



from increased voice to the improved



HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Did you know that Roma women, socially vulnerable citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, do not have an equal access to antenatal services?

Even 50% of them give birth without knowing their RH factor. They mostly receive three examinations during their pregnancy, although the Ministry of Health states that, according to the antenatal protocols, they should have at least ten if they are giving birth for the first time, or seven if they had given birth before. These are the devastating results which the CSO National Roma Centrum (NRC) from Kumanovo, obtained in 2011 from Roma mothers from Kumanovo, Kochani, Shtip, Kriva Palanka and Bitola.

This was the reason for the organization to start with a project for advocating in the institutions. It started its realization in December 2012, and will continue until December 2013.

This is our goal:

With the project "From increased voice to the improved health care access", we want to help the women who have financial difficulties and who are unable to pay for their antenatal healthcare services. The activities of the project are designed to bring the advocacy to an important and effective implementation of the Law for healthcare protection, which guarantees the antenatal and natal services for every woman. At the same time, the activities will help to promote an improved approach to the healthcare protection in the Republic of Macedonia and to raise awareness about the unequal treatment and the lack of approach to the services.

The goal of the project is to promote the unequal access to the services for reproductive health for Roma women. Through the advocating in the Ministry for Health and in the Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia, we want to establish a package for antenatal services which will be free and available to the pregnant women in difficult socio – economic situation.

"It won't be easy. Sometimes we will have to make pressure. Sometimes we will get pressured. We'll have friends, and probably enemies. Still, we will listen to both. All in order to achieve our mission and conception, which is a guaranteed free basic package of antenatal examinations for the poorest", said Sebihana Skenderovska, coordinator of the project.

The NRC won't be alone in the fight for advocating for free antenatal services for women with financial difficulties in the Republic of Macedonia. The organization is working on establishing a network of partner organizations which work on issues related to healthcare. The NRC will closely cooperate with gynecologists, medical and patronage nurses, the doctors of social medicine from the Centers for public health, as well as from the Institutes for public health, who have the most contact with the women.

The project will be implemented in Skopje, Kumanovo, Kochani, Shtip, Bitola and Kriva Palanka.

The National Roma Centrum has a specific program for healthcare, in order to advocate for a successful realization of the right for healthcare for Roma, improvement of the quality for healthcare services for Roma women and raising the awareness for healthcare issues and the rights of Roma women. These strategic goals of the NRC coincide with the strategic goals of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015.

Remember! The flower is our symbol! Help the mothers with financial problems to have healthier babies! "From increased voice to the improved health care access"!

For further information, you can go to www.ednomagazine.com and www.nationalromacentrum.org. And for first-hand information about the project, you can contact the coordinator, Sebihana Skenderovska, on 031/ 427 557, or by e-mail: skenderovska@nationalromacentrum.org.

