

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



Interconnected activities

Public outreach

- ✓ Two promotional videos containing the process of planning and implementing youth actions in [Probitip](#) and [Sveti Nikole](#) were developed and published on MCEC website and social media.
- ✓ Students that study in different languages of instruction shared their opinions and experiences regarding the joint curricular classes in a [post](#) that was published on MCEC website.
- ✓ An online discussion on the topic “It’s time for Civic Education! Reflections on teaching Civic Education in secondary vocational schools” was organized. During the event, representatives of the working group for Civic Education for the secondary vocational schools, teachers and students discussed practices that contribute to quality teaching of Civic Education and a democratic classroom ethos.
- ✓ The project’s excellent cooperation with media outlets resulted in media articles about the project activities in schools as well as in local communities. [Media newsletter](#) was developed and shared with all media outlets.
- ✓ The project website and social media platforms were regularly updated with information and news about the course of project activities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ Students’ and teachers’ perceptions, opinions and experiences with joint curricular classes were analyzed through e-questionnaires and focus groups in the first half of the month. The questionnaires were available in three languages: Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish and were filled out by around 150 students and teachers-implementers of joint curricular classes. Additionally, to gather qualitative feedback, three (3) online focus groups were held with students and two (2) online focus groups were held with teachers. The feedback is being analyzed and the findings will be presented within a report and shared with the Project team.
- ✓ The effects of the revised CivEd curricula in primary and secondary schools were evaluated through e-questionnaires and focus groups in the first half of the month. The e-questionnaires were shared with students in grades 8 and 9 and year 1 in secondary vocational schools, as well as with CivEd teachers. Around 1700 students and teachers provided feedback related to their experiences with the CivEd curriculum contents, the potential for achieving the required competences, the variety of teaching and learning methods, etc. The quantitative feedback will be accompanied by qualitative information gathered through 15 online focus groups conducted with primary and secondary school students and three (3) online focus groups conducted with secondary school CivEd teachers. The final reports that will contain the findings and recommendations will be shared with the project team accordingly.
- ✓ Upon conducting initial analysis of the feedback related to the CivEd revisions in secondary vocational schools, part of the findings were shared during the online event conducted on June 15, 2021 with secondary school CivEd teachers and students. The results indicate students’ satisfaction with the revisions, as they rate their overall experience with the subject as highly positive (average score of 8.5 on a scale of 1-10). Additionally, the vast majority of students and teachers believe that the contents are highly useful, and the activities are quite interesting.

Idea Fusion Center (IFC)

- ✓ The Idea Fusion Center members took part in regular meetings conducted throughout the month. During an online meeting on the June 9, 2021, the students had a chance to talk to the actor Driton Vejseli and addressed topics related to the importance of creativity and high motivation in order to achieve certain goals. Additionally, during the Q&A session, the actor shared with the students his own experience and talked about the road to success, as a result of being committed to the interests and focused on fulfillment of our ambitions.
- ✓ The applications containing students’ ideas for positive change were submitted by the IFC school coordinators and are in the process of review. In the upcoming months, the project will support implementation of students’ creative ideas and will contribute towards increased youth engagement and positive changes on school level.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

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

- ✓ The project team continued to support MoES CIIE in carrying out activities that advance the implementation of interethnic integration and civic engagement in schools. After developing a link on Survey Monkey containing the Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) questionnaires (available in all languages of instructions) which gather data on the implementation of interethnic integration activities during the school year 2019/2020, MoES CIIE disseminated it to all schools in the country. The process of gathering feedback was ongoing during this period. So far 317 schools (242 primary and 75 secondary) completed the questionnaire. The remaining schools will be encouraged to fill in the questionnaire and finalize the survey in the following period. As soon as the results from the questionnaires are received, MoES CIIE will use them to develop reports based on the findings.
- ✓ Moreover, the working group consisted of representatives from universities, education specialist, education institutions and members of MoES CIIE established by the project in partnership with MCEC's Pestalozzi Project for Strengthening Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Municipalities developed a draft document with Intercultural Education (ICE) Standards. This document is expected to be part of National Standards for Primary Education, it encompasses all three development cycles in primary education and consists of three dimensions: knowledge, skills and attitudes. As soon as final changes and feedback is incorporated, the document will be passed on to education institutions for approval and implementation.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ Collaboration and coordination with fifteen (15) municipalities selected to develop strategies and policies for IIE and youth engagement in 2021 continued. The municipalities are at different stages of developing the local strategies, i.e.:
 - Dojran is the first (1) out of fifteen (15) municipalities to adopt the Local Strategy for Interethnic Integration in Education and Youth Engagement, following its finalization by the established municipal commission/working group and placing it on the Municipal Council's agenda for review.
 - Municipalities of Vasilevo and Bogdanci prepared draft versions of their strategies and the action plans and soon the documents will be submitted to the municipal councils for review and adoption.
 - The local strategies in the municipalities of Radovish and Caska were finalized as well and submitted to the municipal' councils for approval.
 - The collaboration and coordination with the remaining municipalities continued. Namely, eight (8) municipalities or Mavrovo and Rostuse, Debar, Stip, Kicevo, Karposh, Kisela Voda, Zelino and Bitola are industrious in their efforts to develop the strategies, while two (2) municipalities: Shuto Orizari and Studenicani are in the process of establishing the commissions /working groups.
- ✓ Moreover, the Municipality of Tearce included in this process in the previous year or 2020 has developed the Local Strategy for Interethnic Integration in Education and Youth Engagement. This municipality dealt with difficulties and delays due to quarantine and even loss in the previous year, hence with the beginning of this calendar year the process was restarted, and the commission/working group was re-established. As a result, in June 2021 the strategy was adopted by the members of the Municipal Council.

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

- ✓ The ten (10) municipalities (Struga, Sveti Nikole, Probishtip, Kavadarci, Veles, Dolneni, Tetovo, Gevgelija, Vrapciste and Prilep) included in this process in 2020 are realizing activities that lead to implementation of youth actions, i.e.:
 - In the municipalities of Dolneni, Prilep, Kavadarci, Veles, Gevgelija and Tetovo, the project team in partnership with YEF, worked on finalizing the items and/or services needed for implementation of the interventions and/or Youth Actions. Hence, an in-person coordination meeting and coordination through telephone calls and e-mail was organized with the municipalities. So far, due to the collaboration between the project, YEF partner organization, the municipalities and the schools, Youth Actions were implemented in four (4) out of ten (10) municipalities: Struga, Sveti Nikole, Probishtip and Vrapchishte.
 - The process of collecting materials (before-after photographs, short video messages) from students in the municipalities of Dolneni and Tetovo is ongoing.
 - Furthermore, in the framework of the online youth campaign #IContributed two videos were developed out of the recorded advocacy meetings and the short video-materials provided by the participating students from Municipality of Probishtip and Sveti Nikole in which they express their opinions and perception of their contribution to advance the local communities.

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

- ✓ The project in partnership with YEF implemented 24 activities in nine (9) out of 15 municipalities with developed strategies to put into practice their action plans and support the organization of Youth Actions in 2021. As a result, the following was achieved:
 - Nine (9) online preparatory meetings with students from municipalities of Kocani, Vinica, Negotino, Resen, Berovo, Staro Nagorichane, Ohrid, Bosilovo and Bogovinje were held to coach them for the upcoming formal advocacy process. During these preparatory meetings, the result and feedback from the online questionnaires were shared and preparations with students were met and instructions were provided to develop advocacy letters that will be forwarded to the municipal education officials and/or Mayors of municipalities. Preparatory meetings with students present the third step in defining priorities and organizing youth actions, following the implementation of first step or informative meetings separately with representatives from municipalities and representatives from schools and second step or mapping of youth interests through online workshops and defining the final priority, based on the feedback received from a wider youth community through online questionnaires.
 - Following, the students with the support of the project developed advocacy letters for each of the nine (9) municipalities, listing the process, implemented activities and the identified priorities to be presented to the municipal representatives.
 - Furthermore, six (6) advocacy meetings between students and representatives from the municipalities of Negotino, Vinica, Kocani, Resen, Berovo and Ohrid were organized. The online advocacy meetings in the municipalities of Kocani, Vinica, Resen and Berovo were highlighted with Mayors' presence, whereas in Ohrid and Negotino the municipal representatives were introduced to the students' recommendations and priorities. During these meetings, the students presented their participation in the overall process and the advocacy letter, which was discussed thoroughly. Hence, the students managed to successfully advocate for their initiatives/priorities.
- ✓ With the beginning of the new school year, the remaining six (6) municipalities with developed strategies (in 2020) will be included in the process of organizing youth actions.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ In partnership with the City of Skopje, seven (7) secondary schools in Skopje ("Boro Petrushevski", "Zdravko Cvetkovski", "Arseni Jovkov", "Josip Broz Tito", "Dimitar Vlahov", "Vlado Tasevski" and "Brakja Miladinovci") continued to implement joint curricular classes in different selected subjects (i.e., vocational subjects, English, French and German language, Art and other) that increased the collaboration among students from different languages of instruction. Representatives from the City of Skopje actively followed the implementation of this process, along with assigned BDE and VET Center advisors. Representatives from City of Skopje were engaged in supporting school directors and School Integration Teams (SITs) to discuss the challenges and ways to further improve this process. The assigned BDE and VET Center advisors were engaged in supporting and mentoring teachers in the process of organizing joint curricular classes and advancing interethnic integration.
- ✓ During the academic year 2020/2021, a total number of 757 joint classes in different subjects (English language, Applied cosmetics, Computer science, English, French and German language, Art, Sport and sports activities etc.) were held, with 636 students participating. To successfully conduct joint classes, teachers-implementers maintained constant online communication, jointly prepared the lesson plan, shared the guidelines and presentations with students and held the classes using Microsoft Teams.

Guidance and support for implementation of joint curricular activities

- ✓ The project continued with implementation of activities that will result in the development of a Guideline for implementation of joint curricular lessons. Members of the working group submitted the third version of their parts of the document, which were discussed and revised during an online meeting held on June 09, 2021. Feedback on each other's materials/content was provided and the final draft of the document was prepared and forwarded to project partners/stakeholders for feedback, i.e. MoES Commission for IIE, State Education Inspectorate (SEI), seven (7) secondary schools from City of Skopje and primary schools involved in the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation Project - Strengthening Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Municipalities which implement joint curricular classes. The deadline for providing comments and suggestions regarding the content of the document is July 09, 2021. Based on the received feedback, the Guideline will be revised and shared with the educational institutions for final approval. This document is developed in line with the National strategy for development of the concept of one (common) society and interculturalism action plan, laws, bylaws, and education concepts in the country and is expected to support and extend the implementation of joint curricular classes in all levels of education system.

Long-term extracurricular activities in schools

- ✓ In this period, the following selected schools implemented activities with the support of the project and under the mentorship of BDE:

- On June 4, 2021, the PS “Kiril and Metodij” from village of Romanovce, Kumanovo and PS “Hristijan Todorovski Karposh” from village of Dragomance, Staro Nagoricane organized an online workshop through Microsoft Teams. During this set of extracurricular activities named “Traditional dishes from my area” students built their life skills and prepared appetizers jointly with their parents.
- Using online tools, the students from eco club from secondary school “Car Samoil”, Municipality of Resen, conducted online meeting on June 11, 2021. During the meeting, the students discussed how they can improve and arrange the school yard, presented the prepared sketches/drawings before their peers and through a voting process they selected one, thus advancing their civic and democratic competences.
- ✓ During the second half of the academic year 2020/2021, a total of 213 students with different ethnic background participated in 52 joint extracurricular activities (38 implemented online and 14 with physical presence of students) that enable them to have extended interaction, to meet often, to know each other better, to learn and work together, foster interpersonal communication, and create friendships.

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

- ✓ The project in partnership with YEF, continued organizing and implementing additional capacity building activities with students from the selected nine (9) primary and secondary schools involved in implementation of long-term extracurricular activities. Through a five (5) phase process, students within their subject club and partnership activities will define and initiate change in their schools, consult with peers, involve the student parliament, and implement a student initiative/action on the schools’ level to mark the International Peace Day, on September 21, 2021. The project direct involvement and support consists of additional capacity building of students on youth activism, volunteering, advocacy, and online campaign.
- ✓ Within this month, the third phase of this new set of activities was finalized. The students with the support of their teachers and the project prepared and shared a link to an online questionnaire with their student parliament and/or their peers for feedback that consists of plan of activities and/or initiatives. Furthermore, individual online meetings with all nine (9) schools for presenting the results of the online questionnaire and defining next steps were held.
- ✓ So far, 27 activities were implemented to finish the first three phases of this process (i.e. 1 - informative meetings with each selected school; 2 - workshops with students on youth activism, volunteering, advocacy and developing a plan of activities/initiatives to be implemented on the International Peace Day and 3 – students sharing an online questionnaire with their student parliament and/or their peers for feedback and conducting online meetings to present the results).
- ✓ 676 students were involved in this process, out of which 126 students attended the online workshops and meetings and 550 students were engaged in defining the activities/initiatives which will be implemented in their schools, by completing the follow-up questionnaire disseminated to them by their peers.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Booklet with good practices of civic initiatives (Vol.2)

- ✓ During June, the project team compiled the final version of the Booklet with good practices of student initiatives from the 2020/2021 school year. The Booklet contains examples from 14 schools that conducted student initiatives and CivEd Open days remotely/in a hybrid manner. All examples are elaborated in detail and illustrated through selected photographs of different phases of the initiatives.
- ✓ The document was proof-read and translated in Albanian language, after which the design process started. The publication of the Booklet is planned for August/September, to support the implementation of student initiatives in the phase 3 schools throughout the following school year. Together with the first volume, the Booklet will serve as a guideline for schools on how to plan and implement successful student initiatives through digital and hybrid means.

Capacity building of school staff from phase 3 primary schools on school civic ethos

- ✓ During June, the remaining 12 capacity building workshops were conducted by 19 BDE advisors assigned to support phase 3 schools. This concluded the cycle of capacity building workshops for phase 3 school teams, consisting of CivEd teacher/s, Director and Support staff members. In total, 17 online workshops were conducted by 25 BDE advisors for more than 250 representatives of all phase 3 schools. During the workshops, the BDE advisors and participants discussed the policies related to the school civic ethos concept, analyzed the necessary phases of student initiatives, reviewed successful examples, and were provided information on incorporating the civic ethos activities in the Annual School Programs. Additionally, per their questions, the school representatives received guidelines on conducting the necessary preparatory steps before the start of the school year, building and coordinating a strong team of school staff interested in promoting civic ethos through student initiatives, as well as developing a timeframe and action plan for the activities, allowing for flexibility required by the epidemiological situation in the country.

- ✓ MCEC and YEF project team members attended each of the organized workshops and provided support to the BDE advisors. After concluding the cycle of workshops, the project team prepared a promotional text which will be published on the MCEC website and social media profiles.

Developing capacity building program on school civic ethos for secondary vocational schools' staff

- ✓ The project team organized two (2) online meetings related to the implementation of student initiatives in secondary schools and assigning mentors. The first meeting was held with VET Center representatives, who provided suggestions on the policy framework in secondary schools that will support the implementation of student initiatives. The VET Center nominated 8 advisors/representatives and each of them will mentor 5 secondary schools. The second meeting was with a group of 10 experienced school practitioners, which will be additional mentors to 35 secondary vocational schools during the 2021/2022 school year in conducting student initiatives (3-4 schools per practitioner). In total, 18 mentors will be responsible for all 75 secondary vocational schools.
- ✓ Preparations for this process started with receiving approval by the VET Center for a school distribution plan among mentors, along with a detailed plan for the upcoming activities related to the mentors. An informative letter was sent to all schools outlining the activities planned for the following school year and informing them of the assigned mentors which will guide them in the process. Additionally, a one-day training of trainers for all school mentors is planned for the first half of July 2021. The project team has developed the necessary training materials (session outlines, PowerPoint presentation, activities, worksheets, etc.) and has started organizing the logistical details of the event.

International consultants conduct a comprehensive training on school civic ethos

- ✓ The project team regularly communicated with the international consultants regarding their questions and technical needs for the training on school civic ethos which is planned for late September 2021. Additionally, the team worked on developing supplementary materials and practical examples required by the international consultants as support for the upcoming training.

Secondary school CivEd activities for assessment

- ✓ The document with assessment activities received final approval by the BDE, after which the design process was started. After finalizing the design outline of the publication, the two versions of the document (in Macedonian and Albanian language) are planned to be published during July – August 2021. The document will serve as additional teaching material and assessment support to CivEd teachers in secondary vocational schools.

Certification of secondary school CivEd teachers which have completed the online trainings on the new CivEd curriculum

- ✓ The project team prepared and printed the certificates for 111 secondary school CivEd teachers that have attended the online trainings conducted in October-December 2020. The certificates were signed by the BDE director and posted to schools.
- ✓ The project team organized an online certification event on June 15, 2021. Four preparatory meetings with the panelists (teachers and students) were conducted in the preparatory stages. At the beginning of the event, the BDE director welcomed the participants and congratulated them for a successful school year. Afterwards, initial results from the MCEC's research were shared with the audience by the YEI M&E coordinator, after which two (2) panel discussions were held (with teachers and students). In the end, the panelists answered audience questions and shared additional examples from their daily work. The event was attended by 40 school practitioners, BDE advisors, YEI team members, etc. In general, the event provided an opportunity for secondary school CivEd teachers and students to share their experiences with the new CivEd curriculum and the Teachers' Guide developed by the BDE and MCEC. The event, along with the receipt of mailed certificates has closed the initial phase of capacity building of CivEd teachers in secondary vocational schools. From the following school year, the process will be continued with in-class observations and mentoring from BDE advisors.
- ✓ After the event, signed electronic certificates for event participation as speakers were shared with the panelists. The project team prepared a promotional text to be published on the MCEC website and social media profiles covering the main topics discussed during the event and in collaboration with the YEI Communications coordinator, an infographic was also developed.

Report on conducted student initiatives

- ✓ Based on the data received by students, teachers and BDE advisors via electronic reporting questionnaires, the project team worked on an analytical report on the student initiatives conducted during the 2020/2021 school year.
- ✓ According to the initial analysis, about 60 % of the student activities were focused on raising awareness on diverse topics (e.g., human rights and antidiscrimination, ecology, Covid-19, bullying, etc.). Students assessed their activities on a 1-5 scale with an average grade of 4,73, whereas more than 80 % of the students have chosen the grade 5. When asked to assess the level of youth participation according to the Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation, most of the respondents have chosen one of the three highest levels (levels 6-8), which emphasizes the value of the student initiatives for empowering student participation in their schools and local communities.

Report on in-class observations of Grade 8 and Grade 9 CivEd lessons

- ✓ The project team worked on analyzing the data provided by the BDE advisors related to their in-class observations of Grade 8 and Grade 9 CivEd lessons. The report will outline the average grades by the BDE advisors on 40 indicators related to the quality and effectiveness of distance education during CivEd classes, as well as summarize the qualitative data.
- ✓ According to the initial insights, the average grade on the indicators is 2,31 (on a 1-3 scale). As all the observed CivEd lessons were conducted online, it is not surprising that the following indicator groups were assessed with lowest grades: active participation of the students (2,1), planning the online lesson and preparing digital resources (2,14) and distance assessment (2,15). The insights obtained from the report will be used to further support CivEd teachers during the following school year, especially if it is conducted via distance education or hybrid means.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ An engineering reports for renovations of PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot" in Municipality of Demir Kapija, PS "Dobre Jovanoski" in Municipality of Prilep, PS "Slavco Stojmenski" in the Municipality of Vinica, PS "Nikola Karev" in Municipality of Krusevo, PS "Kuzman Josifovski Pitu" in Municipality of Kisela Voda, and SS "Arseni Jovkov" in City of Skopje were prepared.
- ✓ Memorandums of Understanding for renovation of PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot" from Demir Kapija, PS "Dobre Jovanoski" from Prilep and PS "Slavco Stojmenski" from Vinica were signed by the MCEC Executive Director, Project Chief of Party, Mayors of Municipalities and Directors from previously mentioned schools.
- ✓ On June 16, 2021, request for offers for "Installation of new thermal facade" in PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot" in Municipality of Demir Kapija, "Installation of new heating system" in PS "Dobre Jovanoski" in Municipality of Prilep and "Reconstruction of ceilings and floors in classrooms" in PS "Slavco Stojmenski" in Municipality of Vinica were announced in the two daily newspapers "Koha" in Albanian language and "Nova Makedonija" in Macedonian language and on the MCEC web page.
- ✓ On June 30, 2021, tenders opening for "Installation of new thermal facade" in PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot" in Municipality of Demir Kapija, "Installation of new heating system" in PS "Dobre Jovanoski" in Municipality of Prilep and "Reconstruction of ceilings and floors in classrooms" in PS "Slavco Stojmenski" in Municipality of Vinica was organized.
- ✓ The maintenance toolboxes which include tools, hygiene equipment, and protective equipment in 12 schools renovated in the third project year were delivered.
- ✓ In addition, the project team worked on registering/collecting the necessary documentation for the 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.