

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



Interconnected activities

Project collaboration activities

- ✓ Macedonian Civic Education Center representative participated at the working group meetings for developing a new Concept for primary education. The working group coordinated by the Bureau for Development of Education consists of representatives of universities in the country, experts in education and practitioners. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) proposes introduction of essential changes. The goal is to make a shift in primary education and fundamentally change the manner of teaching and learning. The Concept is expected to be finalized by December 2020.
- ✓ Members of the YEI project team participated in the online debate - "The role of media and education in addressing discrimination and hate speech", organized by Council for Media Ethics of Macedonia on October 21, 2020. Views, comments and remarks related to the following topics: 1) connecting/linking media self-regulation and higher education to uphold the journalistic integrity; 2) inclusive education and non-discrimination in media reporting and 3) journalism against discrimination – opportunities and challenges were shared during the event. The project representatives shared YEI successes related to the CivEd curricula revisions and the positive outcomes of this process, as per the received feedback from CivEd teachers and students in grades 8 and 9 gathered towards the end of the school year 2019/20.

Public outreach

- ✓ [Infographic](#) on YEI achievements and successes since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis was designed and published. It shows how the project activities were adapted and digitalized to match the new situation. It also contains the achieved results and lessons learned.
- ✓ A document containing examples of extracurricular activities with students that can be conducted online was designed for the needs of the MoES Commission for Interethnic Integration in Education. The document will be annexed to the MoES public call for grants issued for schools for implementation of interethnic integration activities.
- ✓ The project website and social media platforms were regularly updated with information and news about the course of project activities.
- ✓ The project's excellent cooperation with media outlets resulted in media articles about the project activities in schools as well as in local communities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ For the purpose of continuous monitoring of the quality of implemented activities, evaluation questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the participants of the workshop for CivEd secondary school teachers on the new Civic Education curriculum (Modules 1&2). The CivEd teachers evaluated the effectiveness of the capacity building activity and provided feedback on future improvements. The average score for the workshop was high (over 4.5, on a scale 1-5) and the teachers shared that they found the information about the proposed curricular activities and different approaches for realization of the curriculum's goals, most useful. The recommendations for improvements will be taken into account prior to the planning of the upcoming workshops on Modules 3, 4 and 5.
- ✓ Online discussion with students and teachers on good CivEd practices and presentation of the key findings from the Report on teachers' and students' experiences with the new CivEd curricula in grades 8 and 9, took place on October 29, 2020. The key findings related to students' and teachers' perceptions on: implemented CivEd activities, acquired knowledge, most interesting topics and youth initiatives, were presented to the participants from all around the country during the online event. The teachers who were part of the discussion were carefully chosen, based on the feedback received from their students during the e-survey conducted in April-May, 2020. The discussion served as an opportunity for mutual learning and sharing of good CivEd practices and motivation for all of the event participants to continue the successful implementation of the revised curricula in the years to come.
- ✓ In order to assess teachers' needs during COVID-19 crisis, the team developed a questionnaire that will be distributed to a sample of primary and secondary schools. The aim of the needs assessment is to target teachers' challenges and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and fulfillment of educational goals during the pandemic. Additionally, the questionnaire contains questions related to parents' support and technical challenges/opportunities with the National platform for distance learning.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

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

- ✓ The project in partnership with OSCE supports the MoES Commission for Interethnic Integration in Education (MoES CIIE) in advancing the implementation of interethnic education activities in schools and communities. Three (3) coordination meetings were organized during which the reports from the gathered data through Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) questionnaire for the school year 2017/2018 and school year 2018/2019 were presented, finalized with inputs from all members of the MoES CIIE and adopted. In addition, the documents related to the MoES's grant program were reviewed and revised to match the current circumstances and the distance learning reality. At the beginning of November, MoES announced the public call and all primary and secondary schools are invited to apply for financial support for implementation of in-person or online joint student activities. Furthermore, the project team and members of the MoES CIIE were actively engaged in finalizing the development of Standards for Intercultural Education (ICE standards), a process led and implemented in partnership with MCEC's Pestalozzi Project.

Project support to State Education Inspectorate (SEI)

- ✓ YEI project supported State Education Inspectorate (SEI) in the process of revision of School Performance Quality Indicators (SPQI) and the Manual and instruments for Integral Evaluation of schools in accordance with the recent amendments in Law for Primary Education and Law for Secondary Education related to distance learning. On October 13-16, 2020 a working group consisted of four (4) SEI representatives was established and worked on revising and introducing changes in all seven (7) areas of SPQI and the Manual for Integral Evaluation of schools. Additionally, the working group developed a Protocol for conducting Integral Evaluation in the primary and secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia during a state of emergency. Following the revision of the documents, four (4) one-day workshops with SEI inspectors were organized, to introduce them to the latest changes and amendments. The workshops took place on October 27 – 30, 2020 and were attended by around 60 SEI inspectors.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ The project team in coordination with the mentors continuously provided mentorship to designated municipal officials in developing municipal strategies for IIE and youth engagement. The municipalities of Kocani and Tearce are engaged in establishing the Commissions/Working Groups. In four (4) municipalities: Gjorche Petrov, Gazi Baba, Cair and Vinica, members of the Commissions are actively engaged in developing the Municipal Strategies for IIE and youth engagement and the action plans, while in two (2) municipalities: Negotino and Staro Nagoricane, the Municipal Strategies are in the final phase. The municipalities – Berovo, Bogovinje, Bosilovo and Centar submitted the Municipal Strategies to the municipal councils for adoption, while in the municipalities – Resen, Aerodrom and recently Saraj, the Strategies for IIE and youth engagement were adopted on the municipal council's meeting.

Engaging youth to lead by example

- ✓ The project team in coordination with Youth Educational Forum (YEF) implemented two (2) sets of activities that will result in the implementation of Youth Actions in the selected ten (10) municipalities in 2020, namely:
 - Following the process of defining priorities for implementation of Youth Actions in six (6) municipalities, additional two (2) were included to this process, i.e. Tetovo and Sveti Nikole. This process encompasses coordination with municipalities (municipal education officials), selection of schools, coordination with schools' directors and teachers and similar. On October 28, 2020 two (2) online youth workshops were organized using Zoom platform. During the first workshop, fifteen (15) students from selected schools from Municipality of Tetovo (i.e. SS "Nikola Stejn", SS "8 Septemvri" and SS "Mosa Pijade") discussed and mapped their interests for youth actions. The second workshop was attended by students from three (3) schools from Municipality of Sveti Nikole – or SS "Koco Racin", PS "Goce Delcev" and PS "Kiril and Metodij. Next, YEF team will prepare a short questionnaire based on the priorities defined by students, which will be distributed by the participating students to their peers in order to collect feedback and define the Youth Action. This leads to a total of eight (8) out of ten (10) municipalities with defined priorities for implementation of Youth Actions.
 - The second set of activities includes the implementation of Youth Actions. Due to COVID-19 and moving activities online, the implementation of Youth Actions was not attempted so far. In preparation, YEI project jointly with YEF defined the steps for this phase. The implementation of activities will need to be flexible to meet the situation in each municipality separately. To start the implementation phase, municipalities of Probitip and Veles were approached and two (2) online coordination meetings with their municipal officials were organized. During the meetings, the students' lobbying and presentation of priorities before the Mayor or the municipal education

official in their municipality, the municipal participation and contribution in the Youth Action and the realization of the activities was presented and discussed. In the upcoming period, the realization of first Youth Actions is expected, closely monitored by students. Students comments, before and after pictures and reflections on their contribution to change will be posted on the hash tag on this topic created by the project.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ The project team commenced with preparations for organizing a workshop to build the capacities of the newly involved teachers-implementers for implementation of joint curricular classes in the academic year 2020/2021. In the previous academic year (2019/2020), joint curricular classes in different subjects (vocational and general) were organized in six (6) secondary schools from City of Skopje (Boro Petrusevski, Arseni Jovkov, Zdravko Cvetkovski, Brakja Miladinovci, Dimitar Vlahov and Josip Broz Tito). As of mid-March 2020, instruction moved online and schools mostly used ZOOM. In the new academic year 2020/2021, seven (7) secondary schools (SS Vlado Tasevski is a new school that joined this process) are expected to implement joint curricular classes. Now, the education process being implemented online using the National platform for distance learning, thus the training will contain information and build teacher capacities for organization of online classes as well.

Long-term extracurricular activities in school

- ✓ The process of defining the list of schools for implementation of long-term extracurricular activities commenced. Hence, the component team organized a coordination meeting and initiated the process of selection of new schools for implementation of online activities.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Working Group for secondary school CivEd - activity for developing the Guide for secondary school CivEd teachers

- ✓ The first two (2) modular units from the Guide were posted on BDE's website and made available for all teachers. The project team worked on the technical aspects of the Guide, such as introduction and references. The contents of Module 3 were officially approved by BDE, proofread, translated and sent to design and the contents of Module 4 and 5 are finalized and submitted to BDE for approval. This completes the process of developing contents for each module from the Guide.

Working Group for secondary school CivEd – activity for CivEd teacher trainings

- ✓ A total of 80 teachers, divided in four (4) groups participated at the first session of the online training for the CivEd curriculum and teaching materials, referring to Module 1 and Module 2. Trainings were held every afternoon from October 6-9, 2020. The trainings were conducted in an interactive atmosphere, with effective inputs from participants and advice from trainers on using the Teachers Guide, both in the physical and in the online classroom. The training evaluation results were summarized, shared with trainers and integrated into an info-article promoting the project achievements. Working group members responsible for preparing the training materials for the second training session focused on Module 3 have prepared the training presentations and worksheets necessary for the trainings, scheduled for the first half of November.

Engaging International Consultants for Civic Ethos

- ✓ In the first half of October, the international consultants submitted the first deliverable – draft assessment methodology for school civic ethos (consisting of two documents-assessment tool and assessment sheet). The project team reviewed the documents and provided detailed feedback related to the relevance for the local context, the overall structure of the documents and the operationalization of specific descriptors from the tool. By the end of the month, the consultants submitted a second draft of the documents for further revision by the project team and the BDE, as well as piloting with a small sample of schools and BDE advisors.

Event for promoting good teaching practices

- ✓ An online event titled “Recipe for Democratic Classroom” focused on effective CivEd teaching practices and establishing democratic atmosphere in the classroom took place on October 29, 2020. Prior to the event, the project team developed a list of questions/topics for the discussion, which was shared with the speakers (four students and four CivEd teachers, selected due to excellent student feedback). Registration email for the event was sent to teachers and schools, after which the link for the event was shared with the registered participants. The event had a four-part structure: 1) brief presentation of the CivEd concept and findings from the research on experiences with the new CivEd curriculum, 2) discussion with students (including four student-speakers), 3) discussion with teachers (including four teacher-speakers) and 4) questions from the audience. Total of 73 participants (students, BDE advisors, teachers and other school staff) attended the event and jointly pinpointed the types of classes which students find most effective, as well as the main elements for achieving democracy in the classroom.

Working groups for developing instructions for online lessons and extracurricular activities

- ✓ Members of the two (2) working groups which will work on (1) Developing instructions for online lessons and (2) Developing instructions for online extracurricular activities, student organizing and student initiatives were recruited. Initial consultations were held with regards to the final deliverables expected and the deadlines for the assignments. The working groups have started collecting relevant materials and designing the structure of the documents. The activities will continue throughout October and November.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ Preconstruction meetings with representatives of selected construction companies, supervising companies and representatives of school renovation team from all 12 schools were conducted by the project team. During these meetings, representatives of selected construction companies were familiarized with the scope of work, the project documentation and other specifics regarding the renovation projects. In 10 schools the preconstruction meeting was organized with the physical presence of the component team, while in two schools due to the impossibility of physical presence the introduction was made on-line.
- ✓ Technical acceptance of the completed activities for reconstruction of school building of the satellite school in v.Dvoriste at the PS Dedo Iljo Malesevski in the Municipality of Berovo was organized by the component team in the presence of representatives of the contractor, supervisor, school principal and municipality.
- ✓ Reconstruction activities for installation of new floors in PS "Sv.Kiril I Metodij" from Kocani; installation of new windows in PS "Elpida Karamandi" from Bitola; reconstruction of school building in satellite school in v.Radovo in PS Sv.Kiril i Metodij - Municipality of Bosilovo; installation of new floors in PS "Murat Labunisti" from v.Labunista in Municipality of Struga; reconstruction of gym, installation of new windows, doors and floors in PS Hristijan Todorovski Karpos in v.Dragomance, Municipality of Staro Nagoricane; installation of new floors and windows in SS Gjorce Petrov in Kavadarci; installation of new heating system in PS Rametula Ameti in s.Ciflik – Municipality of Zelino are on-going.
- ✓ In PS Mirce Acev in the Municipality of Gjorce Petrov and PS Josip Broz Tito in the Municipality of Valandovo, the renovation activities that are the responsibilities of the municipality are on-going. After their completion, the items that are invested by YEI will continue to be implemented.
- ✓ In the PS Johann Hajnrh Pestaloci, Municipality of Centar, the reconstruction of the roof has not started yet. As this building is a protected real estate cultural heritage, its reconstruction requires approval from the Office for Protection of Cultural Heritage which the municipality should provide before the works start.
- ✓ In PS Nikola Vapcarov in Municipality of Strumica, the installation of new floors cannot be done during the school year due to the protocols according to which the school works, so this project will be realized during the winter holidays.
- ✓ Documentation for cost-share contribution of school and municipality in the renovation process (financial or in-kind) was completed/finalized for PS "Kole Nedelkovski", Municipality of Centar. In total, Cost share of schools and municipalities in the renovation process of schools in second project year is 51.30%.