



Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Present situation in educational sector of the 3 participating municipalities	3
2.1 Overviews of the Education System in Bulgaria and Pazardzhik Municipality.....	3
2.2 Overview of the Educational System in Velenje, Slovenia	9
2.3 Overview of the Educational System in Kochani, Macedonia	13
3. Principles and values of the cooperation between countries.....	14
4. Mission, Vision and main aims	15
5. Key partners, challenges and advantages	16
5.1. Key partners:	16
5.2. Challenges	16
5.3. Potential actions/measures.....	16
6. Action plan.....	18
7. Financing the activities.....	22



1. Introduction

The Erasmus+ project **“MY VIRTUAL TOWN – Education system - democratic force that helps to prepare students to actively participate in all aspects of economical, environment and social life in local communities”** is being implemented in three European municipalities: Kochani, Pazardzhik, and Velenje for the period of 24 months, from October 2018 till September 2020, under the Contract No. 2018-1-BG01-KA201-047917.

High school students are immediate ‘tomorrow’s’ democratic force of our society who should actively participate in all aspects of economical, environment and social life in local communities. The project aims to contribute in increasing the present and future generations of high schools students’ skills and competences to face different challenges in everyday social life from different perspectives and to become active members of their local communities. To achieve this, the project focuses on increased skills and competences of the teachers, for teamwork and cooperation that leads to development and implementation of common education approach for their students.

The project aims to present advantages of “learning by doing” students-based approach in topics of high community interest. This project also supports teachers in adopting cooperative and innovative practices with their training to apply some of the existing web 2.0 tools (OER) and eTwinning platform to increase their skills in application of ICT based techniques, which will lead to development of more attractive learning approaches towards students.

MY VIRTUAL TOWN is being implemented by 9 PP, 3 partners from each country (Bulgaria, Slovenia and Macedonia) involved, those are: 3 high schools (HS of Economics and Management (BG), HS “Ljupco Santov” (MK) and School Centre Velenje (SLO)), 3 local public bodies (Pazardzhik Municipality (BG), Public utility “Vodovod” Kocani (MK) and Ljudska univerza Velenje (SLO)) and 3 NGOs (CSEG (BG), MAGA (MK) and KSENA (SLO)).

Joint team work will lead to establishment of good partnership among project partners, increase their overall competences and skills for the implementation of new joint projects in the future. Secondary schools will benefit from students’ satisfaction with the quality of learning methods, new methodologies and opportunities for research and learning, networking opportunities with other educational institutions, enhanced capacity for transnational cooperation, and educated students as a new generation of young EU citizens who will be forerunners in increasing of public awareness towards all community related issues.

Taking into account project objectives and project activities, the purpose of this document will be to establish a basis for strategic cooperation and transnational partnership in the field of education between the municipalities of Kochani, Pazardzhik, and Velenje by involving representatives of the local, educational, and civil sectors.

Education is a key element for the social and economic life of the society. The power of quality education gives results on two levels: 1) the level of personal development of a citizen and 2) the level of development of the society.



At an individual level, education allows people to gain knowledge, skills and form an approach for critical thinking and thus making a choice in the direction of improving their quality of life.

At the social level, education is a strategic sector which influences the overall development of the community. In fact, education is of strategic significance for the development of the society within one municipality/region.

Educational curricula for students from 14 to 18 years of age in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Slovenia are identical to a great degree, but emphasis of the current project will be given to: ICT in teaching, local governance and civil sector, waste management, protection of the environment, and clean energy initiatives. The process of strategic planning aims to jointly define a vision for the future, to set priorities, to present possible actions and resources within the three regions, and to ensure that councilors, mayor, school representatives, civil society representatives and other stakeholders who are involved in the process will support the realization of the common goals of project *“MY VIRTUAL TOWN – Education system - democratic force that helps to prepare students to actively participate in all aspects of economical, environment and social life in local communities”*, funded by the Erasmus+ Program. The strategy contains a vision for development of the strategic partnership between the educational stakeholders of the three participating regions, main principles for implementation of the strategy, as well as the strategic priorities and measures for achieving the identified vision. The strategy sets the priorities and measures which could be taken by the stakeholders by defining some possible activities and initiatives for future cooperation.

2. Present situation in educational sector of the 3 participating municipalities

2.1 Overviews of the Education System in Bulgaria and Pazardzhik Municipality

The Pre-school and School Education Act (effective from 1.08.2016) provides the legal foundation for the overall education system in the country and establishes the right of citizens to continuously enhance their education and qualifications. The Act recognizes the right for education for all children; guarantees equal treatment regardless of their ethnic or social background and residential locality; ensures conditions and provides opportunities for further development and accomplishment of a high level of knowledge in the system of education.

Bulgarian education system has traditionally been organized within the public sector. However, a number of private schools exist at different levels of schooling. The education in Bulgaria is mainly supported by the state through the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). Financial autonomy is given to schools by financial decentralization and the so-called “delegated budgets”. The financial decentralization transfers rights and obligations that are related to the constitution and execution of a budget (delegated budgets). Schools have more operational rights in relation to budget constitution and expenditures, and execute their own independent policies.

Education and training of children starts in kindergartens. They may be public, municipal or private, depending on the type of their budget. Kindergartens are for children at the age



between 3 and 6 (when they begin first grade). Pre-primary groups for children aged 5 and 6 are compulsory and may take place either in a kindergarten or in a primary school. School readiness is assessed at the end of pre-school education stage by comparing acquired learning outcomes with the learning outcomes described in the state standards. Personal portfolio CD is issued for every child.

School education is free at pre-primary, primary and secondary level in the public sector. It is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16 (0-8 grades). The levels of schooling in Bulgaria are:

- primary education (grades 1- 4 inclusive);
- pre secondary education (grades 5 – 7 inclusive)
- lower secondary education (grades 8 – 10 inclusive);
- upper secondary education (grades 10 – 12 inclusive).

Schools in Bulgaria are state, municipal, private or spiritual and as according to the type of training and teaching they provide – non-specialized and specialized. According to the stage or degree of education, non-specialized schools are:

- primary (I - IV grade inclusive);
- elementary (I - VII grade inclusive);
- secondary (VIII - XII grade inclusive);
- unified (I - X grade inclusive);
- high school (I – XII inclusive).

According to the content of the training, the secondary schools can be

- profiled or
- vocational

Special profiled-schools shall include in-depth competences in a specific profile in accordance with the state education standard for the special profile education.

Special profiles are the following:

- foreign languages;
- humanities;
- social sciences;
- economic development;
- software and hardware science;
- entrepreneurship;
- mathematics;
- natural sciences;
- visual arts;
- music;
- physical education and sports

Vocational training shall include competences needed for the acquisition of vocational qualifications, as well as for the meeting of the eligibility requirements of the occupation or profession, if any, including regulated professions and occupations. Vocational high schools



shall aim at attaining the state education standard for the acquisition of vocational qualifications during the two gymnasium stages of the secondary education degree course.

There can be also innovative schools, which are declared such upon an ordinance of the Council of Ministers and those schools should constantly achieve improvement of education quality by:

1. Developing and introducing innovative elements regarding the organization and / or content of the training;
2. Organizing in a new or improved way the management, the training and the learning environment;
3. Using new teaching methods;
4. Developing innovative training content, school curricula, and school plans.

Specialized schools train experts in specific fields like sport, arts, culture and the needs of religions. Specialized schools are:

- Sport schools (V to XII inclusive)
- culture schools (grades I to XII, V to XII, or VIII to XII inclusive);
- arts schools (grades I to XII, V to XII, or VIII to XII inclusive);
- spiritual schools (grades VIII to XII inclusive).

The primary education starts normally when a child turns seven, but it is not uncommon for parents to consider their children able to start the 1st grade at the age of six. After finishing the fourth grade, students get a certificate for elementary education. To get a basic education diploma, students can go to a lower-secondary school or choose to attend a general secondary school.

In most schools, the school year begins on 15th of September and continues till 15th or 30th of June. Each school year has two terms. In most of the secondary schools, competitive exams for admission are required. Pupils can choose from a number of various types of schools, each offering a different focus (such as mathematics and sciences or foreign languages).

All Exams and External National Examinations are as follows:

1. Primary education – 4th grade (10/11 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Maths, Man and Nature, Man and Society

2. Lower Secondary Education – 7th grade (13/14 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature and Maths. Optionally, students may sit a third exam in Foreign Language.

3. First Stage of Secondary Education – 10th grade (16/17 years of age)



National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths, The exams are in test format. Optionally, students may choose to sit an exam in foreign language and IT.

4. Second stage Secondary Education – 11th – 12th grade (18/19 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths. The exams are in test format. Optionally, students may choose to sit an exam in foreign language.

Pazardzhik municipality is located in the Eastern part of Pazardzhik region. It occupies an area of 636,722 km² that is 14.21% from the region's territory. The municipality takes the proud second place among 12 municipalities within the region. Pazardjik municipality consists of 32 settlements – administrative centre town of Pazardzhik and 31 villages.

According to data of the National Statistical Institute for the year of 2017, Pazardzhik Municipality has a population of 108 376 inhabitants, out of which 68 572 live within the city of Pazardzhik and 39 804 within the surrounding villages. It ranks the ninth position over the rest municipalities according to number of inhabitants.

The Educational system of Pazardzhik Municipality consists of 32 municipal kindergartens and 46 schools – 40 municipal and 6 state.

Type of institution from the system of preschool and school education	Financing	Number
Kindergartens	Municipal	32
Primary I-IV grade	Municipal	6
Elementary I-VII grade	Municipal	25
Unified I-XII grade	Municipal	4
Selective/Profiled high schools	Municipal	3
Vocational high schools	State	6
	Municipal	1
Sport high schools	Municipal	1
Centers for Special Educational Support/	State	1
	Municipal	2
Schools dormitories/housing	Municipal	1
Total:		82

According to data of the National Statistical Institute for Pazardzhik Municipality in 2017/2018

- number of children enrolled in kindergartens is – 3 378
- number of students within the schools is - 12 267
- number of pedagogical personnel /teaching staff/ in kindergartens is – 260
- number of pedagogical personnel /teaching staff/ in schools is – 1019
- number of kindergarten groups is – 134
- number of school classes is – 539

Table: School sector in Pazardzhik Municipality

Educational Institutions	Number of Educational Institutions	Number of classes	Number of pedagogical personnel/teaching staff/	Number of pupils/students
Municipal kindergartens	32	134	260	3 378
Municipal specialized and non specialised high schools	39	424	812	9 512
State and municipal vocational schools	7	115	207	2 755
Total:	78	673	1 279	15 645

In two of the secondary schools High School “Georgi Bregov” and High School “Dimitar Gachev” there is a total of 162 students divided in 7 classes in ART profile – visual arts and music. In the Sport School in the city the number of students being educated is 223 divided in 11 classes. The number of the vocational classes in the municipal schools is 24 and they account for the total of 426 students.

Below you can find a list of all profiles that can be selected by secondary students within the Municipality after graduation of VII-th grade.

HIGH SCHOOL NAME	Profile
High School „Georgi Bregov”	Music
	Visual arts
High School of Mathematics and Natural Science „Konstantin Velichkov”	Mathematics
	Software and hardware
	Natural Sciences
Profiled High School „Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov”	Humanities
	Natural Science
Language High School „Bertolt Breht”	Foreign Languages
High School „Doctor Petar Beron”	Entrepreneurship
High School „Dimitar Gachev”	Music

Below you can find a list of all professions and vocational trainings in local high schools:

High school	Profession/vocational training	Profile	Level of professional qualification
Sports High school	Assistant coach	Sports	III
Vocational High School of Construction, Architecture and Geodesy	Construction Engineer	Building Construction and Architecture	III
	Construction worker – installer	Window frames installation and glazing	II
	Construction worker – installer	RC (reinforced concrete) constructions	II
	Builder	Masonry/Bricklaying	II



	Builder	Climbing shuttering	II
Vocational High School of Economics and Management	Economist – Informatics	Economical Informatics	III
	Assistant in SMEs	SMEs	II
	Tax and customs agent	Customs and tax administration	III
High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences „Konstantin Velichkov”	Software developer	Software developer	III
	Operating system Software developer	Operating system Software development	III
Vocational High School of Hairdressing and Culinary	Cook	Production of culinary products and beverages	II
	Hairdresser	Hairdressing	II
Vocational High School in Industrial Technologies	Automation technician	Automation in continuous production	III
	Technician of energy equipment and installations	Thermotechnics – heat, air conditioning, ventilation and refrigeration equipment	III
	Machine operator	Metal cutting machines	II
	Machine operator	Welding Machines and Equipment	II
Vocational High School of Mechanical Engineering	Technician of computer systems	Computer equipment and engineering	III
	Technician of computer systems	Computer networks	III
	Systems software developer	System software development	III
	Operating systems developer	Operating systems development	III
	Graphic designer	Graphic design	III
	Electro technician	Electro equipment of transport technics	III
	Technician of transport technics	Auto transport technics	III
	Technician of power equipment and installations	Thermotechnics – heat, air conditioning, ventilation and refrigeration equipment	III
Vocational High School in Chemistry and Food technology	Chemist technician	Technology of pharmaceutical , perfumery and cosmetic products	III
	Chemist – technician	Technology of cellulose, paper and packaging	III
	Food and beverages quality technician	Food and beverage quality control and safety	III

The European Commission support for the production of this document does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



	Touristic activities organisator, agent activities	Tourism and leisure activities	III
	Bread and pastry cook	Bread and bread-like products	II
Vocational High School in Agriculture „Tsaritsa Yoanna”	Technician of agricultural equipment	Agricultural equipment	III
	Viticulture technician	Viticulture and wine production	III
	Technician in the food industry	Production of meat, meat products and fish	III
	Plant Grower	Tillage and grain production	II
	Cattle breeder	Cattle breeding	II

Number of children with special needs enrolled in schools:

- within the city – 159;
- in the surrounding villages – 37.

Number of children in Centers for Special Educational Support:

- within the city – 67;
- in the surrounding villages – 3.

Potential weaknesses:

- The school curricula lacks of lessons dedicated at topics related to local governance and civil society, waste management; human rights and anti-discrimination; and quite a few lessons dedicated to topics like protection of environment, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- Few lessons are dedicated to ICT, and practically they do not teach topics like WEB 2.0 tools and Open Educational Resources;
- Need to increase capacity among teachers on topics like: EU programmes and funding, potential opportunities for a professional collaboration with other similar institutions and schools at EU level, and establishment of a teachers network for exchanging professional ideas and experience.
- As a result of globalization and migration, population in rural regions has started to decline and it leads to shrinking numbers of student and pupils enrolled in schools.

2.2 Overview of the Educational System in Velenje, Slovenia

General Information on the Educational system in Slovenia

There are three levels of Slovenian education: basic, secondary and higher education. Basic school is the first stage in the Slovenian system of education.



- **Basic School**

According to the legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, all children must necessarily receive basic general education that is to finish a basic school (in Slovene: osnovna šola). Training is free for both Slovenian citizens and foreign children.

Studying at a basic school lasts 9 years at the age from 6 to 15 years. At the end of the 6th and 9th grades, school children have to pass the National Knowledge Assessment Test (in Slovene: Nacionalno preverjanje znanja). Based on the received assessment result and combined with the overall performance, a 9th-grade pupil is given a permission to continue his/her education.

- **Secondary Education**

Schoolchildren, who graduated from basic schools, can choose what type of secondary education they want to receive depending on their basic school academic performance, career aspirations and plans. In Slovenia, there are 4 types of secondary education:

1) Minimum Vocational Education

If a pupil has only 7 years of basic school, he/she can receive a minimum vocational education, which is aimed at preparing children for the mastery of future profession. Training on such a programme lasts 2 years and ends with a final examination, according to which children can continue studying at a vocational school.

2) Secondary Vocational Education

Secondary vocational education (in Slovene: Srednje poklicno izobraževanje, SPI) is available for students who have completed a basic school or received a minimum vocational education. In secondary vocational educational institutions, students study for three years and master applied professions such as carpenter, mechanic, glazier, hairdresser, baker, etc.

Vocational schools offer apprenticeship programmes that are supported in Slovenia at the national level. If the country experiences a lack of qualified personnel in a certain field of expertise, then students of corresponding study programmes can be trained in practice by a real employer. This facilitates the search for job and helps students better solidify the theoretical knowledge and soon feel engaged in the working process and team. At the end of studies, students have to pass a final examination.

If a student has a desire to continue his/her education at a university or a vocational college, he/she must pass the General Final Examination (in Slovene: matura), which includes Slovenian language, Mathematics and a foreign language. There are also paid preparatory courses (in Slovene: Maturitetni tečaj), during which students are trained to pass the exams.

3) Secondary Technical and Vocational Education

Students can get a secondary technical and vocational education after completing studies at a basic school. The training lasts 4 years and is aimed at obtaining in-depth knowledge within a specific technical or economic profession.

At the end of studies, a Professional Final Examination (in Slovene: Poklicna matura) should be passed. The result of this exam involves enrolling in a vocational college or university for a



professional Bachelor's degree programme. If students have passed the General Final Examination (in Slovene: matura), they can later apply for a university Bachelor's degree programme.

4) General Secondary Education

Children can also receive general secondary education in gymnasiums. There are schoolchildren who want to continue their studies and receive higher education. That is why gymnasiums are so popular among applicants. These are usually the schoolchildren who passed successfully the National Knowledge Assessment Test at a basic school and were successful in all disciplines.

There are different types of gymnasiums:

- a general gymnasium, where students study general subjects, such as Slovenian language, World Literature, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, History, Biology, etc.;
- a classical gymnasium, where students, besides basic subjects, also study Latin and have more lectures on History and Philosophy;
- a gymnasium with in-depth study of foreign languages or natural sciences;
- a sport gymnasium, which is usually chosen by young professional athletes.

When passing the General Final Examination (Matura), students take tests in the Slovenian Language and World Literature, Mathematics, English and two optional subjects. After graduating from a gymnasium, students can enter a university.

- Higher Education

Slovenian education is recognized at the international level. Training is conducted according to the Bologna system. An increasing number of universities keep introducing study programmes in English into the academic process.

Higher education in Slovenia for foreigners is provided on a paid basis, although the tuition fee is relatively low. Slovenian education is recognized throughout the EU, so graduates of Slovenian educational institutions can continue their studies in other EU countries. If desired, they can enter a Master's degree programme in any other country of the European Union and participate in student exchange programmes.

Vocational College

Training in vocational colleges (in Slovene: Višje strokovno izobraževanje) is available to graduates of gymnasiums and secondary vocational schools, who have already worked for three years and passed the Slovenian language, Mathematics and Foreign Language exams (in Slovene: Poklicna matura).

Vocational colleges offer more study programmes than universities do. These programmes are focused on developing practical skills in such areas as Tourism, Wellness, Economics, Logistics, Security, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Two-year studies end with the diploma defence.

General Information on the Educational system in Velenje Municipality:



The Municipality of Velenje provides various forms of education to its residents.

In Municipality of Velenje, all levels of education are provided to citizens. In the city itself there are:

- Velenje Kindergarten,
- six primary schools,
- Center for Upbringing, Education and Training Velenje (for children with special needs);
- secondary schools within the Velenje School Center, where students can study in the following programs:
 - o general high school,
 - o general gymnasium with sports department,
 - o art gymnasium - music and art direction,
 - o electrical and computer school,
 - o mechanical engineering,
 - o geotechnical and environmental school,
 - o school for service activities and vocational colleges,
- College of Environmental Protection
- Faculty of Energetics

As a unit at the Velenje School Center, there is also a dormitory and student dormitory. Ljudska univerza Velenje is also of great importance for education in the City of Velenje with numerous programs (programs for education, language education, Center for independent learning, learning aid for the unemployed ...).

Statistical data for school year 2018/2019:

Number of kindergarten units	12
Number or enrolled children (2018/19):	1445 (in 83 departments)
Number of primary schools	6
Number or enrolled pupils (2018/19)	2963
CVIU 2018/19:	108 students
Sheltered workshop SAŠA 2018/19:	47 in Velenje, total of 94
Number of students in Velenje school centre in 2018/19:	1.614 pupils, 360 students in 500 other participants = total of 2.474
Music school Fran Korun Koželjski Velenje 2018/19:	982 students
College of Environmental Protection 2018/19:	119 regular students in 291 additional



Faculty of Energetics 2018/19:	179 students (66 v MOV)
Andragoški zavod Ljudska univerza Velenje - 2018/19:	11.307 participants in programmes and projects
3rd age university of Velenje 2018/19:	565 participants

Potential weaknesses (Velenje):

- Lack of practical work at school
- Overload of teaching content - a lot of content that has to be done in short period of time
- Has no connection with current social events in the field of renewable energy, climate changes, energy efficiency, etc.
- No interdisciplinary approach to the theme of sustainable energy
- Teachers must adhere to the curriculum and have very few options for additional interactive content
- Education is mainly related to frontal lectures, while experiential knowledge is missing. This refers to almost all school subjects, while for example children on topic about climate changes have much to learn through practical work, but also to give their own contribution to this topic

2.3 Overview of the Educational System in Kochani, Macedonia

Primary education in Republic of Macedonia is mandatory and it continues for nine years. It is organized in three educational periods as follows: from first to third grade, from fourth to sixth grade and from seventh to ninth grade. The students are enrolled in first grade when they are at the age of five years and eight months.

Primary education lasts nine years and is mandatory and free for all students (aged 6-14 years). There are 347 primary schools in the country (around 1100 including satellite offices). The level of literacy is high and accounts for 98.8% for men and 96.8% for women (2015). The gross coverage rate is 63%, and the net rate is 91%. These figures do not include students (mainly Roma) who are not registered at all in the system (without a personal identification number), and therefore the current coverage rate for the respective adult cohort is smaller.

Secondary education, which is also mandatory and free, is divided into four types: gymnasium, secondary vocational education, art education and education for students with special educational needs. At the end of the three-year vocational education, students take a final exam and have no right to enroll at a university. Students who complete a four-year vocational education can choose between a final exam and a state examination, depending on whether they want to continue their education or not, while students from the upper secondary schools obligatory state or school matriculation.



Among the 124 existing secondary schools, 108 are public and the remaining 16 are private. Of the secondary public schools, 23 are gymnasiums; 43 are professional; 33 also offer gymnasium and vocational education; 4 schools are for students with special educational needs; and 5 are art schools.

Besides the Law of primary education of Republic of Macedonia that covers all main aspects of the educational system there are several other documents related to the educational system which address to specific areas.

As most general and important is the National strategy of education from 2016-2020 where we systematically plan the further steps for the educational improvement.

Currently there is a draft version of a new strategy of education (<http://mon.gov.mk/index.php/2014-07-23-14-03-24/vesti-i-nastani/2169-2018-2026>)

With the process of decentralization the schools are governed by the Municipalities and each municipality develops its own Program for support of education every year and this program is being adopted by the municipal council.

Related to this project activities and goals are also the “Strategy for development of Information Computer Technologies in the Republic of Macedonia 2015 – 2020” and “Strategy for environment conservation within the education of the Republic of Macedonia”. “National strategy for life-long learning for 2014 – 2020 in the Republic of Macedonia”

In municipality of Kochani there are six primary schools, one of which is a musical school and there are two secondary schools. In the primary schools, during the current school year (2017/18) around 3 100 students were enrolled from whom 150 in the musical school and around 1 550 students in the secondary schools.

As potential weaknesses in the educational curriculums in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects related to the main topic of this project, is that topics like local self-governance, communal services, human rights and anti-discrimination, and sustainable energy are not represented enough and their importance to the wellbeing of people is not emphasized enough.

3. Principles and values of the cooperation between countries

The implementation of the strategic partnership in the area of education between municipality of Kochani, municipality of Pazardzhik and municipality of Velenje will be based on the following principles and values:

Cooperation – with the aim of ensuring safe and positive environment in which the young population will grow, develop and be partners;

Stability and lasting values – in order to guarantee quality of the realization of the educational processes and at the same time to create conditions for the function the education of the future generations;



Integration – uniting achievements at implementation of the activities, determined with the strategic aims, which are dedicated to ensuring optimal distribution of the present resources and integrating all categories of factors, especially the students, also continuous consideration of the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups;

Motivation – so as to achieve maximum effect in the accomplishment the competence;

Legality – with the aim of guaranteeing the implementation of accepted strategic document in compliance with the corresponding laws and the general public acceptance of the local population;

Professionalism and accuracy – in order to implement the activities in compliance with the legal norms and procedures and through the use of proved positive practices and justification of the political decisions;

Participation – so that all citizens in all groups of interested sides can be included in the processes of consultations and implementation of the competence also in the public policies with local significance;

Continuation – so as to preserve and encourage the tradition for creating educated people who have quality and usable knowledge and skills for improving the quality of life and with responsible participation and contribution to the community;

Openness and orientation - in order to respond to the needs of the citizens and the job market also to encourage the health – with the aim of creating conditions for healthy population.

4. Mission, Vision and main aims

Mission:

Improvement of experience and knowledge of the students and teachers in high schools on the project topics; to continue, maintain and expand further cooperation between the participating partners; to introduce new innovative methods of teaching by using ICT tools; to create a strong connection between the organizations of the project partners during the implementation of project activities; to share good practices and innovations; to train teachers on various contemporary topics, which they will be using later during their teaching activities with students.

Vision:

Sustainable development and clean environment; mitigate the negative impact from climate changes; twinning of the participating partner organizations representing the following three



sectors: 1) Public sector; 2) Educational sector; 3) Civil sector; well educated students and teachers; innovative approach in educational system.

Aims:

Main aims:

- Supporting and deepening the cooperation between the three municipalities, school management, teachers and students and developing strategic partnership for education at the schools;
- Use of the open educational resources for teaching of specific topics like climate changes, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- Participation of teachers from the three municipalities through using methods of open educational forum;
- Development of innovative methods of teaching renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and climate changes;
- The students have to learn the meaning of the use of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and climate changes through making use of present educational tools;
- Acquiring permanent knowledge on the area of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and healthy environment by the students from the high schools.

5. Key partners, challenges and advantages

5.1. Key partners:

The key partners in Implementation of the strategy are: All project partners

5.2. Challenges

- Ensuring relevant support by all the key partners included in the strategy;
- Limited financial resources, human resources and time;
- Creating a flexible school program;

5.3. Potential actions/measures

Areas and actions for improvement of educational process with active involvement of Municipalities, Public utilities and NGO sector in towns of Kochani, Pazardzhik and Velenje.

Following areas and actions for improvement are determined as the most suitable and with high level of probability for successful implementation within the future cooperation among the project partners.

Municipalities, public utilities, and educational authorities can ensure improvement in the following areas:

The European Commission support for the production of this document does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



- Raising ecological awareness of students in all levels of educational process (from kindergartens to high school) through cooperation between representatives of municipalities and public utilities and teachers and students' and ensuring of their active involvement in all awareness campaigns.
- increasing of overall understanding of public related activities (organizing of students' visits and monitoring of one day operation process in the communal enterprises for solid waste collection, recycling centers, drinking water treatment plants, waste water treatments plants, public enterprises for maintenance of city green areas);
- promoting and development of entrepreneurship, creative industry, creative entrepreneurship & co-worker spaces with establishing of interconnection with SMEs from private sector;
- supporting of career advisory activities for students for better acknowledgement of their own skills and competences,
- raising the level of involvement and participation in local society by promoting of advantages of volunteerism among all students;
- improvement of the transnational cooperation and contacts of teachers and students in the frame of international projects;

NGOs can ensure increasing of overall skills and competences of students and teachers by:

- providing of expertise and support to educational staff in development of project ideas and preparation of project applications (for example small scale projects for educational equipment for practical utilization of solar energy);
- preparation and realization of relevant trainings for capacity building of STEM teachers in the topics of utilization of RES, EE, climate change and environment protection;
- support in establishing of relevant international contacts (between schools, involved services, public enterprises and institutions, sponsors ...) in the frame of their other transnational projects;
- motivate students and teachers to continuously participate in actions beneficial for community (ecological and social activities)
- support and stimulate active participation of teachers/professors in the NGO sector in the frame of small scale projects

Both type of partners, public organizations and NGOs, will try to investigate the possibility for a larger deployment of green public procurement (GPP) into their everyday activities, because as outlined by the European Commission, GPP can lead to a large number of benefits: environmental, social, economic, and political, which eventually will lead to excellent opportunities for sustainable development at local level. GPP is directly connected to issues like: energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, protection of environment, and climate change issues. For this reason consortium partners commit themselves to seek initiatives, projects and tools for further development of this topic.



6. Action plan

In the activity plan all the main purposes are appointed according to the preliminary shown examples where in an identical way are presented in accordance with achieving a certain aim – a performer of the activity, time for implementation, expected results, other participants, which means human resources, as well as prerequisites for implementation of foreseen activities;

Activity 1:

Description of the activity	Proposal for policy improvement at national level (BG, MK, SI). Additions in educational curriculum of STEM subjects in high schools: - More school lessons on topics like: protection of environment, EE, and RES.
Performer of the activity	Schools
Expected results	Improvement of educational policy
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Teachers
Budget:	
Financial sources:	N/A

Activity 2:

Description of the activity	Initiative for practical training “on-the-spot” for students from the 3 participating municipalities (high schools). Visits of municipal communal enterprises.
Performer of the activity	Schools, municipalities, private sector
Expected results	Increase of specific knowledge of students from high schools
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Teachers and municipals councilors for education
Financial means:	Local municipal budgets – if available

Activity 3:

Description of the activity	To continue cooperation in terms of development and applying for projects of mutual interest. For example: exchange of students to share experience on the topics from above.
Performer of the activity	All project partners
Expected results	Develop and apply at least 2 project proposals
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	All project partners
Financial means:	Different EU and national programmes and funds from private sector

Activity 4:

Description of the activity	To disseminate project activities and results to other educational institutions. Participating teachers and students can visit other schools which do not participate in the project
-----------------------------	--



	and present project activities to them.
Performer of the activity	All schools together with other partners
Expected results	Improvement of knowledge in other schools
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	All project partners
Financial means:	N/A

Activity 5:

Description of the activity	<p>Awareness raising campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the frame of the established public events mobilizing the students (high schools, secondary schools) in the 3 participating regions, - Production of dissemination materials and creation of appropriate local activities. - Bringing EE and RES technologies in classrooms (mini models and measurements to prove feasibility and benefits) - Discuss topics like human rights and anti-discrimination issues in classes.
Performer of the activity	Public organizations + NGOs + schools (students, children)
Expected results	Raised awareness and improved habits on topics like energy efficiency, renewable energy sources; human rights and anti-discrimination issues.
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Representatives of municipalities and NGOs
Budget:	EUR 150,000 + voluntary effort + 20,000 EUR for the models
Financial sources:	Municipal budget and Erasmus+

Activity 6:

Description of the activity	<p>To increase overall understanding of promoting and development of entrepreneurship, circular economy, creative industry, ecological and energy wise solutions, creative entrepreneurship & co-worker spaces with establishing of interconnection with SMEs from private sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizing of students' visits and monitoring of one-day production process in one branch enterprise from the region - training and demonstration (presentation) of real economic activities - supporting of career advisory activities for students for better acknowledgement of their own skills and competences - research on possibilities to apply circular economy on a concrete production process - establish entrepreneurship database from the 3 participating regions - disseminations materials: leaflets, brochures, posters, etc. - students competition on the above-mentioned topics
Performer of the activity	Public organizations + NGOs + schools



Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised awareness and improved habits on topics like entrepreneurship, circular economy, creative industry. - Raising the level of involvement and participation in local society by promoting of advantages of volunteerism among all students; - Improvement of the transnational cooperation and contacts of teachers and students in the frame of international projects
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Representatives of municipalities, NGOs, schools
Budget:	EUR 300,000
Financial sources:	Erasmus+ and other EU funds / programs

Activity 7:

Description of the activity	<p>To increase overall understanding of public related (communal) activities in the high schools from the 3 participating regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizing of students' visits and monitoring of one day operation process in the communal enterprises for solid waste collection, recycling centers, drinking water treatment plants, waste water treatments plants, public enterprises for maintenance of city green areas - practical participation in communal enterprises activities - disseminations materials: leaflets, brochures, posters, etc. - ideas for environment protection (waste free environment, saving water, recycling, waste separation, plastic ban) from students - students competition on the above-mentioned topics
Performer of the activity	Public organizations + NGOs + schools
Expected results	Raised awareness and improved habits on topics like communal services.
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Representatives of municipalities, NGOs, schools
Budget:	EUR 100,000
Financial sources:	Erasmus+ and other EU funds / programs

Activity 8:

Description of the activity	<p>Energy management in schools</p> <p>Within the class, an energy team has to be set up. Energy team members will firstly be educated on energy efficiency at the school. Simple metering devices has to be purchased, with which energy team will be able to measure energy use in the classrooms. In the first stage, in the beginning of heating season in the school, energy team will make measurements for a short period (e.g. one month) without making any energy efficient actions. In the second stage, energy team will make the same measurements together with implementation of some simple energy efficient action, for the same period as in the</p>
-----------------------------	--



	first stage (e.g. one month). Then they will compare results which will be reported to the whole class. Based on the findings, each team will prepare an energy audit of the building and calculate the savings for the entire building. In the next step, the dissemination of findings to the wider local environment is also important (transfer of knowledge to the home environment, informing media about the project, etc.)
Performer of the activity	Schools, experts on energy efficiency measures, local authorities and policymakers, communication and dissemination experts
Expected results	Reducing energy use in the school, change of behavior among students, increase of knowledge on specific topics like energy efficiency among teachers and students.
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Teachers, NGOs, local authorities
Budget:	20,000 – 40,000 per school/partner
Financial sources:	Erasmus+ Programme; Other potential EU programmes from the next programming period 2021 - 2027

Activity 9:

Description of the activity	<p>Act to react! Raise awareness of students on how they can contribute to better social and environmental conditions by using social and other media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step 1: empower students by promoting active citizenship, freedom of speech and taking actions. Make them understand that their voice matters and that they have power too. - Step 2: Encourage students to use social media to be heard and to give them power to share their views and opinions on regulations, municipal decisions. Create friendly social environment where they can share without being exposed. - Step 3: Activate students to look and act. Make them aware of decisions of the city and how those will impact their (future) life. Let them observe changes that happen and encourage discussion. They should share their views, reflections and dis/agreement with such actions. - Step 4: Teach teachers to explore social media to be used in student friendly manner.
Performer of the activity	Schools
Expected results	Improvement of educational policy, Promoting Active citizenship
Period of performance	2020-2024
Human resources	Teachers
Budget:	15.000 (laptops/phones, but not required)
Financial sources:	N/A



7. Financing the activities

The activities described in this strategy will be financed with the budgets of the municipalities or with funds ensured by different projects and programs.