15 years KONEKT

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023



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15 Years Konekt

When we founded Konekt in 2008, many were skeptical that an organization dealing with these topics could survive. "Does anyone donate here? Corporate social responsibility?! That's an impossible mission here!" These were the most common reactions when I explained what our organization does. But then, as now, we were driven by the vision to build a society of active citizens investing in positive changes and companies leading ethical businesses that care for the environment and people. We started because that piece of the puzzle was missing: a bridge between citizens, companies, and civil organizations. We wanted to be the ones to make donating daily joy, help companies transform their business, and increase local resources available to civil organizations.

We are running a marathon; our results are not immediately visible, and the effects are often seen after decades of work because we are building a new culture, values, and shaping the foundations of civil society. After fifteen years of dedication and perseverance, I can state that we have planted the seed and seen the first sprouts of change. In the next fifteen years, we plan to unlock the full philanthropic potential here and show the power of companies to drive sustainable development. In North Macedonia and globally, we will continue our efforts for a favorable and safe environment for civil society as a foundation for philanthropy and sustainable business.

Our successes were not achieved alone. Like in any community, none of this would have been possible without the dedicated team of Konekt employees, our project partners, donors, organizations, and companies we collaborate with, dedicated professionals from institutions, local organizations, and social enterprises whose dedication, despite enormous challenges, inspires us to continue.

Join us in our next endeavors!

Nikica Kusinikova

Founder and Executive Director of Konekt

"Over the past decade and a half, Konekt has shown exceptional dedication to developing philanthropy in North Macedonia. The positive impact is felt throughout society, from students in rural areas to civil organizations and business enterprises. The driving force behind all these diverse activities is the staff members who believe in the organization's mission and inspire with their dedication. I congratulate the team on 15 years of successful work and wish many more successes for Konekt." – Marija Todorova, Founder of Konekt

"When we founded Konekt, discussions about philanthropy and responsible businesses were rare, as were those who understood these topics. After 15 years, the organization is a source of knowledge for citizens and families who want to donate, institutions, and businesses that care about the sustainable development of their Macedonian environment. We are proud to have been pioneers in creating this trend. Today, these are not just conversations but also concrete help and activities by individuals and businesses increasingly taking responsibility to help those around them." – Goran Buldioski, Founder of Konekt

"15 years is no small feat! When we gathered in 2008 and founded Konekt, I had no doubt that Konekt, led by Nikica Kusinikova and the team of collaborators over the years, would be a successful organization. Konekt has done more; it has raised awareness about the need for responsible giving, provided companies with tools for more responsible actions, and worked with associations to help their communities. It always does so with creativity, differently, and usefully. Congratulations on the anniversary and thank you for everything you do!" – Kristina Hadji-Vasileva, Founder of Konekt

"At Konekt, understanding the needs, the vision for possibilities, and the courage to step into new and unexplored fields important for the development of civil society come together. As a result, they capture global trends and create innovative models for the development of philanthropy that are implemented in the country and promoted abroad. All of this is thanks to a selfless team that constantly works with understanding, professionalism, artistry, and heart." – Katerina Hadji Miceva-Evans, Founder of Konekt



For Our Goran

In this jubilee year, we unexpectedly parted ways with our dear colleague, ally, and friend Goran Lazarevski. Goran was our chairman of the board, author of numerous papers and publications, and collaborator on various activities. Whenever we needed support, help, advice, or direction, he was the first person we called, and he always provided it. We will remember him for his values, wisdom, diligence, humanity, and wonderful humor. We will honor him with Konekt's activities in his memory and with full hearts of gratitude that he remains a part of our lives and professional growth.

Key Achievements and Successes in 2023

Philanthropy

- We prepared a new draft proposal for a law on tax incentives for donations and sponsorships, involving all stakeholders, as part of our support to the Ministry of Justice.
- The Republic of North Macedonia received an improved state rating from the international evaluation for compliance with international financial standards for preventing money laundering and financing terrorism related to non-profit organizations. Our experience is globally recognized as part of good state practices.
- We created the first national campaign for philanthropy, "Days for Giving," and established the first donor fund in the country.
- Our activities enabled the donation of financial resources, goods, and services worth 3,087,283 MKD to 32 non-profit organizations worthy of support. We enabled over 881 individual and 68 corporate donors to experience the joy of giving.
- We promoted time donations as well. 333 wonderful volunteers participated in donation activities, contributing labor and skills valued at 211,672 MKD.
- We established leadership structures in 6 municipalities for sustainable development through local philanthropy.

Advancing Corporate Philanthropy and Social Responsibility

- 131 representatives from 101 companies gained new knowledge or received support to strategically apply CSR, ESG, and corporate philanthropy.
- Under the patronage of the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, we revived the Responsible Business Club, supported by 36 companies.
- We enriched our services and support for businesses in CSR and ESG.
- We strengthened our partnership with the chambers of commerce to expand our impact.

Support for Civil Organizations

- The CSO Network for Financial Sustainability now has 121 members.
- 189 representatives from 114 NGOs and informal groups learned how to raise donations, plan appropriately, and maintain a responsible relationship with local donors.
- We particularly supported several newly formed associations outside Skopje with fewer opportunities.
- Trustmark has become a recognized tool for improving and recognizing the work of organizations.

Regional and International Activities

- We advocated regionally and internationally for the protection of civil society. We shared our expertise internationally, and Macedonian examples of how anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing measures can protect non-profit organizations and the right to association became a global example.

Organizational Development and Communications

- We increased the scope and volume of program activities. 30 activities involved more than 600 participants. Our media presence is also growing, with over 103 publications.
- Our team has also grown.

Annual report on Konekt's Work in Strategic Areas

Philanthropy

Building National Infrastructures for Philanthropy

Our citizens and businesses want to donate. We create more opportunities for them to do so thoughtfully, with the strongest possible impact, safely, and quickly. We work on systemic solutions that enable the building of a culture of philanthropy based on trust, accountability, and solidarity. We build infrastructure that will be a bridge connecting donors and civil organizations that improve community life. From better laws to new opportunities to experience the joy of giving, at Konekt, we nurture thoughtful giving that addresses problems and their causes, rather than just alleviating the consequences.

i. Days for Giving and the First Donor Fund

For the first time, we organized a national campaign, "Days of Donations," which lasted more than 45 days. The campaign supported 28 non-profit organizations and 1 informal group to organize their events and involved 50 businesses. A total of 2,417,848 MKD was donated in financial resources, goods, services, and volunteer labor. The goal of the campaign was for citizens to experience the joy and power of giving and to combine donations into the first donor fund in the country. Over 2,200 citizens, organizations, and companies participated in the Days for Giving, creating opportunities for community improvement solutions to be created with local resources. The campaign concluded with a Charity Bazaar, where attendees could acquire interesting holiday products from 12 social enterprises through donations. As part of the campaign, we organized a donor concert with our partners Indigo, reuniting stars from M2 production, including Elena Risteska, Lambe Alabakovski, and other well-known performers. We also organized a donor fashion auction with 19 unique pieces of clothing donated by 12 top local designers.

To support donors, amplify the effects, and ensure the safety and transparency of donations, in 2023 we established the first donor fund, which also included donations from events we organized as part of the campaign. The fund combines donations from citizens and companies and will direct them to civil organizations for initiatives with the potential for long-term impact and contribution to sustainable development. In this way, we demonstrate that there are not only foreign donors, but that every citizen and company in North Macedonia can be a donor. On the other hand, for civil organizations, especially the smaller ones, we will open a new, important source of additional funding to realize their missions.

> The "Days of Donations" campaign is of exceptional importance for our developing society. Development and improvement are strongly tied to compassion and responsibility. That is exactly what the 'Days for Giving' were about. They provided opportunities to put this into action, which is why the campaign had a mass participation like never before. Through various forms, many people met structured giving for the first time, which offered them part of the solutions. We learned that pooling what each person can set aside to share with others is economical, aligns with our traditions, and is philanthropy in action. This campaign succeeded in improving our mentality towards giving." – Ognen Janevski, spokesperson for the 'Days for Giving' campaign.

ii. Giving Circle

Last year, the fourth Giving Circle was held at Brick Bar, where a hundred citizens, encouraged by companies, collectively donated 641,000 MKD in one hour. The total support in finances, goods, and volunteering reached a value of 881,107 MKD. This makes this year's circle the most successful one yet!

"There is a special energy in collective giving. It creates a community of people who share values and decide to do something themselves, instead of waiting for solutions to come from outside. The Giving Circle nurtures our hope in the goodness of people. For 15 years, Konekt has been a link connecting donors with organizations that drive a better society." – Nikica Kusinikova, Executive Director of Konekt

Under the motto "Join, Plan, Donate!" Konekt's Giving Circle has already become a community of individual philanthropists who know that thoughtful and smart giving can contribute to fundamentally solving problems.

At the event, donations were made to three civil organizations with social entrepreneurship initiatives, knowing that they are an ideal model for inclusive and sustainable development. The organizations presented their business models, which enable a better life for people with disabilities and employ individuals who find it very difficult to get jobs.

Konekt ensures that donors are confident their donations are used in the best possible way. Here are the achievements by the end of 2023:

Association for the Affirmation of the Rights of People with Disabilities "Equality" from Skopje – They began designing the first prototype collection of adaptive, modern clothing suitable for people with disabilities, reducing the need for assistance from another person when dressing. "Equality" worked with users with disabilities to test materials and different fastening methods, etc. They networked internationally, and we eagerly await the completion of the collection.







"Ekovita" from Negotino – With decades of experience and expertise, they created a special, ecological substrate for easy mushroom cultivation. These mushrooms can be grown at home or in an old garage. In times of economic crisis, this is an excellent opportunity for those facing hunger or unemployment. Donations from the Giving Circle enabled 25 unemployed young people to learn how to grow mushrooms and earn a living. They also created a new product: medicinal mushroom pasta, which sold excellently at our charity bazaar. The donations from the circle raised interest from other donors, and now "Ekovita" uses solar energy for production.





"Donations from the Giving circle helped small group homes to survive and opened opportunities for people with disabilities to socialize and integrate into the community where they live." – Daliborka Zlateva, Director of ZLCPDP Veles

"Association for People with Cerebral Palsy and Other Disabilities" from Veles – Donations from the Giving Circle supported the 24-hour care and supported living service for people with disabilities in four small group homes in Veles and Gradsko, which are also maintained through social entrepreneurship. They engaged in activities for training and inclusion in the production of creams, oils, and teas. They learned to sort organic calendula and lavender, pack, and label. When urgent medical help was needed, the association took them to Skopje, and they celebrated birthdays together in the yard. We donated for the inclusion and dignified life of 20 people with disabilities.







iii. New Platforms for Civic Engagement and Easy Online Donation

We strive to be the key link connecting donors with the civil sector in digital space as well. By using new technologies, we enable everyone to be part of positive social changes, even when they are relaxing at home on the couch after a hard day's work or while having coffee with friends. We are moving civic activism, connecting different stakeholders to create better communities, and philanthropy online. In 2023, we dedicatedly worked on designing and programming a new state-of-the-art digital platform for crowdfunding, "Op-op," which will provide a digital space for connecting donors and recipients, as well as "Community" – the digital platform for civic engagement and communication with municipalities. We eagerly await the launch of these sophisticated online systems for wide use at the national and local levels, so everyone can donate and make an impact in their community with just a few clicks.

Building local infrastructure for philanthropy

"The well-being of the community is the well-being of each individual in it." In 2023, Konekt began to transfer good practices to the local level to create sustainable systems that encourage and include all its stakeholders to collectively drive the development and well-being of the community.

Konekt established cooperation with six municipalities (Gevgelija, Gostivar, Ohrid, Strumica, Chair, and Shuto Orizari), which signed Memorandums of Understanding and formally expressed their commitment and partnership to actively contribute to engaging citizens and pooling resources for sustainable local development. We are dedicated to creating tools that local stakeholders can use to jointly identify and offer solutions to improve community life through: "Community" – a platform for civic participation; access to every household through the support and network of EVN, local action hubs, and leadership groups.

In 2023, we became partners with six local civic organizations that will act as local action hubs in the six municipalities. They will encourage citizens to actively participate, propose ideas to solve challenges in their communities, and connect with other NGOs, companies, and local institutions to pool resources. In this way, through cross-sector partnerships and pooling available local resources, citizens themselves will become drivers of local development. Several of the local action hubs were part of the national "Days of Donations" campaign and acted as catalysts for local philanthropy.

In 2023, we conducted a self-sustainability capacity assessment to evaluate the potential for self-sustainability in municipalities in terms of the availability of local resources for local development and community development. The report found that although most of the covered municipalities have resources, cross-sector cooperation is generally at a very low level, especially in terms of involving the business community. The analysis confirmed the relevance of Konekt's activities at the local level and will serve municipalities and local stakeholders as a resource for strengthening local leadership and resources.

Advancing Corporate Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility

We continuously collaborate and work with enterprises to recognize the impacts of their business on society and the environment and to build responsible business strategies and practices. We help them reduce negative impacts and become drivers of positive, sustainable changes in society. Through specialized solutions or joint program platforms, we assist companies in identifying specific goals, strategies, and programs for corporate philanthropy, social responsibility, and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance).

i. Renewed Club of Responsible Business

We renewed the Club of Responsible Businesses with an event under the patronage of the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski. The club unites businesses with proven experience in socially responsible practices with like-minded individuals dedicated to making a positive impact on society and the environment. The Club of Responsible Businesses has several key components:

Collective Impact – By joining forces, businesses in the club can amplify their influence and drive significant social change. Together, we can tackle global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and resource depletion.

Networking and Collaboration – The club offers a unique opportunity for members to network and collaborate with other responsible businesses, fostering innovation and cross-industry partnerships.

Knowledge Sharing – Access to a wealth of resources, best practices, and expert insights to help businesses integrate sustainability into their operations and corporate culture.



Event for the Renewel of Club of Responsible Businesses

Commitments to support the club and build responsible business were made by 36 business leaders, dedicating themselves to participating in solutions to local challenges, leadership, and continuous investment in the development and future of the country on its path to EU membership.

"Unfortunately, what is a long-standing tradition in developed countries is still in its early stages of development here, and therefore, all possible support for these processes is truly needed. I believe that the goals of the USAID project 'Partnerships for Donations,' which are to increase the level and scope of donations by corporations and individuals in the country and at the same time reduce dependence on foreign donors, along with the intention to encourage humane individuals and businesses to allocate at least 2% of their annual turnover for community development, are absolutely achievable. Of course, achieving any goal requires faith, dedication, and mutual cooperation, and together we can make a difference," emphasized President Pendarovski in his address.

"It is very important for all citizens – whether they are public officials, business owners, or community members – to contribute to the future of a country by investing in its development. The US government is also investing in the future of this country, and we are excited to collaborate with the private sector through the Club of Responsible Businesses, which is a collection of advanced and socially responsible business leaders," said Jerry Daible, USAID Director in the country.

ii. Strategic Philanthropy



Training for strategic philanthropy in partnership with American Chamber of Commerce

We serve as a source of knowledge and build the capacities of companies. By doing so, we help their corporate philanthropy, social responsibility, ESG, and other sustainable practices become more effective and aligned with business operations. This year, we developed a new training program for strategic corporate philanthropy. The training enables companies to understand the difference between strategic philanthropy and one-time, humanitarian donations.

The participatory approach of the trainings, in collaboration with our partners from the chambers, has enhanced the participants' ability to define a strategic approach for their business and to selectively choose the recipients of their support instead of reacting ad hoc to requests.

iii. Business and Human Rights

We continued to work on building the capacities of companies and educating them about the crucial role they play in protecting and promoting human rights. We held a series of training courses, enabling 37 company representatives to improve their knowledge, and provided tailored mentoring support to 6 companies with over 698 employees. Through mentoring, they had the

> "The training helped me understand how to protect my personal data and how to safeguard the personal data of employees [...] it helped me realize how to improve and change some practices in the company and how to implement them." – Participant in the business and human rights and personal data protection training.

opportunity to enhance their privacy policies and practices and further align with the Personal Data Protection Law.



The cross-sector working group on business and human rights continued its activities and held four meetings where indicators for assessing the impact on human rights were created with the support of the European Center for Non-Profit Law. These indicators assist both institutions and IT companies. For institutions, they serve as a safeguard mechanism when conducting public procurements of IT technologies, ensuring that the systems they acquire do not negatively impact human rights, civic space, and philanthropy. IT companies, on the other hand, use the indicators to conduct checks during the design of their products. These indicators are innovative and can be adopted and used by institutions and private companies at both national and regional levels.





cross-sector working group meetings

Human rights and freedoms can be either threatened or advanced by artificial intelligence and new technologies. There is limited knowledge about this topic in our region, so in partnership with the European Center for Non-Profit Law from The Hague, we organized three workshops on this subject. As a result, 78 participants from state institutions, businesses, the civil sector, academia, trade unions, and the media now understand the topic and are aware of the key benefits and risks of technologies that we are all curious about.

"I understood the key technical terms related to artificial intelligence and can identify the impacts of these systems on human rights." – Participant from the first workshop on artificial intelligence.



Get connected!

Changes are made together. Companies can support civil society organizations and their noble work in various forms. Such partnerships are rare, so we continue with our service for connecting businesses and NGOs, "Connect!". Where we identify potential for collaboration, we work with both parties, facilitate the first meeting, and help identify possible forms of cooperation. We ease the collaboration process and nurture long-term partnerships.

"Another year of true friendships for important changes. The friendship between Shortlist and Konekt began in 2022 when, with their expertise, they connected us with Open the Windows, whom we became godparent supporters of. In 2023, we continued this godparent relationship, confirming Konekt's assessment ability and competence. We hope that in the future we will have the opportunity to make even more donations and collaborations to contribute to significant changes together with Konekt." – Pepica Mancheva, Senior Marketing Manager.

Sustainable Developments Goals (SDG)



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a catalyst for building partnerships and joint activities among NGOs, the business sector, and institutions. They provide a platform for creating cross-sector partnerships to achieve changes that positively impact development and communities. We continuously work on Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. We have connected various sectors to work together for the benefit of their communities, encouraging them to take the desired changes into their own hands and achieve them. All our initiatives are linked to the SDGs to actively contribute to a better and more sustainable world. Read more at www.sdgs.mk.

In recent years, through our initiatives for cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development, together with companies, the civil sector, and institutions, we have mapped out priority areas for our country where we can jointly achieve significant changes. These priority SDGs have been reflected in the priority areas of the first donor fund in our country in the following areas:









Advocacy

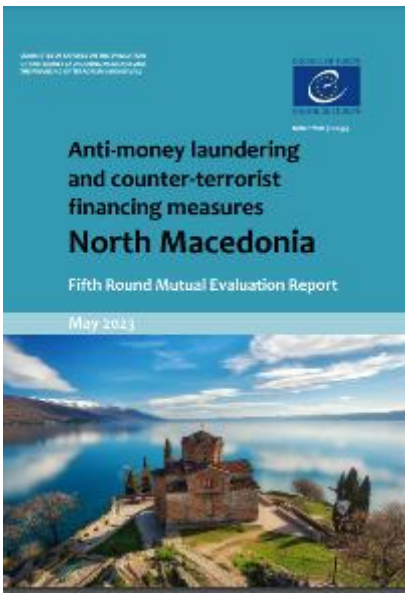
National Advocacy for better laws and policies

We continued to actively advocate and offer our expertise to ensure that our laws and policies encourage more donations and socially responsible practices. Through collaboration and dialogue, we arrive at better solutions.

We analyzed a series of laws with our partners, the European Center for Non-Profit Law from The Hague, and compared them with the best practices for philanthropy across Europe. This led us to create a roadmap with changes we advocate to increase donation levels in our country. This year, we again focused on the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities, whose amendments can make a significant change in the culture of philanthropy.

As a result of our dedication and expertise, and with the involvement of all key stakeholders, the working group formed by the Ministry of Justice drafted a new proposed law that simplifies the procedure and removes identified barriers to using tax incentives. We expect the new law to be adopted in 2024.

In 2023, we reaped the rewards of our dedicated work and support in finalizing the MONEYVAL Mutual Evaluation Report. As an official outcome, North Macedonia received an improved national rating and international recognition for compliance with FATF standards related to non-profit organizations (Recommendation 8 and Immediate Outcome 10). This increased our country's rating from "partially compliant" to "largely compliant." The full report is available here.



For civil society organizations, this is particularly important as it confirmed the assessment that many NGOs in our country are not at risk of being misused for terrorist financing. This paves the way for reducing the legal and administrative barriers that organizations face because of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations.

This year, we continued to advocate for the adoption of a beneficial Social Entrepreneurship Law, monitored tax regulations for non-profit organizations, and promoted volunteerism. These regulations are crucial for citizen associations to develop and become self-sustaining organizations.

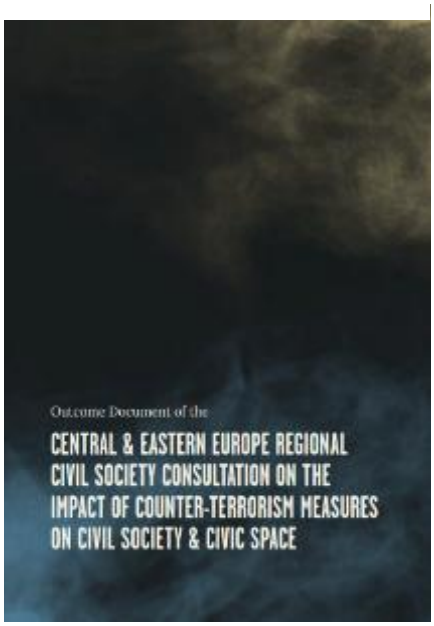
We also focused on acts related to social responsibility, participating in and contributing to the revival of the national coordinating body for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Additionally, we advocated for the adoption of a national action plan for business and human rights.

We Advocate regionally and act internationally



Participants on Global studies consultations

Due to our significant expertise in the field of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, we continued to actively advocate at regional and international levels through the Global Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Human Rights and Counterterrorism and the Global NPO Coalition on FATF[1]. Together with colleagues, we actively participated and advocated at key international events and institutions at the highest level, including the UN Security Council Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the EU, etc., to change international standards and policies for counter-terrorism (and counter-terrorism financing) that have negative consequences for civil society organizations and activists (globally and nationally) and to ensure they are not misused to restrict civil association and action. As a result of our advocacy, in 2023, FATF revised Recommendation 8 to explicitly require a risk-based approach in the treatment of non-profit organizations.



Our positive experiences from cross-sector collaboration with the Financial Intelligence Unit, financial institutions, and NGOs, as well as our achievements in this area, were shared in the revision of the FATF Best Practices Paper. Our recommendations were fully incorporated, and through this official document, they serve as a positive example and practice at the international level.

For the first independent Global Study on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Civil Society and Civic Space, together with the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, we organized regional consultations for Central and Eastern Europe. The consultations were held in Skopje, where 27 representatives/activists from civil society organizations from 13 countries in Central and Eastern Europe shared their experiences on the impact of counter-terrorism policies and measures on their civil society and civic space. As a result of the consultations, we developed a document that was used to directly contribute to the "UN Global Study on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Civil Society and Civic Space." It was launched on June 21, 2023, in New York during Counter-Terrorism Week, and as part of the conference events, the Executive Director of Konekt had the opportunity to directly present the results of the regional consultations, opening doors for further collaboration at the global level.

[1] FATF, Best Practices Paper on Combating the Abuse of Non-Profit Organisations (Recommendation 8), available at: https://www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/guidance/BPP-Combating-TF-Abuse-NPO-R8.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf





ISSUE IN FOCUS

Terrorist Financing Risk Assessments

In 2020, the North Macedonian civil society organization Konekt reached out to the Financial Intelligence Unit to update the national terrorist financing risk assessment before a FATF evaluation. The joint government-civil society terrorist financing risk assessment that followed downgraded civil society organizations from "high risk"—finding instead a subset (13 per cent) of civil society organizations at "low-medium" risk for terrorist financing, with the remainder "low risk."

Source: European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) Learning Center, Risk Rating for CSOs Reduced in Collaborative Process for Risk Assessment in North Macedonia (2020); see also Konekt & ECNL, Handbook for Non-Profit Organiza-

In the past year, together with civil society organizations from the EU, we advocated for AI regulation that ensures the protection of human rights. Therefore, along with 150 organizations, we signed the statement: "EU Trilogues: The AI Act must protect people's rights," calling on EU institutions to ensure that the development and use of artificial intelligence are responsible, publicly transparent, and that citizens have the opportunity to report potential harms and abuses..

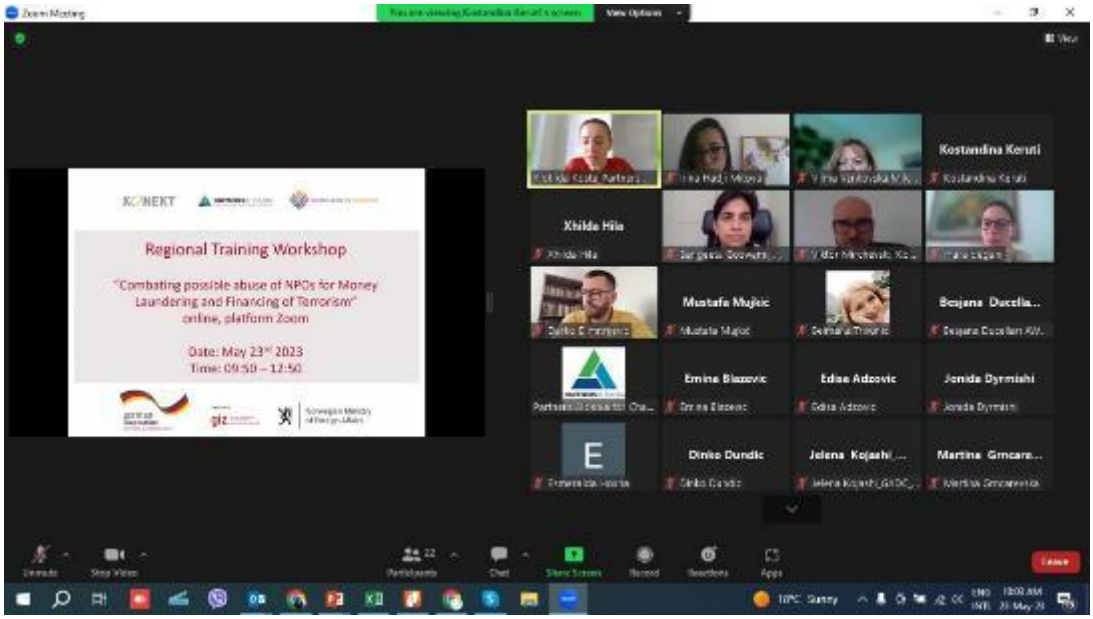
Support to Civil Societe Organizations

i. Network for Financial Sustainability of CSO's

The Network for Financial Sustainability of NGOs has seen significant growth over the past year and celebrated its 5th anniversary. By the end of 2023, the network had 121 members. Additionally, we worked together to mobilize membership in key processes for the civil sector. Network members were actively involved in the working group for the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities and in the preparation of the Draft Law on Social Entrepreneurship. **Non-Profit Organizations and Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing**

ii. Non – Profit Organizations Anti – Money Laundering and Counter - Terrorism Financing

As a leading organization with key expertise and knowledge on issues related to anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, especially from the perspective of prevention and protection of non-profit organizations (NPOs), in 2023, we worked on strengthening capacities at the regional level. In collaboration with Human Security Collective and Partners Albania, we conducted online trainings that increased the knowledge of 41 participants from 36 NGOs from six Western Balkan countries. Through practical exercises and examples, we highlighted how these issues are relevant to their NGOs and how they can prevent and protect themselves from potential abuses. Notably, 68% of these participants attended a training on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing for the first time, contributing to a more conscious approach and understanding of this issue.



Regional on -line training for NPO

Additionally, civil society organizations from the Western Balkans approached us to adapt the "NGO Handbook – Preventing the Exposure of the Non-Profit Sector to Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing" to their national context. This demonstrates that our educational program has a broader impact and can be tailored to other national/international contexts. Due to increased interest, we reissued the Macedonian and English versions of the handbook this year. Learn more about this topic.



iii. Training and Mentorship for mobilizing local resources

"The combination of training and mentoring by Konekt is different from all previous education we have participated in. Through Konekt, we learned for the first time how to connect with businesses." – Anonymous respondent in the evaluation questionnaire.

Civil society organizations are the natural partners of citizens and businesses in achieving changes in the communities they operate in. Our research and analyses have shown that philanthropic potential is fully activated when there are proactive and strong organizations on the other side that responsibly collect donations and put them to use for the benefit of the communities. Therefore, we also work directly with civil society organizations to improve their approaches to local donors.



Learning to request donations through a statement

This year, we trained 57 representatives from 31 NGOs on how to more easily obtain donations from businesses and citizens. We updated the capacity-building program to meet the needs of our participants. We included guest lecturers from businesses, the media, and NGOs who shared their valuable experiences firsthand. Through practical examples, simulations, and the opportunity to put themselves in others' shoes, participants left the three-day training with a ready-made professional plan to more successfully seek donations and support for their noble work.

After the training, we mentored organizations that diligently sought support from businesses and citizens according to their needs. As a result of this process, they received donations and support worth 330,186 MKD. We celebrated together when they organized special events for the first time to gain new supporters or continued with their traditional fundraising tools.

"We have a very good collaboration with the employees of 'Konekt,' who previously conducted educational and motivational workshops for us and encouraged us to become active by creating projects that are considered very valuable for diabetics. They encouraged us to organize donor events, which made us recognizable, and, thanks to that, we received donations and opportunities for further cooperation with companies from Bitola. Thank you for providing us with a high level of recognition and relevance, which means a lot to us." – Dušanka Atanasovska, President of the Association of Diabetics of the Municipality of Bitola.

iv. Trust Mark

The Trust Mark is becoming a recognized mechanism for self-regulation in the civil sector. Through a transparent process and thorough verification, the Trust Mark indicates recommended organizations worthy of donor support. Organizations with the Trust Mark operate at high standards and are dedicated to their mission and values. They are transparent and accountable, and their management is responsible, ensuring legality and safe financial management.

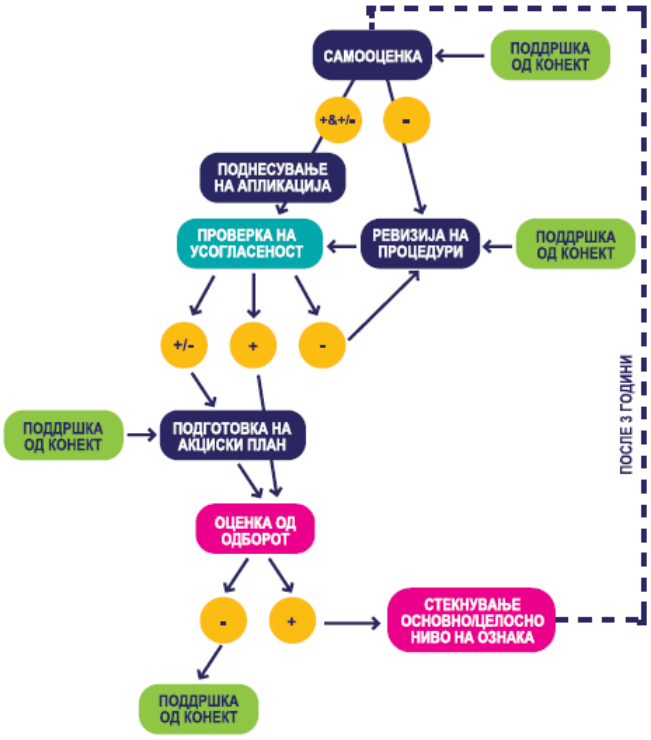
The Trust Mark is open to all organizations. To meet the standards, we mentor civil society organizations, addressing their individual needs. This helps them develop policies, procedures, and grow organizationally towards full certification. We organized a one-day workshop to introduce the Trust Mark to new organizations, explaining the importance of the principles and all the details. The Trust Mark is awarded by an independent mixed expert board that conducts a thorough review. The members have diverse expertise, and their insights promote organizational growth

"The workshop not only helped us understand the Trust Mark but also provided us with a roadmap for building strong civil society organizations." – Slavica Taseva, President of the Association of Career Development Advisors – CDA.

for NGOs. To prepare for increased interest in certification, we expanded the board this year to serve more organizations.

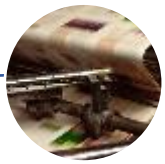
We updated the "Guide to Obtaining the Trust Mark" with new standard changes, more recommendations, and visual aids useful to organizations. Organizations that receive the Trust Mark this year also get a certificate they can use for their promotion. After the pilot phase, in 2023, six civil society organizations received the Trust Mark. The Trust Mark is gaining increasing interest from institutions, banks, and companies. It is also recognized globally in the "FATF Best Practices Paper on Combating the Abuse of Non-Profit Organizations for Terrorism Financing."



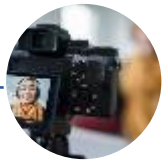


Konekt in the Media





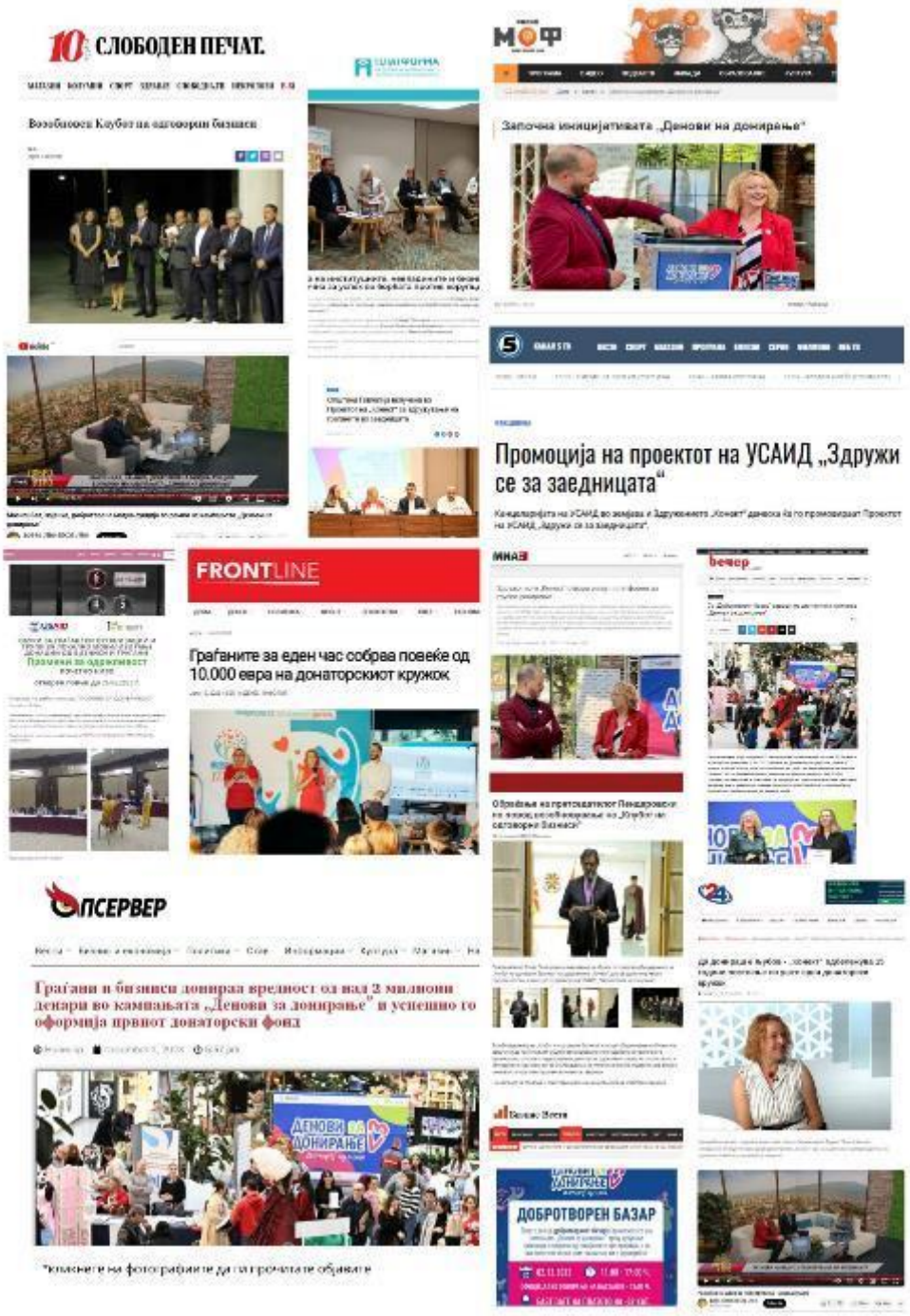
89 publications



9 visits

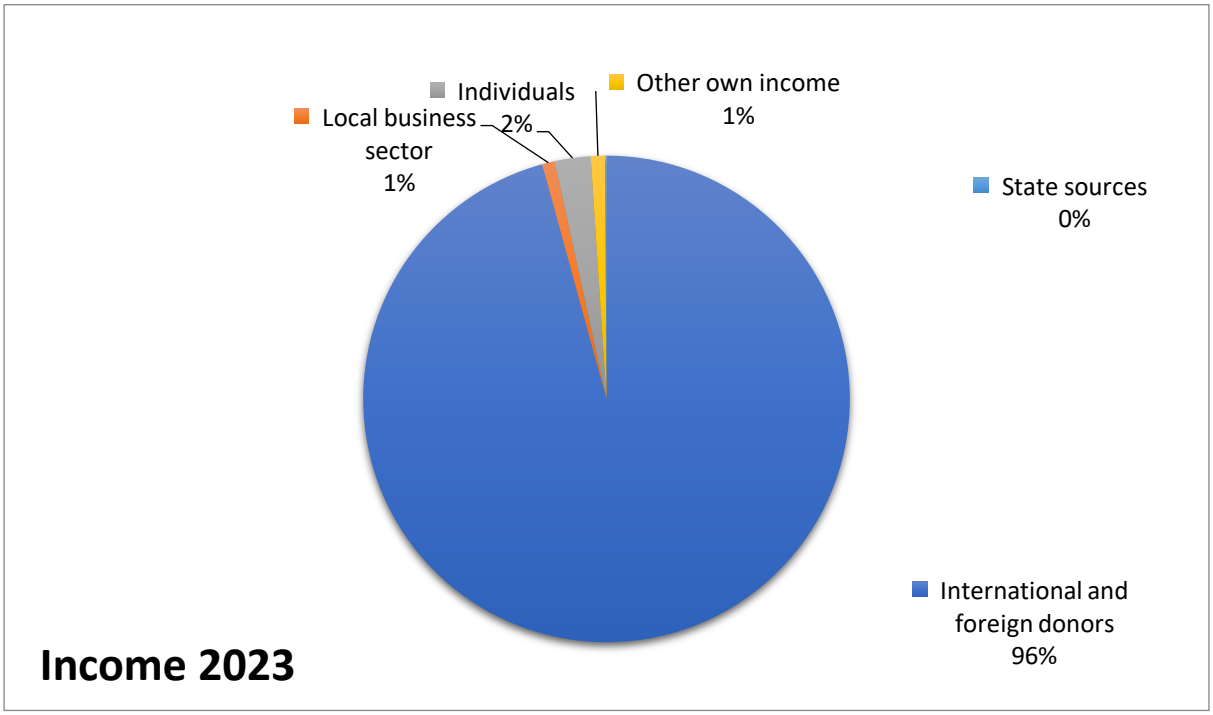


7 articles



Konekt's Finances

In 2023, the total revenue of Konekt amounted to 48,329,650 denars, which represents a significant increase compared to previous years. This is primarily due to higher revenues achieved from philanthropy programs with a significantly increased volume of project activities at both national and local levels. The results of this program investment are reflected in more than double the increase in donations from citizens and companies compared to last year. Although due to increased program costs, the percentage contribution of donations from local sources as well as own revenues is relatively low, these funds provide crucial support for the sustainability of the organization. Own revenues were achieved in a total amount of 88,922.

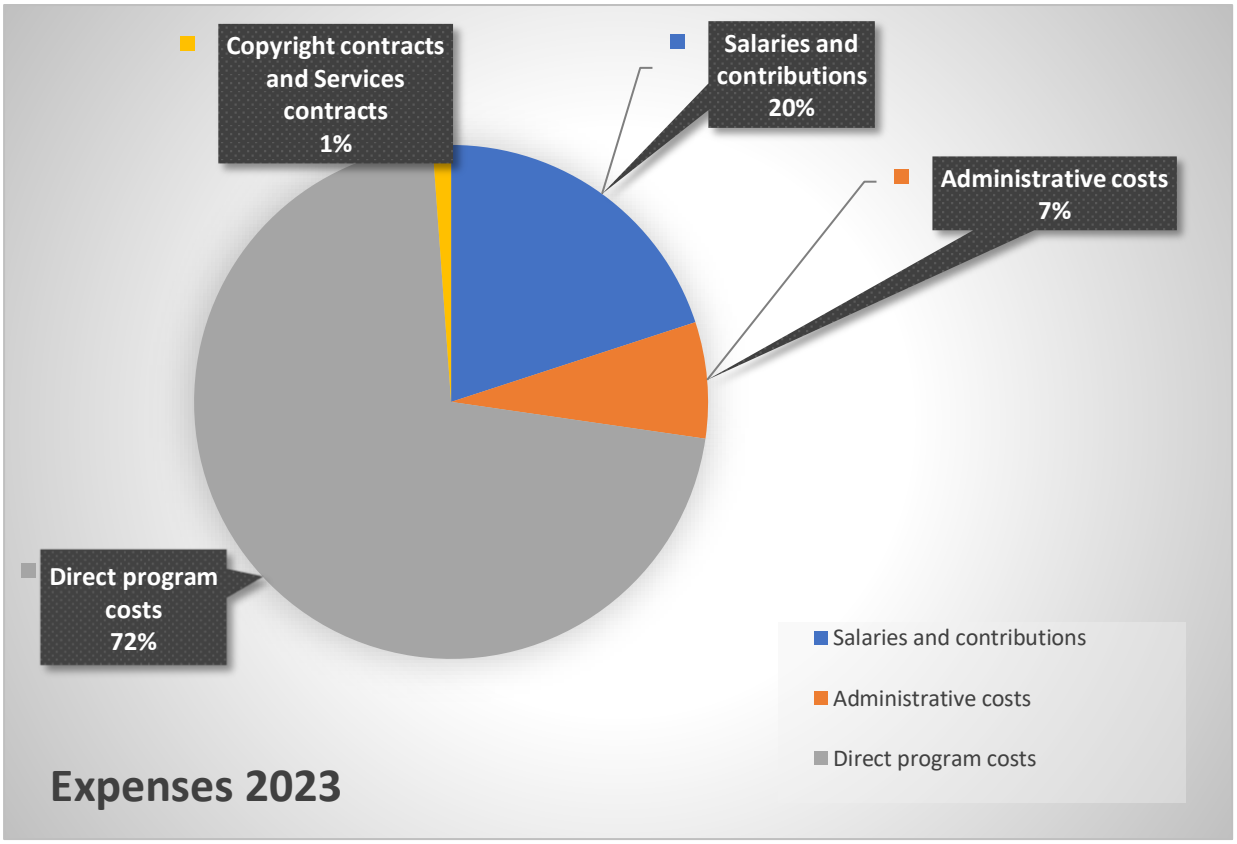


Source of financing	Revenue (MKD)
USAID project "Partnership for Giving" – National Philanthropy	11,340,673.00
USAID project "Get for the Community" – Local Philanthropy	18,160,798.00
EU project through the Metamorphosis Foundation "EcoDialogue towards EU: Driving Environmental Change through Inclusive Policy Advocacy"	819,556.00
SDG's Partnerships - Leave no one behind, Republic of North Macedonia, supported by GIZ	176,737.00
Support and promote effective participation and engagement of non-profit organizations with state institutions around FATF recommendations and their impact on civil society – supported by GIZ Human Security Collective	606,925.00
European Center for Not Profit Law - Increasing international cooperation, financial access and good governance in the processes of preventing money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism	1,206,783.00
Regional consultations and report on the impact of counter-terrorism policies on civil society in Central and Eastern Europe, funded by the United Nations.	1,309,818.00
Donations of individuals	837,472.00
Donations from local businesses	293,000.00

Revenues from donations for civil society organizations	31,570.00
Revenues from own activities	88,922.00
Revenues from interest and positive exchange rate differences	210,083.00
Revenues from reimbursement of travel and overhead costs	34,423.00
Transferred amount from previous year	13,212,890.00
Other revenues	0.00
Total	**48,329,650.00**

In the organization, as of 31.07.2023, there were 6 full-time employees. From 01.08.2023, the team increased by two more full-time employees. In December, the team consisted of 7 employees.

The average monthly gross salary for 2023 for the executive director was 117,509 denars. The ratio between the lowest and highest salary in the organization is 1:1.85, while the ratio between the average and highest salary is 1:1.37.



Our donors

We thank everyone who donated directly to Konekt. Our donors enabled us to follow our mission and achieve successes in 2023. The successes of Konekt are also yours!

USAID North Macedonia

European Union Европска Унија

GIZ - German Society for International Cooperation

European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)

Hristijan Gjeorgievski

EVN Macedonia

Ambrela

Unica Life AD

Sava Pension Company AD

Titan Cement Factory Usje AD

Pharmahem

BKS Company AD

Halk Bank

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Nikola Buleski

Nikola Eftimov

Katerina Tosheva

Lidija Georgieva

Milkbrides - Antonija Guginska

Irina Tosheva

JZJ – Zlatko Jovanovski

Natalija Terzija

Alshar by Silvija Mihajlovska

Rosica Mrshik

Simon Endrovski (Bella)

Tanja Kokev

SKALA - School of Design

Skopje Brewery

Maliqi Foundation

Chateau Sopot

Duna

Lingua Expert

Cafe Bar Che

Tanja Hafner Ademi

Dragica Panovska

Vesna Angelovska Ivanova

Biljana Velichkovska

Anita Palcheska

Thanks also to over 100 fellow citizens who donated to the organizations we supported through the Giving Circle and "Days of Donation".

About Konekt

For 15 years, we have been dedicated to building the potential of the Republic of North Macedonia to develop by relying on local resources and capacities. We know that donations, social responsibility, and cooperation have the power to shape a better society in which everyone can be an active participant in development processes. Therefore, we work with and for citizens, donating families, non-profit organizations, businesses, and institutions in areas where we can make a significant difference together.

Konekt encourages and promotes private donations and social responsibility aimed at effective and long-term development. We show that philanthropy and social responsibility are not just the redistribution of resources, but a powerful development tool that brings benefits to civil society organizations, businesses, the environment, and communities.

We are a key link in connecting those who want to promote sustainable development. We serve with our specific expertise, services, and influential programs that follow the needs of our users and communities. We enrich our knowledge through our membership and the establishment of significant local and international initiatives, networks, bodies, chambers, etc.

For more information and cooperation, Konekt is here for you.

Contact us to build better and sustainable communities together."

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