

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



Interconnected activities

Project collaboration activities

- ✓ MCEC adhered to the recommendation provided by the Government of North Macedonia to stop the virus from spreading and organized working from home for its staff. With schools closing, the project team adapted existing activities, where feasible. Additionally, the project commenced researching for possibilities to engage the school community (teachers, students, school' staff) to pilot distance activities from the safety of their home.
- ✓ The process of adopting the rulebooks deriving from the Law for teachers and student support staff in primary and secondary schools by education institutions is on the way. MCEC in partnership with UNICEF supported education institutions in the process of developing and revising 15 documents that specify education staff competences, standards, processes and procedures for lifelong learning and career advancement. Finalized documents were forwarded to education institutions end of last month and as a result, four (4) rulebooks that regulate [teacher](#) and [student support staff core professional competences](#), education staff [personal plan for professional development](#), novice-teachers support for mastering the core professional competences were adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science and National Examination Center.
- ✓ On March 3, 2020 a YEI representative attended a presentation of the findings and recommendations of the USAID/North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report. The shared findings were related to gender advances, inequalities, constraints, and opportunities in the country in three key sectors: private-sector growth, citizen-responsive governance, and improved social cohesion. The presentation was followed by a Gender Sensitivity Training, which was meant to help participants improve their programming activities by being gender sensitive.

Public outreach

- ✓ The project's excellent cooperation with media outlets resulted in more than 20 media articles about the project activities in schools as well as in local communities.
- ✓ The project website and social media platforms were regularly updated with information and news about the course of project activities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ During the networking meeting with representatives from 30 municipalities (15 municipalities which developed and endorsed Municipal Policies for Interethnic Integration and Youth Engagement in the previous year and 15 new municipalities), the findings and recommendations of the Report on Municipal Involvement in 2019 were shared. The findings related to the five municipalities (Gostivar, Strumica, Kumanovo, Butel and the City of Skopje) which received in-depth support by the project team in 2019. Additionally, recommendations were shared to help municipalities plan and improve their upcoming activities, the collaboration with schools and with the local private sectors. The networking meeting was rated high and the participants shared that the meeting was very useful, as it enabled them to hear experiences, challenges and good practices from the municipalities that developed such policies in 2019.
- ✓ Evaluation questionnaires on aspects of civic ethos were filled out by the participants (CivEd teachers, school management and student support staff in schools) in the four one-day workshops held in two locations: Tetovo and Stip. A total of 109 participants coming from 39 schools and 12 different municipalities attended the workshops on March 09 and 10, 2020. The feedback received from them was carefully analyzed and summarized and the average score for the implemented workshops was high (over 4, on a scale 1-5). The participants shared that they learned about the different ways to encourage students to be actively engaged in their schools and communities and to behave democratically, as well as, about the importance of civic education in schools and its relevance to many social spheres.
- ✓ Since BDE and VET Center advisors are in charge of monitoring curricular and extracurricular activities, they will be using forms for reporting from the field through KoBo toolbox. In addition to

the forms for joint curricular classes, subject clubs and partnering schools, the form for field visits of CivEd Open Days was also prepared and entered in KoBo during this month. Additionally, the project team commenced developing a detailed guideline for using KoBo Toolbox to assist BDE and VET Center advisors while monitoring curricular and extracurricular activities. The guideline will contain a step-by-step explanation on how to install the application, set it up, download the required forms, fill the forms correctly and submit them.

- ✓ Revision and development of questionnaires for gathering feedback from students and teachers regarding their perceptions on the CivEd curricula revisions, has begun. In order to adapt the questionnaires for students and teachers and ensure that we receive qualitative feedback, the project team began working on the revision of questionnaires for evaluation of implementation of CivEd curriculum for grade 8 and on development of questionnaires for evaluation of implementation of CivEd curriculum for grade 9.



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 OSCE provided support to the MoES CIIE to continue with work and implement the activities from their annual work plan. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 in the country, the project in partnership with MoES CIIE developed a plan on how to use online tools to support activities in MoES CIIE annual plan for 2019/2020. In line with that, in collaboration with MoES CIIE and OSCE an online capacity building workshop was organized, during which the processes of updating the Commission Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) and adjusting the questionnaire for the schools in relation to the updated PMP were discussed. Prior to this, the project team and members of the MoES CIIE created a Viber group and provided inputs to the PMP and questionnaire.

Project support to the State Education Inspectorate (SEI)

- ✓ The project team supported the State Education Inspectorate (SEI) in finalizing the documents and preparing the graphic design for the School Performance Quality Indicators and instruments, as well as to the Manual for Integral Evaluation. Both documents were finalized and shared with State Education Inspectorate to upload and use them in an e-form through the official SEI webpage.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ Following the selection of fifteen (15) new municipalities (Staro Nagoricane, Bosilovo, Aerodrom, Cair, Centar, Gazi Baba, Kocani, Saraj, Ohrid, Berovo, Resen, Negotino, Gjorce Petrov, Tearce, Bogovinje) in 2020, they started the process of developing municipal policies and strategies for interethnic integration and youth engagement. Therefore, to continue with this process, the project team developed a concept and organized a *Networking Meeting* with representatives from 30 municipalities (15 municipalities which developed and endorsed municipal policies and strategies for interethnic integration and youth engagement in the previous year and 15 new municipalities). This event took place on March 3, 2020 and gathered around 60 participants. The aim of this event was representatives of 15 new selected municipalities to learn and work together with their peer municipalities that endorsed the interethnic policies in 2019, share and discuss good practices and challenges of this process. This event marked the beginning of activities to follow for building the capacities of municipal education officials. With the project's support, assigned mentors will assist further municipal education representatives in starting the process of developing Municipal Interethnic Integration Strategies and Policies.
- ✓ The assigned mentors, i.e. representatives from education institutions and representatives from municipalities with established municipal strategies, have already contacted and are continuously following the work of the newly selected municipal education representatives. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 and special measures introduced by the Government, assigned mentors with the support of the project team will conduct their mentorship through online communication, providing guidance and support to the municipal representatives.

Engaging youth to lead by example

- ✓ Project team in partnership with Youth Educational Forum (YEF) commenced the process of organizing youth actions with schools from Municipality of Vrapchishte, one of the ten (10) municipalities which developed and endorsed municipal policies for interethnic integration in education and youth civic engagement in 2019. The process of organization of youth actions is planned in three (3) stages or three (3) complementary steps. Therefore, as a *first step*, a workshop with selected schools from this Municipality was organized on March 05, 2020. The workshop took

place in primary school “Vrapchishte” and was attended by 30 students, members of student’s organizations from the following schools: PS “Vrapchishte”, PS “Sali Lisi” v.Dobridol and SS “Negotino” v.Negotino.

During the workshop, students exchanged ideas, mapped issues and discussed innovative solutions for the challenges they face in their local communities. As initially planned, this process is expected to continue with implementation of the remaining steps: *second step* – during which, the student’s organizations will discuss and include their peers from the school in the process, they will coordinate meetings with other students to identify, discuss needs, gather feedback and define youth actions and *third step* - the implementation of the Youth Action during the Open Municipal Days. Due to the current situation and closure of schools, the remaining two steps are postponed for the time being. However, in coordination with partner organization YEF ways will be examined and tested if the first phases of this tailor made program with the student organizations in Vrapciste and other schools in other municipalities, can be implemented.

- ✓ Furthermore, during this period, the documentation for the cost – share from five (5) municipalities and 13 schools for the realization of youth actions in 2019 was completed. The total cost-share is 765,489 MKD or \$14,085.55, which is 63.75% of the total investment in youth actions implemented by the project.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ The six (6) secondary schools from City of Skopje (Boro Petrushevki, Arseni Jovkov, Zdravko Cvetkovski, Brakja Miladinovci, Dimitar Vlahov and Josip Broz Tito), continue to implement joint curricular classes. As of mid-March, when schools closed due to the current situation, project team in partnership with City of Skopje contacted the teachers implementers and explored the possibilities some of the joint classes in some subjects to be organized online in the next period.

Long-term extracurricular activities in school subject clubs

- ✓ In this period, the project team provided support to schools selected to implement activities within school subject clubs, to finalize their applications. As a result, 6 (out of 10) school applications were approved. All 6 schools were contacted by the project team and the possibilities some schools to implement some of the approved activities online with their students were assessed and discussed. Based on the conditions, YEI team expects to pilot this initiative in one-two schools for a start.

Long-term extracurricular activities in partnership

- ✓ Following the networking meeting with representatives from partnering schools, during which the participants shared examples of good practices in the schools, success stories and the experienced challenges during implementation. Furthermore, they shared ideas on how to improve the quality of IIE activities and worked on planning joint student activities, which will be implemented in partnership. Project team provided continues support and guidance to schools to successfully design the activities and finalize the applications. In this regard, in the following period, based on the limited conditions, the project team will examine opportunities to involve schools in partnership to use online tools for implementation of some activities.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Dissemination of workshops on aspects of civic ethos to schools

- ✓ Four one-day workshops were conducted by BDE advisors on March 9 and 10, 2020 in Tetovo and Shtip. Total of 109 school representatives (CivEd teachers, school management and student support staff) from 39 phase 1 schools attended the workshops. They were structured according to the following outline of sessions: 1) overview of the new CivEd Concept as a foundation for developing school civic ethos, 2) presentation of existing educational policies and strategic documents in North Macedonia, 3) analysis of characteristics of student initiatives essential for their success, and 4) review of the role school management and the student support staff have in encouraging school civic ethos. During each of the sessions, the BDE advisors used diverse individual and group activities and discussions to emphasize the importance of the civic ethos concept and its integration into different aspects of the school’s day-to-day activities.

Collecting 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 15 project schools. Currently, 10 examples of good

practices are reviewed and edited, and a general outline of the e-booklet is being developed. The document is planned to be completed (translated and designed) by the end of April.

Establishing the working group for secondary school CivEd

- ✓ After gathering recommendations for working group members, the project team contacted 7 nominated teachers and invited them to apply with a CV and samples of teaching plans. Five (5) applications were received and assessed for suitability to the working group requirements according to an application evaluation system developed by the project team. The working group will start working on their tasks at the beginning of April. Due to the current circumstances, the project team has developed an alternative working plan for the planned activities of CivEd working group in the following period, utilizing on-line digital tools. Additionally, the project team has started researching and gathering materials relevant for the process of developing the teacher's manual in accordance with the newly adopted CivEd curricula for grade 1 secondary vocational schools.

Finalizing the Civic Education Concept

- ✓ After the meeting with the CivEd working group members, all the provided suggestions were integrated in the final version of the Concept which was shared with BDE for a final approval at the beginning of the month.

In-class observations of CivEd lessons

- ✓ After gathering comments by the BDE advisors, the project team finalized the evaluation report form for in-class observations of CivEd lessons and shared the final version with the BDE advisors. Based on the provided feedback, the project team also prepared and shared a Guideline for evaluating the CivEd classes, with a detailed operationalization of indicators. However, due to the schools lockdown, the schedule for in-class observations has been delayed.

Distributing materials for encouraging civic ethos to phase 1 schools

- ✓ The technical equipment (lap-top computer and LCD projector), posters for student initiatives and teacher planners, for encouraging civic ethos for phase 1 schools were distributed to 107 (out of 119) schools, through the regional BDE offices.

Preparing a roster of international experts

- ✓ Terms of Reference for engaging an international consultant to develop and conduct a comprehensive training on school civic ethos is ongoing. The project team is preparing a roster of experts whose qualifications are suitable for the planned tasks.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ Preparatory activities were conducted for announcing the results of the process for selection of schools for renovation in 2020. YEI team once more reviewed the list of 12 schools that the Component 3 working group adopted with the aim of confirming if these 12 schools will continue to remain active in the implementation of project activities. It was concluded that all 12 schools will continue working and implementing project activities and that some schools might need additional support as the new school directors were assigned.
- ✓ Letters for 12 selected schools and municipalities with information on their selection in the school renovation component and participation in component activities in third Project year were prepared.
- ✓ The received feedback from the Ministry of Education and Science regarding the content of the Guidelines Manual for Maintenance of School Buildings was reviewed and the document was revised accordingly.
- ✓ In addition, the project team continued to work 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. The documentation for the cost – share in schools and the municipalities that implemented the renovation project in 2019 was completed for six (6) schools and it accounts for 60.24% of the total investment.