

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



Interconnected activities

Project collaboration activities

- ✓ The last from the sequence of meetings with the working group for developing the by-laws, which regulate school education staff professional development and career advancement as stipulated in the Law for teachers and student support staff in primary and secondary schools was organized on February 27, 2020. In the period between November 2019 and February 2020, 15 documents specifying competences, standards, processes and procedures for education staff lifelong learning and development, as well as career advancement were finalized and forwarded for adoption to the responsible education institutions. These processes assure quality in education and following the adoption of the documents, institutions are expected to start with implementation.
- ✓ On February 7, 2020 the Peace Corps Partnership Fair was organized within the framework of the annual training event for the Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts from the organizations and schools where they serve. During the Fair, Project representatives shared useful materials with the volunteers in order to present the ongoing project activities and initiatives. The overall goal of the event was to connect Peace Corps Volunteers with local organizations, programs and resources in order to encourage collaboration at local level.

Public outreach

- ✓ A [promotional event](#) was held on the occasion of the renovation of PS "Kole Nedelkovski" from the Municipality of Centar conducted under the activities of Component 3. During the event, the Mayor of the Municipality of Centar, Sasa Bogdanovikj, the school principal, Svetlana Maslarevska and the Chief of Party of the USAID Youth Ethnic Integration Project, Nebojsa Mojsoski delivered remarks.
- ✓ In addition, a [promotional event](#) was organized at PS "Nikola Vapcarov" in the Municipality of Cair, to promote the impact of the school renovation. The Minister of Education and Science, Arbër Ademi, the Mayor of the Municipality of Cair, Visar Ganiu, the school principal Merita Kodzadziku and MAJ Patrick Enriquez, representative of the U.S. Department of Defense addressed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the mutual cooperation for the promotion of quality in the education process.
- ✓ In cooperation with the State Education Inspectorate a public event was organized to inform all state and municipal inspectors as well as representatives from key educational institutions about the changes in the Manual for Integral Evaluation of Schools and School Performance Quality Indicators (SPQI), conducted under Component 1 activities. The process of revision of SPQI and the Manual for Integral Evaluation of Schools was conducted in coordination and with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science Commission for Interethnic Integration in Education.
- ✓ The project website and social media platforms were regularly updated with information, news and videos about the course of project activities.
- ✓ The project's excellent cooperation with media outlets resulted in around 20 media articles about the project activities in schools as well as in local communities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ A report on municipal involvement was developed based on the data from the survey completed by each municipality that the project provided support in 2019 (Gostivar, Butel, Kumanovo, Strumica and City of Skopje). Based on the findings related to institutional resources for support of Project activities and collaboration with: SITs, local private sector and schools, lessons learned and future plans of each municipality were shared and recommendations were developed. Additionally the team shared best practices from the collaboration with these five (5) municipalities.
- ✓ Reflection on civic education teaching in school was provided by the BDE advisors during the working meeting for in-class observations of CivEd lessons. The participants shared their experiences from the field observations in order to contribute to better support of civic education teachers in the future. Based on the field observations, recommendations for future and improved support were developed accordingly.
- ✓ During the coordination meetings held with BDE and VET Center advisors, their competences were strengthened with regards to monitoring and mentoring the curricular and extracurricular school activities. The advisors had a chance to further develop their skills for using KoBo Toolbox during their field visits, to easily and quickly report on the activities.

- ✓ Evaluation questionnaires were filled in by the participants at the working meetings related to long-term extracurricular activities in partnership and in school subject clubs. Both working meetings received high scores (over 4, on a scale 1-5). The participants shared that during the meetings they were equipped with new ideas for upcoming activities which could be implemented in their schools that will further strengthen interethnic cohesion and civic engagement.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

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

- ✓ With the decision of the Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Arbër Ademi, the MoES's Council for Interethnic Integration in Education (CIIE) was renamed in MoES's Commission for Strengthening the Capacities for Advancing Interethnic Integration in the Education. Also the structure of this Commission was revised and restructured with new members from key educational institutions.
- ✓ In addition, in February, a second (2) peer-to-peer capacity building and learning workshop was supported by the Project, which also included new members of this Commission. The aim of this workshop was to advance and update the Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) related to improvements in the education system with regard to interethnic integration in education and outline the questionnaire that will serve and be in accordance with the new adjustments in the PMP. The revised questionnaire will be distributed to all primary and secondary schools with the aim of assemble data on IIE using the Survey Monkey platform.
- ✓ During this occasion, the Guide for PMP and its updated version were presented and the document will be useful to the State Education Inspectorate during Integral Evaluation. Suggestions and recommendations were also provided, the Guide for PMP to be used by the National Examination Center as well.

Project support to State Education Inspectorate (SEI)

- ✓ Project team in partnership with SEI commenced preparations and organized a public presentation to announce the amendments that occurred in SPQI and Manual for Integral Evaluation. This event gathered all relevant key educational stakeholders, members of the MoES CIIE and all state and municipal inspectors. During the event the changes related to Integral Evaluation were presented. Both documents, the Manual for Integral Evaluation and SPQI are being graphically edited and the final versions will be electronically shared with all key stakeholders. In addition these documents will be available online and will be published on the SEI's official webpage.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ Project team started preparations for a Networking Workshop that will take place on March 3, 2020. This year, fifteen (15) new municipalities (Staro Nagoricane, Bosilovo, Aerodrom, Cair, Centar, Gazi Baba, Kocani, Saraj, Ohrid, Berovo, Resen, Negotino, Gjorce Petrov, Tearce, Bogovinje) will be included and will start the process of developing municipal policies and strategies for interethnic integration and youth engagement. At this workshop, new selected municipalities will work together with their peer municipalities that endorsed the interethnic policies in 2019, and will share and discuss good practices and challenges of this process. This event will mark the beginning of activities to follow for building the capacities of municipal education officials. In this process, YEI will support them to increase their skills for developing municipal policies for interethnic integration and youth engagement, including know-how on volunteering, civic engagement, fundraising, etc.

Collaboration with educational institutions in providing mentoring support

- ✓ Project team in coordination with BDE and VET Center gathered the assigned advisors from these respective education institutions at a working meeting. The appointed advisors will be engaged in mentoring and providing support to teachers and students for the implementation of curricular and extracurricular activities. At this meeting, the achievements, results and factual data of the activities from 2019 were presented, as well as the plan of activities that YEI will implement in 2020 with their support.
- ✓ Also, during the course of the meeting a discussion was developed related to instruments that advisors use for mentoring and providing feedback and recommendations for further improvements of the activities. Furthermore, in coordination with M&E Coordinator, advisors were introduced with KoBo instrument, which will be used for the purpose of mentoring visits organized in schools.

Engaging Youth to Lead by Example

- ✓ The project team jointly with Youth Educational Forum (YEF) made the preparations and organized a workshop for municipal education officials and SIT members from the schools in ten (10) municipalities (Tetovo, Probistip, Struga, Sv.Nikole, Gevgelija, Prilep, Dolneni, Veles, Vrapciste, Kavadarci). The aim of the workshop was twofold: to provide guidelines for continuous support of long-term extracurricular joint activities in the subject clubs, and to engage and support youth in schools to initiate and organize youth actions in their communities. The newly adopted Law for Primary Education and the draft Law for

Secondary Education prescribe student organizing in schools. Therefore, the project will work and conduct activities with the elected students in the student parliament and the student ombudsman. In partnership with Youth Educational Forum (YEF), students' capacities for practicing their democratic and civic responsibilities will be built.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ Six (6) secondary schools from Skopje submitted their annual plans for the subjects that will hold joint curricular classes in each respective school. In all schools, the total number of joint curricular classes as per the plans and dynamics will reach more than 290 joint classes per month. Project team in partnership with City of Skopje, VET Center and BDE held and organized coordination meetings and the plan for supporting and mentorship by these institutions is already prepared. In addition, the Vice Ambassador of OSCE Mission in Skopje attended two joint curricular classes in SS Boro Petrusovski in Skopje.

Long-term extracurricular activities in school subject clubs

- ✓ Project team commenced the preparations and invited to the workshop representatives from selected ten (10) schools from ten (10) municipalities that endorsed municipal polices. These schools will be supported to perform and implement long-term extracurricular activities in the subject clubs throughout the year.
 - This workshop was structured in three (3) sessions. During the first session, the role of the municipality in supporting schools to implement activities that promote interethnic integration and civic values through youth initiatives, as well as the importance of the subject clubs in the implementation of joint student activities for IIE and youth engagement was presented and discussed.
 - In the second session, representatives of the selected schools worked in groups and planned joint student activities for subject clubs. Furthermore, they become familiarized with the administrative regulation of the payment procedure and the process of monitoring and evaluation of the implemented activities.
 - During the final session, the steps towards strengthening youth capacities for organizing youth initiatives were discussed and the priorities in the process of cooperation between schools and their municipalities were defined. This process aimed at enabling schools to increase the level of quality, but also encourage enhanced youth engagement and participation. The process of application is on-going, and the project team will provide continuous support.

Long-term extracurricular activities in partnership

- ✓ Jointly with YEF, the project team initiated preparations and organized a networking meeting with representatives from partnering schools. During this meeting, the role of partnering schools in the implementation of joint student activities for IIE and youth engagement was discussed. The participants shared examples of good practices in the schools, success stories and experienced challenges, ideas how to improve the quality of IIE activities and how to involve new approaches to implement more creative youth activities, worked in groups and planed joint student activities which will be implemented in partnership. Furthermore, they became familiarized with the administrative regulation of the payment procedure and the process of monitoring of the implemented activities. In 2020, YEI will support 20 schools in partnership.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Working meeting with regional BDE advisors for planning activities for 2020

- ✓ On February 12, 2020, working meeting with regional BDE advisors was organized by the project team. The aim of this meeting was to acquaint the 23 regional advisors assigned to mentor and monitor activities for encouraging civic ethos with the plan of activities for 2020, review the contents and materials for the workshops on school civic ethos, which they will conduct with the schools, assess the process and activities implemented in 2019 and discuss about enhancing the quality of the process. The BDE advisors reviewed the materials (contents and presentations for the workshops and the activity monitoring forms) and provided feedback. Based on the feedback, the project team prepared a *Guideline for monitoring*, with operationalization of indicators.

Preparations for dissemination of workshops on civic ethos to schools

- ✓ The feedback provided by BDE advisors on the training materials for the civic ethos workshop for phase 1 schools was integrated in a final version of the presentation and training manual. Materials were translated in Albanian language and sent for printing. In addition, the schedule for the regional workshops was prepared and consulted with the advisors. The workshops will take place in six (6) locations, starting on March 9, 2020 and ending on March 25, 2020. BDE advisors begun sending invitations to schools which will participate at the first training sessions.

Meeting with the CivEd working group on finalizing the Civic Education Concept

- ✓ On February 17, 2020 the project team organized a working meeting with CivEd working group members from state education institutions, schools and civic sector. During this meeting, the feedback provided by the members of the working group was reviewed and integrated in the pre-final version of the document. In addition, the specific follow up steps leading towards adoption of the Civic Education Concept were discussed and agreed. Suggestions provided by the working group members are being integrated in the final version of the Concept and will be shared for a final approval at the beginning of March 2020.

Working meeting for in-class observations of CivEd lessons with BDE advisors

- ✓ On February 25, 2020 in coordination with the Project for Strengthening Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Municipalities funded by Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, the project team conducted a meeting with BDE advisors assigned to conduct in-class observations of CivEd lessons. The plan for in-class observations for 2020 was presented, followed by a review of the form for in-class observation and a discussion of the experiences with assessing the lessons during the last year (2019). The meeting ended with analysis of classroom situations and identifying the indicators for measuring each, as well as defining the advisor's feedback to the teacher after the lesson. Proposed revisions of the form were integrated in the document, which was sent for a final revision by the advisors.

Distributing materials for encouraging civic ethos to phase 1 schools

- ✓ The technical equipment for encouraging civic ethos for phase 1 schools has arrived, and a plan for distributing the equipment to regional BDE offices was developed. Documents for donations are prepared and the distribution of materials is planned to be conducted during the first half of March, 2020.

Forming a working group for secondary school CivEd

- ✓ Meetings with representatives of education institutions were held in order to consult on the process of forming the working group for secondary school CivEd and gather recommendations on nominating teachers for working group members. The working group will work on developing teacher's manual in accordance with the newly adopted CivEd curricula for grade 1 secondary vocational schools.

Good practices of CivEd activities (Youth Initiatives)

- ✓ The received examples of good practices of student initiatives were reviewed and structured in a compatible manner. Whenever necessary, additional information from schools will be requested in order to receive a more general picture of the activity. The published Good practices will serve as model activities for the implementation of successful youth initiatives that encourage school ethos and influence positive change in the community.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ The received 183 applications during the last project year were evaluated by the component coordinators, school's needs for renovations were checked, whether the school facility is renovated in the meantime, and whether and what activities they have implemented over the past year in the field of interethnic integration in education and civic initiatives.
- ✓ On February 24, 2020 a meeting with all members of the Component 3 working group was organized by the project team. During the meeting, the Component 3 achievements in 2019 and the plans for 2020 was presented. Furthermore, 12 new schools that will participate in component activities in the third Project year were selected. In the upcoming period, the list of selected schools will be published on MCEC web page.
- ✓ Translation of the second edition of the "Guideline Manual for maintenance of school buildings" in English and Albanian was completed and sent for graphic design.
- ✓ 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.