

USAID Youth Ethnic Integration Project MONTHLY REPORT - *August 2021*



Interconnected activities

Project partnership activities

- ✓ The project team in cooperation with UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in the process of printing the high-quality teaching and educational materials for the students of the 1st grade in line with the new primary education curricula.

Public outreach

- ✓ A [field visit](#) with the Representative to the USAID Office in North Macedonia, Sharon Kellman Yett was organized on the event of Youth Day. She joined the students from the primary schools “Ali Fethi Okyar” and “Pere Toshev” and the secondary school “Rilindja”, who together with their parents and the school and municipal staff, beautified the schoolyard of SS “Rilindja” in the village of Zhitoshe. She emphasized the importance of encouraging youth activism and talked to the youth about their motivation and role in the improvement of the environment.
- ✓ Two (2) infographics – one with [main findings and recommendations for implementing student initiatives](#) and another with data for [in-class observations of Civic Education lessons](#) were developed.
- ✓ The design of the publication “Examples of good practices for student initiatives 2020/2021” was finalized. It will be published in the following period.
- ✓ The project activities were included in USAID’s online campaign for International Youth Day and Youth Week, including the USAID Europe and Eurasia (E&E) Youth Newsletter.
- ✓ 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

- ✓ Questionnaires for evaluation of municipal involvement and support for IIE and youth engagement activities were developed and uploaded on SurveyMonkey. The e-questionnaires are available in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish language and will be shared with a total of thirty (30) municipalities that have developed and adopted municipal interethnic integration policies. The gathered feedback will provide an overview of the successful implementation of IIE and youth engagement activities and the municipal involvement in the process.
- ✓ Analyzes of the gathered feedback from the BDE and VET Center advisors from the monitored curricular and extracurricular activities, was completed. A total of 71 reports related to joint curricular classes and 14 reports regarding extracurricular activities were submitted. The feedback indicates that there is room for improvement of activities when it comes to planning of activities, as well as monitoring, evaluating and assessment. The feedback will be shared accordingly with the stakeholders in the upcoming meetings in order to ensure continuous improvement of implemented activities.
- ✓ The analysis of the feedback gathered through e-questionnaires and focus groups related to joint curricular classes and CivEd curricula revisions in primary and secondary schools was finalized. The reports are in the final phase of development and will incorporate conclusions and recommendations, based on the results. Once completed, the results will be shared with the relevant stakeholders and the project team.

Idea Fusion Center (IFC)

- ✓ Due to the current situation with the pandemic and the recent restrictive measures, the Idea Fusion Center camp that was planned to take place this month, was canceled. The planned activities will take place online in the upcoming months, as the IFC members will have a chance to work together on the development of one united idea that will contribute towards a positive change for youth across the country.
- ✓ A total of ten (10) applications for positive change that were developed by the IFC members and submitted by the schools, were approved. The project will support a total of seven (7) primary and three (3) secondary schools in the implementation of creative initiatives.
- ✓ A total of 14 IFC members attended the International Youth Day Global LEAD #WatchOurImpact Celebration. The event targeted youth development practitioners and youth networks from around the world and the attendees had a chance to hear inspirational stories by young activists that are making significant changes worldwide.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

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

- ✓ In partnership with OSCE, a two-day online workshop with MoES CIIE members was organized on August 20-21, 2021. Even though initially planned with physical presence, due to the new COVID – 19 measures, the workshop moved online. During the first session, the results from the Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) questionnaires for the activities implemented in schools during the academic year 2019/2020 were presented and discussed. Following, the MoES CIIE members' capacities were strengthened to utilize the digital tools/applications available on the National Platform for Distance Learning. In the upcoming period, MoES CIIE PMP questionnaires will be moved to MS Forms part of the National Platform and distributed to schools using the National Platform accounts, hence reducing institutions' costs. During the last session, YEI M&E Coordinator provided an overview of the different data gathering methods and conducted practical exercises for data analysis. And at the end of the online workshop, participants completed an e-questionnaire evaluating the sessions as well as listed additional capacity building needs.

Intercultural Education (ICE) Standards adopted by the Minister of Education and Science

- ✓ Over the past period, Youth Ethnic Integration project in partnership with the Pestalozzi Project Strengthening Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Municipalities funded by Pestalozzi Children Foundation supported the working group consisted of representatives from universities, education specialist, education institutions and members of MoES CIIE to develop the document with Intercultural Education (ICE) Standards. This document encompasses all three development cycles in primary education and presents an addition to [The National standards for primary education](#). On August 6, 2021 the document with [ICE Standards](#) for primary education was adopted by the Minister of Education and Science.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ YEI mentors with the project support continued the collaboration and coordination with fifteen (15) municipalities selected to develop strategies and policies for IIE and youth engagement in 2021 and provided mentorship to designated municipal officials. The municipalities are at different stages of developing the local strategies, i.e.:
 - Eight (8) municipalities or: Dojran, Radovis, Caska and recently Bitola, Karpos, Vasilevo, Stip and Kisela Voda adopted the Local Strategy for Interethnic Integration in Education and Youth Engagement, following their finalization by the established municipal commissions/working groups and placing the documents on the Municipal Council's agendas for review.
 - The municipalities of Bogdanci and Debar finalized and forwarded their Local Strategies for adoption as well.
 - In the municipalities of Kicevo, Zelino, Studenicani and Mavrovo and Rostuse members of the commissions are finalizing the documents and the action plans.
 - The Municipality of Suto Orizari is in the process of establishing the commission/working group.
- ✓ A total of 16 municipalities are expected to finalize this process by the end of 2021, since Municipality of Tearce included in this process in the previous year or 2020 developed and adopted the Local Strategy for Interethnic Integration in Education and Youth Engagement as well.

Engaging youth to lead by example (finalizing youth actions from 2020)

- ✓ Youth actions in two (2) municipalities, i.e.: Dolneni and Gevgelija were conducted in this period and in-person activities were conducted as follows:
 - On August 12, 2021, youth actions supported by the Municipality of Dolneni and YEI project, in cooperation with the Youth Education Forum (YEF) were implemented in SS "Rilindja v. Zhitoshe. The youth actions were initiated by students from different ethnic background from primary schools "Ali Fethi Okyar" and "Pere Toshev" and secondary school "Rilindja", who have gathered by respecting the protocols for protection and celebrated the International Youth Day. Together with their parents and the school and municipal staff, they placed and painted modern equipment and planted trees and plants in the schoolyard. The event was attended by more than 40 participants, the Mayor of Dolneni, municipal representatives, guests from USAID, primary and secondary school students, teachers, school staff, parents and employees in the local public enterprise. During the event, Ms. Sharon Kellman Yett, Representative to the USAID Office in North Macedonia met with the Mayor of the Municipality of Dolneni, Mr. Xhemil Qamili, and the school director, Mr. Valmir Shaqiri, and discussed the ways in which the municipality supports young people and their ideas and the cooperation with schools to promote interethnic integration. These youth actions are a result of the online workshops with students and student cooperation with local authorities to realize their ideas. Radio MOF, as one of the leading youth platforms in the country wrote and published an [article about the youth actions](#) and there was a [statement](#) published on the Municipality of Dolneni's website. Moreover, a post was published on MCEC website, as well.

- Youth actions for beautification of the City Park “Violeta” in the Municipality of Gevgelija were implemented on August 27, 2021. These youth actions initiated by students from different background from primary schools “Krste Misirkov” and “Vlado Kantardzhev” and secondary school “Josif Josifovski” were supported by the municipality and YEF project, in cooperation with the Youth Educational Forum (YEF). As a result of this cooperation, the City Park in municipality of Gevgelija was upgraded. The Municipality provided human resources and workforce for preparing the area, installation of the equipment, replacement of the lighting, repairing of existing benches, as well as installation of the new children’ playground, while the project contributed with the procurement of the benches and garbage bins. The event was attended by more than 30 participants, the Mayor of Gevgelija, municipal representatives, primary and secondary schools’ teachers, school staff, number of students and employees in the local public enterprise. Following the youth actions, all students involved will be able to monitor the process of implementation of the proposed intervention and make photographs of the achieved impact. The photographs, students’ comments and videos will be shared during the online youth campaign #IContributed. Following the event, news about the youth actions were shared on local TV station Nova. Moreover, an article will be developed and published on project social media platforms as well.
- ✓ So far, due to the collaboration between the project, YEF partner organization, the municipalities and the schools included in the process in 2020, Youth Actions were implemented in seven (7) out of ten (10) municipalities: Struga, Probitip, Sveti Nikole, Vrapciste, Tetovo, Dolneni and Gevgelija.

Starting the implementation of Youth Actions in new municipalities included in the process in 2021

- ✓ Following the implementation of coordination meetings separately with municipal and then school representatives, organizing youth workshops for mapping youth interests and challenges on local level, preparation meetings with students and formal advocacy meetings between students and local municipal officials and representatives, the project team in partnership with YEF continued with the completion of activities that will lead to realization of Youth Actions in nine (9) out of 15 municipalities with developed strategies for IIE and youth engagement i.e., Berovo, Staro Nagoricane, Bosilovo, Bogovinje, Vinica, Negotino, Ohrid, Kocani and Resen. As a result, the following was accomplished:
 - A meeting with representatives from the Municipality of Bogovinje was organized on August 18, 2021. The purpose of this meeting was for the project team jointly with the municipality to determine the upcoming steps in the implementation of the youth actions and to define the location of the Youth Hub and necessary materials for procurement.
 - The municipalities of Staro Nagoricane and Bosilovo were also contacted by the project team in order to set dates and coordinate the process of organizing advocacy meetings.
- ✓ Furthermore, project team commenced the process of organizing youth actions in the remaining six (6) out of 15 municipalities (Aerodrom, Saraj, Cair, Gazi Baba Centar, and Gjorche Petrov) which developed and endorsed municipal strategies for IIE and civic engagement in 2020. Thus, August 23-25, 2021 individual coordination meetings with municipal and schools’ representatives from the previously mentioned municipalities were held. Each municipality selected three (3) schools to be included in the upcoming process of implementation of youth actions and schools’ representatives attended the in-person meetings as well. During these meetings, the project methodology of student involvement in decision making and initiating change was presented.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ The cooperation with the City of Skopje continued in the realization of joint curricular classes in this municipality with secondary schools’ students from different languages of instruction. Thus, representatives of the City of Skopje initiated coordination meetings with the schools and the School Integration Team members to start the process of planning and realization of the joint classes in the new academic year. The aim was to discuss and define the subjects that schools will incorporate in their annual plans for implementation of joint curricular classes, the teams/pairs of teachers that will be included in the process and to discuss activities that City of Skopje in partnership with YEF will organize to support further development of teachers’ skills and know-how to carry out such a process. In the forthcoming period, the schools will prepare the final plans and select subjects that will be included in their Annual Work Programs.

Guidance and support for implementation of joint curricular activities

- ✓ The project team in partnership with OSCE and MCEC’s Pestalozzi Project for Strengthening Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Municipalities supported the activities and the working group for developing the Guideline for implementation of joint curricular activities. The finalized document was forwarded to MoES and is in a process of approval. Moreover, the document was translated into Albanian language and a process of graphic design will follow.

Project capacity building activities with students from schools selected for implementation of long-term extracurricular activities.

- ✓ The project team continued to provide program support to the 9 (nine) schools selected for implementation of long-term extracurricular activities within subject clubs (5 schools) and in partnership (4 schools /2 partnerships). During June, three (3) out of five (5) phases of the additional

capacity building program (i.e. 1 - informative meetings with each selected school; 2 - workshops with students on youth activism, volunteering, advocacy and developing an initiative to be implemented in schools on September 21, 2021 to mark the International Peace Day on September 21, 2021 and 3 – peer to peer sharing an online questionnaire by students and with the student parliament to define the initiative) were finalized. Following the summer vacation, to initiate upcoming activities, separate online coordination meetings with representatives from all nine (9) selected schools were organized, during which, a plan for implementation of activities was prepared, a list of necessary materials was defined and the implementation of the last two (2) phases or promotion and conducting the initiative were discussed.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Capacity building program on school civic ethos for secondary vocational schools' mentors

- ✓ During the first half of August, the scenario for the workshop with secondary school CivEd teams and the adapted version of the training materials were finalized and translated into Albanian language. The materials necessary for the training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop were also translated and printed. The ToT participants were informed of the workshop content and accommodations necessary for remote attendance (in light of the new COVID-19 measures) were made. Hybrid model for the training was enabled, with part of participants following remotely and part with physical presence.
- ✓ The training-of-trainers took place on August 19, 2021 in Restaurant Oreov Lad. 13 mentors physically attended the event, while two (2) followed it online via MS Teams. Three of the mentors which could not participate at the workshop will be additionally informed on the process and the next steps. The workshop included four sessions on main aspects of democratic school, student initiatives, and role of school management in encouraging civic ethos and examples of situations for mentoring.
- ✓ After the workshop, the project team shared a set of useful materials with the mentors who have started to contact the assigned schools in order to disseminate the content further and initiate the process of organizing student initiatives in 75 secondary vocational schools during the academic 2021/2022 year. During the following month, all mentors will disseminate the workshop to teams from their assigned schools, assisted by the project team. Additionally, a promotional post describing the one-day ToT was prepared by the project team to be published on MCEC's web page and social media platforms.

Policies for assuring sustainability – Methodology for assessing and improving school civic ethos

- ✓ The project team started collecting useful materials and appropriate instruments to be incorporated as part of the civic ethos assessment methodology. The methodology is intended to assist schools in the timely planning of activities for supporting civic ethos and continuous assessment of the school civic ethos through a whole-school approach.

Student initiatives in phase 1 and phase 2 schools

- ✓ The project team designed certificates for the 120 phase 1 and 109 phase 2 schools which conducted student initiatives during the period 2019-2021.
- ✓ The design outline of the publication “Examples of good practices for student initiatives 2020/2021” was finalized in Macedonian and Albanian language. The publication will be disseminated with relevant stakeholders at the beginning of the school year in order to support the implementation of student initiatives in the phase 3 schools (96 in total).

Improving CivEd teaching and learning

- ✓ The process of compiling report on in-class observations of Grade 8 and Grade 9 CivEd lessons was finalized. Qualitative data obtained through the electronic reporting forms was added to the analytical report summarizing data from the 52 in-class observations of online CivEd classes. Afterwards, the report was finalized and shared with the BDE advisors, together with a policy brief (in the form of infographic) with the main findings and recommendations from the analysis. According to the collected data, main areas for further development are: increasing student autonomy, regular assessment of student achievement and improving the interaction between students and teachers via diverse digital tools. The policy brief was translated into English and Albanian language, and three versions of the infographic were finalized and prepared to be shared with the general public through social media.
- ✓ Two versions of the document “Civic Education in secondary vocational education – activities for revising and evaluating” (in Macedonian and Albanian) were disseminated among CivEd teachers in order to support their efforts in performing quality assessment of students' competences during the upcoming 2021/2022 school year.

International consultants conduct a comprehensive training on school civic ethos

- ✓ The consultants submitted all training materials required for the training scheduled in September. The submitted materials include PP presentations, worksheets, required technical resources and detailed scenario of the three-day training. The training is intended to be interactive and participatory, combining face-to-face with digital interaction tools. The topics will cover: relevant information about

the Finnish education system and assessment philosophy, the importance of inclusion, student participation and cooperation with the wider community for the development of school civic ethos, and introduction and consultations about the piloted assessment tool on school civic ethos.

- ✓ The project team reviewed the materials and provided feedback to the consultants, after which the materials were finalized and sent to translation. Additionally, logistical preparations for the training (especially in light of the new Covid-19 measures in the country) continued.

Developing video on phases of conducting a student initiative

- ✓ The design outline of the animated instructional video on the phases of conducting a student initiative was finalized. The textual outline was translated in all languages of instruction in schools (Albanian, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian) and English, after which the production of these videos was started. Once the videos in all languages of instruction are finalized, they will be disseminated among BDE advisors and schools to serve as a visual guideline for students and school staff for more effective realization of the student initiatives in the upcoming school year.

Preparations for student competition on student initiatives

- ✓ After receiving feedback from the YEF staff, the project team pre-finalized the documents developed for the competition (quiz questions, application forms, public call, etc.). The pre-finalized quiz questions were translated into Albanian and Turkish language and piloted with students from the Idea Fusion Center. Their feedback was implemented, and the quiz questions were finalized.
- ✓ The project team started working on the promotional (e.g. communication and visual materials) and logistical aspects (e.g. event format, jury members selection, etc.) of the competition which is scheduled to take place in late October/early November.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ On August 6, 2021, a public opening of offers for "Reconstruction of gym" in SS "St. Naum Ohridski"; "Reconstruction of toilets in the central school in Saraj and in the satellite school in the village of Ljubin" in the PS "Dituria" in the Municipality of Saraj and "Reconstruction of gym" in the PS "Faik Konica" in the village of Dobroshte, Municipality of Tearce was organized. The Component Selection Committee evaluated the three construction companies that submitted offers with the lowest prices for each of these three projects. The necessary documentation for approval of selected construction companies were prepared by the project team, and the prepared documentation were sent for approval to the Contracting and Agreement Officer in the USAID Regional Contracting Office in Kosovo. On August 18, 2021, construction companies were approved.
- ✓ On August 13, 2021, preconstruction meetings in the PS "Kuzman Josifovski Pitu" in the Municipality of Kisela Voda and in the SS "Arsenie Jovkov" in Butel were organized.
- ✓ On August 16, 2021, preconstruction meeting with representatives of the selected company, supervising company and representatives of the School Renovation Team, was organized in PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot", Municipality of Demir Kapija, for the renovation project "Installation of new thermal facade".
- ✓ On August 23, 2021, preconstruction meetings with representatives of the selected company, supervising company and representatives of the School Renovation Team, were organized for "Reconstruction of gym" in the state secondary school for rehabilitation and education "Sv. Naum Ohridski" in Skopje, "Reconstruction of toilets in central school in Saraj and in the satellite school in v.Ljubin" in primary school "Dituria" in Municipality of Saraj and "Reconstruction of gym" in primary school "Faik Konica" in v.Dobroste, Municipality of Tearce. During this meeting, representatives of the construction companies were familiarized with the scope of work, the project documentation, and other specifics regarding the renovation projects.
- ✓ Memorandums for understanding for "Installation of a new heating system" in PS "Dence Dejanoski" in Mavrovo and Rostuse Municipality and "Installation of a new heating system" in PS "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the Municipality of Ohrid, were signed by the MCEC Executive Director, YEI CoP, the mayors of the municipalities and the principals of the schools, so that all stakeholders accepted the obligations for the reconstruction of the schools.
- ✓ On August 20, request for offers for selection of construction companies for "Installation of a new heating system" in the PS "Dence Dejanoski" in the Municipality of Mavrovo and Rostuse; "Installation of a new heating system" in PS "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the Municipality of Ohrid and "Refurbishment of toilets" in PS "Nikola Karev" in v. Borino, Krushevo Municipality were announced in two daily newspapers, Koha in Albanian language and Nova Makedonija in Macedonian language and on the MCEC web page.
- ✓ On August 26, 2021, technical acceptance was organized for "Reconstruction of gym" in PS "Kuzman Josifovski Pitu" in Municipality of Kisela Voda.