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Introduction
To Active Citizenship
Macedonia

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FOREWORD

This handbook is the outcome of the project Promoting Active Citizenship at the Local Level in Albania and the Republic of Macedonia. The project was supported by the World Bank Institute and Active Citizenship Network, the European and international branch of the Italian movement Cittadinanzattiva. It has been carried out with the cooperation of local partners in Albania and the Republic of Macedonia.

The aim of this handbook is to foster civic attitudes and initiatives by sharing a conceptual framework and concrete experiences. The underlying principle of this text is that citizens, when actively getting together and participating in everyday "politics", represent a huge power. Empowering citizens as actors in the public sphere contributes to the development of societies and their ability to address problems of public concern. Therefore, governments and civil society should encourage citizens to take responsibility in caring for common goods, since their involvement helps strengthen the governance process.

The handbook is therefore primarily targeted to citizens, and in particular to:

- Those who are already active in NGOs, associations, or movements and want to strengthen their civic skills;
- Those who would be interested in taking part in civic initiatives and want to look for how-to information.

But it is also targeted to those who are interlocutors of citizens in managing public affairs (for example, politicians, public servants, journalists, businesspeople) and believe that citizens represent an asset instead of a problem in dealing with issues of public interest. The handbook is particularly relevant for government officials at the local level, since a new space for public participation is emerging as a result of decentralization. Further, active citizenship usually results from acting upon problems that are mostly found at the local level.

This handbook should be mainly used for training activities, including seminars. The format of the text is based upon the handbook developed by the Cittadinanzattiva's School of Active Citizenship in 2001, and successfully used for the organization of approximately 180 training seminars for citizens at the local level in Italy. For this version, the conceptual framework was adapted to the country context. Most of the examples coming from the Italian experience were replaced by Macedonian local experiences. In special cases, various stories and experiences from Italy were preserved where appropriate.

¹<http://www.activecitizenship.net>

We hope that the dissemination and use of this handbook helps enhance the ability of local citizen organizations and other bodies to further document successful and unsuccessful experiences and practices, increasing the available knowledge on civic initiatives in Macedonia. In this way, the handbook should be continuously revised and updated to new situations and needs.

The handbook includes three main features:

- I.** A conceptual framework on active citizenship;
- II.** A toolbox for the action of organized citizens, based on local cases;
- III.** An index of useful resources.

Giovanni Moro is the editor of the Handbook. We would like to thank Vesna Atanasova and Kristina Hadzi-Vasileva for documenting local cases and advising on the adaptation of the handbook to the Macedonian local context, as well as different local organizations that contributed their experiences and those that participated in a peer-review of the draft in Skopje on May 31, 2004. Finally, Marcos Mendiburu provided valuable support for the completion of this project.

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I

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK for ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The conceptual framework addresses three main issues, namely the difference between traditional citizenship (promoted through civic education and active citizenship); the kind of powers held by civic organizations and citizens; and a more comprehensive and inclusive definition of governance that rests on both the demand (civic organizations) and supply side (state institutions).



1. BEING CITIZENS

What does it truly mean to be a citizen? According to common wisdom, being a citizen means belonging to a community and having entitlement to a number of rights and duties in relation to public institutions (for example, the duty to pay taxes and the right to safety).

But looking at everyday life, where people must face problems that affect them in a direct and concrete way, being a citizen often means advocating and exercising concrete rights. Let's consider three Italian stories related to health care.

The first is that of Maria Grazia C., a mother whose daughter died in a hospital in 1978 and reported it to Cittadinanzattiva's Tribunal for Patients' Rights in 1980. Her story significantly contributed to the development of a movement in support of patients' rights in Italy.

So that it may not happen to others

The following is a complaint submitted to the Tribunal for Patients' Rights regarding the hospitalization and death of my daughter Valentina, which occurred in 1978 at the second pediatric clinic of the Rome General Hospital (Policlinico di Roma).

I would like to start by saying that putting into your hands something that I have carried with me for two years not only means providing you with information useful to your work, but also entrusting you with something extremely delicate that I suffered personally, and which marks my conscience with a great sense of responsibility. I am convinced that part of the blame for what occurs today in our hospitals falls upon those who suffer in silence.

First of all, I would like to say something about my experience, and that of other mothers, in the hospital. I must point out that having the right to accompany and assist one's own child in the hospital is very different from having permission to do so, given at the discretion of the head physician. The latter creates a situation in which mothers are psychologically subordinated and literally terrified to disagree in any way with even the most junior employees because of the risk of being forced out. (. . .)

For children, the hospital means pain, physical fear, a new dimension that makes one feel different, punished for his or her illness. In the hospital, injections were given at noon and at midnight, because of a division of labor between the nurses' shifts. However, this schedule failed to consider the needs of children that are the most important ones. My daughter was given extremely painful injections of two types of antibiotics mixed together. Lunch was brought to her at noon, soon after her shots. But my daughter, exhausted from crying and from emotional stress, nearly always fell asleep and missed the meal. The situation at midnight was even more dramatic, since we were usually awakened by the neon light switched on in the

room. Besides these incredible practices, we experienced a further cruel episode during the first day in the hospital. When my daughter had calmed down and was finally about to go to sleep, the same nurse returned and rudely ordered me to get her undressed so that they could weigh her and measure her height. Despite my complaints, the nurse insisted on completing her task, which could easily be performed the following morning. Of course, the episode provoked further tears and fear that were completely unnecessary.

As far as hospital staff is concerned, their behavior completely depends on the sensibilities and good will of particular individuals. There is no regulation in this regard, to which one can turn for assistance. One can be badly treated for absurd and trifling reasons by an employee just the same as by the chief physician. (. . .)

And there is yet another serious problem: the paternalistic attitude of doctors, who consider you to be nothing more than a complication and prevent you from closely monitoring your own child's illness by not explaining clearly and completely its causes. This leaves parents completely unprepared for the possible tragic finale of their child's illness, something that unfortunately happened to us. We found ourselves facing our child's death even as they continued to give us hope, despite the fact that my daughter's condition was so serious and irreversible that even a layperson could easily see that she would never make it. I believe that parents have a right to obtain regular and clear information, and that their opinions must also hold a minimum of weight with the doctors.

During examinations, I often pointed out various things that my daughter or I had noticed, but we were continuously ignored. In some instances, our impressions were confirmed, perhaps two or three days later, but they were presented as information noticed by the doctors. One can only sit by and watch helplessly, without an opportunity to understand the risks of one treatment or the utility of a therapy.

This sense of powerlessness continued even after my daughter's death: the corpse is not yours, but yet again it belongs to the hospital. (...) It was thus that, the night when my daughter passed away, after accompanying her to the mortuary wrapped only in a sheet, through endless tunnels underneath the hospital, we were asked to return home, and I was not allowed to accompany her in any way. And what can I say about the mortuary personnel, who wear smocks smeared with blood, and curse as they load and unload corpses to the floor above for autopsies? Thanks to a hefty tip, I was able to spend half an hour with my daughter. One of those attendants approached me and, in a conspiratorial tone of voice, offered a burial cell for sale in the cemetery. I learned from him that he had spent time in prison for pandering, and that the next morning, he would be the one to dress my daughter for the last time, since I was not allowed to do it myself.

I don't mention these details morbidly, but because I hope that this situation could change and others will not have to suffer the same that we did. There are many other episodes I could tell, but I'm sure that this will be sufficient to describe a situation that, were it to

change, would make me very happy. Finally, I have no desire for revenge, which I could gain through other means. But the fact remains that my daughter ended her days in a sad and squalid world, amid unnecessary suffering and great fear, and this could have been avoided if other mothers who experienced the same incident before me would have spoken out and protested.

Though there are many old and new problems, since 1978 the status of patients' rights in Italy has certainly improved. And this happened thanks to thousands of people who, as in the case of Maria Grazia C., decided to become active citizens "so that it may not happen to others".

The second story is that of Mr. Cirillo, a man who was able to achieve something that seemed impossible.

The case of Mr. Cirillo

Mr. Cirillo, a small-scale businessman about sixty years old, traveled to Rome from the southern region many years ago to check himself into a hospital. He was a cardiac patient and had to undergo surgery to have a pacemaker implanted.

When he arrived at the hospital, he was admitted to the cardiovascular surgery section, where he found approximately twenty other patients awaiting the same operation. The presence of so many people puzzled Mr. Cirillo, so he made a few inquiries and discovered that the hospital had run out of money to purchase pacemakers. Because there were no funds, everyone would have to wait (no one knew for how long) for the hospital to purchase the pacemakers and then operate on the patients.

Mr. Cirillo was certainly not the most "patient" of patients, and he was also not too pleased to be restrained in a small room in his pajamas doing nothing and having to put up with absurd schedules. But his patience truly reached its limit when he did a few quick calculations and discovered that the money the hospital was wasting to house twenty patients, without any reason, could easily pay for more pacemakers than were needed, and was even enough to supply the hospital for the rest of the year.

Thus, Mr. Cirillo decided to begin a hunger strike in the hospital. He officially informed the head nurse of his decision, and called the local papers and the Tribunal for Patients' Rights.

Naturally, when the news of his hunger strike spread, hospital managers got into a panic, especially since the regional chairman and health minister had been informed. Besides, it's not every day that a cardiac patient in a hospital awaiting surgery goes on a hunger strike.

All attempts to convince Mr. Cirillo to give up his strike, by both the health director and the department's chief physician, were in vain. Mr. Cirillo was resolute. Even the

attempts to frighten him, emphasizing the possible harm to his health, did nothing but strengthen his determination and resolution: "If something happens to me," he said, "it will be your fault."

There was even an attempt, although rather naive, to bribe him. No one knows how, but the medical staff managed to find a pacemaker. They hurried to him, ready to operate immediately. But Cirillo said he wouldn't even consider it; he would undergo the operation last, because first they would have to perform the surgery on all the other patients.

In the end, no one knows how, but funds were obtained, the pacemakers were purchased, and the patients had surgery. Therefore, everyone benefited: the patients whose rights to good health were protected, and the state, which put an end to an absurd waste of financial resources.

After the successful results, Mr. Cirillo said goodbye to everyone and went home.

The third story concerns mothers who met in a hospital and discovered that they were able to get together and successfully act for the protection of their children's rights.

Indomitable Mothers

In Italy, a couple of decades ago, unnecessary hospitalization of children was common. However, hospitals lacked adequate infrastructure and policies. It usually happened thus that young patients did not get psychological assistance, lived in dreary places, did not have any recreational opportunities, and were not able to continue their school activities. Hospitals did not take into account the existence of parents, so they did not have access to hospital facilities (such as toilets) and usually did not have any physical space to stay with their children. On the contrary, their presence was discouraged; they were considered as a hitch for health treatments and were asked to stay away for hygiene reasons. Regularly, mothers were forbidden to sleep near their children. At the same time, because of the limited number of nurses, children were fastened to their beds at night.

A few years after Maria Grazia C.'s letter and shortly after Mr. Cirillo's hunger strike, a group of mothers of children at San Camillo hospital in Rome got together and dealt with this situation. Thanks to their actions, Italian hospitals' attitudes towards children significantly changed. They talked with doctors and managers about the nonsense of forbidding them to stay with their children at night, since there was negligence and lack of assistance to patients. Given the reiterated refusal of authorities to allow mothers to stay with their children, even using a simple deckchair, mothers decided to take extreme actions. One afternoon, they refused to leave the hospital. They said that they would stay with their children whether authorized or not. They added that if the hospital's authorities were to dismiss them, they should call the police, since they would no longer obey an absurd order. Facing the prospect of bad publicity, doctors and managers finally had to accept the legitimate mothers' claim.

Thanks to that action, the presence of parents in hospitals began to be considered as an asset and no longer a problem.

These are common cases. They happen every day, everywhere in the world, thanks to millions of ordinary people who, instead of waiting for someone else's intervention, take the initiative to address problems of common concern. These initiatives can include:

- Various parents getting together to set up a day-care center for their kids in their homes
- Friends of disabled people removing architectural barriers (for example, a step) that hinder them from having access to the cinema
- Neighbors repairing a road affected by floods
- Setting up a public garden by restoring a field, planting trees and building seats
- Bringing together families of different ethnic groups and promoting a shared solution to problems which could cause violence
- For those living in an industrial area documenting, reporting cases of pollution and demanding that factories address the situation

Through these actions, people exercise citizenship in ways that are completely different from the traditional one.

Traditional citizenship can be defined as the system of various rights and duties that govern the relationship between the citizen and the state to which he or she belongs. Exercising the right to vote is the highest form of expression of citizenship.

Though traditional citizenship is of crucial importance, it presents two major limitations. First, it underestimates the potential of individuals - considered only as voters, yet unable to manage public affairs. Second, it presupposes public institutions' ability to manage solely public affairs, addressing people's needs and protecting citizens' rights.

Both assumptions are false:

- Throughout the world, people are able to do more than vote to care for public interest;
- Public institutions are not able to solve only by themselves problems of public concern.

The cases reported above make it evident that a more concrete citizenship, which is realized not only at the ballot box but everyday, is required. This citizenship entails not only claiming the protection of citizens' rights, but also acting in their defense. We can call it new citizenship.

We can define new citizenship as the exercise of powers and responsibilities of the citizen in the daily life of democracy, where problems of public significance are faced.

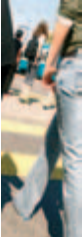
How and why does one individual become an active citizen? There can be many reasons. They include:

- Desire for justice
- Solidarity
- Desire to change reality
- Desire to "count" and to play a leading role
- Desire to join others and develop cooperative and friendly relations and share common interests and activities
- Desire to experience reality "first hand", without intermediaries

Usually these and other motivations appear combined, as in the case of Maria Grazia C.

After all, becoming an active citizen can happen during the life of an individual for a number of reasons, values and circumstances. Being an active citizen is not a special status, which requires particular competencies, know-how or abilities. Nor is being an active citizen exclusive of certain groups such as businesspersons, traders or professionals. Everyone can be an active citizen if he or she engages him or herself and acts for the common interest (and not for personal reward).

- A hospital doctor, who demands a better quality of food for patients, requires transparency in waiting lists, or confronts corruption, bureaucracy and paternalism, is an active citizen.
- An entrepreneur, who supports both financially and technically the set up of a public garden in an area where his/her factory operates, is an active citizen.
- A public servant, who out of regular working hours advises citizens with special needs on public administration, is an active citizen.



2. WHAT ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IS

Beyond the experiences and motivations of each person being or becoming an active citizen, how can we consider this phenomenon in a more objective manner? An active citizen fully develops when he or she joins others in order to achieve a common goal.

Active citizenship can be exercised through different organizational forms, including the following:

- Voluntary organizations
- Grassroots and community groups
- Associations
- Social enterprises
- Communities
- Self-help groups
- Advocacy movements, for example, the environment and consumers
- Networks and coalitions

These organizations may intervene in different fields. Examples of active citizenship may include:

- Providing services and advocating in favor of minorities
- Organizing services for rehabilitation of drug addicts, alcoholics, and prisoners
- Promoting foster care and adoption of abandoned children
- Prohibiting overbuilding and fighting against unauthorized construction
- Creating after-school programs for children who run the risk of dropping out
- Providing legal, psychological and material assistance to crime victims
- Promoting conciliatory forms of conflict management in neighborhoods
- Creating equal opportunities for disadvantaged people
- Combating corruption in public life
- Organizing training for citizens residing in high risk areas on how to understand and prevent calamities and catastrophes
- Fighting for access to drugs for the chronically ill
- Controlling and improving the quality of hospitals
- Initiating legal action against unfair contractual clauses in banking or insurance contracts, among others

How can we define all these different actions and initiatives? Giovanni Moro in his "Active Citizenship Manual" provides the following definition:

Active citizenship is the capacity of citizens to self-organize autonomously in a variety of ways to defend their rights, exercising powers and responsibilities in public policies for the caring for common goods.

Becoming an active citizen may happen for different reasons. Active citizenship entails getting together, self-organizing, and deploying forms of collective action. As an old labor union song says, no single stone forms an arch, and no single drop of water turns the mill on its own. It is important to remember this collective dimension of the concept in a time when a single political leader is often presented as having the solution for every problem.

The realm of action for active citizenship is that of policy-making. Public policies aim to deal with problems of public interest such as health, education, transportation, or employment. They represent the daily and practical dimension of democracy in which active citizenship has a fundamental role to play.

Active citizenship encompasses some particular organizations. In other words, not all the associations of citizens are "active citizenship" organizations. For example, sports associations, chess clubs, networks of motorcyclists, groups of friends of poetry, and amateur orchestras and choirs are associations of individuals that are citizens, but are not considered "active citizenship" organizations.

Active citizenship and civil society are different - though related - concepts. Civil society refers to the sphere where non-state actors share fundamental values and rules. It includes a variety of actors such as religious organizations, professional associations, schools and universities, trade unions, sport, music, art, recreation centers, etc. Active citizenship organizations are part of this sphere, but they are aimed at protecting rights and caring for common goods through the exercise of citizens' powers and responsibilities.

What are the links between active citizenship organizations and other civic associations and civil society forces? All these actors cooperate in creating and enhancing "social capital," that is, the network of ties based on values, reciprocity and trust that constitute the fabric of society. However, active citizenship organizations are devoted to empower citizens as actors who must play an active role for the protection of their rights.



3. WHY ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP?

The purpose of active citizenship can be summarized in three objectives:

- Caring for common goods
- Protecting rights
- Empowering citizens

What exactly are common goods?

Common goods are goods that belong to everyone, and that everyone can use freely. Common goods include the environment, health, culture, trust, the rule of law, etc. They are continuously threatened by selfish and speculative use. Their depletion impoverishes society as a whole.

Then, active citizenship serves to help take care of, protect, develop and provide access to common goods.

A second objective is the protection of rights. **Active citizenship contributes to put into effect the rights proclaimed by law.**

Unfortunately, a right stated by law is often not implemented for a number of reasons:

- Lack of real administrative commitment,
- Conflict with other rights,
- Limited interpretation of the right by those who should protect it,
- Apparent lack of links with precise norms.

Active citizenship serves to ensure the effective protection of rights that are proclaimed at all levels (including regional and international ones) by the law, or those that are deeply rooted in the political culture.

The work of citizen organizations for the enforcement of rights takes two main forms:

- **Advocacy**, which consists of defending the points of view and desires of people in need vis-à-vis those who fail to recognize these rights;
- **Service provision**, which means delivering services able to meet legitimate needs of people unsatisfied with public provision.

Usually, citizen organizations use both approaches. For example, those organizations that manage kindergartens for poor families also have to lobby the public administration so that an official program for kindergartens accessible to everyone is adopted. Further, those organizations that protect patients' rights vis-à-vis public authorities or professionals often have to provide information, assistance, and advisory services for citizens in need.

The third objective of active citizenship is **to empower citizens**. So, what does empowerment mean?

Empowerment takes place when people realize that they have the right as well as the concrete ability to solve the problems they face, so that they can gain control over their lives.

Specifically, this entails the capacity to affect reality and other people's behavior -that is, to exercise power.

It is often said that citizens have no power. This is not true. The experience of active citizens actually demonstrates the opposite. When citizens get organized and participate in public policy, they exercise their own powers of influencing other people's behavior and the course of reality. We can list at least five kinds of power:

- The power to inform and present different viewpoints
- The power to raise awareness by using symbols
- The power to make institutions operate in concordance with their missions
- The power to deliver services and produce goods
- The power to create alliances and partnerships

But, what do these powers mean? Let's take some examples, coming from the world-wide experience of citizen organizations.

FIVE POWERS

Power to inform

Citizen organizations are able to generate information and, in this way, affect reality. Information concerning the violation of human rights in prisons, the existence of illegal dumps with dangerous waste, the real condition of people at risk, etc. is provided through different means, such as monitoring, dissemination activities, etc.

Symbolic power

In various countries, citizen organizations have used symbolic power to increase awareness concerning disabled people. They have demanded the removal of architectural barriers, and have shown the impossibility for the disabled to practice sports or arts, as well as discrimination against the disabled in recreational places. They did so through protest, organization of special events, awards to good practitioners, etc. Thanks to civic action, being disabled is becoming more and more socially accepted. Families no longer feel shame or fear, but the support of neighbors and society at large.

Power to hold institutions accountable

Citizen organizations that control and promote consistency between the organizational and professional patterns in the municipal delivery of services and citizens' needs are exercising such a power. For example, they can ensure that a public transportation service conforms to its schedule.

Material power

When citizen organizations deliver services for mentally handicapped people or poor families, or when they organize humanitarian relief operations in catastrophes, they are exercising this kind of power.

Power of partnership

Significant results in the protection of the environment have been achieved thanks to partnerships promoted by citizen organizations together with private companies and trade unions. These partnerships have enabled, for example, a decrease in industrial waste and pollution, protecting at the same time the right to safety, health and employment, avoiding any conflict between employers, workers, and the community.



4. The ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP ENVIRONMENT

Macedonia initiated the transition to democracy in 1991, when multi-party elections were held for the first time as an independent state from the former Socialist Yugoslavia.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, adopted on 17 November 1991, represents the most important legislative effort made to create a legal framework for the protection and respect of citizens' rights. During the difficult transition period, individuals or groups of citizens relied on different actors to address their concerns and problems, such as unions, NGOs, political parties, community-based organizations, etc.

The Ombudsman is an independent legal body introduced in the Macedonian institutional system to protect the constitutional and legal rights of the citizens when infringed by administrative and other bodies with public authority. The Office includes a Department for Protection of Children's rights.

It represents an additional legal effort to support good governance and help in developing a culture in which citizens may step up and defend their rights by themselves, be listened to and consulted.

The prevailing culture in Macedonia regarding civic activism was until recently characterized by the passivity of citizens, who did not react against the lack of insufficient or low-quality public services; the abuse of constitutional or legal rights; and the limited participation in formulating and implementing public policies. Public agencies did not always consult and involve all stakeholders in the community. In many cases, local NGOs and the international community, through their programs and projects in Macedonia, have encouraged public authorities to involve citizens in policy making. While a number of people in Macedonia still see government officials as powerful people with whom it is hard to deal, many citizens are beginning to realize that government officials are not the owners of their public positions, but individuals who are paid with public revenues to provide services.

As a result, citizens are most likely to act when their direct interests are threatened. In many cases, citizens act when community-wide issues and problems are raised.

Media, in a number of cases, plays an active role in voicing the concerns and problems of various communities. It has been the media that has made public the problems faced by small communities when they have found it hard to have access to public opinion.

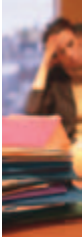
Women exhibit low levels of participation in political life, but the situation is steadily improving as a result of the effort of civil society organizations, especially the Women's lobby, which is a coalition of several women's NGOs and groups from the major political parties in the country.

Local development, as a new vision for the development of the country, is the most important challenge in Macedonian transition. More competencies are being transferred to local governments, which will become main partners in the efforts of communities to develop, live a better life and enforce their rights. The poor infrastructure and utility services provoke continuous discontent in a vast majority of the population. As a consequence, what used to be a very weak reaction from the communities that receive very poor basic public services is now increasing, and citizens are finding ways to express their dissatisfaction and demand higher living standards. Article 30 of the new Law on Local Self-government, adopted January 2002, stipulates that local government should get public input on municipal wide issues and as well as involve them in policy making and the budget process. In order to make local government more transparent and inform citizens, Citizen Information Centers are being established in Macedonian municipalities.

The Ministry of Local Government was established in 1998, with the mandate to design, implement and coordinate the reform of the local government system. A national strategy to intensify the reform process and complete it as soon as possible was adopted in November 1999, as part of the Public Administration strategy. The strategy reiterated the government commitment to create conditions for a more transparent, accountable and efficient local government that would provide better services to the citizens.

The new Law on Local Self-Government provides new and increased competencies to local government units in the realms of primary health care, primary education, sports and culture, as well as the promotion of citizen participation. The law also guarantees better services to the citizens.

In addition to the legal framework and capacity building efforts by international and national programs, the capability of self-organization within the communities, for initiatives that benefit the whole community or parts of it, is also improving. The willingness to enforce the law is increasing and so is the involvement of various stakeholders in policy formulation and design.



5. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP and PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

It could be said that those functions of citizen organizations highlighted above are specific tasks of public administrations. According to this vision, the Mayors or the government, and not the citizens, have to protect their rights and care for common goods. From this perspective, citizens are expected to communicate their needs and demands to the public administration, which is responsible for providing the appropriate answers.

However, the public administration often does not have enough power, information, or resources to meet people's needs. In other cases, administrations themselves are the ones that fail to respect citizens' rights.

Consequently, in order to get their expectations met and legitimate demands addressed, citizens cannot limit themselves to posing questions, but have to contribute to finding solutions as well.

The need for this cooperation encompasses a new approach to "governance."

From the perspective of a more inclusive approach to governance, we acknowledge that, by themselves, governments can no longer manage the problems they face. They can only address these issues by calling upon all public, private, and social entities (including citizens) that are involved in a problem to assume their responsibilities. In order to govern society, then, we need "co-government", in which citizens are no longer simply the beneficiaries of public policy, but are partially responsible for planning policy, putting it into action, and evaluating it.

In this governance framework, active citizens must contribute constructively to a dialogue with public administration, both at national and local levels.

The relationship between citizens and local administrations is of special importance: not only because local administrations are closer to citizens, but also because they have a direct and concrete responsibility in managing those problems that are of main concern for people.

This cooperation can take various forms:

- Information sharing
- Support to civic initiatives
- Partnership arrangements
- Contracting the implementation of public programs or services to citizen organizations

Whichever form it takes, it is of crucial importance that autonomy and equal basis are granted in active citizen-public administration relationships.

The new governance approach is actually challenging for public administration. It indeed goes beyond the traditional principle of freedom of association, where the State must guarantee the possibility for citizens to gather and organize themselves for private purposes. Instead, it relies on citizen self-organization to promote the common interest, traditionally considered the exclusive monopoly of public administration.



6. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP and POLITICS

An extremely hot topic is the relationship between active citizenship and politics, including parties, elections, representative assemblies, or parliaments.

Active citizens often feel dependent or think that their powers and abilities are inferior to those of official political actors. This leads to peculiar behaviors, such as trying to get friendly with or initiate understandings with the councilor or auditor on duty, or nurturing the idea of competing in elections as an alternative to current political parties. There can also be attempts to avoid any contact with politics as a result of the fear of "dirtying one's hands," or thinking "oh well . . . they make all the decisions anyway."

What can be said about this complex topic? Active citizenship involves a political experience, because it refers to the governing of society and intervening in conflicts inherent to this process. However, this is entirely different from the parties and coalitions that compete in elections and constitute elected assemblies at the local, regional, national, and European levels.

Why?

- Because parties deal with the administration of the state, but active citizenship contributes to the governing of society while remaining part of it.
- Because there is no correspondence between organizations of active citizens and political parties, even if certain organizations are aligned with specific parties.
- Because the consensus and support gained as an active citizen does not translate into votes or the ability to affect the electorate. Anyone who is under the illusion of doing so (for example, the various "consumer parties") has always been disproved by the facts.

It must be stressed that a functional democracy requires both parties and civic organizations. Therefore, it is not actually true, as politicians often say, that "citizen organizations exist because things do not work; we must therefore work so well that there is no longer a need for those organizations." It is also fundamental that political parties and active citizens, as well as all other actors, find a way to interact and cooperate with each other, notwithstanding their differences and possible conflicts.

No reason, though, can serve as an excuse for active citizens not to assume their own responsibilities regarding the reform and advancement of democracy. This reform, in fact, concerns the citizens regardless whether they are electors or "governors," and therefore cannot be considered to lie beyond the interests of active citizenship.



II A TOOLBOX for CIVIC ACTION

How does active citizenship work? The best way to answer this question is to examine and analyze concrete experiences of self-organized active citizens dealing with public problems and the lack of effective rights. From this analysis, a number of different tools emerge that can make their action effective. These tools represent a wealth of operational models, or technologies, which are available for all active citizens.

The various tools through which civic organizations can fully participate in the definition, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public policies for the protection of rights, can be defined as civic technologies.

Here is a list of civic technologies grouped into four categories. The list has been adapted from one developed by the Italian citizen organization Cittadinanzattiva.

A. Direct Action Technologies

- Charters of Rights
- Advisory services
- Monitoring and generation of data and information
- Symbolic actions
- Awareness raising / Sensitization
- Proximity of information
- Conflict management
- Organization and delivery of new services

B. Resource Mobilization Technologies

- People mobilization
- Fund raising
- Mobilization of technical resources
- Gathering signatures and support
- Collection and dissemination of good practices
- Education and training
- Creation of associations
- Civic use of Information Technologies
- Civic use of the media

C. Technologies for Dialogue and Cooperation

- Roundtables
- Cooperation Agreements
- Participatory planning
- Partnerships

D. Technologies for Institutional Action

- Complaints and claims
- Institutional action and enforcement of procedures for the protection of rights called for by law
- Lobbying
- Legal actions

In general, these technologies address the how-to question. With reference to citizens' initiatives at the local level in Macedonia, we have collected some concrete cases that have been classified according to different policy fields. Each of them includes the use of one or more tools for civic action.

Given the introductory nature of this handbook, a brief definition and comments for each technology are provided. Our objective is that readers learn to recognize tools or technologies used in the course of active citizenship practices.

With regard to the cases described below, it must be recognized that Citizen Information Centers are often a key actor of civic action. The CIC is an institution which operates in the realm of local municipalities but which, in the Macedonian experience, is also a trigger of civic action.



1. URBAN PLANNING

Street pavement in a neighborhood in Bitola

Policy Field: Urban Planning

Topic: Paved Street in a neighborhood in Bitola

The situation before the civic action initiative: The Citizen Information Center in Bitola was established in early November 2001. The office is not located in the City Hall, but in the downtown area, in order to make the office easily accessible to citizens who need information and assistance on public service provision. Citizens visit the Center concerning many issues, but among the most frequent ones are communal and urban issues. The Center serves as a mechanism to demand from the Mayor and City Council the implementation of certain citizen initiatives. One case that was successfully solved was the request of the residents from the street Nikola Rusinski in Bitola. They approached the CIC with a request for assistance in paving a street, since the current condition of the street was a big obstacle not just for the vehicles but also for pedestrians. Residents from the settlement of Karposh several times raised the same problem, since there was no access to a main street in their neighbourhood. A narrow, unpaved path full of big holes was the only way to access their homes for several years. They contacted the Mayor and other institutions on various occasions, but they replied that there was no available budget and that there were other priorities in the community. Yet the citizens did not give up and resorted to the CIC.

Definition of the problem/need: The street, which was the only way to have access to the settlement of Karposh, was not paved and it was in a very bad condition.

Actions undertaken: After receiving a number of written and direct complaints from citizens, the Center convened a meeting with the Board for Public and Communal Affairs. They discussed the case and decided to proceed and submit it to the City Council. After some time, this topic was introduced in the agenda of the 36th City Council meeting. There was a fruitful discussion and the City Council decided to allocate resources from the budget for the reconstruction and pavement of the street. The project implementation is underway.

Actors involved: Residents of street Nikola Rusinski, CIC staff, Board for Public and Communal Affairs, City Council.

Results: Budget for pavement of the street was approved and the citizens' initiative became a reality.

Source of information: Citizen Information Center in Bitola

This case illustrates the use of the technology of **Claims and Complaints**, which belongs to the category of Institutional Action technologies.

Claims are requests usually addressed to the public agency in charge of the management of a public issue or the delivery of a service. Sometimes they can be submitted through an application form or a procedure, as in the case of petitions to the City Council.

Complaints are reports -filed by individuals or organizations - of situations or facts related to misadministration, unsatisfied needs or violations of rights. They usually imply an inquiry, a response, and the subsequent adoption of actions by the entity involved. In other words, because of a complaint - if it is well grounded - measures should be adopted by the administration, service or company involved.

Karposh's residents get a new parking lot

Policy Field: Urban Planning

Topic: Building a parking lot

The situation before the initiative: Karposh is one of the seven municipalities that constitute the capital, Skopje, and where one of the tallest buildings in the city, with 14 floors and around 500 people living in it, is located. The residents had, what they considered, a big problem. There was a large lot in front of the building consisting of soil and rocks. The supermarket, which most of the residents used for buying their groceries, was on the other side of the lot so people passed through it daily. On top of it, since there was no parking available nearby, the residents used this space to park their cars. In the summer, there were clouds of dust there, while in the winter it usually got wet and muddy. This situation continued for years and years, until the residents decided one day to address the problem.

Definition of the problem/need:

- There was no real parking lot for residents to park their cars;
- Need of a cleaner environment surrounding the building.

Actions undertaken: The residents used the open day of the Mayor of Karposh to visit him and ask him to address the problem. The Mayor explained that the property, despite the fact that it is physically located in Karposh, is under the competence of the city of Skopje and there was nothing that he could do. The residents were not happy. Through the resident's council, they continued to demand the Mayor to act. Finally, the Mayor met with his Skopje counterpart and discussed with him the case. The Skopje Mayor explained that this land was not on the priority list and that he did not have funds to solve the problem. The Mayor explained this to the residents. However, they were not satisfied with the response, and decided not to give up. They continued lobbying the Karposh Mayor. As a result, the Mayor decided

that the municipality would invest money and turn the space into a paved parking lot with spaces marked for each car and at one corner of the lot he even built a small children's playground.

Actors involved: Residents, local authorities, residents' council.

Results: Lobbying and pressure by local residents resulted not only in a new place to park but also in space for children to play.

Source of information: Municipality of Karposh and local residents.

Apart from the technology of Claims and Complaints already considered, this case illustrates the use of another technology that also belongs to the category of Institutional Action technologies: **lobbying**. This technology consists in exerting pressure on political and public authorities in order to achieve changes in terms of laws, regulations, financing, etc., in favor of the protection of citizens' rights or common interests. It requires a certain capacity for communication and the involvement of organized groups, ordinary citizens, information tools, and other influential individuals. It also requires a sufficient level of knowledge of political, institutional and administrative matters. Usually an intense, sometimes full-time - engagement, is required during the decision-making process.

The difference between lobbying and the technology of Claims and Complaints is that the former includes making proposals, while the latter means stressing problems in order to ask for a specific response or for taking responsibility by the concerned individuals or institutions.

Veles' Citizens Change City Council Decision

Policy Field: Urban Planning

Topic: A traffic regulatory decision

The situation before the initiative: The municipality of Veles is located in the north-eastern part of Macedonia, only 50 km away from the capital Skopje. The Citizen Information Center is a small office at the entrance of the City Hall, which opened in October 2001. It informs citizens about their local government, facilitates solutions to problems citizens face with the delivery of public services, and acts as a place in which citizens can make complaints and suggestions. At one of its sessions, the City Council of Veles adopted a decision on traffic regulation in the downtown. The new regulation made many citizens unhappy. The settlement of a one-way street in the center of the city caused many problems not only to citizens who lived there, but also to those who daily passed by that area.

Definition of the problem/need: New traffic regulation in the downtown area of Veles, imposed by an unilateral decision adopted at a City Council session.

Actions undertaken: The new regulation was confusing and complicated and far from being an improvement. Citizens from that part of the city started to react and object to the implementation of the Council decision, expressing their dissatisfaction through the Citizen Information Center. Some of them called the center and expressed their concerns; some went directly to the City Hall and demanded a change. After receiving a significant number of complaints, the CIC staff alerted the Mayor about the citizens' reaction and dissatisfaction. In order to re-examine the Council's decision, they decided to conduct a public opinion survey that included 500 respondents and thus provide the Mayor with specific figures and facts as a solid basis for amending the already adopted Council's decision. After the results of the poll were processed and presented to the Mayor, he proposed the City Council to change the previous decision. On its next session, the Council changed the decision on traffic regulation, fully respecting the citizens' opinion gathered through the survey conducted by the CIC. The Mayor later said that data gathered by this CIC initiative helped him a great deal in making a case at the City Council's session.

Actors involved: Veles' Citizens, Citizen Information Center staff, municipal officials, city council members.

Results: Local authorities took into account citizens' feedback and adjusted traffic regulations according to their suggestions and ideas.

Source of information: CIC Veles

The technology illustrated with this case (together with Claims and Complaints, just considered) can be defined as **Monitoring and Generation of data and information**. It belongs to the category of technologies of Direct Action. By monitoring, we mean collection of information periodically performed by active citizens. This is done through interviews, questionnaires, observation checklists, focus groups, and so on. The aim is to understand better the functioning of services and problems that require preventive actions, as well as to identify solutions over time.

Information and data generated by citizens may change decisions and, in general, deeply influence public policy.



2. PUBLIC SERVICES

Villagers dig up a water supply system in Gorno Kolicane

Policy Field: Public services

Topic: constructing a water supply system

The situation before the initiative: The village of Gorno Kolicane is located in the surroundings of the city of Skopje. As other rural areas, it was experiencing many difficulties. One of the main problems was the lack of a proper water supply system that would regularly provide citizens with clean and potable water. Citizens asked financial assistance for constructing a water supply system to the neighborhood unit, but their petition was turned down arguing that there were no funds available. A similar response was obtained from the local government officials.

Definition of the problem: No potable and clean water for the residents of the village

Actions undertaken: The villagers did not let the matter go that easily. They formed a task force, responsible for collecting money from the villagers to pay for a technical study of the water supply system. Then, they contacted the NGO "Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation" (MCIC), which they had heard could provide funds for reconstruction. Both parties agreed that the MCIC could provide part of the funds but not all. The task force offered in-kind contribution provided by the villagers. As a result, 2,5 km of the water supply system was dug up by villagers in what turned out to be a very rocky terrain. Seeing that matters began to move forward, the neighborhood unit contributed a tractor and the local government also added up some limited assistance. The villagers who could not help digging offered some money and, as a result, an 80.000 Euro system was built. The task force was chosen to monitor the maintenance and operation of the system in the future.

Actors involved: Task force, villagers, neighborhood unit representatives, local authorities, NGO, volunteers.

Results: By mobilizing different community stakeholders to work together on a joint project, clean and potable water was supplied to Gorno Kolicane.

Source of information: Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation.

This case shows the use of a number of different technologies that are also presented in other cases. At this point, we only want to note the technology of **Partnership**, which belongs to the category of technologies for Dialogue and Cooperation.

Partnerships involve various individuals and bodies (for example, professionals, business people, political bodies, the administrative sector, and active citizenship) who establish a strong collaborative relationship, through maintaining their own individuality, to share strategies and work together to pursue common goals that are often complex, innovative, and long lasting.

Operational partnerships focus on the implementation stage of policies or programs: they involve specific cooperation between different actors for the fulfillment of a project or activity. In other words, each partner brings its own resources for the implementation of a common project.

The next case on public services concerns waste management.

Citizen advisory board helps improve local waste collection in Kocani

Policy Field: Public services

Topic: Providing new garbage cans for citizens of Kocani

The situation before the initiative: The municipality of Kocani is an example of open and inclusive government, but also of active and committed citizens. However, like most other communities, Kocani also faces many unresolved communal issues. In October 2002, a poll showed that 45% of the citizens interviewed were dissatisfied with the quality of the drinking water provided, 37% with garbage collection, and 10% with the lack of interest of public enterprise's employees to assist citizens in solving different issues under their responsibility.

As a result, both the Mayor and the public enterprise's manager supported the citizens' initiative to establish a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) that would help citizens and the public communal enterprise to address communal issues. The CAB of Kocani consists of representatives from neighborhood units, local media, local NGOs, local government, public enterprise, etc.

Definition of the problem/need:

- There were no instances through which to convey the problems of the citizens regarding public service delivery to the local authorities.
- The citizens wanted a cleaner city.

Actions undertaken: Based on the results of the survey, members of the CAB developed a strategy for acquiring about 4,000 new trashcans that would significantly improve public hygiene in the municipality. They wrote a project proposal supported by both the public enterprise and the Municipality, and submitted it to the Confidence Building Initiative (a USAID project) for funding. The proposal was approved and USD 54,000 was granted. Based on a com-

petitive bidding process advertised in a couple of daily newspapers, a supplier of trashcans was chosen. At a public event, the trashcans were distributed to the citizens with the most regular utility bill payers receiving them for free, while the others were able to obtain a trashcan for their own use for a symbolic amount of 1 EURO.

Actors involved: Active citizens (members of the CAB), local authorities, public enterprise, foreign agency.

Results: Mobilizing different community stakeholders to work together in a joint project resulted in a cleaner city

Source of information: Citizen Information Center of Kocani.

Roundtables/Advisory Boards are tools used to bring together people and bodies who intend to define jointly ways and strategies aimed at addressing problems of common concern. Roundtables are different from operational partnership because:

- They mainly focus on planning and decision-making and not necessarily on the implementation phase;
- Implementation is often a task of each of the partners and not a joint activity.

In this case, technologies of Partnership and Fund Raising were also used.



3. CITIZEN-ADMINISTRATION RELATIONS

Prilep's citizens open an information office in the City Hall

Policy Field: Citizen-Administration Relations

Topic: Opening of an information office that benefits citizens and local authorities alike.

The situation before the initiative: The citizens of Prilep, a municipality in the central-western part of the country, complained about the difficult communication with local government authorities. As a result, the citizen association "Center for civic initiative" lobbied the local government for opening an information office to the citizens. The Mayor was also concerned about having neither a place nor an effective way to communicate with citizens.

Definition of the problem/need: There was neither a place nor an effective mechanism for two-way communication between citizens and local authorities.

Actions undertaken: Since the municipality lacked funding to support initiatives to communicate with citizens, the citizen association, with support and cooperation of local authorities and the Mayor, developed a project proposal for opening an office where citizens could come and receive and give information about the municipality. They submitted the proposal to a donor. After a long process of negotiation of almost 2 years, the municipality opened an office, called "Mayor's Open Office". With funds from the donor, new equipment for the Open Office was offered as a contribution to the local government. The office facilitates citizens' access to information, serves as a complaint center, and offers legal advice free of charge.

Actors involved: Citizens, citizen association, local authorities, donor.

Results: establishment of an open office within the City Hall to facilitate communication between citizens and local authorities.

Source of information: Citizen association "Center for Civic Initiative".

Another relevant technology illustrated with this case is the **Organization and delivery of new services**. This technology is a form of Direct Action. The organization of new services involves the creation and/or management of structures and facilities. These are meant to ensure the protection of rights that otherwise would not be guaranteed by public institutions due to their inefficiency, or lack of political willingness.

Different results may occur:

- Citizen organizations create new services with support of public administration;
- After the civic initiative takes place, the administration accepts the responsibility for managing such services; or
- Citizens must continue to deliver services by themselves, raising the necessary resources from different sources.



4. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

In this section, we present two cases coming from the Kumanovo region.

Citizens organize classes for mothers and children

Policy field: Conflict management

Topic: Building inter-ethnic confidence among children and mothers traumatized by the war.

The situation before the initiative: Kumanovo is a city situated in the northern part of the country. It is a multi-ethnic city, populated by Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs and Roma. The outbreak of the military crisis in Macedonia, in the spring-summer 2001, resulted in many displaced people from the surrounding villages in Kumanovo, especially women with young children.

Definition of the problem: There was no institution or place in Kumanovo to assist mothers and children traumatized by the conflict

Actions undertaken: In one of the neighborhood units, with many displaced people, citizens started to organize classes for mothers and children traumatized by the conflict. They contacted local authorities and asked for their support. The local government provided an office, and twice a week, the NGO "Confidence" held classes and discussions to a multi-ethnic (Macedonian, Serb and Albanian) group of mothers and children.

Actors involved: Citizens, NGO "Confidence", local authorities, displaced persons.

Results: the community mobilized to address the problem of displaced persons and build confidence among vulnerable people.

Source of information: Citizen Information Center of Kumanovo.

This case illustrates the use of different technologies: Conflict management, Organization of new services, and Education and Training.

Conflict Management belongs to the category of Direct Action Technologies. Conflict management can be defined as the set of activities that aim to prevent the deterioration of situations, recourse to violence, or use of force.

In recent years, this has turned out to be one of the principal functions of citizens' organizations worldwide. Conflict management has become increasingly important with the emergence of conflict at all levels: in public service delivery, in the relationship between citi-

zens and public administration, on immigration issues, in interethnic and inter-religious relations, and also on border issues, as in the case with Kumanovo.

Conflict management can occur in different forms. For instance, through the promotion of structured dialogue and meetings between parties characterized by the absence of bureaucracy and the rapidity of the procedure, the presence of a mediator, the lack of sanctions, and low costs. But it can also be in informal settings, through the intervention of a third party and the effort to build mutual understanding and identify common interests.

Education and Training belongs to the category of Resource Mobilization technologies. Education refers to activities that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the development of individual abilities in the civic realm.

Education is carried out through various types of activities, including thematic conferences, brief seminars, courses of medium and long duration, etc. They entail the participation of experts, distance learning, production of materials for students, etc.

Training refers to a more focused and task-oriented transfer of information and know-how. For example, monitoring the quality of public services or checking the pollution level in a site. It implies the transfer of technical skills and tools for action, and it is meant to involve people in specific activities with relevant technical expertise. Training activities are in general shorter and less involved than education.

Women help keep peace in the Kumanovo region

Policy field: Conflict management

Topic: Preserving peace by building trust

The situation before the initiative: During the armed conflict in June 2001, Kumanovo was one of the regions most significantly affected. Many of the military actions took place in the neighboring municipality of Lipkovo, thus creating a tense and difficult environment. In addition, citizens of Lipkovo were seeking refuge in Kumanovo. As a result, most of the citizens' spontaneous gatherings usually turned into violence and resulted in victims.

Definition of the problem: Lack of trust among different ethnic groups.

Actions undertaken: Women were the first to raise their voice against violence. They demanded a meeting with the Mayor and insisted that he prohibit gatherings of citizens from only one single nationality to avoid divisions within the community. The Mayor supported the initiative and the women continued to organize small meetings in all neighborhood units to prevent the gatherings of people.

Actors involved: Women NGOs, women, local authorities, community.

Results: Maintaining peace by building trust among different ethnic groups of the community.

Source of information: Citizen Information Center of Kumanovo.



5. DISABILITY

Parents open a Day-care Center for Children with Special Needs

Policy Field: Disability

Topic: Opening of a day-care center for children with special needs

The situation before the initiative: The Kumanovo Citizen Information Center was established during the crisis in Macedonia, in July 2001. In that period, the region was affected by the war, and the CIC immediately responded to the changing local conditions and needs, by providing assistance as well as information. Since the conflict left many people homeless, forcing them to seek shelter elsewhere, in their uncertainty, citizens turned to the Center. They did so by requesting daily information regarding the possibility of returning to their homes. The CIC was also used to distribute relief packages and one-time financial assistance due to its contacts with many international organizations, as well as with many local humanitarian organizations. Over time, the CIC built an image of a place that helps citizens to solve problems. This encouraged a group of parents of children with special needs to visit the Center. They asked for assistance from local authorities to open a day-care center for their children, since there was no place in the city to leave their children for day-care. Parents had to organize themselves to take care of their children.

Definition of the problem/need: Parents of disabled children had no day-care facilities in which to leave their children

Actions undertaken: The CIC supported their initiative and informed the Mayor and other officials. They convened a meeting at which representatives from the Center for Social Care, the director of the Medical Center in Kumanovo, and staff from NGOs that work with disabled people participated. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and evaluate the current situation in Kumanovo, and it was concluded that opening such a center was essential. Each of the parties agreed on their own responsibilities: CIC had to conduct research and find out the number of people with special needs in Kumanovo. The Director of the Medical Center had to explore the opportunity for renovation of one medical facility in the settlement of Banovo Trlo. Unfortunately, the project was stopped because the local population did not approve of the opening of such a center in their neighborhood.

After some time, one parent, a member of the NGO "Poraka", came to the CIC and proposed the Center and municipality to partner with in a project that had been developed and would be submitted to the European Agency for Reconstruction. The project consisted of the opening of a day care center for children with special needs. The Mayor and the local officials agreed to be partners in the project. The project was approved after six months.

The municipality also participated through small financial support. The office in the local school was converted into a day-care center for children with special needs. Volunteers were also involved in the project in terms of providing necessary care for children with special needs.

Actors involved: Parents of disabled children, local authorities, NGO, Social Insurance Fund, Director of Medical Center in Kumanovo, European Agency for Reconstruction, volunteers.

Results: By mobilizing different stakeholders in the community to work together on a joint project, the first day-care center was opened in Kumanovo for children with special needs.

Source of information: Municipality of Kumanovo

The disabled raise their voice against architectural barriers

Policy field: Disability

Topic: A series of street theatre plays are used to raise awareness about problems of the disabled.

The situation before the initiative: In Macedonia, approximately 200,000 disabled persons feel discriminated against by the community due to their physical or mental handicap. One of their main problems is the inaccessibility to public and private facilities. In Skopje, due to the lack of adequate ramps, most of these facilities are inaccessible for the physically disabled, and the cycle paths on which they could easily circulate are usually packed with parked cars. Consequently, more than 1,400 officially registered people with disabilities cannot freely move within the city due to the high sidewalks and the cars parked in the spots provided for the disabled.

Definition of the problem/need: Inaccessible public and private buildings due to the lack of ramps.

Actions undertaken: The NGO "Polio Plus", which protects the rights of the disabled, tried to express symbolically the need of the disabled to have access to public buildings by performing a series of theatre plays in the street. The performances informed the community about the needs of the disabled and made citizens aware of the problems in their everyday lives. The plays also reminded community members of the equal rights and treatment of the disabled, and encouraged them to act upon them. As a result, owners of over 600 facilities around the country agreed to build disability access ramps to their buildings.

Actors involved: Disabled citizens, owners of facilities, NGO "Polio Plus".

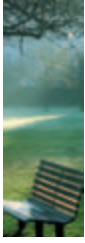
Results: Raising awareness about problems of the disabled resulted in concrete actions by self-aware citizens.

Source of information: www.polioplus.org.mk

This case introduces two new civic technologies: Awareness raising/sensitization and Symbolic Actions.

Awareness raising/sensitization belongs to the category of Direct Action technologies. It is defined as actions aimed at raising citizen understanding of a problem or opportunity. They are very important in the case of neglect or a misleading attitude of the public about a problem, such as disability. It can be undertaken through meetings, leaflets, newspaper articles, etc., which can very often lead to shifting people's perceptions and behavior about an issue.

The other one is **Symbolic Action**, which pertains to the category of Direct Action technologies. Symbolic actions are one of the most commonly used mobilization tools. Symbolic actions are those initiatives with high visibility aimed at prompting an answer or a reaction from the interlocutor while involving citizens on an issue. Usually they catalyze the attention of the public and put pressure upon responsible individuals. In some cases, the initiatives are put forward only after all other attempts to be heard by officials have failed. In other cases, they are useful to show unsolved problems or contradictory behaviors in public affairs.



6. ENVIRONMENT

Citizens Renewed a Picnic Area near Kocani

Policy Field: Environmental protection

Topic: Citizens restore a green area

The situation before the initiative: The neighborhood unit Rade Kratovce is part of the Municipality of Kocani. A place called Bavchaluk, which used to be a picnic and recreational space, is located at the exit of Kocani, near the dam. The space is next to the river, and there are beautiful meadows and places for picnics. During the summer, many citizens from Kocani and the surroundings spend their weekends there, enjoying outdoor activities. However, the place was neglected for many years, and it practically turned into a landfill. Thus, it became a threat for the potential spreading of diseases.

Definition of the problem/need:

- The area that used to be a picnic place was turned into a landfill,
- The environment was polluted and it became a threat in the potential spreading of diseases.

Actions undertaken: The citizens from the neighborhood unit wanted to revitalize Bavchaluk. For that reason, they decided to ask for assistance and funding from the municipality. In May 2002, they identified the Citizen Information Center in Kocani as the starting point for the implementation of their initiative. One day, a group of 20 citizens from the neighborhood unit Rade Kratovce went to the Center and asked to see the Mayor. The CIC staff advised the citizens to submit a written request to the Mayor, who considered their proposal with great interest. He immediately appointed a team of experts from the municipality, composed of the city architect, the communal inspector, and a representative from the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. They went together with the Mayor to see the place and assess the financial needs to clean up the terrain. The next step was to raise the issue at a session of the Council and introduce the project to the councilors. The Mayor also convened a meeting with representatives from the neighborhood unit, to whom he explained the situation. The municipality was willing to help, but due to the lack of financial means, they had to rely on financial assistance from foreign foundations. However, the municipality found another solution. The Mayor decided to organize "a volunteer day" on Sunday. Environmental NGOs, employees from the municipality, the Mayor, and citizens (parents and children) from

the neighborhood unit, as well as from other residential areas, were invited to come to the site to clean up the place. The communal enterprise also participated with machinery in cleaning up the terrain. It was a very successful initiative with visible results. The citizen initiative attracted several foreign donors to make additional investments in building a football field, a playground, etc. After cleaning up the place, the Foundation Konrad Adenauer organized a picnic and lunch for all the participants in the volunteer action.

The Confidence Building Initiative Project installed swings for the children, as well as a football field, tribunes and reflectors. Today, this place has not only been brought back into life, but has also become the most frequently visited place during the day. The area is not just used for picnics, but also for organizing different sport and cultural events.

Actors involved: Citizens from the neighborhood unit Rade Kratovce, Mayor, City Council and other municipal employees, environmental NGOs, volunteers.

Results: The main output was the cleaning and renewal of the picnic area; mobilization of community resources; development of a new relationship between citizens and local government officials.

Source of information: Municipality of Kocani

This case illustrates two civic technologies that belong to the category, Mobilization of Resources.

The first one is **People Mobilization**. It means involving people in a project, campaign or initiative on a permanent basis. People can be mobilized on the basis of their association with a problem, their commitment to the mission of an organization, or their skills or abilities in relation to the task, among others.

The second technology is **Mobilization of Technical Resources**. Technical resources may include cars, caterpillars, tractors, cellular phones, computers and whatever is necessary for the success of a civic action. Usually citizen organizations do not have the possibility to own or rent this kind of equipment. Thus, it is very important that they are able to use it, thanks to their ability to commit the owners (individuals, families, business, professionals, etc.) to a project's goal. In this sense, mobilization of technical resources goes hand-in-hand with people mobilization.

The case is also a very good example of the use of Partnership technology.

Parents persuade Government to pay for Child Treatment

Policy Field: Environment, Health

Topic: Free public health treatment for children from the polluted city of Veles.

The situation before the initiative: Due to the existence of a smelter in the city of Veles, which employs most of the citizens, the environment was highly polluted. The level of emissions of sulphur dioxide and zinc gasses were so high that the World Health Organization declared the city a critical place for living and was considered one of the most polluted places in the Balkans. Given the lack of action by local government, many citizens and NGOs approached the media to inform them of cases of children born with malformations or suffering serious health problems.

Definition of the problem/need: Health of children in the community was at stake.

Actions undertaken: A group of parents from Veles, whose children suffered mostly from the pollution of the smelter, lobbied the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning to help alleviate the health problem. Under their pressure, the Ministry agreed to pay for the children's treatment in the Ministry's summer resorts, available throughout the country. During the months of July and August, around 200 children, up to the age of 14, stayed in these resorts. A call was made to teachers and trainers to volunteer and help the children during their stays. .

Actors involved: Parents of affected children, Ministry of Environment, volunteers, media.

Results: Lobbying helped alleviate health risks for children of Veles.

Source of information: Municipality of Veles.

In addition to some of the civic technologies previously mentioned, this case introduces another Resource Mobilization technology: **Civic use of the Media**. Media can be used in different ways. This technology refers to a specific use, linked to the protection of rights or the support to a common public concern. In the case of the children from Veles, it was unlikely that parents could have succeeded in their claim for assistance without bringing it to the attention of the media.

In practice, the civic use of the media can be implemented in a number of ways: press releases, press conferences, delivery of dossiers and reports, letters to the editor, continuous relations with journalists, newsletters, use of specific columns or broadcasts, etc. The support of the media is very important, both to expand the audience of a civic initiative, and to put pressure on politicians and public officials, usually very sensitive to newspapers and television.



7. EDUCATION

Roma Parents Opened a School in their Neighborhood

Policy Field: Education

Topic: Opening of a school for Roma children

The situation before the initiative: Kumanovo is a multiethnic city comprised of approximately 30% of Macedonians, 30% Albanians, and 30% Serbs. There is also a significant Roma community surrounding the city. The Roma population lives in very bad conditions, facing problems of unemployment, a very low level of education, and lack of basic needs. One day, a group of representatives of the neighbourhood unit of Sredorek, the Roma Association, and parents visited the Citizen Information Center in Kumanovo municipality. They asked for assistance in holding a class for students in an empty facility.

Definition of the problem/need:

- Roma community in the neighborhood unit of Sredorek lived in poor conditions;
- There was no school, preschool or primary school class in the area.

Actions undertaken: The CIC advised the group first to contact the regional unit of the Ministry of Education and to request the approval for opening a class according to the Law on Education. The CIC then suggested contacting several international organizations and developing a project proposal in order to obtain some financial support for the renovation of the facility. Financial aid was essential for obtaining equipment, boards, tables and chairs, etc. The CIC provided guidance to the group and monitored the implementation of the initiative. The CIC requested support from international organizations for assistance in this initiative. As a result of this effort, the facility was completely renovated and all equipment was provided. The approval from the Ministry of Education was obtained, and classes started according to the official program of the Ministry. The Ministry of Education provided teachers from the closest primary school. The school for children between 1st and 4th grade was launched. Currently, there is an initiative hold classes for children from 5th to 8th grade.

Actors involved: Roma parents, representatives from the neighborhood unit, several NGOs and humanitarian organizations, local officials, Ministry of Education.

Results: By mobilizing different community stakeholders to work together in a joint project, a school was opened for children from 1st to 4th grade in the Roma community in Kumanovo.

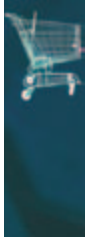
Source of information: Citizen Information Center in Kumanovo

This case highlights the importance of Fund Raising, a technology that belongs to the category of Resource Mobilization.

Fund raising involves the collection of funds, either for a specific organization (in order to cover overhead costs such as rent, telephone, communication, etc.), or for the implementation of specific projects. Fund raising may target:

- Citizens, who are asked to support financially civic initiatives,
- Public bodies, such as national or local governments,
- International donors,
- Private companies, as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts.

Each of them will require the use of specific strategies and tools, such as sponsorships, matching funds, cause-related marketing, partnerships, etc.



8. CONSUMER PROTECTION

A consumers' initiative for use of different types of water meters

Policy Field: Consumer Protection

Topic: Protection of citizens' rights to free choice and fair service delivery.

The situation before the initiative: The Consumers' Advice Bureau in Skopje was established by the Organization for Consumer Protection. The main purpose of the Bureau is to protect the rights of citizens as customers. One of the major problems raised by citizens to the Bureau concerned water meters.

The Public Enterprise for Water Supply and Sewage Systems, taking advantage of its monopolistic position in the market, required citizens to purchase and use only INSA and ABB water meters, which are more expensive, thus violating the right to free choice. They refused to accept the use of Siemens water meters, which in citizens' opinion are better and cheaper than the others.

Definition of the problem/need:

- Limitation of consumers' right to free choice
- Monopolistic control of market

Actions undertaken: After receiving numerous citizen complaints regarding water meters, the Organization for Consumer Protection decided to take initiative and address the issue. Together with members of the Consumer Protection Commission, they supported consumers' right to free choice when purchasing goods. The issue was submitted to the Urbanization and Construction Board of the Council of the City of Skopje, which reviewed the arguments submitted by both parties, and decided in favor of the Public Enterprise for Water Supply. The rationale was that introducing a new type of water meter in the water supply system would cause interferences in its operation. The Organization for Consumer Protection was not satisfied by the decision and submitted the case for further review to the Anti-Monopoly Bureau. Upon review of the case, the agency concluded that the Water Supply Enterprise limited the consumers' right to free choice, taking advantage of its monopolistic position. It decided that, in the future, consumers could use any type of water meter complying with the necessary A-tests and certificates confirmed by the Standardization Bureau, according to the Law on Measurement Units and Measurement Instruments.

Actors involved: Organization for Customers' Protection, the City of Skopje, Anti-Monopoly Bureau, Public Enterprise for Water Supply and Sewage System.

Results: Consumers exercised their right to free choice for purchasing water meters and their right to fair competition and better services by the Public Enterprise for Water Supply.

Source of information: Organization for Consumer Protection.

In this case, a new technology of **Advisory Services** is illustrated.

Advisory services represent one of the most important technologies of Direct Action. They enable citizens to obtain information and assistance when their rights are, or would be, violated. These services must be generally accessible in person or some other way (by phone, mail, e-mail, fax, etc.), and to have certain established working hours. They must have adequately trained front-line staff and data storage tools. They must also have supporting information regarding the activities performed. They usually have a network of consultants and references available to help them in the resolution of more complex cases. As a general rule, they should not entail any financial burden for citizens.

Advisory services include a range of activities, from providing "how-to" information to citizens, to promoting advocacy actions in order to address citizen problems.

Consumers opposed a new system of payment for heat consumption

Policy Field: Consumer Protection

Topic: Consumers opposed the decision by the Public Enterprise for Central Heating to introduce a new system of payment for energy usage.

The situation before the initiative: The Managing Board of the Public Enterprise for Central Heating in Skopje announced that, starting the next heating season, the energy usage in apartment buildings and public facilities with several owners would be measured by one collective calorimeter placed in the heating substation. This meant that payment would be collected per heating area of squared meter. This change raised many questions and dilemmas regarding the legal basis of the new system, the technical capability of the facilities and their water heating systems, as well as other factors related to the use of calorimeters. As a result of this announcement, many citizens expressed their concerns and dissatisfaction to the Consumers' Advice Bureau in Skopje.

Definition of the problem/need:

- A new system of payment was introduced without previous consent of consumers;
- Consumers were obliged to pay additional fees for supply of measurement instruments, with no previous consultation;
- Inequality was introduced in the price of heat energy for consumers in different types of buildings, or buildings built in different time periods;
- Consumers did not have the opportunity to control the expenses for heat energy usage.

Actions undertaken: After receiving many complaints from citizens, the Organization for Customer Protection undertook the following actions:

- A request was submitted to the Consumer Protection Commission by the City Council of Skopje to review the issue;
- The Commission, together with representatives from the Organization for Consumer Protection, reviewed the case of introducing calorimeters for the measurement of collective heat energy usage. They concluded that consumers had not been consulted when the decision was made, although they were obliged to pay additional fees, and that the new system of measurement did not give them the opportunity to control their expenses and own consumption;
- The Commission put this issue on the agenda of a session of the City Council. Representatives from the Public Enterprise for Central Heating attended the session. The City Council decided that the conditions for introducing a new measurement and payment system for heat energy usage based on calorimeters were not fulfilled at the moment.
- Finally, the Organization for Consumers' Protection used the media to inform the consumers about the decision adopted.

Actors involved: the Organization for Consumer Protection, the Consumer Protection Commission, the City Council of Skopje, Public Enterprise for Central Heating "Toplifkacija", Consumers' Advice Bureau in Skopje, Skopje citizens.

Results: Citizens succeeded in opposing the introduction of the new system of payment for heat energy usage.

Source of information: City of Skopje

This case highlights a very important civic technology, namely **Institutional action and enforcement of procedures for the protection of rights called for by law**. It pertains to the category of technologies for Institutional Action.

This technology refers to actions taken by citizens to demand administrations to enforce laws that protect citizen rights and participation. Examples of these actions include: access to administrative documents; service charters; public relations offices; mechanisms established by laws to reform local self-government and included in city statutes (e.g., ombudsman, non-binding referenda, petitions, etc.); city plans for civil protection; basic minimum services during strikes; recourse to regulatory authorities; regulations regarding participation and protection of rights in specific services. The Consumer Protection Commission of the City Council of Skopje is one of these bodies, as well as the above-mentioned anti-trust norms and procedures. Making them effective is a responsibility (and is in the best interest) of citizen organizations.



9. OTHER TECHNOLOGIES

The examples provided below illustrate five other civic technologies not featured in the cases reported above. The examples come from Italy.

The "Charter of Rights Denied to Citizens of Western Catania" (Italy)

Proclaimed on May 18, 2001 in the presence of hundreds of residents, the Charter of Rights is the result of hundreds of reports and questionnaires circulated by the Cittadinanzattiva volunteers. This document aims both at reporting the decay of the area and the lack of essential services, as well as at defining an agenda of priorities for institutions, to be implemented in dialogue and cooperation with citizens. This Charter is composed of 10 rights: the right to respect of citizens' time (above all in public services); the right to information and administrative decentralization (existence of services on site, complete and timely provision of information); the right to health (particularly, prevention); the right to safety; the right to sports and free time (have suitable spaces available for various activities); the right to quality of life (clean public spaces, safe and equipped school buildings, well-maintained green spaces); the right to participation (in city administration); the right to preventive actions (freedom to report situations that undermine personal safety); the right to credibility (give proper recognition to information provided by citizens regarding problems and risks in the country); the right to public and institutional dialogue (opportunity to intervene, at least when safety is concerned).

The **Charters of Rights** - for example those for patients, the elderly, or for children - are documents that contain specific provisions about the ways in which rights, which are generically called for by laws and regulations but ignored in practice, must be protected.

The Charters result not from a technical or juridical procedure, but rather from the systematic collection of citizen reports and complaints about malfunctions in the systems under discussion. Thanks to the analysis and classification of the complaints, rights that are violated or at risk are recognized and established. These charters are publicly and solemnly proclaimed in presence of a judging board, composed of well-known figures from the media, culture, academia and politics, as well as from the community at large. They are the result of the mobilization of active citizens, who make the charter a shared document that belongs to the local communities. They make formally proclaimed rights easier to be enforced through actions and specific interventions.

The technology of **Cooperation Agreements** belongs to the category of Dialogue technologies and it is illustrated by an Italian case related to health care.

Agreeing on procedures for surgery (Italy)

In order to guarantee citizens better accessibility to a higher quality of surgery, the association of family doctors and the association of hospital doctors committed themselves to support and respect the following procedure, in agreement with the Tribunal for Patients' Rights:

- Requests for outpatient specialized examinations from the family doctor (written legibly and submitted with pertinent information about the patient's health);
- Outpatient medical report from a specialist (clear and legible, containing diagnostic and therapeutic analyses, according to the requirements of the Unified Drug Commission);
- Hospitalization access card issued by a family doctor (including the patient's clinical history);
- Referral physician (a doctor who will become the point of reference for patients during their stays in the hospital);
- Examination by a family doctor (who must examine his or her patient whenever deemed necessary, or when requested by hospital doctors or patients themselves);
- Ward telephone booth (with a set schedule, in order to receive phone calls from the attending doctor);
- Availability of the family doctor (for the entire duration of the patient's hospitalization);
- Informed consent (family and hospital doctors must provide information about the risks and benefits of the surgery, but also about the possible problems and subsequent treatments);
- Discharge forms (with precise information about the surgery, possible complications, etc.);
- Waiting lists (transparency regarding waiting periods and the criteria used to compile the waiting lists).

Through Cooperation Agreements, mutual commitments are assumed, deadlines are agreed, and collaboration is vested with institutional power. The interlocutors can be administrative authorities, social actors (such as unions), and other civic organizations. The agreements may have a **general** scope, that is, they can formalize the desires of the parties involved with respect to an overall purpose or they can be **operational**, aiming to solve concrete and immediate problems.

Cooperation Agreements differ from Roundtables in that they specify concrete actions to be taken. Further, they are different from Operational Partnerships because they do not state a common activity, but rather specific activities to be undertaken by the actors involved.

The next technology, **Proximity of Information**, belongs to the category of Direct Action.

"Easy Euro" program (European Union)

In preparation for the introduction of the European single currency, several citizen organizations of different countries participated in a European Commission program called "Easy Euro". The program was aimed at facilitating access to the new currency by vulnerable groups (about 30% of the European population, according to the EC), preventing the risk of social exclusion. Focus groups of target people were organized in several European countries by citizen organizations in order to identify problems. Then, the EC entrusted citizen organizations in creating networks of "proximity informers," that is people working closer to citizens and able to provide information and mitigate their fears. Thousands of teachers, medical doctors, pharmacists, front-line officers of public services, concierges, etc., were mobilized and trained to achieve this goal.

Proximity of information is a civic technology that implies mobilization of trustworthy people closer to the target citizens. They are able to give citizens more direct information and answers on relevant matters, such as new policies, changes in public organization, risks related to everyday life, and others.

The next case illustrates the technology is **Collection and Dissemination of Good Practices**, which belongs to the category of Resource Mobilization.

Community Program on AIDS (Italy)

Community program is an experimental project launched by the local health agencies of Grosseto and Rimini in collaboration with various co-operatives and civic organizations in 1999. The project is a model of innovation through cooperation of public, private and social actors to fight against AIDS. This project targets young people, who are reached through informational campaigns in schools, discotheques, social centers, etc. It also intends to reach workers, organizing training courses for those individuals who work in close contact with young people, such as educators, social workers, psychologists, teachers, student leaders, etc. The project, because of its utility and innovative nature, is recognized as an example of good practice in health issues.

A good practice is a successful initiative that aims to improve simultaneously the economic efficiency and accessibility of public services.

A program to **collect and disseminate good practices** involves the establishment of a catalogue or database including information on projects that constitute good practices, and the institutionalization of different types of awards (such as prizes, contests, and certificates) or the dissemination of information about those cases so that they can be replicated by other initiatives.

Another Resource Mobilization technology is the **Creation of Associations**, as described in the case below.

Creation of a committee to preserve the quality of life in a neighborhood in Rome

The opening of a Bingo parlor in the densely-populated neighborhood of Re di Roma in Rome, Italy, caused many troubles to the residents in terms of traffic, noise, waste management, safety, etc. To face this problem, in March 2003, a group of residents with the support of Cittadinanzattiva decided to create a committee for the improvement of the quality of life in the neighborhood. The main aim of the committee was to ask the Bingo parlor to respect the rights and interests of the community. The committee set up some precise proposals, including a closing time of midnight, respect of the norms against acoustic and light pollution, respect of parking and traffic regulations, access for disabled persons, prohibition to use residents' garbage cans, and others. Thanks to the committee, active citizens were recognized by the local administration as official interlocutors on questions involving the Bingo parlor.

Though getting together and acting as active citizens does not require any formal decision or institutionalization process, in some cases, the formal establishment of an association or committee can be useful. It may help mobilize and motivate the people affected by a problem and give them a stronger voice with their interlocutors. In addition, it gives groups of citizens a formal legal status.

The next example illustrates the **Civic use of Information Technologies**, which pertains to the category of Resource Mobilization.

Regulation on pain therapy (Italy)

On December 19, 2000, the Tribunal for Patient's Rights, through an open letter to the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and the Social Affairs Commission, requested the approval of new regulation on pain therapy. The Commission approved it and sent the text to the corresponding Senate Commission for its consideration. On January 19, 2001, 5 senators brought the measure back under discussion, frustrating the efforts of the Chamber's Social Affairs Commission, which intended to approve the text before the closure of the Parliament.

On January 18, 2001, a press release announced that the website of Cittadinanzattiva contained the names of the politicians who had blocked the legislative measure, and provided their e-mail addresses with an invitation to citizens to write to them. The Movement committed itself to use its Internet site to make the comments of citizens and copies of their letters to the senators public. On January 19, 2001, the text of the law was again discussed and finally approved, following the Movement's on-line campaign and an intervention of the President of the Senate. Finally, on February 8, 2001, the regulation was published in the Italian Official Journal.

Information technologies provide numerous advantages since they are fast, global and interactive. They allow active citizens to organize themselves, communicate, discuss, make decisions, and take action, overcoming economic, geographic, and time obstacles. The use of e-mail, and the possibility to design web sites with interactive forums or chat lines are increasingly accessible to citizens. The Internet is also a place for direct civic action, for example through on-line petitions. Through the Internet, civic organizations can carry out different activities: fund raising, educational and informational campaigns, boycotts, convening meetings, refining common documents, prepare petitions, conduct consultation, training, and recruitment of interested citizens.

The technology of **Legal Action** belongs to the category of technologies for Institutional Response, as illustrated by the next two cases.

Initiating civil action by the Tribunal for Patients' Rights (Italy)

A pregnant woman in her forty-seventh week was given oxytocin during labor to accelerate the contractions. In addition, she had an amniotomy (artificially provoking the water to break) incorrectly performed and doctors did not notice serious fetal problems. The consequences of these errors in the diagnosis and treatment were dramatic: the child died, the uterus broke, and the woman's bladder was removed. The woman turned to Pit Health, whose experts found serious negligence in the conduct of the caregivers, presenting an accusation for involuntary manslaughter and grievous bodily harm. In the trial against the doctors, the Tribunal for Patients' Rights undertook civil action, which was admitted by the court. The trial ended recently with the conviction of the doctors, the compensation for damages to the woman, and the recognition of damages to the Tribunal for Patients' Rights, still to be quantified in a separate civil trial.

Inhibitory action against unfair clauses in bank contracts (Italy)

In January 21 2000, Rome's civil court sentenced two important lending institutions, the Banca Popolare di Milano and the Banca Fideuram, and the Italian Banking Association (ABI), to review most of their bank contracts in order to eliminate a series of clauses judged to be unfair for their clients. The Judge accepted the appeal submitted by the Cittadinanzattiva's Justice for Rights initiative, as part of the Thirty Pilot Cases project supported by the European Commission. The clauses included in banking contracts showed a clear bias in the bank's favor. The Court's decision thus prohibited the use of 32 clauses (of the 42 proposed), both in previously existing contracts and in future ones, and it required ABI to modify the instructions sent to its member banks in a special bulletin.

Though legal action is not the only available tool for the protection of rights, it provides different advantages: to protect individuals from violations of their rights; to prompt the law system to fill in gaps in the system of rights or to recognize new rights; to highlight dramatic but unnoticed situations of violation of rights; or to force powerful actors to respect citizens' rights.

The technology of **Gathering Signatures and Support**, which belongs to the category of Resource Mobilization, is illustrated by the following case.

Gathering signatures for tree trimming in a Roman neighborhood (Italy)

The gardening service of the City of Rome had decided not to trim the acacia trees lining the street Via Donna Olimpia. Since the fall of tree branches was frequent, and in order to avoid serious damage, especially to people, a group of citizens decided to take action. Within a few days they collected 400 signatures, which were then submitted to the office of the 16th District and the Gardens Office of the City of Rome. Following this protest, the trimming of trees took place.

Collecting signatures may support complex and costly initiatives (such as a referendum) or simple ones (such as an appeal or petition). Except in those cases provided for by law, in general, this initiative is not sufficient by itself, but must be coupled with other types of intervention. However, it allows for raising awareness or disseminating information about civic actions.



III RESOURCES

The following resources could be useful to learn more about active citizenship in Macedonia and to collect further learning materials, or to establish links and contacts with citizen organizations operating in this field.

Civic World: News, calendar of events, announcements, and other information related to the activities of the NGO sector in Macedonia.

<http://www.civicworld.org.mk>

Stability Pact Anticorruption Initiative - Technical Assistance to Macedonia, International Instruments, Good Governance, Rule of Law, Integrity in Business and Civil Society.

<http://www1.oecd.org/daf/SPAIcom/fyrom/ps.htm>

Macedonian NGO Online Network (MaNGO online): registration, directories.

http://www.mango.org.mk/default_old.asp

Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia.

<http://www.soros.org.mk/>

"Directory of Citizens Organizations in Macedonia", published by Macedonian Center for International Cooperation: Nikola Parapunov bb. P.O. 835, 1000 Skopje

Citizen Information Centers in Macedonian municipalities:

Bitola

Pavlina Josevska, Vera Dimovska, Milica Cibalevska
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