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# ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT LOCAL LEVEL: THE CASE STUDY OF KARPOSH MUNICIPALITY

## 1. Introduction

The Municipality of Karposh was formed on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1976 (Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, no. 8/76) and, as part of the City of Skopje, extends to its central western area. It borders with the municipalities Butel, Chair, Centar, Kisela Voda, Saraj and Gjorche Petrov, and with the municipalities Chucher Sandevo and Sopsishte, which are not a part of the City of Skopje. According to the last census of the population in 2002, the municipality has 59 810 inhabitants. There are 4 preschools and 10 primary schools in the territory of the municipality.

The Sector for Activities of Public Interest also includes the Department of Child, Social and Health Care that started its activities modestly in 2010. During its staffing and devising of the work programme, the Department conducted numerous analysis and surveys on the needs of the citizens, which brought certain knowledge regarding what is needed and how to help in the field of health and social protection. Hence starts the step-by-

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step planning and implementation of activities in the Annual Programme of this Sector.

They are divided to:

### ***1.1. Activities of social character***

- Granting persons/families at a social risk a one-time financial aid for treatment and natural disaster;
- Granting one-time financial aid to every newborn and adopted child;
- Humanitarian actions (for the Easter holidays, New Year and the Municipality's Foundation day);
- Help in areas affected by a natural disaster and opening sheltering centres for homeless persons, active during natural disasters;
- Humane patrols;
- Celebration of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and establishing a social map of persons with disabilities;
- Celebration of October 1<sup>st</sup>, the International Day of Older Persons (visiting the nursing home for the elderly Mother Theresa in the Gerontology Institute "13<sup>th</sup> November");
- "With love for the lonely"- February 14<sup>th</sup>;
- Manifestation for May 9<sup>th</sup> – the last day of the Gjurgjovden holiday;
- Inclusion of Roma children in JUODG<sup>1</sup> "Prolet";
- Opening a temporary kindergarten in the Bardovci village by the Montessori educational programme, and opening a kindergarten in this village is announced; and
- Assistive technology for individual work for children with special needs in two schools in the Municipality of Karposh (MPS<sup>2</sup> Dimo Hadzi Dimov and MPS Jan Amos Komenski).

### ***1.2. Activities in the Field of Health Protection***

- Introduction of the HACCP system<sup>3</sup> and denoting an authorized person for food control and safety in MPS and JUODG.
- C.T.C<sup>4</sup> "Kluch" trained 17 persons from preschool institutions (technical, expert and medical staff) for following the principles of the

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1 Javna ustanova opštinska gradinka (Public institution municipal kindergarten)

2 Public primary school

3 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

4 Consulting and training centre

HACCP system.

- Projects and workshops in the field of nutrition.
- Education on oral health to preschool children and systematic and preventive health/medical examinations, lectures in the field of health regarding seasonal and unforeseen epidemic diseases.
- Education on reproductive health and early diagnosis of tuberculosis, protection against jaundice (Hepatitis A) intended for children of preschool and school age, as well as on health improvement of the Roma population. Opening a club for alcohol abstinence and substance abuse prevention.
- International activities in the field of public health.

Care for the citizens' health and social protection is a main priority and goal of the Municipality of Karposh. Starting with the youngest population – the children, who are a basic cell of a society, to the “third age” citizens, the Municipality creates its activities as means for facilitating their life from every, primarily health and social, aspect.

Reduction of persons/families at a social risk through the programme activities of the Department of Child, Social and Health Care, as well as care for the youngest population that attend preschools and primary schools, through preventive health measures, are main objectives in the work of this Department. In fact, the Municipality of Karposh is recognizable for its forming and active work of social workers and health care of the population living in the Municipality.

Informing the citizens through the 14 urban communities, through the Municipal Gazette, internet media outlets, and the official internet page, give guidance for the ways citizens can exercise their rights in any area.

Only when the statistical numbers will decline will we be happy with our work, since our main objective is to decrease social and health issues of the citizens.

## **2. Activities for improvement of health and well-being of the citizens**

### ***2.1. Activities in the Field of Social Protection***

The activities in the field of social protection implemented by the Department of Child, Social and Health Care at the Municipality of Karposh are in accordance with the Law on Local Self-Government, the Law on Social Protection, the Law on Child Protection and with the annual Programme adopted at Council session each year.

- Procedure for granting one-time financial aid for treatment and natural disaster to persons/families at social risk.

The person/family in need of financial aid according to one of the aforementioned grounds, submits a request and appropriate documentation to the Department. The social workers inspect the submitted documentation, and upon need of additional documentation, it is being completed. The next step is inspecting the home of the person/family at social risk and making a record. The Commission for granting one-time financial aid, established by the Mayor of the Municipality, inspects the submitted requests and decides upon the approval and sum of the financial aid (according to the ISO 9001 Work Procedure). The number of persons and families provided with one-time financial aid is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of persons and families at social risk provided with one-time financial aid.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Social risk	65	82	53	71	45	316
Treatment	73	73	61	91	67	365
Natural disaster	0	1	3	112	1	117

- Providing one-time financial aid for every newborn and adopted child. A person/family that has a newborn or adopted child submits documents to the Department of Child, Social and Health Protection and, if they meet the established criteria approved at a Council meeting and uploaded on the official website of the Municipality<sup>5</sup>, they have the right of one-time financial aid of 4 000.00 denars (Table 2).

- Table 2. Number of newborn/adopted children provided with one-time financial aid.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Number of newborn/adopted children	506	46	66	94	32	744

- Humanitarian actions: “Let’s be humane for our neighbours”. On the occasion of the Orthodox holidays Easter, New Year and of the Foundation day of the Municipality, throughout the year the De-

partment for Child, Social and Health Care organizes a humanitarian action “Let’s be humane for our neighbours” intended for persons/families at social risk.

The working methods of this action are placing 12 stands in front of the larger supermarkets in the municipality, where citizens can donate food and hygiene products. The donated products are classified and packaged and are then delivered to the homes of the persons and families at the highest level of social risk. Usually, 120 packages are delivered per humanitarian action.

- Help in areas affected by a natural disaster and opening sheltering centres active during natural disasters for homeless persons.

The Municipality of Karposh has established a Protection and Rescue Headquarters in the case of natural or any kind of disaster. There is a trained special unit that operates on field according to protocol and it is known as the Universal Protection and Rescue Unit. If needed, this Unit, in cooperation with the City of Skopje, operates during weather or natural disaster and other occurrences in the country and abroad as well. Due to the lack of centres for shelter of homeless persons, the Department for Child, Social and Health Care opens five additional temporary centres for shelter of homeless persons in the occurrence of bad weather conditions. The centres were established within the five urban communities in the Municipality of Karposh. These stands were ready to welcome the homeless persons as the Unit for Protection and Rescue of Citizens and Material Goods provided the sheltering centres with beds and blankets, as well as food and hot beverages for the sheltered persons.

- “Humane Patrols” Project.

“Humane Patrols” is a project implemented by the Department of Child, Social and Health Care and aims at covering categories of socially vulnerable persons, persons with disabilities and elderly people in their homes.

On that occasion, training on the methods and ways of conducting this activity was held in the premises of the Municipality of Karposh, attended by experts from the Municipal Administration involved in the project and held by professors from the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje.

By creating field activity teams and finding new users, this humane activity gives the necessary care and help to this vulnerable category of our

fellow citizens, which are unable to leave their home due to health-related reasons, by providing foodstuffs, activities at home, medication and company so that these persons can overcome their loneliness.

- Celebration of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, International Day of Persons with Disabilities and establishing a social map.

By providing a record of persons/families at social risk, the Municipality of Karposh has made a social map, i.e. a database of records of all one-time financial aid users and people with disabilities as well. A total of 90 persons with disabilities have been registered in the database of the department so far. Aid to a total of 300 persons has been granted on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in the past 4 years. Each year, financial or orthopedic aids are granted to these persons. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is organized with a convenient programme, addressing by and socializing with the Mayor, and a light meal. During this meeting, the Mayor talks to the people in order to get an insight of the problems they face on a daily basis and of their needs, for the purpose of facilitating accessibility and social inclusion of these persons in their daily lives.

Table 3. Records of persons with disabilities in the Municipality of Karposh

Type of disability	Number of persons
<i>Cerebral palsy</i>	20
<i>Autism</i>	1
<i>Hydrocephalus</i>	1
<i>Paraplegia</i>	4
<i>Multiple sclerosis</i>	5
<i>Dystrophy</i>	3
<i>Hearing impairment/loss</i>	3
<i>Intellectual and physical disability</i>	18
<i>Down syndrome</i>	2
<i>Blindness and visual impairment</i>	6
<i>Persons with hearing impairment/loss</i>	3
<i>Persons with multiple disabilities of speech and hearing impairment</i>	2
<i>Chromosomopathy</i>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

- Care for the elderly and the lonely  
 “Third age” citizens should not be forgotten by society because they have contributed and contribute to its development and prosperity. For that purpose, the Municipality of Karposh celebrates October 1<sup>st</sup>, the International Day of Older Persons each year, by visiting the Gerontology Institute “13<sup>th</sup> November” and brighten their day with a modest programme. Simultaneously, several urban communities form clubs that organize trips or social games as means for socialization among pensioners. These activities are conducted as means of facilitating the lives and socialization of our citizens.  
 “With love for the lonely” another activity implemented by the Municipality of Karposh for socialization of persons that live alone, symbolically held on 14<sup>th</sup> February, also known as “St. Valentine’s Day” and as the Orthodox holiday “St. Trifun”. This event aims at providing these persons with care, friendship and attention that each of us needs to receive.

## ***2.2. Activities in the Field of Health Protection***

Activities in the field of health protection are implemented by the Department of Child, Social and Health Care at the Municipality of Karposh and are in accordance with the Law on Local Self-Government, Law on Child Protection, the rulebooks of the Food and Veterinary Agency, the Institute of Public Health and the Annual Programme adopted at Council meeting each year.

- Introduction of the HACCP system<sup>6</sup> and denoting an authorized person for food control and safety in MPSs and JUODGs.  
 By adopting the Law on Food Safety and Food Contact Materials (Ministry of Health, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 54/28 and 84/7), all producers, distributors i.e. each food operator is legally obliged to implement the HACCP system for the purpose of providing greater control over the biological, chemical and physical dangers that could cause alimentary poisoning in children of preschool and school age. Therefore, the preschools and the primary schools are obliged to implement this system and to work in accordance with its principles. The Municipality of Karposh is the first Municipality in the Republic of Macedonia that has an authorized person for food

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6 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

control and safety in its educational institutions. All food operators in the preschools passed a Codex Alimentarius<sup>7</sup> training and gained additional knowledge on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practice (GHP).<sup>8</sup> Over the course of several months, the HACCP system was introduced in preschools in the Municipality of Karposh and was, most importantly, continuously monitored and upgraded. Lists of work traceability of the technical, expert and teaching staff in preschools have been prepared. The field activity and the audit through which the current situation is stated is recorded in the in a registry signed by an authorized control and safety person from the Municipality of Karposh on the one, and the Director or the Head of the preschool/school on the other hand. After assessment of the whole documentation, a final report is prepared, which presents the entire current hygienic and sanitary situation in the kitchen and the playrooms where the children eat (Prof. Dr. Kakurinov; Manual for necessary requirements for HACCP and Manual and Guide for Introduction, Maintenance, Upgrading, Inspection and Certification of HACCP System; KTC Key, 2009, Skopje).

Primary schools were also noted that they should abide by the legislation, and the concessionaires of kitchens were required to request an introduced HACCP system in the tender documentation, which would guarantee of the food they prepare for the children.

- International activities in the field of health.

Regular attendance at congresses, seminars, workshops is only one of the methods through which employees at the Municipal administration acquire expertise and knowledge in the field of health. Control of food safety would not be complete if the hygienic design of the equipment involved in food production was not taken into account. From this aspect, the Municipality of Karposh is an institutional member of EHEDG<sup>9</sup> - a prestige world organization based in Frankfurt that actively contributes to conducting European regulations in the field of hygienic design and new strategies of design development. The manuals provided by this organization each year are a source of information that provide guidance for turning theory into practice.

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7 Codex Alimentarius (Latin for „Law on Food“), stands for a set of international food standards

8 Good Hygienic Practice

9 European Hygienic Engineering and Design Group

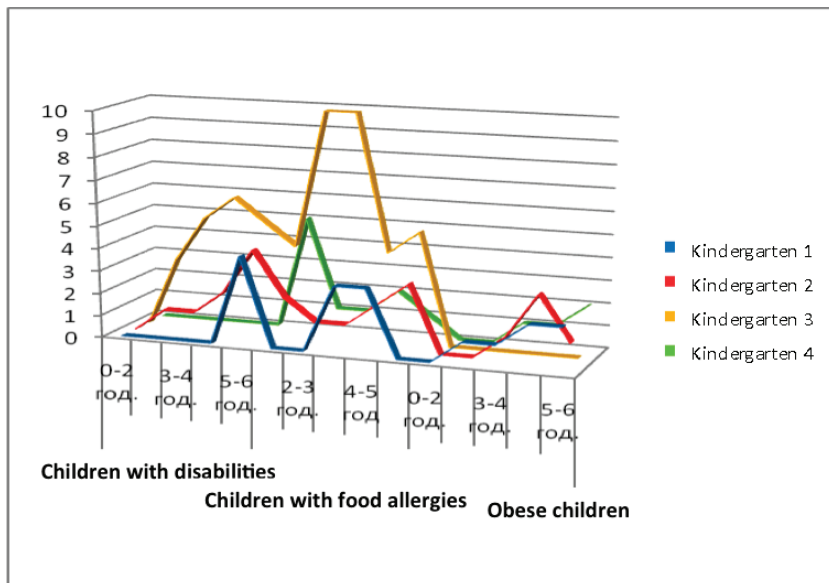


Annual congresses, workshops and seminars allow for developing contacts with experts, exchange of opinions and knowledge and business collaboration that benefits the Municipality.

Through the Macedonian Montessori Association, representatives of the Municipality of Karposh took part in the international project “Play with Me”, held in Ljubljana – Slovenia. Special emphasis was put on social inclusion of persons with special needs and their inclusion in the daily life. The Ljubljana example was very meaningful in terms of implementing the activities in our area and in the education and care institutions.

- Projects and workshops in the field of nutrition for students.  
In the field of nutrition, annual projects and workshops held by experts in the field are being organized in the primary schools. The target group is students from 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade, a period of life where overweight and undernutrition are most commonly noted.
- Education on oral health to preschool children and systematic and preventive health/medical examinations, lectures in the field of health regarding seasonal and unforeseen epidemic diseases.  
The Municipality of Karposh carries out regular and, if needed, additional medical/health examinations in preschools and primary schools, through the Centre for Public Health. An expert medical team (psychologists, pedagogists, doctors, dentists, nurses), that is in constant medical collaboration with the state medical centres, is employed in preschools to coordinate the necessary preventive favors and to continuously care for the health of the children. The children are continuously monitored as means for timely intervention if certain anomalies in their development are noticed. Records of children sensitive to certain allergens are kept, and the weight of the children in the preschools is monitored regularly (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Monitoring of specific needs of children in kindergartens in the Municipality of Karposh



- One kindergarten has an equipped dental office that provides free services to the children attending kindergarten.

Education on reproductive health and early diagnosis of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, jaundice protection (Hepatitis A) intended for children of preschool and school age and of the Roma population.

For the purpose of improving children's health and raising awareness among the Roma population, the Municipality of Karposh, in its plan and programme, also includes numerous activities for prevention of unplanned pregnancy, education on sexually transmitted diseases, early diagnosis of infectious and non-infectious diseases etc. Special attention is given to reproductive health and early diagnosis of tuberculosis (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) as most common health issues that the Roma population experience. Experts from the non-governmental sector, in cooperation with the Municipality, usually conduct the lectures.

- Opening a club for alcohol abstinence and substance abuse prevention. Due to tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse, the Karposh Municipal Organization of Red Cross organized workshops for schoolchildren and their parents. These workshops resulted in publishing of a book and a manual titled "Let's say NO to addiction".

A panel discussion was held on addiction and its consequences which was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, that meet persons with such problems on a daily basis, the Psychiatric Hospital in Bardovci, the Ambulance at the PHI Bucharest in Karposh; as well as by students, teachers and parents.

People suffering from addiction and recovering by abstinence are conversed with on the workshops, and they are being informed about their rights, measures and the ways in which and how to exercise them.

#### **4. Conclusion**

To move forward with new ideas that would raise standards, health and well-being of our citizens is our priority.

To cooperate with non-governmental and governmental institutions in order to encourage and interest them in our ideas and their realization is our vision, mission and goal.

To be the best is what we are recognizable for, especially in the field of health and social care.

Hereupon, it is not a coincidence that the Municipality of Karposh received the Philanthropy Award - 2012 from the civic organization “Centre for Institutional Development” – CID. According to its research and analysis, this independent organization decided to give recognition to the Municipality for its contribution to creating a positive environment and for development of philanthropy at a local level. With that, the Municipality of Karposh became the first public institution of the local government in the Republic of Macedonia that received an award of this kind. The Municipality of Karposh earned this eminent prize by its special contribution to the management and the development of philanthropy.

The purpose of this public award and the epithet “philanthropists of the year” that the Municipality of Karposh was awarded with is to recognize the good practices of responsible action and to recognize this institution for its contribution toward revival and development of the values of solidarity, humanity and social responsibility. The awards for philanthropy and social responsibility are funded by the European Union through the programme for strengthening the civil society within the SIGN project.

## Abstract

In a medical sense, the environment is reflected of the aggregate of external conditions and influences that affect life and development of the organism. The mechanisms by which the environment influences human health are:

- Physical: excessive heat, cold, noise, radiation etc.
- Chemical: Drugs, acids, alkali, heavy metals, poisons and certain enzymes.
- Biological: disease – caused by infective agents, including alimentary poisonings.
- Psychosocial environment: families and households with certain socioeconomic status, social work and social support, settlements and communities, formal institutions and public policy.

Consultation with experts from multiple fields is needed in order to cover all these aspects. Health protection and social status improvement are complex processes that require multidisciplinary approach. Hereupon the complexity in planning and realization of annual programme plans regarding health and social protection of citizens realized at a local level by the Municipality of Karposh. Through the annual programme activities, the local self-government plans and promotes healthy generations that will acquire healthy eating habits and creates, i.e. provides normal psychosocial development throughout their lives.

In order to contribute in this area, the Municipality of Karposh established the Department for Child, Social and Health Care. The way of work and the activities of this Department are prevention, monitoring field conditions for each issue and timely resolution of problems in accordance with the competences of the local self-government and the legislative of the Republic of Macedonia. Of particular importance is the cooperation of the Municipality with other state institutions, the non-governmental sector and the international organizations through which it exchanges knowledge and experiences.

From that aspect, the Municipality of Karposh creates programme activities regarding health and social policy of children, equally including children from persons/families at social risk. A number of activities aimed at the non-institutional forms of social protection of the vulnerable groups affected by the effects of poverty and social exclusion and activities for promotion of education are realized.

The activities aimed at these target groups include all children from the earliest age, and in some urban communities where the Roma or Albanian population is dominant, special attention is paid to social inclusion and

preventive health care of children of these ethnicities.

The public awareness of health care of the population is being raised from every aspect through professional workshops, announcements, professional presentations and trainings and other forms of education.

These activities are usually conducted by social and health workers and pedagogists from the Department for Child, Social and Health Protection and the NGO sector, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and international educational centres such as the “Montessori” Centre.

The Municipality of Karposh does not forget its “third age” citizens. Through cultural and entertaining programmes, the youngest assemble and entertain the guardians of retirement homes, “Humane patrols” active on field are organized that help in the daily life of fragile, old and ill persons that are unable to leave their homes.

Through its programme activities, the Department for Child, Social and Health Care in the Municipality of Karposh encompasses all groups of citizens on the territory of the local self-government, regardless of their sex, gender, age or ethnicity.

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