

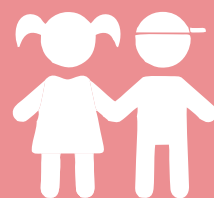


ALTERNATIVE



REPORT

on the implementation of the Convention on the rights of the child
in the Republic of North Macedonia



Coalition of youth organizations SEGA
Skopje, August 2020



Alternative Report

on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of North Macedonia

This document has been produced within the project "Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Macedonia", supported by Pestalozzi Children's Foundation and implemented by the Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation.

Title

Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of North Macedonia

Publisher

Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA

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Printing house

TD TU KITO

Number of copies:

100 copies

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

341.231.14-053.2(497.7)(047.31)

ALTERNATIVE report on the implementation of the Convention on the rights of the child in the Republic of North Macedonia / [authors Elizabeta Markovska Spasenoska ... и др.]. - Prilep : Coalition of youth organizations SEGA, 2020. - 40 стр. : табели ; 30 см

Публикацијата е во рамките на проектот: " Alternative report on the implementation of the Convention on the rights of the child in Macedonia". - Фусноти кон текстот. - Други автори: Marija Nasokovska, Zoran Ilieski, Tomislav Gajtanoski, Monika Ilioska Kantardzioska

ISBN 978-608-4631-15-6

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а) Конвенција за правата на детето -- Имплементација -- Македонија -- Извештаи

COBISS.MK-ID 51916805



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List of Acronyms

Coalition SEGA – Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

SEN - Special Educational Needs

CSOs - Civil Society Organisations

MES - Ministry of Education and Science

BDE - Bureau for Development of Education

MLSP - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

NO - National Ombudsman

UNO - United Nations Organisation

WHO - World Health Organization

MCEC - Macedonian Civic Education Center

PCF - Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

Megjashi - First Children's Embassy in the World

MOF - Youth Educational Forum



Executive Summary

The Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA (Coalition SEGA)¹ hereby submits this Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the Republic of North Macedonia with a view to presenting the state of affairs in the implementation of and respect for the rights arising from CRC regulated by Articles 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 28, and 29. To serve as the basis for preparation of this report, the Coalition SEGA, in cooperation with the consulting company Strategic Management Systems, designed and conducted a comprehensive field research with children, teachers and representatives of schools, social work centres, civil society organisations, national institutions, and international organisations. The data collected in the research complemented by an analysis of key documents and laws enabled the drawing up of conclusions and recommendations presented with this report. Civil society organisations (CSOs), the Macedonian Civic Education Center (MCEC)² and Association for Assistive Technology "Open the Windows"³ drafted separate reports and gave their contribution to the drawing up of this alternative report by presenting information and analyses of relevance to the segment General Measures of Implementation and Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities. This is the second Alternative report submitted by the Coalition SEGA; the first one was submitted in 2009⁴.

Over the last decade, following the issuing of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to the second periodic report submitted by the state Republic of North Macedonia, the Coalition SEGA devoted itself to regular monitoring of the state of affairs, but it also undertook activities aimed at improvement of the implementation of CRC above all regarding children's right to participation in decision-making at school. It may be concluded that the long-standing activities that the Coalition SEGA has been undertaking through its projects supported above all by Pestalozzi Children's Foundation in the field of children's participation in decision-making processes yielded fruitful results. Thus, in 2019, a new Law on Primary Education was adopted which focus was precisely regulation of children's

participation in decision-making processes at school and the process of comprehensive inclusion of children in education.

The conditions in schools indicate a need for further action with the purpose of covering as many schools where the models of participation would be applied as possible and where the capacities of children, staff, pedagogical and psychological services, and school management would be strengthened. These needs are particularly expressed in secondary education where a new law, which shall additionally regulate the participation of children in decision-making processes following the example of the Law on Primary Education, still has not been adopted.

¹ For more information about the activities of Coalition SEGA, please refer to: <https://www.sega.org.mk/en/about-us/about-sega>

² For more information about the activities of MCEC, please refer to: <https://www.mcgo.org.mk/>

³ For more information about the activities of Open the Windows, please refer to: <https://openthewindows.org/>

⁴ [https://sega.org.mk/images/pdf/2009 - Alternative report CRC Coalition SEGA Macedonia.pdf](https://sega.org.mk/images/pdf/2009_-_Alternative_report_CRC_Coalition_SEGA_Macedonia.pdf)



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Over the past decade, discrimination and violence among peers at school has been on the rise. According to the information obtained by means of the research conducted, peer violence and discrimination are particularly present in the cyberspace and are almost inaccessible both for the purposes of identification and undertaking actions by school staff. We value that the state is committed to improving protection of children against violence, but such efforts, apart from being focused on family violence, should also be more focused on peer violence regarding which there is insufficient information and data. The issue is broadly acknowledged and accepted by schools involved in the research, which even though having basic programmes and rulebooks at their disposal in this field, still highlight the need for capacity building among them to cope with this type of violence.

Access to education is a grave problem in society. Even though it may be observed that continuous efforts are put in by the state to reach as greater inclusion of all children in education as possible, still what is lacking are systematic methods in the process and systemic change. We value the continuity that the state secures through social and financial measures, scholarships and tutorship with a view to including children in education and reducing drop-out rates, but these measures do not interrupt the vicious circle of marginalisation and poverty that out-of-school children live in. The lack of records about out-of-school children, in particular Roma children, as well as about children with special educational needs (SEN), is one of the major problems which remains unresolved and further on leads to inappropriate, ad hoc and partial solutions. What is necessary is greater efforts on national level with the purpose of strengthening the capacity of teaching staff and above all of pedagogical and psychological services that work with children who had been out-of-school as well as with children with SEN.

The funds that the state allocates in support of educational reforms decrease year by year. What is particularly worrisome is the data about continuous fall in the quality of lessons and learning contents, a fact noted by children, teaching staff, school management and the state's inspection services. The technological equipment of schools is on a low level. Greater technological investments in schools have not been made after the completion of the project "A PC for every child", and what is especially missing is assistive technology and conditions for work with children with SEN. The infrastructure of school facilities is old, whereby schools are generally inaccessible both from outside and on the inside.

By the conclusions and recommendations stated in this summary and throughout the report, the Coalition SEGA wants to highlight the priority issues that need to be resolved in the forthcoming period by the state and in cooperation with civil society and international organisations, and hereby also requests support from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child with the purpose of common advocacy on the priorities set. The non-existence of a national coordinating body on the rights of the child has negatively reflected over the last period precisely on the coordination of institutions and the efforts in the field of the rights of the child, thus the establishment of such a body and the preparation of a National Action Plan is of particular importance not only for improving the conditions but also for coordinated action.



I. Report Preparation Methodology

For the purposes of preparation of this alternative report, the Coalition SEGA in cooperation with Strategic Management Systems designed a comprehensive national research with a view to collecting and analysing data about the selected articles of CRC. The research methods that were planned underwent adjustment as a result of the newly emerged situation related with the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey planned to be conducted with children was subject to the biggest change; due to the closure of schools, this survey was conducted electronically, while the focus groups that were planned with children did not take place at all. In order to assess the level of progress of schools involved in the projects implemented by the Coalition SEGA since 2011 to date (project schools), the research used a comparative analysis with the schools that were not part of the project intervention. The research encompassed the following procedures:

Analysis of relevant legislation

The data collection process analysed the legal amendments and the progress achieved over the last ten years until the end of 2019. The legislation covers all laws and by-laws of relevance to the selected articles. A special emphasis was put on the analysis of drafted national and local documents containing a broad framework in the field of children's rights. This scope includes strategic documents, action plans, analyses, reports, recommendations given, evaluation reports, etc. by state institutions, as well as by domestic CSOs, international organisations, and donors.

Surveys

The survey with children was conducted online on national level, in all eight regions of the country in 25 municipalities. In addition, an online survey was conducted with teachers from primary and secondary schools.

Interviews

Interviews were organised with national and local institutions, as well as with active CSOs in order to determine the perspective about the implementation of CRC regarding all articles. The research team prepared a list of representatives of relevant institutions on local and national level, whereas the team of the Coalition SEGA prepared a list of civil society organisations active in the field of children's rights.

Case studies and storytelling

This method was partially integrated with the interviews in order to identify case studies and also followed a storytelling method in at least 4 fields (non-discrimination, right to participation and association, violence, and access to and quality of education).

Research sample and scope

1606 children were included in the research by conducting an online survey, on the basis of defined age criteria (10 - 17 years of age), as well as criteria pertaining to gender (equal representation of male and female) and ethnicity (according to availability, but with the tendency to be mindful of the ethnicity percentage on the level of every region). In addition, 350 teachers from primary and secondary education were included in an online survey. On national level, interviews were conducted with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), the National Ombudsman (NO), the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and UNICEF Office North Macedonia. A total of 110 schools, 48 civil society organisations and 21 social work centres participated in the research conducted locally in 25 municipalities in all 8 regions.



Furthermore, for the needs of the research, 24 child surveyors were trained who, unfortunately, due to the newly emerged situation with the pandemic, were not able to work on the field with their peers. For the purposes of conducting the research on local level, a total of 25 local researchers were trained and included.

II. General Measures of Implementation

1. Analysis of the situation

1.1 Legal and institutional framework

In line with the recommendation of the UN Committee for further compliance of legislation with the Convention's provisions (paragraph 9), it may be stated that there is a certain advancement and adjustment to CRC when it comes to the fields of concern for the Coalition SEGA and its partner organisations MCEC and Open the Windows. Over the last decade, several new laws have been adopted and various amendments have been made to key laws of relevance to the focus of this analysis. In 2013, **a new Law on Child Protection** was adopted, **as well as a Law on Juvenile Justice**. In 2016, **amendments** were made **to the Law on the Ombudsman**, forming a separate department for protection of the rights of children and persons with disabilities. In 2019, a **new Law on Primary Education** was adopted, regulating among other changes the right of children to participate in decision-making processes at school. Moreover, this Law puts a particular emphasis on inclusion of children in the education system. The Concept of Inclusive Education was also adopted, putting into practice the provisions of the Law on Primary Education.

In terms of the recommendation of the UN Committee for strengthening the role of the Commission on the Rights of the Child, for increasing the capacities and resources and allocating special funds for implementation of the National Action Plan (paragraph 11 and 13), it may be concluded that no steps whatsoever have been undertaken. For the last 10 years, **neither activities nor initiatives have been observed to be undertaken by the State to reform the once Commission on the Rights of the Child**. It may be concluded that the **Commission is not functioning**, thereby, there is **a lack of coordinated approach by the State** when it comes to implementation of CRC.

In 2016, **a National Inter-Sectoral Coordinating Body for Protection of Children and Prevention of Abuse, Violence and Neglect was established**, which is a step forward in terms of **coordination of state policies pertaining to Article 19** of CRC.

Compared with 2009, in 2019, according to the data obtained from NO, **the number of complaints** filed to NO regarding violation of children's rights **has increased by more than 100%**. While, on the one hand, this situation indicates increased awareness about reporting the violation of children's rights, on the other hand, unfortunately, one may ascertain **continuous violation of the rights of the child**.



1.2 Capacity of institutions

In terms of the recommendation of the Committee for enhancing the capacity of institutions to expand the trainings of persons who implement CRC, as well as of all professionals carrying out activities with children (paragraph 23), the Coalition SEGA focused itself on the capacities of teaching staff in schools.

Children's right to participation in decision-making

The capacities of institutions, above all schools, when it comes to being familiar with children's rights in general are enhanced, however, this statement is valid only for a selected part of the schools that provided direct data. The state of affairs that was detected on the field in 2009, when the Coalition SEGA conducted mapping and research of the capacities of institutions,⁵ reflected a modest level of familiarity among teachers and school management with the rights of the child. According to the findings of the field research that the Coalition SEGA conducted over the period April - June 2020,⁶ **progress can be determined in the capacities of teachers and managing bodies within schools that participated in the research.** Namely, 91% of teachers from primary and secondary schools included in the research have declared that they use CRC in their work. In addition, 47% of teachers have stated that they are very familiar with children's rights, whereas 41% of teachers - respondents point out that school management is very well acquainted with the respect for and implementation of children's rights.

Furthermore, in line with the conducted research, there is **evident progress in the capacities of institutions, i.e. schools for implementation of and respect for children's right to participation in decision-making processes at school.** 79% of involved teachers emphasise that they are regularly

or partially involved in activities aimed at enhancing the participation of children in decision-making processes. With a view to enhancing the capacities of schools for implementation of the provisions for children's participation in decision-making, the Coalition SEGA and BDE prepared a Resource Package for Student Participation, on which 18 advisers were trained, who then undertook 166 visits and prepared both the teachers and the management. In January 2020, pursuant to the Law on Primary Education, the Coalition SEGA and BDE prepared a Guide⁷ on the implementation of the law and carried out a series of trainings intended for teachers in 30 schools.

According to the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, it may be concluded that one half of the teachers covered have attended 1 - 2 trainings on the topic of children's participation in decision-making processes. Trainings are more oriented towards primary education, since it can be noticed that in larger part of **secondary schools** encompassed by the research, there is a **lack of capacities** not only among the teachers, but also among the management and children for implementation of and respect for the right of children to participation in decision-making at school.

⁵ „Analysis of the Implementation of Children's Rights in the Republic of Macedonia“, Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA, January 2010, available in Macedonian language at: https://sega.org.mk/images/pdf/2010_-_Glavna_analiza_na_istrazuvanje.pdf

⁶ „Analysis of the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child“, Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA, July 2020, available in Macedonian language at:

⁷ A guide to student participation, student association and protection of children's rights in primary schools - Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA, 2020, available in Macedonian language at: https://www.bro.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Vodic-za-ucenicko-uchestvo-i-organiziranje_MK.pdf



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The data presented refer to 110 primary and secondary schools, in 30 of which the Coalition SEGA has implemented activities (15 primary schools and 15 secondary schools). In absence of state policies and measures aimed at strengthening the implementation of and respect for this right, **there is still a large number of schools remaining which have the need for enhancing their capacities and which have not been encompassed with any activities in this regard.**

Protection against violence

In the last period, especially after the establishment of the Inter-Sectoral Coordinating Body for Protection of Children Against Abuse, Violence and Neglect, certain measures were undertaken to cope with violence at school. Schools participating in the research have declared that they have Violence Prevention Programmes, and only some schools have stated that they have introduced higher security measures through surveillance systems and control of entrances. Still, it is a general conclusion that **schools are not ready to handle the issue of growing violence and the various types of violence**, witnessed by the reports of NO and the statements of interviewed respondents from schools participating in the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, **according to which there is violence and it is constantly on the rise.**

NO's research about the situation with peer violence in primary schools, over a period of two school years, showed that in the school years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018⁸ there were a total of 3254 pedagogical measures imposed on students in primary schools on the grounds of violence. Thereby, out of a total of 17061 counselling sessions held, 570 counselling sessions were with a parent/guardian because the student had participated in a fight or other forms of violence, 233 counselling sessions were held because the student had been showing asocial or antisocial behaviour, 197 were held because of immoral or unethical behaviour of the student.

Locally, interviewed head teachers and representatives of social work centres highlight the need for greater coordination and cooperation between them and the schools. Experiences are different - while in some places there is a predominating stance that schools are mainly closed on this issue and fail to report violence to centres, in other places progress is particularly emphasised with regard to the improved cooperation between centres and schools in cases of violence. Centres most often act following a report of violence or on the basis of rumour heard or if they detect during their fieldwork that it is a matter of violence. There are certain places singled out (for instance, Prilep) where both the representatives of some of the schools and the social work centre emphasised large figures of violence present among children at school (for

instance, 50 - 100 cases annually, compared with 10 cases in other places).

The skills of teachers, and in particular of the pedagogical and psychological service for recognising and dealing with the various types of violence, are quite limited, which applies both on the level of primary schools and on the level of secondary schools. **There is a lack of planned trainings aimed at enhancing the capacities of teachers and school management**, as well as appropriate guides, orientation and information materials which will strengthen coordination and will raise the action on a higher level.

⁸ A special report of the conducted research on violence among students in primary schools (peer violence), Ombudsman, available in Macedonian language at:
<http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Posebni%20izvestaj/2019/Poseben%20izvestaj-Megjuvrnsnicko%20nasilstvo-10.2019%20.pdf>



On the level of educational policies, **there is no adequate approach to preventing peer violence, hate speech, psychological and social violence.** There are some single-use education activities in certain schools raising the awareness among students about recognising the various types of violence, nevertheless in practice there is a lack of prevention and handling of this issue. In June 2020, MES adopted a Guideline on actions to be undertaken by schools in cases of violence⁹; it will be particularly important that teachers and the pedagogical and psychological services are trained. However, apart from this newest Guideline, there is a **lack of functional mechanisms, clear and mandatory protocols** for reporting and preventing violence by local institutions. Even though it appears that all institutions know their role in terms of treating violence, still many problems are obvious, as for instance **non-reporting of violence by schools, reporting at a very late stage, having no competences within schools for field work, reactive instead of proactive role of both schools and social work centres.**

Inclusion of children with SEN in the education system

The new Law on Primary Education from 2019, putting the emphasis precisely on inclusion of children in the education system, introduces **a real challenge for teachers and school management, above all from the perspective of their capacities to work with children with SEN.**

There is a lack of licensed training intended for teachers for work with children with SEN, both in primary and in secondary schools. 54% of teachers participating in the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA have declared that they have been very rarely or have never been involved in a training on working with children with SEN. Even though **some of the tools intended to work with these children have been provided and are functioning to a certain extent**, as for instance establishing a School Inclusion Team or developing individual education plans on working with children with SEN, still the capacities among teachers for appropriate assessment, planning, implementation and

progress evaluation are missing.

Schools are satisfied and believe that **education assistants are an appropriate support for students with SEN**, but the current capacities do not meet the needs of all students with SEN who have the need for this type of support. In addition, there is a lack of capacity among teachers in primary and secondary education to draw up individual education plans, and many of the schools¹⁰ emphasise that they do not have sufficient specialised staff, i.e. education specialists, speech and language therapists, and the like.

In two of the interviewed schools, it was emphasised that **there are still separate classes existing and functioning for children with SEN.**

⁹ Guideline on the procedure of reporting a student victim to any of the forms of violence, abuse and neglect, Ministry of Education and Science, June 2020



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There are **minimum steps forward made in terms of the level of equipment of schools for work with children with SEN**, but they are very rare. It seems that schools are left alone as to securing funds in order to make the space accessible and meet the legal requirements. **When it comes to accessibility, the differences between interviewed schools are enormous** - starting from schools which are completely accessible both in the inner part of the school and on the outside, to schools that have almost no conditions secured. A separate issue is the **lack of didactic resources, assistive technology, sensory rooms**, etc. In addition, MES has not introduced any accessibility standards nor a body which will perform assessment of the accessibility of schools.

1.3 Dissemination of CRC

In line with the recommendation of the UN Committee for further dissemination of CRC and raising the awareness about the rights of the child (paragraph 21), the Coalition SEGA researched the viewpoints of children and teachers on recognising CRC and the rights of the child, using CRC in lessons, as well as disseminating CRC.

Based on the findings of the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, there is considerable progress in recognising CRC as a document on protection of the rights of the child compared with the findings of the analysis in 2009. Thereby, the majority of children learning in schools included in activities by the Coalition SEGA recognise CRC as a document on protection of the rights of the child.

What's worrying is the data that 44% of children covered by the research have declared that they have never seen CRC. On the other hand, this is one of the key obligations of the State to disseminate CRC to children.

65% of children emphasise that they have partial knowledge about children's rights. In addition, according to teachers, children's rights are partially represented in teaching contents. Of all listed rights which are part of CRC, children recognise the most their right to education. However, the priorities and needs of children have changed compared with the conclusions of 2009. Furthermore, while in the research of 2009, the right to express their views is the second best recognised right by children, in 2020, the second best recognised right by children is the right to protection against violence, which can also lead to the conclusion that the needs of children for protection against violence are also greater. Children and teachers in primary schools also covered by the research show greater self-confidence in their knowledge about the rights of the child and about CRC in general, compared with secondary schools. This may lead to the conclusion that the actions in primary schools are owing to a systematic and continuous approach.

2. Comment on the State report

In the State report, no information is provided as to the Commission on the Rights of the Child, nor any official information on when and how a decision had been adopted to terminate this body. Apart from the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman from 2016, from the information presented in the State report it is obvious that the State has not

implemented almost any field activities on local level with a view to strengthening the capacities of institutions on familiarising them with children's rights, in particular with the right of children to participation in decision-making at school.

¹⁰ Holistic report on the human rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Macedonia within the EU-funded project „Hear Our Voice“, available in Macedonian language at: https://civicamobilitas.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/0._holisticki_izvestaj_za_licata_so_poprecenost_vo_makedonija-mk.pdf



In the State report, no information is provided as to the Commission on the Rights of the Child, nor any official information on when and how a decision had been adopted to terminate this body. Apart from the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman from 2016, from the information presented in the State report it is obvious that the State has not implemented almost any field activities on local level with a view to strengthening the capacities of institutions on familiarising them with children's rights, in particular with the right of children to participation in decision-making at school.

It may be ascertained that the overall progress when it comes to the part devoted to children's right to participation in decision-making is, above all, owing to the activities undertaken by civil society organisations and, more precisely, by the Coalition of Youth Organisations SEGA in cooperation with 30 primary and secondary schools in all regions of the country and BDE, within the project "Implementation of CRC in the Republic of North Macedonia", financially supported by Pestalozzi Children's Foundation.

3. Recommendations

- ➡ The state ought to establish a **single National Coordinating Body** with competences for integrated monitoring of CRC implementation in all areas. The body should participate in drawing up plans and setting priorities referring to children and regularly inform the public about the conditions as to the implementation of CRC on the basis of defined indicators.
- ➡ It is necessary to create **mechanisms and space in the normative framework** for defining and recognising the various **types of peer violence, and in particular the violence present in the cyberspace**. This process should be accompanied by strengthening the capacities of schools, the management, specialised and teaching staff regarding implementation of the new mechanisms, as well as by competences for record keeping and field work with the purpose of reducing violence.
- ➡ **The process of adoption of a new Law on Secondary Education ought to be accelerated**, which will also be based on full inclusion of children in education following the model of the adopted Law on Primary Education. **A transparent and participatory process of preparation of legal provisions** is recommended.
- ➡ **Cooperation and coordinated action of institutions on local level in prevention and treatment of peer violence** ought to be strengthened, by introducing new rules of proactive monitoring and actions, as well as by enhancing the existing protocols and programmes for undertaking actions in cases of peer violence. Institutions ought to be obliged to regularly monitor the conditions and to report by defined indicators.
- ➡ Following the example of the previous successful practice of organising **trainings for teachers via BDE** with the purpose of strengthening the capacities for implementation of children's right to participation in decision-making, it is **recommended that new cycles of trainings are planned and started** so that all teachers are covered both in primary and secondary education.



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- ➡ Faculties producing teaching staff ought to review the curricula with the purpose of including theoretical contents and practice intended for future teachers in the field of children's rights. It is hereby recommended that special emphasis be put on children's right to participation in decision-making, as well as on the inter-cultural dimension and inclusion in education.
- ➡ Teachers ought to be continuously trained on working in inclusive education and on individualisation of lessons. In addition, teachers already working in education ought to be trained in particular in development and implementation of individual education plans, assessment of students working according to an individual education plan.
- ➡ Full physical accessibility of school facilities ought to be secured in line with international standards, including the inner premises and equipment with didactic and other necessary resources and inclusive lesson materials. In this sense, it is necessary to introduce standards for accessibility of school facilities, equipment and the teaching process in general.
- ➡ CRC ought to be disseminated to every child as well as to those children not included in the education process. Appropriate forms and conditions ought to be provided for children with SEN in order for them to be able to read and understand CRC. Every school year, the Convention on the Rights of the Child ought to be present as a separate content when familiarising children at the start of the school year, both in primary and in secondary education. Models of peer exchange and education ought to be used.
- ➡ Activities ought to be implemented with parents, local self-governments and the local community with the purpose of sensitisation and raising the awareness about CRC and its practical implementation.

III. General Principles

1. Analysis of the situation

1.1 Principle of non-discrimination

In line with the recommendation of the UN Committee on further alignment of the anti-discrimination legislation by including all grounds of discrimination in accordance with international standards and establishing an anti-discrimination body (paragraph 27), the Coalition SEGA researched the legal framework and the practice in this field. In addition, this part also includes findings regarding the implementation of the recommendation for reduction of segregation (paragraph 66 c).

On 11.03.2019, with a total of 51 votes out of the total number of MPs, the Parliament passed the Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination, prohibiting in Article 3 any kind of discrimination



The contested Law was again put on the agenda on 16.05.2019 and on the basis of Article 75 of the Constitution, the Parliament discussed it again. The Law was voted on and passed the very same day with 55 votes, by which the Law was adopted without the necessary constitutional majority of 61 votes. The Constitutional Court decided at its 14th session held on 14.05.2020 to repeal the Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination¹¹. Such decision of the Constitutional Court follows the initiative of the previous composition of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination for assessment of the constitutionality and legality of the Law,¹² which stated that the contested law had been adopted contrary to Article 75 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, i.e. the necessary constitutional majority to pass the Law once again had not been secured. Moreover, in the meantime, in a period of one year from the adoption until the repeal of the Law, the Parliament failed to form the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination.

The Law on Primary Education adopted in 2019 considers protection against discrimination and promotion of equality in a greater detail and also stipulates affirmative measures for protection against discrimination. Pursuant to the Law, "in primary upbringing and education, any direct or indirect discrimination, inviting to or instigating discrimination and assistance in discriminatory actions on the grounds of sex, race, colour of the skin, nationality or ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, social origin, education, religion or religious belief, political conviction, other types of convictions, age, family or marital status, property status, health status and social status or any other grounds foreseen by law or by an international agreement ratified in line with the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia in enjoying the rights of primary education is prohibited." (Article 5).

According to the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, what's worrying is the data that 63% of children covered by the research have experienced humiliation at school by their peers. Thereby, humiliation as an occurrence marks a growing trend compared with 2009, when according to the analysis conducted by the Coalition

SEGA, 54% of children involved in the research declared that they had experienced humiliation. The experiences among girls with regard to humiliation and equality are worse, i.e. they are more frequently victims of humiliation and they do not always feel equal unlike boys. While in the 2009 research, a predominating part of the children who declared that they had experienced humiliation once or several times were Roma children, in 2020 dominant in this regard are Macedonian children.

According to the research findings, the reasons for humiliation are most often success at school, material status and age, and for girls also their sex. What's worrying is the data about the still present discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, whereby Roma and Turkish children involved in the research list this as the second most important reason for discrimination. This reason was equally raised as grounds for discrimination among these ethnicities also in the research of 2009.

¹¹ Press Release of the Constitutional Court available in Macedonian language at: <http://ustavensud.mk/?p=19103>

¹² Law on Primary Education - Official Gazette, No. 161/2019, available in Macedonian language at: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/dc070a58a138483aa68da4517a10ac1e.pdf>



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According to the data obtained from children, teachers and school management included in the research, **disability among children is not a reason for discrimination**. 76% of children state that they behave with their peers with disability equally as with the others, that is to say, that they help them to better find their place in the surroundings.

Schools involved in the research recognise discrimination, but there are no special procedures on how to deal with it. Ethical codices and rulebooks are the only way how schools try to prevent discrimination. Schools still emphasise examples of discrimination against children with disabilities and against Roma children, and above all by parents who in this way give an example of discrimination by their actions. **The present segregation in education towards Roma children, children with disabilities or towards poorer children is often exclusively the result of the actions of parents when they withdraw their children from schools where predominantly Roma children are students or from classes where children with disabilities are included.** According to our knowledge and findings, three cases of segregation of Roma children were emphasised, more precisely in a school in Bitola, Shtip, and Prilep.

Children recognise the student ombudsman (established as a mechanism of representing the rights of the child through the activities of the Coalition SEGA and NO), as a mechanism to which, among other things, discrimination can be reported, while one part of the teachers assess the student ombudsman **as one of the most functional forms in the school**.

1.2 Respecting the views of the child

The recommendation of the UN Committee to hear and accept the opinions and views of the child (paragraph 31) is in focus of this report, and also of the conducted field research, since it directly overlaps with the mission of the Coalition SEGA. The findings of the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA **particularly show the progress achieved in the segment respect for the views of the child and its right to participate in decision-making**. With support of Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, the Coalition SEGA focused itself after the submission of the Alternative Report in 2010 on monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee given to the Republic of North Macedonia in terms of strengthening the institutional and legal framework, especially with regard to children's participation and ensuring equal access to education. Furthermore, with support of Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, the Coalition SEGA worked with full focus on preparation and implementation of mechanisms for children's participation in

decision-making processes in a selected number of primary and secondary schools on the territory of the whole country. While, on the one hand, over the period stated, activities of civil society organisations and NO were strengthened with a view to applying the right of children to participation in education, on the other hand minimum activities may be observed by the State and institutions to improve the situation with children's participation in the education process. Finally, the Coalition SEGA, in cooperation with the civil society organisations First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi and Youth Educational Forum submitted a proposal to amend the Law on Primary Education and the Law on Secondary Education directed at regulating children's participation in education, which further resulted in amendments to the Law on Primary Education in 2019 and regulation of the mechanisms of participation.



The new Law on Primary Education adopted in 2019¹³ regulates children's right to participation, i.e. student participation is regulated in Article 68 through the student parliament which, among other things, participates in advocating and promoting the rights and interests of students, promotes student activism, participates in activities for securing peer support for students with SEN, in implementing lessons and extracurricular activities, participates in the preparation of the annual work programme, proposes activities for the annual outing programmes, gives proposals for extracurricular activities of the school, gives proposals for improvement of the student standard, participates in the evaluation of the work of the school, participates in the council of parents and in the council of teachers through its representatives and organises and participates in humanitarian activities, environmental activities and socially useful work. In addition, the Law on Primary Education regulates the election of representatives of the school community in the school board, i.e. they are elected by secret vote of the student parliament, which is organised at the beginning of every school year. Article 68 regulates the student ombudsman who takes care of protecting and enhancing the rights of students at school. The student ombudsman is elected by majority vote of the students from seventh to ninth grade, by way of secret ballot.

In 2016, NO conducted a research in 107 secondary schools¹⁴ in order to examine the fulfilment of children's right to participation in decision-making processes in secondary schools. The research showed a low level of participation of high school students in the education process, an unclearly regulated form of association of high school students and their participation in decision-making processes on questions of relevance to them. High school students are not recognised as an entity and as a factor that can contribute towards efficient functioning and operation of the school.

With regard to the general state of affairs detected by the research conducted in 2009, when still unclear and undetermined viewpoints and knowledge were dominating among children and the remaining respondents regarding the right to participation in decision-making, in the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA in 2020 the

knowledge about this right is much more articulated and the implementation is evident, in particular in primary schools. The newly adopted Law on Primary Education from 2019 only confirms the successful integration of the models of children's participation in decision-making in primary education that were developed, tested and adapted with the assistance of civil society organisations, school management, teachers and children.

88% of children involved in the research are completely convinced of their right to participate in decision-making. Thereby, most of them perform the participation in decision-making processes at school independently or through the president of class. The following are emphasised as the most functional forms of student participation in decision-making: president of class, student community and student ombudsman, a model also introduced through the activities of the Coalition SEGA and NO.

¹³ Law on Primary Education - Official Gazette, No. 161/2019, available in Macedonian language at: <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/dc070a58a138483aa68da4517a10ac1e.pdf>

¹⁴ A special report on the situation regarding the adherence to and fulfilment of children's right to participation in decision-making in secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia, Ombudsman, available in Macedonian language at: <http://ombudsman.mk/upload/Posebni%20izvestai/2016/Ucestvo%20na%20deca%20vo%20sredno-Mk.pdf>



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Regarding the practices of including children in decision-making processes, the **predominating principle is the principle of including children in decision-making by adults (teachers and parents), both at school and in the family. Progress is noticeable** when it comes to including children in decision-making processes **in 2020 compared with the findings of 2009**, whereby 50% of children covered by the research in 2020 have declared that their **parents always include them in decision-making**.

Some of the interviewed schools have already started with active implementation of legal provisions regarding participation and **they emphasise the involvement of representatives of students both in the council of teachers and in the school board**.

Even though **secondary schools** show certain knowledge regarding student participation, and some of them can even boast with successful practices, still, it is visible from the interviews that there is **a lack of systematic approach in this field and unified implementation of models and mechanisms to channel student participation**.

Knowledge among children regarding the mechanisms of participation used by the municipality is limited, whereby **42.5% of children covered by the research have declared that they do not know how the municipality passes its decisions related with questions of their interest**.

2. Comment on the State report

Even though the State report lists the key legal provisions regulating the principles in the segment of general principles (principle of non-discrimination and respect for the views of the child), it fails to give information and field data about the way how legal provisions are implemented in practice by competent institutions. In addition, the State report fails to present data obtained directly from children with the purpose of illustrating their viewpoints.

Furthermore, due to the time period when the State report was submitted, two key findings are not incorporated in it, as follows: the adoption and repeal of the Law on Protection Against Discrimination, as well as the adoption of the Law on Primary Education.

3. Recommendations

Non-discrimination

➡ Municipalities and schools ought to be obliged to **absolutely apply the policy of enrolment of students by area of residence** with a view to reducing segregation in education on the grounds of ethnicity, disability and material status. School management ought to be encouraged to propose new models of reducing segregation which would be locally acceptable and functional.

➡ **School capacities ought to be strengthened, including the management, specialised and teaching staff**, in order to recognise discrimination and act in case of discrimination between peers at school. **School boards and councils of parents ought to be educated and included in the prevention of discrimination originating from the family, tradition and customs.**



➡ **The role of the student ombudsman ought to be strengthened** as a mechanism where children will be able to report discrimination. Moreover, new mechanisms ought to be sought after which will enable proactive actions of the school in identifying and dealing with discrimination. The existing mechanisms ought to be affirmed by informing children about the existence and functioning of ethical codices and rulebooks.

➡ Student communities and teachers ought to be activated to plan and undertake activities with a view to **building values on the level of schools which will promote respect for differences and fair treatment**. Ways should be sought after during lessons in class and ethics lessons to inform students about the negative effects of discrimination, but also to share successful actual stories.

Respecting the views of the child

➡ **Successful models and practices of children's participation** in decision-making in education **ought to be affirmed** and shared by way of mentorship and training, above all with secondary schools. Schools ought to be supported in building an infrastructure and framework to apply the models of participation.

➡ **Training and activities for children in primary and secondary schools ought to be further strengthened** in terms of implementation of the right to participation in decision-making in education, with an emphasis on participation in more significant decisions affecting the quality of lessons and teaching contents.

IV. Civil rights and freedoms

1. Analysis of the situation

1.1 Access to appropriate information, freedom of thought and expression

In line with the recommendation of the UN Committee for improving the access to information for children as well as their protection against contents that might be harmful to their development (paragraph 36), the Coalition SEGA conducted monitoring of the situation over the period 2011 to 2013 and analysed the habits and needs of children regarding access to information, but also with regard to freedom of thought and expression.

The statements from the research of the Coalition SEGA in 2009 about lack of adapted information and programme for children on different media, and especially on TV, have been repeating throughout the whole decade, but the context and the needs of children have changed. According to the findings from the monitoring of the implementation of CRC which was carried out by the Coalition SEGA over the period 2011 to 2013 regarding the right to access to information for children, there is no continuous financing of the publishing activity both on the level of schools and on national level, resulting in instability in the publication of magazines, small number of copies and frequency of publication thus failing to meet the needs. Schools make efforts to allocate funds of their own budgets to finance child magazines, as well as websites of schools in order to facilitate the access to information for children.



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Regarding protection of children against programmes that might have a harmful influence over their psychological, physical and moral development, the Broadcasting Council has applied in continuity while the monitoring lasted the *Rulebook on Protection of Minor Audience* and the measures it undertook with a view to sanctioning media violating the Rulebook were effective.

In 2017, a research was implemented on the representation of child programmes on TV media by the Institute of Project Management and Development IPMD - Skopje, encompassing the aspects of the educational process, contents, quality, audience of child TV programmes in the country. The research findings show that most programmes in national media are designed for the age of 4-10 years and for the age of 11-14 years, whereby the public broadcasting service provider is a forerunner. Most of the child broadcast programmes have no interactive elements, neither do they encourage any process of thinking or participation of viewers on the topics given. The weakest attribute of child TV programmes is, of course, the educational potential and this has also been acknowledged by children, parents, educators, education workers. Another aspect of TV child programmes is that they are not sufficiently developed, especially the inclusion potential of TV contents. TV programmes do not fully include the various social and marginalised groups (persons with intellectual disabilities, ethnic, racial and national minorities, persons coming from poor families, people living in rural areas).

The findings of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services in its analysis on the representation of child programmes on national TVs in 2018 show that child programmes are most represented on the public broadcasting service provider, whereas according to the genre structure the educational-amusement programme and the cinema programme are dominating.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public broadcasting service provider - Macedonian Radio Television, pursuant to the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, opened another programme service in April 2020 - child channel MRT 5, broadcasting contents for children and youth which are educating, informing and amusing.

According to the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA in 2020, as a result of the growing use of Internet communication, **children - participants in the research selected that the Internet is the most frequent channel they use to obtain access to necessary information**, whereas in 2009, the most frequent channel was emphasised to be the radio and television, followed by the school and parents.

With regard to freedom of thought, half of the children - research participants have the greatest trust in their mother in terms of sharing information most often related to violation of their rights, which is then followed by a significantly lower trust in their

father and their friends. There is **a certain part of children (particularly boys) who emphasise that they do not report it to anyone when some of their rights had been violated, which indicates alienation and lowered social interaction** between peers.

The comparison between the findings of the researches conducted by the Coalition SEGA in 2009 and in 2020 shows that the **trust of children in the school's specialised services**, as well as in the class teacher, **has been significantly strengthened**. In addition, children **indicate trust in the student ombudsman** as a mechanism for protection of their rights.

According to the findings of 2020, **66% of children feel protected by adults**. The feeling of protection is more accentuated in 2020 compared with the findings of 2009. Nevertheless, there are 75 children - research participants who selected that adults do not take care of them enough.



After abolishing Article 26 of the Law on Primary Education which allowed the implementation of religious education as an elective subject, the following elective subjects were introduced in 6th grade - Ethics of Religions, Getting Acquainted with Religions and Classical Culture in European Civilisation. The Coalition SEGA analysed this segment as well within the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2011 and 2012. According to the findings, there is limitation as to the respect for the right to free expression of religion and conviction of children according to Article 14. Namely, due to the remaining lack of capacities, the offer of subjects is different in different schools, as well as the quality of teaching staff. The decision on the selection of subjects is brought by children together with their parents, most often on the basis of previous presentation of the contents of the subjects delivered to parents, but not to children. Moreover, there is also limitation in the minimum number of children that is necessary to apply so that a certain subject can be provided. Regarding the contents of curricula, from the data obtained from interviewed parents, it may be concluded that the contents are appropriate to the age of children, do not violate their rights to religion and conviction. It is not clear how the time and lessons dedicated to learning about religions are distributed within the subjects mentioned afore.

1.2 Right to association and peaceful assembly

The Law on Primary Education from 2019 regulates freedom of association within schools. All students in the school comprise the school community, and at the same time, students have the right to student organisation on class level and on school level (student parliament) in a manner as regulated by the school's Statute. The student parliament is comprised of the presidents of class communities. The president of the student parliament is elected by majority vote of the total number of representatives from among the presidents of class communities by way of secret ballot.

According to the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA in 2020, **91% of children are informed about their right to association** and recognise the organisations from their town working with children and children's rights, but 45% of children state that they are not members of those organisations.

Children in primary schools covered by the research recognise the forms of association in schools, they articulate them to a greater extent and more clearly than children in secondary schools. **Children articulate their membership in a class community clearly** and refer to a **defined process of election of president of class** or by presenting more candidates voted on later or by a prior mutual agreement on who would be elected as president.

Children point out that **the class community is most often included in decision-making on activities of interest to students, decisions on selection of an outing destination, as well as on the optional sections that are to be organised**. Thereby, most of the children **have taken direct part in making a certain decision**, most often related with the selection of an outing destination or election of president of class. **Children with disabilities are equally included** in decision-making processes at school just as their peers.



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2. Comment on the State report

The State report fails to present information regarding access to information, freedom of thought and expression. The key change which is not elaborated in the State report (due to the different time period when the State submitted the report) is the clear regulation of the forms of association of children in schools by the adopted Law on Primary Education from 2019 and the defined process of selection of child representatives in those forms.

3. Recommendations

➡ It is hereby recommended to **strengthen the dissemination of information by schools and other institutions via the Internet and on social media used by students**. Thereby, the educational segment of delivered information should be strengthened.

particular for students who have the role of presidents of class and representatives in the council of teachers and in the school board so that they raise initiatives and represent the requirements of students.

➡ **The process of strengthening the role of the forms of association of children at school and participation mechanisms, such as** student community and student ombudsman, ought to be continued. At the same time, individualised support for students ought to be provided, in

➡ **Municipal councils ought to be informed of the mechanisms of participation functioning within schools** so that the Municipality can use these mechanisms to obtain the view of children and include them in decision-making on questions of their relevance.

V. Violence against children

1. Analysis of the situation

With regard to the recommendation of the UN Committee on prevention of violence against children, enhancement of legislation and access to appropriate rehabilitation services for children (paragraph 51), the Coalition SEGA focused itself on researching the reasons for peer violence, as well as the forms of violence and the approach of the state as to preventing violence.

With regard to peer violence, the **state shows interest to monitor and deal with violence** against children on national level, which is reflected in the established structures and the presence of violence prevention provisions within strategic and planning documents. In 2012, a Strategy on Reducing Violence at School was adopted (2012-2015). The strategy defines the greatest number of forms of violence at school and defines the procedures for record keeping of cases of violence at school and their dissemination to interested stakeholders. In 2017, by decision of the Government of RM, **an inter-sectoral National Coordinating Body for Protection of Children Against Abuse, Violence and Neglect** was formed.



In addition, in 2019, a National Strategy (2020 – 2025) was adopted, as well as an Action Plan (2020 – 2022) on prevention and protection of children against violence¹⁵. The purpose of this body is to monitor and coordinate the implementation of activities aimed at protection of children against abuse and neglect, as well as to prepare annual reports. In 2017, the body prepared for the first time a report on the state of affairs pertaining to protection of children against violence according to the developed indicators on monitoring violence against children by all relevant institutions.

In practice, **there are no visible efforts and changes aimed at systemic handling of violence**, in particular peer violence, as witnessed by the situation on the spot through the researches of the Coalition SEGA, NO and other civil society organisations.

In 2017, the report on the state of affairs regarding protection of children against abuse and neglect¹⁶ in line with the developed indicators detected that the system of education of RNM has secured sufficient staff through the specialised services in most of the schools (pedagogues, psychologists and sociologists) in primary and secondary schools having competences for the topic of violence at school, but what is still missing is established practice of unified systemic identification and record keeping of cases of violence at school. In the identified and recorded cases of violence at school, physical violence and psychological/emotional violence are predominating. Maltreatment/bullying have also been identified as types of violence. Peers are the dominant perpetrators of violence at school and the cooperation of schools with other competent institutions is not on the necessary level.

The Coalition SEGA carried out a research about the state of affairs when it comes to violence in secondary schools¹⁷ and according to the findings, there is no significant difference in the perceptions of violence among the respondents of different sexes, cities or ethnicities. This shows that regardless of the demographic structure in schools based on sex, ethnicity or geographic location of

schools, the perception of the existence, form and intensity of violence is similar in all involved schools. The most prevalent type of violence according to the findings of the research is verbal violence. Internet violence was not identified among the most prevalent types of violence. Still, this does not mean that this type of violence is less represented than other types of violence. Students are informed about the mechanisms for reporting violence and, according to school representatives, this information is shared at the beginning of every school year. However, schools do not show any interest and initiative for continuous promotion of the mechanisms for reporting violence by building trust so that students report violence, regardless of whether they are victims of violence or witnesses. The existence and implementation of a programme which would contribute towards reducing/eliminating violence in continuity throughout the whole school year is a real rarity in schools.

¹⁵ Strategy on Protection of Children Against All Forms of Violence 2020-2025 accompanied by an Action Plan 2020-2022, available in Macedonian language at: <http://dspdp.com.mk/vesti/nacionalna-strategija-2020-2025-i-akciski-plan-2020-2022-za-prevencija-i-zastita-na-decata-od-nasilstvo/>

¹⁶ Analysis of the situation regarding the development of indicators for child victims of violence, August 2017, available in Macedonian language at: <https://www.sppmd.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Analiza-na-sostojbata-za-razvivjanje-na-indikatori-za-decata-zrtvi-na-nasilstvo-12.08.2017.pdf>

¹⁷ Current state of affairs as to the existence, prevention and dealing with violence in secondary schools, available in Macedonian language at: https://www.sega.org.mk/images/pdf/Prepoznaj_preveniraj_i_primeni_merki_protiv_nasilstvo_Publikacija_1.pdf



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According to the findings of the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, in general 64% of children - participants in the research believe that there is no violence in schools, but further on and in a much larger **number, they specifically confirm the various forms and types of violence, above all between their peers**. This indicates lack of knowledge among children when it comes to recognising violence. In addition, **institutions and school representatives confirm that there is peer violence**.

70% of children - participants in the research have been victim of some type of peer violence, most often victims to physical violence, but also to verbal and social violence. In general, there are protocols and programmes for violence prevention that are known in schools and most of them are applied. Still, these protocols have not been adapted for identification and action in the types of violence that are on the rise, as for instance peer violence via social networks, verbal and social violence. It is not seldom that the reasons for children's violent behaviour at school is rooted in the family, i.e. in existing family violence. Peer violence is mainly prevalent on social networks, while less so in schools themselves. There are examples of physical

violence in certain schools which are worrisome by their frequency and by the number of perpetrators. This type of violence is particularly emphasised by Roma students in the research. 1/3 of children - participants in the research single out social and verbal violence as the most prevalent types of peer violence.

According to the research findings, violence happens in order to prove strength before others, due to jealousy and to show dominance. In addition, problems in behaviour are one of the reasons that contribute towards violence.

2. Comment on the State report

The State report, when it comes to Article 19 of CRC, refers generally to all types of violence, i.e. it focuses more on adult-to-child violence, whereas peer violence is only mentioned. Moreover, the report highlights activities implemented in this regard by MLSP in cooperation with UNICEF and other civil society organisations, but apart from studies and analyses carried out, it fails to emphasise any field activities or activities with children on this topic.

3. Recommendations

- ➡ A **comprehensive research** on peer violence ought to be conducted with a view to identifying the **forms of cyber violence, media and networks it is communicated through**, as well as determining the elements of regulations **regulating it or if the regulation of child safety on the Internet and prevention of cyber violence can be strengthened**.
- ➡ **Programmes for continuous education of students ought to be prepared and implemented for the various types of peer**

violence, with emphasis on cyberspace violence and the harmful consequences thereof to the integrity of the child's personality.

- ➡ **Educational materials** ought to be prepared in a format adapted to the requirements and needs of children, also for parents, thereby disseminating information about peer violence, its recognition and prevention. The materials should be accessible to children who are illiterate, as well as to children who have intellectual and visual disabilities.



➡ **The role of the student ombudsman ought to be strengthened** as a mechanism for proactive action towards preventing peer violence and reporting violence and joint activities ought to be drawn up with NO in the direction of prevention of violence.

➡ Children ought to be educated on **where and how they should report peer violence**, as well as on the various mechanisms that are available for the specialised services in preventing and treating violence.

VI. Education, leisure and cultural activities

1. Analysis of the situation

1.1 Access to education

Out-of-school children

The Coalition SEGA cooperated with MCEC in line with the recommendation of the UN Committee on encompassing all children in the mainstream educational process (paragraph 66 a, b). MCEC prepared a report in which it presented the findings of the analysis of the legislation and the research conducted over the past period. This report also served for presentation of some of the findings in this alternative report and here also some of the findings of UNICEF's study are presented.

Access to education for some of the children in the Republic of North Macedonia is still a challenge.

According to the latest study conducted by UNICEF Office Macedonia and the State Statistical Office¹⁸ about the status of women and children in North Macedonia conducted for the period 2018 - 2019, field data show that **1.7% of the children covered on a sample aged 6-14 years are out of school**. Thereby, this figure includes **children of Macedonian, Albanian and other ethnicity**, whereas for the Roma community separate data are provided.

In addition, children at the age for primary education who do not attend pre-school education, primary or secondary education are regarded as out-of-school children in primary education. Children who have completed primary education are excluded from the sample. The total number of families covered by the study amounts to 4028 throughout all statistical regions in Macedonia, and the number of children covered by the research aged 5 - 17 is 1431. With regard to children who should attend secondary education, **8.4% of the children in the sample who should attend**

secondary education are out of school. Thereby, this figure includes **children of Macedonian, Albanian and other ethnicity**, whereas for the Roma community separate data are provided. In addition, children at the age for secondary education who do not attend primary education, secondary education or higher education are regarded as out-of-school children in secondary education.

¹⁸ State Statistical Office and UNICEF. 2020. *2018-2019 North Macedonia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2018-2019 North Macedonia Roma Settlements Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Survey Findings Report*, Skopje, North Macedonia: State Statistical Office and UNICEF.



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Children who have completed secondary education are excluded from the sample. In terms of the age of children who should attend school, in line with the data of the study mentioned, 99.5% of the children covered by the study are of an age adequate for primary school, i.e. 96% are of an age adequate for secondary education.

In 2017, within MCEC's research¹⁹ on inclusion of out-of-school children, many insights are offered as to the problems that this group is facing. The findings and conclusions of this research indicate problems existing on the level of municipality, school and parents, and some only describe the factual condition, in particular with regard to two general issues: a) children not enrolled in school and b) drop-outs, i.e. decreasing the number of students in schools. Municipalities do not maintain any systemic records of children who are supposed to get enrolled in primary school, as well as how many of them were enrolled. This significantly burdens the process of policy making on securing coverage of all children on the level of municipality/state. Schools, on the other hand, do not obtain data about children not enrolled in school who had been absent from the place of residence for a certain period, who then they returned. In addition, the failure to adhere to the policy of enrolment of students by area of residence in some municipalities burdens the activities of schools to enrol children in primary school because schools do not have data on which children are obliged to be enrolled in a concrete school.

Schools face difficulties to include children who have not been enrolled on time and are aged over 9 years in mainstream first grade classes. Pursuant to the **Concept of Inclusive Education**,²⁰ adopted by the Minister of Education and Science on 6 July 2020, specific guidelines are defined enabling inclusion of overage children, as for example: the teacher shall develop a work plan for the overage student included in education according to the adapted curricula produced by BDE; the age difference between the overage student and his peers should not be greater than 2 years of age in the first period, while for the second period the difference shall also be up to 2 years of age, i.e. 3 years if the student is included in 6th grade; the implementation of adapted curricula foresees that in one school year two grades can be completed according to the success reached and results made.

The research identified 663 children at primary education age who have not attended primary school at all. Most of these children are aged 6-8 years. Most of the children of this age who are not enrolled in education are located in Kumanovo. Most of the children who are not enrolled in education are predominantly from the Roma population living in poor social environment and unfavourable living conditions at home. 481 children were identified who had dropped out of primary school earlier, but are still in Macedonia. Most of the drop-outs happen already during the first grades and these are children whose parents have no education or lower education than 4th grade, living in poor socio-economic conditions. Migration (69%) and poverty (39%) are listed as one of the most frequent reasons for dropping out of school.

¹⁹ Mickoska, G., Chupi, R., and Spasovski, Lj. (2017). *Inclusion of out-of-school children in the education system: survey report*. Skopje. Macedonian Civic Education Center

²⁰ Concept of Inclusive Education, MES 2020, available in Macedonian language at: [<http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%A6%D0%95%D0%9F%D0%A6%D0%98%D0%88%D0%90-%D0%B7a-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-1.pdf>]



In the last three school years there has been a significant number of overage children during the enrolment process in first grade (81 in 2017/2018, 112 in 2018/2019 and 73 in 2019/2020). In the last three school years (2017/2018 - 2019/2020), more than one half of overage children getting enrolled in first grade were aged 8-9 years, whereas the others were aged 10 years and more. Several limiting factors are identified when working with overage students who are in classes with younger students, as follows: a) it often happens that to these children Macedonian is not their mother tongue, so they have a problem with not knowing the language; b) overage students are very often absent from classes without justification and cannot maintain continuity in lessons, and c) it often happens that these children have poor prior knowledge.

According to the findings of the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA, the establishment of small group homes under the management of Social Work Centres (in our case, the centre in Kavadarci and the group home under management of the Social Work Centre in Shtip), according to the statements of interviewed respondents, appears to be recognised as a good model where centres have direct influence, in particular in terms of including dependent children and retaining them in the education system. Children in group homes are included in the mainstream educational process, thereby also receiving additional care and support after the completion of school obligations.

Interviewed students from one school from Radovich point out problems with the inclusion and retainment in the mainstream educational process of children from rural areas where predominantly Turkish population lives. Because of the traditional customs and rules in this community, often parents do not let girls in particular to continue with their education in secondary school and even stop their education while they are still in primary school. According to the statements of an interviewed respondent from one school in Kriva Palanka, the problem that they face (and this problem might be also present in other places) is to integrate children from hardly accessible rural areas in the mainstream educational process, above all due to the inability to provide regular transport, due to marginalisation of families and poverty.

Roma children

The Coalition SEGA, in line with the recommendation of the UN Committee for securing equal access to education for all children, including street children and Roma children in the mainstream educational process (paragraph 66 a, b, g), deliberated upon the findings of NO, UNICEF and the field findings in this regard.

Roma children compared with children from other ethnic communities remain out of school to a much greater extent, this applying both to primary and especially secondary education, regardless of the fact that both levels of education are mandatory. Over the last decade there has been continuity in the efforts of both state institutions and civil society organisations, international organisations and donors on inclusion of these children in the education process. By adopting the Roma Strategy for the period 2014-2020, the key goals of the access to education for Roma children have been affirmed, as follows: a) at least 98% of Roma children at an adequate age to be enrolled in first grade of primary school should be encompassed, success should be improved and a minimum of 75% success in transition from one to the next grade should be achieved until 2020 and b) transition from primary education to secondary education should be increased, success should be improved and dropping out rates of Roma students should be reduced until 2020.



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State measures refer to encompassing Roma children in pre-school education, support to their educational process and families of Roma children in primary school, as well as state scholarships for Roma students in secondary education. The Roma Education Fund which also participated together with the state in securing scholarships for Roma children in secondary education has focused its efforts over the last decade on supporting higher education of Roma. Nevertheless, despite all the efforts over the last ten years, what's missing is the perspective of mapping out-of-school Roma children, keeping records of out-of-school children, exchange of data between institutions and actions with the purpose of as greater inclusion of those who still have not gotten out of the circle of poverty and marginalisation as possible.

According to the study produced by UNICEF Office Macedonia and the State Statistical Office for 2018-2019, field findings about the status of Roma in primary and secondary education are worrying. Data are worrying not only with regard to the Roma community itself, but also if these data are compared with the findings about the education of the Macedonian, Albanian and other ethnic communities.

Table 1: Status of Roma in primary and secondary education by various indicators

Indicators	Roma children	Macedonian children, Albanian children and other
% of children at the age for primary education enrolled in first grade	75.9 %	94.2 %
% of children who regularly attend primary education	81 %	98.1 %
% of children who complete primary education	56.3 %	94 %
% of children who get enrolled in secondary education	76.8 %	98 %
% of children who regularly attend secondary education	39.4 %	91 %
% of out-of-school children at the age for primary education who do not attend pre-school education, primary or secondary education	18.7 %	1.7 %
% of children who complete secondary education	36.9 %	87.4 %
% of out-of-school children at the age for secondary education who do not attend primary, secondary or higher education	52.8 %	8.4 %



75.9 % of Roma children in the sample at the age for primary education get enrolled in first grade, which is by almost 20 % less than Macedonian, Albanian and other ethnic communities. 81 % of Roma children enrolled in primary education regularly attend school, which is by 17 % less than Macedonian, Albanian and other ethnic communities. 18.7 % of Roma children in the sample are out-of-school children, which means that at the moment they do not attend pre-school education, primary or secondary education. 52.8 % of Roma children covered by the sample at the age for secondary education are out of school, which means that at the moment they do not attend primary, secondary or higher education, whereas for the remaining ethnic communities this percentage amounts to approximately 8%. 56.3 % of Roma children finish primary education, whereas 76.8% of them get enrolled in secondary education. 36.9% of children who got enrolled in secondary education finish it.

In addition, the analysis of the data in the table presented leads to the conclusion that the situation in primary education still marks greater progress than in secondary education, owing to the significant support by international organisations and donors precisely in strengthening the scope of Roma children in primary education and the continuous support for both the teachers and families and children so that they are retained in the system.

The analysis about the education of Roma produced by NO in 2018²¹ concludes that drop-out rates in primary and secondary education decrease with the transition from one to the next school year, however, if taking into consideration the first generation of enrolled students in primary education with nine years of education, it may be concluded that more than one half of the students fail to timely complete primary education, or leave the education process. In terms of awarding scholarships to high school Roma children, a great success is their stipulation by law, however the effect of scholarships for improved achievement of high school students should be yet additionally evaluated. When it comes to secondary education, what's been particularly observed over the last two years is that over 30% of students completing primary education do not complete their education on time or do not continue their education to secondary school, even though this is mandatory.

Children with SEN

The Coalition SEGA cooperated with the Open the Windows Association in line with the recommendation of the UN Committee on improving access to education for children with SEN (paragraph 53 a, c, e). Open the Windows prepared a separate report on access to education for children with SEN presenting information both regarding the legislative framework and the conditions on the field. The findings of this report have also been used in presenting the conditions within this alternative report.

The legal framework and the measures for inclusion of **children with SEN** are directed towards **full inclusion of these children in the education system**. The adoption of the Concept of Inclusive Education in July 2020, foreseeing full inclusion of all children in the education process is of particular importance in this segment.

²¹ Inclusion of Roma after the end of the Roma decade - current status and challenges, Ombudsman 2018, available at: <http://ombudsman.mk/upload/documents/2018/Prezentacija-Inkluzija%20Romi-Vrabotuvanje-07.11.2018.pdf>



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This Concept entails provisions related with ensuring school climate of inclusion, different levels of support for children with SEN, additional services to support the near-daily functioning of students with SEN and their families, support for teachers, as well as transformation of specialised schools into resource centres and inclusion support centres. **A series of practical tools for inclusion of children in mainstream education has already been introduced; what's next is the implementation of other legal provisions in order to additionally strengthen this segment.** The allocation of education assistants, the possibility for consultation and involvement of specialised staff from specialised schools and day centres, hiring education specialists and speech and language therapists facilitates the process of inclusion. **Still, there is a lot of work ahead in reaching full inclusion of these children, both with the schools themselves and with the families of these children and their peers and families.**

In the school year 2009/2010, there were students with SEN in 83.6% of primary schools, i.e. in 199 out of a total of 238 schools who submitted answered questionnaires. On average, according to the summarised data, 10.4 students with SEN attended lessons in every school. If only schools are taken into account with students with SEN attending lessons, this average amounts to 12.48. According to these data, 199 schools have reported 2,467 students with SEN. The cumulative figure about students with SEN included in primary education, both mainstream and specialised, for the school year of 2015/2016, show a total number of 1,138, which cumulatively presents 0.61% of the total number of students. The non-existence of ready statistical data about the inclusion and pursuing of the right to primary education of students with SEN highlights the fact that there are no systemic records.

In absence of official data about the number of children with disabilities, one could take as basis the estimate of the World Health Organisation (WHO) that persons with disabilities (any type of disability) make up at least 10% of the total population. In such a case, it is inevitable to open the questions of inclusion of children with disabilities in general in the primary education system and the ability of the education system to identify, record and monitor the included students with special educational needs. This is the basis for securing individualised support and assistance, but also for planning and monitoring public education policies directed towards motivating inclusion in education.

In the school year 2013/2014, students with SEN were included in 62.5% of mainstream secondary schools in Macedonia, whereas in the school years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, these children were included in 56.5% of schools that participated in the research. On average, this would mean 4.5 students with SEN in mainstream secondary schools in the school year 2013/2014, i.e. 2.79 in the period from

2016 until 2018. The data received indicate a decrease in the number of students with SEN in mainstream secondary schools, which we believe was owing to the unpreparedness of the education system to respond to the challenges of inclusion. If we take into account the data received with regard to the number of students with SEN, we get the result about representation of approximately 1% of the total number of students. In percentage, this figure is small, but still it should not be neglected, since it is a matter of round 400 students for whom quality education should be provided on equal basis as for the remaining students.

Computerisation of lessons is one of the important steps which leads to modernisation of education. Even though PCs were secured for secondary schools, still, individual assistive technology is not provided for students with disabilities.

²²See footnote 20.



Thus, students with SEN face yet another barrier, how are they supposed to access the teaching contents if they do not have assistive technology at their disposal and the possibilities it offers?

1.2 Quality of education and inter-cultural education

The implementation of the recommendations of the Committee from paragraph 56 serves as a basis for the research of the Coalition SEGA in the segment education, leisure and cultural activities, and the findings are presented below.

48% of children included in the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA have declared that they do not get the necessary knowledge at school at all, whereby this critical stance is taken by high 87% of children in secondary education. In 2009, the stance that children get the knowledge they need was prevalent. The critical stance towards education continues further towards teachers, **whereby 49% of children believe that teachers do not use interesting ways to transfer knowledge at all.**

Even though measures are applied to ensure mother tongue lessons, still 1/3 of the children do not learn in their mother tongue, whereby children enrolled in secondary education are the majority of this group of children. This is particularly prominent among children of the Roma community, who together with children of the Vlach community have the opportunity for elective subjects to learn their language and culture, but not for full lessons in their mother tongue. According to the findings, some of the children from the Albanian ethnic community who have chosen to get educated in Macedonian have serious difficulties with learning the language.

Both according to the teachers included in the research and according to the children, schoolbooks are partially clear, and 1/3 of the children emphasise that they do not learn from schoolbooks written in their mother tongue. It may be stated that in particular in secondary vocational education there are schoolbooks missing for certain subjects.

School management and teaching staff point out that there is a certain fall in the quality of teaching contents and methods used, as well as a lack of strategic orientation in the implementation of the continuous reforms and of course continuity in

monitoring the effects thereof. On the other hand, despite the continuous activities of BDE to support teachers by preparing teaching concepts, it appears that there is a lack in the inclusion of teachers in this support. The key reform that MES undertook is preparation of national standards based on competences. The introduction of a Cambridge learning system in primary education is evaluated by experts as a pretty progressive reform, but still, due to certain omissions in the adaptation of the teaching materials, its implementation has been burdened. Teachers do not feel ready to apply this system which often leads to frustration among them; on the other hand, parents are frustrated because they do not understand the system and they cannot help their children appropriately.

According to 48.5% of children involved in the research, the space for lessons seems to be partially adequate and equipped for work. There are big differences between the level of technical equipment in schools, as well as the level of equipment of the space, which generally indicates non-existence of strategic approach in this segment.



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Even though it is evident that nowadays technological devices are used in lessons much more than in 2009, however **many schools do not have the basic technological resources available, such as PCs, smart boards, etc.** The lack of technological equipment has become particularly evident against the backdrop of the pandemic when it was expected from parents and children and teachers to be involved in the distance learning system to the maximum, without thereby having any insight in the capacities of stakeholders to participate in such type of lessons, as well as in the availability of equipment. With the expected second wave of the pandemic ahead in September, MES in cooperation with BDE prepared a Distance Learning Concept²³ which was for a short period of time publicly available for comments by the public. Furthermore, UNICEF Office in cooperation with the organisation Reactor conducted a research among parents and children about their stances regarding distance learning, while some CSOs gave their viewpoints and comments on the Concept. The main remarks referred to not having a comprehensive approach in the preparation of the Concept which put the needs of the parents and children in the background.

It is evident that **the number of students in classes is falling**, especially in primary education, **which is the result of the lowered birth rate and the increased rate of migration** from the state and this is not related with any measures aimed at improving the quality of lessons. Half of the children included in the research state that they learn in classes of between 20 - 25 students, whereas in the research from 2009, the majority of children had learned in classes of between 25 - 30 students. **Children in secondary education learn in classes of mainly over 30 children.** The number of children in primary education in 2019/2020²⁴ decreased by 23,141 compared with 2009/2010. The number of children in secondary education in the school year 2019/2020²⁵ decreased by 25,363 compared with 2009/2010. Nevertheless, the number of children in secondary education classes remains higher due to the introduced mandatory nature of secondary education which causes greater transition of children from primary to secondary education,

whereby the number of classes is not increased. In addition, one of the assumptions is that parents of children in secondary education or finishing secondary education had rarely made the decision to migrate, but also the birth rate in the period when children who are now in secondary education were born was higher and amounted to 13%, marking afterwards a continuous fall to 10.3% in 2018.²⁶

According to the research findings, most of the children are not members of sections, and on the other hand, sections remain to be the most effective mechanism for implementing extracurricular activities.²⁷ Nevertheless, instead of sections, large part of schools has clubs, projects, etc. in certain fields, engaging children in this way. The inclusion of children with SEN as well as children from rural areas in extracurricular activities remains a challenge due to not having an appropriate approach which will meet their needs.

²³ <http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0.pdf>

²⁴ http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat_ObrazovanieNauka_OsnovnoObrazovanie_PocetokUcebn/175_osnucil_op_poct2_ml.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=ec783b5e-ab4c-4cf6-ade3-19bc5f8fde47; Accessed on 20.06.2020.

²⁵ http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat_ObrazovanieNauka_SrednoObrazovanie_PocetokUcebn/175_sredniucilista_rm_t2_ml.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=ec783b5e-ab4c-4cf6-ade3-19bc5f8fde47; Accessed on 20.06.2020

²⁶ http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat_Naselenie_Vitalna/275_VitStat_Reg_StVitNas_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef; Accessed on 20.06.2020

²⁷ Concept of Extracurricular Activities, MES March 2020, available in Macedonian language at:

<https://www.bro.gov.mk/%D0%ba%D0%be%D0%bd%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%be%D0%bd%D0%bd%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%bd%D0%B8-%D0%B0%D0%ba%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%bd%D0%be%D1%81%D1%82/>



A significant share of **schools involved in the research apply in competitions** and have good results, **but the State still does not cover the expenses for attending a competition of students**. They are covered either individually by students themselves or by common school funds. Thereby, high 82% of children involved in the research conducted by the Coalition SEGA state that they have taken part in a competition.

Team work is emphasised as a value which is most frequently applied in schools, while **in secondary schools, the most frequently applied value is respect for each other**.

Students involved in the research underline that **what they lack at school is creativity on the side of teachers, better spatial conditions and extracurricular activities**, whereas **teachers have the need for new and clear schoolbooks, more trainings, educational resources**.

According to NO, not always is the mixed ethnic composition of students taken into account when forming school classes. Furthermore, what's worrying is the tendency to form clean ethnic classes, particularly in secondary schools, as well as the refusal of parents to enrol their children in schools, i.e. classes where members of other communities learn. Based on this research the conclusion may be drawn that classes with clean ethnic composition are also formed because of the teaching language in lessons.

The Law on Primary Education adopted in 2019, unlike the previous law, encompasses the inter-cultural and multicultural dimension of the education process in far greater detail, not only in the goals of the law. The new Law has a separate unit addressing the inter-cultural and multicultural

dimension of the education process, including provision of resources for the implementation of activities. School management and teaching staff included in the research emphasise that they are involved in a lot in activities aimed at inter-ethnic integration. The scope of this type of activities in curricula is greater and more significant.

Children included in the research declare that through the schoolbooks they learn the most about the culture, history and tradition of their own people, and that from the ethnic communities they are the most familiar with the Macedonian and Albanian. In support of the improved inter-ethnic integration is also the data that in 2009 only the Macedonian community was among the ones that students declared to be familiar with the most.

2. Comment on the State report

Inclusion of out-of-school children is a key issue in education, and the State report contains almost no data about this issue. The data presented in this alternative report through the study conducted by UNICEF show a particularly alarming situation among Roma children who to a significantly greater extent remain out of school unlike the children from other communities. The State report points out only the scholarship and tutorship measures undertaken with a view to retaining those children who have already entered the education system. Moreover, the State report contains no data regarding the inclusion rate of children with SEN in the education system. Despite the implementation of integrated evaluation of schools by the State Education Inspectorate, the State report fails to include any data



about the quality of lessons or about the effects of the reforms undertaken. There is a lack of transparent data about the infrastructure and technological works that the State undertakes or about the criteria based on which schools are selected where such works are to be executed. Even though the State actively supports inter-ethnic integration of schools, the report fails to mention any data about the effects of the funds allocated with this aim.

3. Recommendations

Access to education

- ➡ Regulations ought to be drawn up with the purpose of strengthening record keeping and exchange of data between institutions on local level regarding out-of-school children, as well as children with SEN. The system of monitoring the inclusion rate of children ought to be strengthened through the Education Inspectorate to schools and municipalities.
- ➡ The inclusion rate of children ought to be expanded by providing scholarships following the example of successful models of scholarships both in primary and secondary education.
- ➡ Trainings for teachers ought to be conducted in line with the Concept of Inclusive Education with a view to including and monitoring the progress of overage children who are included in mainstream education.
- ➡ The activities ought to be continued with the purpose of as greater inclusion of Roma families and their education as possible in order to decrease the obstacles for inclusion of children in education, particularly of children in secondary education, as well with the purpose of strengthening field activities in this regard.
- ➡ The implementation of legal provisions on inclusion of children with SEN and disabilities in mainstream education ought to be strengthened by allocating education assistants assisting the education process, the teachers and students in line with the Concept of Inclusive Education, by providing financial measures and securing support for schools with specialised staff to work with the children.
- ➡ Regular activities ought to be planned with the purpose of sensitising children, as well as parents and teachers to accept children with SEN as regular students at school.
- ➡ The model of small group homes ought to be multiplied and strengthened so that as many children as possible are covered through this model, who would thus receive appropriate treatment to be included in the education system and support in the education process.
- ➡ Schoolbooks and other educational materials ought to be provided in Braille alphabet, in audio format and/or according to web accessibility standards. By help of laws and by-laws, a condition ought to be stipulated that authors have to submit all materials to MES electronically according to the international web accessibility standards.

Quality of education and inter-cultural activities

- ➡ MES and BDE ought to develop a public database about the infrastructure and technological works undertaken in schools, the selection criteria based on which such works are executed in those schools, as well as information regarding the funds allocated to every school.
- ➡ The quality of teaching contents ought to be enhanced and the staff capacity ought to be strengthened as to applying interactive and innovative teaching methods in line with the National Standards of Child Competences in Primary Education.



- ➡ **Space** ought to be created for functioning of the mechanisms of children's participation in decision-making and in situations of distance learning.
- ➡ **High school education** ought to be reformed and **appropriate schoolbooks** ought to be provided for secondary vocational education.
- ➡ **The quality of schoolbooks** ought to be improved by complementing the teaching contents about children's rights and introducing and reviewing gender sensitive contents.
- ➡ **The skills of teaching staff** ought to be improved as to **actively using technological devices and digital tools** in lessons, as well as the skills for organising lessons via the Internet.
- ➡ **The number of children participating in extracurricular activities** ought to be **increased**, in particular of children with special needs and children coming from rural areas.
- ➡ **Inter-ethnic integration activities** ought to be continued with following the example of the models of exchange between schools implemented so far.

VII. Annexes

Annex 1 - Data about the scope and structure of respondents and institutions covered by the research

1. Scope of the sample in the conducted survey with children

Structure by sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Female	940	58.5
Male	666	41.5
Total:	1606	100.00

Structure by level of education

Level of education	Frequency	%
Primary	724	45.1
Secondary	822	54.9
Total:	1606	100.00



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Structure by type of school

Type of school	Frequency	%
Project schools	579	36.00
Non-project schools	1026	63.9
No answer	1	0.1
Total:	1606	100.00

Structure by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	%
Macedonians	1236	77.00
Albanians	223	13.9
Turks	49	3.1
Roma	42	2.6
Vlach	17	1.1
Serbs	10	0.6
Other	29	1.8
Total:	1606	100.00

Structure by place of residence

Place of residence	Frequency	%
Town	1303	81.1
Village	303	18.9
Total:	1606	100.00



2. Structure and scope of the sample in the conducted survey with teachers

Structure by sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Female	287	82.00
Male	63	18.00
Total:	350	100.00

Structure by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	%
Macedonians	301	86.00
Albanians	36	10.3
Turks	5	1.4
Roma	/	/
Vlach	4	1.1
Serbs	1	0.3
Bosniak	1	0.3
Other	2	0.6
Total:	350	100.00



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3. Structure of conducted interviews with municipalities, schools, civil society organisations and social work centres

Municipality	Primary school	Secondary school	Civil Society Organisation	Social Work Centre	Total
Gazi Baba	4	1	3	1	9
Karposh	2	3	3	0	8
Kisela Voda	3	2	3	0	8
Chair	2	1	2	1	6
Shuto Orizari	2	1	2	1	6
Karbinci	1				1
Kochani	3	1	3	1	8
Shtip	3	3	2	1	9
Kriva Palanka	1	1	1	1	4
Kumanovo	4	3	2	1	10
Gevgelija	2	1	2	1	6
Radovish	2	1	2	1	6
Strumica	2	3	2	1	8
Veles	2	3	2	1	8
Kavadarci	4	2	2	1	9
Sveti Nikole	1	1	1	1	4
Bitola	4	3	2	1	10
Prilep	4	4	3	1	12
Dolneni	1	0			1
Gostivar	3	4	2	1	10
Tetovo	3	3	2	1	9
Debar	3	1	2	1	7
Kichevo	2		1	1	4
Ohrid	3	3	2	1	9
Struga	2	2	2	1	7
Total	63	47	48	21	179



About Coalition SEGA

SEGA is a national platform of youth organizations in North Macedonia, with over 16 years of experience in lobbying the needed legislation changes in youth participation, information, employment and activism. SEGA works on development and implementation of youth policies at local and national level, connects and strengthens youth organizations aiming to activate youth and improve the conditions for their personal and professional development in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Coalition SEGA has given significant contribution towards creation of the first National Youth Strategy [2005 – 2015]. SEGA was actively involved in the facilitation of the process of developing the new National Youth Strategy [2016 – 2025] in partnership with the Agency of Youth and Sports and the UNDP office in Skopje.

SEGA successfully introduced the youth participation model “Council of Youth” in the municipalities, which established the first practices for guaranteeing institutional youth participation in the municipalities through statutory decisions in a number of municipalities including the City of Skopje. Starting in 2010, SEGA introduced the practice of creating Local Youth Strategies, involving 12 municipalities and the City of Skopje. Based on the experiences of these models and processes and the active lobbying and advocacy of SEGA, the councils of youth and youth strategies are now an integral part of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies [2019]. As of 2015, SEGA has been continuously working on developing and piloting digital youth participation tools, through the European digital youth participation platform OPIN.

SEGA is active in the field of child rights promotion at country level. In 2009, SEGA prepared an Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at national level. In 2010, the

report was presented to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child in Geneva. SEGA continued the practice of regular monitoring of child rights implementation, through monitoring processes [2011-2013] and generated periodical and annual monitoring reports. In 2017, SEGA along with Youth Educational Forum and the First Children's Embassy in the world Megjasi, led a consultative process for legal regulation of student participation and organization resulting in a Draft text on Amendments to the Laws on Primary and Secondary Education. In 2019, the Law on Primary Education was adopted by the Assembly, containing the provisions for youth participation submitted by SEGA. In order to support the implementation of the Law on Primary Education, SEGA in partnership with BDE, developed Guidelines for student participation, student organizing and child rights protection for primary schools.

Based on the European experiences and standards of the European Agency for Youth information and Counseling (ERYICA), and aimed at increasing the level of information of youth, in 2010 SEGA established the first “Youth Informational and Counseling Center INFO SEGA” in N. Macedonia located in Prilep, followed by the second Youth Information Center INFO SEGA in Kavadarci in 2015. In cooperation with UNDP, SEGA established Youth Info Clubs in Bitola and Shtip [2014].

Since 2012, SEGA has been implementing the programme Macedonia Model United Nations. Through this programme, young people acquire skills for research, public speech, public discussion, conflict development, decision making with consensus and leadership skills.



Alternative Report

on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of North Macedonia

As of 2017, SEGA has been particularly focused on support of social inclusion of the vulnerable groups of young people through enabling equal opportunities for accessing the labour market, thus establishing 4 Youth Info Career Centers in Prilep, Bitola, Shtip and Skopje towards supporting youth at risk in the employment process. SEGA also delivers services for employability enhancement of vulnerable and socially excluded youth, with focus on young people within the social welfare system and Roma, implementing various acknowledged methodologies.

Coalition SEGA was formed in 2004 and has membership of 24 organizations. SEGA is a member of international networks such as the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), CIVICUS Network, European Network of Innovation for Inclusion and YouthProActiv.