

KONEKT

ANNUAL REPORT for 2025



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SKOPJE, JANUARY 2026

INTRODUCTION

This year we learned an important lesson about sustainability. A concept that is becoming popular, often spoken of, turned into a strategic commitment, yet lived by only a few.

At the very beginning of the year, we lost our largest strategic donor. An unexpected moment that brought serious challenges to many civil society organizations. Resources and teams were reduced, and with that, the support we provide also decreased. It was as if all the sessions from our trainings on the importance of resource diversification, building reserves for sustainability, strong relations with donors, and a broad base of supporters came to life. We are proud that we did not allow stagnation. We continued with the same dedication to pursue our mission, which today is more important than ever: to encourage citizens and businesses to donate and actively contribute, so that civil society organizations can create changes that strengthen sustainable development.

The recipe for true sustainability is simple, but it requires time. It is not a tool for "patching holes," but a process of building bridges between sectors that rely on one another. **This year, our bridge was you**: the partners, donors, supporters, and all collaborators who share our vision. We will never forget the solidarity and support offered by the organizations we have supported throughout the years. For us, that was the greatest recognition of our work. This report testifies to the power of unity – how much can be created from little, and how solidarity remains the strongest driver of development in our communities.

Some of the activities that make us unique, such as the Giving circle and the Charity fashion auction, were carried out thanks to heartfelt local support, without large projects or budgets. This proves the power of philanthropy. It does not wait for big players, but lives in every good thought of citizens, of companies both small and large, in the ideas of young people, and it is present in both good times and bad. All it needs is an opportunity and a platform to channel it – something Konekt regularly provides. Thus, this year we were there for Kochani through https://opop.mk/ and on the ground, supporting volunteer firefighters, as well as a number of associations that change people's lives not only in emergencies but strategically, every day,

step by step. Read this report as an invitation to join us in supporting them.

We are proud of our Responsible Business Club, which we are building together with companies that share our values and vision for the club to become self, sustainable and widely recognized. This year will also be remembered for our connections with colleagues from the region and beyond, with whom we exchange opportunities and support the creation of community foundations. We continued to expand and protect the space for civic participation and to advocate for laws and policies that will bring more support to civil society organizations, because this is a **smart investment** that creates a better life, stable communities, and a society that progresses.

We enter a new cycle stronger, more united, and with an even deeper understanding of our mission. Thank you for being with us and for building the future of sustainability shoulder to shoulder with Konekt.

Respectfully,

Nikica Kusinikova
Founder and Executive Director of Konekt



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



6.315.678,00 MKD

- Donated to Konekt and 26 CSOs



5.100.177,00 MKD

- Financial donations for 2025



1.215.501,00 MKD

- In, kind donations for 2025



84.000,00 MKD

- Estimated value of volunteer work for 2025

PHILANTHROPY

This year we created numerous opportunities for increased giving across our country.

- We implemented the national philanthropy campaign "Days of donation" for the **third time**.
- Through the resources of the first donor fund in the country, we awarded grants **totaling 530,017 MKD** to **four organizations: Association for Assistive Technology "Open the Windows," Association "Pallium," Association "Network of Macedonian Voluntary Firefighting Societies" from Sveti Nikole, and Youth Association "YMCA" from Bitola.**
- In response to the fire incident in Kochani at "Pulse," we awarded a **grant of 300,300 MKD through the philanthropic fund to the Local Community Development Foundation – Shtip, to help address the consequences**. Citizens and businesses also donated to support youth centers in Kochani and Shtip.
- Within the framework of the Charity Fashion Auction, **23 fashion designers, artists, and artisans** donated unique creations, raising over **565,000 MKD in financial resources, goods, and services.**
- Throughout the year, we promoted the **donation of time**. More than **54 wonderful volunteers** joined donation, related activities this year.
- At the sixth Giving Circle, **683,000 MKD were donated**. **Eight companies, two CSOs, and 120 citizens** collectively contributed to the circle to bring meaningful changes to their communities.
- We brought inspiration from a **study visit to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina** together with organizations working under the community foundation model. We saw, and we believe, that we can do it too! The local community foundations from these countries inspired us to intensify our efforts in creating conditions for the philanthropic potential in our communities to be directed toward sustainable development.

- Our online giving platform ***Op, op recorded a 47% increase in collected donations*.**

ADVANCING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

- We organized the **first "Coffee Talks on Sustainability"** at **Farmahem** with the participation of **10 representatives** from **companies members of the Responsible Business Club**. **Participants agreed** that sustainability opens up numerous opportunities and benefits, while passivity reduces market potential, competitiveness, investments, and even poses risks of losing operating licenses. Today, sustainability is increasingly becoming an obligation and a key part of business planning, and preparation is especially important for companies without established systems. We also mapped the areas where the Club's programs and activities should be directed, particularly the development of the Nature Restoration, Biodiversity and Climate Action Program, as well as the quality education program "Reading Together."

- We launched the Nature Restoration, Biodiversity and Climate Action Program, within which **14 representatives from 8 companies** acquired new and applicable knowledge on the principles of green transition, circular economy, and sustainable development.

- **60 representatives from 46 companies** gained new knowledge on successfully implementing gender, responsive family policies and enabling work, life balance for their employees.

- **11 companies** have so far invested in the sustainability of the Responsible Business Club, demonstrating their commitment to joint action for sustainability.

- The UNFPA program "Expanding Choices" supported **7 companies** in advancing their ESG practices in impact, human resources, and gender, responsive family policies for their employees. Through the program, **161 employees** were directly reached.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- We coordinated the action research on the positioning of community foundations in the Balkans and prepared the first systemic review of the potential, current state, and challenges of the community foundation model in our country.
- We advocate regionally and internationally to ensure that legitimate humanitarian and development activities of nonprofit organizations are not undermined. Through the coalitions we are part of, we monitor the impact of the new EU directive on crowdfunding platforms, especially those led by civil society organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- We maintained the scope of program activities. A total of 23 activities engaged approximately 480 participants. This year, we also succeeded in maintaining our media presence. We count 40 publications in traditional and online media.

SUPPORT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

- Konekt is part of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society. At the constitutive session, our Executive Director **was elected President of the Council** for this mandate, through which we actively contribute to the development of civil society.
- The Financial Sustainability Network of CSOs, which counts **128 members, took an active role in advocating for the Law on Associations and Foundations, the Law on Social Enterprises, and contributed to the Council's Work Program until the end of 2025 and 2026.**
- We certified **two organizations with the Trust Mark**, which under our mentorship reached high standards and fulfilled the criteria.
- **25 organizations received mentoring support** and are now more successful in fundraising within their communities and through **www.opop.mk.**
- **The "Get connected" service brings companies and civil society organizations closer together.** We concluded the year with **7 successful partnerships.**

REPORT BY STRATEGIC AREAS OF ACTION

PHILANTHROPY

BUILDING A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PHILANTHROPY

We continue to encourage the philanthropic spirit among citizens and businesses, jointly creating sustainable mechanisms and solutions for smart, thoughtful, and strategic giving. We promote a culture of philanthropy based on trust, accountability, and solidarity. We are building long, term infrastructure that supports both donors and civil society organizations, enabling them to create positive change in their communities. We advocate for better legislation, offer new opportunities to experience the joy of giving, including through the online platform for smart giving “Op, op.” Through thoughtful giving, we create solutions to problems and their root causes, rather than merely alleviating the consequences.

1. Regional Exchange on Philanthropy

In 2025, we networked and carried out a regional exchange on the topic of developing local philanthropy through community foundations. In October, we hosted a gathering to connect and re, examine the development of community foundations in the Balkans and their support infrastructure. Participants included 31 representatives from community foundations, initiatives, and support organizations from North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Bulgaria, as well as our partners from ECFI. They shared inspiring examples and developed ideas for collaboration and growth. Discussions focused on the 4C framework (credibility, connections, capabilities, and capacity). Key points highlighted in these areas were:

- Credibility is their greatest asset.
- They build and strengthen connections at local, national, regional, and international levels.
- They have ongoing needs that require focus to further develop their capacities and the support they provide in local communities.
- They explore innovative ideas to strengthen their financial capacity , all within a challenging environment.









Part of the atmosphere from the regional exchange with ECFI and representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Serbia – photos by Konekt

1. Days of Donation

The third edition of the national campaign "Days of donation" demonstrated that the campaign continues to be an important part of the country's philanthropic infrastructure and a driving force behind it. We succeeded in mobilizing 717,250 denars in financial resources, goods, and services for civil society organizations that we mentored in mobilizing local resources during the campaign. Through the campaign, we encouraged a culture of local giving, showing that impactful initiatives can be supported by local resources rather than relying solely on foreign donors.

Through the organized activities and the engagement of more than 48 volunteers, the campaign continued to contribute to changing perceptions of philanthropy, proving that everyone can donate and become part of meaningful change.



Part of the atmosphere from the charity fashion auction in Skopje – photo by Goran Boškovski

"The 'Days of donation campaign and the support from Konekt make rare diseases such as Wilson's disease visible to the public and enable them to receive concrete financial and social support. Initiatives like the jubilee race 'Give a Hand' demonstrate that when the community mobilizes around a clear goal, donations from citizens and businesses become an act of solidarity and active participation in creating a better and more inclusive society." – Anja Bosilkova, Wilson Association, the organization that carried out fundraising activities within the 'Days of donation campaign**.**

As the central event of the "Days of donation" campaign, we highlight the charity fashion auction. This year's fashion auction brought together more than 150 fashion enthusiasts, combining style, philanthropy, and a sense of community in one unforgettable evening. Attendees bid on donated fashion creations from 23 renowned Macedonian designers and emerging fashion talents, including student designers, raising



Photographer: Tomislav Georgiev

over 200,500 denars for the country's first donor fund.We do not forget our loyal donors and





Silent and public auction – Photographer: Goran Boškovski

supporters. We concluded the year with gratitude to all our donors, supporters, volunteers, and dear collaborators from all sectors. We organized a "Thank you day" at Konekt, where we ceremoniously awarded grants from the donor fund to four civil society organizations, while also connecting businesses and civil society organizations that, through mutual support, jointly create positive changes in communities.



Certificates of Appreciation for Konekt collaborators – Photo: Konekt



Thank you day at Konekt – Photo: Konekt

2. First grants awarded from Konekt's philanthropic fund

The philanthropic fund is the **first and only local source of direct financial support for civil society organizations**, pooling resources from local companies and citizens that increase year after year. The fund operates according to high standards of quality and efficiency and serves as a mechanism that enables donors, families, and businesses to strengthen their philanthropic impact in their communities. With the resources from the country's first philanthropic fund, this year we awarded grants to **four organizations in the total amount of 530,017 denars**: a grant of 126,856 denars to the association "Open the Windows," a grant of 126,205 denars to the association Palium, a grant of 162,653 denars to the Association Network of Macedonian Voluntary Firefighting Societies from Sveti Nikole, and a grant of 114,301 denars to the Youth Association YMCA Bitola. We are monitoring their progress and will keep donors informed about the achievements. The donor fund, as a mechanism, provides the opportunity for local donations to be directed toward initiatives with proven impact.



Grant for "Open the Windows" – Photo: Konekt







Grants for "YMCA Bitola," the Association "Network of Macedonian Voluntary Firefighting Societies" from Sveti Nikole, and "Palium" – Photo: Konekt

Giving circle

The Giving Circle is a community of individual philanthropists, representatives of local businesses, and other supporters who come together to donate to three selected civic initiatives that have the potential to positively impact the community through their work. In 2025, Konect held its sixth Giving Circle with record achievements. This year, **8 companies, 2 civil society organizations, and 120 citizens** jointly

donated at the Circle to create meaningful changes in their communities, raising a **total of 683,000 denars**.

"Funding opportunities for civil society organizations have been seriously reduced. In times of significant challenges for the civic sector, whenever you have the chance, support a civil society organization, whether financially, through volunteering, or in any other possible way. This makes th Giving Circle even more important, as it provides citizens with the opportunity to act in solidarity a jointly enable organizations to sustain their programs." stated Ms. Nikica Kusinikova, Executive director of Konekt.



Representatives of CSOs from the Giving Circle – Photographer: Stefan Božarov



Atmosphere at the Giving Circle in Skopje – Photographer: Stefan Božarov

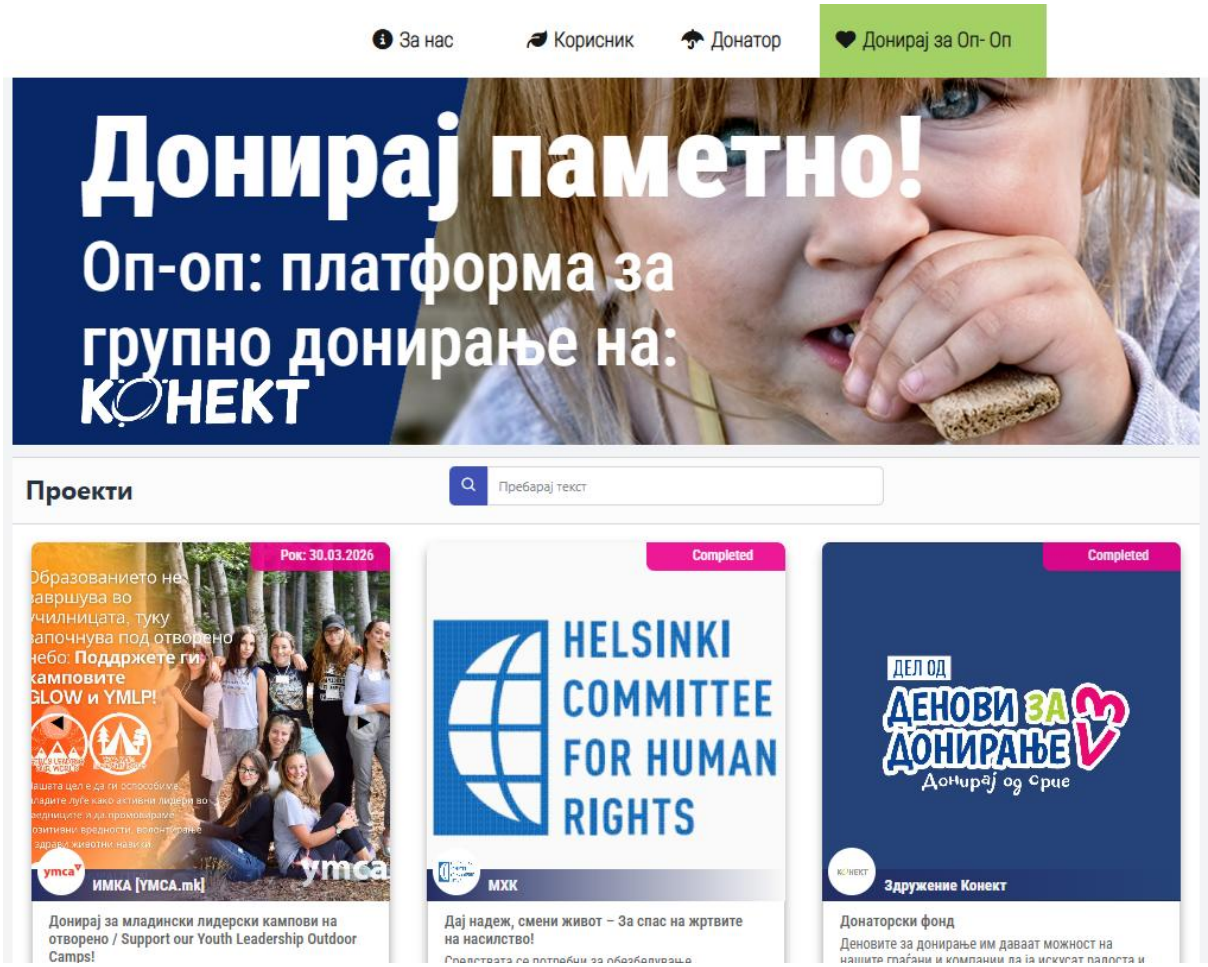
Our joint donations will enable **500 primary school students** to learn how to protect their own health and the health of classmates with diabetes through the activities of the **Association of People with Diabetes from Ohrid**. In this way, care will be shared, healthy food will become "in," and classrooms will be equipped with emergency boxes containing everything teachers need for a quick response.

With the collected donations, **"Towards a Baby through IVF"** will support 70 fellow citizens in fulfilling their dream of becoming mothers or fathers. Donations were made for the babies that are still on their way.

Thanks to donations for **HOPS – Options for Healthy Life**, their professionals will become the first "friends" in nightclubs, parks, and festivals. They will answer all hidden questions with verified information, provide help, and open opportunities for support. We donated to ensure safe youthful curiosity and to encourage healthy life choices.

3. Online crowdfunding platform

In 2025, we continued our commitments and efforts to enable and maintain the digital space for civil society organizations. An added value of the platform is that it also allows direct donations to organizations, thereby contributing to the sustainability of CSOs. In 2025, on **"Op, op," 13 campaigns** were launched and **donations exceeding 530,000 MKD were collected**, representing a **47% increase compared to 2024**, when 360,000 MKD were raised. Our strategic partner, Telekom, in addition to promotion, provides us with free hosting for the platform, which is crucial for its long, term sustainability.



BUILDING LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PHILANTHROPY

Community foundations are local, independent organizations that mobilize citizens, businesses, and institutions around shared goals, from addressing local challenges to creating long, term funds for a better life in the community. They function as the "home" of local philanthropy: a place where resources, people, and ideas connect for sustainable development. Over the past two years, we have actively worked on establishing new community foundations in several municipalities across the country. We strengthened local capacities, building a solid foundation for a long, term model that has proven feasible in our context. When the community creates its own solutions, the results are the most sustainable.

1. Learning through the exchange of regional experiences

The exchange with successful community foundations from the region was a key driver in advancing our local hubs and leadership groups towards the establishment of future community foundations.

In 2025, through the Balkan Re, think initiative, which we coordinated together with ECFI, we deepened regional cooperation and created a strong foundation for shared learning. The study visits to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enabled participants from our seven municipalities to see firsthand what a functional community foundation looks like: how theyraise donations, how they work with businesses, and how they build trust with citizens.





Local action hubs and the Konekt team on a study visit in Niš and Stara Pazova – Photo: Konekt

"The study visit to community foundations in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was significant for our organization. For our team in Gostivar, this journey was a turning point. It helped us identify that sports events are a highly applicable and effective model for fundraising in our local context. Inspired by the example of the Local Community Foundation in Stara Pazova, we now aim to focus on building relationships with corporate donors in Gostivar and the surrounding area. This approach aligns with our vision of creating sustainable support for community-led initiatives and fostering a culture of local philanthropy." – representative of the Gostivar hub

The community foundations from Niš, Stara Pazova, Bijeljina, and Tuzla demonstrated that the model is both possible and successful in smaller, transitional communities, just like ours. Participants returned with new energy, practical tools, and motivation to continue with local initiatives, while the exchange also enabled the start of long, term partnerships. All these activities were part of the EU project "Community Foundations – Strengthening Local Philanthropy in the Western Balkans", which we implemented together with the Trag Foundation (Serbia) and the Tuzla Community Foundation (BiH). At the closing

event in October 2025, more than 30 organizations confirmed that local philanthropy is a driver of sustainable change.

2. Research: What does the national report on community foundations show?



Local action hubs and the Konekt team on a study visit in Stara Pazova – Photo: Konekt

In 2025, we coordinated the research for North Macedonia within the regional Balkan Re, think initiative on community foundations. This was the first systematic review of the potential, current state, and challenges of the community foundation model in our country.

The key findings of the report show that:

- There is real potential for the development of community foundations.
- The model is understandable and acceptable to local communities, but still insufficiently recognized.
- The lack of systemic support threatens sustainability.

In order for community foundations to take root in our country, the research clearly indicates that the following are needed**:**

- **Long, term institutional support –** municipalities and the state need to recognize community foundations as development partners and create mechanisms for their regular financing.
- **Investment in visibility and recognition of the model –** citizens need to know that there is a structure which brings together local resources and directs them towards community needs. Trust is built through transparency and clear local impact.
- **Continuous capacity building –** organizations working with the community foundation model need ongoing training, ranging from local resource mobilization to fund management and strategic use of resources.



The full national report is available at the following <<link>>, while the summary report of the initiative is available <<here>>.

In 2025, Konekt continued its commitment to developing philanthropy within communities. However, reports and experiences show that the **model can only survive with systemic, long, term support**. Local initiatives have the potential, enthusiasm, and trust of the community. Yet, without stable sources of funding, operational support, and clear development rules, that potential may be lost. As the organization leading the national philanthropy agenda, Konect will continue to support communities,

build partnerships, and invest in infrastructure that will make the community foundation model a reality across the country.

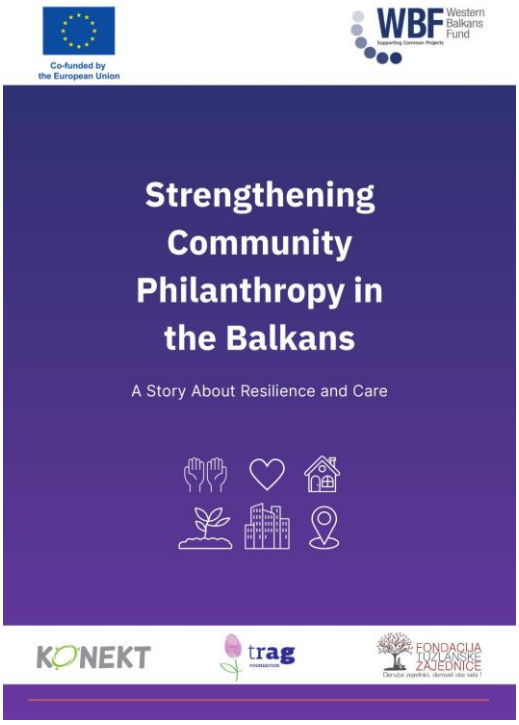
We also promoted the publication “Strengthening Community Philanthropy in the Western Balkans – A Story of Resilience and Care”, which presents concrete steps in establishing community foundations based on the experience of developing community foundations in Serbia and Bosnia and





Atmosphere from the closing event in Skopje within the project supported by WBF – Photo: Konekt

Herzegovina. This practical document describes the best practices and operational characteristics of community foundations (CFs) in Serbia and BiH, offering a roadmap for establishing new community foundations in North Macedonia. The publication elaborates on the key factors for the success and sustainability of community foundations and demonstrates how the specific characteristics of different national models can serve as valuable resources for nurturing diversity, creating a more inclusive environment, and strengthening the community foundation movement as a whole.
The publication is available at the following <<link>>.





ADVANCING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

We help businesses recognize their power to drive positive change in society and the communities where they operate. From strategic approaches and progress plans to the design and implementation of special projects, we act as their advisors on ESG, sustainability, and corporate responsibility. We amplify impact through our Responsible Business Club, which, beyond the individual approach to members, creates and promotes collective action for sustainable development in environmental protection, good governance, and community development.

RESPOSIBLE BUSINESS CLUB

The Club brings together businesses with proven experience in socially responsible practices and like, minded peers committed to making a positive impact on society and the environment. The Responsible Business Club has several key components:

- **Collective impact** – by joining forces, businesses in the Club can amplify their influence and drive meaningful social change.
- **Leadership and collaboration** – the Club offers a unique opportunity for top management to network and collaborate for collective impact on sustainable development and key business challenges.
- **Knowledge sharing** – access to a wealth of resources, best practices, professional training, and insights to help businesses integrate sustainability into daily operations and stay aligned with leading international practices and trends.
- **Individual progress** – through membership, companies advance their practices in ESG, sustainability, corporate responsibility, and community investment.

Business leaders from our member companies identified the most important sustainability issues for the Responsible Business Club program. They expressed readiness to collaborate and jointly create change in the following areas:

- Emigration due to quality of life – addressing the outflow of people from the country.
- Strengthening gender equality and family responsibility – retaining employees by creating tailored workplaces.
- Environmental protection – ensuring rapid preparation to meet international requirements and trends.
- Quality education and knowledge transfer – providing opportunities for youth as an investment in new generations.

Member companies of Konekt's Responsible Business Club

- Raising public awareness of key ESG aspects.
- Imposing higher standards in the fight against corruption.
- Proactive business approaches – joint action through good practices and strategic partnerships with civil society organizations and institutions.

We organized the first meeting "Coffee Talks on Sustainability" for the **member companies of the Responsible Business Club**. The host of this inaugural meeting was Farmahem, who practically demonstrated how sustainability and environmental care are embedded in their processes. We shared professional experiences, exchanged ideas, expertise, and advice from sustainability experts. Together, we mapped the areas where future activities should be directed, with a focus on the Club's Program for Nature Restoration, Biodiversity, and Climate Action. Through the discussion, we confirmed that sustainability is increasingly becoming an obligation and a key part of business planning, with preparation being especially important for companies that do not yet have established systems.



Members of the Responsible Business Club at the event 'Coffee Talks on Sustainability' at 'Farmahem'
Photographer: Jovan Lesanski

NATURE RESTORATION, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE ACTION (E , environmental)



Konekt continued to support companies in their growth in social responsibility, namely ESG practices oriented towards sustainable development. We share our knowledge and expertise with companies and help businesses strengthen their capacities. We organized training on green transition, circular economy, and sustainable development for member companies of the Responsible Business Club, as well as for those interested in joining.

Within the project "Eco Dialogue towards the EU: Encouraging Environmental Change through Inclusive Policy Advocacy", co, financed by the European Union and implemented by Local Community Development Foundation – Štip (LCDF) in partnership with the association Konekt and the association AGORA Center for Promoting Civic Values Skopje, we trained **14 participants and enhanced the knowledge of 8 companies**

directly engaged in this field. Together, we reviewed the latest regulatory trends and practices in ESG. We shared best business practices and presented the "Study of Good Practices from the Local Business Sector – Climate Action and Nature Protection", which aims to promote sustainable practices and inspire businesses to expand their application. Training participants identified this study as one of the most useful resources and highlighted the need for more detailed education on ESG reporting and waste management regulations. The training content was practically oriented, enabling companies to integrate the acquired knowledge into their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), and sustainable business models. This year, we developed a basic environmental module, and through such trainings we encouraged new collaborations and partnerships among companies. We connected Makstil and Besa Shop, who expressed interest in potential future cooperation in their respective fields, as a direct result of project activities. This demonstrates the importance of these initiatives, not only for documenting and promoting practices but also as a foundation for fostering collaboration and joint action among businesses.



Atmosphere from the training on green transition, sustainable development and circular economy – Photo: Konekt

Through these activities, we directly invest in professionals working in CSR and ESG within member companies of the Club and continue to encourage corporate responsibility in the business sector. Our goal is to help companies, through the principles of business ethics and sustainability, achieve increased productivity, innovation, and long, term sustainable development.

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING (S , social)

Maintaining productive workplaces and satisfied employees is essential for the members of the Responsible Business Club. We continued to support both the public and private sectors in strengthening gender, responsive family policies and promoting workplaces tailored to the needs of employees, their families, and personal circumstances.



Within the program **'Expanding Choices through Family, Friendly Policies'**, where we are an implementing partner of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), financially supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), we supported **7 companies** by developing tailored plans to advance and/or introduce gender, responsive family policies.



Children's Workshops at Comfy Angel – Photo: Konekt

Members of the Responsible Business Club involved in the program included Farmahem, NLB, EVN, and Alkaloid. Additionally, we provided support to Vitaminika, Comfy Angel, and Textile Solution. With the companies, we began implementing activities such as psychosocial workshops, assessment of current policies and development of future policies for flexible work arrangements, creation of specialized



Catalogue of Enriched Content of the NLB Library – Design by Vanja Shtrkova





Participants of the workshop in Bitola and Štip – Photo: Konekt

programs to support employees' children, and more. Through these activities, we provided support to **161 employees and 24 children of employees.**





Participants of the workshop with companies in Skopje – Photo: Konekt

Additionally, we enabled direct strengthening of private sector capacities regarding the importance of gender, responsive family policies and their impact not only on employees but also on business sustainability. **Across three workshops, we engaged 38 representatives from 28 companies** from the Skopje Planning Region, Pelagonia Planning Region, and Eastern Planning Region. The workshops also served as a platform for exchange, where participants identified good practices that act as valuable sources of inspiration for their own companies. Evaluation questionnaires showed that participants demonstrated an increased understanding of why family, responsive policies are important and how they can help companies attract and retain talent.

The program's approach also involves leading multi, sector dialogue and collaboration. We organized **five major multi, sector events** (a conference marking World Population Day, three roundtables in Bitola, Štip, and Skopje, the HR Weekend in cooperation with the Macedonian Association for Human Resources, and experience, sharing sessions).

The World Population Day event sent a strong message that introducing gender, responsive family policies enables the utilization of the country's demographic potential. Effective policies should equally support both women and men, ensuring that family and household care is a shared responsibility, which will encourage women's participation and retention in the workforce. There is a vital link between demographic change, gender equality, and sustainable national development. During the panel with representatives from the Government, associations, the private sector, and the international community, it was emphasized that by creating workplaces that better support families, the country can make greater use of its human and demographic capital.



Roundtable in Skopje – Photo: BKSM



Dialogue on World Population Day – Photo: Конект

The roundtables concluded that gender, responsive family policies (GRFPs) provide benefits both for companies and society. It was emphasized that small and medium, sized enterprises should receive special support to align with ESG and GRFP standards. Discussions highlighted the greater need for elderly care institutions at the municipal level and identified a clear need for legislative changes, particularly regarding paternity leave, health insurance, and more flexible employment opportunities beyond the framework of full, time or part, time work.

The roundtables resulted in a strong consensus that direct government support for GRFPs, through financial assistance, increased public services, and potential tax incentives, will be essential for their widespread adoption by the private sector.

The events included participation from the UNFPA Regional Office, the Austrian Embassy, chambers of commerce, trade unions, business associations, civil society, and educational institutions. As key actors in policy, making, in 2025 we also collaborated with state and local institutions to strengthen their capacities in this area. During interactive workshops, they learned from practical examples of good practices and trends in gender, responsive family policies. They also openly discussed systemic gaps such as the need for improved flexible work arrangements, stronger mechanisms for protection against workplace harassment, and opportunities to integrate family, oriented policies into all laws and regulations.

Throughout 2025, the program actively engaged **211 participants, of whom more than 70% were women**. The program **reached 9,401 views and 1,031 engagements through social media**, with over 70 promotional packages distributed offline.

We also continued promoting the MAMFORCE standard for work, life balance, which provides an excellent opportunity for employers to improve their practices and ensure satisfied and productive employees.





Two-day workshop with institutions in Veles – Photo: Konekt

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent an incentive for building partnerships and joint activities among civil society organizations, the business sector, and institutions. They serve as a platform for fostering cross, sector partnerships to achieve changes that positively impact development and communities. We continuously work on Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. Different sectors were connected to jointly work for the benefit of their communities, encouraging them to take ownership of the changes they wish to see and achieve. 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, civil society, and institutions, we mapped the priority areas for our country where significant changes can be achieved collectively. These priority SDGs were also reflected in the priority areas of the first donor fund in our country, as well as in the programs of the Responsible Business Club.



GET CONNECTED!

When businesses and civil society organizations collaborate, they actively create strong foundations for sustainable development and a better life for all. Businesses have a unique opportunity to support social development through investments in projects that significantly improve community life. At the same time, civil society organizations possess the expertise and knowledge of community needs, making them key partners in this cooperation.

Through the "Get connected" service, we continue to connect civil society organizations with companies and institutions. The knowledge and expertise offered by companies are a valuable resource for civil society organizations, while our role is to support strategic partnerships that benefit both businesses and CSOs. The support we provide to civil society organizations is tailored to their specific needs and the resources available from companies.

"Get connected" brings companies and civil society organizations closer together. We concluded the year with **7 successful connections** between companies and civil society organizations in Skopje and Bitola.

ADVOCACY

ADVOCATING FOR BETTER LAWS AND POLICIES

We continued to actively advocate and make our expertise available to ensure that laws and policies in our country encourage more donations and socially responsible practices. Through cooperation and dialogue, we arrive at better solutions.

Our approach involves consulting all stakeholders, particularly our Network for Financial Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations, which in 2025 counted 128 members. We collaborate with institutions and, through our key partnership with the European Center for Non, Profit Law in The Hague, bring significant international expertise to the process of offering solutions. Together with the members of the Network, we actively engage in key processes for the civil society sector. We encouraged members to contribute with their own proposals for joint advocacy, especially in the ongoing process of amending the Law on Donations and Sponsorships in Public Activities. We regularly informed them about legal obligations and deadlines that civil society organizations have towards institutions and the public, as well as the importance of timely monitoring of these processes. With the members of the Network and other civil society organizations, we provide resources to help them build their capacities. In consultation with members, we submitted a proposal to contribute to the preparation of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia's Annual Work Program for 2026, in line with the public call. We highlighted the need to amend key laws, including the Law on Donations and Sponsorships, the Law on Accounting for Non, Profit Organizations, and the Law on Volunteering. Join the Network for Financial Sustainability of CSOs!

At the beginning of April 2025, the Executive Director of "Konect," Ms. Nikica Kusinikova, was elected President of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society. Throughout this period, we kept members of the Network informed about all activities and progress, as well as the work with the Council. We continue to jointly advocate for favorable changes for civil society organizations.

Together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), we enabled gender, responsive family policies to enter, for the first time, the country's **highest tripartite platform, the Economic and Social Council (ESC)**, at its December 2025 session. This marked a significant step forward: the topic became officially recognized and entered the consultative process for policy change planned for 2026.

We also worked on self, regulation of the civil society sector to ensure best practices in fundraising. Our rules and guidelines for collecting and documenting donations in cash or at various events make donating

easier, safer, and more transparent. These rules are shared with all organizations and stakeholders to actively use them in fundraising, with the aim of establishing good practices and strengthening transparency and accountability.Such activities were also linked to the criteria of the Trust Mark.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

We invest our experience and expertise in improving policies and the environment for civil society organizations both regionally and globally. Analyses from key stakeholders indicate a significant shrinking of civic space, with organizations facing pressures and barriers in their work. International counter, terrorism policies, as well as anti, money laundering and counter, terrorism financing standards, have had particularly negative impacts on activists, civil society organizations, and their financial sustainability. The narrative that donations can be misused for terrorism financing also undermines public trust in the concept of giving.

Therefore, our efforts at national, regional, and international levels are directed towards raising awareness and understanding of these negative impacts, strengthening the capacities of institutions, banks, CSOs, and other stakeholders, and advocating for policy changes that create protection and a safe space for civil society organizations.

We are active members of global networks such as the Global NPO Coalition on FATF, through which in 2025 we focused on advocacy to ensure that the standards of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) do not undermine legitimate humanitarian and development activities of non, profit organizations. This included promoting risk, based application of Recommendation 8, combating financial exclusion of organizations, and mitigating unintended consequences of anti, money laundering (AML) policies. We actively participate in FATF's established mechanism for regular dialogue and consultation with the non, profit sector, where we provide feedback and raise questions following FATF plenary conclusions.

We also monitor the new EU directive related to crowdfunding platforms. In this regard, we are part of coalition activities assessing the impact of the directive on crowdfunding platforms, particularly those managed by civil society organizations. Additionally, we took part in consultations with the European Banking Authority (EBA) regarding indicators from the new EU directive on AML/CFT.

CSO COALITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

Through the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Counter, Terrorism, in March, together with 42 members, we took part in a strategic retreat in Brussels, Belgium, where we discussed global and regional trends in the impact of counter, terrorism measures on civic space, identified opportunities for collective advocacy, and explored ways to improve Coalition governance. Konect is a member of the Coalition's Steering Committee, which meets monthly to coordinate the global agenda.

In September, we participated in the annual Steering Committee gathering in Jakarta, Indonesia, where discussions focused on governance and decision, making procedures of the Coalition, its strategy and resource allocation, as well as strategies for risk assessment and mitigation. Following the meeting, several action points were outlined, including updating governance arrangements and the statement of values, finalizing criteria, and refining the decision, making process.

SUPPORT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSO)

MENTORSHIP FOR MOBILIZING LOCAL RESOURCES

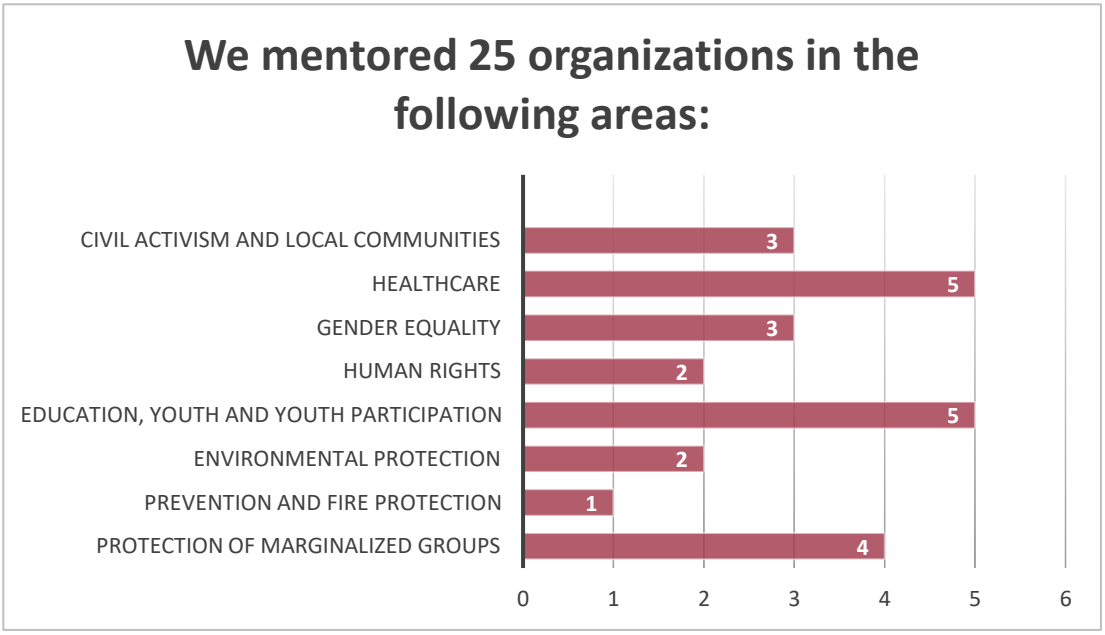
Civil society organizations are worth for greater support. The relationship between a civil society organization and donors should be oriented towards building long, term partnerships that lead to stable resources and positive impacts in the community. These are among the key recommendations we regularly share with organizations during their mentorship process for organizing events aimed at mobilizing local resources.

This year, we mentored a total of **25 organizations** on resource mobilization through specialized events, as well as on proper management, guidance, and practical knowledge for setting up and implementing online fundraising campaigns via the crowdfunding platform "Op, op."

"The mentorship from Konekt was truly significant and useful. Their approach is clear, direct, and focused on practical solutions that we could immediately apply in our work. The way they approached mapping the private sector and the trainings on local financing helped us build concrete tools, a realistic database of potential partners, and a clear direction for sustainability. With their support, we felt more confident and better prepared to build long-term partnerships and mobilize resources at the local level." – Natasha Petkovska, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights.

The knowledge and skills acquired are now being used by organizations to organize various events and

activities to secure more donations and the support they deserve. This year, we mentored organizations interested in preparing strategies and organizing events for mobilizing local resources, and we supported them in implementing these activities.



Through the mentoring process, we helped them gain confidence in approaching new donors, jointly mapped potential donors according to their field of work, and provided guidance to successfully carry out activities and secure more donations from businesses and citizens.

Some organizations continued to use their well, established approaches to potential donors for fundraising, while others, for the first time, organized special events and, with our support, received significant donations. They gained a new circle of supporters and donors who will continue to support their work in the future.

JOINT STEPS TOWARDS EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

On the occasion of April 8 – International Roma Day, the association "Initiative for Women's Rights" from Shuto Orizari awarded a certificate of appreciation to Konekt for its significant contribution to the inclusion of the Roma community in the Republic of North Macedonia.

This recognition represents a confirmation of our commitment to building a just and inclusive society, where every citizen has equal opportunities and rights. Our joint efforts with partners to eradicate discrimination and improve the lives of the Roma community will continue.

We are honored that our work has been recognized and valued, and this certificate of appreciation is an additional motivation to continue with even greater energy and dedication.

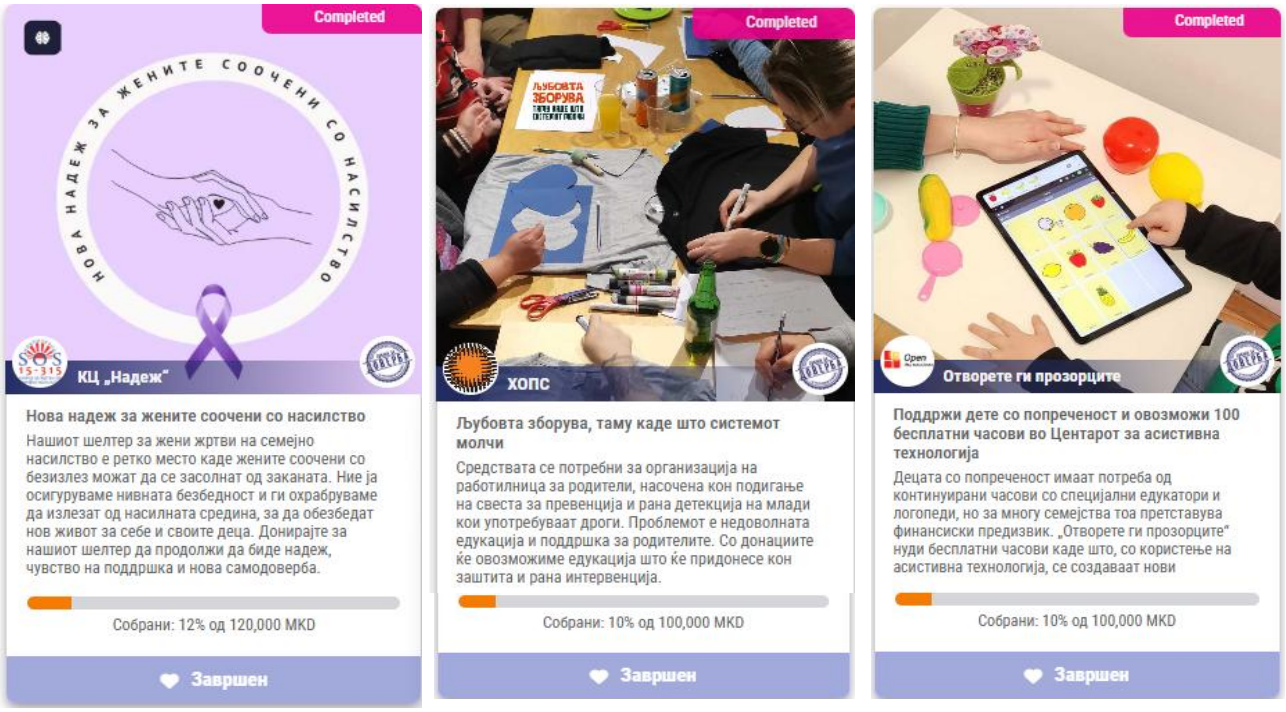


Certificate of Appreciation for Konekt from the Initiative for Women's Rights, Shuto Orizari – photo by Konekt

TRUST MARK

We are increasing trust in the civil society sector. The Trust Mark has already become a recognized self, regulation mechanism in the sector, making it easier for citizens and companies to choose trustworthy organizations where they can donate with confidence. Through a transparent process and thorough verification, the Trust Mark highlights recommended organizations worthy of donor support.

Organizations awarded the Trust Mark operate according to high standards and with dedication to their mission and values. They are transparent and accountable, with responsible governance that ensures legality and safe financial management.



Therefore, we actively promote organizations with the Trust Mark among corporate and individual donors, as well as on the crowdfunding platform Op, op.

This year, the Trust Mark Board convened and, as a result, at the “Konekt’s Thank you Day” event in 2025, we certified the following two organizations with the full, level Trust Mark: “Crisis Center Hope” and “Organization of Women of the Municipality of Sveti Nikole” (OZOSVN).



Certified organizations with the Trust Mark – photos by Konekt

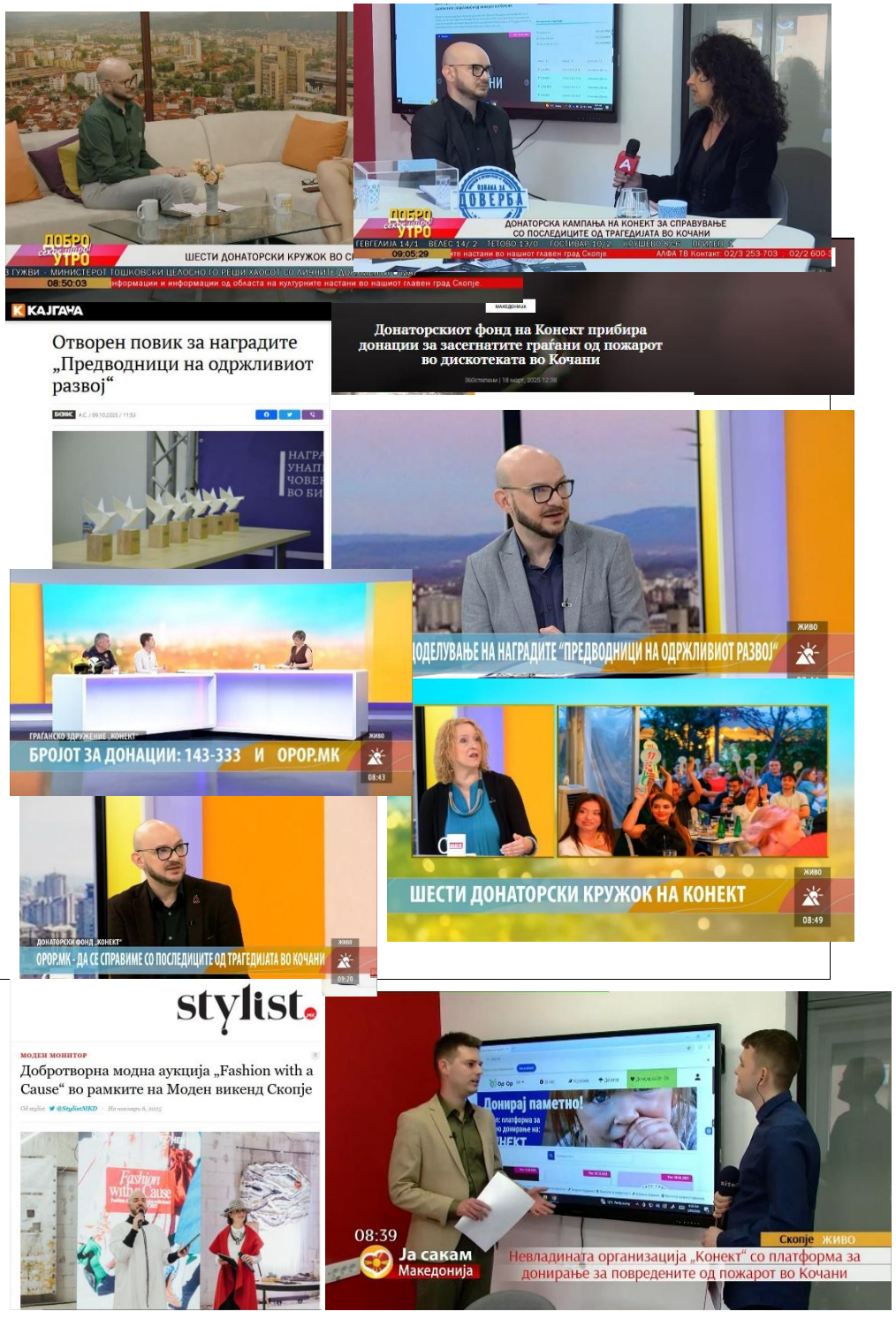
KONEKT IN THE MEDIA

Ongoing media engagement

40 media posts

7 TV interviews

3 Articles

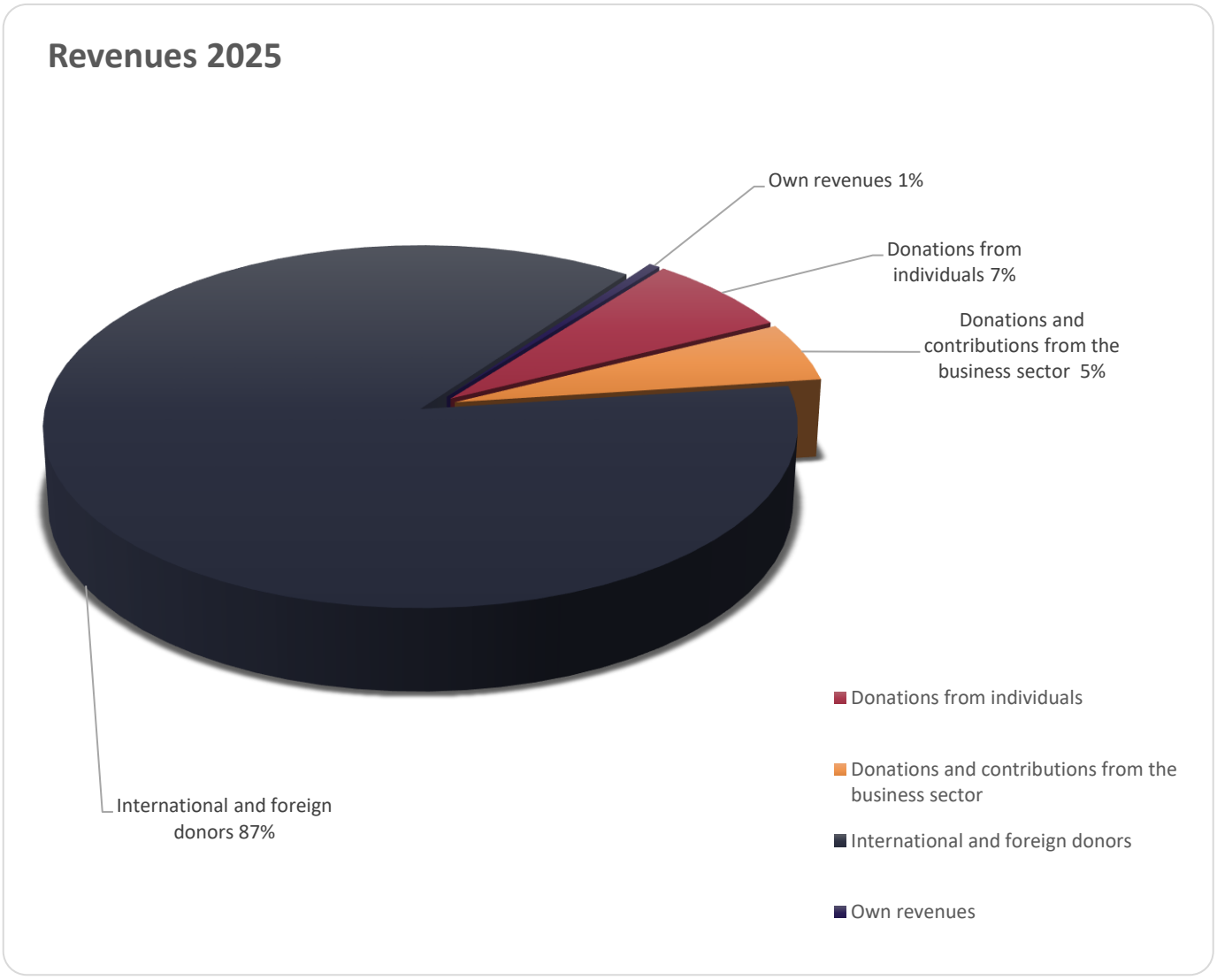


KONEKT'S FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2025, Konekt's total revenues amounted to 21,504,261 denars, which represents a decrease by half compared to the previous year. This decline is primarily due to the termination of philanthropy programs following USAID's withdrawal and the conclusion of their development initiatives.

However, even with significantly reduced revenues, we observed increases in certain areas compared to the previous year, such as higher donations through the Op, op platform and contributions to the National Philanthropic Fund in 2025.

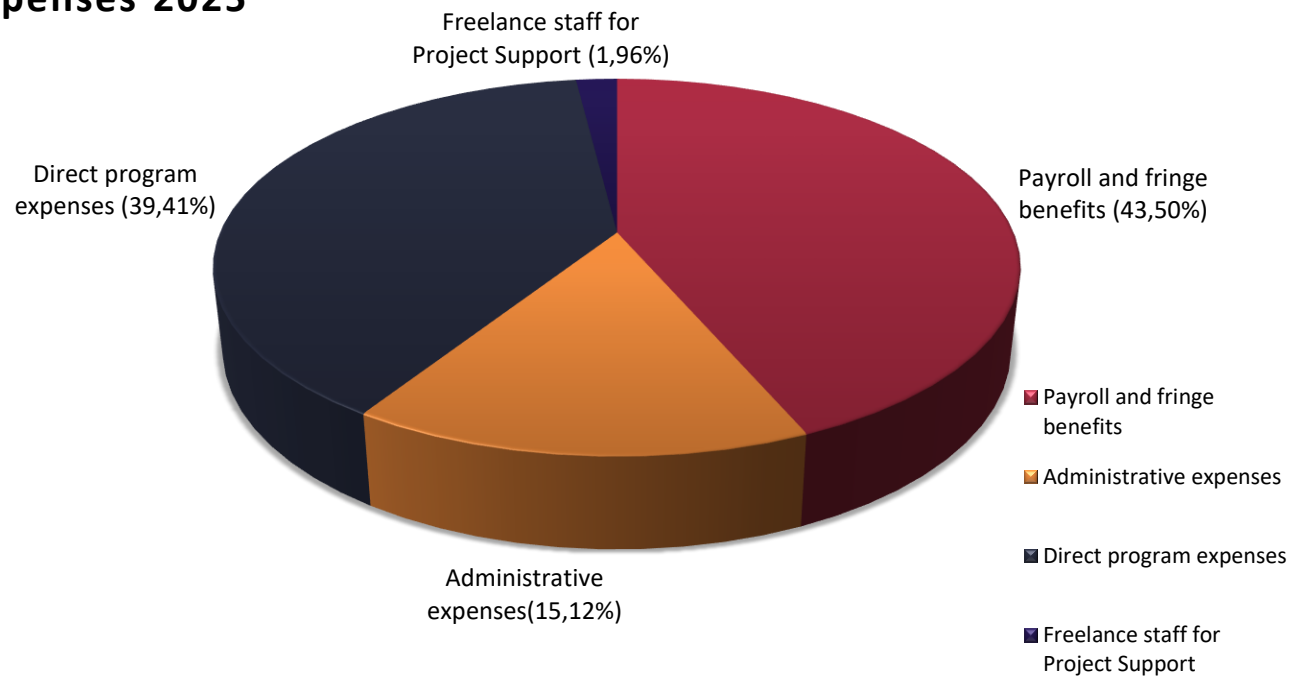
Own funds carried forward from previous years were crucial for the organization's self, sustainability and for bridging the gap caused by the discontinuation of donor support from USAID.



Funding Sources	Revenues (MKD)
"USAID Project 'Partnerships for Giving' – National Philanthropy"	2.004.890
"USAID Project 'Get together for the Community' – Local Philanthropy"	2.802.055
"EU Project 'EcoDialogue towards EU: Driving Environmental Change through Inclusive Policy Advocacy'	934.254
"Civica Mobilitas, through the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation"	1.500.000
"European Community Foundation Initiative (ECFI)"	831.717
Project "Expanding Choices through Family, Friendly Policies", UNFPA	3.112.137
Embassy of the Republic of France in North Macedonia	103.659
"Community Foundations – Strengthening Local Philanthropy in the Western Balkans", EU through WBF	786.662
Donations via SMS	34.600
Individual Donations	1.488.072
Corporate Donations	593.200
Revenues from Donations for Civil Society Organizations	39.300
Support from Responsible Business Club Members	538.116
Revenues from Interest and Foreign Exchange Gains	11.992
Revenues from Travel and Overhead Cost Reimbursements	44.228
Balance Brought Forward from the Previous Year	6.577.879
Other Revenues	101.500
TOTAL	**21.504.261**

At the beginning of 2025, the organization employed 9 full, time staff members. By the end of the year, the team was consolidated to 4.5 employees. The average monthly gross salary of the Executive Director in 2025 amounted to 137,457 MKD. The ratio between the lowest and the highest salary in the organization was 1:2.05, while the ratio between the average and the highest salary was 1:1.5. In terms of program expenses, during the year we provided 1,662,755 MKD in direct financial support to civil society organizations for mobilizing local resources (grants and philanthropy mentoring), through the Giving Circle, the first National Philanthropic Fund, and the 'Op, op' platform.

Expenses 2025



THANK YOU DONORS

We thank all those who donated directly to Konekt. Our donors enabled us to pursue our mission and achieve successes in 2025. The successes of Konekt are yours too!

USAID North Macedonia
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
European Union (EU)
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC)
European Community Foundations Initiative (ECFI)
Embassy of France

Telekom Foundation
Farmahem
Veze Sharri

UNIQA LIFE AD
TITAN USJE AD Skopje
Nikola Buleski
Nikola Eftimov
Lidija Georgjieva
Izet Curi
Silvija Mihajlovska (Alshar)
Irina Tosheva
Olgica Gjorgieva
Katerina Tosheva
Antonija Guginska Jordanoska (“MilkDesign”)
Natalija Terzijoska (“Terzija”)
Biljana Siljanovska (“Be”)
Radmila Davidovikj Nastev
Snezana Efkovska
Ivana Gruevska
Marta Pop Antoska (“M Art Gallery”)
Aleksandra Ristovska (“MORPHO”)
Marija Tairovska (“Marcy's Handmade”)
Aleksandar Stojanov – Zorin
“ESNAF”
Damjan Ristovski (“Narodni nosii”)
Ljubica Solak
Mirjana Josifovska
“Made in Idrizovo”
Petar Kajevski (“11i11 saat”)
Ognen Janeski
Ana Zafirova



We are thankful to more than 190 individuals who contributed to organizations through the Giving Circle and the Days of donations.

Pivara AD Skopje
Winery Kamnik
Winery Chateau Sopot
Volunteer centar Skopje
Skala , Design School
Studio 1
Macedonian Fashion Association
A1 Macedonia
Vanja Sheremetkoski
Ljupka Noveska Andonova
Julijana Daskalov
Pepica Manceva
Irina Hadzi Mitova
Marija Cikarska
Ana Dimovska
Chriss Henshaw
Gjorge Janev
Jakov Karan
Vesna Ivanova
Gordana Vrencoska
Valentina Velichkovska
Anita Dimova
Cloe Courigen
Gorjan Karan
Leaute Guiuet Youna
Baudoujn Camille
Elena Krstevska
Andrea Tanaskoska
Ivana Tanaskoska
Aleksandra Spaseska
Ivana Jovanovska
Jana Misho



ABOUT KONEKT

For 18 years, we have been dedicated to building the potential of the Republic of North Macedonia, enabling it to grow by relying on local resources and capacities. We know that giving, social responsibility, and collective cooperation have the power to shape a better society in which everyone can be an active participant in the development processes. That is why we work with and for citizens, donor families, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and institutions in areas where together we can make a significant difference.

Konekt encourages and promotes private giving and social responsibility aimed at effective and long-term development. We demonstrate that philanthropy and social responsibility are not merely redistribution of resources, but powerful tools for development that bring benefits to civil society organizations, businesses, the environment, and communities.

We are a key link in connecting those who want to foster sustainable development. We serve with our specific expertise, services, and impactful programs that respond to the needs of our users and communities. We enrich knowledge through our membership and by founding important domestic and international initiatives, networks, bodies, chambers, and more.

For more information and collaboration, Konekt is here for you. Contact us, and together we will build better and more sustainable communities.

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www.sdgs.mk

www.opop.mk

Responsible Business Club