

USAID Youth Ethnic Integration Project MONTHLY REPORT - *April 2020*



Interconnected activities

Project collaboration activities

- ✓ Youth Ethnic Integration project works in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science and key education institutions to meet the needs of students and teachers. Hence, in this period of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, a desk research paper on distance education and digital competences was developed by the project team, encompassing concepts, global trends and policies in the Republic of North Macedonia. Furthermore, the paper reviews available policies and practices, technologies and platforms to support distance education.

Public outreach

- ✓ Two (2) animated videos, i.e. one aimed at helping teachers organize digital extracurricular activities with their students and the other, containing steps and guidance for cleaning and disinfecting the school buildings after the crisis to prepare schools to open their doors to students, were developed by the project team. As soon as finalized, both videos will be published on MCEC website and social media.
- ✓ An infographic containing procedures for preparing the school buildings to welcome back students and staff was finalized in Macedonian. It contains detailed procedures for cleaning and disinfection of school buildings after the crisis with COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, the document is being translated in Albanian and will be published on MCEC website and social media.
- ✓ The project website and social media platforms were regularly updated with information and news about the course of project activities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ A guideline for using KoBo Toolbox was finalized by the project team and it will assist BDE and VET Center advisors while monitoring curricular and extracurricular activities in the field. The guideline contains general information about the application, as well as, step-by-step explanation on: installing and setting up the application, downloading the required forms, the proper way of filling-out and editing the forms, and finally saving and submitting them.
- ✓ An evaluation report on the capacity-building activities for schools and municipalities implemented during the first quarter of 2020 was developed by the project. The report analyses the received feedback from the four (4) workshops conducted in the period February-March. The purpose of these workshops was to strengthen the capacities of school staff and municipal representatives in order to ensure better quality of interethnic integration in education and youth engagement activities. A total of 205 representatives from 31 municipalities took part in the activities and 70% of them provided feedback on the effectiveness of the workshops through filling e-surveys. The results from the overall evaluation in the report are presented in three parts: fulfilment of the goals, most significant knowledge/experience of the participants and needed support for successful implementation of upcoming activities. Finally, the report summarizes lessons learned and suggestions for future improvement.
- ✓ In order to receive participatory feedback from teachers and students on CivEd curricula revisions, an e-survey is being conducted. The survey assesses the experience of teachers and grade eight (8) and nine (9) students with the curriculum contents; the potential for achieving the required competences; the variety of teaching and learning methods; conceptualization, planning and implementation of the CivEd Open Days, etc. Due to the present constraints and inability to conduct focus groups with teachers and students, the e-survey was adapted in order to provide qualitative feedback as well.
- ✓ For the purpose of assessing students' experiences, perceptions and expectations from implementation of activities in subject clubs, an e-survey is being conducted. The developed survey includes questions related to their past experiences with interethnic integration in education and youth engagement activities, their motivation to participate in present activities, preferences for future activities, etc. Taking into account that some schools are implementing online activities as part of the subject clubs, there are specific questions targeting students' experiences with digitalization.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

Project support to the Ministry of Education and Science Commission for Interethnic Integration in Education (MoES CIIE)

- ✓ The project team in collaboration with MoES CIIE developed a plan on how to continue to provide support to activities during the COVID-19 pandemic period and organize them online using different tools. Following that, in collaboration with OSCE an online capacity building workshop was organized for MoES CIIE

members and the concept of intercultural competencies and standards was present. The aim of these standards is to support relevant stakeholders in the education system to work with students in promoting and advancing intercultural understanding, peace and respect of diversity. The role of the MoES CIIE in this activity will be vital in embedding this process and integrating intercultural education in our education system.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ The process of developing municipal policies and strategies for interethnic integration and youth engagement started in the fifteen (15) new municipalities (Staro Nagoricane, Bosilovo, Aerodrom, Cair, Centar, Gazi Baba, Kocani, Saraj, Ohrid, Berovo, Resen, Negotino, Gjorce Petrov, Tearce, Bogovinje). The project team in collaboration with assigned mentors supported the municipalities in initiating, discussing the process at the municipal level and establishing the working group/commission through official document signed by the Mayors. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 and special measures by the Government, assigned mentors through online communication actively engaged, guided and mentored the municipal education officials in all fifteen (15) municipalities in this process.

Engaging youth to lead by example

- ✓ The project team in partnership with Youth Educational Forum (YEF) started the process of implementation of activities in two (2) selected municipalities (Struga and Probistip) that will lead to the final step of organizing youth actions once schools are reopened after COVID-19 pandemic period in the country. In each of these municipalities the project team coordinated the process with the municipal education officials and jointly defined the schools that will be included in the first two phases. Further, the project team jointly with YEF made the necessary preparations and organized ZOOM online meetings with teachers and students to coordinate activities. Prior to that, the project received parents' consent to allow student participation. The first online meeting with representatives of the student parliaments from three (3) schools from Probistip took place on April 30, 2020.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ In coordination with City of Skopje, online working meetings with directors and School Integration Team (SIT) coordinators from three (3) secondary schools (Brakja Miladinovci, Dimitar Vlahov and Boro Petrushevski) were organized. In this period, given the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were able to organize joint curricular classes in five subjects: Technical drawing with CAD, Agricultural technical subject, Practical subject, Pedicure and Manicure Esthetic, and Cosmetic subject. Teachers-implementers through online communication jointly prepared the plan for the curricular classes, shared the guidelines and presentations with students using Viber groups and held their classes on-line through ZOOM application.

Long-term extracurricular activities in school subject clubs

- ✓ Due to the current situation with COVID 19 in the country, two out of six (6) schools with approved applications shifted the implementation of some activities online. Students from multimedia school club in SS "Josif Josifovski" from Gevgelija through online communication and use of social media developed a concept and logo for the activity (Press Enter- Be a Volunteer). As part of this activity the students will develop and prepare a documentary film and photo-gallery for Red Cross volunteers. Furthermore, they created a special section as a part of the school's blog, dedicated particularly to the work of this school club. This will enable students to publish products, keep other students informed and motivate them to engage in this type of activities, as well as to advance their communication and writing skills. In SS "Orde Chopela" from Prilep, students from the nutrition school club, created colouring books for preschool children and leaflets on healthy food, for nine grade students. They are also preparing a brochure for a healthy lifestyle. The brochure will contain information on eating habits, balanced diet, the importance of physical activities and exercise, how to maintain healthy lifestyle, etc. When schools are reopened, the brochure will be printed and shared with other schools in Prilep.

Long-term extracurricular activities in partnership

- ✓ Following the networking meeting with representatives from partnering schools organized last month, during this period the project team provided continues support and guidance to schools to successfully design the extracurricular activities to be implemented in partnership and finalize the applications specifying the type of support needed by the project. In addition, based on the limited conditions, the project team examined the opportunities to involve schools in partnership to use online tools for implementation of some activities.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Working group for secondary school CivEd

- ✓ After selecting the members and establishing the working group they started developing the content for the Teachers' Guide for CivEd subject in grade 1 secondary vocational schools, utilizing online communication and data storage/exchange possibilities. According to the alternative working plan developed by the project team, the working group has regular online meetings to discuss status updates, give feedback to each other and define next steps and deadlines. In the meantime, all members of the group work individually on developing lesson plans and reviewing each other's work. During April, two online meetings were held and

16 workshops for the Teachers Guide were finalized. By the beginning of May, approximately half of the necessary lesson plans will be developed by the working group members.

Developing guides for online teaching and assessment tools for CivEd teachers

- ✓ The project team developed a guide containing a selection of online tools which can be used in the CivEd classes in primary schools during the lockdown due to the COVID-19. The document outlines possible ways of incorporating these tools into the online CivEd classes, as well as gives detailed instructions on using the tools. The guide was shared through social media groups with CivEd teachers in primary schools who have expressed very positive feedback for the document and shared willingness to trial the tools in their online CivEd classes.
- ✓ In addition, a guide on the process of assessment of CivEd competences, during the period of distance learning is being developed by two local consultants. The document is in a draft version and will be finalized and shared with teachers during the first half of May 2020.

Requesting proposals from international experts

- ✓ After preparing a roster of experts whose qualifications are suitable for developing an assessment methodology and conducting a comprehensive training on school civic ethos, the project team contacted all of the selected experts with detailed information on the Terms of Reference of the planned international consultancy, inviting them to send their proposals.

Good practices of CivEd activities (Youth Initiatives)

- ✓ The project team continued to collect good practices of student initiatives from the phase 1 schools. In order to understand the wider context of the activities, the project team requested additional information and photos from 16 project schools. Currently, 13 examples of good practices are reviewed and edited, and a general outline of the e-booklet is being developed. Additional information is requested from 3 schools in order to complete the examples of good practices of their student initiatives. The booklet with good practices is planned to be completed (translated and designed) by the end of May 2020.

Finalizing the Civic Education Concept

- ✓ The Civic Education Concept was approved by the BDE and is awaiting adoption by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Finalized documents for the donated materials and equipment for encouraging civic ethos to phase 1 schools

- ✓ After delivering the technical equipment, posters for student initiatives and teachers planners, for encouraging civic ethos to 107 (out of 120) phase 1 schools in early March, the documents for the donations in the schools where the technical equipment was distributed were finalized at the beginning of April.

Research on CivEd in secondary schools

- ✓ The research on the experiences of students and teachers with the old CivEd curriculum and the revised modular curriculum which was prepared during 2019, was proofread, edited and is currently being graphically designed.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ Training materials (presentation and other documents) on how to establish School Renovation Teams and how to develop the priority list for renovation projects in the school for representatives of 12 selected schools and municipalities were prepared.
- ✓ Draft graphic design of second part of the "Guideline Manual for maintenance of school buildings", in Macedonian language was finalized.
- ✓ Scenario for animated video on Macedonian and Albanian language on how to prepare schools from a hygienic point of view to start working after the COVID-19 pandemic was prepared, animated video was finalized and sent to the MoES Sector for Capital Investment for approval.
- ✓ In this period, the project team worked on registering/collecting the necessary documentation for cost-share contribution of schools and municipalities in the renovation process (financial or in-kind) for the schools in which the renovation process was completed.