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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

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BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The Republic of Macedonia is an independent, democratic and social country. The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia exercise their power through representatives, who are democratically chosen on immediate general elections. The main aims of the country are radical reforms within the economic and political life, establishing of a market economy and a stable parliamentary democracy.

The Republic of Macedonia has a population of 2,022,547 citizens, out of whom 64.18% are Macedonian; 25.17% are Albanian; 3.85% Turkish; 2.66% Roma; 1.78% Serb; 0.48% Vlah; 0.84% Bosnjak and 1.04% members of other communities.

The capital of the Republic of Macedonia is Skopje with a population of 467, 257 citizens.¹

The freedom of religion is guaranteed.

The highest constitutional body is the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia which is composed of 120 members of Parliament. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia embodies the executive power.

The President of the Republic is elected on immediate general elections, with secret voting, for the period of five years.

During the period of transition, there have been dramatic and considerable transformations in the political, economic and social development of the Republic of Macedonia. Nevertheless, besides the difficult times and tensions, the country has managed to preserve its peace and security. These are the basic pre-requisites for promoting political, economic and social development and faster integration into the European Union. As a result of the social and economic changes, the basic economic indicators, the GDP, do not mark considerable tendencies of improvement.

Table 1: Basic economic indicators²

	GDP per capita in US dollars	Rate of employment	Rate of unemployment
2001	1.830	38.6%	30.5%
2002	1.839	35.8%	31.9%
2003	-	34.5%	36.7%

¹ Reports, Census of people, households, and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002, final data, Skopje, 2003.

² Monthly statistical report, State Statistical Office, Skopje 2004 and Labour Force Survey, State Statistical Office, 2001, 2002, 2003, Skopje.

- Number of illiterate citizens up to age 10 is 63,562 or 3.6%.³
- Public expenditure for education out of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in year 2000 is 3.5%; in year 2001 it is 3.6% and in year 2002 it is 3.6%.⁴

Principles and general aims of the system of education

The new educational policy in the Republic of Macedonia has posed several important aims for establishing sound foundations for development. The established aims forward the education towards: 1) improving the efficiency; 2) building standards in the compulsory, secondary and higher education; 3) improving the conditions for education of young people from 12 to 19 years; and 4) creating conditions for education of the adults.

The processes of democratization of the whole society and respect of human rights have created foundations for building democracy in education by respecting the two basic principles:

- principle of equality (justice, accessibility and respect of rights of all without difference in sex, age, racial, ethnic or religious background, place of residence and social status, capability and health condition);
- principle of participation of subjects in education, (freedom of expression, choice and adequate participation in the decision-making in the educational practice, as well as acceptance of responsibilities).

The normative framework which determines the democratic and other basic principles of education consists of the following: The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the system acts for Elementary, Secondary and Higher education, international documents, The Convention for the Children's rights (UN, 1989), The World declaration for education for all (EFA, 1996), The Memorandum for life-long learning (2000) and other.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the system laws for education guarantee the pupils a right to education in their mother tongue.

³ Census of the population, households and dwellings in Republic of Macedonia, 2002
State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2004

⁴ Gross Domestic Product in Republic of Macedonia, 2002, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2004

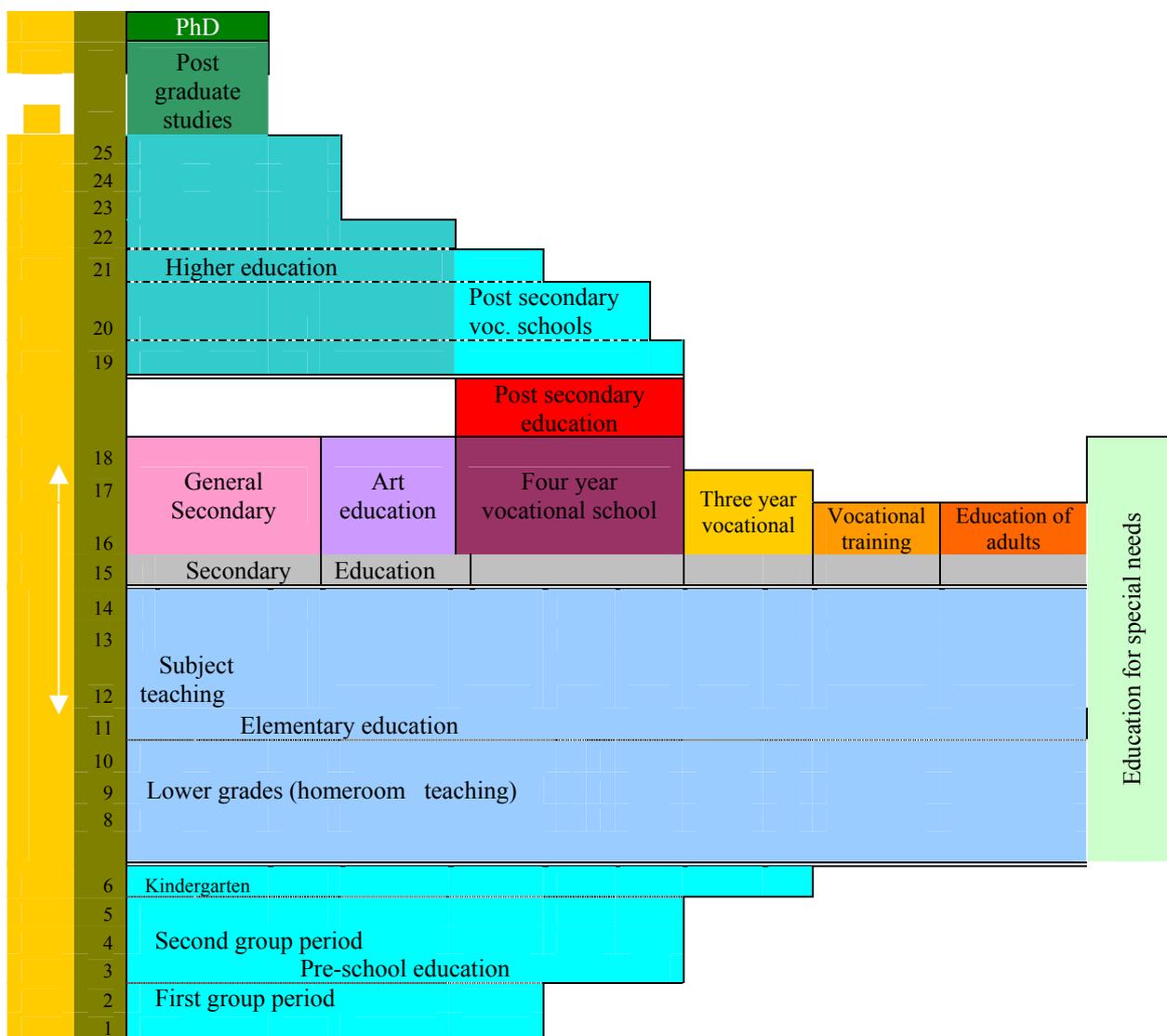
The educational process in the public educational institutions is performed in Macedonian language. For the members of the other communities, there are educational groups (classes) and schools with education provision in Albanian, Turkish and Serbian Language. This right is guaranteed in the public pre-school, elementary and secondary education. At the universities, the education provision is performed in Macedonian, Albanian and other world languages, which is regulated by law.

Despite the limited resources, the Republic of Macedonia has taken continuous care in the past decade for enlarging and maintenance of the network of kindergartens and pre-school institutions, schools, faculties and universities for education in all levels, having managed with limited means of financing. There is a determination to strengthen the education of adults for completion of elementary education, for additional qualifications or further professional education.

This enables development of understanding, tolerance, cooperation and trust among children, young people and adults of different national and social background.

The educational system provides transfer from one to other type of schools and creates vertical connection among the separate levels of education as well as advancement to post secondary and higher education.

The subsequent changes in the education will improve the quality of the educational process and will continue the tendency to achieve internationally verified standards of knowledge and vocational training.



Graphic display of the system of education in the Republic of Macedonia

OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

The development of the educational system is based on planned changes, which are targeted at achieving certain aims, currently important not only in our country but in the educational systems of other countries as well. They aim at raising the quality and efficiency of the system of education and training, meeting the needs of the young people and the adults for knowledge, as well as innovating in the process of teaching and learning. In that direction, there is a tendency to intensify the professional development of teachers, to enable the use of information technology in education, to increase the number of pupils in all levels of education and to make better use of resources in education. These processes are supported by completing the legal framework for organization and management in education and the ongoing processes of decentralization in this area.

The changes in the economic and political system create a need for improvement of the conditions in education, larger access to all levels of education for young people and adults on the principles of permanent education, as well as initiating employment and professional development of all of the users of educational services and their preparation for active citizenship. These aims should lead towards creating equal opportunities for education and social cohesion. Within this aim, it is important to encourage young people to take part in education, to develop modes of formal and informal education, to build a rational network of state and private educational institutions and the educational system as a whole.

The key aim in the development of the educational system is opening of the system towards the achievements and experiences of the other developed countries in the world and the countries of the European Union. This aim imposes creating a spirit of entrepreneurship, improvement in the teaching of foreign languages, intensifying the mobility and exchange, as well as greater use of the results from surveys about the development of the economy and other areas.

The educational system is continuously built upon the cultural values, traditions and aims towards which the Republic of Macedonia is striving such as the respect of the basic values and human rights of citizens, recognized by the international law and determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

The fore-mentioned changes seem to be common in the pre-school and all levels of education. Nevertheless, they have certain specific characteristics which deserve special attention.

In the period 2001-2004, the Ministry of education and science has been in charge of the national policy in education and science. The ministry prepares the regulations in education and science, which are verified by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, and is responsible for their implementation. It also organizes the financing of education and takes care of affairs in this area.

Within the Ministry, there is a Bureau for development of education with a status of a legal entity. Its authorities and competencies are in the area of preparation of the curricula and programmes of study, supervision and assistance to schools as well as the area of in-service training of teachers for the revised curriculum and innovation in the teaching process. Recently, the Bureau for development of education (through its Assessment Unit) has started organizing external exams for evaluation of achievements of pupils in the elementary and secondary schools. In this area, the Republic of Macedonia has taken part in several international surveys for evaluation of achievements in education.

The State Inspectorate, as a body within the ministry, performs inspections of the implementation of the laws and other regulations in all levels of the educational system.

The Pedagogical Service is in charge of supervision of the curricula and programmes of study, course books, textbooks etc.

With the new efforts for decentralization of the system of education, the key areas in the educational policy have been determined. They are: the curricula and programmes of study, evaluation and assessment, providing quality and professional assistance, professional development of teachers, supervision (inspection), financing and maintenance of infrastructure.

Also, the jurisdiction and the bodies of the educational institutions on national and local level have been determined. In that way, the people employed in educational institutions, pupils, parents, representatives of the local community, the union, the social partners, interest groups and other will be more included in the system of decision making in education

Pre-school education

(From the age of six months until school age)

Organization and management

In the system of pre-school child care and education, according to the Law, there are independent or integrated institutions (nursery schools or kindergartens). The nursery schools enroll children up to two years of age, while in the kindergartens there are children from two years of age till the age when they start school. The children are placed into educational groups according to their age.

There are also pre-school institutions for children who are five or six years old. Efforts are in progress, to organize compulsory education for all the children who have not been included in the pre-school institutions. There is a new curriculum which will be implemented starting from the next school year. According to it, the compulsory elementary education will last nine years.

There is an intention to involve families and parents to cooperate with the pre-school institutions in the education of their children and to participate in the costs.

Table 2: *Number of kindergartens and children*

Year	Kindergartens	Children
2000	52	37 801
2001	52	36 502
2002	52	36 417
2003	52	36 605

Source: Reports about pre-school organizations and kindergartens within elementary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

Nevertheless, in the period after the 90, there is a slower development of pre-school child care and education. Thus, during the past four years, still a small number of parents have enrolled their children of age up to 2 years in nursery schools, while in the network of kindergartens and pre-school institutions the number of children maintains the same level as the previous years. The number of children who attend pre-school programmes within the elementary schools is larger than the number of children who attend pre-school programmes within the kindergartens.

The management of the kindergartens is in the jurisdiction of the Governing Boards which consist of representatives of the founder, the staff, parents of the children and members from the local community where the kindergarten is located. According to the Act for protection of children's rights from year 2000, the means for financing the kindergartens are provided from the state sources, from the beneficiaries of the services, from the local government, from foundations, donations, legacies, sale of own products and other sources.

The pre-school education is not compulsory, and the instruction is performed in Macedonian language. For children of members of other communities, there are separate educational groups in the kindergartens and pre-school institutions where the instruction is performed in the mother tongue of the children: Albanian, Turkish and Serbian language.

Table 3: *Number of children in kindergartens according to the language of instruction*

School year	Kindergartens in elementary schools					Kindergartens in pre-school institutions				
	Mac. lang.	Alb. lang.	Turk. lang.	Serb lang.	other lang.	Mac. lang.	Alb. lang.	Turk. lang.	Serb lang.	other lang.
1999	10 209	5244	283	48	-	3 939	612	74	25	38
2000	10 204	5261	255	49	-	3 639	582	94	25	61
2001	9 509	5243	263	38	-	3 373	591	87	25	50
2002	9 372	5138	217	62	-	3 183	487	80	27	24
2003	9 170	5239	320	72	-	3 130	465	68	16	56

Source: Reports about pre-school organizations and kindergartens within elementary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

With the changes of the system laws (Act for social protection of children and Elementary Education Act) the children from the kindergartens, who are 6-7 years of age will be integrated into the elementary education. The service of the pre-school institutions is adjusted towards the needs of the parents for care-taking and education of their children during the working hours of the day and the week.

Planning and programming

For the pre-school education, there is a framework curriculum for the instruction and standards for the facilities for stay and sustenance of the children. They are in accordance with the age of the children.

In our country, in the last decade, there has been an open pedagogical approach, which provides opportunities for development of programs for instruction in the nursery schools and kindergartens on the level of the pre- school institutions and educational groups. There is an open approach towards parents and the local community, which presupposes immediate involvement of parents in the work and decision making in the kindergartens and pre- school institutions.

The programmes for pre-school education are detailed from the members of the professional Councils and the teachers in the pre-school institutions. In this respect, the openness of the system of pre-school education towards innovation and greater activity of the teachers and the children is expressed through the following characteristics:

- planning of the instructional process is based on the age and the developmental characteristics of the children and not on derived abstract aims and objectives;
- the needs and the interest of children are the bases for the instructional methods (this presupposes creating flexible educational situations in which children can find their opportunity for learning, socializing and playing);
- the educational practice with children is more open towards the child's experience (with connections to their family and the local environment, with free access and possibilities of involvement of parents and other adults in the work of the kindergartens and other pre-school institutions);

- organization of the space, the time and the way of grouping of the children is becoming more a matter of agreement and planning, which is in accordance with the realistic conditions, needs and possibilities of the children;
- the educational process can not be restricted to verbal transfer of ready made content matter (the instructor can not be a transmitter of a designated program, but an active participant in the educational process, who together with the children and other adults is creating the curriculum);
- the evaluation and the self-evaluation are the bases for introducing professionalism and professional development of the child minders and teachers, as well as for creation of favorable conditions for educational practice.

Innovations in the educational process- projects and programmes

The changes in the programming and in the way of organizing the educational practice are related to the pre-service education and professional development of the child minders and teachers.

Thus, besides improving the pre-service training , the implementation of the programme “Step by Step” supported by George Town University from Washington and the Open Society Institute- Macedonia has played a considerable part in the innovation of the education of pre-school child minders and teachers. The implementation of this programme has created conditions for the children, within their educational process, to be able to make a choice of activities, to solve problems, to work creatively, to socialize and play together, to take care of the community and the local environment.

A programme with a similar aim is the programme for interactive learning in the pre-school institutions, which is supported by UNICEF and by Bishop Grosseteste College from Lincoln, Great Britain. It introduces changes which improve the quality of the educational process (acquiring functional knowledge through personal experience, through activities and topics connected to the life of the children etc.). This concept helps to build self-confidence and promotes individual development of children.

In 2003, this project together with the programme “Step by step” included all the children from the pre-school educational groups in the elementary schools and the kindergartens, in total about 18 600 children.

Besides other innovative projects in the pre-school education, the “Step by step” programme for example, includes families of Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, and Bosnjak ethnic background. The parents of children, who are not attending kindergarten or pre-school institution before they start school, are being prepared for better understanding of their children. Another project with a similar aim is the project “Learning and growing up together” for parents from families of Macedonian, Albanian and Roma communities.

The project “Inclusion of children with special needs within the regular schools and kindergartens” continues to be implemented with an aim to diminish the concealed selection and exclusion of certain groups of children from the educational system (for reasons of poverty, ethnic background, cultural status, place of residence etc.) Yet, there continues certain selectivity, manifested mostly by: separate system of schools for children with special educational needs, unjust separation and grouping of children, etc. Nevertheless, this project helps in changing beliefs and attitudes of parents, teachers and other subjects in education of children with special needs. Therefore, the project “Inclusion of children with special educational needs” has been introduced into more schools in our country.

The project “Education for Roma children in the year before starting school” is implemented with support of UNICEF. The main aim is to enable Roma children to learn the Macedonian language, to improve their socialization, to equip them with working and other cultural habits and basic knowledge necessary in the year before starting school.

Major problems and challenges

The current picture of the pre-school education illustrates the need for special efforts for redesigning the pre-service education and training of child minders and teachers and adjusting it to the changes in the curriculum and educational practice. They put an emphasis on the competence and skills of the teachers as prerequisites for development of open and fair system of pre-school education.

A strategic aim in the development of pre-school education is the transfer of this system, from the Ministry for labour and social politics, within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of education and science. The incorporation into this ministry will enable better adjustment to the elementary education. In this respect, a greater cooperation in relation to the organization and the curricula is expected between the pre-school institutions and elementary schools.

It is necessary to continue the processes of modernization of the educational practice in the kindergartens and pre-school institutions and to increase the professional support and advice, but at the same time, the self evaluation of the educational practice in the pre-school institutions is also important. There is a need to prepare a plan for efficient use of the available facilities, to increase the rate of inclusion of children of different ethnic background in the kindergartens and pre-school institutions, to include the non-government sector and the private sector in the system and there is a need for further diversification, so that the pre-school education can be made accessible for a larger number of children and families.

Elementary education

(from age 7 to 14 years)

Organization and management

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Elementary Education Act, conditions are created for children from 7 to 14 years of age to attend elementary school from grade I to VIII. Children who will be of age 7 at the end of the calendar year are enrolled in grade I of elementary school. Due to the amendments to the Law, children who will be of age 6 by the beginning of the school year, can be enrolled in grade I only under the basis of a positive opinion issued by a specialist doctor, a psychologist and a pedagogical counselor.

In the system of elementary education, the network of schools for instruction in mother tongue from grade I to grade VIII is being enlarged. For the pupils, members of the Macedonian people, the instruction is performed in Macedonian

language and Cyrillic alphabet, and for the pupils from other communities the instruction is performed in their mother tongue: Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian language.

The pupils from the Vlah and Roma communities have a right to study their mother tongue from grade II to grade VIII in elementary school on an optional basis.

The pupils from the other communities study the Macedonian language as an official language of the Republic of Macedonia.

Table 4: Number of pupils according to the language of instruction in elementary schools

School year	Language of instruction			
	Macedonian language	Albanian language	Turkish language	Serbian language
1999/00	168 526	76 752	6 307	627
2000/01	164 242	75 571	6 061	616
2001/02	160 218	76 087	5 874	528
2002/03	153 665	75 543	5 825	483

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

The internal structure of the eight year compulsory education is adjusted to the age of the pupils into two developmental periods from grade I to grade IV (home-room teaching in core subjects) and from grade V to grade VIII (instruction in different subjects).

The instruction in the class (educational group), during the first period including grade IV is as a rule performed by one teacher-instructor. In the upper grades, from grade V to grade VIII, the classes of pupils are organized in the same manner, but if there is a need other classes can be formed. According to the national curriculum, the instruction from grade V till grade VIII is performed by subject teachers, trained and certified for teaching one or two related subjects.

With the adoption of the National Curriculum in 2001, in the elementary schools there are conditions for studying a first foreign language in the grade IV. With provision of the material conditions and employing teachers, a larger number of pupils can start learning the first foreign language in grade IV.

In the upper grades, from grade V to grade VIII, pupils study two foreign languages (the first foreign language as a compulsory subject and the second foreign language as an elective). This enables diversity in the teaching of foreign languages:

as compulsory, elective, as block hours or as an optional subject. Therefore, it is necessary to hire more teachers and intensify their training for teaching foreign languages, as well as equip the schools with technical equipment and create didactic materials for instruction.

In the local communities with small number of pupils, regional schools are organized, that are under the governance of the elementary schools, which enroll pupils from grade I to grade VIII. In the smaller settlements, where there are not enough pupils, combined classes are formed. There is one instructor for all pupils from grade I to grade IV. After grade IV, pupils continue their education in more developed schools with grades from V to VIII.

Combined classes for pupils from grade I to grade VIII can be organized only with permission from the Ministry of Education and Science. For pupils from regional schools, if there is a necessity, bus transfer is organized or accommodation is provided in a student dormitory or a family.

The elementary schools can organize full day instruction and stay of pupils from grades I to grade IV, depending on the needs of pupils and their parents. For the instruction in one class (educational group) there are two teachers. The cost of the full day stay of pupils is covered by their parents.

In the elementary schools, there are School Boards, whose members are elected from the body of home-room teachers, subject teachers, parents, as well as the representatives from the local government and the founder of the school. A new legal provision is being adopted which will enable greater decentralization. This will increase the jurisdiction, but also the responsibilities of the local government in the area of the compulsory elementary education.

Planning and programming

In the period after 1996, there have been amendments to the Elementary Education Act and changes in the National Curriculum and the programmes of study. These changes have made the basic principles more specific and they are: **democratization** in the elementary education for all categories of beneficiaries and their different educational needs; **openness** towards pedagogical and organizational innovations; systematical **monitoring and evaluation of achievements of pupils** in

the school (self-evaluation, internal, external evaluation); introduction of **basic educational standards; inclusion into education** of children with special educational needs; **cooperation** among pupils, teachers and parents and cooperation with the local community.

In the system of elementary education especially, there is a principle for the right to education as a basic human right, which enables building foundations for a just society, further education of the individual and preparation for life and work. In the past few years, there has been an initiative for inclusive education for separate groups of children, who have been deprived the right to education in the past (children from poor families, members of ethnic or language minorities, children from communities where there is prejudice for education of female children, children who live in distant and isolated settlements, far from the school and children with special educational needs.

In the elementary education, within the programmes of study for lower and upper grades of elementary education, special attention is addressed to introducing the topics for civil education and rights of children, as well as to innovation of forms and methods which encourage the processes of socialization, cooperation, education for tolerance and building mutual trust among children in the life and work. These activities are supported by the Centre for Civil Education from Callabasas-California USA and the Association of CRS- Catholic Relief Services for Macedonia.

In the upper grades of elementary education, there is a project for Civic Education, which includes home-room teachers and their pupils. It includes project activities for acquisition of knowledge, skills and development of capabilities such as: identification of problems related to the life of children in the school and local community; finding ways and methods for problem solving in everyday life.

In grades VII and VIII of elementary school, a subject called Culture for citizenship has been introduced, with an aim to equip pupils with knowledge, develop their skills, abilities and help them adopt values which are prerequisites for development of a whole person as well as competent, responsible and active citizenship.

Innovations in the educational process

When the qualitative achievements in elementary education are discussed, the National Curriculum and the programmes of study for each separate subject are the most important bases for planning, implementation and evaluation of the educational process, and they have a central position in the educational policy. They reach the very core of education, teaching and learning and that is why the innovation of the National Curriculum and the programmes of study have always attracted great interest of the professional experts and the wider public.

The Bureau for Development of Education is the originator of new concepts for the instruction and teaching in the elementary education. For the completion of these complex tasks, curricular committees have been formed, which comprise of large number of experts from the faculties for education of teachers, prominent experts from the subject area, as well as experienced teachers from different schools.

The new programmes of study are focused on principles, aims, topics, activities and expected results. They trace a new approach in planning and organization of the teaching process, adjusted to the developmental and educational needs of pupils in real life, together with their social, economic and cultural needs.

The most important change in the development of the programmes of study is the shifting of the focus of the educational process from content based planning and programming towards goal and content based programming. There is more explicit planning of expected effects, achievement of pupils (knowledge, skills, content matter, means, activities, which are more clearly defined in the elementary education).

This provides a basis for measuring and evaluation of achievement and quality in education. It gives the teachers an opportunity to be independent in concretization of topics and methods in their work in accordance to the anthropological-psychological and social and cultural components of the educational process. This creates an opportunity for expression of the professional expertise and creativity of the teacher.

The main advantages of this approach are the following: using content matter and methods which connect learning to pupil's experience; flexible organization of the lessons; encouragement of individual activity; change in the layout of furniture in the classrooms, which is supposed to promote socialization and cooperation in learning, etc.

A serious problem in the educational process in the elementary education is the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievements on the basis of objective procedures and standards. It can be said that due to limited material investments into education and the educational infrastructure, it is not always possible to fulfill the standards, which seems to be probably the most unfavorable tendency in our educational system.

Without the standards, the evaluation and control is limited to making indirect conclusions, on the basis of the realization of content matter prescribed by the National Curriculum and programmes of study, the inspections, the supervision and advisory support from the Bureau for Development of Education. In fact, in the elementary education, there is mainly assessment of pupils' knowledge by their teachers, and monitoring of the work of the teacher and advisory help from the headmaster of the school and the advisors from the Bureau for Development of Education.

For overcoming this unfavorable situation, four years ago, the first major steps were made for development of a system for external evaluation, which will be performed on the basis of adopted national programme for evaluation of pupils' achievements in the elementary education. It will be performed on a representative sample or on the whole population of pupils, after completion of certain educational cycles (lower grades and upper grades in elementary school).

For this purpose, within the Bureau for Development of Education, there is an Assessment Unit, which with support of the Dutch Government and the World Bank and under mentorship of the Institute for educational measurements CITO from Holland, has performed national testing of achievements of pupils in lower grades of elementary schools in mother tongue (Macedonian and Albanian) and mathematics. This national testing has an aim to check the level of adopted knowledge, skills and abilities of representative sample of pupils and schools. On the basis of this information, conclusions can be drawn about the quality of the achievements of pupils in the lower grades of elementary school.

The Assessment Unit has been developing into a competent institution for performance of national testing and evaluations in the elementary education through evaluation of achievements of pupils in the lower grades or upper grades in elementary schools. A national programme for testing of pupils' achievements is expected to be adopted soon.

The improvement of quality in elementary education is largely encouraged by the long-term projects for innovation – “Active teaching-interactive learning’ which is realized with support of UNICEF and professional support of Bishop Grosseteste College from Lincoln, Great Britain as well as the programme “Step by Step’ supported by George Town University from Washington and financial support from the Open Society Institute Macedonia.

These projects, which have been in practice for almost a decade, have already included many teachers and pupils from elementary schools in our country. In that way, the changes in the process of teaching in the lower grades through the realization of these projects can be continually transferred into the teaching in the upper grades.

Considerable contributions to the positive changes in the elementary schools have been made by the project “Approaches towards visual thinking” which is realized with support of the Open Society Institute Macedonia. Additional positive influence has been exerted by the projects: “Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking” (also supported by the Open Society Institute Macedonia); Games for conflict resolution” (supported by the Swiss government); “European network of schools which promote health” (supported by the World Health Organization), UNICEF and some other non-government organizations).

In the period from 2000-20004, the Republic of Macedonia took part into projects for international evaluation in education: PISA, a programme for international evaluation of educational achievements of pupils after completion of general education (pupils at the age of 15 who are in the first year of high school in our system of education).

The aim of this research is to determine the readiness of the pupils for continuation of their education and involvement into everyday professional and life situations (literacy of pupils and their knowledge in mathematics and science is evaluated). This project is realized in three year intervals under the patronage of OECD. In the Republic of Macedonia, these activities are administered by the Assessment unit in the Bureau for Development of Education.

The Assessment unit is also taking part in the project TIMSS (International Study of educational achievements in Mathematics and Science) which is an international comparative study. The aims are to determine the level of knowledge and skills of pupils in Mathematics and Sciences (Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Geography) in grade VIII in elementary schools, as well as to evaluate the factors

which are related to culture, the curriculum, the programmes of study and aims, the teaching practice and institutional organization of education, which have an influence on pupils' achievements. This study is performed in cycles of five years.

The International study PIRLS (international study which is administered every five years) has an aim to gather information about the capabilities of pupils of age 9 and 10 for understanding of written material and the experience gathered in school and their family, as well as the factors related to achievements of pupils.

From year 2002, the project "Creative teaching and learning" has been introduced into 45 elementary schools. This project has many components among which the most essential are: training of teachers for new approaches in the methodology of teaching; training of teachers and pupils for the Debating and Street Law programmes; equipping schools with media libraries; training of the management team of the school for preparation, realization and evaluation of development plans.

The implementation of the project will last three years with support of the Open Society Institute Macedonia and financial support of USAID.

In the elementary education, there is a project for introducing descriptive assessment of achievements and development of skills of pupils in the lower grades of elementary school (from grade I to grade III). This innovation expects the teachers who are involved in it to be trained for analytic monitoring, checking and assessment of the development of every pupil; teachers should acquire a skill to transfer the results from the monitoring and evaluation of pupils; parents and staff employed in the relevant institutions should develop a rationale for the need for descriptive assessment, which is compatible to international standards and experience; it aims to create a basis for changes in the legal framework for implementation of descriptive assessment in the educational practice in our schools.

Major problems and challenges

Generally, the new programmes of study provide a sound basis for measurement and evaluation of achievements of pupils and teachers in the school. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the planning itself, as well as the realization of the teaching process, presupposes a need for gathering objective information about the results of the pupils. For that purpose there is a need of official data: data about the initial knowledge and skills of pupils for those levels and grades for which the new programmes of study are designed; and data about the level of attainment of the

targets and the effects from the teaching according to the new programmes of study. On the basis of the evaluation based on such data, the new programmes of study could be adjusted and measures for support of teachers could be taken, in cases where there is a discrepancy in the expected results and achievements of pupils.

In this respect, the formative assessment of pupils should be made more up to date. In order to achieve this aim, there is a need to innovate the whole system of evaluation and assessment of pupils' knowledge during the whole educational process (evaluation of the process). The aim of this evaluation is to provide feedback, which is a basis for taking corrective specific measures in order to prevent failure. The formative evaluation is an important component of the contemporary guidance of the educational process. It focuses on the teaching process, the activities of the teacher and the pupil, on monitoring of their activities from the point of view of the didactic concepts, the concepts of technology of learning and the concepts for individual and social development of the pupils.

It is necessary to introduce a system of evaluation with completely new elements: self-evaluation, external evaluation and evaluation from the perspective of the parents.

Self-evaluation should be developed as a powerful instrument for development both on institutional and individual level. On institutional level there is a need for the schools to create their development plans, and that means to introduce a procedure for self-evaluation.

On the level of teachers, the self-evaluation can be encouraged if there is a clear definition of competencies of teachers, defined standards of knowledge, or skills needed for the teaching profession. For fulfillment of this aim, there is a need to involve the faculties for teacher training, which will have to redesign and improve the initial education of future educators.

On the level of the pupils, the self-evaluation is the most favourable developmental form of assessment. This form enables the pupil to develop several skills which will be very useful in the course of the life-long learning, in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the activities and achievements in school and later in life.

There is a necessity to develop also the external evaluation, and this presupposes existence of an external body, an institution which is in charge of creating instruments, administration of the evaluation and interpretation of the results.

It is necessary to speed up the staffing with experts of the Assessment Unit in the Bureau for Development of Education, which should continue with the spread of the new trends in the system for monitoring and evaluation.

Secondary education

(from age 15 until age 19)

Organization and management

The public secondary schools provide instruction for young people from 14/15 years to 18/19 years of age. After completion of the elementary school, the pupils have a right to enroll into any secondary school. This right is utilized by about 85% of the pupils who complete the compulsory education, and immediately enroll into a secondary school, in different programmes for general high school programme, vocational school (polytechnic) or secondary school for arts.

Table 5: *Number of enrolled pupils according to the type of education*

School year		General high schools	Vocational schools with three year programmes	Vocational schools with four year programmes	Art schools
2000/01	number	34 033	11233	44812	912
	%	37.40	12.34	49.24	1.00
2001/02	number	35 884	10067	45204	913
	%	38.97	10.93	49.09	0.99
2002/03	number	37 059	9292	46259	916
	%	39.62	9.93	49.46	0.97

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

The percentage of pupils who enroll into general high school programmes is about 40%, while the other 60% enroll into the technical and other vocational schools with three years or four years of instruction. There is a small interest for enrollment into vocational training programmes, which last from six months up to two years.

According to the Secondary Education Act, starting from September 1995, besides instruction in state (public) schools, there has been a provision for secondary school instruction in private secondary schools.

Table 6: Number of private secondary schools, number of students and teachers

School year	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
1999/00	4	411	56
2000/01	4	593	78
2001/02	4	698	92
2002/03	5	848	119

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

The instruction in the secondary education is performed in Macedonian language and Cyrillic alphabet, while for pupils from other communities the instruction is provided in the language and alphabet of the communities: Albanian, Turkish and Serbian in a manner determined by law. The pupils from other communities study the Macedonian language.

According to the Secondary Education Act, the instruction can be performed into one of the world foreign languages. Thus, this legal provision is applied by introducing the bilingual instruction and opening of private schools in a foreign language.

The state schools are founded by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, while for the private schools, the government issues a recommendation for verification, according to the submitted proposal for its curriculum and syllabus. This recommendation for verification for founding a private school presents an evaluation whether the pedagogical standards determined by the Ministry of education, have been fulfilled.

Table 7: Number of schools and pupils in secondary education

School year	Language of instruction							
	Macedonian		Albanian		Turkish		English	
	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils
1999/00	92	74 632	22	14 093	4	602	5	448
2000/01	90	74 816	23	14 902	5	646	5	626
2001/02	90	74 800	24	15 844	5	694	5	730
2002/03	89	74 742	23	17 135	5	762	6	887

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

There is an ongoing procedure for changing the legal framework which will enable greater decentralization and taking over greater jurisdiction in secondary education from the part of the local government.

According to the current practice, the secondary schools can offer instruction in more vocational programmes and fields, but there are schools which offer instruction in only one programme of only general high school education.

The number of pupils that should be enrolled in general high school programme, the vocational schools and the secondary schools for the arts, is determined by the public announcement for enrollment of pupils, which is published on the proposal of the relevant ministry towards the end of March every year.

The advancement from elementary education to secondary education is regulated on the state level. The pupils apply for the announced places, and the schools announce the number of the applicants. In schools, where there are a larger number of pupils who applied, there is a selection according to academic achievement. The pupils, who do not get a place in the first enrolment term, apply again for a place in schools where there are free places.

The applicants are ranked according to the grade points average from grade V to grade VIII and the marks in the subjects such as Macedonian language and Mathematics, and in certain schools in two other subjects important for the field that the pupils have chosen. The secondary schools for the arts perform an evaluation of the special talents of the applicants.

The school documents (certificates, diplomas etc.) can be issued only by schools which fulfill the organizational, curricular, instructional, material and other conditions regulated by the Act and other regulations. The verification is issued by the relevant Ministry.

For the children and the young people with special talents within the elementary schools and other institutions, there is provision of instruction in parallel music and ballet- dance classes on elementary level. After completion of the elementary level, those pupils can continue their education in secondary schools for music, ballet and other applied arts. For the arts, there are studies on specialized higher education institutions (for visual arts, drama and music).

The pupils with special educational needs are in direct care of the educational institutions, educational bodies, centers for social care within the local government and the state. The schools and the centers for pupils with special educational needs are

founded in the units of the local government and the state. Their work is financed by means from state sources, donations etc. These institutions provide secondary education or education for vocational training depending on the type and the level of hindrance in their development.

The costs for the education provision in public secondary schools are covered by the state, and in the private schools are covered by the parents of pupils. In the public schools, there is access to adults, who have to pay for the costs of their education.

The number of pupils in one class can not be larger than 34 and smaller than 15 pupils. In the majority of the secondary schools, the instruction is performed in two shifts (as a rule the shifts combine pupils of year I and II and year III and IV). The pupils change shifts every two weeks, in the morning or in the afternoon. The instruction is performed from Monday to Friday starting from 7.30 a.m. or at 8 a.m. until noon, and in the schools that teach in two shifts until late in the afternoon. The instructional lesson lasts 45 minutes.

In the secondary schools there are School Boards. The members of the schools boards are elected from the representatives of the founder of the school, the local government, parents of pupils and teachers in the school.

The education for adults in the secondary education is organized in the form of consultations and taking exams in six examination sessions.

An important function in the educational system is performed by the student dormitories which function within the elementary and secondary schools, as well as independent institutions for accommodation, sustenance and educational activities with pupils. In the year 2000, 3400 elementary and high school pupils were housed in 32 student dormitories, and there were 5000 university students, staying in 7 student dormitories. The facilities such as student restaurants were used by a larger number of pupils, even those who have used private home stay.

The Republic of Macedonia has specialized educational institutions for human resources and other personnel in the area of security and defense, which are founded by special regulations.

The children, young people and adults take part in many activities in science clubs, culture or sports clubs, libraries, etc. The role of the printed media, radio, television and other media is very important.

In the Republic of Macedonia there are religious schools and faculties.

Planning and programming in general high - school education programmes

In 2001, changes were made in the curricula and programmes of study for general high-school education. The new curriculum includes compulsory subjects which represent the general educational standard. They are compulsory for all the pupils and their role is to provide access to higher education, to raise the general education and culture of pupils as a prerequisite for further education and self-education.

The compulsory subjects cover for up to 80% of the total weekly or annual number of lessons in the general high-school education programme (in year I, there is an optimum coverage of the compulsory general education subjects, and in the subsequent years, there is a gradual decrease of their number and hours per week).

A strategic orientation is the introduction of two foreign languages in the general high-school education programme, as well as an opportunity to study the foreign languages in various didactical modes: in bilingual teaching programmes, as an intensive course, as blocks of lessons, optionally or in other modes.

This determination creates a necessity to solve problems in hiring trained teachers, improving the professional expertise of the teachers, provision of didactical materials and technical equipment in schools.

All this means that there should be additional training of teachers, organized professional development and provision of the schools with appropriate textbooks for the instruction for foreign languages.

The elective subjects in the general high school programme enable the pupils to acquire advanced level of theoretical knowledge. These subjects differentiate the pupils according to their orientation for future studies and the elective part of the matriculation exam. The pupils have a choice of elective subjects in the following areas: literature and arts, social sciences and natural sciences and mathematics.

In this period (from 2001), from the highest levels in the education system, there have been considerations for the introduction of the matriculation exam. Still, the implementation of the new national curriculum and programmes of study has been faced with insufficient preparation of pupils, teachers and the schools. Thus, in the educational practice there were many problems and considerable workload on the part of the pupils, especially with the realization of the programmes for sport and sport activities, music, visual arts and other elective programmes and activities in the

schools. In only two years, there emerged a need to revise and reduce the workload on the part of the pupils in the curriculum.

In the course of 2003/04, there has been a greater adjustment and rationalization of the compulsory and elective subjects, as well as the programmes for sport and sport activities, music, visual arts and the project activities.

With the implementation of the National Curriculum, efforts have been made to change the internal structure of the life and work of the pupils in schools as well as effort for creating standards for monitoring and evaluation of achievements of pupils. Intensive preparations are under way for introduction of the matriculation exam, particularly for introducing the external exams in Macedonian language and literature, Albanian language and literature and Turkish language and literature as well as mathematics and foreign languages and other subjects in the general high school programme, which can be part of the matriculation exam.

State Subject Examination Committees have been formed (in subject areas and particular subjects) as well as State Examination Committee for the matriculation exam. The members of the committees have been trained for development of examination programmes and guides, examination papers and test items, as well as the procedures for evaluation and assessment of the achievements on the examination papers, the examination procedure, etc.

In the past years, there has been pilot testing of the examination papers for separate subjects on a representative sample of schools, classes and pupils. At the moment, they are focused on creation of bank of test items in different subjects and subject areas. These activities are organized by the Bureau for Development of Education, and the Assessment Unit.

The main functions of the external exams are: issuing certificates for achievement; selection of candidates for enrollment into higher levels of education or for employment purposes; control of the programmes of study and their realization in the schools; motivation of schools, pupils and teachers; monitoring, adhering to and realization of educational standards and reporting about the success of the school. The reputation of the teachers and schools could depend in a great deal on the results which their pupils achieve in the exams.

In order to have a greater effect on the teachers and schools, the reports of the external exams are published and distributed without charge to schools in format of special documents. They contain information regarding particular subjects expressed

in quantitative and qualitative indicators of the overall achievements in tests. They give suggestions to the teachers about the most troublesome topics in the courses and indicate the reasons for good or poor results on the tests.

The activities for administration the matriculation exam are transferred to the school level as well, through training of the school coordinators, invigilators, etc. Besides, the schools perform pilot testing according to the prescribed procedures,

In 2004, the matriculation exam was performed in the secondary schools for the arts.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma programme was introduced in “Josip Broz Tito “High school in Skopje in the school year 1996/97. This programme prepares pupils for the International Baccalaureate external exam which is designed by the International Baccalaureate Organization-(IBO). In order to enroll in this programme the pupils must be 16-17 (after completion of second year of general high school education).

Planning and programming in the secondary vocational education

The secondary vocational education has two main aims: preparation for continuation of education on institutions for higher education and preparation for employment in the industry, trade, services and other areas that the pupils have chosen. Pupils can acquire specialized knowledge and skills during the course of the vocational internship training before full term employment.

The curriculum and the programmes of study define the aims and attainment targets, the content, type and length of education in public and private schools, as well as the qualifications of the teachers who provide the instruction. The curriculum and the programmes of study are prepared by the Bureau for Development of Education. There is a positive experience from the active participation in the preparation of the programmes of study of prominent professionals in particular subject areas from the faculties and the university, teachers from vocational schools who teach the particular subject or subject area, as well as advisors from the Bureau for Development of Education. In that way, involvement of large number of professionals and teachers is provided in the development of the curriculum and the programmes of study.

The programmes of study can be proposed also by the schools, companies and institutions and other legal entities for accommodating to their specific needs

(additional qualification, further qualification etc.). After completion of four years of secondary vocational programmes, which are most represented, the pupils take a final school leaving exam or matriculation exam and acquire the right for continuation of their education on an institution for higher education. Still, this provision has not been fully implemented, which means that the matriculation exams have not been administered yet in all schools. The pupils take the final school leaving exams and have a right to sit for entrance exams for enrollment in higher education institutions.

After completing the three-year programmes for secondary vocational education, the pupils take a school leaving exam accompanied with practical assignment. They acquire the right to employment or to continue one more year in the four-year-vocational programmes in the corresponding professional profile.

The two-year programmes for vocational training can be entered also by individuals who have not completed their elementary education. Together with the vocational training, they follow a special programme for completion of their elementary education. The law has provided that the two-year as well as the three year programmes for vocational training for part time students can be performed also in other institutions for education of adults, when the conditions required by the law are provided.

The programmes for secondary education in the field of arts can be enrolled by pupils who are talented for visual art, music or ballet. After four years of instruction, these pupils take the matriculation exam and acquire the right to continue their education on respective higher education institutions.

Innovations of the educational process

During the past decade, or more specifically in the period from 2001 to 2004, there have been changes in the curriculum and the programmes of study within the PHARE programme for reform of the vocational education and training. The aims of those changes were the following: to improve the condition of the facilities, the equipment in schools, to improve the conditions for practical training, to introduce standards for the process of teaching, to revise and innovate the programmes of study, to create a link with the social partners of the vocational education and training. A lot of workshops were organized for training and professional development of teachers in the vocational schools. Nevertheless, there is still a need to revise the number of

educational profiles and curriculum in the vocational schools in order to achieve better efficiency.

For many of the fore mentioned problems, the solutions were sought in the Programme for reform of the vocational education and training –PHARE and from 2001 with support of the German-Macedonian association for technical cooperation, a project for innovation of the programmes of study and the teaching process in the three-year vocational education was started. This project considered the programmes of study for the mechanical, auto-technical and electro-technical vocational profile for the schools in Ohrid, Strumica, Kumanovo, Stip, Bitola, Gostivar, and Skopje.

New programmes of study were made, which offer 50% general and professional theoretical instruction and 50% of practical training which is performed in the school workshops that were renovated and equipped according to German standards.

The practical training is performed also in companies where the related profession is performed. Training for the teachers is also included. The project will last till 2007.

Nevertheless, not only in schools included in the fore-mentioned innovations, but even wider in the system of secondary education, there is not a completely built system for evaluation of achievements of pupils and evaluation of the work of the teaching staff and other counselors (pedagogues, psychologists and other).

For this area of secondary education, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievements is carried out by the teachers continuously, throughout the whole school year;
 - care is taken to lower the workload on the part of the pupils;
 - in the schools, there can be internal and external assessment of pupils' achievement;
 - the assessment and award of marks has to be transparent;
 - the teachers have to report the mark to the pupils after the assessment and in case of written assignments, written comments have to be given as feedback to the pupils about the shortcomings of their knowledge.
-
- the parents or the legal guardian can have access to the written assignments and other work produced by the pupil or has to be informed about the achievement of the pupil.

Regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the achievements of pupils in the obligatory programmes and activities such as: sports and sport activities, music, visual arts and other project activities, the teachers have an obligation: to supervise the attendance and the participation of the pupil; to write notes about the achievements of the pupil and on the basis of objective arguments to formulate a report about the participation and achievement of the pupil.

The pupils have to fulfill the requirements of the obligatory programmes in the general high-school education programme, or the obligatory programmes in the secondary vocational education programme by the end of the school year.

In order to encourage the process of self-evaluation of pupils, the teachers in charge of the class have special obligations. They have to instruct the pupils how to keep record of their achievement in the obligatory elective programmes and themes in the general high school education programme and the vocational education programme. Beside that, pupils should be instructed how to prepare summative self-evaluation reports for the covered themes, the performed activities and the achieved results. Within these reports, there should be reports prepared by the teachers in charge of the realization of the obligatory programmes in the school or in other institutions in the local community (clubs, associations, resource centers, etc.)

In the area of monitoring and assessment of achievement of pupils there are certain responsibilities for the teachers such as: to be familiar with the aims of the programmes of study for the subjects they teach; to be familiar with the methods and techniques for assessment, which are determined in accordance to the nature of the content matter being taught; to be able to use appropriate procedures and different test of knowledge (oral assessment, written production assessment, informal and non-standardized tests, written work, essays and other forms; to be able to assess research work and graphic work).

The mark for the oral assessment should be based on oral presentations, participation in discussions, debates, analysis, critical thinking and other forms, while the mark for the written performance should be based on tests of knowledge, written work, graphic work, projects, coursework and other work. What is very important is that in the process of assessment, the teacher should strive to make the teachers–pupil relationship more democratic.

With the completion of the system for evaluation and assessment, with introduction of the external assessment of the achievement of pupils in secondary

schools (which are projected within the final exam, the matriculation exam and the exams for other certificates), we believe that a new concept for planning and programming of the teaching, as well as evaluation and assessment of achievement of pupils and teachers in the secondary education, will be developed and fully implemented

Major problems and challenges

Because of the fore-mentioned conditions in the secondary education, it is necessary to approach the further reform with greater seriousness. The reform will have to be based on the idea and aims for life-long learning, which presupposes creating conditions which will provide:

- greater access to secondary vocational education for young people and adults;
- application of flexible ways for organization of the vocational education which will be adjusted to the realistic needs and abilities of the young people and the adults and to the available resources;
- reconsidering, but also improving the institutions, programmes and organizational forms for vocational education by connecting the formal and informal education;
- introducing of verified norms and standards for institutions and programmes for education, as an important prerequisite for ensuring quality and professionalism, in the provision of secondary vocational education.

Besides, there is a need to approach the issue of privatization of vocational education and its financing. With the processes of decentralization and regionalization there are possibilities for various forms of financing in the secondary education. In that manner, increased participation of parents as financiers in the educational process (for certain profiles and professions) should be expected. Interested companies and the local community are also expected to take the role of financiers of particular vocations. These processes will contribute to the replacement of the role of the state in financing of the secondary vocational education.

In order to intensify these basic processes it is necessary to redesign the educational profiles and adjust them to the needs arisen from the new economic conditions, to revise and reduce the workload of the curriculum and programmes of

study, to reduce the number of pupils in one class, to introduce modular forms of instruction and new methods of teaching.

It is necessary to provide modern equipment and teaching resources and in that manner, the vocational schools should become more independent. That could be achieved with greater connection with the local community and the needs of the local economy and the economic development of the country.

The vocational schools should take into account the needs of the young people and adults who have no qualifications and have been without a job for a longer period of time, or those who have a qualification that is not needed on the labour market. These conditions are a new challenge and the schools should make an effort to satisfy the educational needs of the young people and adults for vocational qualification, additional qualification or new qualification.

It is very important to develop the forms of professional development and in service training of teachers, especially teachers in vocational subjects and professional practice. Also, the professional analyses and reports should be made about the achievement, but also about the problems, difficulties and the limitations. It is necessary to engage the associations of schools, teachers and economic associations in the regions. This involves encouraging the social partners for their participation in the development of the secondary vocational education, information about the strategic targets of vocational education, forms of work and their participation into innovation of the vocational education.

There is an urgent need of the comprehensive analysis of the network of the secondary vocational schools, educational profiles, conditions on the labour market with a purpose to rationalize the secondary vocational education; to providing standards; provision of equipment and information technology and its use (creating a database for vocational education); determining standards for vocational education according to the nomenclature of the educational profiles and vocations; training the managers of secondary school for contemporary management and communication with local community and social partners. The schools should improve the forms of professional orientation of pupils and linking of the schools with the informal vocational education.

EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Organization and programming

The vocational education and training for the first employment is regulated by the laws in the area of education and the area of labour and social policy.

In the period from 2001-2004, the content, organization of the vocational education and training for work of young people for 12 to 18/19 years of age, as well as the older candidates, has not been significantly changed. This activity is still mainly performed in the schools and other vocational schools. Thus, in the schools for education of the adults and the workers' universities in the country, there are programmes for completion of elementary education of adults together with instruction in courses for vocational training which last a few months.

Besides this, there are programmes for vocational training which last two or three years.

The programmes and courses for two, three or more years of vocational education and training are represented in the public secondary schools. Besides full-time students, these programmes can be enrolled by other candidates, who have a need to acquire vocational education by taking exams. In fact, there is no difference in the content of the curriculum and programmes of study for full-time or part-time students.

In this manner, the vocational education and training for young people from 12 to 18/19 years of age is mainly organized and realized in the state secondary schools. In building of the standards, the curriculum and the programmes of study, many other institutions beside the Bureau for Development of Education and the schools are involved, such as: companies, associations, economic associations and other interested subjects in this area.

The programmes for completion of the elementary education of adults are composed of core and elective part. They are adjusted to the experience of the candidates. Certain subject in the curricula are reduced, (such as foreign language, physical education, technical education and music), while there are opportunities for vocational training, mostly through courses which last a few months, but not more

than a year. Beside the certificate for completed elementary education, the candidates receive certain certificates for their vocational training.

The programmes for vocational training which last two years consist of programmes for general education, vocational education and practical training. The practical training depends on the type of the educational profile. With some of the profiles, 75% of the required time is targeted towards vocational training with special accent to practical training and the other 25% are filled by programmes for mother tongue, society and its composition and protection. The practical training takes up to 40% of the time programmed for vocational training. These programmes are planned with up to 700 hours of instruction (total number of hours). The programmes for vocational training for two years are designed for the following profiles: agricultural, mining, graphic and printing workers, machine workers, construction workers, trade and sales, etc. After completion of the two year programs for vocational training the candidates can enroll in the first year of three-year vocational education.

The tree-year programs for secondary vocational education are composed of general and vocational education with practical training and summer practice (with total number of 3250 hours). For some profiles of vocational education the practical part takes up to 45% of the teaching time and general education is up to 55%. After completion of the three year programs, the candidates can easily continue their education for one more year in order to acquire four-year vocational education. Some candidates after completion of the three year programs often enroll into the four year vocational education programs, due to limited possibilities for employment.

The tree year programs for vocational education are offered for numerous vocational profiles: metallurgical workers, engineering workers, electro-technical workers, chemical technological worker, textile and tannery worker, graphic worker, construction worker, traffic worker, trade and sales worker, workers in catering and services, legal and administration worker, fire fighter and personalized service workers. This type of education is completed with the final exam which comprises of theoretical and practical part.

Programs for secondary vocational education which last four years are represented the most. They are programmed with the total number of 4200 hours of instruction. The pupils in the programs for four year vocational education sit in for a final exam or the matriculation exam.

After completion of the secondary vocational education the candidates can continue their education to acquire secondary vocational specialist education. The programs for specialist vocational education are realized with 900 hours after completed 4 year vocational education and appropriate working experience of two or more years.

Programs for studies of one to three years are offered through colleges for post secondary vocational education, which can be enrolled by candidates after completion of vocational schools with four year programs.

In the educational system of the Republic of Macedonia for young people from 12 to 18/19 years of age, in the last decade, there have developed many vocational courses, which provide instruction and training for different professions. These courses are enrolled by young people who have completed three or four year programs for secondary vocational education, who want to train for certain type of profession which is demanded on the labor market. These various vocational courses are also enrolled by students who have completed general high school programs with an intention to find employment.

The duration of the vocational courses is different (several months), but always less than one year. These courses are especially developed in the Worker's University in Skopje, Bitola, Veles, Tetovo, Kumanovo and other towns. Major disadvantage in this segment of the education system is the very low interest of companies and employers for programming organization and financing of informal and formal vocational education and training of young people for employment. Besides, there is a need to innovate the programs of study for the theoretical subject and the practical training for work.

Major problems and challenges

Our analysis has shown that it is necessary to reform the education of young people from the age of 14-15 and 18-19 as well as the adults, which should be based on the following postulates:

- the education of young people and adults is a basic human right and the basis for fulfillment of all the other personal and social rights;
- the education of young people and adults, especially informal education has to have equal treatment with full time formal education;

- the education of young people and adults, is a crucial potential force for democratization and development of a civil society;
- the education of young people and adults, is the basic factor for economic development and provides opportunities for the workforce to be included into the economic trend;
- the education of young people and adults, is a form of partnership which is realized in cooperation among the state subjects interested for education, professional association and employers.

Having all this in mind, it is necessary to lead a more consistent educational policy in this area (which is now incomplete and insufficiently regulated). This presupposes, above all:

- completed legal regulation of education of young people and adults
- establishment of a system of education of young people and adults by defining the conditions, criteria, and standards for the activity and organization of the institutions for education of adults;
- development of methodology for creation of certified programs for secondary vocational educations, which will be provided within the school and other institutions and forms of informal education;
- creating a data-base of institutions which provide education for young people and adults;
- making of short and long-term programmes for improvement of the educational structure of the employed in the institutions for education for adults;
- enhancing the services for education of adults within the Bureau for Development of Education and establishment of public funds for financing of education of young people and adults;
- providing institutions for education of young people and adults with material and technical equipment.

Higher education

(from 19 to 25 years of age)

According to the Act from year 2000, the higher education is performed by universities, faculties and post secondary professional colleges which can be state or private, founded by domestic or foreign legal entities.

The higher education can be enrolled by full-time and part-time students.

Table 8: *Number of students at faculties and post secondary professional colleges*

Academic year	Total number of students	Number of students at faculties	Number of students at post secondary vocational schools
1999/00	36 922	35 995	927
2000/01	40 246	39 406	840
2001/02	44 710	43 587	1 123
2002/03	45 624	44 731	893

Source: Reports about enrolled students at faculties and post secondary professional colleges, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003).

About 50% of the pupils, after completing the four years of secondary education enroll to studies for higher education. The conditions and criteria for selection and admission of new students are proposed by the institutions for higher education and are adjusted by the universities. Every year a public announcement is made for enrollment of students, which contains information about the study programmes, the number of student places, the conditions, the procedure and the deadlines for application. The announcement is prepared by the universities on the basis of the proposals of the institutions for higher education and with consent of the government of the Republic of Macedonia. The candidates who apply, have to have completed general high school education, four years of vocational school or schools for art.

Because of the limited number of places for new students, procedures for ranking of students according to their achievement in secondary education and the results of the entrance exams are used. The criteria for admission are equal for full-time and part-time students.

The demand for places at the university is much greater than the planned number of new students.

Table 9: *Students enrolled in under graduate studies, citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, according to their national background. **

Year	Total	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serb	Roma	Vlah	Other
2001/02	44575	39765	2192	546	822	126	417	707
2002/03	45478	40592	2259	590	807	136	440	654
2003/04	46484	42317	2031	459	682	93	356	546

Source: Reports about enrolled students at faculties and post secondary professional colleges, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (1999-2003)

*) data do not include students enrolled at private universities and faculties.

According to the law, co-financing of studies is introduced in such a way that a certain fee is established which the student has to pay to the institution for higher education to cover the costs of studying, which are not compensated for through financing from the part of the state or other sources.

The amount of the means for co-financing of studies is determined by the faculties and institutes in accordance with the regulations which are determined by their bodies and the relevant ministry.

The state provides resources for scholarships and student loans which are mostly used by students and pupils from the low income social categories, as well as talented students and pupils in different fields of education.

According to the law, undergraduate studies at the faculties are with duration from 4-7 years. When organized as studies for professional vocational education, these studies can be organized with the duration less than four years.

Undergraduate studies at the post secondary vocational schools can be with duration from one to three years. Postgraduate studies can be organized as scientific or artistic studies (Master's programs) and post graduate professional (specialist programs).

The institutions for higher education are guaranteed their academic autonomy which is expressed in planning, realization and development of provision of higher education, determining of the internal organization, creation of funds, joining and associating with relevant organizations and associations in the country and abroad, international cooperation, etc.

The governing bodies of the universities are: the university Senate, the Rector, and the Rector Managing Body. The managing bodies of the faculties and post secondary vocational schools are: the Teaching- Scientific Council, the Dean, and the faculty's administrative body. The students are represented in the management of the institutions for higher education by the representatives of the student's union in the bodies of the institutions for higher education or by means of self-organizing or any other way determined by the statute of the institution.

The reform in the area of higher education has two main targets: 1) to improve the efficiency of the system of higher education by reducing the number of drop-out students, as well as reducing the duration of studies; 2) to introduce a system for evaluation and control of the process of instruction, the programs for study and teaching methods.

The law has provided a legal framework for reform in the study programmes and obliges towards implementation of the Bologna Declaration. It includes acceptance of levels of studies, introducing of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), support of European cooperation and striving towards quality in higher education.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Every contemporary educational system is based on developed information technology. This means that all educational institutions are equipped with computers, connected into a network, that the system contains data bases, and that the teaching staff is trained for use and maintenance of information technology. During the last decade, greater attention has been dedicated to the development of information technology in our educational system, with an aim to transfer information in two directions, from schools to the central level and the other way around. Implementing of information technology can help create relevant data bases which can be used for better definition of the aims of the educational policy. Therefore, the main results of the system of the information technology will be focused on macroeconomic and educational indicators.

The Macroeconomic indicators refer to the determination of: cost per student related to GDP; the percentage of means that the government is spending for education related to public spending or to GDP; Gross rate of enrolment of student

related to the general demographic trends in the country; the rate of graduated students across the level of education and their employment etc.

The educational indicators are selected for key issues: the number of pupils per teacher; the percentage of advancement of pupils into higher grades (classes); the percentage of student that fail or drop-out from school; the number of pupils in one class, (educational group); qualification and professional development of teachers; supervision of the realization of year plans in the schools etc.

Nevertheless, in the Republic of Macedonia in this period, there has not been a completely installed computer infrastructure in the educational system on a state level. The installment of such network is being performed in stages with certain difficulties (of financial nature) and with insufficient training of the teaching staff. The present stage of development of the information technology is targeted towards complete equipping with computers of secondary schools, which will be followed with complete equipping with computers of elementary schools. After that, the last stage will be networking of the schools with the computer centers on regional level and the Ministry of education and science. In that way, there will be continuous flow of information in both directions.

The equipping of schools with computers so far has been sponsored by many institutions and donors, especially the Open Society Institute, through donations of computers and media libraries, as well as the donation of computers by the government of the People's Republic of China. The Educational development centre (EDC) has installed computer laboratories in considerable number of school within the project e-schools-mk.

Major problems and challenges

In order to install a complete computer network in the system of education on a state level, the following steps should be undertaken:

- completion of the process of equipping the educational institutions with computers in order to make the computer network and the informational system operational;
- to train the staff in all levels so that the computer system can be fully functional;

- to undertake activities for informing the association of parents for providing support to schools in the process of implementation of information technology;
- to establish a system for technical support and servicing the computer network.

QUALITY IN EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Education of teachers and their competencies

The teaching profession is one of the most important factors for development of the system of education. Therefore in the process of expanding of state and private universities and faculties, there is a need to monitor, measure and evaluate the conditions in the initial education of teachers and the quality of their work.

Starting from this, special attention is focused on the data that concern the structure of the teaching staff in all levels of education, as well as the functional data which refer to the potential contribution of the teachers towards the improvement of efficiency and quality in education.

According to the data about the teachers in kindergartens, schools and pupils' dormitories, who have a status of: child minders, teachers in lower grades, subject teachers, professional collaborators (pedagogues, psychologist, and teachers for special needs, social workers, librarians, and lab assistants) and others, positive tendencies in improvement of the initial education of teachers can be noticed.

Thus, the child minders in the preschool institutions were mainly trained in two-year studies within the former pedagogical academies, while the supervisors and the counselors in the school dormitories had the same initial education as the teachers and professional collaborators in elementary and secondary schools. A large number of teachers in elementary schools have completed two year studies for teachers, within the pedagogical academies on particular programs for teaching in lower and upper grades of elementary schools.

The present model of initial education of subject teachers enables them to teach two related subjects in the area of natural or social sciences and in some cases

for the subjects in the area of the languages. Recently, the number of teachers with a university diploma, who are employed in the kindergartens, pre-schools and primary schools, has increased. This has been enabled with the system laws as well as the changes in the curriculum and programs of study at the faculties for the teaching profession.

Table 10. *Teachers and professional collaborators in public elementary schools, according to the level of professional qualifications*

School year	Level of professional qualification				
	Higher	Post-secon.	Secondary	Other	Total
2000/01	3 547	9 470	902	8	13 927
2001/02	3 790	9 280	874	10	13 954
2002/03	4 280	9 057	826	31	14 194
2003/04	4 929	8 570	820	16	14 335

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (2001-2004).

The teaching staffs that prepare for instruction in kindergarten and schools in Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian language are trained in separate study groups at universities and other related institutions. In the Republic of Macedonia, there are two state universities “St. Kiril and Metodij” in Skopje and “St Kliment Ohridski” in Bitola. Two years ago, the University of South Eastern Europe in Tetovo was founded as the first private institution for higher education. The procedure has been completed and the state university in Tetovo has commenced work. Large numbers of students, who are members of the ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia, are included into the institutions for higher education.

The process for foundation of other private institutions of higher education has been very intensive in the last few years. Most of them work as departments of universities from other developed countries.

Studies for teachers of Albanian, Turkish, and Serb language for elementary and secondary school are organized at separate study groups within the Faculty of Philology in Skopje.

Instructors for general education subjects in secondary education schools have completed the relevant studies at the faculties of Philosophy, Philology, Natural sciences and Mathematics, faculties for Arts and the Faculty for Physical Culture.

The teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects and practical training have completed their initial education at the faculties for technical sciences and other sciences, such as: Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medical Sciences, etc. The teachers who have not acquired appropriate pedagogical training during their studies are required to take additional exams for pedagogical, psychological and methodological training at appropriate faculty. As exception to the rule in some schools, the practical training is performed by a small number of teachers who have completed post-secondary education or in special cases only secondary vocational education.

Table 11: *Teachers and professional collaborators in public secondary schools, according to the level of professional qualifications*

School year	Level of professional qualification				Total
	Higher	Post second	Secondary	Other	
2000/01	5 417	195	91	5	5 708
2001/02	5 482	226	77	-	5 785
2002/03	5 641	233	82	11	5 967
2003/04	5 712	244	73	8	6 037

Source: Reports about elementary and secondary schools, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (2001-2004).

In the schools for students with special needs, the teachers have completed post-secondary or higher education for work with students with special needs, and there are teachers with professional qualifications for certain subjects, who have completed the appropriate training for work with children with special needs.

At the faculties, the teaching scientific titles are docent, professor and associate professor. For the philological faculties, the teaching scientific titles are lector and senior lector and for post-secondary vocational schools, the titles are lecturer, senior lecturer and professor at the post-secondary vocational school.

Table 12: *Instructors and professional collaborators according to the level of professional qualifications in higher education institutions.*

Academic year	Level of qualification				Total
	PhD degree	Master's Degree	Specialist Degree	Bachelor Degree	
2001/02	1 326	786	130	496	2 738
2002/03	1 411	835	184	405	2 835
2003/04	1 420	567	177	463	2 627

Source: Reports about teachers and collaborators in higher education institutions, State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (2001-2004).

Professional development of teachers

The requests for improving the quality in the area of education are not always connected with the increase of the level of initial education of the teachers, but also with development of programs for internship (preparation for work) and professional development. The implementation of these mechanisms was expected to build a complete system, which will enable the teachers to build better skills and improve the quality of teaching and learning. This should lead to improvements in the way of evaluation and assessment of achievements of pupils, students and teachers in schools, faculties and post secondary schools.

The teachers, subject teachers, counselors and collaborators, when employed for the first time in educational institutions, have an obligation to sit for a certification exam after one year of work, according to a program which is brought by the Minister of education and science, on proposal of the Bureau for Development of Education. Apart from that, during the teaching practice, the teachers, counselors, professional collaborators, and school heads have an obligation to attend seminars and other forms of professional and pedagogical development. As already mentioned in the previous text of this report, the professional and pedagogical development of teachers is in the jurisdiction of the institutions for higher education which offer studies for education of teachers. Nevertheless, the greatest burden for offering programs in this area in practice is accepted by the Bureau for Development of Education.

Having in mind these conditions for the professional and pedagogical qualification of teaching staff in schools and other educational institutions, the following limitations are evident:

- the institutions for higher education which organize studies for education of teachers have not seriously focused on following the changes in teaching practices in schools for the purpose of improvement of the quality of education of the young people;
- the basic education of teachers is performed within a large number of institutions for higher education and therefore there no equal standards;
- there is no significant activity in the institutions for higher education for continuous professional and pedagogical development of the teaching staff already employed in the elementary and secondary schools

The role of teachers in the quality of education

The changes in the educational process in our schools, at the same time bring about the necessity for changes in the education of the teaching staff. This need is related to the three stages of development of preparation of teachers: their initial education; the preparation for the teaching process and the continuous professional and pedagogical development during their teaching process.

As already mentioned, the teaching staff can complete the initial education at many educational institutions. At present, every faculty for teachers creates its own standards, not only for the studies in the basic subjects for which the teachers are preparing, but also there is no clearly defined state standard for the subjects from different sciences for education and methodology of the particular subject. At some faculties which organize studies for teachers, the number of instructional hours for the pedagogical and methodological education is very small (below 10% of the total number of hours. It is well -known that the European standard for pedagogical and methodological education of future teachers falls within 25-30% of the hours of instruction during the studies. The small number of hours can have a negative effect on the preparation of future teachers, especially for those planning to teach in the lower grades (in homeroom teaching), as well as subject teachers in elementary education. The psychological, pedagogical and methodological training of teachers and their motivation are very important factors for maintaining quality in the teaching process.

The number of pre-service teaching practice hours of teacher trainees in schools is also below the European standards. The graduates from other faculties such

as (engineers, lawyers, economists and others), who choose to teach a vocational–theoretical subject and become instructors in vocational practice in vocational schools, acquire a status of a teacher by taking exams for pedagogical, psychological, didactical and methodological education, following programmes which are equal to those required for the profiles for teachers in vocational schools.

Nevertheless, the plans for development and reforms in higher education need to focus greater attention to this segment of professional development of teachers.

The universities do not have a common strategy for building of standards for the initial education of teachers, as well as plans for meeting the demands for teaching staff. It happens in practice that some educational institutions enroll larger number of students than the quotas determined for the same profiles. The consequences of these conditions in the education of future teachers are multiple: unemployment, over-dimensioning of the network, discordance between supply and demand for teachers on the labour market. Besides, none of the educational institutions conducts interviews or other procedures to check the motivations and interest of future teachers, which later causes problems in the teaching practice.

As far as the pre-service preparations for teaching before employment are concerned, the one year internship is completed with taking a certification exam consisting of two parts: practical and theoretical. The practical part is designed as realization of a teaching hour with presence of a committee which evaluates the performance of the teacher. The theoretical part consists of questions in methodology of teaching and the legal provisions in education. Every teacher, who passes this step successfully, is considered to be ready for the realization of the teaching process. Nevertheless, even in this segment of the preparation for teaching, further changes are necessary in order to update the professional expertise, skills and abilities of teachers. It is necessary to build responsibility in the work of the mentors in the pre-service training, as well as innovation of the procedures for evaluation and assessment of the achievement of teachers in the process of internship.

The professional development of teachers during their teaching practice is performed in various ways and under different influences. For the professional development of teachers, there is a legal provision which determines that the institutions which have competencies in this are: the Bureau for Development of Education, the institutions for higher education which prepare future teachers, the elementary and secondary schools, the teachers themselves, the counselors and the

professional collaborators as well as other non-government institutions which have authorization for teacher training issued by the Ministry of education and science. Nevertheless, the institutions for life-long education of the teaching staff have different initiative in the realization of the teacher training programmes. The present higher education institutions which educate future teachers, instructors, counselors, professional collaborators in the school (pedagogues, psychologists, special needs teachers, etc) do not participate in the programmes for their life-long professional and pedagogical development. This is one of the major problems in the education of teachers in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Bureau for development of education has taken serious steps in the past decade, especially within the research projects and concepts for innovation of the curricula and programmes of study and their implementation in practice, towards the professional development of teachers, instructors and counselors as well as successful implementation of the innovations in the teaching process. Yet, these activities could not reach to the majority of teachers and instructors.

Proposals for change

Starting from our experience and the common characteristics of education of future teachers and educators in the countries of the European Union, it is necessary to promote the following determinations in the Republic of Macedonia:

- the teachers and educators and other teaching staff in the schools should be educated on the level of higher education (with three-year or four-year study programmes);
- the teachers and educators and other teaching staff should have a possibility for post-graduate, specialist, masters' and doctoral studies;
- all the teachers, educators and professional collaborators should take part into life-long professional development programmes (during their professional practice);
- the pre-service training for the teaching profession should provide that studies in education and methodological preparation of future teachers should take up 50% of the total number of hours programmed for the initial education of

teachers, who teach in the lower grades of elementary school. For the subject teachers who teach in the upper grades the percentage should be 25-30%.

- for students of other faculties, who have completed a degree in their profession and want to become teachers, one year successive studies should be organized. The studies should include: the contemporary achievements in the educational science (sociology of education, pedagogy, developmental and pedagogical psychology, didactic, planning and programming of the teaching, practice and methodology of teaching and internship);
- the standards and the nomenclature of the teaching profession should be regulated according to the provisions of the Declaration from Bologna, (which favors the successive model of acquisition of teaching skills; the studies in education should be treated as postgraduate professional specialization which is upgraded to the graduate studies of the individuals who would like to start teaching).
- the profession of a teacher, educator or a counselor is a dynamic one, which creates a need for the teachers, educators or counselors to get promoted in their career on the basis of the results achieved in the process of teaching and the permanent lifelong education which should be an inseparable obligation of teachers during their professional practice.

This presupposes:

- a) introducing evaluation of the programs of study at the institutions which prepare future teachers;
- b) introducing evaluation of the work of the professors and instructors from the side of the students;
- c) introducing an appropriate nomenclature of titles for the teaching staff;
- d) designing programs for mentoring in the period of internship of teachers and introducing a practice for monitoring of their appropriate realization.

Besides that, teachers, educators and counselors should be prepared to face multiple challenges:

- to become partners and active participants in the innovations and changes in education;

- to be motivated and trained for making their own developmental plans and self evaluation;
- to be encouraged to introduce innovations into the teaching practice;
- to be educated to promote education for lifelong learning;
- to participate in creation of didactical-methodological conditions for realization of the process of teaching and other activities in the kindergartens elementary and secondary schools.

In the educational system of the Republic of Macedonia, there is an urgent need to take measures for improvement of the status of the teaching profession by appropriate evaluation of the achieved results, promotion in the profession and continuous professional development. All this is a prerequisite for motivation for successful implementation of the forthcoming reform in the area of education.

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