



The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Education for All 2015 National Review

This report was prepared by the relevant national authorities in view of the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). It was submitted in response to UNESCO's invitation to its Member States to assess progress made since 2000 towards achieving Education for All (EFA).

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To:
UNESCO Commission

SUBJECT: National Report – Education for All
Connection: Request no.11-15138/1 dated 22.09.2014

Dear,

In regards to your request, the Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with the Bureau for Development of Education, State Examination Center and Center for Adult Education, submits the following report:

The Republic of Macedonia is engaged for a long-term and strategic achievement of its goal: "Education for all", through the modernization of the education and by strengthening the inclusiveness in order to improve the overall system, starting with the early child development and education, providing universal access and the completion of compulsory, free and qualitative primary education, improving the learning opportunities for youths and adults, increasing the adult literacy, and by 2015 achieving gender equality in the primary and secondary education and improvement of all aspects of the quality of education.

The report covers the following topics: organization and participation in pre-school, primary and secondary education, initial and continuous education and training for teachers, standards and curricula, inclusion of marginalized groups, student assessment, national and international measurements and adult education.

Early child development is one of the priorities of the Republic of Macedonia. Its essential components are: the outmost improvement and the harmonization of the quality of the pre-school education, with the tendency to get closer to the countries of the European Union, the increase of the scope of the children of preschool age, opening the kindergartens to the families and the local community, inclusion of the children with special educational needs, establishment of a system for continuous professional development of the staff, licensing and certification of the teaching staff, social inclusion of the children from the marginalized groups.

The Republic of Macedonia has an optional preschool education for the children aged 0 to 6. The main activity of the subsystem of the pre-school education in the Republic of Macedonia is care and education. The mission of the preschool education and is geared towards an equal approach and maximum coverage of the children from the preschool age with various forms and programs, designed according to contemporary trends and latest scientific knowledge in the field of early child development.

In the reporting period, the Republic of Macedonia together with the international organizations and the European Union have undertaken a series of reform initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education in the period of early child development. The Bureau for Development of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, international organizations and the European Union have actively participated in undertaking initiatives and the creation of policies for the improvement of the quality of education in the early childhood and is committed to the success and

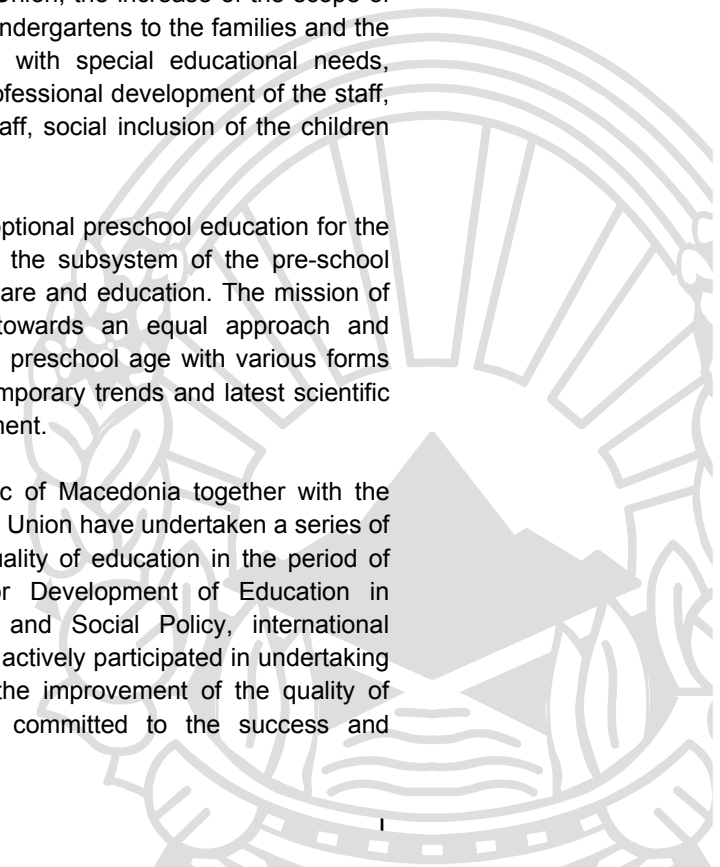
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sustainability of the same. In this regard, in 2013 the Bureau for the Development of the Education drafted a program for early learning and development, based on the Standards for early learning and development of children aged 0 to 6, adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The program for early learning and development is intended for children from aged 0 to 6, or more specifically for children aged 0 to 5 years and eight months where in compliance with the legislation, the children continue their further education within the frames of the compulsory nine-year primary education. The program for early learning and development which is based on the standards for early learning and development, supports the holistic approach in encouraging the early learning and development in young children, which is aimed at ensuring a safe and secure environment for learning and development, strengthening the developmental readiness for school, as well as gaining correct habits of health care.

The Bureau for Development of Education through the active participation of their representatives has contributed to the licensing and certification of the teaching staff, as well as for the training for directors of institutions for children and their licensing and certification in accordance with legal responsibilities. In the reporting period, the Republic of Macedonia with the international organizations and the European Union has undertaken reform activities which include: raising awareness about early child development, review of legislation, funding, inclusion of the local government as an active participant, reducing inequality based on ethnic, geographic, health and wealth background, increase of participation as well as improvement of the quality of services.

In the past period the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has adopted amendments and addenda to the Law on Child Protection (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 23/13, 12/14 and 44/14) and has paid a special attention to the increase of the capacities for the care and education of children from preschool age, through: construction of new buildings designed for JOUDG, facilities within the JOUDG or adapting the space for opening groups in other premises, i.e. kindergartens in rural areas.

The cooperation of MLSP and UNICEF with the units of the local government has also contributed to the inclusion of the most marginalized children (1843 children were involved in 20 centers for early child development). In 2012, with the support of the Government, 14 new kindergartens were opened, so their number in 2013 was 54.

According to the State Statistical Office, in 2013 alone, 29 113 children were cared which represents an increase of 8.3% compared to 2012.

The low coverage of children from the Roma community, lack of early socialization and educational experiences of Roma children who are out of any form of preschool education, lack of Roma teachers for preschool education and insufficiently trained staff in pre-school education, which is not sensitive for the diversity and is unable to fully meet the different needs of the children, are part of the detected problems. In order to facilitate access of the Roma children



and their involvement in the preschool education, each year, about 450 children are admitted free, which is especially important given the fact that it means inclusion of the Roma children attending classes together with other children, and not their segregation. Starting from 2005 and onwards, there is continuous increase of the number of the Roma children included in pre-school education, from 1.5% to 4% (Strategy for Roma 2014-2020, p.66). By 2011/12, within the frames of the project, 2.200 Roma children were covered in the pre-school education, of which 82% got enrolled in the primary education.

Also, besides the access, the position of the parents of the Roma children covered was improved, social skills were improved, the knowledge of the Macedonian language, as well as there was an increase of the competence of educators for the work and overcoming the prejudices and stereotypes about Roma in the public kindergartens.

The IPA funds enabled the continuity of the support centers for early child development and other activities with the involvement of local NGOs. IPA activities mostly focused on the most vulnerable categories of children: Roma, children with disabilities, children from rural communities. They also included strengthening of the capacity of all stakeholders in order to achieve results and standards from the learning.

For a successful implementation of the social inclusion in the early child development, UNICEF undertook activities to strengthen the capacity of the national team of trainers. Three modules for inclusive education were developed and piloted. The team was also introduced in the assessment by the International Classification of the Functionality of Children and Youth (ICF-CY - International Classification of Functioning-Children and Youth).

In 2014 they developed a draft model for the assessment of an additional educational, health and social support for children and youth. Currently there is an ongoing public debate which will be followed by a final version and its adoption.

Despite such positive examples, the current state of preschool education shows a limited network and low coverage of children (only about 15% of children under the age of 6 are covered by some form of pre-school education).

With the process of decentralization, in the future, it is expected, the responsibility in the field of early child development to be undertaken by the local government, which is expected to raise the awareness of local authorities for the maximum use of existing infrastructure and personnel capacities in this domain in order to improve the current situation.

Article 1 of the Law on Primary Education ("Official Gazette" No. 103/08; 33/10; 116/10; 156/10; 18/11; 42/11; 51/11; 6/12; 100/12; 24/13; 14/14; 116/14 and 135/14) regulates the compulsory primary education as provided in primary schools, as well as the activity of primary education as part of the overall educational system.

According to Article 2 of the same law:
(1) Every child has the right to basic education.



(2) Prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, race, color of skin, national, social, political, religious, wealth and social status in the exercising of the rights of primary education, established by law.

In 2014 a working group was established to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science for the promotion of ethnic integration in education. The working group is responsible for the implementation of activities in the field of integrated education provided by the Strategy for Integrated Education and is the main body in the implementation of activities and projects for the integrated education. The working group makes proposals to the Minister of Education and Science on activities in the field of the integrated education and has the authority to monitor the activities approved.

In terms of improving the quality of primary education, number of measures and activities have been undertaken:

➤ Innovation of the curricula and educational programs

The curricula on several subjects has been supplemented (mathematics, computer science, chemistry, physics, biology, art education) in the last year of the primary education by introducing targets, content innovation and entrepreneurship. Based on the recommendations by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, the current reforms in the education system in the Republic of Macedonia have included additions to the educational programs in several subjects (mathematics, computer science, chemistry, physics, biology, art education) in the last year of the primary education by introducing targets, content and activities for integration and emphasizing the competences for innovation and entrepreneurship. The new curricula is designed in such a way that they can connect with the real life through practical examples and by highlighting the applicability of this content in the future personal and professional development of students. In this context, whenever possible, it is necessary to connect the educational process with the business sector (companies, banks, etc.) where students can get to know about the practical application of content they learn.

➤ Training of teachers

During 2013, based on the changes, the teachers that are lecturing the above mentioned subjects were adequately trained by accredited institutions from the Bureau for Development of Education in 2013.

➤ Introducing entrepreneurial learning

Given the importance of entrepreneurial education in terms of fostering leadership, initiative, commitment, confidence and responsibility, as well as in terms of developing a positive attitude towards teamwork, especially in the selection and planning of their professional commitment, in 2014 a new subject - *innovation* was introduced in the ninth grade of primary school.

In the frames of this subject the students will participate in entrepreneurial activities and activities for career planning by getting to know the real business and opportunities for professional development, in a manner appropriate for students at that age. For a successful implementation of the new curriculum, the Bureau for Development of Education held working meetings with the primary



school teachers who teach this subject. In these meetings the teachers were presented activities as well as examples for the realization of the goals of the curriculum.

In the professional secondary education, the curricula and educational plans have been reformed for 13 occupations and 13 educational profiles. Since the 2014-2015 school year, the teaching based on the new reformed curricula and educational plans in the three-year professional education will be implemented in fifty-two high schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

A revised manual has been set for the implementation and administration of the program for a conditional financial compensation for the secondary education by persons who directly or indirectly participate in the implementation, financing and/or administration of the program. The conditional financial compensation is intended for regular students from the secondary schools whose households are users of: social welfare or social assistance whose right is on hold due to the inclusion in public jobs, as well as households that are not users of child support.

In the school year 2012/2013, by the proposal of the Bureau for Development of Education, the Minister of Education and Science adopted the curriculum for the subject Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the high school years I, II and III and Business and Entrepreneurship for the year IV.

The teaching based on the Program for Innovation and Entrepreneurship enables students to develop an entrepreneurial spirit, innovative thinking and initiative by acquiring knowledge and skills in the area of entrepreneurship, business and career development.

The contents of innovation and entrepreneurship are further connected, i.e. they are the basis for the subject Business and Entrepreneurship in the year IV of high school and art education. For a successful implementation of the above curricula in the secondary education, the Bureau for Development of Education conducted a training with the teachers from high schools that teach this subject. Activities are conducted for strengthening the competence of entrepreneurship through the implementation of a pilot program for the study of entrepreneurship across all subjects in primary education (seeceel project) and by introducing the subject innovation in the 9th grade.

➤ Training of teachers for mathematics and language

In order to deepen the understanding of teachers for a qualitative teaching in mathematics and language (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian) and in order to increase the capacity of teachers for the realization of high quality teaching for students in the initial years of the primary schools in math, reading and writing, for the purposes of ensuring the successful start of the education for all children, in 2010 a training was set for teachers from the program "Mathematics with thinking and linguistic literacy".

The training is realized by certified teacher-trainers who have previously undergone training for trainers, have held classes by applying the techniques of the program and have prepared professional portfolio. The certification of trainers was followed by the advisors from the Bureau for Development of Education.



During the training, the teachers acquired the knowledge and experience that allowed them to understand better the way children learn math, learn how to read and write, and appropriate to that to use innovative techniques and methods of teaching and working with students.

Up to now 4247 teachers from 211 schools have undergone training in mathematics with thinking in the early grades. The training lasts 8 days or 50 hours and includes the following topics:

- The ten principles of mathematics with thinking
- Schemes and relations in mathematics
- Counting - from counting to addition and subtraction
- Classification of mathematical problems
- Understanding a number, understanding of operations, use of multiple strategies
- Textual tasks –tasks based on situations
- The use of visual means and different techniques for teaching
- Explanation and justification of own mathematical thinking
- Formative assessment
- Balance between understanding/teaching use of terms/concepts and processes/procedures

Up to now 2777 teachers from 136 primary schools were trained for language literacy in the early grades. The training lasts 8 days or 50 hours and includes the following topics:

- Qualitative teaching for literacy
- Concept, steps and techniques for initial reading
- Concepts of printed text
- Phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency
- Connection between reading and writing
- Concept, steps and techniques for initial writing
- Types of texts
- Grammar and grammatical rules and conventions
- Formative assessment of reading and writing

➤ New curricula from Cambridge

The school year 2014/2015 was the start of studying subjects Mathematics and Natural Science under the adapted curriculum of the International Center for Curricula of Cambridge (Cambridge International Examination Centre). The plan is that by the school year 2016-17 there should be in place adapted programs in mathematics and natural science to the ninth grade.

The main features of the adapted curriculum in the subjects Mathematics and Natural Science are: spiral curriculum – allows students to consolidate and build the knowledge that they learned; scientific research - allows students to develop



critical thinking, to think and to use evidence; problem solving - students easily learn that mathematics and science are important and will help them solve problems in everyday life.

For a successful application of the adapted curricula in mathematics and natural science from first to third grade, the Bureau for Development of Education held training for teachers of all schools in the Republic of Macedonia. Presenters in the training were councilors from the Bureau for Development of Education and teachers who in April completed a training for master trainers given by experts from Cambridge. During the training, the trainers were supported by experts from the International Center for Educational Programs in Cambridge, who followed the seminars on the new curriculum.

- A curriculum on the Macedonian language has been adopted for the children of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia where they begin or continue the primary education.
- The use of ITC in the teaching is strengthened

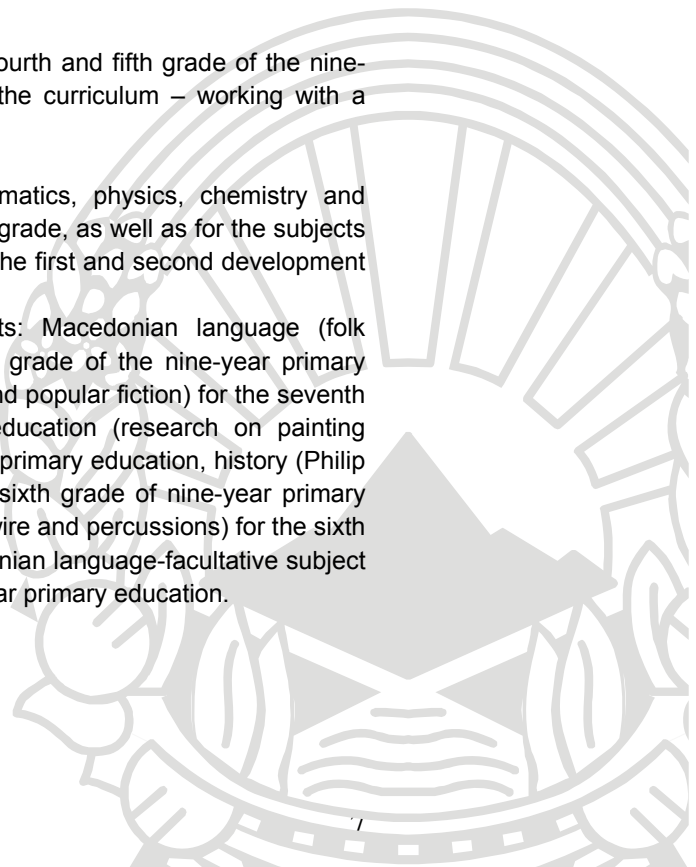
A system for sharing video content in the educational institutions in the Republic of Macedonia is developed. This system is a web portal through which teachers and students in the primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia share and watch video content that is related to the topics that are taught throughout the school year. Video content from the portal can be used in a simple way and it is an additional and effective method in teaching. To date there are 1017 video contents.

We purchased digital content in the primary and secondary education, including:

Educational software TOOLKID for the third, fourth and fifth grade of the nine-year primary education within the frames of the curriculum – working with a computer.

Digital content *Intel* for the subjects mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology for the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade, as well as for the subjects mathematics and knowing the environment in the first and second development period of the nine-year primary education

Digital educational contents for the subjects: Macedonian language (folk literature and popular fiction) for the seventh grade of the nine-year primary education, Albanian language (folk literature and popular fiction) for the seventh grade of nine-year primary education, art education (research on painting texture) for the seventh grade of the nine-year primary education, history (Philip II, Illyrians and the Illyrian Kingdoms) for the sixth grade of nine-year primary education, music education-folk music (brass wire and percussions) for the sixth grade of nine-year primary education and Albanian language-facultative subject in the seventh, eighth or ninth grade of nine-year primary education.





Educational software EDUBUNTU for the subjects: computer science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography and musical education in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade of nine-year primary education.

Educational software EDUBUNTU for the secondary education for the subjects: mathematics, science, geography, physics, Latin and music.

In order to enhance the application of ITC in the teaching process in the primary education and its convergence with the modern European and world educational systems, we are considering the use of other digital content from different sources. The Bureau for Development of Education has analyzed the digital content from multiple sources, primarily from the web portals: www.khacademy.org, www.oer.comons.org, www.classroom-aid.com, www.oer.mk, www.openschool.bc.ca and others. We have organized activities for mapping of the digital content according to the curricula and activities for the translation of the previously mapped digital contents according to the curriculum.

We have prepared video games for the subjects: introduction to the environment (grade 3), chemistry (for 7th and 8th grade), physics (for 7th and 8th grade) and an introduction to the nature (grade 4).

We are implementing activities for the strengthening of the competence for entrepreneurship through the implementation of a pilot program for the study of entrepreneurship across all subjects in primary education (seeceel project) and by introducing the subject *innovation* in 9th grade.

-Improving the spatial technical conditions in the schools and building new, especially in the rural areas.

➤ Construction of new schools

We have constructed 16 schools in the rural areas

➤ Safe schools

In order to create schools that are safe places for learning and development of the students, as well as safe places for teachers, we have taken actions to improve the overall school environment, improved communication and relationships between all in the school (students, teachers) as well as with the parents and the local community.

Specific activities are undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, a Strategy to reduce violence in schools and a Protocol to reduce violence in schools has been adopted. A Joint Protocol for action in case of domestic violence has been adopted.

The Ministry of Education and Science in the school year 2013/2014 issued a public call for the selection of the cleanest and safest school. 22 primary schools and eight secondary schools applied. From the total number of schools that applied, 3 primary schools and 3 high schools were selected as the cleanest and safest schools.



➤ Support for students/parents

In order to improve the financial situation of the students from year we are implementing the concept of free education through free textbooks for each student (30 million euros investment), free transportation for students who attend schools that are more than 2.5 kilometers from their homes and free internet for all schools. We have introduced a Counseling Program for parents (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 4/12) and the Program for Counseling of Students (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 160/13). We have introduced extra hours for extra and additional lectures. We have strengthened the professional service in schools, employed 105 psychologists and 13 teachers in primary and secondary schools. In the coming period, there will be activities for the strengthening of the professional service in the primary and secondary schools, where by the end of 2015 some 198 associates should be employed. In order to create schools that are safe places for learning and the development of students, as well as safe places for teachers, we have taken actions to improve the overall school environment, improve communication and relationships between all in the schools (students, teachers) as well as with the parents and the local community.

All students from first to third grade have been assigned a personal computer.

➤ Professional orientation

From 2012/13 we are implementing the project on vocational guidance for students in cooperation with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia. With this activity by taking adequate tests we are helping students in the final year of their primary school to find the right answer to the question where further to continue their education.

➤ Information system

In terms of improving the data and reducing the abandonment of the primary education we have improved the process of keeping statistical data and reporting to the parents.

We have set up an information system for managing the education and human resources - EMIS whose purpose is the collection, processing, verification and presentation of the data that are important to the educational process in the primary and secondary education in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as for the creation of educational policy.

➤ E – Diary

We have made a web application called Electronic Diary (E – Diary). The Electronic Diary (E – Diary) is a project of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) which aims to improve communication between teachers and parents, to allow quick and easy inspection of the log information by teachers in the schools, to allow a centralized and fast statistical analysis of the MES and other state institutions etc.

In order to improve communication between teachers and parents and to allow a quick and easy inspection of the log information by the parents and teachers in the schools, parents receive SMS notification for the grades, absences and behavior of their children, as well as notification of his/hers email address. This



service parents receive once a weekly and it's free. This feature is currently used by more than 212.000 parents and/or guardians.

- The campaign "Healthy Food for Faultless Childhood" and "Health is a choice"

The campaign "Healthy Food for Faultless Childhood" – is implemented from the 2011/2012 school year and has attracted a lot of attention and active involvement of parents, the local community, local businesses and local media, as proves the reception of over 600 recipes from students and children, 400 environmental messages and 180 menus for healthy food in schools and kindergartens. We have organized over 50 public events in municipalities in the state, attended by over 7000 students, 2400 children from kindergartens, 340 teachers and 180 tutors. The campaign is realized as part of the program "Integration of environmental education in the Macedonian educational system" (hereinafter Program) implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science on the basis of the Memorandum of cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. With this Memorandum, the project "We don't have a spare planet" implemented by the Association for Education, Consulting and Communication, OXO, received an institutional support for implementation in all kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, boarding schools and private high schools under the above title of the Program.

We have adopted a Rulebook on standards for food and meals in the primary schools and have prepared standards. It regulates the quality of the meals that are to be consumed by the students in schools.

- Education for adults

In recent years in the Republic of Macedonia have been made significant steps to improve the quality of the adult education and to increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning.

In 2005 we have adopted a Program for the development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005 – 2015, in which a chapter is devoted to the development of adult education in the context of lifelong learning.

In January 2008 we adopted the Law on Adult Education. As a result of the Law, in November 2008 the Government of the Republic Macedonia founded the Center for Adult Education (AEC). The center became operational in June 2009, and six people were employed.

In order to complete the legal framework, we have adopted by-laws of the Law on Adult Education:

- Manual for the content, form and procedure of signing a an agreement for monitoring the program for the adult education;
- Manual for standards for space, equipment of facilities and institutions for adult education;
- Manual for the title, content and form of the certificate of knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies acquired by special programs for adult education;
- Manual for the content and form of the documentation and records run by the institutions and institutions for adult education;
- Manual on the form, content and manner of keeping the central registry and the registry of municipal institutions and institutions that implement publicly recognized educational programs for adults;



- Manual for the manner for verification of special programs for adult education;
- Manual for the manner for verification of facilities and institutions for adult education

In 2010 the Council for Adult Education prepared a Strategy for adult education 2010 – 2015, which was approved by the Minister of Education and Science. This document set the priorities for adult education until 2015.

The CUD has continuously implemented the program for the establishment of vocational education for adults who have completed the primary education. The program began to be implemented in May 2010 with the lectures for the secondary vocational adult education in the municipality of Aracinovo in the economic/legal and trade classes. The program covers the municipalities of Aracinovo, Prilep, Cair and Tearce.

The Center for Adult Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science has continuously participated in activities related with CONFINTEA 6.

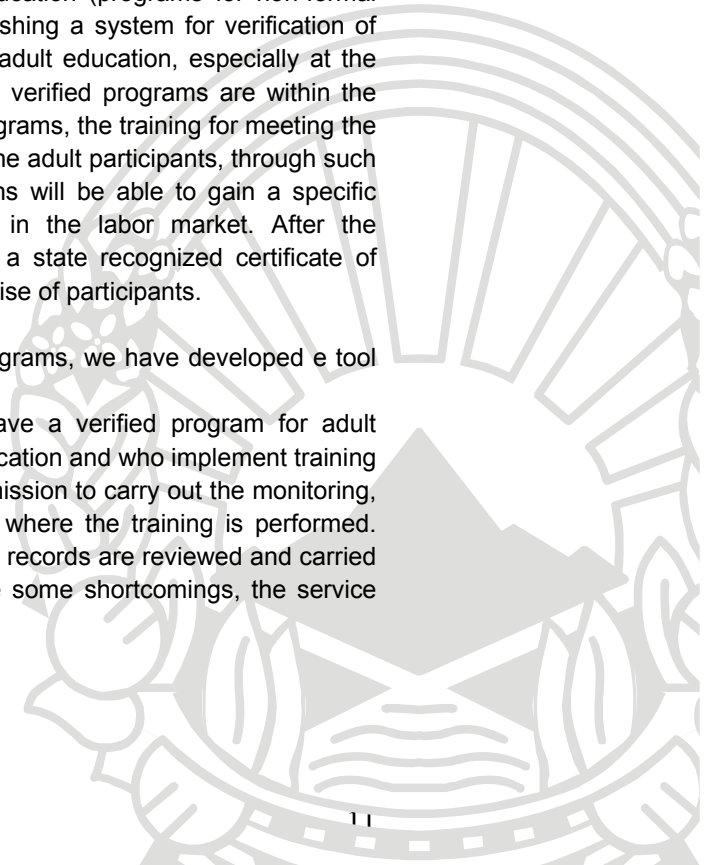
Since 2010, the Center for Adult Education has participated in the implementation of the Operational Plan for active measures and programs. (Training for meeting the demanded occupations in the labor market).

In 2011, the Public Institution Center for Adult Education received a *Membership Certificate* from EAEA (European Association for Adult Education) by becoming a member of EAEA.

In January 2012, PI Center for Adult Education – Skopje started the process of verification of special programs for adult education (programs for non-formal education for adults). The purpose of establishing a system for verification of such programs is to raise the quality of the adult education, especially at the part of the non-formal education. Part of the verified programs are within the Operational Plan for active measures and programs, the training for meeting the demanded occupations in the labor market. The adult participants, through such programs, for a short period of a few months will be able to gain a specific qualification and thus become competitive in the labor market. After the completion of the training, they will receive a state recognized certificate of completion, which guarantees a certain expertise of participants.

In order to guarantee the quality of these programs, we have developed e tool for monitoring and evaluation.

CAE monitors the service providers that have a verified program for adult education through the PI Centre for Adult Education and who implement training for adult education. The Center forms a commission to carry out the monitoring, visits that service providers in the premises where the training is performed. During the monitoring, the documentation and records are reviewed and carried out by the service providers and if there are some shortcomings, the service providers are told to make corrections.





The implemented program is verified, i.e. whether everything provided with the verification program is implemented during the training. If during the duration of the monitoring a training is implemented among the service providers, the representatives attend training in order to see how the training for adult education is implemented, and to consult with participants who attend the training. After the monitoring, the commission shall prepare a Report on the facts and send it to the service providers.

In the period October 2011 - July 2013 we implemented an IPA Twinning project "Support for capacity building of the Centre for Adult Education, development of programs for adult education and literacy programs and completion of primary education for excluded persons", implemented by a French-Spanish consortium. Within the frames of the project:

- the capacity of CAE was strengthened through training for the staff on various aspects of the working obligations (strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, training of trainers, verification, certification), transferred and experiences from European Union were transferred, especially experiences from the France and Spain).

-6 programs are designed and implemented for the adult education according to an analysis of the labor market

- installer of water and sanitary installation, Netting School - Tetovo
- renovation of traditional dwellings, civil engineering secondary school Zdravko Cvetkovski Skopje;
- care for the elderly, Humanost Skopje;
- service of sewing machines, Poly Project Engineering - Stip
- training of trainers working with adults, FON University - Skopje
- wine advisor, Sato Kamnik - Skopje

-six programs for functional literacy of the excluded are developed and implemented on the basis of needs assessment of the adults for such programs.

- Suto Orizare for the Roma population;
- Topansko Pole – Skopje, for the Roma population;
- Bitola, for the Roma population;
- Veles for the juvenile who have committed crimes;
- Prilep for single parents, and
- Dolneni, for the population from the rural areas (in Albanian language)

As for the measures aimed at ensuring the quality of teachers and trainers, the Public Institution Center for Adult Education programs has prepared androgenic training of teachers and trainers involved in the process of education of adults.

Namely, within the IPA Project a pilot program for professional trainer of trainers of adults is developed and tested.

Through this program, participants will gain knowledge and skills how to prepare and structure the training, how to use different methods and techniques



adapted for adults, the different learning styles of adults, the attitude that needs to have a coach in training, and more.

The program consists of two levels, in which the participants acquire a certificate of professional trainer for adults (first level) and professional trainer of trainers of adults (second level).

The purpose of this training is to train the teachers and trainers who work with adults for work with adults, and that it is their legal obligation. Because the pilot program proved sufficient quality, it continues to be implemented by providers certified by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Centre for Adult Education in cooperation with DVV International - Office Skopje, in 2012 and in 2013 organized the Days of lifelong learning manifestation.

The Centre for Adult Education in collaboration with the European Training Foundation (ETF) is preparing a Concept of informal adult education. At the same time, in collaboration with UNDP, the Center works on developing a Concept for basic adult education. These two activities are mutually coordinated and concepts are expected to be finalized by the end of 2014.

➤ -Life skills

In terms of essential life skills (essential life skills) the Bureau for Development of Education continuously provides expert advice and adequate support to teachers who implemented the curriculum for *education for life skills* from first to ninth grade of nine-year primary education, i.e. from first to fourth year in secondary education. The objectives of the program are to support the students in acquiring certain knowledge, attitudes and skills that help to meet the real challenges of daily life, as well as to provide support to students in selecting and practicing the healthy behavior.

From the current school year, the Bureau for Development of Education will prepare an addition to the program with contents in the field of social and financial education for students.

In order to improve the education and training of adults, the Center for Adult Education has given a great contribution in the recent period.

Obstacles or factors which hamper the process of completion of primary education is that the special programs that are implemented by CAE allow obtaining a certificate, which does not allow vertical transition in the system of education. The document does not provide the rights provided by the school certificates, which reduces the attractiveness of informal programs.

To overcome some of the weaknesses in the process of developing the Concept for primary adult education and Concept for informal adult education.

Republic of Macedonia has adopted a National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012 year. It defines the policies and measures aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of women in all areas of social life. One of the priority areas is education.

In the area of education we have realized reforms that allowed the promotion of awareness on the gender equality through the education process. In 2007/08 it



was introduced a Concept of nine-year primary education in which it has been defined the principle of non-discrimination in terms of gender.

Since January 2008, the Department for Equal Opportunities in MLSP together with the MES have implemented the project "Gender Sensitive Education" where in 2008, they realized 15 two-day training for the teaching staff of the primary schools in the Republic of Macedonia. A manual for non-discrimination in the educational system in the country was drafted.

Curricula for first, second, third and fourth grade has been prepared. In the curriculum *Introduction of environment* in the development goals it is highlighted "student to get encouraged for the humane relations between the sexes." The MES is implementing the program on gender and development which includes the gender concept in the curricula and textbooks. There have been 6 regional trainings for teachers in the secondary education in terms of the application of this concept in the teaching process.

In December 2008 we completed the implementation of the one-year Gender Sensitive Education program, where within the frames of the curriculum on Life Skills, which is implemented in the classes, specific attention is paid to the gender sensitivity. Handbook on "Education for life skills is published".

We have completed 15 two-day trainings for 320 teachers from 312 primary schools in 71 municipalities which aim to strengthen the capacities of teachers from first to fifth grade, with skills and knowledge to recognize stereotypes and prejudices in textbooks and curricula on the role of girls and boys/women and boys in the society.

Within the frames of the 2011 campaign, "Equal opportunities - do not discriminate" schools took an active part in the competition on "Gender equality and non-discrimination" for best drawing, essay and best photography. We have improved the tools for monitoring in terms of all indicators in the education according to the gender equality and affirmative action is taken to overcome the inequality caused by gender inequality (example: persons leaving school early).

For the identification and evaluation of the quality of education in accordance with existing applicable laws and regulations in the Republic of Macedonia we have used three methodological procedures, i.e. three types of evaluation: self-evaluation of the school, integral evaluation and external assessments and exams.

-State graduation

In our country, the external exams at the end of secondary education for the first time were conducted within the frames of the state exam. The introduction of new models of exams in high school aims:

- raising the general level of knowledge, skills and abilities of students
- monitoring and control of the implementation of the curriculum
- completion of secondary education
- better quality and fair selection at the entrance to higher education



- information for students, parents and educational institutions for student achievement obtained through valid and reliable measurements

The state graduation in the Republic of Macedonia is an exam which is taken at the end of four years secondary education. It consists of external and internal exams which check and evaluate the knowledge, skills and abilities of students acquired during high school. The state graduation in our country is successfully implemented since 2008 in all three languages (Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish), according to a joint Concept for high school, vocational and art education. Its role is twofold: the completion of the secondary education and selection for entry into higher education.

Since the school year 2014/2015 the state graduation will take place according to a new concept, according to which, the students of the secondary education, besides their native language, they will also have compulsory subjects such as mathematics and foreign language. A year later, this concept will be applied in the secondary vocational education. For the students of the secondary art education instead of mathematics, the subject of history will be compulsory.

The external exams of the state graduation are performed according to prescribed procedures and pre-determined standards of performance. These examinations and assessments in the Republic of Macedonia are planned, organized and implemented by specialized agencies – The State Examination Centre. The professional part of the exams is the responsibility of professional boards and committees, composed of experts in the given field (state graduation board, state graduation subject committees, subject to appeals committees, expert committees to determine the proposed threshold etc).

➤ External evaluation of student achievement

The external verification of the student achievement in the Republic of Macedonia is implemented since the academic year 2012/2013. It includes all students from grade 4-9 in the primary and all students of 1-4 year of the secondary education. The main goal of this type of testing is to test the reliability of the teacher in the evaluation process.

The Republic of Macedonia has experience with international testing too: PISA + (2000), PIRLS (2001, 2006) and TIMSS (1999, 2003, 2011). Over the last 5 years our country was involved in TIMSS 2011. We have published a National Report on the achievements of students in the Republic of Macedonia. Last year an experimental testing PISA 2015 was conducted in our country. In the meantime we are making preparations for the realization of the main testing for this cycle.

It should be noted that the external examinations and assessments do not question the function and the need for school-based assessment. Namely, the assessment of student achievements by teachers, especially the formative assessment, with the introduction of external assessments, further in the process of education has the role to provide continuous feedback on the quality of student achievements and the quality of teaching.



The results of these exams are used by the schools as important indicators in the evaluation of the quality of education that they provide to students, i.e. the degree of success of the educational standards and performance of the school. The responsible institution for the organization and implementation of the external assessments and exams in the Republic of Macedonia is the State Examination Centre.

Actions taken by the Ministry of Education and Science contribute to improving the educational system and the fulfillment of the objectives set: "Education for all".

With respect,

MINISTER

Abdilaqim Ademi

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