Interethnic integrated education in Macedonia

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Ethnic composition
(around 2 million in total)

Data from the last official census (2001)
more than 50% ethnic Albanians
20-50% ethnic Albanians
10-20% ethnic Albanians
less than 10% ethnic Albanians
ethnic ALBANIANS
  Albanian language
  Muslims

ethnic MACEDONIANS
  Macedonian language
  Orthodox Christians
Macedonian-Albanian interethnic conflict (1)

- Since the independence of the country gained in 1991 (after secession from Former Yugoslavia)

  Ethnic Albanians claimed that they deserve to be treated like majority in the country and enjoy equal rights/status with ethnic Macedonians

  Ethnic Macedonians declared that ethnic Albanians, like all other ethnic groups living in RM, enjoy more rights than normally enjoy minority groups in other countries
Macedonian-Albanian interethnic conflict (2)

- In 2001 the country experienced violent escalation of the conflict

  - Ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (UÇK)
  - Security forces of R. Macedonia (army, police)

- Ended with international mediation (EU and USA) → Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA)
- Widely perceived as a win-loose solution
- Dealt with the ethnic issues and did not include provisions for dealing with the interethnic conflict
Education is divided along ethnic/language lines.

- Study in Macedonian
- Taught by Macedonian teachers
- Learn about Macedonian history & culture
- Study mainly with Macedonians
- All extracurricular activities with Macedonians

Ethnic Macedonians
study in Macedonian
study mainly with Macedonians

taught by Macedonian teachers

study in Albanian
study with Albanians

taught by Albanian teachers

learn about Albanian history & culture

all extra-curricular activities with Albanians
“mixed” school

- Macedonians study in Macedonian and learn about Macedonian history & culture taught by Macedonian teachers. They also study with Macedonians.
- Albanians study in Albanian and learn about Albanian history & culture taught by Albanian teachers. They also study with Albanians.

All extra-curricular activities with Macedonians and Albanians are also part of the school.
Percentage of “mixed” schools

26% of primary schools (age 6-14)
(Macedonian/Albanian/Turkish/Serbian)
86 out of 332

30% of secondary schools (age 15-18)
(Macedonian/Albanian/Turkish)
29 out of 99
## Percentage of pupils in elementary schools that attend classes in Macedonian or Albanian

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonian</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in two/three-language schools</td>
<td>13,8%</td>
<td>13,0%</td>
<td>12,8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>in one-language schools</td>
<td>86,2%</td>
<td>87,0%</td>
<td>87,2%</td>
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<td>Albanian</td>
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<tr>
<td>in two/three-language schools</td>
<td>34,6%</td>
<td>31,8%</td>
<td>30,4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>in one-language schools</td>
<td>65,4%</td>
<td>68,2%</td>
<td>69,6%</td>
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*Multiculturalism and Interethnic Relations in Education, UNICEF, 2009*
Interaction between ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian pupils that study in “mixed” schools is not assured

- In many of these schools they study in detached buildings, or in separate parts of the same building, or in different shifts.

Baseline study for the USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project, 2012
Interaction between pupils in “mixed” schools

“Mixed” schools are perceived as arenas with more frequent interethnic conflicts and higher level of stereotypes and prejudices.

Teachers, parents and even pupils are ambivalent when it comes to direct contact:

- They believe that interaction is a source of interethnic tensions and conflicts with ethnic dimension.
- They are aware that interaction is the best way for pupils to get to know each other and learn to function together.

Baseline study for the USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project, 2012
Steps Towards Integrated Education in the Education System of the Republic of Macedonia, 2010

• Policy paper as a product of OSCE HCNM’s efforts to initiate a comprehensive Government strategy towards an integrated education system

“Despite considerable progress over the last decade in the education system with regards to mother-tongue education, developments have taken a turn that gives cause for concern and should be focused, addressed and corrected, with particular emphasis on interethnic relations, in order to reduce ethnic distance caused by too little knowledge about each other and by almost no interaction, increased additionally by serious language deficiencies.”
USAID project on interethnic integration in education

- Joint activities with “mixed” groups of pupils
- Professional cooperation between teachers
- Learning about the culture of *The other*
- Democratic participation of pupils
- Language of instruction by teachers
- Involvement of parents

Two/three-language schools
One-language schools in partnership
Inclusion of the state educational institutions

- Ministry of Education and Science
- Bureau for Development of Education
- Center for Vocational Education and Training
- State Education Inspectorate

- Raised awareness about the need for interethnic integration in education
- Improved competencies of the state educational officials
- Introduced changes in the documents for integral evaluation of schools
Enhanced interethnic interaction in education

- Joint in-service trainings for teachers from different languages of instruction
- “Integration skills” added in the teacher training

- Raised awareness about the need for interethnic integration through education
- Cooperative involvement of teachers in the decision making
- Cooperative planning and preparation for school activities
- Increased number of pupils that are having contact with the others
Acceptance of multiethnic reality

- Pupils learn about their own culture and the culture of *The other* from the perspective of *The other*
- The school culture is turning into multiculture

- Improved understanding of *The other* and appreciation of differences
- Raised awareness about the stereotypes and prejudices towards *The other*
Language as a political tool

- Decreased number of ethnic Albanian pupils (and teachers) who speak Macedonian
- Resistance among ethnic Macedonian pupils (and teachers) to learn Albanian

Teachers’ readiness to engage

- Average of 4 hours spent in school
- Political parties’ influence in education

Support of the central and local authorities

- Lack of real commitment to the idea
- Little investment in education
The contribution of education
Thank you for your attention