

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SHADOW REPORT ON SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

RELEVANT SECTOR POLICIES

Key strategy documents that govern operation of this sector group include the [Education Strategy 2018-2025](#) and Revised [Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020-2022](#). Relevant documents in this sector that were subject of changes concern laws on primary and secondary education. These amendments, adopted in 2020, anticipate a possibility for the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to take direct decisions in emergency situations about the type of instruction organized at schools, and additional provisions on inclusion of all children in primary and secondary education. Such change is a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis that started in March 2020 and is still underway. In order to ensure better coordination and possibility for the government to intervene, measures were proposed to facilitate organization of the instruction process under combined method (online instruction and physical attendance when allowed by the epidemiological situation).



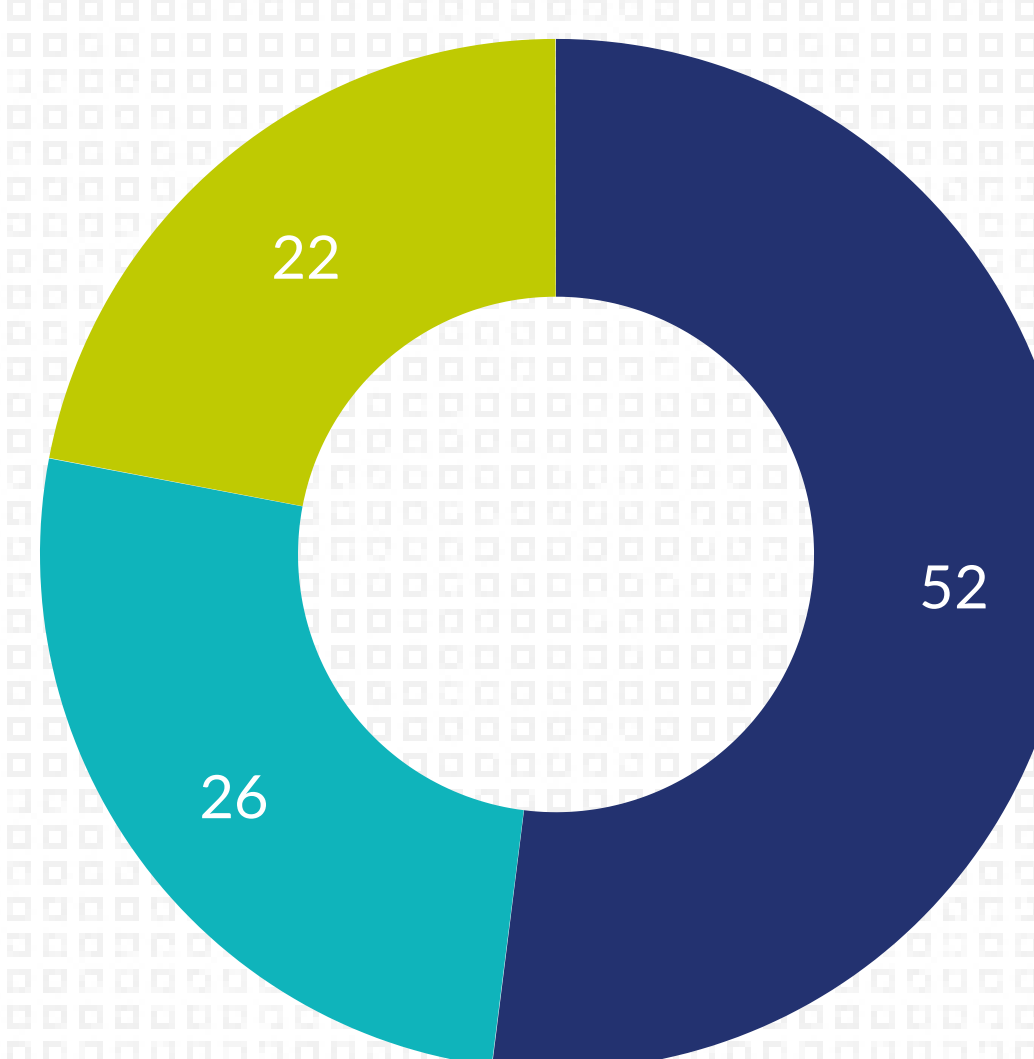
In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted the Plan for Organization of the Instruction Process in Primary and Secondary Schools for the School Year 2020/2021. In March 2021, the Ministry of Education and Science published amendments to the [Law on Primary and Secondary Education Textbooks](#). As regards the sector on employment and social policy, [no significant changes are observed from the situation noted in the 2019 Shadow Report on Work and Effects of Sector Working Groups](#). The strategic framework under the Revised Education and Social Reform Programme 2020-2022 is complemented with additional strategy documents, as follows:

- ◆ National Strategy on Employment 2016-2020;
- ◆ National Strategy on Alleviating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020
- ◆ Strategy on Formalization of Informal Economy and Action Plan 2018-2020;
- ◆ Revised Action plan on Youth Employment 2016-2020;
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In March 2021, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted [2021 Operational Plan for Active Employment Programmes and Measures and Labour Market Services](#), which is the key document and policy on services targeting unemployed citizens. This plan was amended in [July 2021](#), with minor changes in respect to policy essence and approach.

SWG EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

- ◆ **FORMED:** 2017
- ◆ **NUMBER OF SWG MEMBERS:** 97, institutions x 51 members, civil society organizations x 21 members and donor community x 25 members
- ◆ **NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2020:** two meetings, 18.6.2020 and 16.11.2020
- ◆ **SWG CHAIR:** Minister of Education and Science and Minister of Labour and Social Policy



■ State Institutions (52%)
■ Donor community (26%) ■ CSOs (22%)

SWG FUNCTIONALITY

- ◇ SWG membership is defined and appointed, but not fully.
- ◇ The rules of procedure stipulate organization of at least one session every three months, but only two meetings are organized in 2020.
- ◇ SWG members are regularly invited to meetings.
- ◇ Invitations with location, agenda, time and accompanying materials are sent electronically to all SWG members.
- ◇ SWG members are timely invited to meetings (at least 10 days in advance of scheduled meetings).
- ◇ Minutes from SWG meetings are taken in predefined form and contents and are sent to SWG participants, followed by publication on MLSP's website.
- ◇ SWG regularly informs the public about its work.

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

- ◇ **19 civil society organizations** are invited to participate in SWG meetings.
- ◇ SWG has a developed practice for civil society participation and **provides space for involvement of** civil society representatives.
- ◇ **High number of SWG members and participants significantly reduces possibilities for meaningful discussions at meetings.**
- ◇ **Introduced practice for electronic submission of comments and remarks** by SWG participants.
- ◇ **Main challenges** for civil society representatives: **untimely distribution of invitations and (voluminous!) materials** for SWG meetings, failure to deliver invitations to actual civil society representatives and **insufficient time for consultations on strategy documents** and agenda items.

CSO CAPACITY

- ◇ Role of civil society representatives in SWG is perceived as rather **formal** instead of essential. SWG setup (and size) does not allow sufficient and meaningful participation at meetings, which are insufficient in number (two meetings per year)
- ◇ Comments and remarks from CSOs are often **welcomed and receive due attention** from other SWG members and line ministries.
- ◇ Civil society representatives **receive feedback** whether their suggestions and comments are taken into account.

EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

- ◇ Two **plenary sessions** are organized, in compliance with the rules of procedures stipulation for at least two meetings per year.
- ◇ Topics discussed at SWG meetings included action fiches and strategic responses to IPA 3.
- ◇ No **operational meetings** are organized in 2020.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE:

- ◇ **Amend the rules of procedure** in order to define the model for selection of civil society representatives, their role and mandate.
- ◇ Fully enforce the rules of procedure in respect to **timely information and distribution of work materials, and increase dynamics of SWG meetings.**
- ◇ Design **specific mechanism for greater and more efficient involvement of CSOs.**
- ◇ **Renew expired sector-wide strategic documents** and position them properly.
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