LANGUAGE LITERACY IN THE EARLY GRADES

REPORT
research of the achievements at the end of the first cycle of the realization of the project

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Skopje, December 2013

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Study conducted by the Macedonian Civic Education Center

МАКЕДОНСКИ
ЦЕНТАР ЗА
ГРАЃАНСКО
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

There is a common practice in well-planned action projects, and especially in those of large scale, to make a baseline study prior to the project activities, and after a determined key period of carrying out the project to do a repeated study in order to perceive the progress and the effects of the project activities.

This report presents the findings of the study of the state of affairs at the end of the first cycle1 of the realization of the programme Language Literacy in the Early Grades (2013), and the comparisons of the findings from the study of the initial state prior to the beginning of the project activities conducted in 2010. The implementation of the – Language Literacy in the Early Grades was carried out by the Bureau for Development of Education and the UNICEF Office-Skopje, and on their behalf, the research study has been conducted by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre. Mrs. Bojana Naceva, and Mrs. Ana Mickovska Raleva, took part in the study and in preparing of the Report in 2010, whose parts of the Report (with their permission) have also been used in this Report when comparing the results between the two measuring.

The conceptual framework of the study was set up on the basis of the analysis of factors that could have impact on the effects of the project activities, and which could be found in studies about active teaching in reading and writing. Hence, this study has made an attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

▶ What are the attitudes of the teachers to the instruction of the beginning reading and writing?

▶ What are teachers' perceptions concerning the importance of certain contents and competences related to reading and writing and what are the expectations of the students?

▶ What is the level of pedagogical knowledge of teachers related to the teaching of mother tongue in the early grades?

▶ What is the level of support given to teachers by the managing staff and the other school teachers in improving mother tongue instruction, in general, and particularly in the program of Language Literacy in the Early Grades?

▶ What is the level of the knowledge and understanding of the students on issues and tasks on reading and writing?

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1 Under the term First Cycle we understand the three-year realization of the instruction in the Mother Tongue in the Grade Teaching Phase with students who at the beginning of the realization of the Programme attended Grade 1 and in the period of the measuring of 2013, they had completed Grade 3 in the schools, and were the first that were included in the activities (schools from Phase 1).

This Report presents comparisons of the states of affairs between the selected project schools and the control schools on the basis of the results of the measuring done in 2013, and the comparisons have been made of the results of the project schools prior to the beginning of the implementation of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* (in 2010), and after three years of its implementation (in 2013).

In Part I of this Report, are given in details, the results of the measuring and the comparisons that will serve for further planning and realization of the project activities, as well as for further evaluations. The Part II and Part III of the Report contain basic information about the program - *Language Literacy*, and about the methodology of the study. The structure of this Report differs from the structure of the *Baseline Report (the Measuring of the Beginning State*) from 2010, so that, at the beginning are given the results, the analyses and the information related to the results from the study, and then are given the other information about the study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the research

This study was carried out after three years from the beginning of the realization of the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades aiming to collect information about:

- ▸ the progress and the effects of applying the principles and techniques in the teaching of mother tongue (Macedonian and Albanian) that are promoted in the program with the teachers of the grade teaching phase; and
- ▸ the achievements of the students in the first cycle of their education (from Grade 1 to Grade 3).

More precisely, the study was carried out after one cycle of the realization of the program and to:

1. to collect information about the changes in the trained teachers related to their attitudes to studying and learning the Macedonian and the Albanian languages, related to the principles of the instruction in the Language Literacy in the Early Grades;

2. to investigate the changes in the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers related to the understanding of the contents and of the pedagogical approaches in the teaching of reading and writing;

3. to collect information about the differences in the achievements at the end of Grade 3 of the students that had been taught by the trained teachers in the Language Literacy in the Early Grades related to the achievements of the students that had been taught by the teachers who had not been trained;

4. to collect information about the realization of the activities in the project schools, the care of the teachers for applying the approaches from the Language Literacy in the Early Grades and the support that they had received in the school.

Conducting the study

Data were collected on a sample of 14 schools, that from the beginning were included in the program - *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* (the project schools) and 14 schools (with similar characteristics) that were not included (the control schools). It was planned to examine 10 teachers and 20 students (at the beginning of Grade 4) who have classes in the premises of the central school building, and the school principals and representatives of the pedagogical service – 2 representatives from the project schools. In those schools where the number of teachers and students was smaller than that one planned in the sample, the data were collected

from all of the teachers and the students. The total number of examined teachers was 293, and of students – 572, and, also, data were collected from 32 school principals and representatives from the pedagogical service. Additional data were collected in focus-groups from 12 BDE advisers and 112 examinees from the project schools (teachers, national trainers and school support staff). In those schools was conducted the baseline study (the initial state) prior to the beginning of the realization of the project activities. Such an approach provides reliability in comparing the state both in the project and in the non-project schools after three years, since the students in the course of the first cycle were taught by teachers who had passed the training at the very beginning of the program. Though the schools are a representative example of the project schools in Phase I, nevertheless they are not a representative of all primary schools in the country and the data cannot be generalized for all of the schools in the former Yugoslav.

Data were collected using the following instruments developed for this study:
- ▶ Scale of attitudes on learning and teaching mother tongue;
- ▶ Test of pedagogical knowledge of teachers (related to the principles of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades)*;
- ▶ Scale of concern for applying the approaches from the *Language Literacy.*
- ▶ Qestionnaire for teachers;
- ▶ Test on writing for Grade 3 students;
- ▶ Test on reading with understanding for Grade 3 students;
- ▶ Questionnaire about the circumstances and practices in the family related to writing and reading for Grade 3 students;
- ▶ Questionnaire for school principals and school support staff.
- ▶ Protocol for a semi-structural interview for a focus-group.

The data were processed for all examined subjects according to established indicators, and comparisons of the states between the two measuring in the project schools and in the control schools are also given.

Basic findings of the study

A short description of each indicator, and of the main findings related to it for this study, is given below (the indicators, in more details, are given In Part III of this Report).

Within the frameworks of the indicators for the students and for the teachers the measurement shows that:

▸ In 2013, in the project schools are achieved higher results in relation to the control schools (in the first measuring there were no differences);

▸ In the project school there is an improvement of the achievements of students and of the attitudes of teachers in 2013, compared to the results of the measurement in 2010, and

▸ In the teaching of the Macedonian Language the students and the teachers are more successful in doing the tests compared to those in the teaching of the Albanian language, but the differences in the successfulness of the students by different languages have decreased compared to those of the measuring in 2010.

This denotes that the program had positive effects in the instruction of the mother tongue in the first cycle of Primary Education.

Indicator	Brief description	Findings
Understanding of learning and of teaching mother tongue	Attitudes of teachers about learning and teaching mother tongue based on the principles in the programme *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*	- Teachers from the project schools, to a higher degree than the teachers from the control schools have changed their attitudes to the teaching and learning of the reading and the writing in the early grades in direction to accepting the instruction based on the principles promoted by the programme – *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* - Teachers in the instruction of the Macedonian Language accept more the new approaches than the teachers in the instruction in the Albanian Language, but among them there are no differences between the two measuring. - Teachers from the project schools with instruction in the Albanian Language to a considerable degree have increased the accepting of the new approaches.

Indicator	Brief description	Findings
	Methodical and pedagogical knowledge of teachers related to the approaches promoted by the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*.	- In 2013 teachers from control schools were less successful in doing the test than the teachers from the project schools (there is a slight improvement in the project school and a slight decline in the control schools). - Teachers in the project schools giving instruction in the Macedonian language understand better the new approaches than the teachers giving the instruction in the Albanian language. - Teachers understand better the new approaches in reading than the approaches for improving writing. - Also, as it was the case in 2010, the methodological procedures that are selected by the teachers are not often speciffic for the teaching situation.
	Expectations of the teachers related to the students achievements in the mother tongue.	- There is no big difference in the expectations of the teachers from their students in 2010 and those in 2013. - 2/3 of the teachers partly agree that the students from their classes could achieve more than that prescribed by the curriculum, and almost 1/3 consider that to a great extent the students could achieve more than that what is prescribed by the curriculum. - Alike, as it was the case in 2010, the majority of the teachers from the project school have knowledge of the curricula for the mother tongue in Grades 4-6, and almost half of the teachers are not familiar with the curricula for Grades 7-9. - The cooperation between the grade teachers was improved, mostly in the mutual visits on class hours. - In the project schools, with instruction in the Albanian language, the cooperation between the teachers from the grade teaching phase and that from the subject teaching phase was increased compared to that one in the schools with instruction in the Macedonian language, but the support that they had received from the school principal and from the pedagogical service of the school was much smaller.

Indicator	Brief description	Findings
Support to changes in the teaching of mother tongue in project schools	School management staff satisfaction with the the teaching of the mother tongue and satisfaction with the students' achievements.	- The school management staff is mainly not satisfied with the instruction in the mother tongue in their own schools. - Compared to the measuring in 2010, no significant difference was stated in the opinions of the school management staff about the way of the realization of the teaching. - Generally, concerning the issue about the achievements of the students in their own schools, the majority of the respondents consider that they are on the level of the curricula requirements and are the same as in other neighboring similar schools. - Concerning the domain of writing, compared to that one of reading with understanding, more frequently are met answers that the students have achievements that are lower than those present in the curricula.
	Support to promoting the teaching of the mother tongue, including also the equipment of the school.	- The majority of school principals and the representatives of the pedagogical service consider that there is good mutual cooperation between teachers and that the teachers could may relay on the support in the school in introducing innovations in the teaching of the mother tongue. - The school principals and the representatives from the pedagogical service consider that there is big cooperation among the grade teachers, but they practice very little the mutual visits to class hours and the discussion about the classes. - The equipment of schools with specific aids for the teaching of mother tongue is at an average level. It is noted that the schools are better equiped, compared to 2010, in their school libraries and in the special departments for the grade teaching phase with school-reading books and magazines for children. - According to the teachers, the clasrooms in 2013 are better equipped with materials for making books and with language games, but the situation with magazines for children worsened.
	School management staff awareness about the Project and their preparedness to give support.	- The management staff is sufficiently informed about the aims and of the activities of the Project, and even 2/3 of them were fully attending the training activities. - School principals and the representatives of the pedagogical service are prepared to give support to the trainers and in the visits to classes, they attended the training and at the meetings of the acting bodies of teachers (school grade teachers councils), and almost half the school principals engaged themselves in providing the conditions and the materiials that are conected with the financial means.

Indicator	Brief description	Findings
Achievement of students	Achievement of students on the test in reading and on the test in writing.	- The achievement of students in 2013 are higher than those in 2010, but the difference between the results is due more to the increased worsening of the achievements in the control schools than to the improvement of the results in the project schools.
		- In the domain of reading with understanding, the students of the project schools have achieved higher results than the students of the control schools. In the measurement of 2010, they did not differ between themselves.
		- The largest progress, compared to that one in 2010, is recorded in drawing direct and implicit information from the text, in arranging the order of the events and in foreseeing the possible actions of the story.
		- In 2013, the difference in the successfulness of the students in different languages of instruction at the test in reading decreased. This denotes bigger gains (bigger improvement) in the instruction of the Albanian language (though still the students attending instruction in the Macedonian language are more successful).
		- The students from the project schools were a bit more successful in writing in comparison with the students from the control schools. Nevertheless, the results on the tasks that measured the ability of the students in writing with given words, as well as the use of orthography and the needed lexis, are lower than the expected results and than the prescribed expectations in the curriculum for Grade 3 according to all of the criteria (and especially concerning the composition and the originality).
		- Students studying on Macedonian language of instruction have higer achievents on the test on writing than the students on the Albanian language of instructions.

Indicator	Brief description	Findings
Acceptation, realization and the need to give support to the *realization of the Language Literacy in the Early Grades*	Acceptation of the project activities.	- More than of the teachers have overcome the concern related to the acceptation and the realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* - More than half of the teachers are still concerned about that how the application would have impact on the organization of the teaching, the learning and on the achievements of the students
	Level of realization of the project activities.	- A larger percent of the teachers estimate themselves that they are at the upper half of the level of the application of the 10 principles and techniques in the teaching (mostly on the level of improvement - 40% of the teachers). - The largest is the percent of the teachers (42%) who stated that the approaches and the principles of the programme they apply in more than of the class hours in the mother tongue.
	The need to give support to the trained teachers in various domains.	- Generally speaking the teachers need additional training for particular aspects of the teaching of reading and writing. - Complementary support and training is needed more to the teachers in the instruction in the Albanian language (from 23% to 53% on particular aspects) than to the teachers in the instruction in the Macedonian language (between 3% and 15%).
Additional information and analysis of the factors that may have influenced on the achievement of the students in the project schools		- The teachers in most of the project schools (as well as the advisors from the BDE) expected that the achievements of the students in 2013 would be higher than those in 2010. - It was expected that the results in the domain of writing would be a bit weaker than the results in the domain of reading with understanding. - In those schools in which the results are improved it is noticed that there is a better understanding of the curriculum, a greater focus on particular methodological approaches, creative application of the techniques and greater certainty in their combining with what they know from other trainings, as well as the existence of various types of formal and non-formal cooperation between the teachers and the trainers. - In the schools with worsened results, the explanations about such results were looked for in not having time, overburdening with administrative tasks, not having freedom in the realization of the curriculum, as well interference with the requirements for using ICT in the teaching. Also, the cooperation between the teachers was small or was lacking.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the findings presented above, it is expected that the realization of the project *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* followed by a continuing support to teachers, raised, to a certain degree, the level of the achievements of the students in the project schools and the pedagogical/methodological knowledge of teachers. Due to the decrease of the achievements in the control schools, compared to the results in 2010, it is stated that there were factors which in whole influenced negatively (in all schools), but in the project schools the program – *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* reduced the negative impact of these factors. Taking into consideration the positive influence of the program, and on the basis of a detailed analysis of the results and the examined factors that influenced on the achievements, the authors in this report would like to present the following recommendations:

1. Starting from the fact that the respondents from the school management expressed dissatisfaction of the way in which the teaching is carried out in their schools (the majority of the school directors and of the representatives of the support service staff service are trained), during the in-school support visits the advisors from the BDE are to organize meetings with the school principals and with the school support service to initiate strengthening of the activities, the tasks, the obligations and the cooperation of the various school teams for the realization of the program.

2. It is necessary to introduce in the schools a "culture" and practice of systematic monitoring and of measuring, especially in the case of long-term innovations in the teaching that lead to higher results and achievements of the students. This would help to see on time the improvement or the worsening of the achievements and on time to undertake various types of corrective activities, and also in giving the specific support.

3. It is necessary to provide direct, ongoing and well-thought support (by the advisors from the BDE, by the teachers-the main trainers/mentors, via the teams for learning, via organized sharing of good practices and other materials) of trained teachers for:

   ‣ overcoming the methodical ambivalence and increasing their self-confidance to make use of the methods diversity and freedom;

   ‣ strengthening the pedagogical and the methodical knowledge and skills, especially those related to improving the teaching for learning, assessing the students and undertaking responsibility for the achievement of the students;

   ‣ overcoming the concern about the effects of the realization of the project activities, and in particular the concern for the consequences, the cooperation and the sharing of the experiences, as well as the modifying and the upgrading of the program.

4. In the realization of the subsequent training in the schools, care should be taken for balanced activities that would enable raising the level of the methodological and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers for the language lit-

eracy of the students, especially the techniques for writing, in using and adapting the strategies of the program and in the planning of the instruction.

5. To record and to disseminate the experiences of the project schools in which the achievements of the students and of the teachers have improved.

6. In the following period the program implementer should:
   ▸ prepare more specific directions for support of the program at school level;
   ▸ with increased focus monitor the realization of the program and its effects;
   ▸ prepare instructions for the teachers, how to connect the ICT with the approaches in the program;
   ▸ give support to the teachers for earlier beginning and more focused learning of the writing, and
   ▸ add, in the criteria for teachers certification, compulsory possessing of a examples for successful realization both in reading and writing.

7. The difference in the improvement with the trained teachers with the Macedonian language of instruction and of the teachers with the Albanian language of instruction shows that a more strengthened support is needed to the teachers doing the instruction in the Albanian language. Those responsible for implementing of the program are to develop a more specified, more intensified approach.

PART 1 – FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This part presents the data obtained from the study and they are presented according to the defined indicators:

- ▶ Understanding of learning and of teaching reading and writing
- ▶ Support to the changes in learning the mother tongue in the school
- ▶ The achievements of the students
- ▶ Accepting the level of realization of the Language Literacy and the need for futher support.

The presented data represent a cross-cut of the state in the project and in the control schools of the relevant factors in monitoring the effects of the program. The states are measured at the end of the first cycle of the primary education, when the generation of students from Grade 1 that was included in the programme completed Grade 3 (in 2013), in the same schools where in 2010 the baseline study about Language Literacy was conducted. Comparisons have been made between the project and the control schools in relation to the factors which were considered that could have influence upon the changes caused by the realization of the Language Literacy. Hence, where there was a need to understand better the changes, analysed were also the changes that evolved in the subsample of project schools, i.e. in the subsample of control schools. Separately are presented the qualitative perceptions by the program implementers about the possible reasons for the achieved results.

Considering the limitations in the sample (see Part II, chapter 5), the generalization of the conclusions about the effects of the program upon the schools with different characteristics than those in the sample should be regarded very carefully.

1. UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEARNING AND OF THE TEACHING

The teachers understanding of how students learn to read and write, and how teachers should teach the students early reading and writing, was examined using three instruments. Bellow, a brief description of each instrument is given, the results obtained from the two surveys are presented, as well as the comparisons made between the project and the control schools.

1.1. Attitudes of the teachers to learning and teaching reading and writing based on the instructive framework for the language literacy

WAY OF MEASURING

Attitudes of teachers were measured on a scale of Likert's type which consisted of a total of 36 statements:

▸ 8 statements relate to understanding of how children learn to read and write and

▸ 28 statements describing approaches in teaching learning and writing.

The statements are formulated to express opinion which is in agreement.with some of the principles in the instinctive framework of the programme *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, or a statement contrary to some of those principles. Each principle is presented with 3-4 statements.

Examinees were asked to denote the degree of agreement with each statement on the 5 level scale (from 1 – I don't agree at all, up to 5 – I fully agree). The higher result on the scale denotes higher degree of acceptance of the instruction adjusted to the instructional framework of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

The results are presented using the arithmetical means of the degree of acceptance of the statements by the teachers from the project schools and from the control schools prior to the realization of the program – in 2010, and after three years of its realization, in 2013. The comparisons were made within the subgroup of the project schools and only within the subgroup of the control schools when it was considered that such information would more profoundly explain the situation. Separately are commented the statements in which the most visible are the differences between the project schools and the control schools.

The theoretical average, which could be interpreted as an indefinite attitude is 108, and the maximum value which expresses the highest degree of agreement with all of the statements is 180. In the table below, the outcomes are presented (expressed via arithmetical means (AM) on the scale) from the measuring of the attitudes of the teachers from the project schools and from the control schools in 2010 and in 2013, and the comparisons between them.

Table 1. *Comparisons of the arithmetical means on the Scale of attitudes about learning and teaching of reading and of writing*

Time of the examinations	Project schools	Significance of differences	Control schools
2013	AM =129,45	←—————→	AM=124,22
	↕	Difference significant at level 0,01	↕
Significance of differences			
	Difference significant at level 0,05	←—————→	No difference
2010	AM=125,51	No difference	AM=125,76

▸ At the beginning of the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* the teachers from the project and from the control schools did not differ in the degree of acceptance of the approaches based on the principles and the instructive frame for the reading and the writing promoted. After three years of the realization of the *Language Literacy,* the teachers from the project schools, compared to the teachers from the control schools, to a larger degree accept the learning and the teaching in the Grades 1-3 in accordance with the principles of the program and the application of the promoted approaches and techniques in the teaching (the AM on the scale for the project schools is 129.45; and the AM for the control schools is 124.22). The difference is not big, but is statistically significant.

▸ The teachers of the project schools and of the control schools, in the level of acceptance differ mostly[2] in the following statements:

• I adapt the activities related to the reading and writing to the various styles of learning of the students.

• I consider that the program should be adapted to the individual needs of the students.

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2 For about 0.4 or more units on a five level scale.

- When a Grade 1 pupil writes "a scribble", the best method is to ask him to retell the "written part".
- In order to express themselves better, I encourage the students to make drawings or to use graphics in their writing or to use graphical organizers.

▶ In the course of the three years, the acceptance of the approaches promoted by the *Language Literacy* has increased with the teachers from the project schools, while with the control schools there are no changes[3]. With regard to the three years' realization of the program in the project schools even bigger change in their accepting was expected, but it did not happen. Still, 8% of the teachers in the project schools neither declaratively do not accept the approaches in the program (they have a result on the scale which is lower than the theoretical mean), or are indifferent to them.

▶ When it is analyzed in more details, in relation to what the changes have evolved, it is noticed that with the teachers from the project schools there is – a slight increase in the degree of accepting of almost all of the statements that describe the approach in accordance with the *Language Literacy* and a more considerable decrease in the acceptance of some of the statements that represent the traditional approaches in the teaching. The agreeing decreased mostly[4] with the following statements.
  - Even, since the beginning, it should be insisted on the speed of the reading.
  - The children should first learn how to read the texts of the grade 1 book, and then you may give them to read additional literature as picture books.
  - The old practiced methods of learning are the most efficient and it should not be experimented with something else.

However, there are still quite of statements that describe the traditional approach in the teaching of reading and writing which, the teachers of the project schools do accept. It is an indicator that they have either not changed their teaching in order to be able to come to a conclusion about their effectiveness, or have been using them, but were not convinced that they are more efficient.

▶ The teachers doing the instruction in the Macedonian language, compared to the teachers doing the instruction in the Albanian language, to a considerably higher degree accept the approaches promoted by the program, as in 2010, as well as in 2013.

▶ There are no changes with the teachers of the control schools, which is expected, due to the fact that in the meantime, no interventions have been made with them in the teaching of reading and writing, related to the *Language Literacy.*

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3 When a statement is presented such **there are no changes**, it means that the differences of the arithmetical means were statistically significant, at least at the level of 0.05, and when it is stated **that there is difference/change,** it means that the differences of the arithmetical means are statistically significant up to a level of 0.5.

4 For 0.4 or more units on a five level scale.

▸ In the course of the three year realization of the program, the teachers from the project schools, to a considerable bigger degree than the teachers of the control schools, have changed their attitudes towards the teaching and the learning of reading and writing in direction to departing from the traditional approaches and accepting an instruction based on program Language Literacy in the Early Grades.

▸ In addition to the recorded changes in the project schools there is a considerable number of teachers that still accept more the traditional approaches in the instruction. This points out to their methodical ambivalence (at the same time acceptance of some traditional approaches and some of the innovative approaches).

▸ The teachers in the instruction of the Macedonian languages to a considerable higher degree accept the approaches promoted in the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades, both in 2010 and in 2013.

1.2. The methodical and the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers

WAY OF MEASURING

The methodical and the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers were measured by a Test for the teachers which consist of 13 vignettes. The vignettes represented descriptions of situations related to the teaching of reading and writing in which the teacher could behave adequately or not adequately i.e. traditionally to the approach promoted in the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades.

▸ For 7 situations it was required from the offered descriptions of a teacher reactions, the respondent to make an estimate which are adequate (for each situation alternatives were given: yes, no, and I am not sure; in some situations the correct answer was "yes", and in some situations the correct answer was "yes", and in others the correct was the answer "no" - the answer "I am not sure" was always considered as incorrect.)

▸ For 6 situations the responded was, out of the offered methodological procedures, to select the most adequate one.

1.2.1. The achievements of the teachers on the test for the methodical and the pedagogical knowledge

On the test, there were 13 tasks, out of which 7 were cluster type and the maximum number of points was 36. The results are presented via arithmetical means of solving the test or via the average results by the teachers from the project and from the

control schools prior to the beginning of the realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* in 2010 and after three years of its realization in 2013. Comparisons we made only for the project schools and only for the control schools when it was estimated that such information would more profoundly explain the situation. Specially commented were the tasks in which the most visible are the differences between the project schools and the control schools.

The distribution of the points on the test with the teachers of the project and of the control schools is presented on the Graph1. The largest number of the teachers from the control schools achieved between 16 and 19 points, while the majority of the teachers from the project schools had between 18 and 22 points.

The average number of achieved points on the test in 2013 (17.39) is still under the arithmetical mean on the test – 18. This denotes to insufficient methodological and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers for the realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*
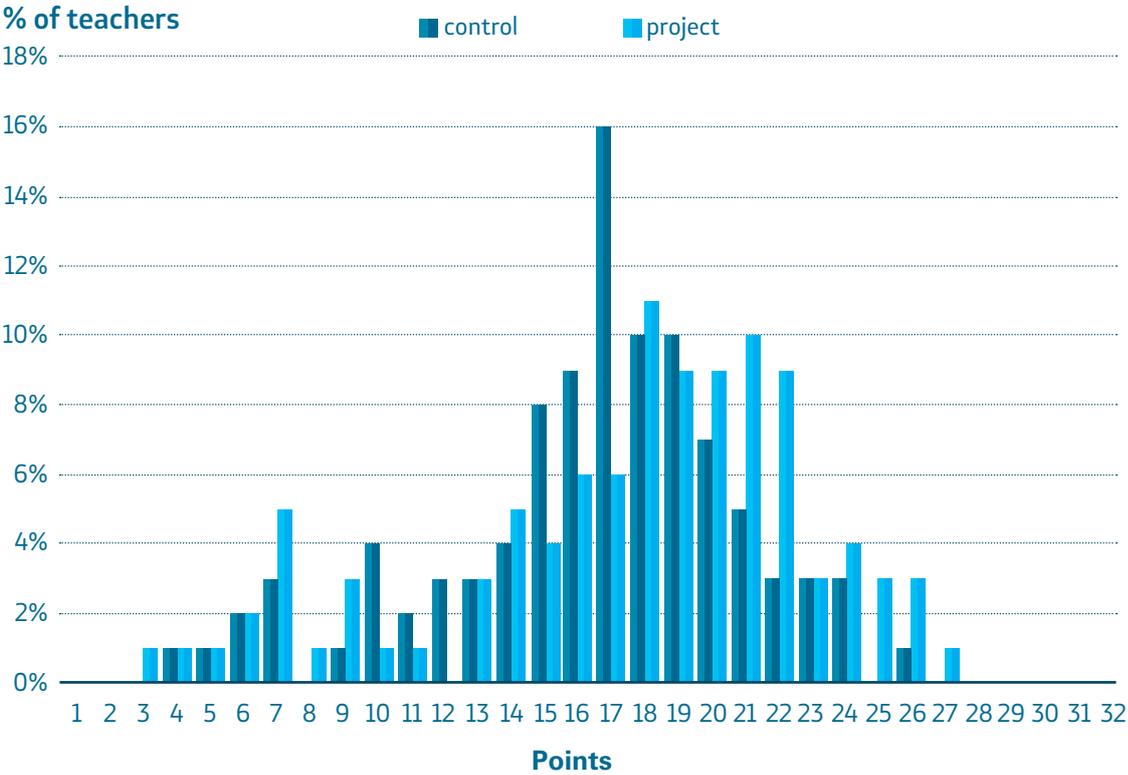
Graph 1: *Frequencies of achieved points of the teachers in the project and in the control schools*

On the basis of the comparisons presented in the graph and in the Table 2 it may be concluded that in 2013 the teachers from the project schools were a bit more successful in doing the test than the teachers in the control schools. In 2010, they

did not differ in doing this test. The differences presented in percentage points[5] in 2013 are due to the insignificant improvement with the teachers from the project schools and the inconsiderable worsening with the control schools.

Table 2. *Comparisons of the arithmetical means on the test of the methodological and pedagogical knowledge*

Time of the examinations	Project schools	Significance of differences	Control schools
2013	**AM =17,39**	← → Difference significant at level 0,05	**AM=16,34**
Significance of differences			
	No difference		No difference
2010	**AM=17,09**	← → No difference	**AM=16,69**

Generally speaking, it may be stated that there are no changes with the teachers neither from the project nor from the control schools in the past three years, though due to the three years' realization of the program it was expected that there would be improvement with the teachers from the project schools.

When you compare the achievements of the teachers in between the two testing, according to the language of instruction, the picture changes a little:

▸ In 2010 there were no differences between the project and the control schools in both languages of instruction.
▸ The teachers performing the instruction in the Macedonian language achieved higher results both in 2010 and in 2013.
▸ In 2013 the teachers of the Albanian language both in the project and in the control schools did not differ.
▸ In 2013, in the instruction in the Macedonian language, the teachers from the project schools were more successful than their colleagues in the control schools.

These data are presented in the following graph:

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5 The percentage point is the difference between the two results which were expressed in percentages. In this Report, because of easier following the text, the differences in the average solution are expressed by numerical values and the sign %. These values, in fact are percentage points and most often they refer to the differences between the two measurements (in 2010 and in 2013), the differences between the respondents from the project and from the control schools or the differences according to the languages of instruction.

2013

Albanian
- Kontrol schools — 40%
- Project schools — 40%

Macedonian
- Kontrol schools — 49%
- Project schools — 53%

2010

Albanian
- Kontrol schools — 42%
- Project schools — 43%

Macedonian
- Kontrol schools — 49%
- Project schools — 50%
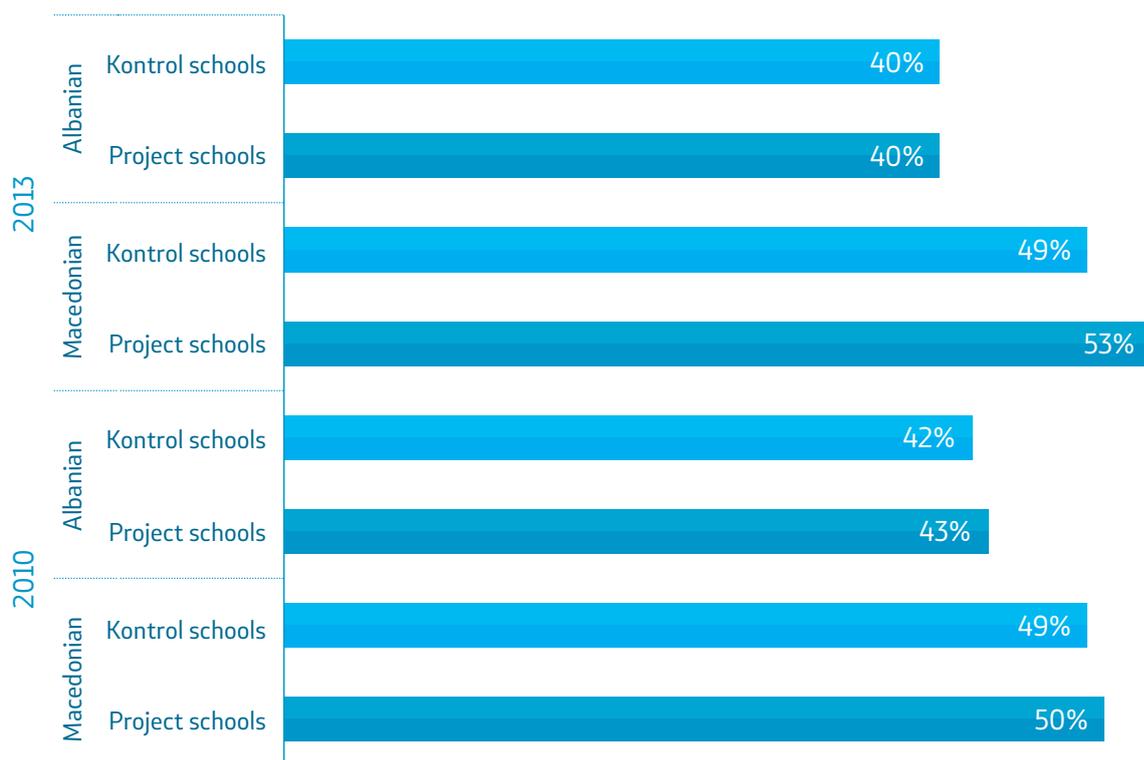
Graph 2: *The average results on the test for the methodological and the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers in the instruction of different languages of instruction.*

1.2.2. Responses to particular teaching situations

When the general data about the achievements on the test in methodological and in pedagogical knowledge, are fragmented so that the results for each task would be presented separately (1) in the project schools in 2010 and in 2013, and (2) in the control schools in 2013, you get a more clearer picture about the changes which have (not have) evolved. These results are presented in the table bellow, where shaded are the fields where the difference in the average percent of solving the test is bigger than 10%.

Table 3. *Doing the tasks of the Test on methodological and pedagogical knowledge.*

Teaching situation	Description of the requirement	Offered approaches	Percentage of doing		
			2010	2013	
			project	project	control
1	Choice of the approach in the teaching of understanding words via breaking them down - 4 approaches are offered, the approach number 3 is appropriate.	1	17	9	17
		2	38	33	27
		3	49	45	36
		4	9	12	12
2	Selection of procedure for the development of critical reading - 4 approaches are offered, the approach number 4 is appropriate.	1	30	37	31
		2	26	27	21
		3	25	23	16
		4	72	66	67
3	Selection of a procedure for improving the writing 4 approaches are offered, the approach number 4 is appropriate .	1	58	45	50
		2	13	11	6
		3	5	5	5
		4	56	49	64
4	Estimate of the potentials of a teaching approach in reading - 6 approaches are offered, the approaches 1,2,3 and 4 are appropriate.	1	67	69	54
		2	77	74	73
		3	64	77	70
		4	11	4	5
		5	87	88	85
		6	9	7	2
5	Estimate of the adequacy of different questions according age of the children - 5 approaches are offered, all approaches are appropriate.	1	86	83	88
		2	68	74	63
		3	59	74	56
		4	42	72	77
		5	33	52	38
6	Selection of a procedure for overcoming the difficulties in reading - 4 approaches are offered, the approaches 2 and 3 are appropriate	1	19	18	22
		2	61	73	56
		3	86	76	78
		4	15	17	10
7	Estimate of the adequacy of the teaching strategy for reading at a particular age - 3 approaches are offered, all approach are appropriate.	1	88	90	90
		2	91	88	93
		3	69	66	63
8	Selection of the most adequate reaction in a not planned situation - connection to the interests of the pupils.		47	56	55
9	Selection of the most appropriate feedback.		14	13	12
10	Selection of the most adequate feedback.		22	23	26
11	Selection of the best technique for understanding.		40	62	50
12	Selection of the best strategy for improving the writing.		61	55	64
13	Selection of the best strategy for improving the writing.		64	59	58

- ▶ When you compare the results in the project and in the control schools in 2013, it may be seen that in six requirements in the project schools, the percentage of solving is much bigger, but with one task (requirement 4 of the teaching situation) the percentage of solution is considerably smaller.
- ▶ If you look at the changes in the project schools from 2010 to 2013, big improvements happened with seven tasks, however with one task the percentage of solution decreased very much.

These data denote that the teachers are still not quite sure that the most adequate way of behavior in the described teaching situation is that one which is mostly in accordance with the instructional framework for reading and writing given in the *Language Literacy.* They also often consider the traditional approaches as adequate ones.

In the test, six tasks referred to the teaching of reading with understanding, 3 to the writing, 2 to the assessment (giving feed-back information), and 1 task to the planning. The number of tasks according to domains was small in order that they be elaborated separately as sub-tests, but from the data given in the table for doing the tasks from the teachers in the project schools, the following might be concluded:

- ▶ Some tasks related to reading are better done in relation to 2010, but some of them are done less successfully;
- ▶ In the domain of writing, in one task which referred to the selection of adequate strategy for improving of the writing the average doing of the test is considerably reduced in relation to 2010, and in the other two tasks the average is reduced;
- ▶ There are no changes with the tasks related to giving feed-back information.

The tasks related to planning is done considerably more successfully than in 2010.

As an illustration, below are given two teaching situations which had largest improvements in relation to 2010. Below is given also the percentage of the responses for each alternative.

Tanja, the teacher of Grade 1 students, sets many questions related to what they are reading. Some of her colleagues consider that some of the questions are too complex for this age of the students.

According to your opinion, is she supposed to set up such questions to Grade 1 children?

Circle, according to your opinion what is adequate, for EACH of the answers.

The correct answers are darkened.

	Yes	No	I am not sure
A) Where did the 7 goats live?	**84**	6	4*
B) What do you think that it would happen to the goats?	**71**	12	8
C) Which important things happened in the story?	**67**	17	10
D) How do you know that that the step-mother of Snow White was evil?	**72**	13	7
E) What would have happened if the Prince had not fallen in love with Snow White?	**43**	31	17

The correct answers are darkened.

* *The remaining percents up to 100 belong to those that did not answer.

In the above teaching situation, the number of teachers, that consider that the complex questions that presuppose conclusion (question under D) and prediction (question under E), are adequate for the teaching of understanding of what had been read about. In the trainings, accent was placed on this, and a lot of teachers had probably checked it in practice.

The following teaching situation is related to recognizing adequate techniques for understanding of the reading. There were great improvements in doing this task also.

Bojana, a teacher, has read two texts to her students. One was about roe-deer, and the other one about cows. She wants her students to compare the roe-deer with the cows.

What from following, is best to give the students in order to make the comparison?

Circle one answer.

A) Mind map 4

B) The two texts plan 8

C) Venn diagram. **62**

D) Table. I know- I want to know- I have learnt. 22*

The correct answer is darkened.

* The remaining percent's up to 100 belong to those that did not answer.

In this case, the task is related to using specific techniques which were part of the training, and which the teachers, before, had been using them rarely. However, this is an indicative issue that a considerable number of the teachers from the project schools, as an adequate technique, selected some that is not adequate for making comparisons of that what was read about. This denotes to an insufficient understanding, and probably to an inadequate use of the stated techniques.

CONCLUSION

▸ The teachers of the project schools were a little more successful in doing the test than the teachers in the control schools. Their differences are due to the small improvement in the project schools and the small worsening in the control schools. In 2010 there were no differences between the project and the control schools.

▸ The teachers doing the instruction in the Macedonian language understand better the approaches of the *Language Literacy* than the teachers in the instruction of the Albanian language. They, also, in the course of the three years of the realization of the program show bigger progress.

▸ A large number of the teachers are still not sure that the teaching procedures that comply with the principles of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* are more adequate than the traditional ones. The have understood better the new approaches in reading than the approaches in writing.

▸ As it was the case in 2010, this measuring showed also that, often the methodical procedures selected by the teachers are not specific for the teaching situation.

1.3. Considerations, experiences and practices of the teachers related to reading and writing

The third part of the questionnaire covered questions related to the attitudes and the experiences of the teachers about the teaching of the mother tongue (Macedonian, i.e Albanian). The main aim was to check whether the attitudes, the experiences and the practices of the teachers from the project schools changed considerable after the three years' experience of implementing the project.

WAY OF MEASURING

▶ Attitudes and experiences of the teachers about the mother tongue instruction were measured by an instrument containing a Scale of attitudes, related to the expectations of the students related to reading and writing at the end of Grade 3, and 5 cluster questions about the teaching of mother tongue in the school.

▶ In particular, measured were: the importance of acquiring particular knowledge and skills by the students, the types of materials which are used in the teaching, the familiarity with curricula for mother tongue instruction for upper grades, the perception of the degree of rigidity/flexibility of curricula, etc...

▶ Furthermore, it contained questions related to the degree of cooperation and of giving support to colleagues and the support school service in carrying out the teaching as well as in making an estimate of the need for training of particular aspects in the of teaching mother tongue.

▶ At the end teachers were asked about the teaching aids that they have in the classrooms, and are used in the teaching of mother tongue.

1.3.1. Knowledge and skills that are to be acquired by students in Grade 3

The instruction to a large extent was led by an implicit teaching program implemented by the teacher, i.e. how he/she understands the teaching aims and what importance he/she places on them. The opinion of the teachers about the importance of concrete knowledge and skills that the students should to acquire by Grade 3, was estimated by a Questionnaire containing a set of 25 questions.

In the table below (Table 4) are given the 25 questions and the percentage of teachers from the project schools who selected the category – very important (in the research in 2010 and in 2013).

Table 4: *Consideration of teachers about the importance of concrete knowledge and skills that the students are expected to acquire by Grade*

		2010 %	2013 %
1.	To formulate sentences in direct and indirect speech in speaking and in writing.	65	58
2.	To use words with opposite meaning.	47	65
3.	To discover and to use various and cognate words that refer to the same notion.	39	58
4.	To systemize events according to their appearance in the oral and written narration.	73	73
5.	When commenting texts to make difference between a reason and a consequence, a fact and an opinion, the main idea and the details related to the idea.	55	51
6.	To compose sentence which has meaning and in which the words are arranged rightly.	89	92
7.	To narrate events according to pictures and according to given words.	81	99
8.	To answer questions with a complete sentence.	91	93
9.	To answer questions, whose answer is explicitly given in the text.	45	47
10.	To answer questions which require conclusion.	67	73
11.	To raise questions related to the text.	85	89
12.	To be able to sum up the important details.	76	77
13.	To work on projects in the domain of the Macedonian language.	38	45
14.	To be able to foresee what would happen further in the text.	62	65
15.	To notice the basic theme, course of events, dialogue, monolog.	75	83
16.	To make difference between title, author, illustration of a text, or a book.	77	86
17.	To understand the meaning of unknown (the new) words.	79	88
18.	To read loudly and correctly, respecting the punctuation marks.	92	93
19.	To understand what have heard about.	87	90
20.	To check up quickly a given text.	32	27
21.	Loudly to explain how they have understood the text.	78	80
22.	To analyze words (by breaking them down to voice, syllables, grouping them according to the root of the word).	57	64
23.	To write correctly an informative text.	40	51
24.	To use correctly all the punctuation marks.	86	87
25.	To compose a narrative text about own experience.	79	77

Generally speaking, the opinion of the teachers about the importance of particular knowledge and skills, that the students are to master by Grade 3, has not change much in three years. There, where there are changes, they are mainly in the direction of increasing the percentage of teachers who consider that particular knowledge and skills are very important.

The largest number of the teachers considers that, for the students, by the end of Grade 3 the most important issue is:

- to learn to compose sentences that have meaning and in which the words are correctly arranged;
- to narrate events according to given pictures and given words;
- to read aloud and to respect the punctuation marks correctly;
- to understand that what they have heard; and
- to answer to questions with complete sentence.

On the other side, a *smaller number of teachers* consider that the following skills are important:

- formulating sentences in direct and indirect speech;
- finding out and using various and related words that refer to same notion;
- to distinguish between reason and consequence, fact and opinion, main idea and details, related to the idea;
- answering to questions, whose answer is not explicitly given in the text;
- ability for quick checking up of a text;
- writing correctly of informative texts; and
- working on projects in the domain of the mother tongue.

According to the results, in 2013 there are very small differences between the teachers from the project and from the control schools, and the differences are also small between the teachers in the project schools with instruction in Macedonian language and the teachers in the project schools with instruction in Albanian language.

1.3.2. Familiarity with mother tongue curricula

Familiarity with the expected outcomes from learning mother tongue until the end of primary education is considered as important also in the realization of the curricula in the first cycle. Indicator for the situation in our schools is the questions about the familiarity with the curricula for the next cycles. From the answers of the responders it may be stated that:

- largest part of the teachers in the project schools possess familiarity (partly or to great extent) of mother tongue curricula for Grades 4-6 (98% of the respondents);
- almost half of the teachers are not familiar with the curricula for Grades 7 - 9 (45%).

This situation was stated in the study in 2010 also, and this shows that the discussion in the framework of the training for the *Language* Literacy about the importance of the familiarity with the expected outcomes was not a sufficient motive for the teachers to get familiar in more details with the mother tongue curricula, and particularly in the third cycle of the primary education.

Legend: ■ Not at all ■ Partly ■ To a great extent

Familiarity with curricula Grades 7 – 9
- 2013: 45 | 46 | 9
- 2010: 48 | 41 | 11

Familiarity with curricula Grades 4 – 6
- 2013: 2 | 51 | 47
- 2010: 14 | 45 | 41

Methodical freedom
- 2013: 0 | 34 | 66
- 2010: 3 | 45 | 52

Percent of respondents
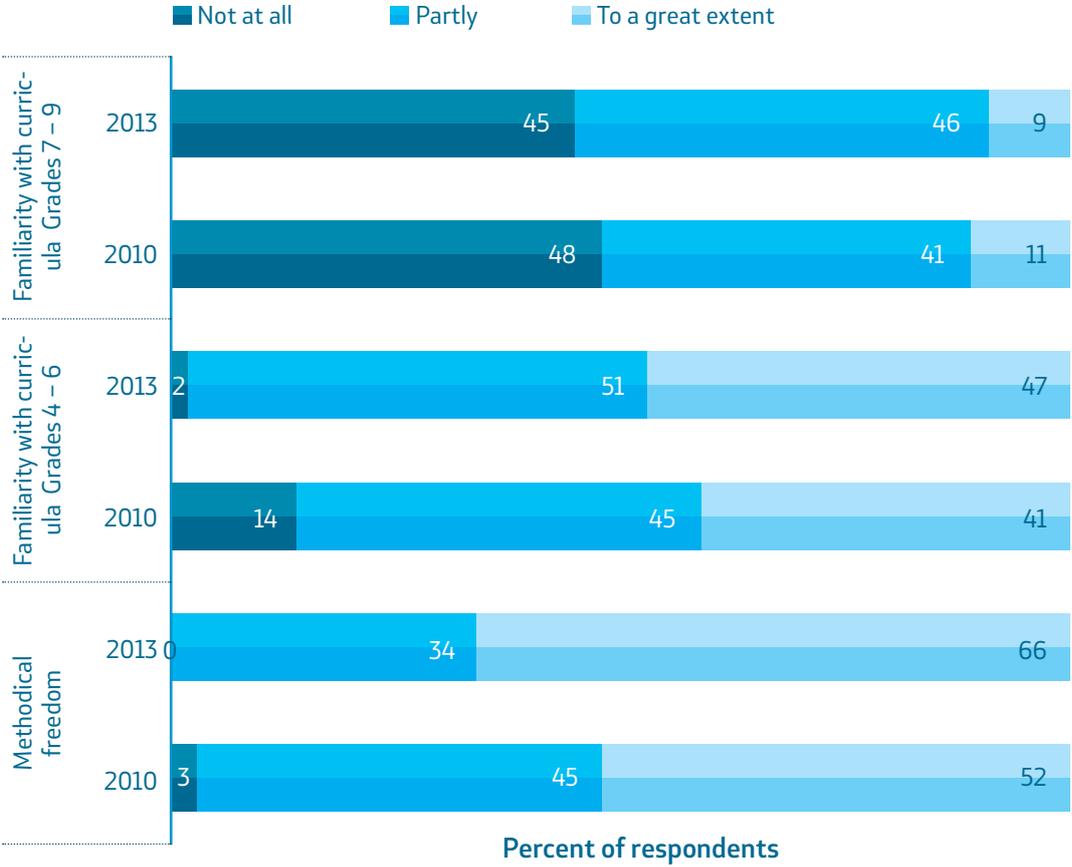
Graph 3: *Familiarity with curricula and the attitude of the teachers in the project schools*

Concerning the attitude – to what extent the mother tongue curricula give freedom for making a choice of the approaches that are considered as the most adequate, the majority of the teachers from the project schools (66%) *to a great extent* agree. In 2010, 52% of the teachers from the project schools agreed to a great extent (Graph 3). This difference is particularly important because, in the past three years, in introducing innovations in the teaching methods, the teachers from the project schools were probably referring to their own experience in applying various methods in the teaching and the ability for adapting the curricula. The teachers noticed that the curricula provide for them the necessary methodical freedom

1.3.3. Expectation of the teachers in attaining the curricula requirements

One of the findings given in the analysis of the curricula, prepared by international consultants, was that the expectations in the curricula are low (see the information in Part II of this Report). On the other side, in many investigations of the factors about high achievements, a correlation is found between the expectations of the teachers and the achievements of the students. Therefore, the teachers were asked about their expectations, i.e. did the students from their classes might achieve more than that prescribed in the curriculum. The responses of the teachers from the project schools are presented in the following graph.

Students achieve more than that prescribed by the curriculum

■ Not at all ■ Partly ■ In a great extent

	Not at all	Partly	In a great extent
2013	6	64	30
2010	11	65	24

Percent of respondents
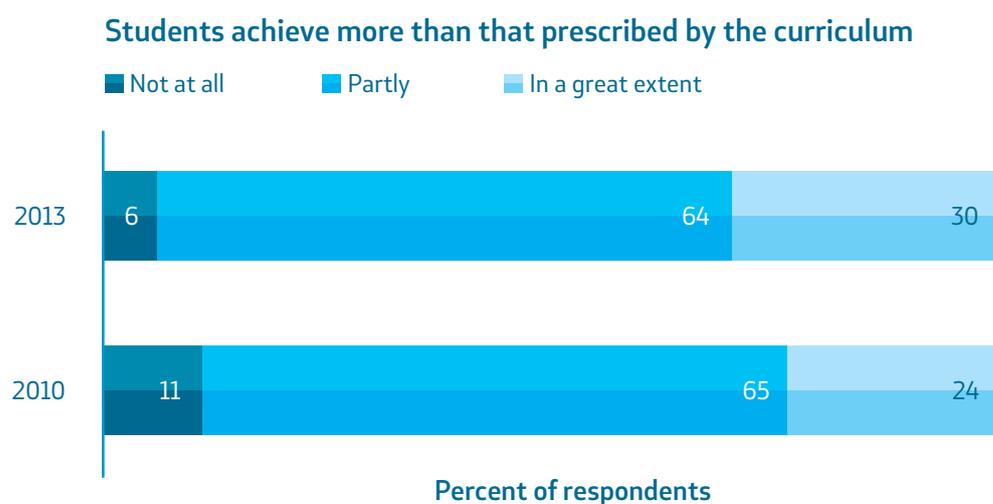
Graph 4: *Expectations of the teachers from the project schools about the achievements of the students compared to the requirements in the curriculum.*

The largest part of the teachers in 2013 (64%) agree *partially* with the issue that the students from their class could achieve more than that prescribed by the curriculum. Also, the percentage of the teachers (30%) who consider that the students, *to a great extent,* could achieve more than that prescribed, is not small. There are no significant changes in relation to the expectations from the students in relation to the responses in 2010.

1.3.4. Cooperation and support in relation to the mother tongue instruction

According to the responses of the teachers, three years after the realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, in relation to the support given to the teachers by the school directors and the support service staff of the school (DPS), no significant difference is noticed. In more details, what kind of support the school directors and the support staff were giving could be seen in this part of the Report, in Chapter 2.
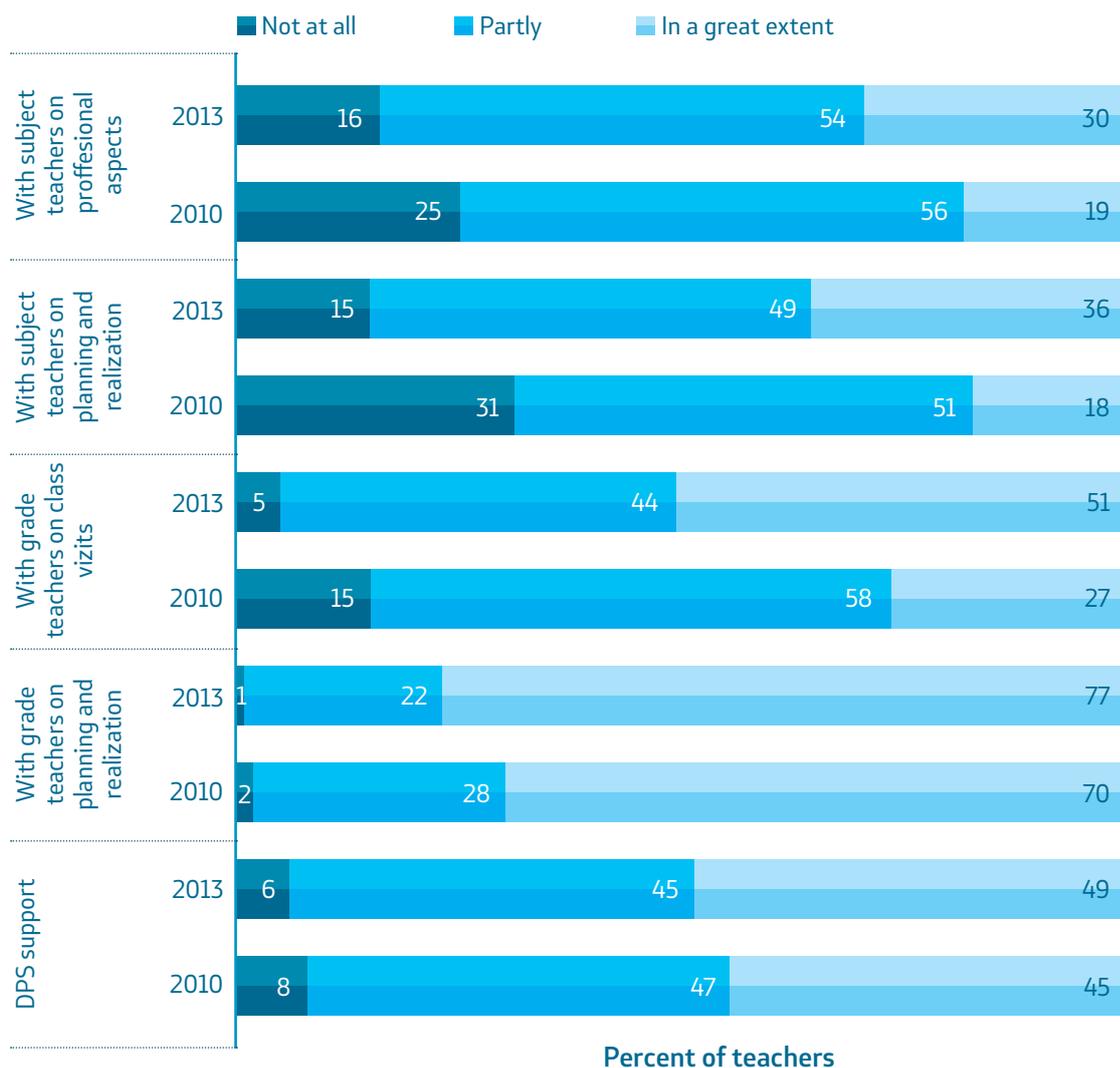
Graph 5: *Mutual support between the teachers from the project school*

In the project schools the situation from the aspect of the cooperation between the teachers is improved, mostly in the mutual visits to class hours, which is probably due to the process of certification. The cooperation of the teachers from the subject teaching is more rare, but Is increased in relation to 2010. Concerning the content of the cooperation with the subject teachers, the cooperation about professional aspect is increased, but that for planning and realization is decreased, which is expected due to the fact that in the subject teaching, the methods changes characteristic for the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* are not introduced (Graph 5.)

Interesting are the findings from the study concerning the cooperation between the subject teachers and the grade teachers in the project schools according to the language of instruction (Graph 6). In the project school with instruction in the Albanian language, greater is the cooperation between the grade teachers and subject teachers, compared to the cooperation that the teachers from the schools with instruction in the Macedonian language, but is much smaller than the support that were receiving from the school director and the support service of the school.
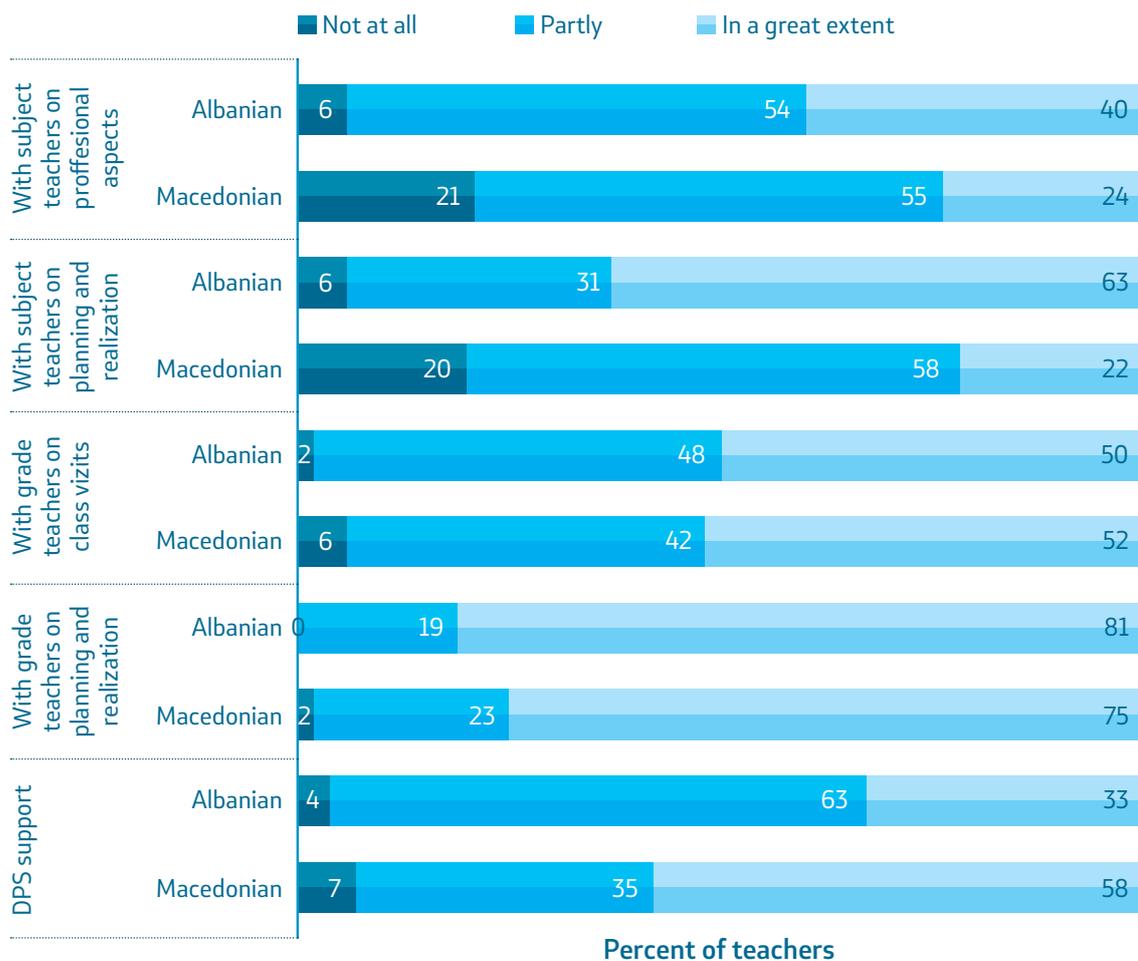
Graph 6: *The mutual cooperation between the teachers and the support to the project schools in 2013 according to the language of instruction.*

Similarly, in the discussion in the focus groups, the teachers from the project schools most often were expressing the satisfaction for the help they were receiving from the trainers and for the mutual cooperation of the teachers from the grade teaching phase. (Their statements, in more details, are presented in Chapter 3.3 of this part of the Report).

1.3.5. Using various texts in the teaching reading comprehension

Still (compared to the findings of 2010), the largest part of the teachers in the project schools, as a basic sources for acquiring the ability in reading comprehension are using the texts from the official sources for learning the mother tongue (70% several times a week, 24% several times a month) and the books from the compulsory reading lists (18% - several times a month).

The remaining sources of texts (chapters/parts of books, original literary texts, texts from textbooks of other subjects) according to the responses from about half of the respondents, are used several times a month, and about 1/4 of the respondents answered that they never, i.e. rarely used them in the instruction. It was expected that the use of these types of texts in the project schools to be increased.

1.3.6. Teaching aids in the classroom

According to the responses of the teachers in the project schools (and also in the schools with instruction in Macedonian language and in the schools with instruction in Albanian language), concerning the issue of having and using teaching aids in the mother tongue instruction, the situation from 2010 to 2013 has changed very little (Graph. 7.)
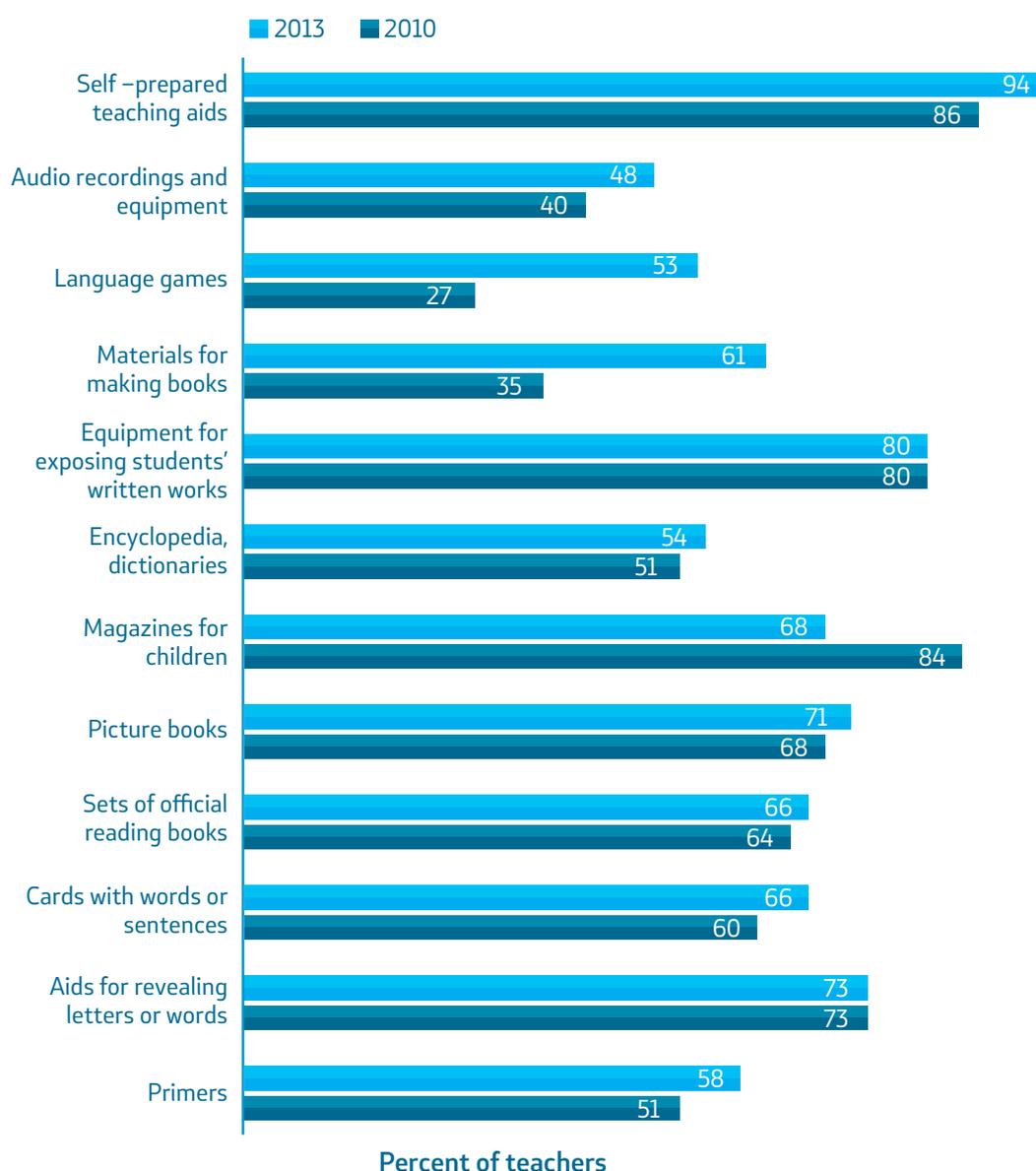
Graph 7: *Possessing teaching aids in the classrooms in the project schools.*

From the graph, it may also be noticed that the situation with magazines for children is worsened to which, may be, the changes in the Law for textsbooks[6] have had impact on. Only the percentage of teachers who in the classroms have language games for reading and writing and materials for making books has increased, which is probaly due to the realization of the instruction in accordance

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6   Teachers are not allowed to use additional literature in class.

with the approaches and the techniques promoted by the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

CONCLUSION

▶ The majority of the teachers, mainly, expect from their students to achieve more than that prescribed by the curriculum.

▶ There is no big difference in the expectations from the students with the teachers from the project schools in 2010 and in 2013.

▶ There is no considerable change with the teachers in the project schools in relation to the frequency of using texts in the instruction between 2010 and 2013. In both of these measuring the teachers stated they most often had used texts from the official textbooks. Similar is the situation, also, in the control schools.

▶ The situation with the teaching aids in the classrooms of the project schools remained almost unchanged for the past three years, with an exception that the percentage of teachers that have language games in the classroom and materials for making books has increased, but the number of those that have magazines for children has decreased.

▶ The teachers from the project schools in their classrooms have a lot of teaching aids that can be used in the mother tongue instruction, compared to the teachers from the control schools.

2. SUPPORT TO THE CHANGES IN LEARNING MOTHER TONGUE IN THE SCHOOL

The support to the changes that are introduced in learning mother tongue is considered as an important factor in innovating the teaching which is promoted at the trainings for *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* It is expected that the teachers in the project schools have had support by the management staff in the school, the pedagogue-psychologist service, and other teachers in the school. Also, it is considered that the specific equipment at the school level contributes to increasing the quality of the mother tongue instruction.

> ### WAY OF MEASURING
> The support to changes was examined with a Questionnaire for school directors and pedagogue-psychologist service from the project schools. They both gave replies to 15 questions (out of which 4 were scales of attitudes) related to:
> - the satisfaction with the teaching of mother tongue;
> - the opinion about the achievements in mother tongue in the grade teaching cycle;
> - the realization of teaching mother tongue, and of the activities for improving the instruction;
> - the cooperation and the suppot to teachers;
> - the level of equipment of the school for the teaching of mother tongue in the grade teaching cycle;
> - their familiarity and the support of the activities for the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*

2.1. Satisfaction with the teaching of mother tongue

School principals and the school support staff in the project schools were asked about the degree of satisfaction with the teaching of mother tongue and about the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, with an aim that the teachers would prove the quality of the realization of the curriculum and the students to acquire increased knowledge and skills for reading and writing. Four fifths of the respondents (the total number of respondents is 32) implicitly stated "*dissatisfaction*", i.e.:

- ▸ Almost 2/3 (18) of the examinees, agree, and 5 examinees agree completely, that in the teaching of mother tongue in their school there is a need for modernization, (although almost 2/3 of the examinees stated that in the last years the teaching has improved a lot). More than half of the examinees agree completely with the statement that the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* has helped for the improved quality of the realization of the teaching program.
- ▸ All of the respondents agree that the students in their school are able to achieve more in the mother tongue, although almost all of them agree that the program has helped to increase the knowledge and the skills of the students for reading and writing.

The comparison of these responses with the responses in the measuring of the starting state shows that the level of satisfaction of the management team from the mother tongue instruction in 2013 is the same as that in 2010.

2.2. Methods of realization of the instruction

On Graph. 8 are presented the data of the consideration of the school principals and of the representatives of the support service about the method of the realization of the instruction in 2013, as well as of the realization of the instruction in 2010.
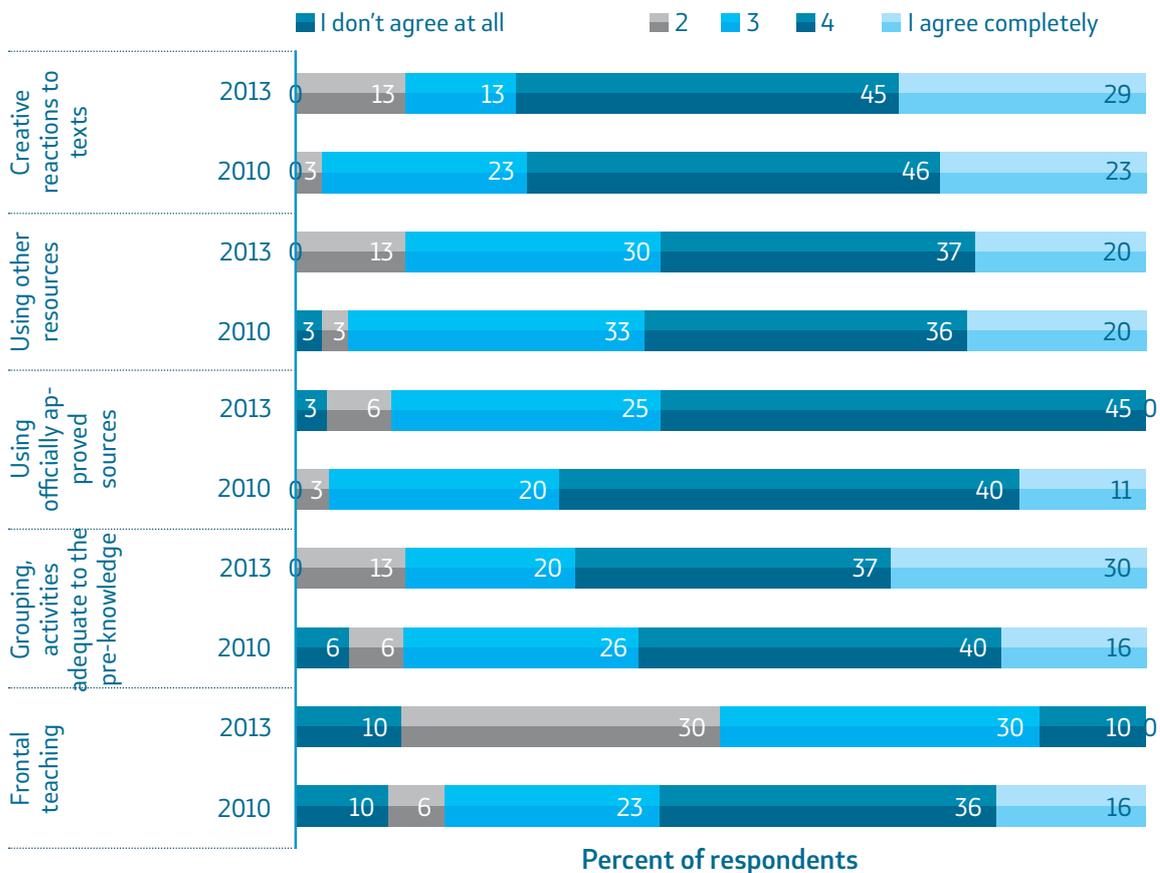
Graph. 8: *Opinion about the realization of the mother tongue instruction.*

In 2013, the frequency of using frontal teaching by the teachers is smaller – there are no respondents who fully agree that the teachers most often work frontally, and only 10% agree very much with such claiming. In 2010, even 50% of the respondents agreed with the issue that the teachers most often work frontally.

The teachers *more often* are grouping the students and are selecting activities adequate to their pre-knowledge. In 2013, 67% of the principals and of the representatives of the support service noticed that as practiced by the teachers, while in 2010 that percent was 56%. Between the two measuring the situation *did not change* in relation to the use of other sources for teaching learning and writing, using official sources of knowledge (textbooks, work lists, reading lists), as well as, also, the participation of the students in dramatizations, oral presentations and playing roles. This means that using the texts from the official sources for learning mother tongue is still dominant, and is not sufficient the realization of the activities in which dominant role would be the creativity of the students. Referring to the sources that are used in the teaching, the largest part of the teachers stated also that, as a basic tool for acquiring the ability for reading and writing, are used the texts from the official sources for learning of the mother tongue The teachers also, as well as their principals and the representatives of the support service, state that the remaining sources of texts (chapters/ parts of books, original literary texts, texts from textbooks of other subjects) are used quite rarely or are not used at all.

CONCLUSION

▶ It may be stated the management in the project schools, is mainly not satisfied with the mother tongue instruction in their own schools. According to the respondents, although in the previous years the instruction had improved and on it, among other thing, had impact the realization of the program *Language Literacy* in their school, still there is need for improving the teaching which would help the achievements of the students be higher.

▶ Except in the organization of the work with the students on the teaching hours (frontal instruction in spite of a variety of many active methods) in the other aspects of the realization of the mother tongue instruction there is no considerable difference in the answers of the respondents in 2013 compared to 2010.

2.3. Opinion about the achievements in mother tongue

We got an opinion about the achievement of students in Grades 1 – 3, from the replies to three questions, i. e., compared with the achievements of students in similar neighboring schools, and compared with the objectives for writing and the objectives for reading with understanding which are prescribed by the curriculum. Concerning the achievements compared with similar neighboring schools - 6 respondents stated that they are the same, 11 that they have no information about

the other schools, and 13 respondents stated that they are higher. Similar to the measuring in 2010, again, the majority of the respondents, who considered that the achievements of the students in his/her school are higher or the same as in the other schools are school principals, and the majority of the respondents who stated that they have no information about other schools – are school pedagogues/ psychologists (school support staff) workers. About 80% of the respondents (24 respondents on the question related to the reading, and on the question related to writing) agree that in comparison with the objectives of the curriculum for the corresponding classes, the achievements of the students are at the level of the curriculum requirements (in 2010 such was the opinion of 70% of the respondents). But 1 respondent, on the issue of the reading with understanding, as well as 7 respondents on the issue of the writing, agree that the achievements of the students are lower than the curriculum requirements.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ Generally speaking, the majority of the school management team, concerning the achievements of the students in thir own schools, think that they are on the level of the curricula requirements, or are the same as in the other neighboring schools.
- ▶ Referring to the domain of the writing compared to that of the reading with understanding, more often is met the response that the students have achievements that are lower than those of the curriculum requirements which is confirmed also by the achievements of the students (Chapter 3.1. of this part of the report).

2.4. Cooperation between teachers and support given by the management staff for improving the teaching of mother tongue

Concerning the issue of the mutual cooperation and support between the teachers in the school, as well as about the support given by the management team, from the replies to the questionnaire for school principals and for the support service, we got the following information:

- ▶ *More than 2/3* of the respondents stated that the teachers, to *a great extent* can count on the support by the school in introducing innovations, that they cooperate with the school principal and with the support service, and that they cooperate with the colleagues from the grade teaching concerning the planning and the carrying out of mother tongue instruction. And that the teachers, to a great extent, are enabled to visit trainings that are specific for the teaching of mother tongue (out of their school).
- ▶ *About 2/3* of the examinees stated that partially is practiced the cooperation between the subject teachers of mother tongue and the grade teachers concerning the professional aspects in the teaching of mother tongue.

▶ According to 6 respondents the grade teachers do not, *at all,* cooperate with the subject teacher of mother tongue concerning the planning and concerning the realization of the instruction, and according to 5 respondents, they stated that no training, at all, is organized at school level for the teaching of mother tongue.

School principals and the representatives of the support service in the project schools were asked to what extent they have been informed about the aims and the activities of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* and about the way by which they personally provide support to teachers in carrying out the teaching of mother tongue. Out of a total of 32 respondents, 7 stated that they have not enough information about the project activities and aims, while the other 25 stated that they have been well informed.

28 respondents gave answers to the question about their role in the realization of the project activities.

▶ All of the respondents were giving support to the teachers trainers and were practicing visits to mother tongue classes of their teachers.

▶ More than 2/3 of the respondents, who gave answer to the question, stated that the have informed the teaching staff about the program, attended the trainings of the teachers, attended the meetings of the teaching staff and were included in the visits/monitoring to the class hours in mother tongue.

17 respondents provided equipment and visual aids for the work of the teachers in applying the new approaches in the teaching, as well as conditions and means for the realization of the training of the teachers.

On the Graph 9, are presented the data about how the representatives of the school management staff, personally, had seen their role in the realization of the Project in 2010 and in 2013.

■ 2013 ■ 2010

Category	2013	2010
Conditions for monitoring by the BDE	82	46
Visits to classes	100	73
Participation on teachers council meetings	82	73
Participation in the meetings of teachers	60	43
Attendance at the trainings	75	61
Providing conditions for the training	60	60
Support to the trainers	100	70
Providing information to the teaching staff	75	61

Percent of the respondents

Graph 9: *The role of the principal and of the support service staff in the realization of the project*

The percentage of the representatives of the school management staff that give specific support for the realization of the project activities (except in the provisions of conditions and materials for the training) in 2013 is higher than that in 2010. This is particularly noticed in the visits to the class hours and the support to the trainers where all of the respondents were included, and probably it is related with their role in the school team for certification within the framework of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* Such more suitable situation is understandable because of the fact that in 2010 part of the representatives of the school management were not on time adequately informed about the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* and about the inclusion of their school in the project activities.
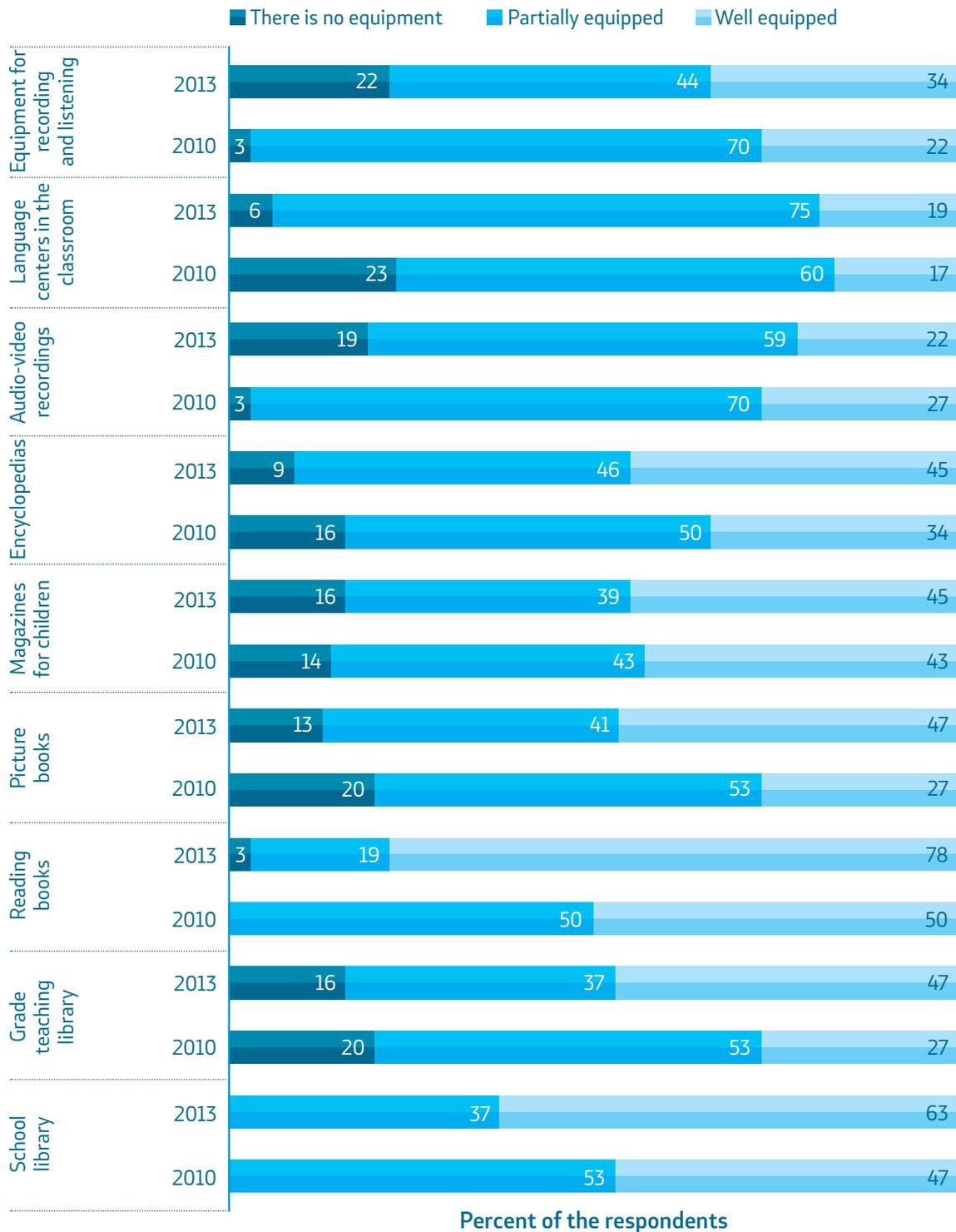
CONCLUSION

- ▶ The in-so-far practiced approaches in improving the teaching – were the support to the professional development of teachers via complementary trainings and mutual cooperation. The majority of school principals and representatives of the support service consider that there is good cooperation among the teachers and that the teachers may count on support from school in introducing innovations in the teaching of mother tongue.

- ▶ Even, 21 representatives from the school management (out of a total of 32 respondents) together with the teachers attended the training for the *Language Literacy,* which means that they are well informed that the support should be adequate to the programme.

- ▶ The lowest is the percentage of respondents that find themselves in providing conditions and materials – which is related to the provision of financial means

- ▶ The cooperation of the grade teachers with subject teachers of mother tongue is partial, and is necessary, and especially when taking into consideration the data of insufficient familiarity with the curricula for mother tongue for Grades 7 – 9 (Part 1.3.2. of this report).

2.5. Equipment of schools for the teaching of mother tongue

According to the responses of the school principals and of the representatives of the school support service, their schools, generally, are well equipped with teaching aids and materials for the teaching of mother tongue. All the schools in the sample have their school library, and 15 the respondents stated that in it there as a special part for the students from the grade teaching cycle, which is well equipped.

What the schools have most are the sets of reading books for grade teaching, picture books and magazines for children, but less are present the audio recordings with stories and songs, equipment for recording and listening, as well as separate language corners/centers in the classrooms.

		There is no equipment	Partially equipped	Well equipped
Equipment for recording and listening	2013	22	44	34
	2010	3	70	22
Language centers in the classroom	2013	6	75	19
	2010	23	60	17
Audio-video recordings	2013	19	59	22
	2010	3	70	27
Encyclopedias	2013	9	46	45
	2010	16	50	34
Magazines for children	2013	16	39	45
	2010	14	43	43
Picture books	2013	13	41	47
	2010	20	53	27
Reading books	2013	3	19	78
	2010		50	50
Grade teaching library	2013	16	37	47
	2010	20	53	27
School library	2013		37	63
	2010		53	47

Percent of the respondents

Graph 10: *Equipment of schools with teaching aids.*

In comparison to 2010, according to the respondents, in the past three years, the equipment of the school libraries and the separate parts for the students from the grade teaching has been improved with sets of the official reading books and picture books. Also, the number of the language centers for the students for the grade teaching has increased, though still the largest partly of them is partially equipped.

CONCLUSION

▶ The equipment of the schools with specific aids for the teaching of mother tongue is on average, although it concerns to materials that are easy to provide. The schools are best-equipped with reading books and magazines for children.

▶ For more contemporary methods, in the teaching of the language literacy – particularly for the reading with understanding, the audio recordings and the video plays may be used, as well as equipment for recording and listening/watching such recordings. According to the school management staff in schools is still partially equipped with such equipment, which the teachers may use in the instruction.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS

The main objective in the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* was to contribute to improving the achievements of the students. The expectations were that the trainings that the teachers have received will cause changes in the instruction which will result in higher achievements in reading and writing with the students from the project schools. Therefore, in the study that was conducted after the three year's realization of the program, were measured the achievements of the students in reading and writing at the end of Grade 3.

WAY OF MEASURING

The achievements of the students were measured by a test which contained tasks on reading with understanding, the ability for writing a text upon given words and the use of the orthography and the needed lexis.

The test consisted of 6 tasks (out of a total of 24 requirements) that measure the knowledge and the abilities in the following domains.
- ▶ reading – 4 tasks (13 requirements);
- ▶ writing – 2 tasks (11 requirements).

In measuring the achievements of the students in the domain of reading, we selected one long literary text with 6 requirements related to the content of the text, one short text with 3 requirements and 2 short literary texts with 4 requirements, out of which, one was related to the comparison between the characters from the two texts. In measuring the achievements of the students in the domain – writing, we developed a task from open type (writing a text with using given words), and another task which referred to improving the content of selected parts of a given letter.

With regard to the age of the students, we placed in the test a relatively small number of tasks for each one of the domains. That represents a limitation from the aspect of the justification for generalizing the conclusions for the entire program domain. Therefore, the conclusions will refer to the knowledge and the abilities which were explicitly measured by the tasks in the test.

The same test was used in the measuring at the beginning of the Program in baseline 2010, and at the end of the first cycle of primary education in 2013.

Data about the possible factors that influenced upon the achievements are obtained also by the discussions with the focus groups with BDE advisers – coordinators of the Program and teachers from the project schools.

Data about the other possible influences related to the family are obtained by a questionnaire.

3.1. Achievements of students on the test in reading comprehension and on writing

The results of the achievements of the students are presented using the arithmetic means and the average percent of acquired points on the test, as a whole and in sub-tests in the domains of reading and writing. Comparisons were made of the achievements of the students in the project and in the control schools prior the beginning of the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* (in 2010), and three years after its realization (in 2013). Separately are commented the tasks in which the most evident are the differences between the project schools and the control schools, or in which there are largest differences between the two measuring.

The general statement is that the students from the project schools in 2013 had better results on the tests than the students from the control schools. There was no difference in 2010.

The average number of achieved points on the test for the students from the project schools is 14.40 (out of the maximum of the possible 32 points), i.e. the average percentage of doing the test is 45,00%. In the control schools, the average number of achieved points is 12.62, i.e. the average percentage of doing the test is 39.43%. The difference of about 6% (6 percentage points) in the average doing the test is not very big, but is statistically significant.

On the Graph below are presented the distributions of the students from the project and from the control schools according to the number of achieved points on the test.
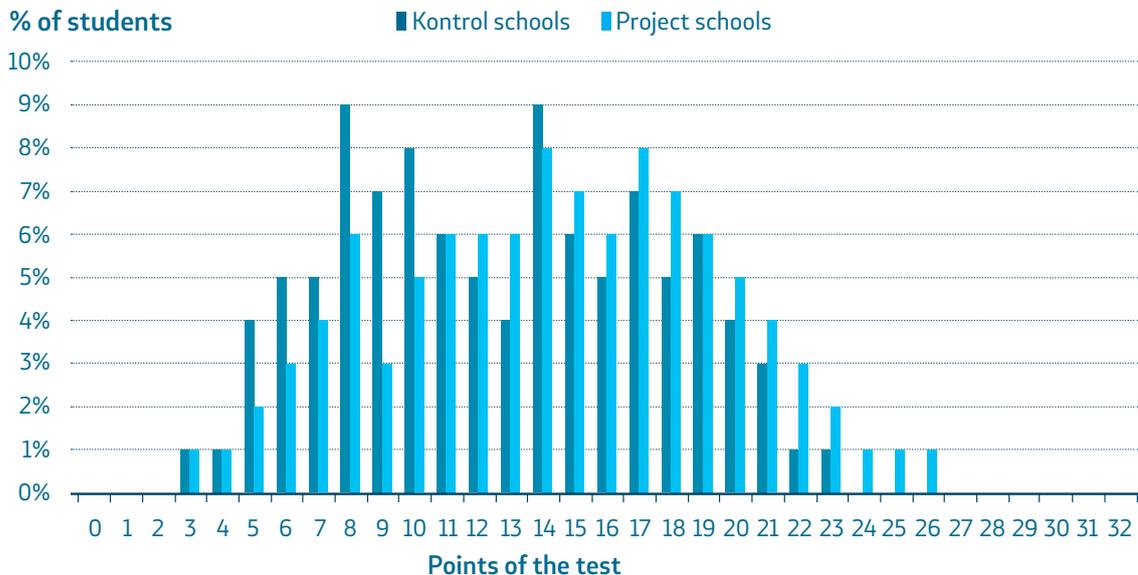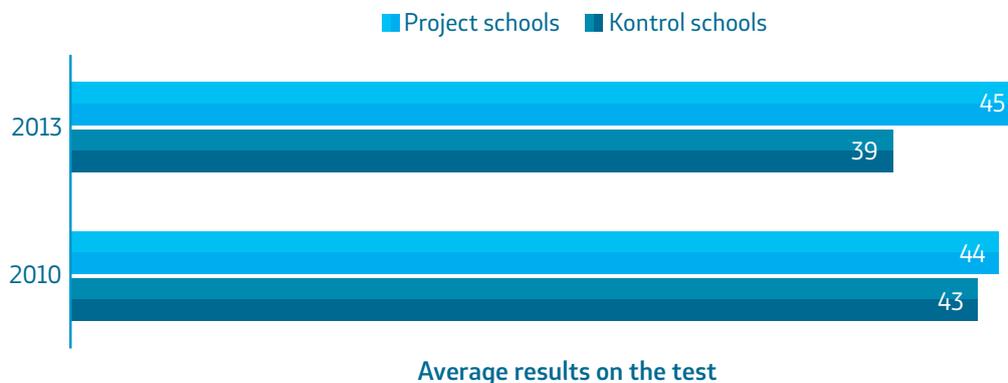

Graph 11: *The results on the test in the project schools and in the control schools in 2013*

From the Graph, it may be noticed that:

▶ The distribution of the results of the students of the project schools related to the distribution of the results of the control schools is shifted to the right (to the larger number of points), which means that the students from the project schools did the test better

▶ Most of the students from the project schools achieved between 14 and 18 points, which are values around the theoretical arithmetic mean on the test which is 16 points, while the majority of the students from the control schools have between 8 and 17 points.

▶ The highest achieved result in the project schools is 26 points and it was achieved by 1% of the students, while the highest result in the control schools is 23 points, achieved, also, by 1% of the students. Those are results that are considerably below the maximum possible number of 32 points

However, when a comparison is made of the results of the students in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 2013 (Graph 12), then it is noticed that the results are not due so much to the improvement in the project schools (it is inconsiderable), but are due to the weaker results that the students from the control schools have achieved in 2013 in comparison to those in 2010. Due to the fact that in control schools no intervention has been made related to the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* it cannot be said to what are the reasons for the weaker results. In any way, provided that the same reasons were present also in the project schools, their negative impact was smaller or was neutralized with the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

■ Project schools   ■ Kontrol schools

2013	45
	39
2010	44
	43

Average results on the test

Graph 12: *The average results on the test in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 2013.*

Aiming to determine the possible different impacts in the schools with different language of instruction, a comparison is made of the achievements according to the language of instruction. The results are presented in the following Graph.
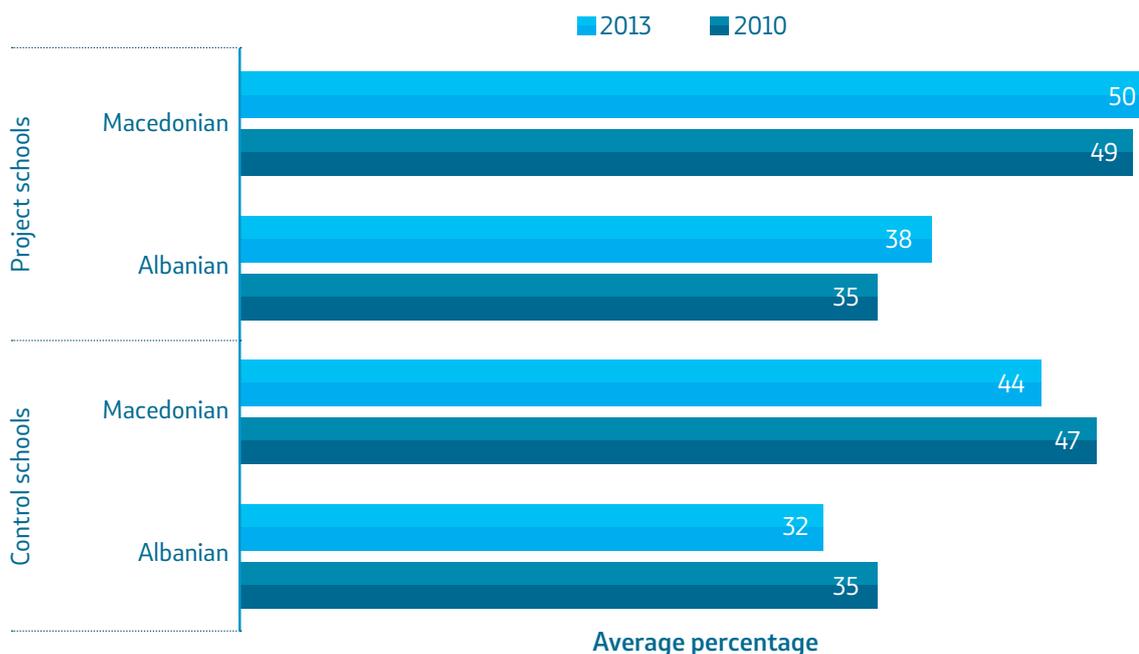
Graph 13: *The average results on the test in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 2013 in the instruction in the Macedonian language and in the Albanian language*

The difference in the average results in doing the test in 2013, between the students of the project and of the control schools in both of the languages of instruction is 6%, in favor of the students from the project schools. At the beginning of the program, there were no differences between the project and the control schools.

In the instruction in the Albanian language and in the instruction in the Macedonian language, those differences are more due to the weaker results of the control schools in 2013 in relation to 2010, than to the improvement of the results in the project schools which is inconsiderable.

CONCLUSION

▶ The students in the project schools in both of the languages of instruction have achieved higher average results on the tests than the students in the control school. There were no differences in 2010.

▶ The differences in 2013 are due to the inconsiderable improvement of the results of the students from the project schools and the small worsening of the results of the students from the control school in relation to 2010.

▶ The students attending the instruction in the Macedonian language, as it was the case at the beginning of the project, have achieved higher results than the students attending the instruction in the Albanian language. Within the course of the three years, the differences have decreased inconsiderably.

3.2. Achievements of students on the test in different domains

The test for the students consisted of two parts: one for comprehensive reading, and the other for writing, which given in two separate sessions and they measure relatively independent abilities. An analysis is made about the achievements in each of these domains.

3.2.1. Achievements of the students on the tasks for reading

The test in reading comprehension contained three tasks.

▶ In the first task, the students were required to read the text and to answer 5 questions that referred to explicit and implicit information contained in the text. On two questions, it was required from the student to explain his/her opinion (to explain why he/she thinks that is so).

▶ In the second task, it was required from the students to read a short text and to answer to three questions related to the text which checks the understanding of the order of the events, the message of the text and the answer to the question for a direct information given in the text.

▶ With the third task it was required from the students to read two short texts and to answer 4 questions, out of which two referred to comparison of the texts, one for recognizing the literary type of the text, and one on drawing the main idea (giving a title of the text).

For each correct answer, one point was received, and another point for the explanations of the answers in the tasks. The total number of possible points was 14.

The general conclusion is that in 2013 the students from the project schools were more successful in the reading comprehension in relation to the students from the control schools. The average results on the tests in project schools are 7% higher than the results of the control schools. In 2010, there were no considerable differences between them.
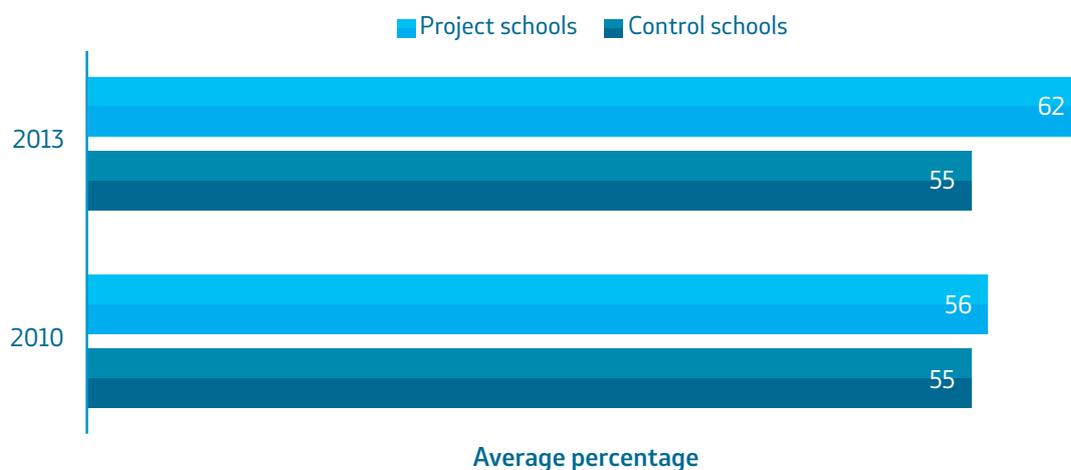
Graph 14: *The results on the test in reading in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 201*

It is evident that there is a progress of the students from the project schools in reading comprehension since the beginning of the realization of the program. Concerning the results of the students from the control schools, as it was expected, there are no changes in the achievements on the test in reading comprehension.

The achievements of the students from the project schools in reading comprehension at the beginning of the project and at the end of the first cycle, in more details are presented in the next Graph where the distributions are given according to the number of acquired points by the students from the project schools in the two studies.
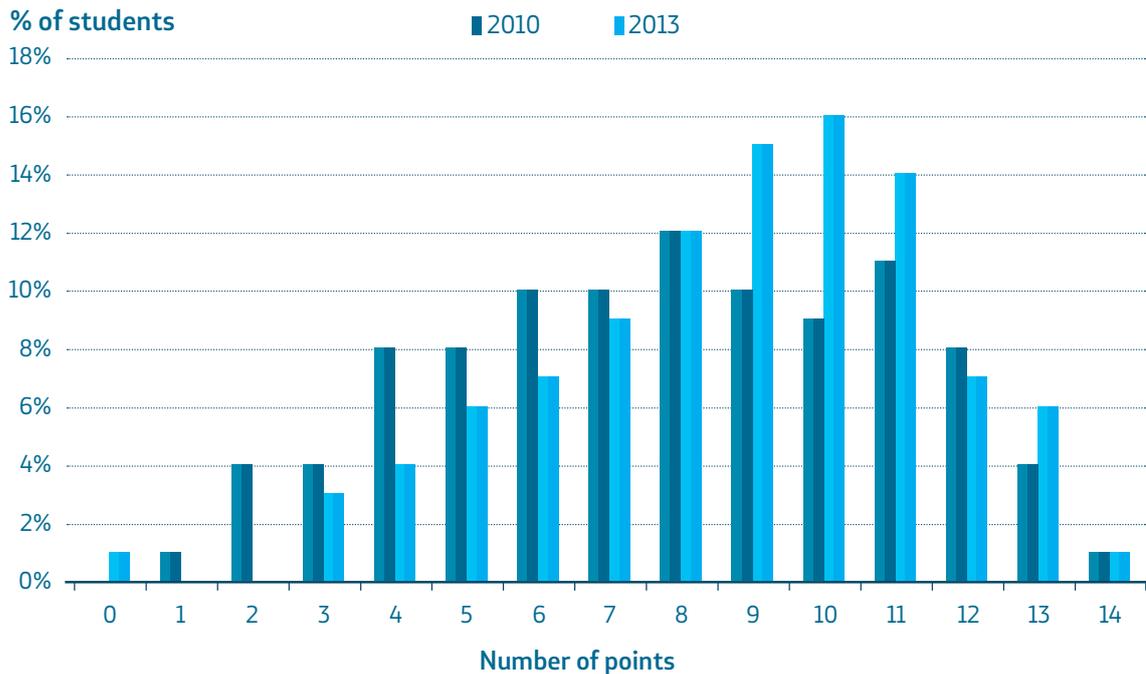
Graph 15: *Distribution of acquired points on the test in reading in the project schools in 2010 and in 2013*

From the Graph it may be noted that:

▶ The distribution of the results in 2013 is considerably shifted to the right in relation to the distribution of the results in 2010, which shows that the students from the project schools were more successful in doing the test on reading. In 2010 the largest part of the students, had on the test between 6 and 9 points, and in 2013, the majority of the students had between 9 and 11 points

▶ 66% of the students from the project schools in 2013, achieved more than half of the possible points on the test, 14% achieved more than 11 points (almost 80% of the possible number of points), and the number of students that achieved less than 5 points (5 points represents 36% of the total number of points) has decreased considerably. These data denote a high degree of attainment in comprehensive reading with the majority of the students from the project schools

When the results are analyzed according to the language of instruction you come to similar facts. These results are presented on the Graph bellow.
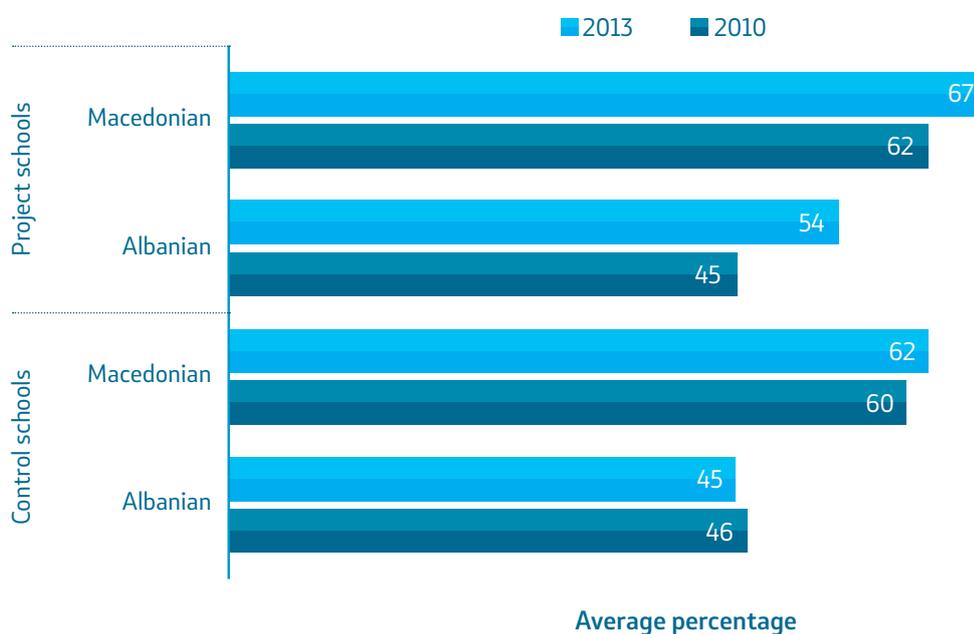
Graph 16: *The average results on the test in reading comprehension in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 2013 in the instruction in the Macedonian and in the Albanian language*

From the Graph, it may be concluded that in the two languages of instruction the students from the project schools showed progress in the reading comprehension. The progress is bigger with the students in the Albanian language of instruction (for 9 percentage points).

▸ The students from the project schools in the instruction in the Macedonian language have higher average results on the points for 5 percentage points compared to the students of the control schools.

▸ The students of the control schools in the Albanian language of instruction have higher average results on the points for 9 percentage points compared to the students of the control schools.

▸ The differences in the results of the two languages of instruction between the project and the control schools in the two languages were not significant. In 2010, the differences between the project and the control schools in their two languages were not significant.

▸ In 2013, the students in the instruction with the Macedonian language have for about 13% higher average results on the test than the teachers with the instruction in the Albanian language. The difference in the achievements on the test in reading between the teachers with the instruction in the Macedonian language and the Albanian language in the project schools decreased in relation to that in 2010, but is still big.

▸ The differences in the achievements on the test in reading between the control schools in the Macedonian language of instruction and in the Albanian language of instruction has increased. In 2010, the average results was 14%, and in 2013 that difference is 17%

In more details are analyzed the achievements of the students in the project schools in the testing in 2010 and in 2013, in each task of the test. The analysis shows that the largest improvement (the increase of the percentage of correct answers for more than 10%) there are in the tasks which require from the students:

▸ to draw direct information from the text;
▸ to draw implicit information from the text;
▸ to arrange chronologically the events in the text;
▸ to foresee what would happen later in the story.

For an illustration, below is given the task on which the students from the project schools showed the biggest improvement.

| Correct answers to the requirements | % of students with correct answer | | | |
| | project | | control | |
	2010	2013	2010	2013
Requirement 1. Correct answer order 2;1;5;3;4	38%	51%	32%	36%
Requirement 2. Correct answer: drum	78%	89%	86%	86%
Requirement 3. Correct answer: b)	61%	77%	60%	68%

Mostly (for more than 10%) has reduced the number of responses which require to explain the answer. With these tasks, the largest is the number of students which hadn't tried to write anything. This shows that may be the problem is not in the understanding of that what was read about, but is in the writing, to what the other results related to writing, point out, and which are later analyzed.

CONCLUSION

- In the domain of reading comprehension, the students from the project schools have achieved considerably higher results than the students from the control schools. In the measuring, at the beginning of the realization of the program they did not differ between themselves.
- The majority of the students from the project schools have mastered the reading comprehension at a satisfactory level.
- The biggest progress in relation to 2010 is recorded in drawing direct and implicit information from the text, in arranging the order of the events and in the foreseeing the possible actions in the story.
- The tasks which required writing an explanation to the answer are with worsened results. The low results are probably due to the insufficient skills for writing.
- In relation to 2010, the students from the project schools, both in the Macedonian and in the Albanian language of instruction, have considerably improved their reading comprehension.
- The difference in the successfulness of the students in different languages of instruction has decreased, which denotes to bigger gains (bigger improvement) from the program for the Albanian language of instruction.
- Both, in 2013 as well as in 2010, the students with the Macedonian language of instruction are considerably more successful in the reading comprehension.

3.2.2. Achievements of the students on the tasks in writing

The test in writing consisted of tasks.

- In the first task, the students were required to improve a given letter – a reaction of children to a given situation that they got from a newspaper. The task required from the students to choose one of the offered responses and with it to improve the structure of particular sentences, the lexis and the composition of the letter (expressing the aim of the letter). For each correct answer on the first task they were receiving one point.
- The second task was of an open type – writing a composition upon given words. In it, were given **characters** (friends, a dog); **events** (a play for children, football match, elastic band, folk, a quarrel which team is better, funny end of the match) and **places** (playground, park). The students were required to write a short story The students were reminded not to forget to give the title and to take care of the punctuation. For objective assessing of

the written compositions, were developed criteria for assessment (see the appendix). The second task was assessed according to 7 criteria, where for each one you could get 0, 1 or 2 points.

The total possible number of points on the test in writing was 18.

The general statement is that in 2013, the students from the project schools were more successful in writing compared to the school from the control schools. The average results on the test in the project schools is for 5% higher than the results in the control schools. In 2010, there were no considerable differences between them.
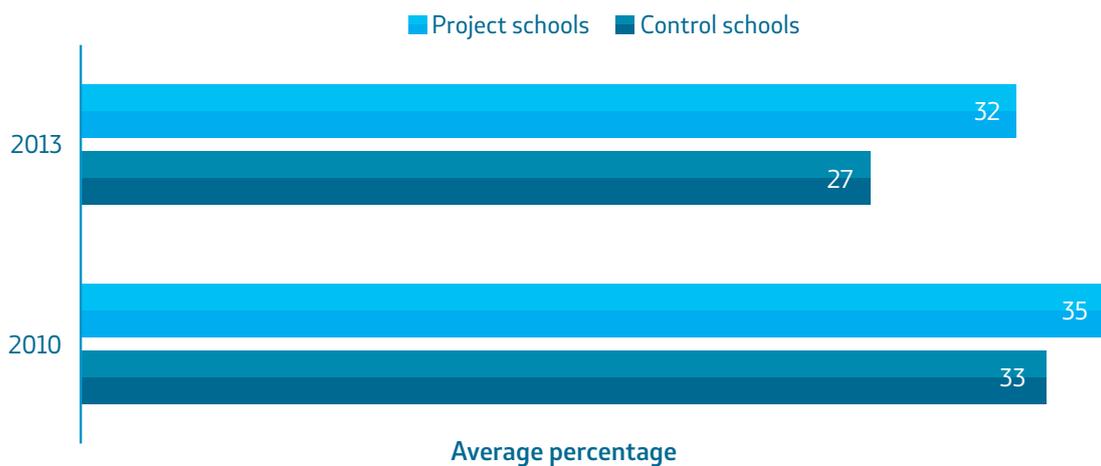
Graph 17: *Results on the test in writing in the project and the control schools in 2010 and in 2013*

The average results on the tests in writing were low in the two measuring, both in the project and in the control schools. At an average, the students have achieved a little less than one third of the total possible number of points.

It is indicative that the students both from the control and from the project schools in 2013 achieved weaker results in comparison to 2010. The drop of the results in the control schools is twice bigger (6% smaller average results on the test in the control schools in relation to 3% smaller average results in the project schools). Though, the worsening of the writing in the project schools is smaller than that in the control, such results were not expected and therefore it was necessary to make a more profound analysis, first of all of the reasons for worsening of the results in the project schools. For that purpose, discussions in the focus groups were organized, in which from the organizers of the program, were collected qualitative indicators about the methods of work and the possible reasons that had influence upon the achievements. The findings are presented in Chapter 3.3 in this part of the report.

The quantitative data about the achievements of the students in the project schools in writing at the beginning of the project and at the end of the first cycle are presented, in more details in the following graph.

% of students

■ 2010 ■ 2013

Number of points
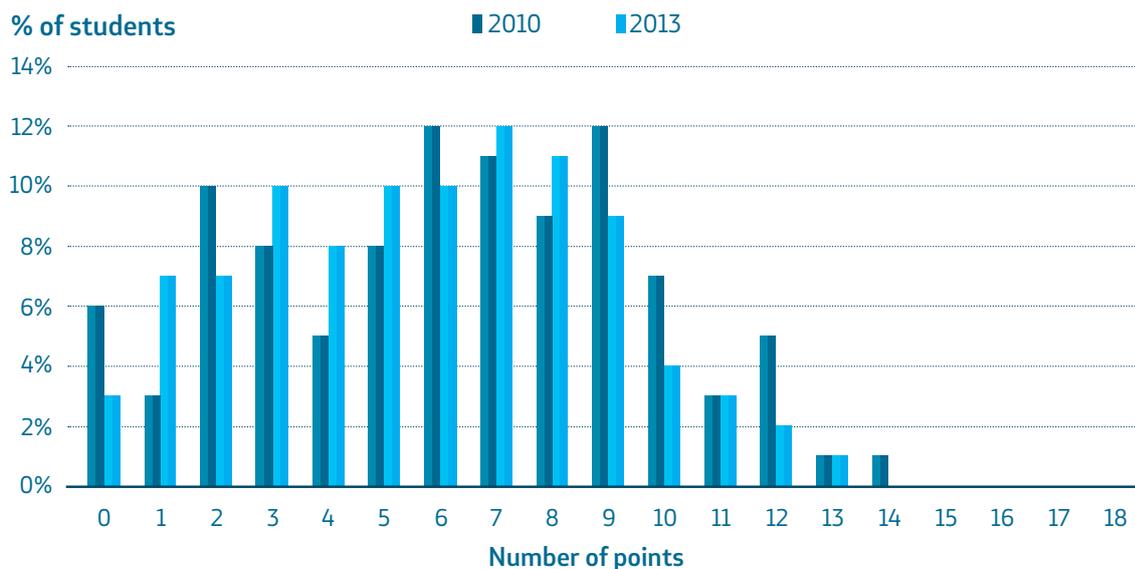
Graph 18: *Distribution of the acquired points on the test in writing in the project schools in 2010 and in 2013.*

From the graph it may be noted that:

▶ The distribution of the results in the project schools both in 2010 and in 2013 is considerably shifted to the left, which is an indicator for low achievements. There is no some regularity in the distribution according to the successful-ness in doing the test in relation to the total acquired number of points.

▶ 80% students of the project schools in 2013, acquired less than half of the possible points on the test (less than 9 points). In 2010, that percent was smaller and amounted 71%. These data denote to very weak results in the writing with the majority of the students in the project schools.

When the results are presented according to the languages of instruction you come to similar notions. The graph bellow presents those results.
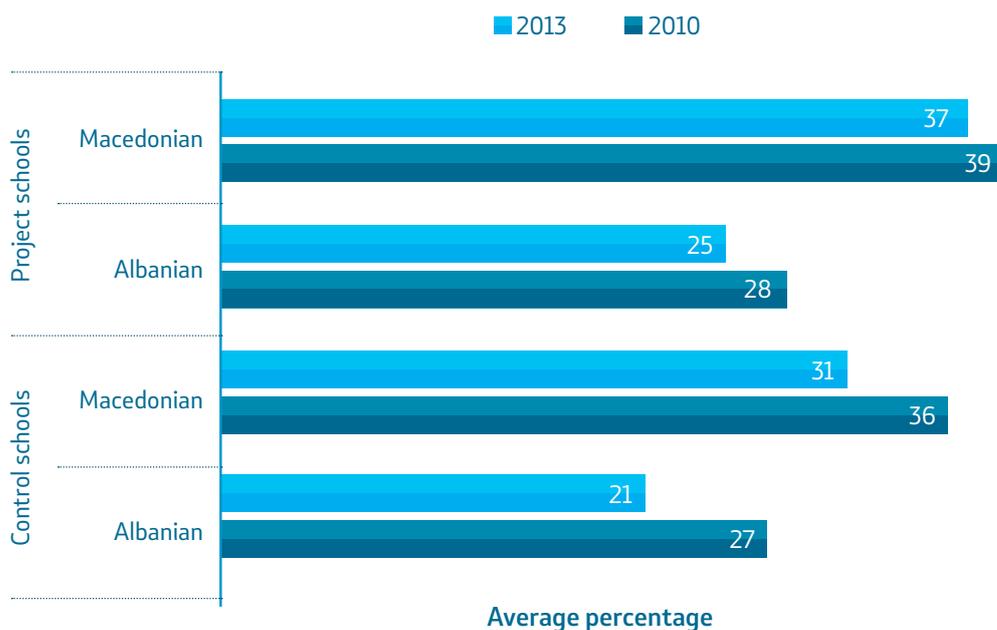
Graph 19: *The average results on the test in writing in the project and in the control schools in 2010 and in 2013 in the instruction in the Macedonian language and in the Albanian language.*

On the basis of the data, the following may be concluded:

▸ The students from the project schools in the Macedonian language of instruction have higher average results for 6% in relation to the control schools. When you compare the students in the Albanian language of instruction, the difference between the project and the control schools is a bit smaller and amounts 4%. In 2010, there were no considerable differences between the project and the control schools in the two languages of instruction..

▸ When you compare the achievements in the project and in the control schools in the two measuring you may notice that with the students in the Macedonian language of instruction, the average results on the test decreased for 2%, and with students in the Albanian language of instruction for 3%. The decrease at the limit of t he statistical significance.

▸ In the control schools, there is greater decrease of the average results on the test for 4% in the schools with the Macedonian language of instruction, and for 6% in the schools with the Albanian language of instruction.

▸ In the schools in the Macedonian language instruction, the average results on the test were for about 10% higher than the average results in the schools with the Albanian language of instruction. The differences in the achievements on the test in writing between the schools with instruction in the Macedonian language and in the Albanian language, in the two measuring remained almost unchanged.

In more details, are compared the achievements of the students in the project schools in the testing in 2010 and 2013 on each task in the test. The findings are the following:

▶ The first task is solved more successfully. With it, mainly the understanding of the process of writing was checked, and the responses to the requirements were by a choice of the offered answers. From the achievements of the students on this task It is noted that about 68% of the students in the project schools recognize a good structure of the sentence, about 55% recognize the adequate use of a word in a sentence and the adequate composition of the text (in this case a letter) when they have to select one of the offered responses and with it to improve the text. Compared to 2010, in 2013 this task was solved a bit more successfully.

▶ On the second task (writing a story upon given words), the results in 2013, compared to the results in 2010 are weaker. The following table (Table 5) gives the percentage of students from the project schools according to the level (1,2, or 3) that they have achieved in 2010 and in 2013, for each of the criteria according to which the successfulness in writing was assessed.

Table 5. *Achievements of the students from the project schools in the domain of writing (task – writing a composition upon given words) in 2010 and in 2013.*

| Criteria | Level of achievement[7] | | | | | |
| | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | |
	2010 % of students	2013 % of students	2010 % of students	2013 % of students	2010 % of students	2013 % of students
Composition	56	89	43	10	1	1
Clarity of the composition	33	32	65	65	3	3
Use of given words in the composition	31	21	49	59	20	20
Punctuation	46	43	52	56	2	1
Orthography	32	56	67	42	1	2
Sentence construction	44	55	52	44	5	1
Originality	71	80	25	17	4	3

From the table it may be noticed, that in the two testing, a very small percentage of students have shown that they could achieve the highest requirement for the most of the criteria, except when the use of the given words in the composition is in question, where the achievements are a bit higher.

In o 2013 about 50% of the students from the project schools have achieved the first level in the majority of the criteria (except in the criterion on originality and on the criterion – composition). In the majority of the criteria (composition, orthography, sentence construction and originality) the results are weaker in relation to 2010.

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7   The description for each of the levels is given in the appendix 3.

▸ The students from the project schools were more successful in writing in comparison to the students from the control schools. There were no differences in 2010..

▸ The differences are not due to the improvement of the writing in the project schools, but to the greater decrease of the results in writing in the control schools in relation to the project schools

▸ The results on the tasks in the test, with which was measured the ability of the students for writing a text upon given words, as well as the use of orthography and the necessary lexis, are lower than the expected results, according to the program *Language Literacy,* and of the prescribed results in the curriculum for Grade 3.

▸ The results in writing a text upon given words are worsened in the majority of the criteria by which the text was assessed, and mostly in relation to composition and originality.

▸ The students learning in the Macedonian language of instruction have higher achievements than the students learning in the Albanian language.

3.3. Considerations about the reasons and the methods of work that have impact on students achievements

Although, the achievements of the students from the project schools on the entire test and in particular in reading and writing are better than the achievements of the students in the control schools, still they are under the expectation, particularly in writing. Namely, together with the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* it was expected that the achievements of the students in the project schools would improve in relation to the results in the same schools prior to the beginning of the realization of the program. On a whole, there is a certain improvement of the results in reading, but the results in writing are worsened. In addition to the findings obtained about the changes in the methods and in the pedagogical knowledge of teachers, see (Chapter 1.1 and 1.2), and the findings about the acceptance of the changes and of the level of realization (Chapter 4), an additional elaboration was made of the achievements of the students in each one of the project schools. The results in reading have improved in 7 out of 14 schools, and in the others are unchanged or worsened. In writing, unchanged are in 4 schools, and in the other 8 schools they are worsened.

Besides, in order to identify in more details the reasons and the methods of work that have influenced upon the more concrete achievements discussions were held in the focus groups with the teachers, and the support service workers in the project schools, and in the focus group with the advisers from the BDE, who served as coordinators of the program *Language Literacy.* Below in groups are given the qualitative data which were collected within the framework of the focus groups.

3.3.1. Estimate about the achievements of the students within the framework of the study and opinions for their reasons

The expectations from the results on the test in reading and on the test in writing

The teachers from the majority of the schools (3/4%) had expected that their students on the testing in 2013 would achieve better results than those in 2010. Only in one school they considered that the results are may be worsened. The advisors – coordinators of the program, also expected that in the majority of the schools the achievements would improve. The estimates about the successfulness of one third of the schools are correct, while the others achieved weaker results than it was expected.

The teachers from the majority of the schools, as well as the advisors, expected that the students would have better results in reading than in writing, which coincides with the results from the testing. Such opinions were most often based on the larger interest of the students for reading than for writing, on that that the writing is more difficult for them; in the trainings they had much more and more adequate techniques for reading than for writing, and on that, that up the Grade 3, the teachers' pay more attention to reading than to writing. The advisors had also noticed that in carrying out the instruction the teachers were paying more attention to reading than to writing.

Factors that have impact upon the achieved results by the students in reading

In the discussions about the factors that contributed to particular results in reading in the schools in which the results in reading were worse than those in 2010, most often, as reasons for that were mentioned: overburdening of curricula, lack of sufficient time to apply the new techniques for teaching reading, as well as, for ex.: "more time is needed for the realization of the teaching unit according the curricula requirements" lack of interest of the students for reading, etc. Some of the responses, such as this one: The analysis of the text according to the techniques of the project cannot be realized in one class hour" point out to the lack of feeling for methods freedom and to inappropriateness of the teachers in an adequate way to plan the application of the new approaches. Very often, it was stated that the use of computers reduces the interest of the students for reading literary text, on one side, and that the pressure for using ICT in the instruction, creates problems for them in teaching reading. This might be an indicator that the teachers need additional training in order to adjust these two requirements (using ICT and application of the techniques for teaching reading) which seem to them that are incompatible.

„... the students are somehow isolated from books they don't have interest, love to the book, they are obsessed by the computers, face book, they collect more short information from the Internet, than do the reading of fairy-tales and fables or whatever written texts adequate to their age …(teacher)

„...We cannot create in them love for the book and to nurture that love because we always have pressure for the application of the ICT, the time in those class hours passes with some explanations, you don't have time to devote attention to the students and to the preparations of the productive methods and strategies of the program … (trainer).

In the schools in which the results in reading are improved, as factors that influenced upon the improvement most often are stated the adequacy of the program *Language Literacy* and the methods which they personally and in their school have practiced *t*hem. Their statements denote to good understanding and creative application of the approaches of the program and a feeling of security in the integration of the approaches of the program with other methods approaches that they are familiar with or are using them.

„We had a lot of discussion that we do not have to limit ourselves, but to the contrary that we are to apply those techniques that are available in the language literacy and to make integration of all the possible class hours, it may be done in many subjects: music, arts, even in physical education. We are still going into all those methods of work, we are still discovering the opportunities that the techniques are offering. That what is interesting is that truly on these class hours the children are activated to a maximum. We use the play very much (teacher)".

„I thing that the setting of real questions is that what gives most positive results in relation to all that what we do in class hours. And in this program (referring to the language literacy) that we are now doing a great accent was put on that moment" (teacher).

Factors which had positive influence on the achieved results of the students in writing

In the majority of the schools, in the domain of writing, weaker results have been achieved than those in 2010. Therefore, in a large number of the schools, the discussion about the reason for such a situation was a central topic

In the schools in which the results in writing are weaker than in 2010, in addition to the reasons that are stated for the weak results in reading (lack of time, overburdened curricula, burden with administrative works), are most often stated, and also the use of computers and the social networks where the students write inadequately (with abbreviations, symbols, mixing the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabets), the inadequate use of the teaching time prescribed by the curricula, and that that the teachers devote less time to writing than to reading, that the techniques for

writing are more difficult for using, and that the oral expression is easier for the students.

Many of the schools pointed out that the practice is such because up to Grade 3 the accent on mastering the reading is bigger, while to the writing more time is devoted in Grade 4 and 5.

„Aural expression is easier, but the writing process is a more difficult process to develop. I think, we elaborate up to Grade 3, more the reading and the aural expression. In a way, even at the end of Grade 3 we start with something more in relation to writing, but that writing which should really contain all the elements is in Grade 4 …" (teacher).

„I think that the reason why we have weak results in writing is in the fact that the teachers devote more class hours to reading, and very few to writing, although there are good and interesting strategies which we have learned from the program. Next, I think that the students, also, hate to write, and express themselves in writing, but want to do it aurally and via the computer with any kind of abbreviations and writings" (teacher).

In the two schools, in which the results in writing and in reading have improved, as factors for that, are stated the adequacy of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* and the methods how they were applied in the school.

„I think that up to Grade 3 – there should be more literacy, it is nice to write a composition, but the compositions should be composed even since Grade 2 – even with those few letters that we have learnt…" (teacher).

„The reason for this small progress in writing is because we put more accent to the aural expression. The students should have good results in reading, and if the reading is not well improved we do not move on immediately to writing. I think that here there arguable issues which may be are blocking us…The freedom is an important issue here. Here,, we should really devote attention to all the components, to all the techniques that we have learnt II think it is nice to devote attention also, to the techniques for writing and to work more in class hours" (teacher).

The advisers' considerations are similar to those of the teachers, they think that in the teaching more attention is devoted to reading, that for the reading in the program and in the trainings are given more techniques that are interesting for the students that the reading is learnt through learning the other subjects, an informally that it is not the case with the writing. There were opinions that there are still teachers who still don't understand the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, and do not apply adequately the approaches that *„the writing requires continuity, it should start since Grade 1 "* and that the advisers should inspire for a more profound analysis in writing. In addition, the advisers consider that the reason may be that they received the instrument for assessing the application of the

techniques for writing late, so, they in the visits to the schools, devoted more attention to reading than to writing. Certain suggestions were given, that additional suggestions should be developed for the teaching of writing, to give the teachers more support in the teaching of writing, and in the criteria for the certification, and in the portfolios, should obligatory be some written works related to writing.

3.3.2. Opinions about the strong and the weak points in the realization of the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades

A discussion was held within the focus groups, about what would be good in the realization of the program, and what were the weak points, with an aim that these findings be used in the further coordinating of its realization.

Good points in the realization of the program

According to the majority of the participants, in their discussions, good points in the realization of the program are: the quality training and the cooperation between the teachers in the school and the trainers. In addition, a large number of them pointed out the adequacy of the approaches that make the teaching interesting for the students, the opportunity that the program is giving for the application in the other teaching subjects, and they have pointed out the linking with the previous experience in other subjects. The teachers from the schools in which the results of the students are improved, spoke about the strong points which referred to the methods in which the have realized the program, while the teachers from the schools which did not progress, spoke about common, general characteristics of the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades, and about their work practice.

Strong points are those which are being used „...*various techniques for realizing the program objectives, the improved interaction between the teachers and the students, the increased activity and the concentration with the students, a more qualitative cooperation between the grade teachers about the preparation of the instructive materials.“ (teacher)*

„*In this program, we discussed about everything, it gives us broadness for applying, we could apply the components of the techniques in some other situation. The principles that are concretely given for the language literacy have been branched out. That means, that with the application of the Language Literacy in the Early Grades, we got richer methods knowledge, we can make our class hours to be more interesting and I think that it enables adding up to the other programs that we have had previously, since the Interactive Teaching, with the Reading and Writing to Critical Thinking, from Step by Step, that were also interesting, and especially SBS.. We used plays in Grades 1,2 and 3.) (teacher)*

Weak points in the realization of the program

The trainers, the support staff in schools and the BDE advisers, as weak points in the realization, most often we stating: the insufficient understanding of the techniques and the insufficient interest of the teachers for their application. Part of the advisers, as weak pints in the realization, most often, were mentioning the indifference of the school principle for the realization of the program.

When the teachers spoke about the weak points they were rarely talking about concrete methods defaults, but they spoke more about external organizational aspects in the realization of the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades. As weak points in the realization of the program, the teachers were often mentioning the impossibility to realize it in the prescribed amount of class hours, the burden of the teachers with administrative works, lack of feeling for methods freedom.

„There is not always freedom with the teachers which will enable them application of the techniques. They are afraid, if they step of the curriculum" (trainer).

„...We have problems, we are overburdened with administration, keeping the E-diary, we are afraid of getting fines, due to the formal administration we can not devote attention to creative preparations and to the work with the students. There is no individual approach, we do everything hastily…(teacher).

„... We cannot devote enough attention to the program for the language literacy, because 5-6 projects are being carried out in the school, and we do not know what to do first, the class hours are not nice, because we and the students are overtired, overburdened, many formalities, 30% ICT in the instruction, all that is a burden to us, and we do not know what to do first, and the students, in that way, are loosing part of our devotion…" (teacher).

3.3.3. Cooperation in the schools in the realization of the program

There are many proofs in the professional literature and in the practice that the mutual cooperation between the teachers and the school management team is one of the best mechanism for the promotion of the practice, especially in introducing innovations. The quantitative data from the responses in the questionnaires have shown that the respondents teachers and school principals) to a great extent agreed with the statement that the grade teachers cooperate well between themselves. In the focus groups, in the project schools, a discussion was held also about the forms and content of the cooperation. In the discussions on this issue, great differences may be stated between the schools in which the results of the students are improved and those in which the results are worsened.

Cooperation with the trainers in the school

In all of the schools in which the results are improved, almost all the participants in the discussion were saying that they cooperate between themselves well in a formal and informal way. They were particularly stressing the cooperation with the trainer about the program in their school, from whom, as a matter of fact, was ex-

pected to give support to the other teachers, as well. *In part of the schools in which the results are worsened, the cooperation was not good.*

„There is a lot of cooperation between us. We are constantly in contact and we constantly ask between ourselves if something is not clear, or if any of the techniques is not clear. We are constantly in contact, also, with our trainer. I think that since there is a cooperation between us, since we ask each other and discuss, I think that that is the reason why these are good results " (teacher).

„The open class hours were in that context of cooperation, I think that in a such a way the knowledge is conveyed. I think it would be more difficult in some other way, only to read the book. The book is for the book, but when you conduct an open class hour, that, that and immediately you can work better" (teacher).

„They were always giving us advises and support. We can call the trainer on the phone, when there is something to be made clearer. When we used to call her on the phone, she never said no, I can't speak now, I am busy. She was always helping us " (teacher).

„All that, we had gone through in the training was together with the teachers After the training, we discussed, we said, let's sum up for the winter holiday, to crystallize in a way the more concrete things. It was a good meeting when we underlined those most important moments, in such at way together and when we sum up them it would be easier for us and for the children" (trainer).

All the participants in the discussions stated that the school trainers had always been prepared to help them and that at the beginning the cooperation was more frequent, and later – rare. The cooperation, most often, was carried out about the preparation of the open class hours, and the discussions about using the techniques. Almost all of the trainers who took part in the discussions expressed their satisfaction from the cooperation. From the discussions of the teachers and the trainers, from part of the schools that have better results, noticeble was the systematic approach in the cooperation.

In a large number of schools in which the results are worsened, the cooperation also was smaller, in one school, there was no, even, an initiative for cooperation, neither from the teachers nor from the trainer. The reasons were: not having time, overburdening with various administrative tasks, lack of interest by the teachers. In some of the schools, the school trainers had left the school.

„....nobody, so far, had asked from me any help, everybody gets on by oneself through the manual, though I am always ready for consultations and help..." (trainer).

Cooperation at the level of the professional acting body

The good organization of the program presupposed that the cooperation would be on a formal level, via the work of the professional[8] acting body for grade teaching. According to the statements of the teachers, the cooperation was carried out in such a way in part of the schools in which the students have achieved higher results. In two schools there are acting bodies per grades and with the program Language Literacy they are occupied when they meet at the level of a grade, and discuss how the application of the new strategies in the instruction functions, and how together to contribute for the efficiency in teaching and in learning. The cooperation in the professional acting bodies, very often, was not formalized, but the teachers cooperated on an informal level. The schools in which there existed two types of cooperation, both formal and informal, as a rule, have, improved achievements, in relation to 2010.

„At all the meetings of the professions acting body, the priority for us, was the LL and the techniques, to create a data base with application, and that base to be useful to us, because every year we are in another grade '' (teacher).

„May they are not so much formal meetings, but we have informal meetings at every brake between the class hours, not to say every day, and we use our private time for that also. And, we have open class hours, three to four times a month " (teacher).

In a large number of schools, where there are weaker results, the aspects of the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* were not part of the work of the professional acting bodies. In one school, the participants in the discussion had agreed the professional acting bodies in the school, are almost not functioning, and for these three years the acting body has not dealt with the professional issues from the *Language Literacy,* nor were exchanged experiences of the application of the techniques and the strategies for the promotion of the reading and the writing according to the program. In another school, in which the results were, also, worsened, it was said that they have 9 local schools and that the teachers cannot come to the scheduled working meetings of the professional bodies, because nobody is paying them the travelling expenses.

Except for the support of the colleagues, in the majority of the schools, the teachers stated that for them the cooperation with the adviser in charge was useful, in pert of them they cooperated with the pedagogues, and rarely with the school principal, when, he, before that, was a grade teacher and was trained for the program. The cooperation, most often referred to consultations concerning the application the techniques, assessment about their application after the conducted class hours, sharing good practices and materials.

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8   According to the Law on Primary Education (Article 144), professional body of the school is the professional acting body of grade teachers, which has its own obligations among which is the improvement of the educational-enlightenment work.

▶ The teachers from the project schools, and the advisers from the BDE, generally, did not have a good estimate of the results in reading and writing that their students had achieved. In the majority of the schools it was expected that they would be higher than those in 2010.

▶ Expected were weaker results in writing than in reading, because more time was devoted to reading in the first cycle, and because the techniques for teaching reading in the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* could be more simply applied and they are more interesting for the students.

▶ In the schools in which the results are improved, it was obvious that there was better understanding of the program, greater focus on concrete methods approaches, creative application of the techniques and greater security in their combining with all that they know from other trainings. In the schools in which the results were worsened, the explanations were looked for in the lack of time, too much burden with administrative tasks, lack of freedom for the realization of the teaching, interference with the requirements for using the ICT in the instruction.

▶ In the schools, in which the results are improved, there are various types of formal and non-formal cooperation between the teachers and the trainers. The cooperation is more often focused to concrete current and future needs of the teachers. In the schools in which the results are worsened, most often the cooperation is at a low level or is absent.

3.4. Preparedness of the students for reading and the activities in their home related to reading prior to starting to go to school

Many investigations have proved that exposing children in their early childhood to activities related to reading is a key factor in creating habits for reading and high achievements in comprehensive reading[9]. Therefore, in this study also, as in that in 2010, the students were asked about their experiences in their family related to the activities for the reading in the pre-school period, as well as about the habits for reading in their families.

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9 I. V. S. Mullis, M. O. Martin, A. M. Kenedy, P. Foy, PIRLS 2006 International Report. Chesnut Hill, MA: Boston College, стр. 106.

We collected the data about the situation and the habits in the families that relate to language literacy, by short questionnaire, to which the students responded at the end of the testing of the second day.

With 6 questions we collected data that refer to:

▶ visiting pre-school institutions;
▶ pre-knowledge for reading;
▶ activities in their home related to reading in the pre-school period;
▶ number of books in the family;
▶ membership in libraries; and
▶ discussions about the books read in the family.

The data from this short questionnaire, will be presented with an aim to see the family context of the students tested in 2010 and in 2013, related to the literacy.

3.4.1. Activities that induce the skills for reading and writing

The data presented in Graph 19 refer to the activities that induce the skills for reading and writing, which the students from the project schools, in 2010 and in 2013, did with the senior members of the family prior to starting to go to school.
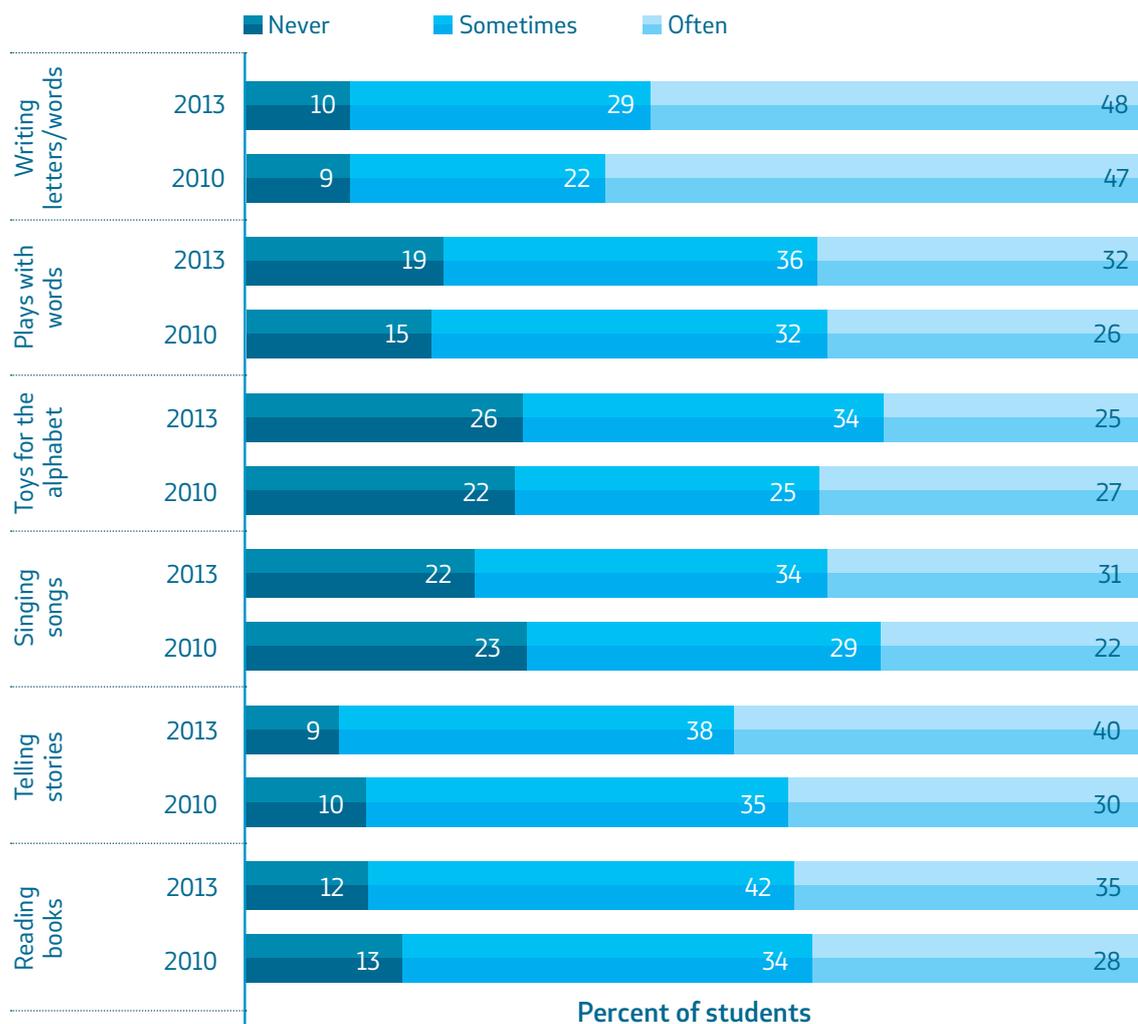
Graph 20: *The frequency of exposing to activities that induce the skills for writing and writing with the students from the project schools.*

It may be stated that in the two samples (in 2010 and in 2013) more than 70$ of the students, even in the early childhoods, were sometimes or often exposed to inducing activities, when the students very often together with their parents were writing letters or words. There are no considerable changes of the situations in relation to 2010.

Table 6: *Discussing about the books that have been read in the family * .*

How often they read or discuss together	Percent of students who discuss about a book they have read with a member of the family					
	Sometimes		Once to twice per week		Every day	
	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013
Project school	16%	18%	42%	48%	33%	27%
Control school	19%	15%	42%	51%	33%	28%

*The total percentage of the students is not 100%, because part of the students did not respond to this question

Generally speaking, the parents or the adults in the family often devote some of their time, during the week, to listen to their children how they read or to discuss with them about that what they have read about. About 40% of the students in 2010, and about 50% in 2013, once or twice a week read books to the members of the family, or discuss with them about that what was read about, and about 30% of the students responded that they do it every day, and that, both in 2010 and in 2013.

3.4.2. Situations that induce the skills for reading and writing

In relation to the pre-knowledge that the students had had prior to starting to go to school, and are related to reading, from the Table 7, you may see that in the sample were tested students from the two generations, about half of the students knew the letters prior to starting to go to school, about 30% of the students responded that they were able to read and write words, and about 10% could read dictionaries. There are no significant differences In the pre-knowledge of the students that were tested in 2010 and in 2013.

Table 7: *Pre-knowledge for reading *.*

Pre-knowledge	Percent of students according to the pre-knowledge prior to starting to go to school					
	I knew letters		I could read and write letters		I could read dictionaries	
	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013
Project school	50%	53%	31%	29%	9%	13%
Control school	44%	56%	36%	28%	12%	10%

* The total percentage of the students is not 100%, because part of the students did not respond to this question.

From the data presented in Table 8, it may be seen more than half of the tested students, both in the project and in the control schools, attended pre-school institutions, and that is in the generation of 2010 and in 2013. The percentage of the students from the project schools who attended pre-school institutions in the generation of 1013 is larger than that from the control schools.

Table 8: *Attending pre-school institutions *.*

	Percentage of students that attended pre-school institution			
	yes		no	
	2010	2013	2010	2013
Project school	60%	69%	33%	28%
Control school	57%	59%	41%	39%

* The total percentage of the students is not 100%, because part of the students did not respond to this question.

With regard to the fact that the habits for reading are acquired even at an early age, the students were asked about the number of books in their home, about using the services of libraries, as well as about the habit of the children to read books or to discuss about a read book with the senior members of the family.

Table 9: Books in the family *.

	Percentage of students that have books in the family									
	0–10 books		11–25 books		26–100 books		101–200 books		More than 200 books	
	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013	2010	2013
Project school	15%	18%	32%	39%	20%	22%	14%	10%	9%	6%
Control school	16%	24%	32%	27%	28%	27%	12%	7%	4%	8%

* The total percentage of the students is not 100%, because part of the students did not respond to this question.

About one third of the students from the two subgroups and from the two generations (2010 and 2013) live in families that have from 11 to 25 books in their family libraries, and about 15% of the students have more than 100 books at home (bigger is only the percentage in the project schools in 2010).

Table 10: *Membership in library *.*

	Percent of students and members of the family who borrow books from library			
	yes		no	
	2010	2013	2010	2013
project	69%	72%	23%	23%
control	71%	83%	26%	16%

*The total percentage of students is not 100% because part of the students did not respond to this question.

In relation to borrowing books from libraries, the affirmative indicator is that the percentage of students or the members of the family who borrow books from libraries, according to the responses of the students, is big. In 2010, it was about 70%, in both the project and in the control schools. In 2013, a considerable bigger number of students (83%) responded that in their family, books are borrowed from library.

CONCLUSION

▶ The experiences of the children in the family, related to activities for reading in the pre-school period, as well as their habits for reading in their families, are very similar with the sample of the tested students in 2013 with those in 2010.

▶ According to the obtained indicators, these experiences do not represent a factor that would influence upon the differences in the achievements between the students from the project and from the control schools, as well as, between the achievements of the students from the project schools in 2010 and in 2013.

4. ACCEPTANCE, LEVEL OF REALIZATION OF THE PROGRAM AND THE NEED FOR SUPPORT

The success of the changes that are introduced, depends to a great extent from the concern of the teachers that are supposed to introduce and use the given innovation, as well as of the adequate support that they should get. The support that the teachers are getting should help them to overcome easier the stages of concern in which they are found in order to apply more surely the newly acquired knowledge and skills. Wanting to obtain more information that would enable us better interpretation of the results, in the measuring in 2013, we included additional instruments that refer to the acceptance, the realization and the support to the teachers for the application of the innovations in the Language Literacy in the instruction in the early grades. The data were collected only from the project schools teachers.

Below is given a short description of each instrument that was used in the second study, and are presented the results.

WAY OF MEASURING

The acceptance of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* and the concern of the teachers in its realization was measured by an eight level Scale of concern which contains 35 items, and determines 7 stages.

The level of use was measured by one Scale for self-assessment of the level of application of the principles and the approaches from *the Language Literacy,* as well as by another question about the frequency of their application in the teaching.

The need for support was measured by one question in the questionnaire for the teachers about their needs for further training and support in the listed nine aspects of *Language Literacy* that are important for its implementation in the everyday practice.

4.1. Acceptance of the Language literacy in the early grades

During the introducing of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, the teachers in the project schools were facing a process of change, which according to the studies of ((Hall (1977); Loucks&Hall (1979); Roberts (1993)), first begins within the individual/the teacher, which represents a very personal experience, imposes development of knowledge and skills, and together with it, there is included the feeling of concern. In measuring the level of acceptance and concern in the realization of the *Language Literacy, we* used an adapted scale according to the Concerned Based Adaptation Model – CBAM. We connected the analysis of the results with the Stages of Concern - SoC, which are seven, and are grouped in three categories: the concern for oneself, the concern for the tasks/the activities and their realization, as well as the concern about the effects. Theoretically, the teachers are not facing, at the same time with all those concerns, but there dominate the stages of one category, and when they are overcome, there dominates the concern of the next category. Hence it is crucial, during giving the support, that it should refer exactly to overcoming the concerns of the teachers that they are facing in this period – on the contrary, the support will not be very effective.

On the Graph 20, is presented the percentage of teachers that have overcome each of the seven stages of concern. It is noted that the larger part of the teachers (but not all) have overcome the concerns of each stage, in which they were faced with in different periods of the three years application of the approaches and techniques from the *Language Literacy.*

Stage of concern

Stage	Percent
Refokusing	69
Collaboration	59
Consequencess	33
Management	69
Personal	78
Informational	80
Awareness	81

Percent of teachers
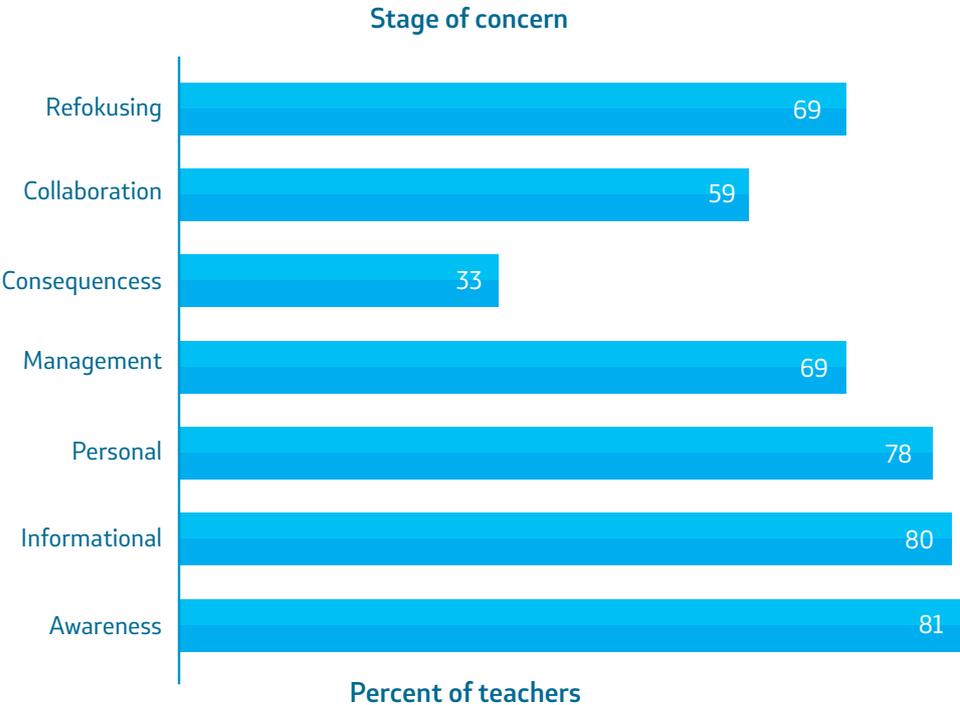
Graph 20: *Percentage of teachers from the project schools who have overcome a particular stage of concern.*

To the first category – concern for one self, belong the teachers who are in the stages of *awareness* for using the *Language Literacy, being informed* and the training that he has acquired, as well the *personal concern* – about the own making out in the realization of the principles and techniques of the program. This category appears most often, and it is noticeable at the beginning of the introducing of the change and refers to the need for more information and responses for intangibilities, dilemmas and questions.

▶ According to the responses, 81% of the teachers have overcome/mastered the first stage and are aware about the program *Language Literacy,* as well as for its need.

▶ The stage of being informed/, where the teachers need additional information, as for example, what are the experiences of the teachers who are already applying the program, what kind of resources they have at disposal, and in what way the application of the *Language* Literacy, is different from the practice up to now, and etc., has been overcome by 80% of the teachers.

▶ The stage of concern for oneself which refers to the professional status and the career development of the teachers, the opportunity for passing personal decisions about the application, as well the concern related to the needed time, effort and devotion is overcome with 73% of the teachers.

In this context, for concern is the data that about 20 percent of the teachers have still not overcome the stages of awareness and being informed, because all the examinees in the sample are teachers that have passed the training, and besides, in these schools, are still working the teachers – national trainers – the mentors of the program, who are supposed to give support to their colleagues in the realization.

The second category is *the concern for the activities* and for their realization, which contains elements from the stage of concern for *the organization of the instruction/management*. This category appears at the beginning of the application of the project/the program in the everyday work of the teacher, and refers to the need of additional knowledge, skills and information for a more efficient planning for the realization of the activities (from the aspect of time, the needed materials, the organization of the work for the students, inclusion of aims and activities of the program in the yearly/thematic/daily planning and the preparation of the instruction, and so.). The concern for the organization of the instruction has been overcome by 69% of the teachers, who are already sure in relation to the activities, and they do not represent for them a particular concern.

To the third category which is *the concern for the effects*, belong the stages of concern for the *consequences, the cooperation, the upgrading* and the *modifying and upgrading/refocusing* of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*. This category appears after the teachers have become more secure in planning, organizing and applying the principles and the techniques in the everyday practice. Here, the concern refers to: how the application of the newly acquired knowledge and skills will influence upon the learning and the achievements of the students, how to improve more the application, how the *Language Literacy* is effective, compared to the previous method of work, how to cooperate and to share the results with other teachers, how can the program be modified and be upgraded in order

to improve it, and to have wider application (in other contents, topics and domains in the framework of the mother tongue and in the other subjects).

According to the responses, and compared with the other two categories (i.e. the four previous stages of concern), as it was expected, smaller is the percentage of the teachers who have mastered and have overcome the concerns that belong to this category. It is noticed that, the smallest percentage of teachers (33%) have overcome the stage of *consequences* – the concern for the effects upon the students and their achievements, which theoretically precedes to the concern for cooperation and sharing, as well as for modifying and upgrading. In relation to this, and to the other sources and investigations, it is pointed out that at the level of a system, in the country, more care is taken about what and how should the teacher do, than on the influence of that what he is doing about upon the students and upon the effects. Hence, probably, the teachers, also, in the project, have devoted more attention to dealing with the concerns related to the cooperation and the upgrading, i.e. modifying and upgrading of the program, than to the concerns about the effects/the influence of the program upon the students and their achievements.
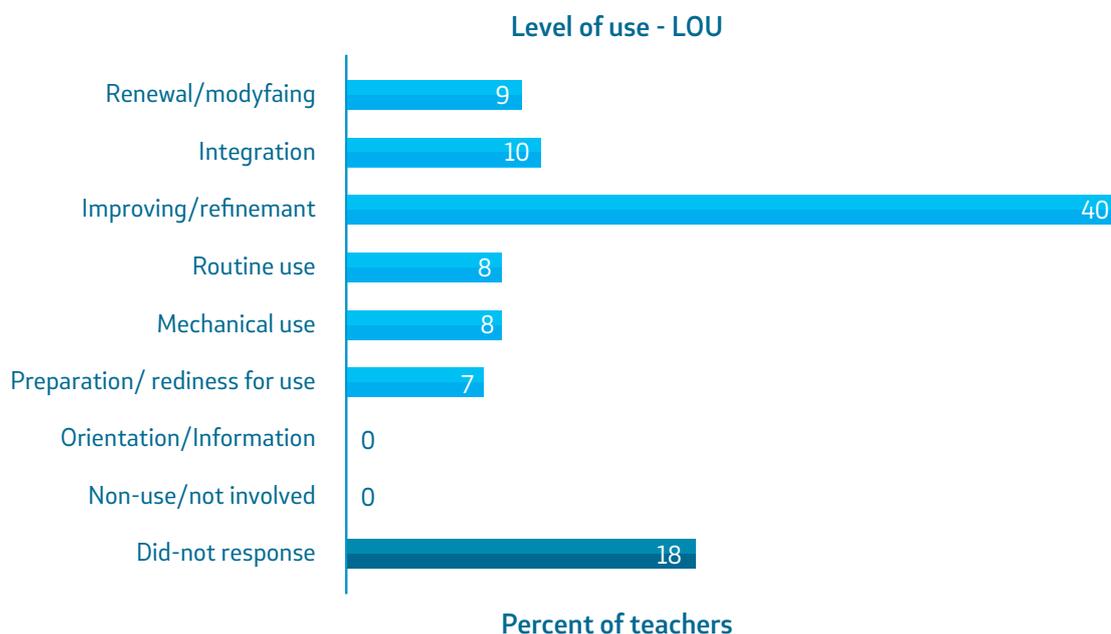
> ▶ The concern for cooperation and sharing was overcome by 59% of the teachers, but most of the teachers cooperate and share experience in their own school, and with the professional acting body for grade teaching, which is confirmed, also, by the responses given by the school principals and the representatives of the support staff service, the responses of the teachers themselves on the question in the questionnaire about how much they cooperate with the other teachers, as well as from the discussions in the focus groups
> ▶ The concern for modifying and upgrading/refocusing has been overcome by 69% of the teachers, but this most probably refers to the selection and the adaptation of the techniques that are being used, and are related to the realization of the program in the mother tongue lessons.

4.2. Level of realization of the program Language Literacy

To the question about the level of realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, responded the teachers from the project schools, who have been trained and were expected to apply the principles and the techniques in three school years, i.e. with one generation of students in the first cycle of the education (Grades 1-3). According to the investigations, the level of use of a given change/innovation in the instruction is related to the experience of the teachers and the length of time of the application (Hall (1977); Loucks&Hall (1979); Roberts (1993)) and in most cases, when it refers to introducing a more extensive program, after Grade 3 would be found in the average levels of use, measured by the instrument for self-estimate of the Levels of Use - LoU[10]

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10 Griffin, D. and Christensen, R. (1999).Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) Levels of Use of an Innovation (CBAM-LOU). Denton, Texas: Institute for the Integration of Technology into Teaching and Learning.

The percentage of the teachers, who in this research have estimated themselves that belong to a particular level of use is given in the graph below:

Level of use - LOU

Level	Percent
Renewal/modyfaing	9
Integration	10
Improving/refinemant	40
Routine use	8
Mechanical use	8
Preparation/ rediness for use	7
Orientation/Information	0
Non-use/not involved	0
Did-not response	18

Percent of teachers

Graph 21: *The percentage of teachers that are found in each of the levels of use of the program.*

As it was expected, a large percent of the teachers, estimate themselves that they are in the middle levels of the use of the program. According to the descriptions for each level, given in the questionnaire:

▸ 8% of the teachers (level of mechanical use) are mainly focused on short term everyday use of the *Language Literacy*, mainly trying to acquire greater skill in using the principles, techniques and forms of teaching, and they devote less time to reflection;

▸ 8% of the teachers (level of routine use) feel secure and are applying the principles and techniques in the way as they had been trained for, they are content with the application, and think, very rarely, to change something or to improve;

▸ even 40% of the teachers estimated themselves that they are at the level of improving and they make variations of the *Language Literacy,* aiming to increase the achievements, i.e. to have maximum effects with the students.

Besides the fact, that all the teachers who have responded to the question are included in the realization of the program (0% at the level of not use and 0% at the level of being informed), still high is the percentage of teachers (7%), who are ready for change and have planned and prepared the change – means that they still have not started to use the innovations of the *Language Literacy..*

The percentage of the teachers in the highest levels of use (10% for integrating, i.e. 9% for modifying), directs to the point that few teachers connect their activities from the *Language Literacy,* with the activities of their colleagues, aiming to achieve, generally, bigger influence and effects and to value the quality of the use

and of the effects of the program, with an aim to modify their own work and to develop something new.

Related to the issue of use, on the following Graph are presented the results of the responses of the teachers on the question about the percentage of the lessons in the mother tongue, in which they use the principles and techniques of the *Language Literacy*.
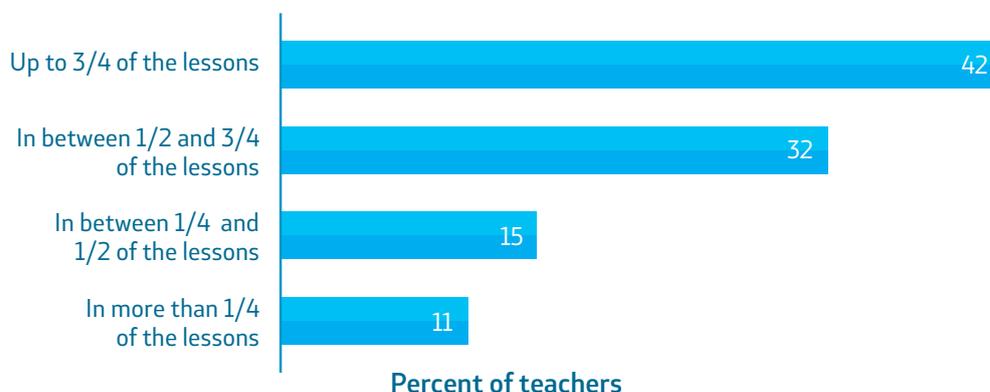
**Graph 22:** *Coverage of the Language Literacy in the lessons*

The biggest is the percent of teachers (42%) who said that they use the approaches of the program in more than 75% (or 3/4) of the lessons in mother tongue. Then 32% of the teachers, stated that they use the approaches in more than half of the lessons. About 25% of the teachers stated that they use the principles, the teaching approaches and techniques of *Language Literacy* on less than half of the lessons. The great number of lessons with the use of the program, most probably, refers to the use of the techniques. If you take into consideration the responses of the teachers to the other questions in the instrument for the teachers, you make conclude that in the practical realization of the teaching, the majority of the teachers are still not directed towards instruction in which, every day, in it, are embodied the principles of the *Language Literacy*, but to an instruction in which often are used the techniques that were part of the trainings or similar modified approaches..

Also, 2/3 of the school principals and of the support staff, to the question related to the instruction of the mother tongue, responded that in their school, its modernization is needed, in addition to the fact in the last few years instruction has been improved, and they agree with the statement that the project has helped for the improved quality of the realization of the curriculum.

4.3. Necessity for the training about different aspects of the instruction

The teachers were asked about the needs for their further support and training. In the questionnaire, as potential areas for training were listed nine aspects of the instruction in the mother tongue. For all of the listed aspects, about half of the teachers responded they would be pleased the training, while 20% of the teachers consider that the training is inevitable. But, there is a significant difference be-

tween the teachers from the project schools with instruction in the Macedonian language and the teachers from the schools with instruction in the Albanian Language (Graph 23).
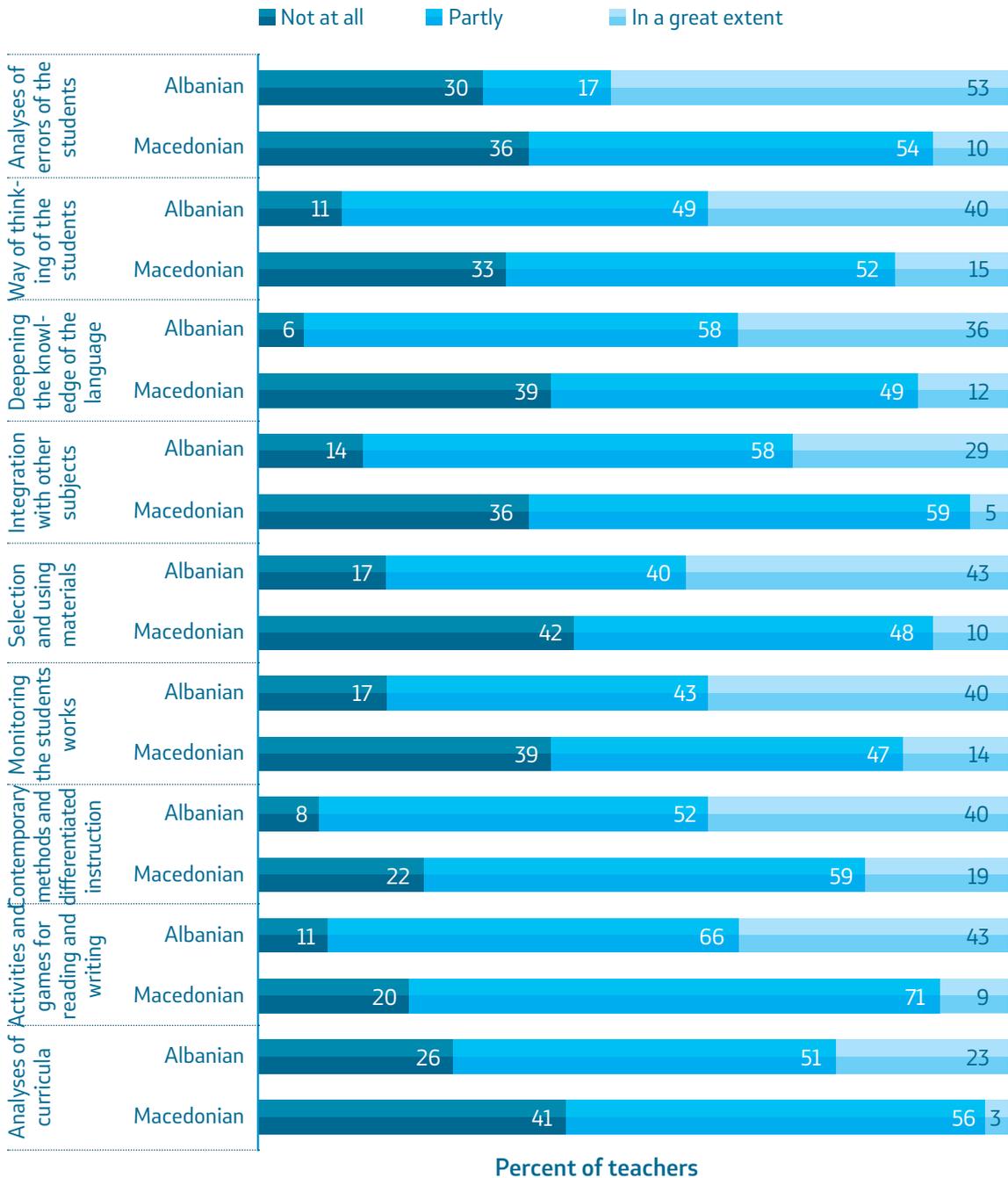
Graph 23: *Necessity for training the teachers from the project schools*

In each of the listed aspects (except in the analysis of the curricula for mother tongue instruction, in the parts on reading and writing and the integration of the teaching reading and writing in other subjects) the percentage of the teachers from the schools with instruction in the Albanian language, who stated that *to a great extent they need training* is between 36% and 53%, which is much more than the percentage of the teachers with instruction in the Macedonian Language.

CONCLUSION

▶ More than 3/4 of the teachers have overcome the concern related to the acceptance and the realization of the *Language Literacy.* But still, more than half of the teachers have concerns about how its use will influence upon the organization of the instruction, the learning and the achievements of the students.

▶ The self-estimate about the level of use of the principles and the approaches of the *Language Literacy* has shown that a larger percent of the teachers are found in the upper half of the levels of use (mostly in the improving)

▶ According to the responses about the frequency, 75% of the teachers, on more than half of the lessons they were taking care about the principles and have been applying the techniques.

▶ Though they were trained at the same time by certified national trainers (it is supposed with the same quality and according to the same program, more of the teachers in the instruction with the Albanian language, than the teachers in the instruction with the Macedonian Language, have stated that they need additional training for individual aspects of teaching reading and writing (from 23% to 53% of the teachers in the instruction with the Albanian language, while the percentage of the teachers with the Macedonian language of instruction is between 3% and 15%).

▶ The indicators about the stages of concern and about the level of use, point out to a level of use, which may generally result with very improved achievements by the students.

PART II – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this part are given, the basic information about the program Language Literacy in the Early Grades and the activities that have been conducted so far. An review, is given also of the findings from the research about the factors for the achievements of the students. It represents a starting base for the research of the situation prior to the beginning of the realization of the project activities - the baseline conducted in 2010.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM *LANGUAGE LITERACY IN THE EARLY GRADES*

1.1. Starting points

Due to the fact that each reform is a long-term process, it is necessary to introduce the changes carefully and gradually. First of all, an estimate should be made in order to see what effect might each step cause to the reform in the schools, among the teachers, the students and the parents. In planning and conducting the changes, the positive pedagogical experiences should be kept and also the important elements in the overall pedagogical heritage, and to accept the ideas, which would improve the quality of the system of education and enlightenment. In introducing the changes, it is necessary to find a measure between the new one and that one which has already acquired positive acknowledgement in the schools. The effects of the changes should be anticipated, no matter whether they would cause misunderstanding, resistance, or from the very beginning to attract and motivate the schools for cooperation and by themselves to accept the changes aiming to change and to improve the quality of educational process.

Taking into consideration all that stated above, the Bureau for Development of Education prepared a Concept for Nine-year Primary Education and enlightenment with a new curriculum plan for Primary education, which by a decision of the Minister of Education and Science began to be implemented in the school year 2007/2008. Following the principles of the primary education and enlightenment determined by the Conception (above all, the principle for general education character of primary schools, the principle of quality in education and the international comparability of knowledge, the principle of active participation of students, and the principle of the best interest for the child), were developed also the curricula for the particular subjects defined by the teaching plan for primary education. The curricula prescribe the goals for a particular developmental period (Grades 1 – 3, 4 – 6, 7 – 9), the aims per grades, the concrete objectives for selecting the contents, the notions that are to be acquired and examples of activities and methods by which the teacher could realize the prescribed aims. Also, the curricula offer didactic directions for the teacher, as well as general instructions for monitoring the achievements of the students

The very fact that with the new Concept, a six-year child becomes a student, brought along with it, changes in all the important segments of the education-enlightenment process. It wasn't possible just to adapt the old curricula, or simply to undertake or make some other improvisation. It was necessary to set up new goals and to devise new contents adapted to the characteristics of six-year old children. The thinking of the child at this age is concrete, the interest is stressed for plays and all types of communication, the child is open and curious, has a command of the aural speech in an amount that provides communication, and dome aspects in his speech, it comes even closer to the speech of adults.

But, at the time when the curricula were developed, consideration was taken related to the coverage of the children in the kindergartens at the age of five. (in 2006 it was less than 20%), so that, in determining the objectives and of the expected outcomes, consciously were supported low expectations in particular teaching subjects for the first developmental period (Grades 1 -3), in comparison to other countries of the European Union, with an idea that together with the implementation of curricula, there would immediately start a new continuing evaluation, monitoring of students' achievements, as well as a continuous work with teachers concerning the methods of work with the students and in the way of meeting the goals and improving the understanding about the quality of the instruction.

1.2. Analyses of curricula

The Bureau for Development of Education, due to the above mentioned reasons, and with an interest in raising the quality of education, supports the realization of particular curricula directed, above all, to strengthening the efficiency, which takes into consideration the improvement in students' achievements and of the expected outcomes in particular teaching subjects, above all, the efficiency in teaching the Macedonian, the Albanian, the Turkish and the Serbian, as mother tongues. To a certain reason, taking into consideration the results achievement in reading literacy PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Study) about Macedonian students which rate among the lowest in East Europe, there was a need to make efforts to strengthen the capacities in the country in carrying out a high quality instruction in mother tongues in primary education (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian languages).

The Bureau for Education in cooperation with UNICEF Office – Skopje, in the course of 2008 began with the realization of activities on the program –*Literacy in the Early Grades* with an aim to develop a curriculum that would enable the teachers to monitor the development of the students, and to create plans for the meeting particular objectives, as well as plans for the realization of the lessons in mother tongue in Grades 1 – 3. The activities carried out during 2008, by international experts –Ph.D Nancy Clair and Richard Holdgrave - Resendez were focused on:

▶ making analysis of mother tongue curricula for Grades 1 – 3;
▶ making comparative analysis of curricula in other countries in order to see the corresponding contents, the expectations and the organization of the nstruction;

▸ establishing broader goals (standards) for mother tongue instruction;

▸ developing a plan for training in the mentioned teaching subjects.

The analysis, above all, confirmed, in a way, that what was determined by approving the new curricula, i.e. that which in comparison with the curricula in other countries, our curricula (for grades 1 – 3) have generally low expectations[11].

In relation to the basic structure of the curricula for mother tongue instruction (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian) a recommendation is offered for it's strengthening which would turn it into a more efficient document for giving directions for instruction, the learning of the students and the assessment. Namely, the objectives are organized in three groups (objectives related to Grades 1 – 3, objectives for the teaching process and specific objectives for each grade). The objectives that relate to Grades 1 – 3 include the expectations that correspond to the developmental period, but, according to experts, the current objectives lack explicit hierarchy. Some of the objectives are broadly formulated, and others are more narrowed. For example, in *the objectives for the developmental period of Grades 1 – 3,* there is a broadly formulated statement – "to develop sense of belonging to the Republic of Macedonia by studying the Macedonian literary language", while another more concrete objective states – "to acquire and practice basic writing". In that direction, a recommendation is given (aimed to develop a more coherent document for the curricula which would enable teachers to monitor the progress of students and to develop objectives and plans to carry out the contents and the planning for class work), to consider about: 1) developing broader objectives (standards) in reading and writing; 2) prescribing topics which would organize the components of reading and writing (contents), and 3) establishing indicators for the expected or the supposed competences (for per grades) or cycles..

In developing of the curricula into components (or topics) also, as it was previously mentioned, the three groups of objectives lack organizational hierarchy with frames of the curricula, and the repeating of topics in frames of the curricula makes it difficult to monitor the essential components of literacy and the statement what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. The analysis gives certain general considerations:

▸ many of the objectives related to the development of writing and to the language put less stress to other components of reading and writing, including the reading comprehension;

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11 The following examples are taken from the curriculum for Macedonian language which point out that the expectations are too low.

• The program points out that second grade students should learn how "to make precise graphic presentation of elements of letters". This is an aspect of consciosness about that what is written and the concept of writing which is to be developed in Grade 1. Students should know how to write the majority of the letters by the end of Grade 1.

• The curriculum points out that in Grade 2, students should "learn and divide words by syllables". This is an aspect of the phonological sense and should be developed in Grade 1.

• The curriculum points out that Grade 3' students are to acquire sense about the prime and ordinal numbers and to distinguish one from the other". This is an aspect of sense about that what is written written and which should be developed in Grade 1. Students are to be able to make distinction between letters and numbers in Grade 1.

- many of the objectives for comprehension appear in the program domain - literature instead in the program domain - basics of reading and writing;
- there are few objectives which support phonological sense, understanding, decoding and knowlege of words, stock of words, fluency and the writing process;
- there are many opportunities for the students to be more creative in writing and telling stories. In the objectives, methods and activities for Grade 2 and 3. In the objectives, formulations such as "adequate" and "correct" are used more often than in those for Grade 1, may be, there is too much stress of the grammar in Grades 2 and 3, which could cause stiffness in the continuous developing of the literacy with students;
- while in the curriculum, the component of writing is represented in the form of writing letters, words and sentences, there are few opportunities for students to follow the process of writing (preparation for writing, draft-version and revision, editing and publishing) in order to make a portfolio of the writen works.
- in grade 3 there is an introduction to reading and writing Latin skript via something that seems as writing in Macedonian langauge with Latin script - it is not clear why the students are studying the Latin script via the Macedonian language wich is taught via the Cyrilic alphabet (students could learn the Latin script in their English classes).

The analysis states that certain specific aims are repeated in the curricula domains and grades. It is supposed that the activities in learning would be more advantageous by Grade 3, however the specific objectives should be upgraded one over the other and be easy to monitor.

Otherwise, the analysis does not remain only on "the week" or "the strong" sides of the curricula, but at the same time it gives recommendations for more precising, recomposing and pointing out particular parts (aims, contents, didactic directions, etc.) in curricula.

So, as an important issue it is pointed out that the chapter of the curriculum entitled as "Didactic recommendations", for all the grades where mother tongue is taught (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian, enables integrated planning of the teaching process in the following subjects – familiarity with the environment, the mathematics, the music education and physical education". However, the curriculum does not give directions how to integrate the language with the contents. The development of curriculum with topic units may represent one way of integrating the contents. Furthermore, the chapter Didactic Recommendations (Grade 1) consists of "methods, forms and teaching aids" covering "all the interactive, contemporary and modern methods … with a focus on the method of play, method of problem solving and discovery (the research method as the most adequate one for the specifics of learning by students at that age)". However, the document does not mention what are those contemporary and modern methods. The current activities in the curricula are either plays or exercises about which, very often, concrete instructions for teachers are lacking.

1.3. Training of teachers

On the basis of the considerations from the analysis, an expert team – Nancy Clare and Richard Resendes (from MIske Witt & Associates Inc. (MWAI). St. Paul, USA) developed a program for trainers, aiming to train teachers, via instruction, to implement the given recommendations related to curricula. For the needed trainings, the experts: Nancy Clare, Richard Resendes, Michel Monson and Jane Westrick, developed a manual – Language Literacy on Early Grades.

▶ The Bureau for Development of Education, in order to include teachers of better quality, i.e. teachers who by own wish and motive determined themselves to contribute to improving mother tongue instruction, on the basis of an open competition, made a selection of about fifty teachers (part of them carry out the instruction in the Macedonian, part in the Albanian, Turkish or Serbian), with an obligation:

▶ to attend the training structured in seminars of a total of 49 hours;

▶ to implement the acquired knowledge in carrying out the instruction (with support of BDE advisers) and,

▶ to carry out the training of teachers in the country teaching mother tongue in Grades 1 - 3 (after they first, within the frameworks of their schools, will carry out the traing with other teachers that do the instruction in Grades 1 - 3, and for that would be recommended by the advisers and by the international team of trainers).

The main objectives of the training for the *Language Literacy* were:
to deepen the understanding about the quality instruction of mother tongue by the teachers;

▶ to implement the newly acquired knowledge in the instruction and so to become more effective teachers;

▶ to improve students' achievements in mother tongue (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian);

▶ to improve the students' results in mother tongue within the framework of the international comparative assessments and studies.

In 2009 and in 2010, raining sessions for the teachers were organized structured in 4 seminars, or expressed in hours, the teachers attended training of 49 hours.

1.4. Dissemination of training, monitoring of results and support

After the training of the teachers and of the advisers from the Bureau for Development of Education, a phase began of dissemination of the trainings, first within the framework of –schools[12] from which the trained teachers come from. The teachers, under the mentorship of the advisers, were already implementing the acquired knowledge from the workshops in their mother tongue classes, and in the period October-December they conducted the training for all the teachers teaching in Grades 1 - 4, in their own schools.

Upon the recommendation for a successfully carried out training, these teaches after getting credentials for trainers, with the support of the Bureau for Development of Education, in 2011 carried out the training in a neighbouring school (close to their own school) – schools of phase II.

In phase III, 65 schools were included, when care was taken to include schools from regions that were not previously included in training. In 2012, in each school, two teachers were trained for school trainers. The school trainers were applying the newly acquired knowledge and skills in their own practice, and then, with support from the advisers in charge for the training from the BDE, did a dissemination of the training of the training of the teachers in their own schools.

In relation to the trainings, it should be pointed out, that though at the beginning it was not planned, still, in them were included all the teachers from the grade teaching and the representatives from the support service in the schools, and in some of them were included the school principals, with an aim to be able more adequately to give support to the teachers, to monitor the realization of the instruction and to be included in the process of teachers certification.

The application of the approaches of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* as from the aspect of the quality of the realized instruction, and also from the aspect of the results achieved by the students is monitored by the Bureau for Development of Education and by the national/main trainers. The aim of the trainers is to give direct support to the teachers in their school, and for this, so far, at least, two visits were realized for support to each of the schools in phase I and phase II, two visits during the dissemination of the trainings in each of the schools in phase III, and in the schools in phase 1, the trainers were giving continuing support to their colleagues. Within the framework of the project, with an aim that the main trainers give more qualitative professional and pedagogical support, in October, the national/main trainers underwent a two day training for mentor skills, and in November 2012, a training for recording good practices for the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

Also, at the beginning of 2012, were developed criteria for certification of the teachers who demonstrate application of the acquired knowledge and skills in their everyday practice. For the certification, responsible are the schools teams for ver-

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12 The training in 14 project schools, which are in the sample for this study (Appendix 2) began after the conducted collection of data.

ifying, and the advisors from the BDE. According to the received reports from the advisors, so far 391 teachers, particularly from the schools in phase I and in phase II, meet the criteria and have successfully passed the process of certification.

The realization of the new approaches in the language literacy will be further monitored by the Bureau for Development of Education, as from the aspect of the quality of the realized instruction, as well as from the aspect of the results achieved by the students.

2. FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.1. Studies of some relevant factors of students' achievements related to teachers

Learning how to read and write is a complex process. Therefore, researchers look for factors which make the instruction of reading and writing more effective. In addition to the factors related to students and to the social environment they come from, and to which school can have small influence, the most often issue of research are the attitudes, the knowledge and teachers' practice.

According to certain studies (Greenwald, Hedges & Laine, 1996; Mosenthal, Lipson, Torncello, Russ & Mekkelsen, 2004; Sanders & Horn, 1994) in Reutzel R., J. A. Dole, R. Sudweeks, P., S. Read, J. A. Smith, B. Donaldson, C. D. Jones, K. Herman (2007, p. 2), the teacher is the most influential single factor who influences upon the educational development of the student. According to those studies he is more influential than the family, the environment and the school that the child attends. According to other studies (Rowen, Correnti and Miller) although the teacher is important, the education of parents as a more influential factor. The researchers, also, point out to a series of methodological issues related to discovering the other factors upon the achievements and the progress of students.

In relation to the characteristics of the teachers, that are important for the teachers to be more successful in teaching the reading and writing, most often are studied the attitudes related to reading, their knowledge about the content that they are teaching, as well as their pedagogical and methods knowledge

2.1.1. Knowledge of teachers

In the investigations of the knowledge of the teacher, that are essential for the instruction, the majority of the researchers start from the theoretical framework set up by (Shulman (1986, 1987) according to Reutzel (2007). Shulman, first separated two categories of teachers' knowledge: content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and then added pedagogical knowledge related to contents which in our terminology are known as methodological knowledge.

Content knowledge
Content knowledge is the kind of knowledge of the curriculum that the teacher is teaching to students. Some researchers such as for e. Paris, Wixson & Lipson (1983), according to Reutzel (2007)) call it *declarative knowledge* of the teaching

subject. They most often estimated them via proxy measures, such as the level of education, content of courses that the teachers have studied and via knowledge tests.

In order to measure the subject knowledge, needed for the teaching of reading and writing, it is more complex task than the measuring of the content knowledge in other subject areas. Its because of the fact that the reading and writing do not have a content core which the other teaching subjects have, and the good readers and writers can hardly identify their own content knowledge which makes them be good. (Reutzel (2007) p. 4).

The content knowledge in the domain of reading and writing is often defined via the standards for training or for competences of the teachers in a particular domain. So, the National Council for Acreditation of Teacher Education has defined standards for education of teachers in USA (NCATE, 2007), and they are upgraded in the domain of reading and writing by the International Reading Association (IRA, 2010). Even, in cases when the indicators are given, they are not easy to measure.

Some recent studies on reading (Moats & Foorman (2003), McCutchen et al. (2002) according ro Reutzel et al. (2007)) show that the increased content knowledge of teachers does not influence upon higher achivements of students.

Pedagogical knowledge

The pedagogical knowledge, according to Shulman, reffers to "the general behaviour of the teacher in the teaching which is in corrolation with the achievements of the students on standarizeed tests " (Shulman, 1987, p. 6), according to (Reutzel (2007) p. 7) or said in some other way, it is the teachers' knowledge how to perform the instruction.

There are many studies which have investigated the relationship of the pedagogical knowledge with the achievements of students. Because of the fact that the program *Literacy in the Early Grades* is not directed to the general pedagogical knowledge, here we will not present the results of the findings that refer to them.

Specific methodological knowledge

The most important component of teachers' knowledge, according to (Shulman's (1986, 1987), and according to (Reutzel (2007) p. 8) is the pedagogical knowledge about the teaching subject, which in our pedagogical context reffers to the familiarity of the specific methods of the subject, i.e. the knowledge how the instruction and the learning of a particular subject should be carried out.

Teachers should possess all of kinds of knowledge in order to carry out successfully the teaching of reading and writing. Actually that, what they have learned at their graduate studies is *the recommended practice*, and teachers upgrade that knowledge upon the experiences from the real practice. That knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994, according to Reutzel (2007) p. 8)) calls it "practical knowledge ". That knowledge is very individual, and often it is implicit, but to a large extend it determins the teaching practice.

Takiing into consideration the Shulman's conceptual framework and the statements of the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) that a large number of the research instruments were not reliable, Reutzel (2007) and collaborators developed for the project *Knowledge of the Teachers in Reading and Writing in Early Grades* (Primary Grade Reading & Writing Teacher Knowledge Project), a *Scale for Measuring the knowledge for the instruction of mother tongue* More precisely, the purpose of the scale is to estimate the knowlege of teachers from Grades 1 – 3, in the effective teaching of reading and writing, based on the findings from the studies.

On the basis of an extensive study of references, a taxonomy of teacher's knowledge was developed covering 20 domains in reading and 20 domains in writing. The scale consist of one test with multiple choice items (content knowledge of language, teaching situations that require application of pedagogical and methods knowledge, and knowledge about the learning of children, as well as knowledge about the aims of the instruction, and a scale of estimate of the instruction on the basis of an immediate class room observation. The instrument had good measuring characteristics (Reutzel and all (2007). However, when after three years they checked the predictive value, they found that the "Result on the scale explain only 1 to 4% of the total variance of the results in reading on the Stanford 10 - first test in Reading." (Reutzel (2010, slide 21). Another group of researchers from the University of Michigan made an effort to develop instruments which would measure the pedagogical knowledge (Rown at all, 2001). The starting point for them, also, was Shulman's understanding of the pedagogical and methods knowledge of the teacher. They investigated the achievements of the students in the following domains: word analysis, understanding of the read texts and writing on one hand, and on the other – to what extent the teachers are familiar with the contents, the thinking processes with the students and the pedagogical strategies in the teaching of reading and writing. The knowledge of the teachers was investigated by questions that consisted of short, realistic descriptions of teaching situations and a requirement to select one of the offered responses for that how to deal with in such a situation. One of the given answers was correct, but many were not. (Rown at all, 2001, p.5). In the reports, not only an analysis of the impact of the knowledge of teachers upon the students' achievements was made, but also on the entire approach practiced in the school. Differences in the efficiency of the approaches to teaching are found also (3 different programs for improving the teaching) upon the achievements of the students in reading and writing, which were measured by standardized tests. (Rown at all, 2009).

On the basis of the review of the results from the investigations, it may be concluded that the measuring of the pedagogical and of the methods knowledge of teachers for the teaching of language is complex, and it is difficult to develop instruments with good psychometrical characteristics. Findings about the links/influence of the pedagogical knowledge upon the students' achievements are not univocal.

In the country, in measuring the achievements of the students on a large size, so far, were not measured the knowledge of their teachers, and so there are no data about the relationship of these two variables. In constructing the instruments for measuring the pedagogical and the methods knowledge of the teachers in the

project *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*, the stated findings were taken into consideration.

2.1.2. Attitudes and beliefs of teachers

On the basis of the reviewed references, we have come to a conclusion that there are not many studies which have successful attempts to find out a set of attitudes of teachers, as a personal relationship to reading and writing. Concerning teachers' attitudes in general, the studies have shown that they may be changed as a result of the graduate education and in the in-service training. This finding is important for those introducing changes because "provided that the teachers have predisposition to change themselves then the changes are possible. Without the change of the attitudes, it is extremely difficult to effect upon the changes of the teaching practice. The majority of the researches that measured attitudes have shown that the attitudes have changed as a result of the interventions that have been undertaken, which shows that at least one of the major prerequisites for the change of the teachers is subject to the influence of the learning" "(National Reading Panel, (2000 p. 5-14). The Researches stated also that "there is little research how the teachers could be supported for a long period in order to provide lasting implementation of the new methods and influence upon achievements of the students "(National Reading Panel, 2000 p. 5-2).

2.1.3. The concern of the teachers about the changes

The success of the application in the teaching depends, to a great extent, of the serious approach and of the concern of the teachers who are to implement a given innovation. But, it is very important that the teachers receive an on-time and adequate support, which would help them to overcome the concern easier and to proceed on to the higher levels of application. In the majority of the investigations, related to introducing innovations and the concern of the teachers related to innovations, the model of accepting the changes accompanied by concerns was used (the Concerned Based Adaptation Model – CBAM), or more concretely the phases of concern (Stages of Concern - SoC), which refer to the affective side of the change (reactions, feelings and perceptions) of the teacher and the levels of application (Levels of Use - LoU) related to the behavior of the teacher towards the application of a given change

The findings of the investigations[13] show that:

  ▸ The application of the cooperative techniques for learning has improved after the teachers were given support adequate to their concerns. (Anderson, Rolheiser, & Bennet, (1995); Hargreaves at al. (2002); Cheuning &Yip (2004)).

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13 Archie A. George., Gene E. Hall., Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer (2008) Measuring implementation in schools. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire, SEDL, page 66. Table with a short description of relevant studies about the concern and Archie A. George., Gene E. Hall., Suzzane M. Stiegelbaurer (2008)Measuring implementation in schools. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire & Levels of Use, SEDL, page 3o –table with a short description of relevant studies of the level of use

▶ The adaptation of the training, taking into consideration the concerns of the teachers, results with better application of the innovations and greater focus toward the students (Casey & Rakes (2002)).

▶ The support to the understanding and the application of the innovation by the teachers improves the learning by the students (Borner (2003); Bennett, Fullan, & Rolheiser, eds. (2006)).

▶ The level of application is related to the experience of the teachers and of the duration of the implementation of the innovation (Hall (1977); Loucks & Hall (1979); Roberts (1993)).

▶ The skills of the trainers, the support by the management, the situation with sources for learning and other materials, the openness of the teachers for cooperation and their mutual support, as well as the culture in the school, have influence upon the level of the application of the innovations (Loucks & Melle (1980); Hall, Hord, & Griffin) (1980); Robers (1993); Krasner (1999)).

PART III – METHODOLOGY

In this part, a short description is given of the used methodology in the study, i.e.: information about the aims of the study, the conceptual framework, indicators of the study, used instruments, sample, collection, processing and analyses of the collected data.

With an aim to monitor the quality of the application of the approaches for reading with understanding and writing in the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades,* as well as the results achieved by the students, it was necessary to provide relevant information about the progress and the results of the activities. In order to provide such information, prior the beginning of the activities of the program *Language Literacy* (in 2010), the beginning state was examined, and examination and the study was repeated three years later (in 2013), after the students that were taught by teachers that were included in the first phase of the project completed the first cycle of primary education (from Grade 1 to Grade 3).

The used methodological approach was based on the following principles:

▸ Focus on providing valid and reliable information that are necessary for the evaluation of the objectives of the project and the influence of the activities in the program *Language Literacy;*

▸ providing data that could be used in explaining of the states;

▸ providing adequate basis for drawing further conclusions and decisions for achieving higher results and for planning and organizing the next activities, and;

▸ rationality from the aspect of duration of time, the included human resources and the means.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study, as well as, adequate instruments.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to provide relevant information about the state at the end of the first cycle in the realization of the program *Language Literacy* and on the basis of their comparison with the study of the beginning state (conducted in 2010) to pass conclusions about the degree of achieving the aim (*to raise the level of knowledge and skills of the teachers in order to improve the achievements of the students in the language literacy – reading and writing)*

The particular objectives of the study were:

1. To provide information about the **changes with the trained teachers** in relation to:
   ▸ their attitudes to the teaching and the learning of reading with understanding and the writing, and
   ▸ their pedagogical, i.e. methodological knowledge relevant for the realization of the instruction in the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

2. To provide information about the **difference in the achievements** at the end of Grade 3 between the students taught by teachers that were trained to apply the principles and the techniques of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades (*students from the project schools) and the students taught by the teachers that were not trained for the realization of the program (students from the control schools).

3. To provide information about **the changes in the achievements** at the end of Grade 3 with the students in the project schools after the three-year realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades*

4. To provide information about the realization of *the Language Literacy in the beginning grades* of the project schools, about the concern of the teachers and the support they had been receiving.

5. To give directions for the planning and the realization of the further activities.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to make an estimate of the effects of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* upon the teachers and their instruction, as well as upon the achievements of the students, the following two ordinary ways of measuring the changes were used:

1. *„with and without the activities "* – this is a quasi-experimental approach where, in one group of schools (the project schools) the activities are carried out (the teachers are trained and the project is realized), and in the other group (the control group) changes are not made in relation to the ordinary way of instruction (the teachers are not trained), and,
2. *„prior to and after the activities "* – when the changes are measured in the project schools in the course of a determined time period.

In the baseline (in 2010) and in the consequent research (in 2013), and on the basis of the review of the investigations about the factors that have essential impact upon the achievements of the students, it was determined to examine the states and the changes in the project schools and in the control schools in relation to:

Factors related to the teacher

▶ The pedagogical knowledge for the teaching of the mother tongue.
▶ The attitudes to the learning of mother tongue and to the specific pedagogical approaches in the teaching of reading with understanding and writing.
▶ The expectations of the students in the domain of reading and writing.
▶ The familiarity with the curricula.
▶ The training of the teachers for the specific methods in teaching the reading and the writing at the beginning grades.
▶ The level of using (LoU) and the phases of concern (SoC) for the realization of the program *Language Literacy*

Factors related to the socio-economic environment

▶ The education of parents.
▶ Number of books at home.
▶ Habits at home related to reading and writing.
▶ Pre-knowledge of students prior to going to school in Grade 1.

Factors related to the school environment

- The mutual support of the staff in the school.
- The equipment of the school for the instruction in the mother tongue.
- Factors related to the support of the school managing staff
- Considerations about the current states in the achievements in the mother tongue.
- Activities for improving the teaching of the mother tongue.
- Support to the teachers in the teaching of the mother tongue at the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades ***.

The factors marked with „*" are examined only in the baseline research (2010), in order o determine whether the project and the control schools are leveled up and no interventions were applied on them which would lead to changes. The factors marked with „**" were examined only in the consecutive measuring (2013), are related to the experiences from the realization of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* and can substantially have impact upon its effects

In accordance with the Conceptual Framework, developed at the beginning of the study (Appendix 1), the method by which the changes in the examined factors in the project and in the control schools were compared, is presented bellow.

Time of the study	Project schools		Control school
Prior the beginning (2010 г.)	Achievements of students ↑	no differences →	Achievement of students ↑
At the end of the first cycle (2013 г.)	Achievements of students	→	Achievement of students
Prior the beginning (2010 г.)	Factors related to teachers ↑	no differences →	Factors related to teachers ↑
At the end of the first cycle (2013 г.)	Factors related to teachers	→	Factors related to teachers
Prior the beginning (2010 г.)	Factors related to the school environment ↑	no differences →	Factors related to the school environment ↑
At the end of the first cycle (2013 г.)	Factors related to the school environment	→	Factors related to the school environment
Prior the beginning (2010 г.)	Socio-economic environment	no differences →	Socio-economic environment

3. INDICATORS

The indicators, given below, are defined specially for this study on the bases of the objectives and the activities of the program Language Literacy and were measured. The results, elaborated in this report, are given according to the stated indicators.

Indicator 1 – Understanding of learning and of teaching the students by the teachers and the compatibility with the way of teaching based on the principles of learning in *Learning in the Early Grades* (Understanding of earning and of teaching mother tongue)[14]

▶ Attitudes to the learning of mother tongue and to the teaching based on principles of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

▶ Methodological and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers in accordance with the approach in the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.*

▶ Expectations of the teachers in relation to the achievements of their students in the reading with understanding and the writing.

▶ Familiarity with the mother tongue curricula for the Macedonian language, i.e. the Albanian language in the next cycles of the primary education.

Indicator 2 – Support to the teaching of mother tongue by the school management staff (Support to the changes in the teaching of mother tongue)

1. To what extent the school principals and the representatives of the support service (pedagogues, psychologists):

▶ are satisfied with the teaching of mother tongue, especially in the grade teaching phase;

▶ what do they undertake for improving the teaching of the mother tongue.

2. The support to the teachers in the instruction of mother tongue:

▶ cooperation with other teachers;

▶ support to the changes and the activities that are introduced for improving the instruction.

3. Equipment and specific aids for the teaching of mother tongue.

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14 The indicator is given as it was formulated in the Logical Framework for the study, and in the brackets are given the shortened names that are used in the previous parts of this report.

Indicator 3 – Achievements of the students

Achievements of the students on a test in reading comprehension and on a test in writing, consisted of items for measuring understanding of a text, vocabulary, decoding and word analysis, as well as the phonological sense, the use of orthography and the needed lexis.

Indicator 4 – Acceptance, level of realization and the need for support for the language

literacy in the early grades (Acceptance, realization and support)[15]

- ▶ Acceptance of the program;
- ▶ Level of realization of the program;
- ▶ Need for support in the realization.

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15 This indicator was used only in the project schools in the measuring at the end of the first cycle because it refers to the experiences, the concern and the needs related to the program Language Literacy.

4. METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In accordance with the defined indicators, different sources and methods of collecting data were used in his survey.

4.1. Teachers' survey

The data about the actual methodological and pedagogical knowledge of teachers about the early literacy, their understanding of reading and writing, as well as about their attitudes how reading and writing in early grades have to be taught, were collected by a test composed of short descriptions (vignettes) of teaching situations related to the early language literacy, and on a scale of attitudes about the early literacy. The data about the teaching practice, the expectations of the students, the familiarity with the curricula, the abilities of the teachers in using interactive approaches in teaching the students reading with understanding and writing, as well as the level of application of the newly acquired knowledge were collected by a questionnaire. We also prepared a special scale which was used to make an estimate about the phases of concern of the teachers.

All the three instruments were technically arranged in an instrument named as *Questionnaire for teachers from the project schools* and a *Questionnaire for the teachers from the control schools*, which required about 50 minutes to be answered.

4.2. Assessment of the language literacy of students

With specially prepared tests, and their administering at the beginning of Grade 4, we collected data about the knowledge and the skills of the students acquired at the end Grade 3 in reading with understanding and writing. Also, we collected data about the situations and the habits in the families of the tested students related to the language literacy.

The two tests and a short questionnaire were placed in one *Test-booklet*. About 45 minutes were needed to answer each test. The tests were administered separately in two successive days and at the end of the second day students gave answers to the questionnaire.

4.3. Survey of the school principals and the representative of the support service (pedagogues, psychologists) of the school

Data about the state in the teaching of mother tongue, the support to teachers in carrying out the realization of the instruction, the equipment, as well as the personal engagement of the managing staff in the realization of the program *Language literacy* were collected by the school principals and by the support staff of the school. Specially prepared questions and scales of attitudes were included in one instrument – the *Questionnaire for school principals and school support staff,* which required about 20 minutes to be answered.

4.4. Focus-groups with advisors from the BDE – coordinators for the program and with teachers from the project schools

After the initial analysis of the data, it was needed to do collecting of additional information and a more profound analysis of the factors that may be have influenced upon the achievements of the students in the project schools. We considered that the needed information may best be obtained through the discussion in the focus-groups, for which an adequate protocol for the focus-group was developed and a list of questions. The qualitative data were collected by a group of advisors – in charge of the support in the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* and by the teachers in Grade 4 (the teachers that taught the generation of students that were tested in 2013, and by the school management staff in the project schools. Enable objective comparisons of the project schools in the two measuring (2010 and 2013) as well as between the project and the control schools.

4.5. Description of the instruments

The content of each of the used instruments is given briefly below. The instruments for the research in the project and in the control o make the comparisons be more objective and more understandable for a schools, in a larger part, were the same in order to be able to make the comparisons be more objective and more understandable for a wider part of users of this report.

Name of the nstrument	Brief desription
Questionnaire for teachers[16]	The questionnaire for teachers consisted of 4 parts: ▸ The first part contained a scale of attitudes of Linkert type, which measures the acceptation of teaching and learning according to the principals of the program *the Language Literacy – reading and writing*. It initially contained 44 statements and for each one of them it was required to denote the degree of agreement on a 5 degree scale. 38 statements were taken into consideration in the processing, and 8 were dropped because of their low discriminativity. ▸ The second part contained 13 vignets (taeching situations) used to examine the pedagogical and methods knowledge of teachers for teaching in the early grades. 7 of the tasks were clusters (with 3 to 6 questions), and in 6 the best answer was required. ▸ The third part contained a scale of attitudes related to the expectations of the students related to reading and writing at the end of Grade 3, and 5 clustar questions about the teaching of mother tongue in the school. In this part, the scale with 35 items which was used to estimate the concern of the application of the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades* ▸ The last 4 questions required data about the education and the experience of the examiners.
Test for reading and writing	The test for the students contained 6 tasks (24 requirements) which measure knowledge and abiities in the following domains: ▸ Reading – 4 tasks (13 requirements) ▸ Writing - 2 tasks (11 requirements) A total of 13 requirements were used, with a choice the offered answers, 2 with short answers and 2 open-ended tasks which required explication of the opinion or the attitudes of students, and an essay type task (writing a brief composition upon given words). The test was structured in three parts: 1. Test in reading, 2. Test in writing and 3. Questionnaire related to the student and his/her family, which contained 8 questions.
Questionnaire for school principals and representatives of the support service[17]	The questionnaire for the managment team of the school contained 14 questions divided into 2 groups: ▸ A group of questions and scales of attitudes, which reffered to the teaching of mother tongue in the school, ▸ A group of questions related to the information and the support to teachers in the project schools. The last 4 questions require data about the education and the experience of the examinees
List of questions for the focus-groups[18]	10 questions about the ways of work of the schools related to the program, the opinions about the good and the weak parts in the realization of the program and of their relation to the results of the student

16 The part of the instrument used to collect data in order to make an estimate the concern of the teachers and the level of use in the Language Literacy in the Early Grades is included only in the questionnaire for the teachers in the project schools..

17 This questionnaire was used only in the project schools.

18 This questionnaire was used with the advisors of the BDE and in the project schools.

After the application of the instruments in the baseline study, the psychometric characteristics of the scales and of the tests were checked. The tasks/items that were not discriminative were not taken into consideration in the processing of the data in the two measuring. And in the repeated measuring, the instruments showed similar characteristics (about the reliability and the discrimination).

5. SAMPLE

5.1. Selection of schools

One of the research challenges was to identify two samples – one from the project schools and the other from the non-project schools, which will be mutually comparable. The population of the project schools consisted of 33 schools which in the program *Language Literacy* were included by applying to an Advertisement for teachers – future trainers. The project schools are not a representative of the entire population of schools in the country, though it had in mind to cover all the schools in the country. In the dilemma, to measure the initial state on a representative sample of schools (teachers and students at national level) and in that way to provide a highly reliable basis for comparing the effects when all the schools would be included, or to develop a sample comparative (parallel) to the starting project sample, which would provide more reliable comparison of effects of the project activities, we decided to choose the second approach. So, two comparable cluster samples were selected:

1. Sample of project schools and
2. Sample of non-project schools

In making the choice of the sample of project schools (the schools included in the project), care was taken that the sample should better represent the population of primary schools in the country, in relation to:

- ▶ the geographical coverage;
- ▶ the location of schools (urban – rural) and
- ▶ the language of instruction (Macedonian - Albanian).

Fourteen (14)19 project schools were selected. Due to their limited number, and to their characteristics in relation to the mentioned factors (the larger part are urban and with Macedonian language of instruction), they could provisionally be considered as a representative sample in relation to the entire populations (all the schools in the country).

Then, we deliberately made a selection of parallel schools, taking into consideration that they be identical in relation to the geographical coverage (from same urban and rural places) and to the language of instruction, and be similar according to the social background of students (which was later checked through their

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19 Initialy14 project schools were selected but in one of them the Program was not realized because the training was not conducted in this school, and so, in the comparison the results of the 14 schools were used.

parental education) with the selected project schools. A deviation of this rule was made in the selection of one control school with instruction in the Albanian language, where due to the absence of urban non-project schools, a corresponding suburban school was selected. After the program *Language Literacy* began to be carried out, and also in the planning of the 2013 research, it was stated that in the sample there would be small changes:

▸ In one of the project schools, in the sample of 2010, the training was not carried out because the trainer had left the school. Due to that, in the repeated research, this school and its corresponding control school were excluded.

▸ Due to the fact that in two of the bilingual schools the training was carried only for the teachers with instruction in the Albanian language, the research about the instruction in the Macedonian language was done in the closest schools with similar characteristics, where the teachers with instruction in the Macedonian language have passed the training three months after the training in the project school.

The sample of the schools is given in Appendix 2, and its characteristics are given in the following table.

Table 11. *Sample of schools according to the language of instruction and the urban environment of the settlement.*

Urban environment	Project schools			Control schools			Total
	Macedonian	Albanian	Mixed	Macedonian	Albanian	Mixed	
Urban	7 (8)[20]	1	2	7 (8)	0	2	19 (21)
Rural	1	3	0	1	4	0	9
Total	8 (9)	4	2	8 (9)	4	2	28 (30)

In the sample of 2010, it was stated that there are no considerable differences in the education of parents in the project and in the control schools with instruction in the Macedonian language, as well as in the project and in the control schools with instruction in the Albanian language. The education of parents in the schools where the instruction is in the Albanian language is considerably lower than the education of the parents (in the project and in the control schools). Due to the fact that the period of 3 years is small to cause a considerable change in the demographic and the socio-cultural structure in a one school in 2013, the data about the education status of the parents of the students were not collected.

5.2. Selection of students

The population to which the measuring of the effects of the program refers to are the students from the project and the control schools that have completed Grade

20 The number in the brackets refer to the sample of 2010.

3, because the the content of the program was focused on the first cycle of the primary education Grades 1 – 3. The baseline study, and also the study at the end of the first cycle of its realization was carried out with students from Grade 4 at the beginning of the school year, which was a population that was closest to the target group and enables measuring of the more lasting effects of the realization of the program up to Grade 3.

In the selected project schools and control schools, in both studies, by random sample, in each school 20 students from Grade 4 were selected. In the project schools, in the study at the end of the first cycle of the realization of the project, the choice was done only from the students that were taught by the teachers that were trained for the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* Provided that the number of the adequate students in the school was smaller than 20, all of the students were included in the survey. The study in 2013 was conducted on a total of 572 students (54% in the project schools and 46& in the control schools with the instruction in Macedonian language, and 37% with instruction in Albanian language), and in 2010 it was done on 574 students

5.3. Selection of teachers

In the control schools, in both studies, by random sample 10 teachers were selected from the grade teaching phase of each of the schools. In the project schools, in 2010 the selection was done by random sample out of all the teachers, and in 2013 the selection was done only out of the teachers that were trained for the *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* Provided that the number of adequate teachers in the school was smaller than 10, the sample was including all the teachers.

The study in 2013 was conducted on 293 teachers (156 teachers from the project and 137 from the control schools[21]. The number of teachers from the project and from the non-project schools is evenly distributed, i.e. 53% are from the project schools, while 47% are from the control schools, 77% are from urban places, while the remaining 23% are from the rural areas[22]. The majority of the respondents (89%) are females, 10% are males, while 1% did not stated their gender[23]. This gender non balance is expected, taking into consideration that the majority of the grade teachers in the country are females.

With reference to the level of education, 65% are graduates from the Pedagogical Faculty (grade teacher), 8% are graduates from the Higher Pedagogic School – grade teachers, 7% are graduates from the Pedagogical Faculty (school pedagogues), 6% of the respondents are graduates from the Faculty or Higher Pedagogic School – for pre-school education (14% did not state their level of education). The majority of the respondents – 37% have working experience of 11 to 20 years, then – 27% from 221 to 31 years, 24% up to 10 years, and 11% over 31 years of

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21 In 2010, the study was conducted on a total of 295 teachers

22 In 2010, 49% of the teachers are from the project schools, 51% from the control ones, 73% are urban and 27% are rural

23 in 2010, 69% of the respondents are graduates from the Pedagogical faculty (grade teachers), 19%, are graduates from the Higher Pedagogic School for grade teachers, 7% are graduate pedagogues, 5% are graduates for pre-school education.

working experience as teachers (7 respondents did not state their level of education). A great number of the respondents had been previously included in projects for improving the education, in particular, 67% in the project *Active Teaching*, and 33% in the project *Step by Step.* There are no significant differences between the teachers from the project and from the control schools concerning the inclusion in these projects. But, in comparison with 2010, in 2013 the percentage of teachers that were trained in the two projects is 17% smaller (in 2010, in the project *Active Teaching* 75% teachers were trained, and in the project *Step by Step* – 52%), which is probably due to the newly employed teachers that do not have training for these programs.

5.4. Selection of school principals and of support service representatives

The sample of the school management staff from the project schools consisted of the school principal and of one represenative of the support staff (pedagogue or psychologist). Processed were the data from the qustionnaire for school proncipals and the representatives from the support service, administered on a total of 32 examinees, i.e.:11 school principals and 2 deputy school principals, 12 school pedagogues and 4 school psychologists (one examinee did not answer the question about his professional profile.

More than 2/3 of the respondents are females.(22 examinees) According to the age structure, the largest is the number of respondents (12) with working experience between 21 and 30 years, then 8 respondents have a working experience of up to 10 years 7 respondents have working experience of over 31 years, and 5 respondents have working experience from 11 to 21 years. According to the type of education, 3 respondents were trained to teach in the grade teaching cycle, 7 for the subject teaching, 20 are university graduates of pedagogy or psychology, 1 respondent – stated – other type of education , and 1 of the respondents did not respond to the questionnaire.

5.5. Focus-groups

Within the framework of the focus-groups, the informations/data were collected from 17 advisors from the BDE – in charge of monitoring and giving support to the realization of the program *Language Literacy in the Early Grades.* Then the advisors organized focus-groups with the teachers from the sample in 14 project schools.

The discussion within the framework of the focus-groups was conducted with a total 112 respondents, out of which 72 teachers from Grade 4 (those whose students were part of the sample), 19 trainers for the program employed by the corresponding school, and 21 representatives from the school management (school principals, pedagogues and psychologists).

6. DATA COLLECTION, PROCESSING AND ANALISIS

The collection of data was done by trained researchers/instruments administrators who had previous experience in conducting similar investigations. They went through a one-day training, at which were agreed the deadlines about the administering of the tests for the students, and the questionnaires for the teachers, the school principal and the support service staff.

The collection of data began on October 21, and ended on November 8, 2013. The complementary processing of the data, the analyses and the collection of qualitative data was done in the period of December 12th – 25th.

Then the coding of the filled-in instruments and the reviewing of the tests was done. The answers to the open questions in the tests for the sudents were checked by trained examiners (one for Macedonian language and one for Albanian language) who have experience in checking the language tests.

Data were entered into Excel program, and then for their processing were used:

- ▶ TIAplus - program (for the scale and for the tests for the teachers and for the tests for the students) in which
  - the psychometric characteristics of the instruments were checked;
  - the results of the tests and the scales of attitudes were estimated;
  - comparison was made between the project and the control schools in relation to the results on the tests and on the scales of attitudes;
  - comparison was made between the results in 2010 and in 2013;
  - a secondary analysis was made of the results in 2010 and in 2013.
- ▶ SPSS program which was used to process the answers to the questionaires and for the school managers, and in making comparisons between the answers in the questionnaires from project and non-project schools.
- ▶ SOCQ 075 Graph and Print and Excel were used in processing the dates on the Scale of concern for the program.

The quantitative and the qualitative data were analysed in relation to the defined indicators, by using topic analysis. The analyses were done as it is presented in the conceptual framework (Part II, Chapter 2 of this Report). Primary were the analyses of the differences between the two testing in the project schools and the analyses of the differences between the project and the control schools. Analyses were made, also, of the results and of the comparisons according to the language of

instruction (Macedonian – Albanian). The results of are presented by arithmetical means, frequencies, achievement on the tests in points and in the average solution of the tests in percentage. The differences in the achievements are most often expressed in percentage points (percentage point is the difference between two results which were previously expressed in percentages). In this Report, for the sake of easier following the text, the differences in the average solution are expressed in numerical value and with the sign %. These values, are in fact percentage points and most often refer to the differences between the two measuring (in 20103 and in 2010), the differences between the examinees from the project and from the control schools or the differences according to the languages of instruction.

Because of the exclusion from the sample in 2013 of one project and one control school, which were part of the sample in 2010, and in order to be able to compare the results between the two testing, the data collected by the teachers and the students in the baseline study in 2010 were again processed and analyzed. The eventual small differences in the values of the achievements in 2010, which are used in this report, compared to the achievements that are presented in the report of the initial state, are due to the repeated analyses. The repeated processing does not cause changes in the statements that the project and the control schools in 2010 did not differ.

After the initial analysis of the results was made, it was stated that there was a very small progress in the project schools, and concerning the domains (such as writing in the test for the students), results as those in 2013 we stated, which did not differ considerably compared to the results in 2010. In order to explain the reasons for such a situation, the following was done:

- ▶ a secondary analysis of the results for each project school, and separately for each domain;
- ▶ collecting qualitative data from the focus-group with the advisers from the BDE, in charge for the coordination and for professional support to the schools;
- ▶ collecting qualitative data from the national trainers that trained and gave support the teachers in the project schools; and
- ▶ collecting qualitative data from the focus-groups with the trained teachers that taught the generation of students that were tested in each of the project schools.

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1. **The framework of the study**

2. **The sample of the schools**

3. **The criteria for assessing**

PROJECT: 1

Reading Literacy in the Early Grades

Language literacy in the early grades

INDICATORS

Aim	Tasks	Activities	Baseline Indicators	Outcome Indicators	Impact Indicators	Methods/instruments
Build the capacities of teachers in the instruction of reading and writing for improving the achievements of students	Developing capacities (preparation of trainers) in the training of teachers from the grade teaching phase for using new approaches in the teaching reading and writing Training of teachers from the grade teaching phase for using new approaches in the teaching reading and writing	Training of teachers for the Reading Literacy Trainings of teachers		Number of trained trainers Number of trained trainers		

Aim	Tasks	Activities	Baseline Indicators	Outcome Indicators	Impact Indicators	Methods/ instruments
	Teachers are expected to use the Ten Principles and techniques from Reading Literacy program in the instruction		How close is the present teaching practice in the teaching of language, with the instruction base on the Ten Principles of reading Literacy program • The average value of acceptance of the items on the Likert's scale which indicates instruction based on the Ten Principles. • % of trained teachers whose responses to the teaching situations/vignettes show understanding of the use of the Ten Principles in the teaching	Increased acceptance of the teaching pedagogy/methods based on the Ten Principles of the Reading Literacy Program • increased average value of acceptance of the items on the Likert's scale which indicates instruction based on the Ten Principles • Increased % of trained teachers whose responses to the teaching situations/ vignettes show understanding of the Ten Principles in the teaching	• Increased % of trained teachers whose responses show the application of the Ten Principles in the teaching	Likert's scale Questionnaire for teachers Test for teachers with vignettes/teaching situations which measure pedagogical knowledge
		Support to teachers in the implementation of the Program		Acceptance, implementation and the need to support the Program • % of teachers that are at a definite level of the application of the Program • % of teachers that are in a definite category of concern for the implementation of the Program • % of teachers that need specific support		SoC and LoU - SBAM scale of concern for the implementation of the Program Self-assessment of teachers about the level of implementation Questionnaire for teachers

Aim	Tasks	Activities	Baseline Indicators	Outcome Indicators	Impact Indicators	Methods/instruments
	School management gives support to qualitative instruction in the teaching of Language in the grade teaching	Support by the school management in giving support and in monitoring the introducing and the implementation of the Reading Literacy Program	Present level of support by the school management to the instruction of Language in the grade teaching • % of representatives from the management that are not satisfied with the level of achievements in reading and writing in the grade teaching. • Approaches that are used in giving support to teachers in the teaching of Language • The present state with teaching aids for the instruction of language • Satisfaction of teachers for the support they have	Increased level of support by the school management to the instruction of Language in the grade teaching • Increased % of representatives from the management who believe that their students could achieve more • Improved are the ways that are used to support the teachers in the instruction of Language • Improved is the equipment of the school with teaching aids for the instruction of Language • Increased is the level of satisfaction of teachers for the support they have	• Decreased % of school management staff that are not satisfied with level of lower grades students achievements in reading and writing	Questionnaire for school management Questionnaire for teachers
	Increased state with teaching aids for the teaching of Language					
Higher achievements of students	Increased level of knowledge and understanding by students of - reading - writing	Обучените наставници користат нови приоди во наставата	% of students who have correct responses on the tasks that measure knowledge and understanding of: -reading - writing		Increased % of students who have correct responses on the tasks that measure knowledge and understanding of: -reading - writing	Knowledge tests for students

Project/Control	Name of the school	Place	Language
Project	Ljuben Lape	Skopje	Mac.
Control	Lazo Angelovski	Skopje	Mac.
Project	11ᵗʰ October	Skopje	Mac.
Control	Dimitar Miladinov	Skopje	Mac.
Project	Dimo Hadji-Dimov	Skopje	Mac.
Control	Mirche Acev	Skopje	Mac.
Project	Vancho Kitanov	Pehchevo	Mac.
Control	Kiril I Metodij	Makedonska Kamenica	Mac.
Project	Kocho Racin	Prilep	Mac.
Control	Blazhe Koneski	Prilep	Mac.
Project	Grigor Prlichev	**Охрид**	Mac.
Control	Kocho Racin	Ohrid	Mac.
Project	Dimitar Vlahov	Shtip	Mac.
Control	Vancho Prke	Shtip	Mac.
Project	Strasho Pindjur	Karbinci	Mac.
Control	M. M. Brico	Lozovo	Mac.
Project	Ismail Kemali	Gostivar	Alb.
Control	Faik Konica	Gostivar	Alb.
Project	Georg Skenderbeg	Arachinovo	Alb.
Control	Bajram Shabani	Kondovo	Alb.
Project	Faik Konica	Tearce	Alb.
Control	Azdreni	Glogje	Alb.
Project	Kiril Pejchinovich	Tearce	Alb.
Control	Sabedin Bajrami	Kamenjane	Alb.
Project	Brakja Miladinovci (Alb.) Josip Broz Tito (Mac.)	Struga	Alb./Mac.
Control	Bratstvo	Ohrid	Mac./Alb.
Project	Rayko Zhinzifov (Alb.) Blazhe Koneski (Mac.)	Skopje	Mac./Alb.
Control	Zhivko Brajkovski	Skopje	Mac./Alb.
Project	Strasho Pindjur (excluded)	Kavadarci	Mac.
Control	Dimkata Angelov Gaberot (excluded)	Kavadarci	Mac.

The scheme of the criteria and of the indicators for assessing a written work – narrating upon given words

	0	1	2
The composition	• It doesn't have composition • There is no linkage between the parts • 1-2 sentences are used only	• The composition is poor • There are 2 out of 3 parts of the composition • The linkage between the parts is small • Bad distribution of words in the parts (the introductory part is longer than the main one)	• Well-developed composition (introductory, main, concluding part) • Linkage between the parts • Good distribution of words
The clarity of the composition*	• less than 50 % of the sentences are clear	• 50-90% of the sentences are clear	• 90-100% of the sentences are clear
The use of the given words in the composition	• There is no use or used are only 1-2 words of the given ones.	• At least one word in each category is used • (characters, events, place)	All the words are used, and out of the following words: soccer, elastic, folk and places, in each of the categories: events and place, only one word is used.
The punctuation**	• Less than 50% percent of the punctuation marks are correctly used.	• 50-90% of the marks are correct	• 90-100% of the marks are correct
The orthography	• Less than 50% 0f the words are ortho-graphically written correctly	• The orthography is correct in 50-90% of the words	• The orthography is correct in 90 -100% of the words
The construction of the sentence***	• Less than 50% of the sentences are grammatically correct	• 50- 90 % of the sentences are grammatically	• 90 -100% of the sentences are grammatically correct
The originality ****	• Less than 2 indicators for originality are present in the composition	• 2- 4 indicators for originality are present in the composition	• 4-5 indicators for originality are present in the composition

*Clarity – the thought is fully completed.

**When needed the following are used: full stop, colon, comma in numbering, exclamation mark and question mark.

****The grammatical structure of the sentence is good (correct use of verb forms, congruence of subject with predicate, congruence of the subject with its complements according to grammatical categories.

****The need of adjectives, comparisons, direct addressing to the characters, linking with the events with a particular place and time, as well as personal impression of the events.