



This project is funded by the European Union

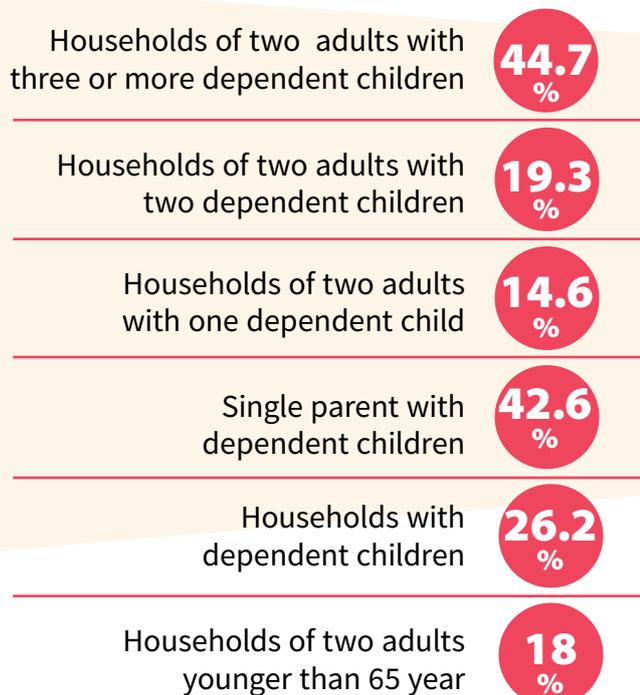
ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education



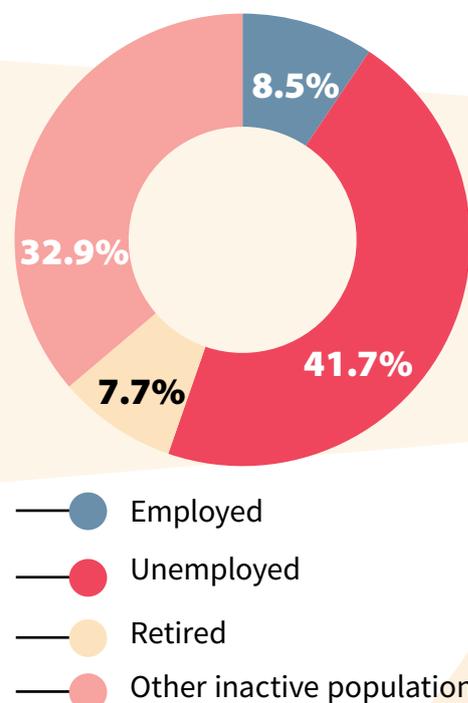
Policy Brief: North Macedonia

According to the latest data, the poverty risk rate in the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 was 21.6%. The analyses of the types of households indicate that the poverty risk in households of two adults with three or more dependent children was 44,7%, single parent with dependent children 42,6% and households with dependent children 26,2%. According to the most frequent activity status, the poverty risk rate for the employed was 8.5% and for the unemployed 41.7%, whereas it was 7.7% for the retired. Child poverty rate was 27.8%.¹

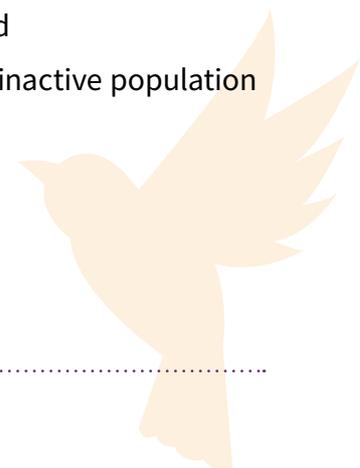
AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY RATE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE



AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY RATE BY MOST FREQUENT ACTIVITY STATUS / 2019



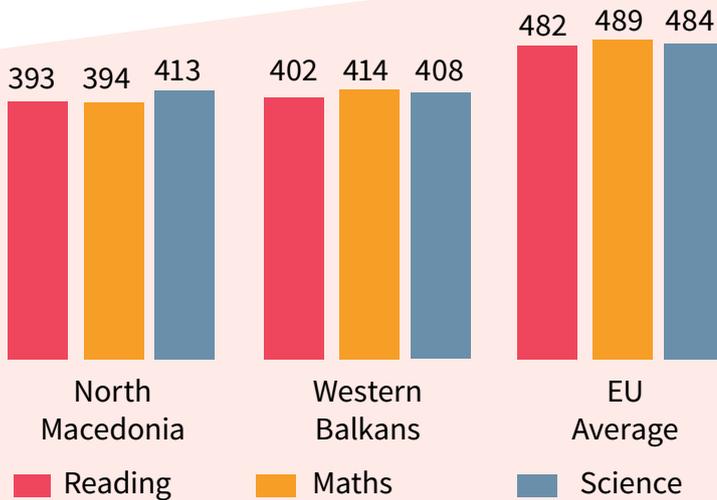
Equity



¹ State Statistical Office, http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/4.1.20.113_mk.pdf



PISA 2018



In the past years, the Republic of North Macedonia took part in the PISA study in 2000 (PISA 2000 plus), 2015 and 2018. The comparative results, although lower than the international average, show a trend of improvement.

PISA results for 2018 are the best so far, i.e. they are significantly better than the country results in the past two assessments. The Republic of North Macedonia is ranked 2nd among all countries participating in the assessment in terms of the progress achieved between two PISA assessments (2015 and 2018, including rank 1 or the greatest progress of all participating countries in reading comprehension results, rank 3 in the progress of mathematics results and rank 2 in the progress of science results.²

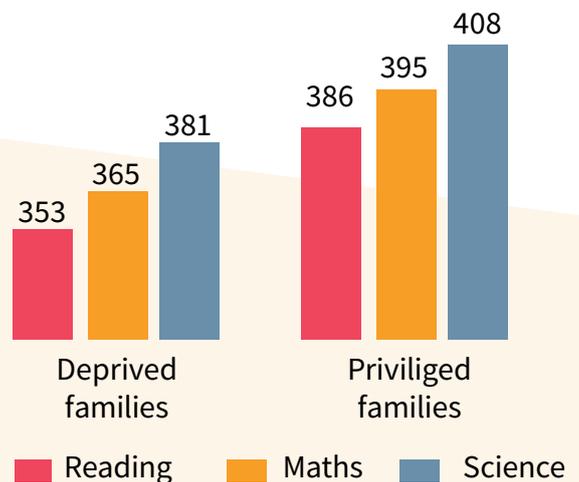
The comparison of the results from 2015 and 2018 shows that:

- the results in the reading comprehension assessment have improved by 41 points, from 352 points in 2015 to 393 in 2018;
- the results in science assessment have improved by 29 points, from 384 in 2015 to 413 in 2018;
- the results in mathematics assessment have improved by 23 points, from 371 in 2015 to 394 in 2018.

Unfortunately, analyses have not yet been made to determine the main reasons for this progress in student achievement.

The Chart illustrates the difference in PISA results for the deprived families and the privileged families in North Macedonia, showing a 5% to 10% drawback among students from poorer households.

PISA 2018



Students' reading performances in the international average scale of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) are among the worst, compared to the countries and economies that take part in PISA (Result 391, rank 68/76, 2018)³.

² PISA 2018, <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=MKD&treshold=10&topic=PI>

³ Ibid.



Public spending on education and training was at 3.7% of GDP in 2019.⁴

The enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 6 in 2019 was 40.2%, which is far from the desired goal of 95%.⁵

In 2018, the gross enrolment rate in primary education was 63.91% and the net enrolment rate 92.97%.⁶

Although secondary education is compulsory, the gross coverage rate in 2018 was 41.80% and the net coverage rate 69.63%.⁷

Preschool education participation is also rather low among minority groups. More than half of the Macedonian children attend preschool education, compared to less than one in five Albanian children. Only 2.6% of the 4 year old Roma community children attend preschool education. Children from urban areas are six times more likely to enrol in preschool education, compared to the children from the rural regions.⁸

73% of Roma children who attend school never complete their education. Roughly 3 to 4 children per household are of age to go to school, yet the costs of sustaining schooling for this many children have become a financial burden.⁹

Share of youth not included in education, employment or training in 2019 was 18.14%.¹⁰

The SES is one of the factors that exert the strongest adverse influence not only on the quality of life of families affected by it, but also on the education of children and youth in all its tiers - from pre-primary to higher education.

ENROLMENT RATIO

Pre-primary

40.2
%

Primary

63.91
%

Secondary

69.63
%

University

33.3
%

Its negative effects include low level of participation in education, likelihood of dropping-out, poor quality of learning and insufficient progression through the education process.

Children with low SES are characterised by the lowest rates of participation in pre-primary education and lowest achievements in primary education, which later causes many problems for them in the upper tiers, *i.e.* secondary and higher education. The efforts to improve the situation are enhanced with the contribution of international organisations, donors and a large number of NGOs/CSOs working on empowering children and youth with low SES and improving their access to quality education. The impression remains, however, that all such initiatives suffer from lack of coordination and fragmentary realisation.

⁴ EU Commission Staff Working Document, North Macedonia 2020 Report, Brussels, 6.10.2020

⁵ Ibid

⁶ State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, Primary and Secondary Schools at the beginning of the school year 2017/2018, Number 2.4.18.04/895

⁷ Ibid

⁸ BIRN, Kevin, Analyses of the Situation of Women and Children in the Republic of North Macedonia [online source] / Kevin Birn – Skopje, UNICEF Office, 2020

⁹ 4 Efforts to Alleviate Child Poverty in North Macedonia in <https://borgenproject.org/child-poverty-in-north-macedonia/>

¹⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.NEET.ZS?locations=MK>



One good policy example is the decision of the Government to introduce compulsory secondary education for all children. This had a positive impact on progression rates from primary into secondary education, which rose to 95% in 2011, as well as on reducing attrition/drop-out rates in secondary education to 0.75% in 2017.¹¹ This decrease in drop-out rates was expected, taking into account the supplements and amendments to the Law on Secondary Education that provide for penalties for parents who do not ensure their children's regular attendance in secondary education and the introduction of positive measures for supporting at risk groups, including free transportation, scholarships and free textbooks.

The current National Strategy for Education¹² envisages further increase of the duration of mandatory education by making the final year of pre-primary education (age group 5-6 years) compulsory. This reform should help increase the coverage of children in preschool facilities, thus helping children acquire basic competences before they enter primary school.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The country needs to focus on inclusive economic growth, where all segments of society enjoy equitable opportunities;
- A more inclusive education - equitable and fair education opportunities for all has the potential of being a significant moving force for inclusive growth.
- Providing only educational opportunities will not be sufficient to improve access to education and to facilitate progression. Enrolment of children in school also requires interventions for actively removing numerous barriers and risks for children who are at a disadvantage, such as child labour, juvenile marriages, violence and discrimination.
- Therefore, a “campaign-like” approach to meeting immediate needs can help mitigate the problems of specific groups in the population, but cannot produce long-term effects or betterment. The full resolution of the problems faced by children and youth with low SES in the field of education requires parallel interventions in education, health and the economy.
- Improving the financial situation of families through guidance, training and employment, complemented by on-going campaigns aimed at adults and children to raise their awareness on the need and importance of education is a necessary prerequisite for long-term results.
- Implementation of the new strategic framework for education, particularly the targets for pre-school education.
- Increased support for teacher training and teacher professional development and ensure an effective assessment process.
- Improved access to quality education for all, in particular preschool enrolment, children with disabilities and children from Roma communities.

¹¹ Drop-out rate is recorded as students who have officially left school, i.e. withdrawn their documents in the course of a school year.

¹² Strategy 2018–2025 and Action Plan. - Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2018