

ePACT

Education Partnership for Advocacy, Capacity-Building and Transformation

Progress Report - June 2016



The project is implemented with the financial support of the Austrian Development Cooperation as part of the initiative "NETUCATE – Networked education creating a skills web for participation and sensitivity, 2015-2018.



Project Background

ePACT is an initiative of two civil society organizations with a proven track record in the field of education. EUROCLIO – the European Association of History Educators and CDRSEE – Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe have worked for over 20 years in the region, providing opportunities for regional cooperation and promoting innovative and responsible history education. The initiative seeks to build on these experiences by building sustainable partnerships in the region for systemic change in education. Practitioners and policy makers benefit from intensified relation and cooperation as it strengthens capacity for both reform and implementation.

Overall, ePACT seeks to contribute on the macro level to sustaining the democratization process and enhancing conflict sensitivity in the Western Balkans through reforms and implementation of changes in the formal schooling system that will intensify democratic education. As such it support strategic aims laid down in the South East Europe 2020 policy of the Regional Cooperation Council, as well as sustaining various EU policy agenda's, such as Erasmus+ (including the Paris Declaration on Education for Fundamental Values), Open Up Education and Education and Training 2020.

The project strives to achieve that education authorities and civil society jointly reform education and schools in the region to enhance critical thinking and active citizenship.

For achieving this specific objective the project relies on three interrelated results:

1. New evidence-based curricula reform strategies for history education in particular and social science in general are developed by policy makers and curricula developers. These subject areas develop important competences of students and play a major role in the development of democratic conflict and gender-sensitive mindsets.
2. Increased capacity for training and multiplication at the classroom level, providing for individuals who will be able to act as trainers for peers and who will be able to multiply the competencies for multi-perspective and participative lessons. Eventually this will build the democratic competences of the future generation and equip students with the empathy and the skills necessary for turning complex conflicts into constructive solutions.
3. Joint advocacy and regional cooperation is crucial for nurturing synergies amongst civil society and policy makers on the regional level, putting key actors in the position to share and co-ordinate ongoing support for educators in the field of social science and didactics.

Education authorities and civil society jointly reform education and schools in the region to enhance critical thinking and active citizenship.

Status Report after Expert Meetings on 8-10 June, Vienna

ePACT successfully organized two standing working group meetings of experts on 8-10 June 2016, in Vienna, bringing together 12 policy makers, 27 members of civil society (including teachers and community leaders), 3 members of Academia and 2 participants from intergovernmental organisations working in the Western Balkans. The joint programme of both expert groups included expert presentations on the latest developments in educational science, in international policy developments and existing global and European initiatives for development of educational policy and practice. Moreover, the expert groups were able to engage in a constructive sharing of existing initiatives and events on the national level and an exercise in mapping needs and opportunities individuals and institutes would be able to offer one another.

The meeting started with a key note address by Prof. Andreas Demetriou from Cyprus on “Learning how to think, learn, and reason”, about how intelligence is measured and how it can be nurtured in primary and secondary schools. An expert panel, comprised of Janet Looney from the Institute of Education and Social Policy and John Hamer from the Council of Europe gave an overview of the wider international context before the working groups started with discussions in their specific areas.

It was agreed that ‘development of education’, was a much more appropriate wording than ‘reform’ taking into account that the project wants to build on existing best practice and complement approaches that can address remaining gaps.

The meeting was organised into two specialist working groups. A regional working group that had a focus on strengthening the implementation of learner centered teaching/learning approaches that, despite endorsed by all countries on the policy level, still can rarely been identified in classrooms of the region. As a result of the meeting, a Partnership Memorandum will be crafted between participants, which will outline details of the partnership and set common agendas.

The second regional expert group had a specific focus on history education and entered into a collaborative and engaging reflection on best ways to conduct a wide-ranging needs assessment that will shed light and increase understanding on areas and ways of making history teaching more relevant and constructive, centering on the need to gather a substantial evidence base while serving the needs of policy makers to identify gaps, needs and opportunities.

Going forward, the expert groups embraced the need for closer collaboration and has started to collaborate online using Basecamp as designate cloud service. Furthermore specific events and opportunities for synergy were identified.

The next steps are a preparatory meeting in Montenegro for the Needs Assessment and the planning of accredited Pilot Seminars for building capacities amongst school directors, inspectors and curriculum designers for a more committed implementation of learner centered teaching/learning approaches in schools.

Participants

Special Working Group on History Education

Name	City	Institute
Aleksandar Todosijevic	Belgrade	Primary School "Branko Radicevic"/Teachers Association UDI
Aleksandra Jankovic	Sarajevo	OSCE Mission to BiH
Alois Ecker	Vienna	University of Vienna
Arber Salihu	Pristina	Ministry of Education
Benny Christensen	Copenhagen	EUROCLIO Ambassador
Bettina Paireder	Vienna	University of Vienna
Bojana Dujkovic Blagojevic	Banja Luka	EUROCLIO HIP BiH
Brigitte Haider	Vienna	European Parents Association
Darko Stojanov	Skopje	Institute for National History
Dea Maric	Zagreb	Documenta
Donika Xhemalji	Pristina	Primary School "Faik Konica"/Teachers Association SHMHK
Fatmiroshe Xhemali	Tirana	Teachers Association ALBNA
Ferit Idrizi	Pristina	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Gentian Dedja	Elbasan	Elbasan University/Teachers Association ALBNA
Igor Jurukov	Skopje	Ministry of Education
Iliriana Topulli	Tirana	Ministry of Education and Sports
John Hamer	London	Council of Europe
Jonathan Even-Zohar	The Hague	EUROCLIO
Judith Geerling	The Hague	EUROCLIO
Klaus Edel	Vienna	University of Vienna
Marko Suica	Belgrade	University of Belgrade
Milos Vukanovic	Podgorica	National Museum of Montenegro/Teachers Association HIPMONT
Mire Mladenovski	Skopje	Teachers Association ANIM
Mirza Cehajic	Zenica	Education Pedagogical Institute Zenica
Rade Vujovic	Podgorica	Teachers Association HIPMONT
Radoslav Atos Milosevic	Podgorica	Ministry of Education
Rodoljub Jovanovic	Amsterdam	University of Amsterdam
Vesna Dimitrijevic	Belgrade	Primary School "Laza Kostic"/Teaches Association UDI

Special Working Group on Didactical Reform

Name	City	Institute
Ana Pesikan	Belgrade	Professor at Faculty of Philosophy,
Andreas Demetriou	Larnaca	University of Nicosia Research Foundation

Biljana Stojanovic	Belgrade	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
Corinna Noack-Aetopulos	Thessaloniki	CDRSEE
Dukagijn Pupovci	Pristina	Kosovo Education Center
Fabian Rühle	Vienna	Centropa
Gerda Sula	Tirana	Step by Step Center
Janet Looney	Paris	European Institute of Education and Social Policy
Jasminka Čekić-Marković	Belgrade	Center for Educational Policy
Monika Tortschanoff	Vienna	Austrian Development Agency
Nedim Prelic	Tuzla	University of Tuzla
Nertila Pupuleku	Tirana	Ministry of Education and Sports
Predrag Damjanovic	Banja Luka	Pedagogical Institute, Ministry of Education and Culture
Radoje Novovic	Podgorica	Ministry of Education, Bureau for Educational Services
Ryve Prekorogja	Pristina	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Sasa Kulenovic	Belgrade	CDRSEE
Snjezana Koren	Zagreb	Philosophical Faculty, University of Zagreb
Violeta Petroska-Beshka	Skopje	Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution
Zoran Lalović	Tivat	Ministry of Education, Bureau for Educational Services
Zvezdana Kovac	Thessaloniki	CDRSEE