Dear friends and collaborators,

We are greeting you with the latest issue of our e-bulletin where you can find out something more about our current activities and projects our Foundation worked on in the period of July to October. Also, we celebrated the International Teacher’s day in this period, so on this occasion we would like to share with you the Teacher’s Oath, created on this year’s Regional Conference for Educators in Bosnia and Hercegovina, where our Foundation took part.

We hope you will enjoy the contents of this issue and that you will share it with your colleagues and collaborators.

TEACHER’S OATH

I pledge that I will do my job with love, conscientiously and proudly.
That I will love and respect all children, care for their wellbeing, and always be guided by their best interests.
That I will learn and grow together with them.
That I will find what is good and noble in each child, and nurture it.
That I will develop their perseverance, faith in themselves and self-esteem,..........

A simple click on one of the titles below will take you directly to the selected content you would like to read first!
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That I will learn and grow together with them.

That I will find what is good and noble in each child, and nurture it.

That I will develop their perseverance, faith in themselves and self-esteem, and whenever necessary, I will stand behind them and blow in their wings.

I will give them assistance and support on the path to new knowledge.

I will encourage their curiosity, and encourage them to ask questions - and when I do not have the answers, I will teach them how to search for them.

I will protect their right to their own opinion.

I will raise them to develop the peace in themselves and live in peace with others, to understand others and to recognize diversity as an opportunity for learning and richness.

I will encourage them to actively contribute to the life of the whole community.

I will do everything so that my students feel welcome, accepted and safe in our school.

I will build partnerships with parents and I shall strive to be a person of trust.

I will protect the right to privacy of children and families, and I will not talk about them without their consent.

I will help colleagues who want to develop and grow.

I will open my heart and mind to learn and understand new and different things that will make me a better teacher, and I promise to live the values that I teach.

Teacher's oath has been developed by 300 preschool, primary and secondary teachers, participants of 8th Regional Conference for Educators

Neum, August 25, 2016
On October 5, more than 400 guests came to the Cinema Frosina – Skopje to celebrate the International Literacy Day, International Teacher’s Day and the Children’s Week. Step by Step Foundation, as a part of the USAID Readers are Leaders Project, organized the event “Speech4Teach – Inspiration for Education”.

The event was officially opened by USAID Mission Director, James Stein, who in his remarks made in Macedonian language pointed out: “Three years ago we launched USAID Readers are Leaders Project. Ever since we have been working together with you to improve literacy and numeracy of the students in the Republic of Macedonia. In the past three years we have been promoting reading both in and outside the classroom as a mode of discovering new worlds.” He also added: “I am particularly proud and happy that today we will hear some inspiring ideas from talented representatives in the field of education, parents and talented students. We should take this opportunity to learn from each other, share ideas and develop together in our work.”

Suzana Kirandziska, the Foundation Step by Step Director and USAID Readers are Leaders Project Chief of Party, reminded the audience on all the different events organized to promote project activities and emphasized the importance of creating more opportunities and events to discuss the challenges and success in education.
“Speech4Teach – Inspiration for Education” presented seven speakers who, each from their own point of view, shared their personal stories and professional experience on the challenges and success in education. The speakers and their topics were:

- **NEBOJSHA MOJSOSKI**, USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Chief of Party, MCEC – The Positive Side of Defeat
- **REBEKA JANKOVSKA RISTESKI**, pop singer, president of Give us Wings, association of people with rare diseases – Let’s Bring Our Worlds Closer – video message
- **SATKI ISMAILI**, school director, math teacher – Math Reforms
- **UBAVKA BUTLESKA**, school pedagogist – Rediscovering Pedagogy
- **MAJA MISHEVSKA**, student, author of three books for children published in Amazon – What is Literacy to Me?
- **ELENA APOSTOLOVA**, second to fifth grade teacher – Stimulating Classroom – Utopia or Reality?
- **MATEJ PLAVEVSKI**, student, IT prodigy, - I See colours in my Binary World

The audience was overwhelmed with ovations, laughter and a feeling that changes to better are necessary and possible. And indeed, the speeches hit the spot—made us reconsider the way we look at things, and opened new perspectives in education. After the inspirational speeches the audience had the opportunity for a Q&A session with the speakers.

On this occasion Step by Step Foundation offered more interesting activities. The inspirational speeches were followed by educational workshops and demonstrations at the Children’s Creative Center, where hundreds of teachers, parents and other participants followed presentations of new books published by Step by Step Foundation, learned to create math manipulatives, how to illustrate picture books or how to rearrange the classroom and make it more comfortable for the children.

We want to thank all of the teachers and other school representatives, the education institutions and the NGOs, the professors and the students from the Faculty for Teachers, and everyone else who made Speech4Teach – Inspiration for Education a unique experience!
In June 2016 we started expanding the trainings “Read, Learn and Have Fun”, “Math +” and “Our Classroom – Our World” beyond the project schools and they will be accessible to every school in the country by the end of this school year. The process, which will have 3 representatives from each school, has already started in 102 schools divided in 14 groups.

First 14 groups of schools started with a training for creative techniques for improvement of the students’ language skills, “Read, Learn and Have fun”.

“This training has to be made available to every teacher in our school. We need more practical activities of this kind.”

a teacher who took part in “Read, Learn and Have Fun” training in Hasan Tahsini primary school in Zelino.

In August “Our Classroom – Our World” trainings for creating stimulative learning environment were held, so that the children can have classrooms that are arranged to express the interests of everyone involved in the process of education and to encourage the development of each child. Parents’ inclusion in each of these trainings was of particular importance to us, and as a result, at the training in Gjorche Petrov primary school in Skopje, the parents took the initiative to include the students as well.

“We got some new ideas how can we, as parents, take part in the school activities. Two things describe the training: Joint spirit and enthusiasm.”

a parent who took part in the “Our Classroom – Our World” training in Vancho Prke primary school in Shtip.
In the course of September we accomplished “Math +” training cycle with the last training for creative techniques for improving students' math skills. Now we are ready for the new group of trainings for the additional 67 schools.

“This is the best training I have attended so far. We learned new techniques, and most of all, we shared experience with the colleagues from the other schools.” – a teacher who took part in “Math+” training in Kiril Pejchinovic primary school in Kisela Voda, Skopje

Those who did not manage to attend the trainings should not be disappointed, because by the end of the year we will publish the manuals with activities for improving first to third grade students' language and math skills.
In April, an online survey was conducted to examine the dimensions of teachers' professional identity and was sent to teachers that are members of learning communities. We chose these teachers because we would like to hear what they have to say about the themes included in the survey but also because of their dedication to this component and their strife for life-long learning and professional development.

The survey consisted statements grouped in 12 themes intended to examine teachers' perceptions about the actual versus desired state regarding aspects of professional identity. The 344 teachers (LC members) that responded on the survey provided valuable insight into the issues teachers are faced with regarding their role and influence. Teachers' answers to the open-ended questions can be summarized in three categories regarding their ability to create and uphold positive change.

Teachers’ comments regarding...

The way external evaluation is conducted provides little feedback on what it is teachers need to do to improve, hindering experimentation an innovation and reducing teachers' autonomy in students' assessment.

“They need to abolish the penalties that result from the external testing... they leave out the processes needed for improvement and development.”
Curriculum implementation is an area in which teachers would like to have more freedom in. In essence, good teachers who know their students' needs are able to use a variety of methods to achieve the curricular standards.

"The freedom is in planning and conducting of the curriculum. The new programs and guidelines for achieving the set goals are very restrictive and they don't allow for some activities that might suit students' needs better."

Congruent with trends around the world, teachers in Macedonia are left out of the decision making process when it comes to policy that sanctions their profession. Teachers feel they are underutilized as actors in creating positive impact in the education system, thus don't feel ownership over education policies they need to implement.

"When they come up with changes, additions [to existing policies], JUST ONCE, I wish they asked us, the practitioners, what kind of changes are necessary for quality education."

These insights suggest that the whole community needs to recognize the need for greater autonomy in their work, greater trust by the system to make sound decisions and protection from external factors (political, parental pressure etc.) to uphold their professional integrity. This would pave the way towards creating a systemic appreciating of teachers' professionalism as unique and trust for teachers to uphold the standards of their own profession.
Step by Step Foundation has published a new e-collection with positive practices in the field of early literacy and numeracy, compiled after an open call during the course of May and June this year. Teachers, parents, school directors, pedagogues and psychologists, librarians, students and professors from teacher training faculties, and organizations for early child development and education, were invited to share their positive experience in teaching reading and math.

The collection of lesson plans for using the audio-digital picture books, prepared as a part of the project, has also been updated with new lesson plans submitted by the teachers. Each of the picture books is now accompanied with a lesson plan, work sheets, monitoring and evaluation sheets the teachers can use on the lessons.

The two manuals built using the Microsoft OneNote tool, are available for free on Digital Library. Step by Step Foundation would like to thank everyone who shared their experiences and practices and thus contributed to compiling the manuals. We have created a valuable resource of positive practices and lesson plans which can be adapted and tailored for particular needs, and used by the educators and parents alike when they work with the kids both in the classroom and at home. With the use of Microsoft OneNote tool, practices can be modified and adapted according to different needs and learning settings.

10 Picture Books Now Available in Turkish

In order to contribute to enriching the resources for the youngest students with Turkish, language of instruction, we published 10 e-picture books from “Our First Library” collection in Turkish. You can download them on www.stepbystep.org.mk and use them with your children.
Our mobile library is special vehicle that visits the primary schools and the local communities in order to provide free access to learning resources for the youngest students even in the most remote, rural areas.

The mobile library offers:

- **Children’s books**: picture books, encyclopedias, books
- **Audio – digital picture books**
- **Reading corner**
- **Math games**
- **Learn through play**

If you want us to visit your school or local community, you should contact us on: 02/3077-900 or [daniel@stepbystep.org.mk](mailto:daniel@stepbystep.org.mk)

For additional questions regarding the activities of the USAID Readers are Leaders Project, please contact Ana Dimovska, Information and Communication Officer, through e-mail: [ana@stepbystep.org.mk](mailto:ana@stepbystep.org.mk) or cell: 072/307-321
The activities with the children included in the project in the two centers for educational support – Dendo Vas in Gjoche Petrov and Nadez in Shuto Orizari continued during the summer period. The work with the pre-school children was focused on their preparation for a successful enrollment in the first grade. Step by Step Foundation gave all 60 children a backpack and school supplies. We are very proud that since 1st of September, these 60 children enrolled in first grade.

The school children who also continued the activities throughout the summer. We organized activities and workshops for them to revise what they have learned and to expand on the knowledge and skills they had problems with. At the same time, we held meetings with the teaching staff from the schools to discuss the children’s progress and the challenges in the forthcoming school year. It was a great pleasure to conclude that all of the user students appeared to have improved their success as a result of the increased cooperation with the schools and the support from the Dendo Vas and Nadez centers.

Educational Activities for Girls and Women

The center activities for girls and women continued in this period. We held a number of informational sessions on the topics of Safe Motherhood, The Importance of Positive Discipline and Education as a Condition for Better Parenthood, as well as guidelines for coping with consequences from recent flooding in the area of Skopje. At the same time, we organized numerous creative workshops with mothers and children to improve family support in overcoming the teaching goals and the contents in the field of science, math and reading. The parents and the children created dolls of various materials and learned about the human body - organs and their function, created and played math games for counting, classifying and grouping, played ‘I spy...’ and ‘Guess my place...’, thus learning grammar and geography topics.
Several visits and activities together with other organizations took place in the summer period. The children were taken to see the film 'The Big Friendly Giant', they visited the children from the village of Tearce, Tetovo in cooperation with the German Schüler Helfen Leben Organization and the Center for Education and Development from Tearce and Loja, Center for Balkan Cooperation from Tetovo. At the same time, the Scout Associations of Macedonia and France cooperated to carry out the Scouting Week during which fun scout games and creative activities were organized – tying a knot, creating and “fishing” paper fish, bowling, sack jumping, carrying object while walking fast, games for balance and concentration, treasure hunt etc. The children learned how to work in a team and talked about solidarity, tolerance and friendship.

The reading corner organized several workshops for education of 13-18 year-old girls where they read and analyzed books for 8th and 9th grade and the books for secondary school. The users were introduced in the world of Marta, Teodos the Merchant, Ana Karenina and Iliad. The importance of reading was emphasized and they acquired skills analyzing and discussing literary works.

For more information regarding the Project for Roma Empowerment and Awareness for Democracy through Education, contact Elena Mihik, Project Manager, through e-mail: elena@stepbystep.org.mk or visit the website of the EU Delegation in Macedonia.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION OF STEP BY STEP FOUNDATION TEAM

Step by Step Foundation team continues with efforts for professional development of the team and staying up-to-date with modern trends in the field of early childhood development and education. In the past period, we were a part of several international conferences and presentations where we presented our work and exchanged experience with colleagues from the region and from around the globe.

European Conference in Education Research in Dublin, Ireland

The European Conference in Education Research (ECER) was held in Dublin, Ireland from 23 to 26 of August. Representatives from Step by Step Foundation presented two scientific papers – “The Implications of EGRA and EGMA Implementation in Teaching Reading and Math” and ‘The Voice of the Progressive Teachers – Teacher’s Perception of the Professional identity’. This was an excellent opportunity to learn something new and to present what we have learned from our activities to a broader academic community.

International Scientific Conference “Pedagogy in the Modern Global Society” in Ohrid, Macedonia

From 19 to 21 September, the Institute of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje held an international scientific conference in Ohrid, where Step by Step Foundation representatives presented two papers, ‘The Voice of the Progressive Teachers – Members of the Learning Community’ and ‘Factors Associated to Fluent Reading and Understanding among Second and Third Grade Students in Macedonia’. This was a good opportunity to share the experiences from this project with the academic audience in Macedonia and the region.

International Conference for Early Childhood Development in Vilnius, Lithuania

From 11 to 13 of October, the International Step by Step Association organized a Conference for Early Childhood Development in Vilnius, Lithuania, where many practitioners, creators of educational politics, parents and NGO representatives from all over the world had the opportunity to exchange opinion and ideas about the possibilities and challenges of early childhood development in times of rapid changes.
Regional Conference for Educators in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the past eight years Step by Step Center for Educational Initiatives – Bosnia and Herzegovina has been organizing the annual conferences for educators. This year it was held in Neum, from 25-28 August, and was attended by more than 300 educators from five Balkan countries. The conference program offered many interesting workshops, lectures and discussions which resulted in creating the Teacher's Oath.

Education Fair in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 28 October we participated at the Education Fair in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where we presented the activities of our Foundation. The Fair was a part of the close-out activities of the Education for a Just Society Project, carried out by Center for Educational Initiatives Step by Step – Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by USAID and Open Society Fund – Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to the practitioners and institution representatives, the event was also attended by representatives of five countries from the region – members of the International Step by Step Association.