



The establishment and development of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) closely followed the transitional changes in Macedonia.

The story of the establishment and development of MCIC is both inspirational and impressive. MCIC was established in 1993, upon domestic initiatives with support from the Dutch Interchurch Aid (DIA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The establishment came in response to the problems arising from Yugoslavia's break-up, heralding a sign of solidarity in the efforts for peaceful resolution of the problems, fostering of good neighborly relations and cooperation among all people living in Macedonia and promotion of peaceful and fair solutions for the existing differences in the region, in a hope that this is possible.

MCIC has grown into independent, civil, not-for-profit organization, ready to face the challenges and to create models or alternatives for problem resolution. The results achieved in the past fifteen years are considered as successful. This success has been already recognized with numerous acknowledgements. MCIC is a role model in Macedonia and Eastern Europe.

Since its establishment, MCIC has implemented more than 1,300 projects, as part of 60 programs, amounting to over 45 million euro, in the following sectors: water supply and sanitation, rural development, health and education, employment and civil society, democratization, trust, immediate aid and activities on Balkans.

MCIC has supported the development of rural communities, by strengthening their capacity for resolving their own problems. As a result now 250 villages have access to drinking water. Karbinci, Dolneni, Staro Nagoricani, Saraj and others are leaders among the rural

municipalities, thanks to the focused and yearlong support by MCIC.

Through the activities in the health and education sector, the focus was placed on capacity building and inclusion of marginalized groups (women, Roma, people with special needs) in the mainstreams. The greatest achievement is the establishment of a model for improving the education of young Roma. The development of these programs has evolved in treating the issues of marginalization and discrimination, also on the highest level in the legislation and the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, through the lobby groups such as the Macedonian Women Lobby, IPPLG for people with special groups and the Roma lobby group.

After the initial experience with the loan-based development, in 1998 MCIC has established the Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation (MEDF), focused on development of small enterprises, by providing access to financial and non-financial services. So far, MEDF has supported over 3,500 entrepreneurs by providing loans, but MEDF has also a wide range of non-financial services for the users.

During the conflicts in Kosovo (1999) and Macedonia (2001), MCIC has taken the role of “breaking the ice and filling the gap” (Mokoro, 2002) and mobilized the civil society in providing humanitarian response in the crisis. This period has directed MCIC to post-conflict activities and confidence building as well as activities outside of Macedonia. MCIC started direct activities in confidence building among the different communities and groups (ethnic and religious communities, media, former combatants etc.). With the activities in Kosovo since 1999, MCIC showed “uniqueness of its own positive example for possible cooperation among people from different ethnic and religious background in the Balkan context” (ACT, 2002). The regional cooperation peaked with the establishment of the Balkan Civil Society Development Network.

The basis of all MCIC activities is development of civil society and active citizenship. MCIC started with capacity building of the activists (over 2,000 people trained) and organizations (support to over 200), by supporting the development of strategic organization, surveys and support for the institutional development of civil society. MCIC contributed for development of new legal frameworks for civil society, as well as the adoption of the Strategy of the Government for cooperation with the civil society sector 2007 – 2011. This activity has culminated with the NGO Fair and the establishment of the Civic Platform of Macedonia in 2004.

MCIC is a member of UN ECOSOC, ACT and CIVICUS, as well as the above mentioned

networks and platforms.

MCIC is recognized through the slogans that identified the activities from the initial “Help for Self-Help” through “Whole is when there is all”, “However” and “Don’t you FYROM me” to the “I live here” and “One next to Another”.

From the time when “the young organization MCIC played a pioneering role in the fast changing Macedonian society” and “MCIC should play the role of facilitator” (MDF, 1997) through “MCIC, directly and indirectly is having positive influence on individual, communal and societal level by developing role models and models that affect the other actors in the society” (FAKT, 2000), MCIC has become one of the leading civil society organizations in Macedonia and the Balkans.

MCIC’s success is based on values. MCIC is unique platform of dialogue and cooperation of different interest groups in Macedonia, which find their own space in MCIC. MCIC is a place “of values, such as tolerance, difference, voluntary action, cooperation and peace” (INTRAC, 2002).

MCIC has won the US and EU Award for Civil Society and Democracy in 1998, Mother Theresa Award in 2004 and many municipal and local recognitions.