

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



Interconnected activities

Public outreach

- ✓ To promote the activities and accomplishments of the Idea Fusion Center, a [TV appearance](#) was organized on the Morning show on TV Telma. Nastasija Stojanovikj, project representative and Hana Bushi, a student from SS “Cvetan Dimov” and Tamara Mladenovska from SS “Brakja Miladinovci” discussed on this topic and shared their experiences.
- ✓ A [field visit](#) was organized with the USAID Country Representative Erik Janowsky. He visited a youth action in Vinica and engaged with the students, the Mayor of Vinica, and the school director emphasizing the importance of youth engagement and supporting youth. A local media outlet Macedonian Media Service published a wholesome [coverage](#) of the visit, including statements from all stakeholders.
- ✓ A promotional video about the Idea Fusion Center was published online on MCEC channels. Hana Bushi spoke about her experience as one of the coordinators of the Center as well as some of the latest [accomplishments](#).
- ✓ 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

- ✓ The key research findings related to teachers’ and students’ experiences with joint activities, were shared with the participants of the training for teachers-implementers of joint curricular classes, conducted on the November 05. 2021. The findings incorporated quantitative and qualitative data, gathered through e-questionnaires and focus groups conducted at the end of the school year 2020/21. In addition, the participants had a chance to observe the findings from the submitted reports from the BDE and VET Center advisors that monitored the joint curricular classes during the previous school year.
- ✓ An evaluation report of the training with teachers-implementers of joint curricular classes was developed. The findings indicate that the training was successful, as it was rated with an overall grade of 4.61 on a scale of 1 to 5. The participants found the practical examples and the experience-sharing sessions as the most useful.
- ✓ Video with instructions for filling in the MoES CIIE’s PMP questionnaire was developed by the project team. The video contains technical instructions for SIT coordinators as guidance for correct filling in of the electronic questionnaire, which is necessary for the MoES CIIE Performance Measurement Plan (PMP). The questionnaire is available in all languages of instruction and uploaded in Ms.Forms.
- ✓ Focus group questionnaires for gathering qualitative feedback regarding the effect of IIE activities and youth initiatives were developed. The focus groups findings will be incorporated in the annual report summarizing experiences of students and teachers, with YEI activities.

Idea Fusion Center (IFC)

- ✓ Throughout the month, the IFC members:
 - held a presentation within their classes, in order to share their acquired knowledge and the most important takeaways from the implemented IFC activities in the period January – September. During the presentations, the IFC members wrote down their classmates’ ideas and shared them with the project team;
 - worked on developing one-page summaries about the implemented school initiatives, lessons-learned from the process and ideas for future support of activities. Each school submitted a summary that will be part of a booklet showcasing students’ ideas and achievements.
- ✓ On November 12, 2021, the IFC members took part in a workshop that was a continuation of the last online meeting for development of a unified idea. During the workshop the students chose one idea and fully developed it. Throughout the upcoming period the IFC members will work on developing a presentation that will be used for introducing the idea in front of educational institution representatives.



Strengthening interethnic cohesion activities

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

- ✓ YEI continued to support MoES Commission for Interethnic Integration in Education (MoES CIIE) in advancing the implementation of interethnic education activities in schools and communities. Following the process of revision and transferring of the MoES Grant program call into MS Forms application part of the National platform for distance learning, which eliminates the need to use applications that raise additional costs for institutions and also secures easy reach to schools using the official email addresses, the call was forwarded to all primary and secondary schools and [announced on MoES web page](#) on November 1, 2021. This year 95 schools (70 primary and 25 secondary) will be selected and will receive financial support for implementation of joint student activities in the academic year 2021/2022. The deadline for submitting the applications is December 3, 2021.
- ✓ The project support to MoES CIIE was extended in the process of finalizing the PMP questionnaire for the academic year 2020/2021 as well. The gathered data, through this key instrument, supports institutions in decision making and advances the implementation of interethnic integration activities on school level. Thus, after revising the questionnaire, it was moved to MS forms and made available in all languages of instruction. Following, on November 22, 2021 the questionnaire was forwarded to all schools in the country expected to provide their replies in the upcoming period.

Intercultural Competences in Education (ICE) Standards for secondary education

- ✓ Following the development and adoption of Intercultural Competencies in Education (ICE) Standards for primary education, YEI commenced a new activity and supported the establishment of a working group for development of ICE Standards for secondary education. The working group consists of representatives from Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), Vocational Education and Training Center (VET Center), practitioners and education experts. During this month, members of this working group drafted their assigned parts of the document and submitted initial versions. Following, the contents were reviewed and feedback was provided by other working group members. Hence, three (3) online coordination meetings were held, to discuss the specific details, as well as to provide instructions on how to further develop the material.

Partnership with key educational institutions.

- ✓ Following the finalization and adoption of the *Guideline for implementation of joint curricular classes*, the project continued with activities for developing an online training tool for teachers-implementers of joint curricular classes to be placed on the BDE platform for online professional development of teachers. Thus, to define the structure, the sessions as well as the materials for the online training, the project team organized a coordination meeting with the BDE and the VET Center representatives. Based on the Guideline, the online training will be structured in five (5) sessions: 1) educational policies that support the implementation and the benefits from realization of joint curricular classes; 2) educational institutions support and school activities for implementation of joint curricular classes; 3) planning of joint curricular classes; 4) organization and realization of joint curricular classes and 5) assessment of the developed students' intercultural competencies. Each session will include a theoretical part in the form of a text, a video with statements from end-users and questions to evaluate mastering of materials and information for every session. After successful completion of all five (5) sessions, a certificate will be issued by the online system. As a next step, draft version of the materials for the first two sessions are expected to be developed by December 6, 2021.

Municipal interethnic integration policies

- ✓ On November 26, 2021 the Project team organized an online coordination meeting and gathered mentors that are included in the process of developing strategies and policies for IIE and youth engagement. During this meeting, the progress, finalization and adoption of interethnic integration policies in the remaining four (4) (Bogdanci, Studenicani, Mavrovo Rostushe and Suto Orizari) out of 15 municipalities selected in 2021 was discussed. So far, eleven (11) out of 15 municipalities adopted their Local Strategies for IIE and Youth Engagement i.e. Dojran, Radovis, Caska, Bitola, Vasilevo, Karpos, Stip, Kisela Voda, Kicevo, Zhelino and Debar, whereas the remaining four (4) municipalities finalized and forwarded the documents to the municipal's councils for adoption. The process of endorsing the Strategies was delayed/postponed due to the local elections in RNM. The municipalities of Bogdanci and Suto Orizari are expected to adopt their Local Strategies after new municipal councils are established. A similar situation is in the Municipality of Mavrovo Rostushe, where a new cycle of local elections will be organized in the forthcoming period. Moreover, the Local Strategy in the Municipality of Studenicani is anticipated to be adopted by the end of December, 2021.
- ✓ 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)

- ✓ Through previous activities implemented by the project in partnership with Youth Educational Forum (YEF), students from “Orde Chopela”, “Kuzman J. Pitu” and “Mirche Acev were supported to initiate and represent their priorities in front of the representatives of Municipality of Prilep. It resulted in the implementation of the proposed interventions/youth actions or construction of a City Pet Park on November 2, 2021. The municipality provided mechanization, materials, human resources and workforce for installation of the equipment, while the project contributed with the procurement of the urban equipment. As a next step, the project and the Municipality of Prilep will support activities for promotion of the established Pet Park.
- ✓ The Municipality of Veles managed to finalize the priorities proposed by students related to arranging sports field with installation of new net fence. This will improve not only the visual appearance, but also the safety of the playgrounds and the traffic in the nearby road.
- ✓ As a result of the collaboration between the project, YEF, the municipalities and the schools included in the process in 2020, Youth Actions were implemented in all ten (10) municipalities: Struga, Probistip, Sveti Nikole, Vrapciste, Tetovo, Dolneni, Gevgelija, Kavadarci, Veles and Prilep.
- ✓ This month, the project documented cost-share contribution from two (2) municipalities involved in 2020 that implemented Youth Actions, i.e., Municipality of Prilep and Municipality of Kavadarci. The average percentage of the cost-share for these two municipalities amounts to 82.30% of the total investment. So far, the project documented cost-share contribution for nine (9) out of 10 municipalities, and it accounts to 68.78% of the total investment.

Implementation of youth actions in new municipalities included in the process in 2021

- ✓ The project team continued the process of organizing youth actions in the 15 new municipalities (Berovo, Staro Nagoricane, Bosilovo, Bogovinje, Vinica, Negotino, Ohrid, Kocani, Resen, Aerodrom, Saraj, Cair, Gazi Baba, Centar, and Gjorce Petrov) with developed and endorsed Local Strategies for IIE and Youth Engagement in 2020. Thus, the following was accomplished:
 - On November 18, 2021, youth actions initiated by students and supported by the Municipality of Vinica and YEF project, in cooperation with the Youth Education Forum (YEF) were implemented. The youth actions included the replacement of the existing old equipment in the city boulevard with new one and recycling of the old benches. During the event, the students of SS “Vanco Prke” together with the students of primary schools “Goce Delcev”, “Koco Racin”, “Slavco Stojmiski” and “Nikola Parapunov” supported by their teachers-mentors, repaired, refurbished, painted and decorated the old benches in the workshop part of the vocational secondary school. Few of the recycled benches will be installed in the yard of the vocational secondary school “Vanco Prke”, as the only secondary school in this municipality and the remaining benches will be installed in the urban areas of Vinica. Through these activities, the students contributed to restoring the equipment and reusing it, and ultimately played a part in protecting the environment. The event was attended by more than 40 participants, i.e. the Mayor of Vinica, municipal representatives, guests from USAID, primary and secondary school students, teachers and school staff. Moreover, [news](#) about the youth actions was shared with media from all over the country.
 - Online representation and advocacy meetings with students and representatives from the municipalities of Gjorce Petrov and Centar were organized. In Gjorce Petrov, students from three (3) primary schools: “Straso Pindzur”, “Gjorce Petrov” and “Joakim Krcovski” attended the online meeting and presented their ideas and priorities for improving the local community in front of the municipal representatives. As a result, youth actions will be implemented in this municipality in the upcoming period. Whereas in Municipality Centar, all three (3) initiatives proposed by students from primary schools “Kiro Gligorov”, “Johan H. Pestaloci” and “Sv.Kiril and Metodij” were discussed between the students and Mayor Georgievski and students. They agreed on youth actions for arranging the Francophonie Park in this municipality. So far, the project managed to define youth priorities in all 15 municipalities and organize advocacy meetings between students and municipal representatives in thirteen (13) out of 15 municipalities (Kocani, Vinica, Negotino, Staro Nagoricane, Berovo, Ohrid, Bogovinje, Resen, Cair, Gazi Baba, Aerodrom, Centar and Gjorce Petrov). The remaining two (2) municipalities (Bosilovo, and Saraj) will follow.
- ✓ Coordination activities by the project in partnership with YEF were also conducted, namely:
 - An online meeting with the director from primary school “Hristijan Karposh” from the village of Mlado Nagoricane was organized. The aim of the meeting was to determine the next steps and activities for the establishment of a park in v. Mlado Nagorichane, which was set as the most important youth priority by the students from primary schools “Hristijan Todorovski Karpos” in v. Dragomance, “Hristijan Karpos” in Mlado Nagoricane and “Svetozar Markovic”.
 - In addition, in-person coordination meetings with representatives from municipality of Cair and municipality of Gjorce Petrov were conducted by the project team, with the aim to discuss details regarding the implementation of youth initiatives in these municipalities. Potential locations for conducting the youth actions were visited as well. Next steps will include the realization of the youth actions in these municipalities.

- In-person coordination meetings with the newly elected mayors of the municipalities of Ohrid, Resen and Bogovinje were organized by the project team too. The mayors were familiarized with the project goals and realized activities, upcoming plans and activities, as well as next steps that will lead to implementation of the proposed youth initiatives in these municipalities.

Curricular activities in schools

- ✓ On November 5, 2021, the project team in partnership with City of Skopje and OSCE organized a one-day training with teachers-implementers of joint curricular classes in the academic year 2021/2022 and SIT coordinators. 51 teachers and SIT coordinators from eight (8) selected secondary schools from City of Skopje (“Arseni Jovkov”, “Boro Petrusevski”, “Zdravko Cvetkovski”, “Dimitar Vlahov”, “Josip Broz Tito”, “Vlado Tasevski”, “Brakja Miladinovci” and recently included secondary school “Pance Karagjozov”) attended the training, built their capacities and advanced their skills and know-how related to interethnic integration in education process and implementation of joint curricular classes, based on the *Guideline for implementation of joint curricular classes*. During the training, facilitators presented the process of organizing the joint classes, as well as the established processes on the central, local and school level in terms of interethnic integration in education. The attendees gained knowledge and skills (by taking part in the planned exercises) about the teaching preparations, the process of planning and the role of the school in the process of implementation of joint classes. The teachers learned more about organizing the joint classes, the collegial cooperation, working with the students, managing challenges, developing competencies and similar.



Strengthening democratic culture & civic behaviors activities

Student initiatives in primary schools

- ✓ BDE advisors assigned for mentoring phase 3 schools continued supporting the school-level teams in planning the process of student initiatives and reporting on the progress to the project team.
- ✓ Most schools are in the final phases of implementation of the student initiatives and some have finalized the activities by promoting them through CivEd Open Day, both with physical presence and online.
- ✓ Diverse activities are taking place, including: improving the lives of elderly people in the community through supporting them, maintaining the hygiene in the school yard, activities for strengthening the student ‘voice’, awareness raising on environmental protection, traffic safety campaign, etc.

Student initiatives in secondary vocational schools

- ✓ Mentors for student initiatives in secondary vocational schools worked with school-level teams in planning the process of designing student initiatives and reporting on the progress to the project team. Part of the consultations were conducted online, through telephone meetings, while part were conducted with physical presence.
- ✓ The schools are in different phases in the implementation of student initiatives, whereas the vast majority have mapped the local problems and identified at least one topic to focus on. Most have started implementing the activities they have outlined in the plan of activities.
- ✓ Reports from mentors show a wide variety of topics: campaigns against plastic bags and for using textile bags, donating hair for children with cancer, reusing the school waste materials for a pet-park equipment in the school yard, etc.

Student competition on student initiatives

- ✓ The three finalist-teams sent the form with elaboration of the plan for conducting the initiative, which were shared with the jury members for initial assessment, according to set criteria.
- ✓ The second part of the student competition – student pitching session took place on November 03, 2021, from 12.00, with the three winning teams from the first round presenting their idea for a positive change in front of a three-member jury and responding to a set of questions posed by the jury. On the basis of the elaboration of the idea, its presentation and the responses to questions, the three places were determined, which reflect into different amounts of budget provided in order to realize their idea.
- ✓ The teams shared their planned budgets for the initiatives and the project team purchased and distributed the requested materials. In addition, the certificates and promotional materials for the student competition were delivered to all six (6) participating teams and a [promotional text](#) for the student competition was published.
- ✓ Students have already started to work on the realization of their initiatives, i.e.: “Student school blog”, “Greener and cleaner school yard” and “Student idea laboratory”.

Improving CivEd teaching and learning

- ✓ BDE advisors were engaged in observing CivEd lessons in secondary schools, providing feedback to teachers and reporting on the quality of lessons. Out of 15 conducted observations, 14 indicate well-organized classes with appropriate use of the contents outlined in the Teacher’s Manual developed in the frames of the project. Students worked in an interactive and democratic atmosphere.

- ✓ The project team conducted and recorded an interview with Kushtrim Ahmeti from the Tetovo State University, on the newly accredited curriculum for the program: Philosophy and Civic Education. The concept of the program is based upon the CivEd subject reforms developed in the frames of the project. The enrollment for this bachelor program will begin next year

Policies for assuring sustainability

- ✓ The project team worked on integrating various materials (documents, presentations, videos etc.) into a draft e-training for teachers on supporting school civic ethos through student participation and initiatives for positive change.
- ✓ The e-training consists of three sessions: (1) developing civic competences and a democratic school ethos, (2) school practices for supporting democratic school ethos and (3) student voice and initiatives, each consisted of brief theoretical overview and interactive activities for practicing the gained knowledge and skills. It concludes with a quiz/test on the gained competences.
- ✓ The first version of the e-training concept was shared with BDE for review and suggestions for improvement, after which a second version will be prepared.



Incentives to schools - Renovations

School renovations

- ✓ On November 23, 2021, the project team organized a coordination meeting with the representatives of MoES/SCI which are members of the school renovation working group. During this meeting, the school applications from the preliminary list of schools for renovation in the fifth project year, prepared in March 2021 by the Working Group, were analyzed. This is necessary to ensure that YEI renovations will be aligned with the MoES/SCI annual program for the school improvements, i.e., the project's activities will be complementary and will not overlap with MoES/SCI school improvement program.
- ✓ Component team organized technical acceptance of the completed activities for reconstruction of toilets in the central primary school "Dituria" in the Municipality of Saraj and the satellite school in v.Ljubin.
- ✓ The implementation of school renovation projects in the last two schools selected for renovation in the fourth project year, i.e. "Refurbishment of toilets" in PS "Nikola Karev" in v.Borino, Municipality of Krusevo and "Replacement of the internal carpentry and the entrance door" in PS "Brakja Miladinovci", Municipality of Probistip is ongoing and the activities are implemented as required with the joint Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP). Coordination between schools, contractors and supervisors is conducted on a daily basis.
- ✓ The renovation of the satellite primary school "Nikola Karev" in v.Borino, Municipality of Krusevo is regularly monitored by a representative of the project team and a project external consultant who is in charge for filming the process of school renovation and developing a video from the recorded material. The video should show the whole process of school renovation.
- ✓ In addition, most favorable bidders for purchasing of school maintenance tools and equipment for renovated schools were selected.
- ✓ Furthermore, project team delivered the second edition of the "Guideline Manual for maintenance of school buildings" to all municipalities in RNM. With municipal's support, the packages with prepared materials were submitted to all primary and secondary schools within their territory.
- ✓ The process of 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 is ongoing and during this month, the project documented cost-share form three (3) schools and municipalities renovated in 2021, i.e., PS "Dimce Angelov Gaberot" in the Municipality of Demir Kapija, PS "Slavco Stojmenski" in the Municipality of Vinica and PS "Kuzman Josifovski Pitu" in the Municipality of Kisela Voda. The average percentage of contribution of the three (3) schools and municipalities amounts to 43.02% of the total investment. So far, the project has documented contribution from five (5) out of 12 schools and municipalities from the fourth project year in the renovation activities, and it accounts to 38.42% of the total investment.