



Place to grow:
Child-friendly municipalities

Final conference: “Growing together: achievements, experiences and future steps

Within the framework of the project “Place to Grow: Child-friendly municipalities”, the Family and Child Care Center – KMOP Skopje, and the First Children’s Embassy in the World – Megjashi held the final conference where key results of the project were highlighted, and experiences, challenges and learned lessons were shared. Ideas and visions on how to ensure sustainability of the achieved results were also discussed.

The conference was held on the 25th of June 2025 in Europe House – Skopje with a diverse group of attendees – children, youth and representatives of the units of local self-government, civil society organizations, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools from Vinica, Debar, Gostivar, Veles and Kisela Voda. Amongst present were Ms. Vesna Boshevska-Petrushevska from the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as a representative from the Delegation of the European Union in North Macedonia, Ms. Marzia Pallotta.



At the event, children took on the role of hosts – Jana Pljokova, third year student at the Gymnasium “Kocho Racin” in Veles, and moderators – Jovana Cimbalevikj, graduating student at the High School “Vasil Antevski Dren”.

The conference covered:

- Presentation of the project’s results, including video testimonials of children and local partners, as well as snippets from the podcasts dedicated to children’s participation;
- Panel discussion on the topic of “Local action for children’s rights: Why is it important?” at which the children and representatives of the municipalities spoke about their impressions, noticeable results as well as challenges.



With an introduction by Ms. Marzia Pallotta (Delegation of the European Union), the panel discussion invited speakers: Kristijan Martinov, student at the Gymnasium “Kocho Racin” in Veles, Matej Ristov, student at the primary school “Krumе Kеpeski” in Kisela Voda, Ana Arsova, graduating student from the high school “Vancho Prkje” in Vinica, and Edina Miftaroska, a student in the “28th November” high school in Debar.

Panelists from the partner municipalities included Verica Todorovska Daceva, head of the Department of public affairs in the Municipality of Veles, Vesna Blazhevсka, social worker at JDG “Veseli Cvetovi” in Kisela Voda, Aleksandar Jovanov, member of the Municipal Council in Vinica, and Dzevit Miftaroski, professor of Macedonian language in the “28th November” High School in Debar. Additionally, Vesna Boshevсka-Petrushevсka from the Office of the Ombudsman addressed the panel.



A hybrid exhibition "Gallery from a Children's Perspective", through drawings, messages and photographs, told the children's vision of their municipalities.

Presentation of the Monitoring Platform - a tool for monitoring project results, with a discussion on its integration into regular local planning.

Short speeches by attendees about inspirational moments and personal messages related to the project and children's rights.

An open space for discussion and networking that allowed participants to connect their perspectives, share specific challenges they face in practice, and identify potential for joint action.



Final thoughts and recommendations

The conclusion from the conference is clear: integration of children’s participation in local processes is not just a requirement, but also a crucial factor for an improved, more democratic and sustainable society.

The event confirmed the need for regular meetings with children and youth in which their voices will be valued in the crucial phases of building municipalities dedicated to children: planning, monitoring, and evaluation

Encouraging children's creativity, empathy, and vision for the community should remain a pillar of any local development strategy.



The project is funded by the European Union

