

**NETWORK OF EDUCATION POLICY CENTERS**



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ANNUAL REPORT  
2021

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## 1. OVERVIEW 2021

It would be expected that preserving the spirit and activities of a professional network that is as geographically wide as NEPC in the second year that did not allow for face-to-face meetings, would be challenging. Yet, NEPC had the resilience to continue and even advance in some areas regardless of the stress 2021 brought to most of the member organizations, the secretariat and the people within them. This resilience is a reflection of the shared values and tight-knit relationships within the network. The implementation of emergency funds and of the Strategy process have surely contributed to further reinforcing the relationships with membership, moreover in 2021 NEPC launched new initiative (HR initiative) to support the professional development of members' staff.

Developing and sustaining a professional network requires a reflective process of questioning the strength of the organization's underlying philosophy, established processes, structures, and procedures. The 2021 and preparation for the new NEPC strategy highlighted NEPC's ability as a community to reflect on all the combined learnings from the past as well as to reopen the question of the futures in education – ecological justice has been identified as guiding value in designing programmatic areas of the Network. The Strategy process responds to the urgent need for paradigm shift in education as crucial system in contributing to the world green transition. Although the process of strategy development was not fully completed in 2021 it was a the main as well as a cohesive element in organizational development.

The mandate of Mario Bajkuša as member and the President of Governing Board expired, General Assembly elected Andrea Soldo as Governing Board member and Governing Board elected Ulviyya Mikailova as the President of the Governing Board.

The completion of the UNESCO GEM Regional Report *Inclusion and Education All means all*, that involved all NEPC members, its international launch and consequent dissemination and advocacy activities firmly placed NEPC in the global educational policy arena. In 2021, NEPC also contributed to the data collection of GEM report about non-state actors in education. The cooperation with UNESCO increased NEPC's visibility, outreach and advocacy capacities as well as provided us with deep insight and understanding of the issues across our region and beyond.

2021 also marks, after fifteen years, the ending of the valuable financial support from the Open Society Foundations' Education Support Programme. We thank them once again for the trust in our expertise, the financial support and for the rewarding partnership which we are sure will continue in other forms.

As a community we also suffered professional and for many of us personal loss of our dear colleague and friend Radmila Rangelov Jusović, Executive Director of Center for Educational Initiatives Step by Step and former member of NEPC Governing Board. She truly believed in the power of education to transform lives and the world. We continue our efforts to improve educational experience for every learner as we remember her.

## PROJECTS

### UNESCO GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT 2021: Profiles on non-state actor education provision and regulation in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	<b>Project Contractor</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	May 2021 – October 2021
<b>Partners:</b>	N/A
<b>Funded by:</b>	UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM)

NEPC role was to collect data for the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) 2021: Non-state actors in education - Who chooses? Who loses?

NEPC collected the Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) on non-state actors in education from 18 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey). The profiles summarize the types of provision and regulations of non-state actors in education at the country level from the most recent available sources. PEER are also intended to be cross-national learning tools for education stakeholders and the 2021 NSA profiles aim to respond to two key questions: (1) How are non-state actors engaged in education provision within a country's education system? (2) What laws, acts, strategies and policies exist which govern and regulate non-state actors engagement in education provision?

Moreover, NEPC provided a background report providing a cross-country overview of issues pertaining to non-state education provision and the involvement of private actors in public education in a selection of countries which submitted country profiles: Albania, Sarajevo Canton (Bosnia and Herzegovina), North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

The paper describes key features of non-state education provision in these countries, presents and comments on the regulatory environment in which non-state providers are being established and operate, and it discusses how this environment influences the equity, quality, and inclusiveness of public education in the countries covered. The purpose of the report is to invite further research and inform follow-up actions in areas of significance for the equity, inclusiveness, and integrity of education in those countries.

The tasks were performed in cooperation with 10 NEPC members and several external experts.

## ALCOR: Building Teacher Parent Connections Through Digital Multilingual Learning

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	<b>Project Partner</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	June 2021 – May 2023
<b>Partners:</b>	Terremondo (Italy); RISBO (The Netherlands); PRAXIS (Estonia); Open Academy Step by Step (Croatia); Rutu Foundation (The Netherlands)
<b>Funded by:</b>	E+ - KA2

The objective of the project is to support linguistically disadvantaged primary school learners in Europe who are at risk of falling even further behind their peers as a result of COVID-19 school closures. ALCOR is a follow-up of the AVIOR project, both spin-offs of the Sirius Network on Migrant Education. The sudden shift to online learning due to the COVID-19 crisis presents an opportunity to build teachers' capacity in three ways: (1) the use of digital resources and blended learning; (2) integrating home languages in teaching strategies and (3) engaging plurilingual parents through the use of multilingual (digital) learning resources with the aim of fostering migrant and minority students' sense of belonging, self-confidence and identity. The ALCOR-project will build on and expand the results of AVIOR with four main activities:

1. An intensive train-the-trainer peer-learning programme for teachers
2. Parent/teacher Co-Creation Workshops and Language Friendly Learning festivals
3. Production of white board animations that visualize how home language integration and parental involvement may result in student well-being and academic success through the use of multilingual learning resources.
4. Creation of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) aimed at developing a 'language friendly' mindset and enhancing teacher competence in forging effective teacher/parent connections through home language integration and digital technology.

Expected results include:

- A core group of eight primary school teachers in four countries trained and prepared to guide their colleagues in creating language-friendly blended learning environments in their schools with full involvement of the parent community;
- Over 60 parents in four countries from linguistically minoritized backgrounds actively involved in the school community, having gained greater insight into their own role in enhancing their children's learning and have acquired practical experience in developing multilingual (digital) learning resources in partnership with teachers.
- More than 2000 teachers, teacher trainers, school leaders and education policy makers across Europe with enhanced awareness and understanding of the links between home language integration and parental engagement to achieve social inclusion, student well-being and academic success including the powerful role of multilingual learning resources in forging teacher/parent connections.

In 2021, NEPC has been responsible to implement the IO1 - Building parent teacher connection through multilingual digital learning (creating multilingual school environment). Within IO1 in the ALCOR project all partners (Italy, Estonia, Croatia, and The Netherlands) have provided a national report about the education of migrant and/or minority students in their educational systems. The national reports included information about the education of migrant and/or minority students at primary level, languages in education, teacher education for working with migrant and minority students, and teaching during COVID. The IO1 presents the comparison of the national reports has been conducted based on the described topics as well as focus groups conducted with teachers in project countries.

**Global Education Monitoring Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Regional Report – Inclusion and education: All means all**

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	<b>Project Partner</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	January 2020 – April 2021
<b>Partners:</b>	n/a
<b>Funded by:</b>	UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM)

NEPC cooperated with Global Education Monitoring Report at UNESCO and European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education in editing the Regional report on inclusion and education in Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the accompanying edition of The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report.

NEPC collected data from 18 countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey in cooperation with 13 NEPC members and several external experts. The country data collected covered the following thematic areas: Laws and policies; Governance and finance; Data; Curricula, learning materials and assessments; Teachers and support personnel; Schools; Communities, parents and students.

NEPC responsibilities also included drafting the papers and chapters: Curricula, learning materials and assessments; Teachers and support personnel. Moreover, as the report was designed during the COVID-19 crisis, NEPC also contributed to the data collection and drafting of additional chapter regarding the education systems responses to COVID-19 crisis.

In 2021, NEPC co-organized launch of the report on Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 and actively designed the dissemination plan. The dissemination of the report was very intense and counted more than 60 presentations in national and international media and events.

## HAND IN HAND: Empowering teachers across Europe to deal with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges (HAND:ET)

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	Project Partner
<b>Duration:</b>	March 2021 – March 2024
<b>Partners:</b>	Educational Research Institute (ERI), Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS), Croatian Ministry of Science and Education (MSE), Board of Education of Styria (BES), Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (DIPF), Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (ISRZ), University of Graz (Uni Graz), Mid Sweden University (MIUN), Universidade de Lisboa (ULisboa), Aarhus University (AU)
<b>Funded by:</b>	EU; Erasmus+

In March 2021, HAND:ET project was launched. HAND:ET is a policy experimentation project focused on teachers by supporting their development of social and emotional competencies as well as their diversity awareness (SEDA) to empower them for the complexity of everyday working life with increasingly diverse classrooms and enable them to deal flexibly with new challenges. Moreover, project aims to contribute to the formation of a comprehensive EU teacher policy (by providing EU and country-specific recommendations), addressing contemporary structural problems of the teaching profession in an evidence-based long-term way. HAND:ET builds on the lessons learnt and insights from *HAND IN HAND: Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies – A Whole School Approach* which was recognized as one of the ten most relevant EU projects addressing teachers' and school.

NEPC is the lead of the dissemination and visibility assuring high visibility of the project and its results. In 2021, NEPC outlined the dissemination plan for the first year, coordinated the realisation of the project website (in cooperation with an external provider) and its preliminary content as well as the development of the new visual identity. As a dissemination lead partner NEPC coordinated and supported activities that promote project visibility and dissemination activities, such as managing project social media and webpage, preparing and disseminating the newsletter and hosting an EduFocus episode on the social, emotional and intercultural competencies.

## HEAD: Empowering School Principals for Inclusive School Culture

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	Project Leader
<b>Duration:</b>	1.12.2019 - 30.11.2022
<b>Partners:</b>	Croatia: Forum for freedom in Education; Open Academy Step by Step North Macedonia: Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives Step by Step; Macedonian Civic Education Centre

Slovenia: Educational Research Institute; National School of Leadership in Education

The Netherlands: NSO – CNA Leadership academy

*Associate partners*

European School Head Association

Association of Croatian Secondary School Principals

Association of Croatian Primary School Principals

**Funded by:**

EU; Erasmus+

The project aims to address the professionalisation of school principals in Croatia and North Macedonia. It focuses on inclusive education, exploiting best practices from Slovenia and the Netherlands and piloting five modules of professional development (PD) in 60 schools, building their capacities in establishing inclusive school culture creating inclusive school policies and practices through participatory decision-making.

Through the PD program, school principals involved will strengthen their capacity to support democratic school governance, cooperation with stakeholders and inclusiveness in general. By streamlining the professionalization of school leaders, the project will provide professional development for school leaders to create an inclusive school culture in their schools, resulting in better management, in both the academic and non-academic aspects, leading towards a more inclusive community and society.

The impact of the project will be measured by an impact study that will show the effectiveness of the intervention and a policy roadmap defining the major steps and milestones for mainstreaming the professional development programs in the piloting countries will be outlined.

In 2021, the Syllabus has been presented to education stakeholders through the organization of 2 national events that involved 116 participants and the implementation of the Syllabus HEAD - Empowering school principals for inclusive school cultures has been conducted with about 60 principals from Croatia and North Macedonia. The policy components of the project have been designed to be implemented through 2022. The interim report has been approved by the EC and after several online meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> project meeting has been organized in Zadar in July 2021.

Resources and news about the project can be found here: <http://head.edupolicy.net/index.html>

## Integrity of Education System

**NEPC Role:**

Project coordinator

<b>Duration:</b>	18.4.2019 - 18.12.2020 (extended until June 30 <sup>th</sup> due to COVID-19 crisis)
<b>Partners:</b>	Center for Applied Policy and Integrity, Bulgaria; International Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management – Georgia; Association Educational Centre PRO DIDACTICA, Moldova; Mongolian Education Alliance, Mongolia; Foundation Education Initiatives Support, Kyrgyzstan
<b>Funded by:</b>	EU; Erasmus+

The aim of the project is to explore integrity selected areas and reform priorities in education in 4 countries from NEPC region: Georgia, Mongolia, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.

The project is implemented through 3 phases:

Educations | Evidence collection | Dissemination activities.

The pandemic has affected the dissemination of national reports in Mongolia and Kirgizstan and to provide better dissemination at national and international level, the project extension to June 2021, has been required and approved by OSF.

In 2021 the activities were focused on dissemination the project results: 4 national events were organized in project countries to present the comparative results of Synthesis report and publication shared among policy makers and education stakeholders. The EduFocus **Storytelling to uncover integrity violations in education** was also lunched on [NEPC You tube channels](#).

### **ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education**

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	Project partner
<b>Duration:</b>	April 2020 – April 2024
<b>Partners:</b>	Kosova Education Center (Lead); Sabancı University - Egitim Reformu Girişimi; Children are the Future; Centre for Education Policy; proMENTE social research; Centre for Educational Initiatives Step by Step; Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives “Step by Step”
<b>Funded by:</b>	EU, EuropAid

The ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education – project is a platform created by a pool of NEPC members NGOs and research institutes from Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA countries) that will support schools, grassroots organisations and policy makers in developing actions and policies aimed at mitigating the effect of low socio-economic status on students’ achievement, reducing inequalities in education.

In the 2021, as dissemination and policy partner, NEPC continued to manage the project social media and web page as well as to coordinate and support the project visibility, dissemination activities and promotion of the project outputs.

As the situation with the pandemic wasn't allowing for the implementation of the study visits, as a replacement activity NEPC organized two thematic webinars on the issue of poverty in education that were held in May for the ARISE Consortium and partner grassroots organizations. Another learning event was also implemented within the project under the NEPC coordination: NEPC & ARISE Summer School took place online, from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July, and was dedicated to the issue of equity gaps in education. Main aim was to provide ARISE Consortium with the theoretical knowledge and background for the school development programme that is developed as a part of the ARISE project.

Moreover, NEPC drafted the call for Nacional Policy Coalition (NPC) members as the project intends to, through NPCs, engage and connect the main educational stakeholders dealing with the issue of poverty and supporting low SES students by creating a platform for knowledge-sharing and cooperation – national coalition – in six participating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey).

### **Start the Change – creating a generation of change makers through intercultural education and volunteering**

<b>NEPC Role:</b>	Project partner
<b>Duration:</b>	January 2020 – January 2023
<b>Partners:</b>	Forum for Freedom in Education; Elementary School Ivan Meštrović; INOVA+ Innovation Services; José Estêvão Secondary School; Macedonian Civic Education Center; State Municipal School “Nikola Karev”; SIRIUS
<b>Funded by:</b>	EU, Erasmus +

The Start the Change project aims at preventing and combating radicalization and extremism among young people by promoting democratic and EU common values, fundamental rights, social inclusion, media literacy, intercultural understanding and active citizenship. It will empower teachers, students' and parents in understanding and recognition of the complexity and challenges of the contemporary society by strengthening their personal, social and civic competencies through a whole-school approach.

In 2021, NEPC continued to coordinate and support the project visibility, dissemination activities and promotion of the project outputs.

Additionally, to prepare for the first policy event, NEPC also conducted a policy questionnaire in order to collect the data about the students' participation in the participating countries. First policy event, Policy lab 1: Policy and practice to Start the Change was held in May as an online event via ZOOM platform. It gathered over 60 participants: policy makers, teachers, school leaders and support staff as well as NGO representatives from the project implementing countries and NEPC region together with the Consortium. Goal was to introduce and raise awareness of the topic of students' participation and importance of students' voices in connection with policy change.

## **1. EMERGENCY FUNDS II**

With the support of Open Society Foundations the second round of emergency fund was launched with the aim to support members responses to the pandemic emergency addressing the following

priorities: counter authoritarianism, ensure economic justice and promote information democracy. Within the second emergency fund six initiatives were supported, one being multi-country:

1. Let's talk about education – informed dialogue for better education, Center for Education Initiative Step by Step – Bosnia and Herzegovina
2. “Student journalism” program, Mongolian Education Alliance - Mongolia
3. Research on Schools Response to Public Health Crisis in Serbia, Kazakhstan and Romania: comparative study, Centre for Education Policy – Serbia; Foundation Center for Applied Education – Romania; School for All - Kazakhstan
4. Bridge the gap 2, Open Academy Step by Step – Croatia
5. Contact Grabber: Keep on Studying, Praxis Centre for Policy Studies – Estonia
6. The Education Base. Remedial education and innovation mentorship hubs for restoring and empowering learning-deprived communities during and post-Covid-19 pandemic - Foundation Center for Applied Education – Romania
7. Mapping systemic responses to pandemic related challenges in education -NEPC

EDUCATION SYSTEM RESPONSES TO PANDEMIC- NEPC EMERGENCY FUND II 2021 was a valuable opportunity to provide support to members in time of crisis reacting to education system needs with a long-term perspective. Moreover, the initiatives provided NEPC a closer insight into members activities strengthen our partnerships and inspiring future activities. The results of the initiatives are very relevant above all for the long term value and impact created: the comparative report provided relevant data and recommendations for future crisis also identifying the weakness of the system in managing the beginning of pandemic; The *Words on Education* are highly recognized platform of dialogue that greatly contribute to information sharing and to the visibility of education topics in public space; the early warning system represents an opportunity for the entire Network to learn more about the application of nudging technique to improve education process; the equipped play-hub is a meeting place for kids and parents from different background created around children needs; the Journalism club is established extracurricular activities that greatly contributes to build democratic and responsible citizenship with support of forward-looking school management and open opportunities for students' voice to be heard.

## 2. LEARNING EVENTS

### NEPC initiative to support professional development

In 2021, NEPC launched a call a new initiative to support the professional development of staff of members organizations. The financial support could be used to contribute to the costs of financing online education, MA/PHD courses, seminars and other educational/professional development activities. The initiatives targeted members staff under 35 years old and/or employed as junior research; project assistant or other junior position in the organization staff structure.

Four members benefited from the initiative:

- (Mongolia) Mongolian Education Alliance – one year fee for Coursera.org

- (Kosovo) Kosova Education Center – Training program Certified Accounting Technician
- (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Center for Education Initiatives Step by Step - Co-financing Phd Peace studies/Peace pedagogy
- (North Macedonia) Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives Step by Step- Training program Academy for digital marketing

### Summer School 2021 - NEPC & ARISE Summer School 2021: Bridging Equity Gaps in Education/School, 28<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, Online

This year NEPC Summer School was connected to the learning activities within the ARISE project. NEPC & ARISE Summer School took place online, from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July, and was dedicated to the issue of equity gaps in education.

Main aim was to provide ARISE Consortium with the theoretical knowledge and background for the school development programme that is developed as part of the ARISE project: a framework of school development programme was presented and participants were familiarized with the methods such as school needs mapping, data collection, planning and monitoring of school activities, etc. Moreover, aim was also to empower participants in active initiations and participation in the policy making process.

Even though Summer School was connected to the learning activities within the ARISE project this year, six lectures were open to all interested parties:

- **Applying the principles of universal design to policy and practice in teaching and learning**, Diana Murdoch from European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
- **Monitoring equity and inclusion in education**, Manos Antoninis, Director of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report
- **Inclusive school climate and culture**, Jelena Kovačević, University of Sarajevo
- **Why values in education matter**, Nerzuk Ćurak, University of Sarajevo
- **Inclusive school policies**, Lana Jurko, Network of Education Policy Centers
- **Involving community and parents**, Muamer Tinjak, Islamic community student center Sarajevo.
- **Social Justice**, Zorica Trikić, International Step by Step Association

In total, 19 participants from the ARISE project registered via the online form as well as the 10 participants from outside of the scope of the project. Overall, participants expressed the event was useful for future activities within the ARISE project and in their regular scope of work as well.

Results of the evaluation (from 1 (lowest) to 5(highest):

content of all lectures/workshops	4,5
usefulness of the content	4,7
overall rating of the sessions	4,7

Overall comments for the event that were shared are positive as participants mostly expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to participate at the event.

## Edufocus

The new video series Education Focus is meant to be NEPC's platform for discussions about education trends, challenges, ideas with a future oriented perspective. It is hosted by NEPC and aired on [NEPC youtube channel](#). In 2021, seven Edufocus episodes were published:

- **Edu Focus #1 - Teaching in time of COVID: lockdown practices and online "paideia"**  
Online version of PAIDEIA Debate Clubs for teachers and professional development program organized by Educational Center PRO DIDACTICA, was presented as well as the magazine "Child, kindergarten, family", published by Open Academy Step by Step, that collected numerous kindergarten practices organized during the lockdown. It also features an overview on the desk-research conducted by NEPC in 25 countries about the education system response during the COVID-19 crisis and published in the GEM Report Unesco "Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Report – Inclusion and education: All means all".
- **Edu Focus #2 - Digital tools supporting teaching and collaborative learning in digitalization**  
Overview of the insights and practice examples from two desk researches published by The European Education Policy Network (EEPN; <https://educationpolicynetwork.eu/>) on the the topic of digitalization in education: "Digital technical tools, skills and competences supporting teaching and learning" and "Collaborative learning and collaborative school leadership in the digital age". The authors of the research, Peter Kelly from the University of Plymouth (UK), and Sandra Haugas from Praxis Centre for Policy Studies (Estonia), lead us in the discovering or their findings.
- **Edu Focus #3 - School leadership training in Netherlands and Slovenia as inspiring practices**  
Presentation of the project "Empowering school principals for inclusive school culture" led by NEPC. National School of Leadership in Education of Slovenia (Šola za ravnatelje) and the Netherlands School Leadership academy NSO-CNA (NSO-CNA Leiderschapsacademie) share their decennial experience in providing professional development for school principals and they will discuss possible milestones towards the mainstreaming of similar programs in other countries. On the topic, National School of Leadership in Education of Slovenia and the Netherlands School Leadership academy coauthored the paper "Heading for Headship - Contrasting school leadership training in the Netherlands and Slovenia".
- **Edu Focus #4 - Storytelling to uncover integrity violations in education**  
NEPC and Center for Applied Policy and Integrity conducted a project that investigated integrity violations in education. Through storytelling it uncovered behaviors hardly identifiable with a standard approach. This Edu Focus #4 presents this methodology and the most common vulnerable areas of education systems.
- **Edu Focus #5 – Social, Emotional and Intercultural Education: From Policy to Practice**  
Presentation of the mapping study Policies of Social, Emotional and Intercultural Education in Six Countries (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Republic of Moldova, Russia and Slovenia) authored by dr. Urška Štremfel, Scientific Associate at Pedagoški inštitut/Educational Research Institute.
- **Edu Focus #6 How do systems prepare and support teachers to teach all students?**

One of the key recommendation of the 2020 GEM Report - Inclusion and education is that all teachers should be prepared and supported to teach all students. The NEPC Edu Focus #6 presents more about examples of teachers preparation and support for inclusion.

- **Edu Focus #7 - Inclusive School Policies**

It presents how school policies can be adapted and become more inclusive answering to the questions How much autonomy do schools have when we talk about school policies? Is there space for improvement even when we think the rules have already been set?

**5th NEPC Primary colors of education conference**

The 5<sup>th</sup> PRIMARY COLORS OF EDUCATION is traditional NEPC annual conference that collects narratives about education from the Network and wider.

In 2021, the conference was organized on Dec 1st and 7th online. The two days conference had twofold aim: to reflect on approaches applied during the crisis and to propose possible directions for the education in the future. The first day of conference was dedicated to inclusion as an eternal topic in education whose interpretation, implementation and monitoring is ongoing in many countries of NEPC region (and wider). The keynote opening speech by Lana Jurko, NEPC executive director, opened the conference presenting to which extent inclusion is embedded as fundamental principle in education system and why governments cannot postpone the comprehensive integration of inclusion principals in all aspects related to education. The two panel discussions planned afterwards showed several very diverse NEPC members initiatives and international projects that contribute to empowering education systems to provide equal opportunities to all learners. In the second day of conference, two panel discussions were held. The first one discussed the role of three different yet complementary policy networks and how they contribute to participation in the policy process. The last panel of the conference opened a window on the future through two earth-centric philosophies – ecological justice and degrowth.

The conference gathered around 50 participants registered for.

Speakers:

- Lana Jurko, NEPC
- Jane Ester, PRAXIS I Estonia
- Batjargal Batkhuyag, Mongolian Education Alliance I Mongolia
- Jasminka Marković, Centre for Education Policy I Serbia
- Sanja Brajković, Open Academy Step by Step I Croatia
- Višnja Pavlović, Forum for Freedom in Education I Croatia
- Petrit Tahiri, Kosova Education Center I Kosovo
- Mialy Dermish, SIRIUS Policy Network on Migrant Education
- Lana Jurko, Network of Education Policy Centers
- Eszter Salamon, European Education Policy Network
- Mladen Domazet, Institute for Political Ecology I Croatia
- Burcu Meltem Arık Akyüz, Education Reform Initiative I Turkey

Moderators:

- Ulviya Mikailova, CIE I Azerbaijan
- Iva Perković, NEPC
- Andrea Soldo, proMENTE I Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Lana Jurko, NEPC
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### 3. PUBLICATIONS

- Research on Schools Response to Public Health Crisis in Serbia, Kazakhstan and Romania  
CEP, 2021
- Research on Schools Response to Public Health Crisis in Serbia  
CEP, 2021
- RESEARCH ON SCHOOLS RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN KAZAKHSTAN  
CEP, 2021
- Heading for headship - Contrasting school leadership training in the Netherlands and Slovenia  
Mateja Brejc & Tatjana Ažman (NSLE National School for Leadership in Education Slovenia)  
Frans Grobbee (NSO-CNA School Leadership academy the Netherlands)  
Ljubljana - Amsterdam (May 21 - 2021)
- 2021 Global Education Monitoring Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia  
Report – Inclusion and education: All means all  
(UNESCO, 2021)

### 4. Network studies

Network studies are NEPC initiatives, initiated during the pandemic, to explore education trends, challenges and issues through secondary analysis or exploratory issue papers.

**Mapping systemic responses to pandemic related challenges in education-** This research builds on the findings from the COVID-19 mapping that was conducted as a part of the GEM Regional Report 2020 and the OECD 2020 paper on the impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion where country policy responses were presented. NEPC further explored how national systems, after having some time to organize, addressed identified challenges and what measures and policies were implemented in order to ensure equal access to quality education for all students, especially those from vulnerable groups. Data was collected in 15 countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey.

**Mapping of policies, practices, and integrity in school admissions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan** - This issues paper provides an overview of results from an initial scan of primary and secondary evidence concerning school admissions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of the issues paper is to provide a basis for decisions about follow-up analysis and action on the basis of mapping of schooling system set-up an

admission policy in participating countries, consolidation of information about their admission practices, and the identification of areas of tentative risk to integrity and equality of access to school education.

## 5. ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

### ON LINE PRESENCE (web and social media)

- NEPC continues to publish all its outputs as well as educational related news and analyses from member countries and beyond on its [webpage](#) and its [Facebook page](#) which, at the end of 2021, counted 1144 likes (1212 followers) and about 124 published posts. On the [Twitter account](#), 91 tweets/retweets were posted until December 31st, with an average of about 2936 impressions per month. Since the re-opening, the social media presence continues to increase. In 2021, 136 more followers were gained on Facebook. Until December 31st, the Twitter page counted 171 followers (+ 52 compared to 2020).
- NEPC web page has also been updated with 26 articles on NEPC activities, news and projects,
- Until December 31st, a [YouTube channel](#) features 35 videos and clips, with 1289 views overall.
- In October 2021, a [LinkedIn page](#) was created. Until December 31st, it gained 75 followers and 27 posts were published.
- Newsletters: 4 issues (April – June – October – December); 325 recipients; average opening rate = 32%; average click rate = 2%

### CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

#### INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

In 2021, NEPC was present in more than 60 international, regional or national events. The presentations were related to NEPC projects and activities but mainly to the Regional report of GEM 2021 – All means all. Among the presence in international events and media, we highlight:

- 20.04.2021 – At the online seminar **Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes** organized by Manchester Metropolitan University, Lana Jurko gave the lecture **Initial Teacher Education and competences for democratic culture from the perspective of learner's voice (participation and inclusion)**.
- 28.07.2021 - NEPC Director Lana Jurko participated in the piece published on the BBC, following up on the [GEM UNESCO](#) Regional Report Inclusion and Education: All means all, presenting the case of school in Orehovica, where through joint efforts of teachers, school leader and support of [Pučko otvoreno učilište Korak po korak](#) inclusion in education is accomplished and [#allmeansall](#). Video is available [here](#).
- 27.09.2021 – Croatian radio show 'Izvan Okvira' was dedicated to HEAD project. Lana Jurko and Sanja Brajković (OA SBS, Croatia) presented the project. The audio is available [here](#).
- October 2021 - 1st KIX Conference on Educational Policy and Innovation NEPC was pleased to support and participate at the 1st KIX Conference on Educational Policy and Innovation. The Conference aimed to create a forum for intensifying dialogue between researchers,

policymakers, and practitioners from Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and beyond. On the first day dedicated to the COVID-19 response and digital learning, Lana Jurko moderated the thematic session on the [Prospects of Digitalization in Education](#), while Iva Perković in the session on the [Challenges and Opportunities for Education amid the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) presented the [main findings](#) from the study on the state policies concerning learning gaps, students' wellbeing and support for teachers and school leaders a year after the onset of the pandemic in 15 countries. Lana Jurko also participated at the second day of the conference, [sharing the main results and recommendations](#) from the GEM CEECCA regional report 2021 on inclusion and education in the session [Policy Lessons on Inclusive Education](#).

## NETWORKS

NEPC is a member of [SIRIUS Policy Network on Migrant Education](#) since its inception in 2012. SIRIUS is a multi-stakeholder network that gathers organizations and experts in migration and education from around Europe, including policy makers, researchers, practitioners and representatives of migrant communities. It gathers more than 40 organizations from 20 countries. SIRIUS transfers knowledge and influences policy development with the aim of supporting students with migrant background.

NEPC is a member of [European Education Policy Network on Teachers and School Leaders](#) (EEPN) since its inception in 2019. EEPN is a Europe-wide network of relevant organisations (policymakers, practitioners, researchers and stakeholders) to promote co-operation, policy development and implementation at different governance levels, and to support the European Commission's policy work on teachers and school leaders. This network is building on existing activities developed at European level, especially initiatives and projects supported through European Union programmes in the field of education. Currently it gathers 33 organizations from 21 countries. NEPC is one of the seven lead partners and is in charge of the dissemination activities of the network.

## 6. NETWORK

### NEPC Secretariat team

Executive Director (100% working hours) Lana Jurko  
Network Director (100% working hours) Raffaella d'Apolito  
Financial Manager (100% working hours) Igor Hrustić  
Project coordinator (100% working hours) Iva Perković  
Communication officer (100% working hours) Pietro Santilli until July 2021.

### Board Members

Urška Štremfel – Representative of region A  
Burcu Meltem Arik Akyuz – Representative of region B  
Ulviyya Mikayilova, President – Representative of region C  
Andrey Samoylov – Representative of members-at-large  
Mario Bajkuša - Representative of members-at-large (until April 2021)  
Andrea Soldo – Representative of members-at-large (from April 2021)

### Board meetings

In 2021, the Governing board met four times:

February 2021, online | April 2021, online | June 2021, online | October 2021, Istanbul.

Members of Governing Board in 2021 supported the work of Secretariat and Executive director and in particular contribute to the design of Strategy process with the aim to enhance active members' participation. During the October meeting held in Istanbul, members of the Governing board drafted the first version of revised vision and mission as well as of the strategic statements. The Governing board in 2021, also approved the new NEPC initiative *Support to the development of human potential in members organization*.

The mandate of Mario Bajkuša expired in 2021 and new board member was elected at April GA. During the Board meeting in April, Ulviyya Mikailova was elected as President of the Governing Board.

### General Assembly

In 2021, two General Assembly were held in April and December.

29.04.2021. - 18 out of 25 full members were presents. GA approved the NEPC report 2020 and the revision of action plan 2021 was presented. Andrea Soldo was elected as board member.

23.12.2021. – 15 out of 25 full members were presents. GA approved the plan and budget 2022 and the report 2021 was presented. Upon proposal of Governing Board, the following change in the membership were confirmed:

- Termination of membership of CPZ-International, The Centre for Knowledge Promotion – Slovenia
- Termination of membership of Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro - Montenegro

Upon members' request the following was approved:

- Waiving of membership for Children Are the Future (CAF), Albania and International Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management (IIPPM), Georgia
- Inkind contribution for the 2022 membership for Children Are the Future (CAF), Albania and International Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management (IIPPM), Georgia

### Membership

In 2021, two memberships were terminated: CPZ-International, The Centre for Knowledge Promotion –Slovenia and Pedagogical Center of Montenegro, Montenegro.

The decision was taken by Governing Board and approved by General Assembly.

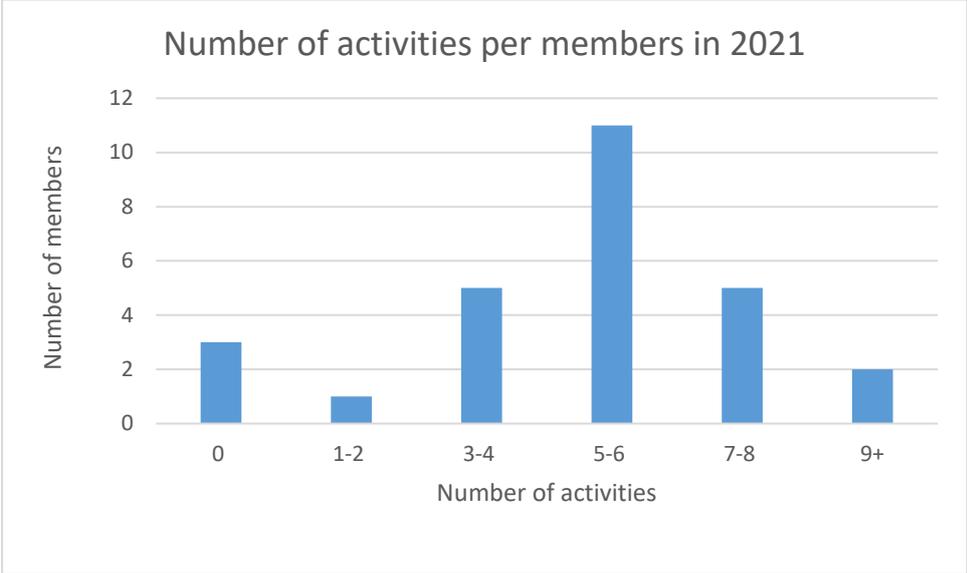
In both cases it is about inactive members: NEPC did several attempts in the last four years to clarify the situation without receiving any response.

### Network analysis

The Network analysis collects information about members involvement in activities implemented by the Secretariat, distinguishing open rate activities (meaning activities open to all members) and partly open activities (meaning activities that are limited to certain regions ie. fundraising activities).

In 2021, NEPC implemented five activities open to all members: 22 members participated in at least one of these initiatives. In activities that are partly open the rate is also high: 12 members were involved in fundraising activities; 13 as project partners in project not lead by NEPC and 23 in projects lead by NEPC. Averagely more than 80% members is involved in open activities and almost 60% in partly opened activities.

The number of activities in which each member is involved show very stable picture of the Network. Only three members have been involved in zero activities.



The rates of involvement show no differences among the NEPC regions. There are no significant differences between the 2021 and 2020 analysis.

**7. FUNDRAISING**

Recap of project proposals:

FUNDER	NEPC ROLE	ACRONYM/TITLE	RESULTS
EC	Lead	(H2020) STEP: SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	REJECTED
EC	Lead	(E+; KA2) GREAT: Gender Equality in Education	REJECTED (WAITING LIST)
Office for cooperation with NGOs	Lead	Co-financing of ARISE project	APPROVED

## 8. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL REPORT

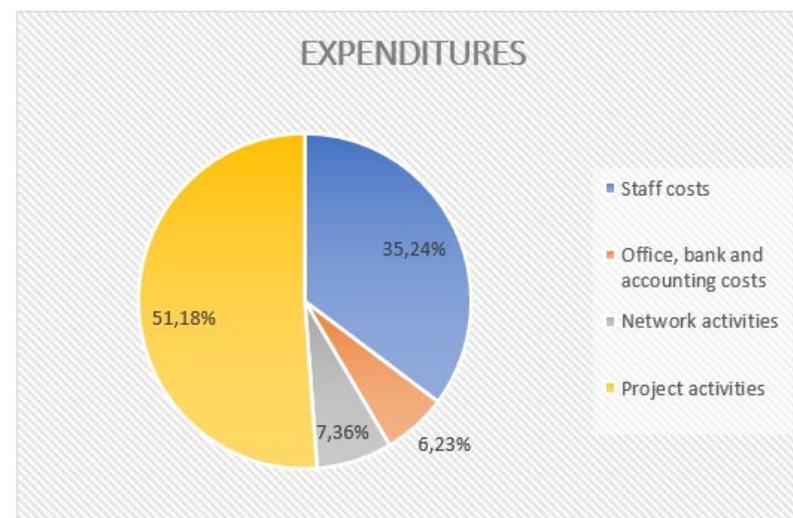
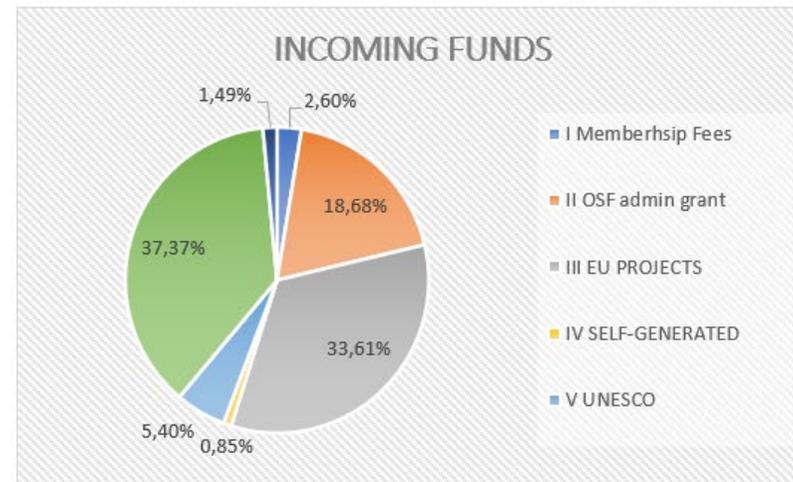
### INCOMING FUNDS (in eur)

I Membership Fees	19.313,63
II OSF admin grant	138.758,46
III EU PROJECTS	249.571,07
IV SELF-GENERATED	6.309,52
V UNESCO	40.086,90
VI OSF TIE OFF GRANT	277.516,92
VII NATIONAL FUNDS (eu project co-financing)	11.072,04
<b>TOTAL INCOMING FUNDS</b>	<b>742.628,54</b>

### EXPENDITURES (in eur)

Staff costs	121.536,52
Office, bank and accounting costs	21.478,81
Network activities	25.385,52
Project activities	176.509,93
	344.910,78

The amount of network activities in 2021 is lower than foreseen as Summer School and Policy Lab have been organized within projects.



#### SPENDING ACCORDING TO PROJECTS

HEAD	114.199,55
SIRIUS	862,57
UNESCO GEM RR	21.897,16
ARISE	7.620,09
UNESCO GEM NSA	19.971,29
HAND IN HAND 2.0	290,16
STC	298,84
ALCOR	2.193,80
INTEGRITY	7.753,48
COE	1.422,99
TOTAL PROJECTS' COSTS	176.509,93
NETWORK ACTIVITIES	
JUNIOR INITIATIVES	3.003,41
EMERGENCY FUNDS (1&2)	11.304,12
BOARD MEETINGS	3.773,56
COMPARATIVE MAPPING STUDIES	5.704,58
VISIBILITY AND PUBLICATIONS	1.599,86
TOT NETWOR ACTIVITIES	25.385,52



Network of Education Policy Centers

[www.edupolicy.net](http://www.edupolicy.net)