Greetings from the Step by Step team

We are proud to present you with the newest edition of the e-bulletin, which, from a project newsletter has grown into an organizational information leaflet. In the future, in addition to the updates about the USAID Readers are Leaders Project, the e-bulletin will keep you updated about the other two projects the Foundation is implementing – the USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project and the Project for (Self) Empowerment of Roma Parents and Children.

The bulletin will also keep you informed about the other activities in which our Foundation is taking part in, together with the International Step by Step Association and are aimed at improving the quality of preschool and primary education.

Read and share!

Greetings from the Step by Step team
As announced in the previous edition of the e-bulletin, in March, the Letters and Numbers Roadshow continued visiting the schools from the second phase. This time, the Roadshow, together with the local celebrities started the tour by visiting PS Goce Delchev and PS Blazhe Koneski in Prilep.

“I had a wonderful time today! My favorite part was when I received a picture book and I was invited to read in front of everyone. Now, I can read my new picture book at home.” – Tamara from the second grade in PS Goce Delchev – Prilep. During the event with the actors Julijana Stefanova and Petar Gorko, lower grade students demonstrated interest and knowledge which is a proof that this school is treating early grade literacy with great attention. Some of the parents who attended the event also confirmed that are regularly involved in various activities for improving language and mathematics literacy and are organized by the teachers from the school.

During the previous month, the Roadshow also visited PS Manchu Matak from Krivogashtani, PS Sv. Kiril and Metodij from v.Buchin, Krushevo and PS Grigor Prlichev from Ohrid, where the students joined in reading and math sessions with the actors Julijana, Petar and Amernis. In Sv.Kliment Ohridski primary school in the village Draslaica, Municipality of Struga, the lower grade students learned mathematics and were reading picture books in Macedonian and Albanian language together with the singer Venera Lumani and the handball player Naumche Mojsovski.

On page 4 of this e-bulletin you can check the dates and venues of the Roadshow in April.
Around 200 students from five primary schools in Skopje joined us in the celebration of the World Storytelling Day and the International Children's Theater Day at the event organized by the Readers are Leaders Project and the City Library “Brakja Miladinovci” – Skopje. On March 20th, the City Library turned into a children’s theater, where the actors Sonja Stamboldzioska and Martin Jordanoski together with the students, parents, grandparents and teachers were reading and telling stories about dragons and monsters, as well as legends about how the lakes and mountains have been created. This is how we joined in the global celebration of storytelling.

On March 22nd, Reading and Math are Fun activity was once again available for all interested students and members of their families in the Kids Club in Skopje City Mall. This time, the children had the chance to spend a fun hour of reading and mathematics with the actress Tanja Kochovska. Addition, subtraction, stories about the importance of friendship and stories about the planets in our galaxy were the activities in which the children and their families took part of.

USAID Readers are Leaders Project has signed an agreement with the University Clinic for Children’s Diseases – Skopje. Several departments of this hospital and the children’s corner will be equipped picture books and other learning resources, but also public reading sessions will be organized for the children residing at the clinic. In this way, we will try to make their stay at the clinic a little less difficult and will contribute in improving their language and math skills.
USAID Readers are Leaders Project has prepared two more interesting picture books for the youngest students. “Dorothy and the glasses” and “When you’re big” can be downloaded and used for free in Macedonian and Albanian language from our digital library on the following link: http://stepbystep.org.mk/biblioteka

Our agenda in April:

Join us for the Reading and Math are Fun events with some of our favorite celebrities:

Reading sessions with public figures

8 April, 10:00
PS Faik Konica – v. Slupchane, Lipkovo
with Amernis Nokshikji

8 April, 12:30
PS Kiril and Metodij – Sveti Nikole
with Amernis Nokshikji and Gorast Cvetkovski

9 April, 10:30
PS Nikola Petrov Rusinski – v. Racinovo, Berovo
with Amernis Nokshikji and Gorast Cvetkovski

9 April, 12:30
PS Vancho Kitanov – Pehchevo
with Amernis Nokshikji and Gorast Cvetkovski

11 April, 15:00
PS Josip Broz Tito – Valandovo
with Kristina Arnaudova and Naumche Mojsovska
USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project

The Step by Step Foundation is partner of the Macedonian Civic Education Center, the main implementer of the USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project. The Foundation is mainly responsible for the implementation of the component “Teacher Competencies”. This component aims to develop competencies and standards for teachers and school support staff, as well as procedures and instruments for career advancement, mentoring programs and guidelines for internal evaluation. During the development of the documents the project strives to include all stakeholders by organizing round tables, public discussion, informing the schools etc.

During the last month the project team along with the expert group for developing teacher standards reviewed the input received during the public debate (http://www.stepbystep.org.mk/novosti-i-nastani/item/457-povik-za-pridones-kon-nacrt-standardite-za-nastavnik-mentor-i-nastavnik-sovetnik) and finalized the document. Also, the project team, along with the expert group for developing school support staff competencies continued to work on the Competencies for School Support Staff and the next month the group will begin developing standards for school support staff mentor and school support staff advisor. Next month two other working groups will begin their work: the working group for development of instruments and procedures for career advancement and working group for preparation of mentoring programs.

For more information regarding the “Teacher competencies” component, contact Ana Stojanov, Project Coordinator, through e-mail: ams@stepbystep.org.mk or cell: 072/ 307-327.
In September 2013, Step by Step Foundation started implementing the Project for (Self) Empowerment of Roma Parents and Children, funded by the Roma Parenting Support Projects of the Open Society Foundations’ Early Childhood Program. The project aims at developing and strengthening linguistic confidence and competence of 120 Roma children aged 3-4 through center-based informal early childhood learning and development stimulation. This project is implemented in cooperation with three local NGOs, Dendo Vas, Ambrela and Nadez, all situated in Shuto Orizari municipality. The NGOs are in charge of setting up Parent and Child Support Centers which the children visit for a few hours a day and are involved in various activities that aim to stimulate their motor, cognitive, socio-emotional skills and creativity, abiding by the development standards of Early Childhood Development. Additionally, the centers work with the parents on a regular basis to not only keep them informed about planned activities, but also to help them see the importance of early childhood learning and to help them improve their parenting skills, indispensable in their support to the development and further education of their children - direct project beneficiaries and their siblings. This support includes both informative sessions with the parents, but also bonding activities between the parents and children.

In March, a workshop was held in order to introduce the recently included NGO Nadez with the education programme that is designed to improve the parenting skills of Roma parents and to aid the development of their preschool children. The workshop included sessions on how to create and maintain a stimulating environment; how to plan, organize and reflect on the work using the evidence book as part of the Step by Step preschool programme; how to effectively engage the family and communicate with the parents; how to evaluate the development level of children aged 3-4 and 4-5 and how to support the progression to the next development level, using the state standards for early childhood development.

In the upcoming period (May, 2014) there will be a series of trainings and compiling of early childhood materials tailored for the need of the preschool professionals working with Romani children as well as workshops with parents conducted by trainers from the International Step by Step Association.

For more information regarding the Project for (Self) Empowerment of Roma Parents and Children contact Elena Mishikj, Project Coordinator, through e-mail: elena@stepbystep.org.mk or Majda Josheska, Educational Coordinator, majda@stepbystep.org.mk.