

Monthly report

USAID Youth Ethnic Integration Project

February 2018

Interconnected activities

Youth initiatives and joint student activities program

- ✓ A workshop with representatives from 31 pilot schools that applied for financial support within youth initiatives and joint activities program was organized. During the workshop, the procedure for administrative and financial regulation of grants was presented. Furthermore schools were provided with support and guidance to successfully implement the approved activities. Prior to the workshop, the project team held a coordination meeting with representatives from "Youth Educational Forum" (YEF) organization, to discuss details, including their involvement in the workshop.
- ✓ Following the workshop, the schools started with the implementation of the activities supported through the youth initiatives and joint activities program. On February 17, 2018 students from PS "Marshal Tito" v. Murtino, Strumica, in ethnically mixed group jointly performed during Strumica Carnival with their mask "Playful garden" and won the first place in the category group mask. In addition, students from Macedonian and Turkish language of instruction from PS "Krste Petkov Misirkov" v. Bistrica, Bitola participated in a workshop entitled "We choose democracy".

Online outreach tools

- ✓ In order to increase the visibility of project activities, increase public awareness about the project's goals and increase community engagement, the project uses various online outreach tools. All online outreach platforms are regularly updated with information, news, photo galleries, videos, resources and materials about the course of project activities. As of this month, besides the already established platforms, the project started using an additional social media network for photo sharing – Instagram. Thus, the project uses the following online outreach tools:
 - website (www.mcgo.org.mk)
 - Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/mcgo.mcec.mk)
 - Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/mcgo_mcec_mk/)
 - mobile application EduMobMK (Android - <https://goo.gl/9wPRjg>; iOS - <https://goo.gl/t6KC2B>)
 - YouTube Channel ([Macedonian Civic Education Center - MCEC](#))
- ✓ In order to raise public awareness about the vital importance of interethnic integration and development of civic values among youth and increase the project's communication with the general public, the project started with preparations for organizing an online photo contest. The contest will be open to all teachers from all primary and secondary schools in Macedonia.

Monitoring & Evaluation activities

- ✓ The instruments for pretest of the pilot schools were finalized.
- ✓ Preparations were conducted for the implementation of focus groups with students, teachers and parents, as part of the pretest with pilot schools.
- ✓ The school database was finalized and the project team will start to use it.

Coordination and collaboration activities

- ✓ For the purpose of the visit by the USAID Assistant Administrator for the Europe and Eurasia Bureau, Mr. Brock Bierman, MCEC hosted a meeting with representatives of USAID Macedonia, the Ministry of Education and Science and civil society organizations, where experiences and ideas for interethnic integration in schools, youth initiatives and civic education in Macedonia were exchanged.

The voice of YEI

- ✓ Several coordination meetings were organized within the team and with the partner organization YEF for the purpose of planning and implementing the student debates in nine (9) pilot municipalities. Students from primary and secondary schools part of the pilot year will contribute to a series of debates entitled Youth Talks.

- ✓ This sequence of events will commence in the municipality of Kumanovo, during which 60 participants from primary schools Toli Zordumis, Kiril i Metodij from v. Romanovce, BraKa Ribar from v. Tabanovce, Hristijan Karpos and secondary schools Kiro Burnaz and Pero Nakov, in a World Cafe setting, will debate on the topic : “Youth act integrated and locally”. Therefore, a visit to the host school Pero Nakov was organized by the project team and the school hall was selected for the organization of the event.
- ✓ Within the month of March, a second debate will be organized in Strumica. Thus, the Mayor of Strumica, a representative from the Strumica City Council and Local Youth Council, a teacher from the region of Strumica and a member of the project will discuss on the topic: “The local community as the main factor for promotion of interethnic integration and civic values among youth” using the Agora Discussion format. 15 students and five (5) school representatives, i.e. school directors, schools support staff, teachers and parents from each of the six (6) pilot schools and ten (10) representatives from the Local Youth Council in this region will be able to ask questions and comment on important issues for their schools and communities.
- ✓ As part of the Voice of YEI activities planned within the annual work plan, the project team also commenced with activities for the organization of a thematic discussion with mayors or representatives from nine (9) pilot municipalities. The project team is brainstorming possible scenarios for this event that will tackle the topic of local municipal education policies.

Upcoming Activities

- ➔ Organizing student debates entitled Youth Talks in Kumanovo on March 6, 2018 and Strumica on March 9, 2018.
- ➔ Regularly updating all project online platforms with information, news, photo galleries, videos, resources and materials.
- ➔ Organizing an online photo contest for promoting interethnic integration in education and development of civic and democratic values among youth.
- ➔ Setting up the M&E school database and implementing training on how to use of the database for the project team.
- ➔ Implementing focus groups with students, teachers and parents from pilot schools.
- ➔ Implementing quantitative survey with students, teachers, school management and professional service staff and parents in pilot schools.

Strengthened interethnic cohesion activities

Coordination meeting with YEI Mentors related to planed activities with SITs and the support to schools

- ✓ The meeting with YEI mentors was initiated to discuss and define next steps and activities planned to take place in the following period with schools. Thus, several actions were agreed and the following will be undertaken: the MoES Working Group for Interethnic Integrated Education will contact schools to receive accurate information about the active members of SITs in schools, develop contents about working meetings/workshops with SITs from all primary and secondary schools, actively engage YEI mentors in mentoring the curricular and extracurricular activities that will be implemented in schools, and similar.

Creative workshops in schools

- ✓ In eight (8) selected secondary schools, teachers established groups (of 25-35 students) and implemented 21 workshops in this period. These creative workshops are being implemented every week in each of the school. To students are offered diverse skills about teamwork, team-building, developing communication and collaboration skills, lots of group work using creative ideas, and similar. In the following period, students will create and develop concepts for a joint product that will be presented at their final public presentations in their own communities.

Forum Theater Training

- ✓ Teachers from eight (8) selected secondary schools that were trained to conduct creative workshops additionally were gathered and trained to develop their skills to use forum theater methodology with their students. The training offered various simulations and practices to teachers for developing skills to deal with various issues and learn to offer plenty of solutions when working with students. This methodology is practical, inclusive and participatory.

Working meetings with SITs from all schools

- ✓ Preparations were initiated and started for gathering SITs from all schools across Macedonia. That includes defining and designing the content for the working meetings, coordinating activities with YEI mentors, contacting schools in collaboration and coordination with MoES Working Group for Interethnic Integrated Education, and similar. These working meetings will take place from March to June 2018 and will include all primary and secondary schools from Macedonia allotted in 44 groups.

Coordination meeting with MoES Working Group for Interethnic Integrated Education

- ✓ A meeting to talk about the role and activities of the MoES Working Group for Interethnic Integrated Education in the upcoming period was organized. YEI team, USAID representative and OSCE representatives together with the President and Vice President of the Working Group discussed many issues that can help enhance its role, increase their visibility and support improvements that can advance the interethnic integration in the education system at the institutional and local level.

Upcoming Activities

- ➔ Organizing a coordination meeting with YEI mentors.
- ➔ Organizing working meetings/workshops with SITs.
- ➔ Implementing regular coordination meetings with MoES Working Group for Interethnic Integrated Education.
- ➔ Organizing visits and mentoring of extracurricular and curricular activities in schools.
- ➔ Implementing creative workshops in secondary schools.

Strengthened democratic culture & civic behaviours activities

YEI support for revising Civic Education curricula content

The project team conducted meetings with representatives from MoES and BDE, during which suitable timeline regarding advancing Civic Education subject was agreed. The process of revising Civic Education includes development of key civic competences and improvement of the teaching plan and programs that will strengthen civic culture and behaviors among youth. In the process, the expert team reviewed the "Analyzes of the approaches in teaching Civic Education". This document gave an overview of the setup of Civic Education in different countries and it initiated a discussion on:

- Whether to focus on academic/theoretical knowledge or practical skills;
- Whether to organize Civic Education as a separate subject or as a cross-curricula subject; and
- Whether to focus Civic Education on classroom discussion or expand it to real-life activities.

- ✓ The sub-group responsible for creation of key civic competences developed competences for students that should be achieved in primary school after 3rd, 6th, 9th grade and upon finalization of the obligatory secondary education. The document for civic competences will assure that while developing the teaching plan and programs a focus will be placed on improving knowledge, skills, values and behaviors among youth. This will contribute towards building future, active, responsible and engaged citizens in the community.

Upcoming Activities

- ➔ Announcing an open call for expert team for developing teaching programs for Civic Education subject.
- ➔ Organizing working meetings with the members of the expert group.
- ➔ Finalizing the comparative analyzes of regional and international best practices.

Incentives to schools / Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ The component team is in the process of preparing information letters for schools and nine pilot municipalities about the outcome of the evaluation process.
- ✓ In addition, preparations for the initial meeting with representatives from selected schools and pilot municipalities, during which the component team will present the next steps, is ongoing.
- ✓ Furthermore, preparation of training materials for School Renovation Teams from selected schools for determining the needs and priorities for renovation is ongoing.
- ✓ Exchange of information with UNICEF representatives regularly conducted about developing the workshop modules for all employed staff in the school, students and parents, related to building the skills for disaster risk management.

Upcoming Activities

- ➔ Organizing field visits in selected schools.
- ➔ Establishing the School Renovation Teams in selected schools.
- ➔ Making the preparations for the School Renovation Teams training.
- ➔ Providing support to schools in implementation of activities supported by youth initiatives and joint student activities program.