

REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

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CIVIL ASSEMBLY OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA FOR KOVID-19

Document written by the participants in the first Civil Assembly for Kovid-19 in Northern Macedonia.

July 2021

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Introduction to the Civic Assembly for Covid-19

After the announcement of the call for applications to the Citizens' Assembly, each of us applied individually, filled out a questionnaire and were randomly selected. 40 participants were selected, each one was contacted individually by the ZIP Institute, who explained in more detail about the project and the meetings.

We were sent an information package with more detailed information about the project, our role as participants, how the meetings are organized, how the ZUM platform is used, as well as material that we read before the meetings started. The material included examples of how other countries are handling Covid-19, an overview of measures taken by the Government in the country and many articles, surveys and research related to Covid-19.

We had a trial meeting, where we were introduced to the application tools we used during our meetings - the Zoom application and participants had a chance to get to know each other before the process began. Then we had 8 meetings scheduled every third week and one extra meeting. During the meetings we were divided into small groups, in which we discussed, analyzed and solved the assigned tasks.

During the meetings we had the opportunity to learn more about the coronavirus and the pandemic with Covid-19 from a number of professionals such as Dr. Sead Zeinel specialist / internist, Dr. Zlate Mehmedovic specialist in occupational medicine, Dr. Aleksandra Grozdanova Professor at the Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Dr. Bojan Boskovski, specialist neurologist and national coordinator for WHO. From their presentations we were educated about the types of vaccines, their mechanisms of action, the work of the WHO, the need to comply with preventive measures, mental health, etc. During the meetings, lively discussions were developed, especially about: combined education, the right to choose vaccination, profitability during the pandemic, the prices of Covid tests (we compared the prices in other countries and in our country), high mortality rate as a consequence of Covid in the country, distinguishing between the terms "lockdown" and "quarantine".

PRINCIPLES

As a result of the new knowledge obtained from the experts, information during the research of links and materials related to Covid on the Internet as well

as the discussions of the participants in the Citizens' Assembly, the following principles emerged:

- 1. Affordable health for all** (affordable health insurance for all);
- 2. Education for all in times of crisis;**
- 3. Without double criteria** (to apply to all the same rules and legal measures to apply equally to all);
- 4. Work for all in times of crisis;**
- 5. Assistance to vulnerable categories** (assistance for unemployed persons and socially disadvantaged families, assistance for single parents);
- 6. Economic equality;**
- 7. Respect for the right to choose** (unrestricted human freedoms);
- 8. The right to free non-formal education for Kovid-19;**
- 9. Unification in healthcare** (equal protocols and measures for all);

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the set principles, we made a number of recommendations. The following recommendations were adopted by voting and a majority of 75% of the participants.

1.

Short title:
Vaccination
The topic refers to the area:
Prevention
Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)
<p>-Mass immunization of the population which would achieve greater protection of the population and less spread of the virus, as well as reduction of mortality. Only with mass immunization will we be able to defeat the pandemic, and the responsibility lies with each of us for ourselves and our loved ones. The state should provide vaccines as soon as possible in order to enter collective immunization.</p> <p>- The recommendation respects the right of citizens who do not want to be vaccinated because it is a personal choice and restrictive measures apply to all. The Ministry of Health should make a campaign for them to be vaccinated and they do not want that. The state should take measures for such cases.</p>
Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?
<p>-Many scientific research, WHO, daily experiences of vaccinated people and lectures by experts indicate that vaccines protect and are the only way out of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>-If vaccinated people become infected, according to experts, they will experience milder symptoms of the virus;</p> <p>-After the vaccination started in the country, reduced mortality and new cases were noticed;</p> <p>- Israel has largely normalized life after mass immunization against Covid 19. But the question is what to do with those people who do not want to be vaccinated, who enters the domain of public health and personal rights, so Israel relied on various incentives to the population to receive the vaccine. WHAT WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO BE VACCINATED: Here is how Israel solved the problem (vesnik.com)</p>

2.

Short title:
Strict border restrictions
The topic refers to the area:
Prevention

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

-The recommendation seeks to set strict restrictions on borders, with the state requiring citizens to receive a negative PCR test and / or a vaccination certificate upon entry to prevent the import of delta soybeans for travelers coming from high-risk countries where they are registered. a large number of cases with this mutation. Prevent new strains of the virus from entering.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- The recommendation will provide greater protection of the population in the country and will significantly reduce the spread of the infection;

3.

Short title:

Managing government with economic collapse

The topic refers to the area:

Economy

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

- The state failed in managing the crisis and the few measures they adopted did not bear fruit. The recommendation includes greater accountability by the state for the funds spent on the crisis and greater financial assistance to those affected by the crisis who lost their jobs, low-income people and intervention in companies that profit from the state and have no employees; [Published list of companies that took aid from the state, but did not pay the workers - Republika \(republika.mk\)](#)

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- The recommendation will provide insight into the implemented measures of the government as well as the next measures that it will take;
-Give more grants for recovery from the crisis or for those who want to start their own business;

4.

Short title:

Physical presence teaching

The topic refers to the area:

Education

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

The recommendation refers to the re-introduction of physical education in order to increase concentration and interaction among young people. Online education is difficult for both parents and students and we believe that students should return to school.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- It will be easier and more efficient, there will be greater concentration, socialization, functionalization. A normal teaching function will be achieved. Development of students' mental capacities. The work of teachers and parents will be facilitated.
Personal experience Some parents could not provide their children with computers and other learning aids online.

5.

Short title:

Employment of a larger number of medical staff

The topic refers to the area:

Health

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

Employment of a larger number of medical staff which would have greater effectiveness and more accessible services. For that purpose, we demand that the status of the medical staff that is under contract be resolved, that students graduate from medical school and other unemployed medical personnel be employed.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- Employing a larger number of medical staff will facilitate the management of the infection and will reduce the workload of hospitals
-Patients will have greater access to health services and will increase the capacity of hospitals.

6.

Short title:

Regular disinfection of institutions

The topic refers to the area:

Health

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

This recommendation refers to the supply of state and public institutions with disinfectant and protective means and regular (daily) disinfection of the same (health institutions, schools, public transport, state borders, shopping centers, sports centers, municipalities). Introduce greater control over when and by what means disinfection is performed. The Ministry to introduce a joint commission that would take care of the implementation of effective disinfection.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- We heard from expert Dr. Zlate Mehmedovic at one of the meetings that disinfection of public areas is very important and thus will prevent the retention of bacteria and microorganisms on the surfaces and will prevent the spread of infection.

-We brought this recommendation because we read the following article:

<https://mzzpr.org.mk/2020/04/07/%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%B8-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0-covid-19/>

7.

Short title:

Vaccination and tourism vouchers

The topic refers to the area:

Tourism

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

This recommendation encourages citizens to be vaccinated so that the state can award vouchers for travel to the country to anyone who will be vaccinated. This would also improve health status, the economy and tourism.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

Following the example of Serbia, the vaccinated citizens received a voucher of 1500 denars from the state.

- Greece will offer young people a voucher of 150 euros to receive the vaccine for Covid-19. <https://www.euronews.com/2021/06/28/greek-teens-offered-150-in-vouchers-if-they-get-a-covid-19-jab>

- For all vaccinated citizens over 50 who received the first dose of vaccine during the month of July, Montenegro gives them a tourist voucher of 50 euros. [Crna Gora: For vaccinations and tourist trips from 50 euros | Balkan News | Al Jazeera](#)

- Many countries are considering giving vouchers to vaccinated people, polls are being conducted such as in Ireland, the government is offering 100 euros for people over 65 who have received the Covid-19 vaccine, which can be used as a voucher in local hotels, restaurants, etc. [Poll: Should over-65s get hotel or food voucher after they receive Covid-19 vaccine? \(thejournal.ie\)](#)

8.

Short title:

Delta Strain Education (Indian Strain)

The topic refers to the area:

Education

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

Greater education of the specifics of the delta strain of the citizens about the spread of this strain in order to better prevent and prevent the consequences and education about whether the vaccines work on these new strains as well

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

-Some countries are experiencing enormous expansion of the delta soybean, e.g. Australia reintroduces restrictive measures.
- With the arrival of autumn and the possible new wave of infected people, all citizens will benefit from greater education for the delta soybean The [Indian soybean has returned the fears of a new autumn wave of Covid-19 | Northern Macedonia DW | 21.06.2021](#)

9.

Short title:

Availability of the "My appointment" system

The topic refers to the area:

Health

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

This review refers to the availability of the existing My Appointment Scheduling System which almost does not work. We demand significant improvement of the system so that the citizens can schedule examinations without any problems. To improve the system or to introduce a new one in its place that will serve all citizens in the country.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- The idea is important because the citizens have problems with the system even before the pandemic. The corona virus only made matters worse by scheduling checkups. There are citizens who really rely on the system and are very dissatisfied and have to look for alternative ways of scheduling examinations.
- Fair criteria will be achieved because the system can be used by all citizens in the country

10.

Short title:

Introducing a home visit

The topic refers to the area:

Health

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

We ask the Ministry of Health to introduce the home visit service for people with disabilities, people with disabilities and the elderly. By introducing this service, people would have greater access to medical care and assistance and would prevent further complications for patients.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

-Number experiences from the daily life of the citizens in the country and personal experiences of the participants
-It will facilitate the work of doctors and ambulances who are already overloaded with work

11.

Short title:

Keeping distance and working in shifts

The topic refers to the area:

Preventive measures

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

This recommendation proposes the citizens to keep a distance of 2 (meters) especially indoors and to be mandatory when moving or playing sports outdoors and indoors. The recommendation will prevent and spread the virus in the workplace

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

-The recommendations of the WHO experts we encountered and the falling numbers show that the measure works
-Employees in positions with a larger number of employees to work in shifts in order to further protect themselves

12.

Short title:

Profitability of pharmaceutical companies and private health institutions

The topic refers to the area:

Economy

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

- We try to achieve approximately the same prices for treatment in private and public health, ie reduction of the prices of the tests or the same to be free, as well as reduction of the prices of the basic medicines for treatment from Kovid-19 or to be covered by the state,

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

Proof of the profiteering is the published profit of the private laboratories and hospitals at the expense of the citizens
-Daily experiences of the citizens have shown that the prices for testing and treatment are really huge and not everyone can afford them
-Most participants agree with the recommendation because they saw it themselves
<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/gphc-and-cma-warn-pharmacies-against-profiteering-covid-19>

13.

Short title:

Psychological support

The topic refers to the area:

Health

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

Establishment of special centers with professionals to help citizens deal with and help with mental health. This recommendation will improve the mental health of citizens, especially in the post-war period.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

-Recommendation from an expert we heard in the meetings about the importance and importance of mental health.
-Scientific medical journals <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmed.2021.666973/full>
<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/tackling-the-mental-health-impact-of-the-covid-19-crisis-an-integrated-whole-of-society-response-0cca0b/>
-Most participants agree with the recommendation

14.

Short title:

Grants for small companies

The topic refers to the area:

Economy

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

The state and its institutions and non-governmental organizations to invest more in grants for small companies. This measure achieves the survival of small companies and also contributes to employment in the country.

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- The employees in the small businesses and the citizens will have benefits from the recommendation which will improve the economy.
- Examples from other countries: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/kolika-je-cena-rada-u-srbiji-tokom-pandemije/30495862.html>
- Many of the group agree with the recommendation

15.

Short title:

Teaching with partial physical presence (combined)

The topic refers to the area:

Education

Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)

The Ministry of Education to organize combined classes with physical and online attendance, for example physical attendance, one with online attendance. The children will have more attention during the teaching presence knowing that they are in a school institution

Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?

- It is important because the children forgot how to behave in a school
- Numerous examples from everyday life and from those present in the group
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2021/04/02/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-recommendations-and-opportunities-for-ukraine>
- Following the example of Turkey, whose Ministry of Education introduced several television channels for education for those students who did not have the means to attend classes regularly; (<https://www.aa.com.tr/mk/%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%BE%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5-%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B4-19-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BD%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B6%D1%83%D0%B0-%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0/1788073>)

16.

Short title:
Vaccination in rural areas
The topic refers to the area:
Health
Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)
Providing better conditions for vaccination, provided transportation to the nearest vaccination points, for those who do not have transportation. To find the best alternative for vaccination of people in rural areas (to provide space, which will be intended for vaccination in villages, mobile teams could go home and vaccinate people at home).
Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rural COVID-19 Innovations - COVID-19 Vaccination (ruralhealthinfo.org) - COVID-19 Vaccination for Rural and Remote Essential Workers CDC -

17.

Short title:
Public transport
The topic refers to the area:
Prevention
Recommendation Description: (What do we mean by this recommendation and what is it trying to achieve?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To put into operation more buses with a limited number of passengers in order to reduce congestion. The recommendation helps people not to get organized with other cars or use other means of transportation. Frequent bus routes reduce congestion and reduce virus transmission. Introduce night lines in order to help citizens and those working in the third shift. To have more control in the buses on whether the passengers adhere to the measures
Proof: Why is this idea important and how will the 'fair' criteria be met?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The recommendation is important because most citizens use public transport and will benefit from improved conditions and more bus lines - From the personal experience of the participants, most agree that more frequent bus lines and night lines must be introduced - BUSES IN SKOPJE FROM TODAY DRIVE OVER ALL DAY WITH SATURDAY SCHEDULE - I WANT TO SAY (sdk.mk) - COVID-19 Best Practices for Public Transportation (fema.gov) - Metro and Covid-19: Steps we've taken WMATA - The effects of COVID-19 epidemic on public transport ridership and frequencies. A case study from Tampere, Finland - ScienceDirect

CONCLUSION

We had a good cooperation with the ZIP Institute and the whole team and we are satisfied with the whole organization. We had good cooperation between the participants. The meetings took place smoothly and on time.

We had the opportunity to talk to the experts and ask them questions. We had enough time between the meetings to research more, to learn from examples from other countries and how they deal with the virus, and we learned a lot.

The materials from the meetings and lectures by the experts were shared with the participants after each meeting and we had the chance to review them in more detail. It was done on fair principles, the discussions were conducted with maximum respect for all participants, and the definition of the recommendations was done with an extensive discussion and a long review of the evidence.

The process was fair and democratic, there was room for all participants to express themselves and vote. A sufficient number of recommendations have emerged which are supported by more than 75% of the participants and which we believe will be implemented by the Ministry of Health.

We believe that the Citizens' Assembly was an excellent opportunity to discuss an important topic with people from all over the country and to contribute to improving the well-being of the citizens.