AGORA



AGORA – Center for Promotion of Civic Values

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT 2025

INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2025, AGORA – Center for Promotion of Civic Values continued to carry out activities aimed at fulfilling its mission: strengthening civic participation, promoting democratic values, and supporting gender equality at the local and national levels.

The organization actively worked to develop inclusive initiatives and policies that encourage sustainable social development and create a supportive environment for all citizens. The year was marked by expanded partnerships, the development and implementation of new initiatives, and a stronger public presence through research and advocacy activities.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

AGORA – Center for the Promotion of Civic Values is a civil society organization founded in 2001, and re-registered in 2015 to expand its mission and programmatic work.

The association's vision is the advancement of people and communities grounded in gender equality, economic prosperity, and democratic principles. Its mission is to strengthen the capacities of all societal stakeholders and to promote participatory and sustainable processes that lead to community development.

AGORA's strategic goals are:

- Gender equality is embraced and put into practice at the local level,
- A stronger environment for young people and women to start businesses,
- Municipalities operating effectively, efficiently, transparently, and with accountability,
- Prosperous, economically growing local communities,
- Agora is an active member of relevant national and regional international networks,
- The organization's funding is secured through several different donors.

The association achieves its goals through an established Work Program, specifically through the following activities:

- Conducting analyses and monitoring relevant policies,
- Strengthening local stakeholders for active participation in decision-making,
- Advocating for the adoption of appropriate measures and policies at the local level,
- Raising awareness among all stakeholders and the wider public,
- Building knowledge and skills among its target groups
- Networking and connecting stakeholders, including cooperation with other organizations and institutions,
- Preparing project applications to secure sufficient funds to achieve the planned objectives.

In line with its mission and expertise, AGORA develops its programs in the following thematic areas:

Gender Equality

- Empowering Women and Their Organizations 2
- Support for Gender-Responsive Policies and Budgeting
- Public Awareness Campaigns and Outreach Activities

Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment

- Training, mentorship, and support for youth-led businesses
- Grants for business ideas
- Encouraging young people's social and economic inclusion

Democratic governance and local development

- Supporting municipalities in transparency and accountability
- Promoting participatory decision-making methods
- Monitoring, analysis, and advocacy in the area of public policy

Media transparency and an informed public

- Tracking media reforms
- Investigative reporting, analysis, and public campaigns
- Strengthening media literacy

AGORA works with a wide range of stakeholders, and its **primary target groups** are: women and girls, including those from vulnerable groups, young people, local civil society organizations, municipalities and public institutions, the business sector, media professionals and networks, local communities and the broader public.

AGORA's work is carried out through an executive office, which during the current year included four engaged staff members with program, administrative, and financial responsibilities, under the leadership of the organization's president. It has its own website: https://agora.org.mk/ and a Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/agora.org.mk

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Supporting the circular economy and strengthening environmental policies

AGORA, in partnership with two civil society organizations (Foundation for Local Community Development - Shtip (FRLZ) as the project lead and the association Konekt) in March 2025 launched implementation of a two-and-a-half-year EU co-funded project, aimed at fostering cross-sector dialogue in the areas of the circular economy and waste management. More specifically, the goal of the project "Eco Dialogue Toward the EU - Driving environmental change through inclusive policy advocacy" is to promote cross-sector dialogue and cooperation on the circular economy and waste management, strengthen civil society for policy advocacy, and improve stakeholder participation in shaping and implementing environmental policies.

The kickoff event, where the project was presented to key stakeholders and the public, took place in June 2025. With more than 40 representatives from the civil society sector,



The President of Agora speaks on the gender perspective in environmental policy

The business community and government institutions discussed circular-economy policies, sustainable waste management, and formally marked the launch of the project. At the same time, the event also highlighted the gender dimensions of managing textile waste, recognizing that textile production is among the lowest-paid and most labor-intensive sectors, largely dominated by women, and one that also generates enormous amounts of textile waste.

As part of the project, Agora conducted research on North Macedonia's readiness to transition to a green economy by analyzing the situation with textile waste; identifying the key challenges, best practices, and opportunities for recycling and reuse, as well as developing recommendations to strengthen waste-management policies and practices. The analysis places special emphasis on the obligations set out in the Law on the Management of Specific Waste Streams and the Law on Extended Producer Responsibility and is specifically relevant to all stakeholders across the textile-waste value chain. The analysis was finalized in December 2025 and published on Agora's website (https://agora.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Analiza-tekstilen-final-1.pdf). In addition, an Abstract of the analysis was prepared, providing a concise overview of the main findings and recommendations from the analysis. The Abstract is also available on Agora's website (https://agora.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Апстракт_Анализа.pdf)



In addition to the Analysis, Agora also prepared a Guide to the Law on the Management of Additional Waste Streams, which will be published in early 2026.

Additionally, Agora supported activities carried out by partner organizations. It took part in the training "Business Sector in the Green Transition," where business-sector representatives discussed how companies can become a driving force for sustainable change. It also joined the promotional activities for the campaign "Eco Evolution: From Waste to the Future", and was also present at Energo-Technoma 2025, where

hosted a panel-discussion focused on waste management and the circular economy with the project team in attendance.

Through structured consultation meetings, stakeholder mapping, research and initial capacity-building activities, the organization laid important groundwork for long-term cooperation among the civil society, public, and business sectors.

2. Research to Launch a (Peri)Menopause Awareness Campaign

In 2025, AGORA developed a menopause campaign concept and carried out research into the challenges, needs, and experiences of women during (peri)menopause to gather relevant insights that would inform the creation of a campaign to raise public awareness, reduce stigma, and make space for open conversations about women's health. The emphasis was on the need for women to receive reliable information and encouragement – from healthcare providers, employers, and the broader community.

The research was conducted from July – October 2025 through an online survey available on AGORA's Facebook page. The survey was also shared



on the Facebook and LinkedIn profiles of the partner organization, Consulting for Strategic Development, as well as on the Instagram profile #alarmzasvest, following expressed interest in collaboration from the pharmaceutical company "Bionika."

After a sufficient number of responses were collected (the survey questionnaire was completed by 398 women), a report was prepared with key findings, conclusions and recommendations for the status and needs of women experiencing menopause.

The plan is to run the menopause awareness campaign throughout 2026 by hosting public discussions with qualified medical professionals, and by creating engaging content made up of written posts, infographics, and videos—primarily on social media. To support this, the plan also includes establishing a formal partnership in early 2026 with the company "Bionika" to help organize public discussions with specialist physicians in the field. In addition, the plan includes raising additional funds for the campaign's implementation.

Through this initiative, the organization continued its commitment to advancing gender equality, improving access to reliable information, and providing support for women.

3. Partnerships and Collaboration

In 2025, AGORA significantly broadened its network of partners by establishing and strengthening collaborations with civil society organizations, the business sector and public institutions.

To implement the "Eco Dialogue Toward the EU" project, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the civil society organization "Foundation for Local Community Development - Štip" (FRLZ) and the association Konekt.

At the request of the pharmaceutical company "Bionika," a collaboration was launched to share information, knowledge, and resources focused on the needs and challenges of women experiencing menopause, with an agreement to formalize the partnership in 2026.

These partnerships supported stronger coordination, better resource-sharing, and the development of sustainable models for joint action, which has already led—and is expected to continue to lead—to greater visibility and a stronger impact in local communities.

VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

The organization strengthened its communications presence by updating content on its website and by regularly publishing content on its Facebook social media page. All content was published in line with the donor (EU) visibility guidelines. At the same time, an Instagram page was launched, which is planned to be fully activated in 2026.

The menopause survey highlighted a major need among women for access to reliable information, psychological support, and encouragement of open conversations about menopause within families and workplaces, as well as in public discourse. There is a clear need for structured health protocols, early education for women, and system-level changes that take health, economic, and social policies into account.

It can be concluded that the strongest growth in interest was in topics related to women's health and sustainable environmental policies, and that AGORA further strengthened its recognition as a relevant stakeholder in these areas.

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of the year, the AGORA team invested in strengthening internal processes, planning, and refining its strategic approaches to day-to-day work. The organization focused on developing monitoring and evaluation systems, improving internal coordination, and boosting operational efficiency, including drafting internal policies and procedures and updating content on the website in both Macedonian and English. The three policies developed during the year – the Anti-Corruption Policy, the Gender Equality Policy, and the Environmental Responsibility Policy—were published on the website as part of the organization's commitment to openness and transparency.

CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The main challenges throughout the year were limited financial resources, the need for stronger cross-sector coordination, and for raising awareness around public dialogue on

key topics such as the circular economy and women's health. Through an adaptive approach, the AGORA team succeeded in developing models for effective collaboration, transparent communication, and inclusive engagement of stakeholders.

Throughout 2026, AGORA will focus on:

- further strengthening efforts on the circular economy and a healthy environment, 6
- running a public menopause awareness campaign grounded in the research conducted,
- expanding initiatives to increase women's participation in politics,
- supporting young people's involvement in decision-making processes and building leadership skills,
- effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable performance by municipalities,
- strengthening partnerships and launching new initiatives for civic participation,
- continued investment in organizational capacity-building and institutional development.

AGORA remains committed to its mission to strengthen civil society and promote inclusive, democratic communities.