of the Centers.



Promoting social inclusion through effective use of the EU funds  
The project is financed by the European Union



On the other hand, on the question "Have the Social Work Centers cooperated with civil society organizations?", most of them answered positively. As we can see on the graphic, only seven answered negatively on this question, and three don't know. The Centers stated that mostly the cooperation with the civil society organizations is in the form of social risk consultations, debate participation, or in regards to social prevention, and less present is the joint project implementation supported by foreign donors, as described previously.