



PUBLICATION

Twenty Years of Remedial Class in Macedonian in Slovenia

Publication “Twenty Years of Remedial Class in Macedonian in Slovenia”

Editorial board:

**Mirče Ivanovski
Ilija Dimitrievski
Igor Zahariev
Zekirija Šainoski
Georgi Zlatarev
Krstel Dimitrovski**

People who contributed greatly in gathering the materials:

**Nevenka and Miladin Mladenovi from Preddvor
Dalila and Mirče Ivanovski from Škofljica
Blaga, Delčo, and Bernarda Petkovi from Šentvid pri Stični
Sašo and Mateja Petkovi from Šentvid pri Stični
Branko and Borče Mitovski and their families from Nova Gorica
Stojna and Boris Malijanski from Ljubljana**

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Foreword

Change is a constant in our lives and moving abroad is one of the bigger changes in one's life. Changing one's living environment can awake a change in the individual, in the target society and the source society. People have always emigrated individually or in groups and it seems there is even more emigration occurring today.

The issue of migration involves many diverse factors: how do you adjust to a new environment as an individual, do you strive to preserve your culture and language or do you immerse yourself in the language and culture of the environment, whose part you are slowly becoming. More of the first, more of the second? Do you try to find a balance? This remains each individual's personal decision. How will the new environment accept you, will it work in your favour, will it help you on your way, or will it look askance at you and be prejudiced towards you? This is the issue of immigrant integration policy. What will be the attitude of the country you left towards you? Does it still consider you as its own or does it disregard you completely since you have decided to leave? This is the global issue of the attitude towards emigrants.

Slovenia has been a county of emigrants as well as a country of immigration for a number of years. Almost half a million Slovenians and their descendants live abroad. Slovenia pays a lot of attention to Slovenian emigrants; it includes international influence in that field (EU, Council of Europe, UN) into its integration policy. When Slovenia became a member of the European Union, it also had to accept the European acquis. Education is one of the fields that remain almost entirely under the purview of each member country. We say 'almost' because Slovenia nevertheless had to transpose a directive into its legislation: the Council Directive on the Education of Children of Migrant Workers from 1977. It stated that Slovenia has to include the school-aged children into the education system free of charge and enable them to learn Slovenian. On the other hand, the countries of origin are obliged to collaborate and offer these children lessons of their own mother tongue and culture. Even though this is a fairly vague definition, Slovenia took this task seriously and started to organise remedial classes of the Macedonian language and culture. Later, other mother tongues started to be taught in schools, but the collaboration with Macedonia boasts the longest-running tradition by far.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport currently co-finances remedial classes of ten mother tongues and cultures, however, it enjoys the support of only Macedonia and Croatia and no other countries of origin, no matter how much the ministry would welcome this. We encourage the other countries to support the remedial classes of their mother tongues and cultures. The Slovenian side also covers the costs of the expenses for renting the space in the schools that offer the classes, the costs of co-financing the study materials, and the material costs. Once a year, we collaborate with the National Education Institute RS in hosting an expert meeting for the teachers who teach mother tongue and culture classes. This is an opportunity for exchanging information and good practices. The work in this field is supported by the Strategy for the Inclusion of Children and Pupils – Immigrants in the Education System of the

Republic of Slovenia (2007), the Guidelines for Educating Children of Immigrants in Nurseries and Schools (2009, 2012), and the Plan/Guidelines for Remedial Classes of Mother Tongues and Cultures for Members of Other Language and Cultural Communities in Slovenia (2012).

In 2013, the Republic of Slovenia passed the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014–2018, where one of the chapters focuses on the language of minorities and immigrants in Slovenia. The right to preserve and nurture one's mother tongue and culture is one the fundamental human rights and multilingualism is also the advantage of every European citizen and a society, formed by multilingual individuals. Let this publication be evidence that the Slovenian society wants more multilingual individuals, that it values the contribution of people from other countries and languages in shaping a social reality, and that it is prepared to keep actively contributing to this.

Bronka Straus
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
Masarykova 16
1001 Ljubljana

1 Introduction

Slovenia was relatively successful in overcoming the situation that arose after the collapse of the joint Yugoslavia. A reasonably calm ten-day war with no major damage to the economy led to Slovenia fulfilling its dream of an independent country and then joined the European Union as a full-fledged member state and successfully adopted the euro as the joint currency. Among its citizens, it retained about 10% of people of different nationalities from the former country. Their total number and the number of individual nationalities were adequate for their culture to be represented in the Slovenian environment and to form cultural connections with the newly-formed countries, from which they originate. This also ensured that the cultural variety from that past period was preserved and that it enriched the Slovenian cultural field. The so-called “immigrant” minorities organised into cultural societies, thus preserving their national identity and culture from the inevitable assimilation in the future. It was no coincidence that Macedonian cultural societies were the first to organise, because there were no unresolved questions between the two countries about the distant past, or the period of the joint country, or about the future. The community of Macedonians living in Slovenia first organised into the “Macedonia” Cultural Society in Ljubljana and then in other cities in Slovenia (Maribor, Kranj, Jesenice, Celje, Koper, and Nova Gorica). After two years, a need arose for some kind of organised entity that would coordinate the operations of these societies, which led to the formation of the Macedonian Union of Cultural Associations of Slovenia. It placed importance on organising remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia for children of parents, whose country of origin is Macedonia, and all other children who are interested in this language, culture, history, and geography. The majority of the members thought this is the most successful way to resist assimilation with no negative consequences for cohabitation and collaboration in the host country and with numerous positive consequences for enlivening cultural and other events with collaborations between individuals, groups, and countries. This was the shared opinion of the ministries of education in both countries, which supported the initiative for reciprocal financing of both remedial classes: the Macedonian language in Slovenia and the Slovenian language in Macedonia. So, in late 1993, after final coordination in the summer months of the same year, Slovenia officially started remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia. It has been more than twenty years since then and the classes are still being carried out to the delight of everyone involved, from the participants in the classes to their parents. The Macedonian Union of Cultural Associations of Slovenia in collaboration with numerous participants/institutions in both countries wishes to present our activities to the general public with this publication and document the good practice as an example of possible and already established exemplary collaboration.

2 From the idea to the realisation

The Macedonian community living in Slovenia experienced some less than favourable moments like all Slovenian citizens right before the war for independence and in the years after it; this was reflected in the blocked contact with their family and friends from their home country, the former republic and now country. The phone connections to Macedonia were severed during and immediately after the war, so people had to travel to Italy or Austria if they wanted to talk to their family and friends. There were no direct flights and even after they were established, the price of such transport usually exceeded people's economic abilities allegedly due to "insurance fees for flights over war areas". The remaining possibilities for physically going to Macedonia were: 1) by land through Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, which could take from 24 to 48 hours or even more in the summer due to the traffic jams, or 2) by sea through Koper to Albania or Greece and then by land to Greece.

These conditions forced the Macedonians living in Slovenia to mobilise and join ranks, because they wondered what changes would have an important influence on their lives and how they could better their situations with regards to the newly created conditions. For those who had created families and counted on a future in Slovenia, it was clear that they would not only have to strive for their future on a personal level, but also on a group, national level. There were relatively many Macedonians studying in Slovenia after the 1963 Skopje earthquake; Slovenia excelled as an excellent host and showed solidarity in helping to remove the consequences of the earthquake damage. The Macedonian students followed the example of the then very popular student clubs in the bigger cities across Slovenia and founded the Macedonian Students Club. The founders and members of the club who did not return to Macedonia after completing their studies came up with the idea to organise similarly in the given situation in the new country, the Republic of Slovenia. They were supported by the economists and other working people and on 18 January 1992, the first Macedonian cultural society in Slovenia, "Macedonia", was founded in the hall of the opera house in Ljubljana. The timing for the formation of such an organisation was favourable and the beginnings of an organised activity seemed to point to a light at the end of the tunnel in the given conditions. This is supported by the fact that the founding congress was a meeting of several representatives of Slovenian cultural organisations and a four-member delegation from Macedonia, who travelled by plane through Graz and was led by Tito Petkovski and the later first ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia, Dr Dimitar Mirčev. The congress also featured the reading of greeting telegrams by the presidents of both republics, Milan Kučan and Kiro Gilgorov, in which they welcomed the proposed manner of organising the cultural activities as the first step for a fruitful collaboration in the future. Slovenia was a sort of "window into the world" for Macedonia at the time, which is supported by these events:

- The first embassy of the Republic of Macedonia anywhere was their embassy in the Republic of Slovenia.
- After a few years, the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia assumed the role of representative in their relations with the Vatican.
- Their first international football match was also held against the Republic of Slovenia in Kranj and then a return match in Skopje.
- The first cultural society of a nationality from the former country in Slovenia was the “Macedonia” Macedonian Cultural Society in Ljubljana.
- Remedial classes of the mother tongue were first organised in Slovenia and Macedonia and were financially supported by both countries.

In the former Yugoslavia, some elementary schools in Slovenia held classes in the so-called “Serbo-Croatian” language. There, the children from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina received not only knowledge of their “mother” tongue, but also of other subjects. Considering the nature of the language, the majority of Macedonian children were not included in those classes, which may have led to the opinion that Macedonians can learn Slovenian relatively quickly. I think this was a logical consequence of the fact that they were forced to decide to learn either the Slovenian language, which they would desperately need, or the other language foreign to them, which would not benefit them much in Slovenia. The Macedonian cultural societies were aware of the importance one’s mother tongue, so they strived to establish remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia. The initiative fell on fertile ground in Slovenia and in Macedonia. As a result, a reciprocal agreement was signed on executing and financing remedial classes of the mother tongue in Slovenia and Macedonia. This was officially implemented on 27 November 1993 in the France Prešeren Elementary School in Kranj. The official unveiling was attended by: Secretary of State at the Ministry of Education and Sport, mag. Teja Valenčič, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, Dr Dimitar Bajaldžiev and his consultant Snežana Korubin, the ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia, Dr Dimitar Mirčev, and the ministry attaché, Stevo Nikolovski, representatives of the Macedonian cultural societies, along with numerous interested people, mainly parents of the children taking the remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia. The event started at 10.30 a.m. and the entire ceremony and the cultural program lasted an hour and a half. It was the host Duško Mitruševski, who together with z Naum Tašanoski, Trajče Andonov (then president of the “Macedonia” Cultural Society from Ljubljana), and other members of the initiative committee, who brought the remedial classes of Macedonian in the Republic of Slovenia from the initial idea to its final implementation. The program began with welcome speeches by all the esteemed guests, who said almost everything about the issue that is still important to this day. This was followed by the first lesson—prof. Dragi Stefanija gave a lecture on the Macedonian language and its long history and meaning— and the event was concluded with a performance by the students and a folk dance group.



Source: Video archive of the Mladenovi family.

Mag. Teja Valenčič greeted the audience on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sport. She emphasized that she completely understood the feelings of joy and excitement over the unfolding event, because she herself had visited parents in towns outside of Slovenia, where similar classes were held for children of Slovenian heritage. This was also the reason why the ministry of education was sympathetic to the initiative for such classes for Macedonian children in Slovenia. She was happy to report that an earlier meeting settled on the financial aid for the classes. The Republic of Slovenia decided to cover the costs of the space and material funds for the classes in Slovenia, while Macedonia resolved to finance the person teaching the class. Reciprocally, classes of Slovenian would be organised in Macedonia.



Source: Video archive of the Mladenovi family.

In his speech, ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia, Dr Dimitar Mirčev, thanked all the stakeholders for realizing the initiative and called event historic; he mentioned that 1993 was the 100th anniversary of the founding of IMRO and 90 years since the Ilinden Uprising and the death of the most famous Macedonian, Goce Delčev. He described the current conditions in Macedonia, which fought for international recognition, economic stabilisation, and against the blockade; he thanked the Republic of Slovenia for helping with this. He pledged ongoing support to the remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia from all the state institutions, especially from the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia. The Minister of Education and Science of Macedonia, Dr Dimitar Bajaldžiev, began his part of the speech with these words:



Source: Video archive of the Mladenovi family.

“The long-awaited day has come, a pleasant day we had been expecting for months to share with you here in Slovenia. 27 November 1993 has long been marked at our ministry as a day that will open a new way of collaboration with Slovenia. The remedial classes are the main reason for our societies, in this case the “Macedonia” Cultural Society, to care for the children as well as to become the hub for creating connections and collaborations between those who were born in Macedonia and friends to Macedonia.” After describing the road so far, he mentioned everyone who contributed to it and expressly stressed that Slovenia setting an example is equally important as the financial support and that he wished other republics of the former country would follow it. He emphasized his wish for the visitors of the classes in Slovenia to feel Slovenia as their second mother and not a wicked stepmother and that the loyal residents of the Republic of Slovenia will also be proud of their Macedonian roots, which they will be able to express though Macedonian words and songs.

As tradition dictates, the class started with the first lesson. Prof Dragi Stefanija, lecturer of Macedonian at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, held a

lecture entitled “Macedonian literacy and education in Macedonia, here in Slovenia, and in general”.



Source: Video archive of the Mladenovi family.

“Macedonia is a small country compared to other European or other countries; however, it has great merit for Slavic literacy, Slavic culture, and Slavic science in general. It was brought to us by brothers Cyril and Methodius, who presented it to the Proto-Slavic community.” He also mentioned that the Macedonian and Slovenian (Carinthian, Carantanian) theories were once in a dispute over the origin of the Proto-Slavic language, but that they agreed that the Proto-Slavic language originated in Macedonia in the vicinity of Solun.

“Macedonian education and literacy mark exactly 1107 years since their beginnings. Back then, precisely in 886, a student of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Saint Clement of Ohrid, arrived in Macedonia and founded the Ohrid Literary School in the land’s western area, right to the Vardar River, which spanned across the central area of Ohrid, in today’s north Greek city of Kostur and the south Albanian city of Devoll. This led to the founding of the first Macedonian and Proto-Slavic university. If anyone can boast the oldest educational system among the Slavic nations, it is definitely us. The Ohrid Literary School had 3500 graduates. No school in Europe boasted that number of pupil or students, call them what you will, until the fifteenth century. This year marks 1100 years since Saint Clement (in 893) was elected as the first bishop (Vladika). He was the first Proto-Slavic bishop in the territory on the right bank of the Vardar River to the sea (of course, today’s borders were not established then and I hope my mentioning it won’t cause a diplomatic dispute). He was succeeded by Saint Naum of Ohrid and through all of this, we became a nation of literacy, Christianity, and consequently, and nation of culture.”

The mentioned different written documents (different types of gospels) date back to the 10th to the 12th century and were the foundation upon which enlightenment was spread, particularly on a religious basis. During this time, official literacy was taught in the Glagolic alphabet. Between the 12th and 14th century, the Macedonian Glagolic alphabet shifted into the Cyrillic alphabet, whose origins date back to 1150. This is the period of the texts that were the basis for continuing the so-called Macedonian

redaction and review. The latter marked the beginning of including everyday words into texts, which was the basis for further distinguishing and forming different Slavic languages.

In the third part of the program, the students of the first generation of remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenia (Biljana Andonova, Sašo Mitruševski, Sašo Petkov, Suzana Ristova) and the senior colleagues (Valentina Filova and Irena Nančoska) introduced themselves through six reciting performances. Some were accompanied by the “Biljana” mixed choir from the “Macedonia” Cultural Society from Ljubljana who also sang the Macedonian anthem. Then, the folk group from the Saint Cyril and Methodius Macedonian Cultural Society from Kranj performed for the audience.

3 Course of the class

As mentioned, the first-generation students of the remedial class performed at the opening, because the class had started in September, like every year, and the official opening was held at a time when the representatives of both ministries of education could be present. The first teacher was Svetlana Mitruševska, who played a pioneer role in encouraging the students. Among other things, she drew the students’ interest by organising field trips to Macedonia for the students. After two/three years, the Mitruševski family decided to return to Macedonia, and Dragan Tušev came from Macedonia to be the teacher. He taught the class for one school year and then had to leave due to health reasons. He was succeeded by Zekirija Šainoski, who continues to teach the remedial classes to this day.

It should be mentioned that the class was also held in Maribor for two to three years under the leadership of teacher Kristina Deleva, since Maribor is spatially quite remote from Ljubljana and the class organiser was unable to carry out the class within the available timeframe.

In addition to the scheduled class of the regular weekly lessons, which were held predominantly in the afternoon in the schools with the most attendees, the class also included some regular and occasional activities. The regular activities involved yearly competitions in knowledge of geography, history, the Macedonian language, and literature that the students gained during the course of the school year, an end-of-the-year diploma ceremony, and a New Year mixer for the participants. The periodical events included field trips to Macedonia, the students participating in different events around Slovenia, Macedonia, and abroad, such as:

- participating in summer camps in Macedonia, organised and financially supported by the Macedonian Emigrant Association and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia;
- participating in different competitions in knowledge, cultural (musical, folk dance, etc.), and other events, and
- attending different events and guest performances of Macedonian artists in Slovenia.

The “quiz” on the subject matter was one of the fundamental ideas for testing the quality of the remedial class, because it clearly illustrated to the parents what the students had learned that year. It also introduced some positive competitiveness among the participants, as they could win stimulating awards. The event has been held

for years as part of the “May Days of Macedonian Culture” event by the “Saint Cyril and Methodius” Macedonian Culture Society from Kranj. Since these days fall on the same week as Saint Cyril Day, 24 May, the timing is right for holding a competition in knowledge.



Impressions from the traditional competition in knowledge in Kranj in 2009 (*Source: Archive of the Ivanovski family.*)

In June, the remedial class usually ends with a joint event by most of the participants for their parents, peers, and teachers of the hosting school. This is a chance for their schoolmates and general environment in which the class is held to be familiarized with their activities. In addition to the participants in the class, other youth and children’s sections of singing and folk dance groups from different Macedonian cultural societies also perform. The event often attracts other acts by Slovenian pupils from the schools in which the class is held. This is followed by a short photo presentation of last year’s closing ceremony in Dragomir Benčič – Brkin Elementary School.



Welcome speech by Janja Babić, principal of Hrpelje – Kozina Elementary School
(Source: Archive or the Kočo Racin MCS from Koper.)



Audience: pupils waiting for their diplomas, parents, guests (representative of the Koper Elementary School, principal of the host school, representative of the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia, Aleksandar Dimovski, president of MUCA and representatives of the Municipality of Hrpelje – Kozina. (Source: Archive or the Kočo Racin MCS from Koper.)



Impressions of the cultural programme performed by the remedial class students (folk dance from Kranj, students from all the schools in the rest of the program) – 14 June 2014 Dragomir Benčič – Brkin Elementary School (Source: Archive or the Kočo Racin MCS from Koper.)

;



Part of the cultural programme and events after the official end of the ceremony: left a folk dance group from Koper and right musical accompaniment of the children's folk dance group from Kranj on the ethnic instruments. (Source: Archive or the Kočo Racin MCS from Koper.)

There is a definite wish for these field trips to Macedonia and around Macedonia to be a regular activity for the participants of the remedial class; however, this activity includes relatively great costs that cannot be guaranteed each year. That is why this activity is periodical, but of great importance in gaining popularity for the class among the participants/children.

These problems are partly solved by financial aid from the parents. Just like parents supply the funds for field trips and summer camps, so the parents help pay for the travel expenses to Macedonia and back. For a certain number of participants, the accommodation and other summer school expenses is covered by the organisers: the Macedonian Emigrant Association and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia.

The included photos show the students of the first generation of the remedial class on their first trip to Macedonia, at Samuel's Fortress in Ohrid, led by the first teacher Svetlana Mitruševska (first from the right in the first photograph) along with some parents.



Source: Archive of the Malijanski family.



Source: Archive of the Malijanski family.

The photographs below show impressions of a similar field trip from 2013. The remedial class students are shot in front of a monument to Alexander the Great in Skopje and while playing on the Kale Fortress in Skopje. Here, they were also received by the president of the Republic of Macedonia, George Ivanov.



Source: Archive of the Ivanovski family.

Lastly, the class students participated, listened to, or co-created the programme for individual events, such as: competitions in knowledge of the Macedonian language and literature for immigrant elementary schoolers, literary meetings and guest appearances of Macedonian and Slovenian writers, creating literature for children and the youth, participating in more widely planned programmes together with other participants of different nationalities. One example is when they participated in performances by Neža Mauer and Kira Donev (youth authors from Slovenia and Macedonia) in Slovenia in 2007 and last year's performance at the symposium of Pan-Slavic culture in Maribor.

Between 2008 and 2010, a group of students from the remedial class in Macedonian from Nova Gorica took part in several competitions in Macedonia. In 2008, they participated in a competition in Radoviš, in 2009 they attended the "Racin Meeting" in Kumanov. They also participated in the national competition in the Macedonian language and literature in Skopje in 2010.

The remedial class students participated in national competitions in language and literature for emigrants in Macedonia. Among the competitors in 2009, a student of the remedial class in Nova Gorica, Valentina Petrova, won first place in the national competition for emigrants in Kumanov, as depicted in the plaque below.

СОЈУЗОТ НА ДРУШТВАТА
ЗА МАКЕДОНСКИ ЈАЗИК И ЛИТЕРАТУРА
НА РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

ДОДЕЛУВА

ДИПЛОМА

на ученикот / ученичката

Валентина Петрова

ОУ „Франца Ерлавец“ Нова Горица-Словениза

за освоено I (прво) место на
XXXII РЕЦИТАТОРСКИ НАТПРЕВАР
по македонски јазик и литература
од основното образование за
учениците од дијаспората

мај 2009
Куманово



претседател

Нада Николовска
Нада Николовска

The same student also received a special plaque from the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia for her achievements in the field of remedial classes.

Амбасада на Република Македонија во Република Словенија и Сојузот на македонските културни друштва во Република Словенија, на учениците од граѓани кои потекнуваат од Република Македонија и редовно ја посетуваат дополнителната настава по македонски јазик, македонска литература и национална култура, за покажан успех во учебната 2008/2009 година, доделуваат

ПОФАЛНИЦА

на уеникот/ ученичката

Валентина Петрова

Се пофалува за постигнат особен успех во познавање на македонскиот јазик, македонската литература и национална култура на Република Македонија, при дополнителната настава во Република Словенија.

Нова Горица, 06.06.2009 год.

Претседател
На Сојузот на МКД
Марко Матовски



Амбасадор
Самоил Филиповски



4 Survey

Finally, we created and carried out a survey among the former students of the remedial class and gathered the thoughts of the individuals who had various important contributions to the design and implementation of the class (Janja Babič, Zekirija Šainoski, Melita Steiner, Namita Subiotto).

4.1 Student feedback

We chose to survey some students of the first generation and some current class participants. We asked them all the same questions:

- a) When did you attend the remedial class in Macedonian in Slovenia and in which school?
- b) What was the most memorable aspect for you? Do you think it benefited you and if yes, how?
- c) Did you experience difficulties in Slovenian class or any subject because you took this class or inversely; in what cases did you benefit from taking the class?
- d) How did your classmates regard your activities (did it cause you to have any positive or negative status, did it bring you any additional insight)?

The first answers are by the respondents from different cities who took the class during its first few years, followed by the answers from the students from the first decade of the new millennium, and completed by the answers of the current students.

4.1.1 Rada Malijanska, 29 years, Ljubljana, lawyer

- a) I attended the remedial class in Macedonian from 1993 to 1998 along with my older sister and younger brother, which was held at Trnovo Elementary School on Friday afternoons.
- b) I certainly found the education useful, because I met many peers I got along with well; I learned the basics of the Macedonian language and gained a good insight into the Macedonian culture. There was a lot of reading Macedonian literature, performing in recitals, and song-singing. I also recall the history lessons and one occasion when our teacher Svetlana Mitruševska gave us the assignment to choose a national hero and draw them. I chose Jane Sandanski, because of his interesting appearance. He was bald, but he also had a long heart-shaped beard. Everyone laughed at my choice and the drawing. Even my older sister and younger brother have good memories of that time. They especially remember the trip to Ohrid.
- c) My Macedonian class did not cause me any trouble in Slovenian or any other subject. The same goes for my brother and sister. It was more of an advantage especially in geography and history. Let me mention that my school was aware that I was taking Macedonian and encouraged me. Each year, it was noted in my yearly report that I attend this extracurricular activity and the students were commended for each activity at the end of the year.

- d) Since my school regarded my Macedonian class as something positive, my schoolmates reacted in the same way.

4.1.2 Biljana Cvjetičanin, 36 years, Britof pri Kranju

- a) I first attended the remedial class in Macedonian in a very informal form. When the “Saint Cyril and Methodius” cultural society was founded in Kranj in 1992, we, the Macedonian children born in Slovenia started gathering there, because we wanted to learn more about our culture. We would meet in Kranj and teach ourselves to recite, read and write poems, and to dance. During this time, I borrowed the text books from my relatives in Macedonia so that I would deepen my knowledge and especially to learn the literary language. We spoke in a dialect at home. A few years later, we too got a remedial class teacher in Kranj (I’m not sure what year this was, but I know I was in high school). Then we started learning much more systematically. We learned about the language, history, geographical characteristics of Macedonia, learned songs, and put on plays.
- b) The students took the Macedonian class very seriously. We had a lot of respect for the teacher and absorbed all the knowledge that he was willing to give us. I remember the plays and how much we loved them and the quizzes we would put on and later compete with the Macedonian kids from other towns in Slovenia. I still benefit from the knowledge I got there. I am proud to be Macedonian and I like to talk about our history, culture, knowledge of the home country at any time. The knowledge I got in class (I also learned a lot from my parents) is something I pass on to my children and teach them that they are even richer because of their culture.
- c) I never had any problems because of the class. It was also more of an advantage. In elementary and secondary school, I wanted to expose myself to the knowledge I got in Macedonian class and it also benefited me in other subjects.
- d) My knowledge and experience only made people see me in a positive way. Since I was used to public appearances from my Macedonian society (poems, dancing, hosting), my teachers picked that up and included me in other school activities.

4.1.3 Irena Joveva, 26 years, Faculty of Social Sciences graduate from Jesenice

- a) a) I know I went to remedial class in Macedonian for nine years, so somewhere from 6 to 15. This was at Koroška Bela Elementary School in Jesenice and the teacher was Zekirija Šainoski.
- b) Considering this was quite a few years back, I cannot recall a specific memory; I have quite a few, nice ones, of course. One of the most vivid memories were the quizzes we had every year; I was in charge of History. I remember the preparations and the competitiveness between the kids. I remember our poem recitals at different celebrations and such. Very nice memories, in short. I certainly benefitted from the education, in school and on a personal level. I think it is wonderful for a child to preserve the culture of their parents, their roots ... I speak and read Macedonian fluently and I can

thank my education for that. I know Macedonia fairly well, from its history to its grammar, and my education is also to thank for that.

- c) Class was held once or twice a week if I remember correctly and I never had a problem because of that, not in Slovenian or any other subject. I never had any problems with Slovenian, probably because I read a lot, even though we spoke in Macedonian at home. Quite to the contrary: I benefited from it and used it to my advantage. I remember how we sometimes got assignments at school to write a paper, in History or Geography, for instance; I would use my knowledge of Macedonia and often wrote about it.
- d) You should ask them that, but I think everyone was very proud of me. No one looked at me in any kind of negative way, because my parents are from Macedonia or because I took remedial classes of Macedonian. Never. I was always praised and everything was excellent. By the way, I also often use my knowledge of Macedonian and Macedonia during my university studies and my work; it comes in handy especially with the recent events there and pretty tense situations ... The online portal 24ur.com often reports on it and my colleagues there are certainly grateful to have someone who can translate things to them and explain the situation first hand.

4.1.4 Valentina Petrova, 20 years, Nova Gorica

- a) I am Valentina Petrova, born 27 July 1995 in Kočana in Macedonia. I currently live in Nova Gorica. I moved to Slovenia in 2006. I went to remedial classes of my mother tongue at Fran Erjavec Elementary School until 2009.
- b) I participated in a few competitions in Slovenia and Macedonia. In 2009, I was commended for regular class attendance and won first place in the national competition in Kumanov. Of course, all thanks go to the best teacher, Zakiri Sainoski, who always encouraged us and never let us forget the Cyrillic alphabet and Macedonian.
- c) I will most remember the remedial class in Macedonian for the competitions, being the hostess at Macedonian evenings in Nova Gorica, and my best poem that won me first place in Kumanov.
- d) I never had any problems because of my Macedonian. Everyone was proud of me, because they knew Macedonian was my mother tongue. I was proud that I proved I can go to a Slovenian school and take Macedonian class.

4.1.5 Merita Ravmanoska, 15 years, Kozine

- a) I took Macedonian from 2007 to 2015 at Dragomir Benčič - Brkina Elementary School, Hrpelje.
- b) I will always remember the field trips to Macedonia and our socializing. I think it benefitted me, because this way I won't forget my mother tongue. I got a lot of experience from participating in different cultural events.
- c) I did not have any problems from going to Macedonian class, there were more benefits than problems.

- d) At first they were very surprized, but they adjusted in time. They found it interesting that we have so many different dances, dishes, ethnic costumes, etc. they were glad that we could tell them about Macedonia first hand. Some of them even visited Macedonia.

4.1.6 Mite Stojanov, 10 years, Koper

- a) I have been going to Macedonian class since 2014 in Koper Elementary School.
- b) I certainly benefited from the class, because I have learned many words and how to write them, as well as many other things about history, geography, and culture.
- c) Taking the class did not hurt my other school subjects.
- d) My schoolmates were excited, because we won prestigious awards at a prize contest.

4.2 Feedback from individuals

4.2.1 Janja Babić, principal of Hrpelje – Kozina Elementary School

At our special request, recently retired principal of Hrpelje – Kozina Elementary School, Janja Babić, described the course of the remedial class in Macedonian at the school. She sectioned her contribution into three sections.

Integrating immigrant children involves more than learning Slovenian

In the 2013/2014 school year, there were 19 immigrant children at the school. In addition to their regular classes and Slovenian as their second/foreign language (Suzana Godina Jelušič), the immigrant children also took their mother tongue lessons. This year, a teacher of Macedonian, Zekirija Čainoski, came from Ljubljana once a week. Macedonian class was held on Thursdays from 1 pm to 2.30 pm. 7 Slovenian students also joined the class, because they were interested in the Macedonian language.

The teacher worked very well with the librarian; they consulted about the learning difficulties of individual students, they coordinated substitute classes that the teacher couldn't do on the set date.

The activities we carry out at the school to better include the immigrant teachers and develop the intercultural dialogue are:

- Slovenian class for the students, once weekly (one hour),
- Mother tongue class, once weekly (two hours) – outside associate.

We have a collection of Macedonian books in the library that the immigrant children often take out. Children in the higher grades have the option of reading these books and present them for their book badge. This year, twelve students participated in the book badge program. We also supply dictionaries of the children's mother tongues.

In addition to the adjusted book badge program, these general adjustments include the option of taking tests individually outside the class, longer time to complete the test, more photographic material, assistance with reading the instructions (school's counsellor's office).

There are many possibilities for intercultural dialogue and a better knowledge of the Slovenian language and culture, they just need to be perceived and actualized.

This year, we were invited to go on a field trip to the beautiful Macedonia. We organised a meeting of Macedonian societies from different Slovenian cities at the school; the societies introduced themselves with a cultural programme and folk dancing.

The children visit Macedonia and the president of the republic

During the autumn break from 27 October 2013 to 01 November 2013, the students from our school and two more schools from Ljubljana and their Macedonian teacher Zekirija Šajnoski and principal Janja Babič visited Macedonia. We were pleasantly surprised by the news that the Macedonian president Georgij Ivanov would see us. We visited three Macedonian elementary schools and met with their students and teachers. We saw the homes and hometowns of our Macedonian students, several cities, and the cultural and historic landmarks of Ohrid, Saint Naum, Bitola, Struga, Skopje ... We admired the many natural and artificial lakes, the diverse landscapes, and learned about the historic and cultural riches of the land and its people. Macedonia is a wonderful country filled with kind people. The Sun is not only on their flag, but shone for us and warmed us during our trip. The journey was arduous, but our impressions were so nice that we all agreed it was unforgettable.

We would like to thank our teacher Šajnoski, who invited us on this wonderful journey, the Macedonian Ministry of Education, the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as our municipality, all of who made this unforgettable trip financially possible. We promised to meet again.



Visit at the president of the Republic of Macedonia (Source: Archive of Janja Babič.)

Diploma ceremony for students of the remedial class in Macedonian in Slovenia

On Saturday, 14 June 2014, we held a ceremony for the Macedonian immigrants in Slovenia. It was intended especially for students who take remedial classes of Macedonian in Slovenian schools and who are taught by teacher Zekirija Šainoski and for their parents, grandparents, and friends.

They travelled from different cities around Slovenia; the classes are namely held at our school and also in Koper, Ljubljana, Postojna, and Kranj.

The ceremony in Macedonian and Slovenian was held in a multipurpose space in our school. The cultural program included the Brkini Quartet, ballerinas, students reciting Macedonian poems, the Kočo Racin Macedonian cultural society from Koper and the Macedonian cultural society from Kranj. The dancers from their folk dance groups demonstrated the Macedonian circle dance and a few other traditional dances. The cultural program was followed by an end-of-the-year diploma ceremony for the students of Macedonian.

The ceremony was attended by a representative of the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia Aleksander Dimovski, president of the Macedonian Emigrant Association in Slovenia Krste Dimitrovski, president of the Kočo Racin Macedonian cultural society from Koper, Violeta Matijević, host school principal Janja Babič, and a representative of the municipality of Hrpelje - Kozina, deputy mayor Peter Boršič. At the end, the participants of the cultural programme danced and sung together with the audience, and later had dinner and socialized. Along with the photographs from the previous chapter about the event, here are two new ones about the Slovenian students' contribution to the event.



Our ballerinas present themselves.



Our students' performance at the event

(Source: Archive of Janja Babič.)

We are enriched by the diversity and abundance of different cultures, which is why these kinds of events are so welcome. We are proud of our actions which help to enrich the immigrants' integration and break the boundaries in our local and wider environment. Our school lives for values such as good interpersonal relations between the students, teachers, and parents, harmony between different cultures, religions, and nationalities and always strives to lead by example in everyday life. I was very proud of this as the principal.

4.2.2 Zekirija Šainoski, teacher of the remedial class in Macedonian

Zekirija Šainoski described his view of the journey and work in the remedial class in Macedonian in Slovenia and described in short his ten-year teaching term.

I took over the remedial class in Macedonian and the cultural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia in September 1996 from my colleague Dragan Tušev. I was appointed to the position by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Slovenia. Prior to my arrival in Slovenia, the class was held in Ljubljana, Kranj, as well as in Jesenice and Maribor, where my colleague Kristina Delova taught the class. Since the very beginning, I had a lot of support from the Macedonian Emigrant Association in Slovenia, the Macedonian societies in Slovenia, and the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia. I was accepted in all the Macedonian societies by the boards, as well as by the students and their parents, who also invested great efforts in organising the remedial class, because they wanted as many children to take it as possible. The support of the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport was also invaluable to me, as it created the ideal conditions to carry out the class in the elementary schools. In November 1996, a new group of students formed in Velenje, who took the Macedonian language class. Next year, another group was formed in Celje. As the teacher, I was happy and pleased that the Macedonian language started being taught in more cities across Slovenia. I must also mention that I was especially pleased in the 2000/2001 school year, when a new student group wanting remedial classes of Macedonian formed in Nova Gorica. The largest credit for that goes to the founding of the “Ohrid Pearls” Macedonian Cultural Society in Nova Gorica.

The largest and most unforgettable events in my career are connected to my students performing at events with their rich cultural programmes on Macedonian national holidays and state holidays, organised by the Macedonian cultural societies. It is at those times that the students performed in front of their parents, important guests and friends from the Slovenian and Macedonian environment, and the representatives of the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia. I still recall the cheerful smiling faces of the parents and a few tears of pride and joy. I also remember the cheerful and smiling faces of the students when they got their diplomas at the end of the year. I was proud of my students when they competed in competitions, traditionally held in Kranj; I liked seeing them display their knowledge of Macedonia. I will also never forget the national competitions in the Macedonian language and literature for the children from the diaspora, which were held in the Republic of Macedonia and where the students took first and second places.

I think remedial classes of Macedonian should become and remain an integral part of the Macedonian language in Slovenia, a kind of recognisable symbol of the Macedonian culture in Slovenia and the European Union. I am optimistic, because in addition to four elementary schools in Ljubljana, the classes are also held in Postojna, Koper, Kranj, and the Municipality of Hrpelje - Kozina and are expressing the tendency to spread to other cities in Slovenia. I would like to finish with a quote by Macedonian poet Blaže Koneski: “Until we have our language, we have our motherland.”

4.2.4 Namita Subiotto, head of the Department of Macedonian Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Namita Subiotto, professor of the Macedonian language at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, submitted her contribution “The Macedonian Language in Higher Education and Perspectives for Teaching Macedonian in Elementary School”.

The Macedonian language has been taught in the Slovenian higher education system at the Pedagogical Academy in Maribor (from 1961 to 1994) and the Pedagogical Academy in Ljubljana (from 1967 to 1981); however, the Department of Macedonian Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana boasts the longest-standing tradition. The section at the Faculty of Arts was founded during the 1961/1962 academic year as part of the Department for the Serbo-Croatian language and literature. Until 1966/1967, the section was headed by Blaže Ristovski, then it was taken over by Dragi Stefanija. Under his leadership, in 1984/1985, the section finally grew into an independent Department for the Macedonian Studies, which meant that the subjects of the Macedonian language and literature became an obligatory part of the study programme. In 1991, Dragi Stefanija became a full professor for the Macedonian language and literature and he headed the department until 1998. Between the 1999 and 2001, the department was headed by Katerina Veljanovska, and I have been running it since 2002. Since 2006, the Macedonian section has been running at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Maribor as an elective course.

Courses in the Macedonian language, literature and culture at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana were first included in the study programme Croatian, Serbian, and Macedonian language and literatures and in 2009, they were included in the (under- and postgraduate) South Slavic Studies programme, accredited according to the principles of the Bologna reforms. The courses in Macedonian Studies are obligatory for all students who are enrolled in the programme and some are opened to all other students of the University of Ljubljana or exchange students. Other Slavic study programmes also offer Macedonian as an elective course. About 20 students enrol in the South Slavic Studies programme each year, of which about 10% have Macedonian as their mother tongue; some come from the former Yugoslav republics, while others are Slovenian students interested in the study of South Slavic languages, literatures, and cultures, or exchange students, most often from Poland, Croatia, and Bulgaria.

The bilateral agreement between the University of Saint Cyril and Methodius in Macedonia and the University of Ljubljana facilitates a lively student exchange and guest lecturers, and guarantees scholarships to our students and professors for the Seminar of the Macedonian Language, Literature, and Culture in Ohrid, where they can deepen their knowledge and get a first-hand insight into the Macedonian culture, which undoubtedly contributes to an increased interest for Macedonian Studies. In the past ten years, about 50 diploma theses have been submitted at the faculty (here, I would like to mention the thesis *Macedonian Language in Slovenia* by Vesna Mohorič (Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, 2014; COBISS.SI-ID 55343202), as it deals with the topic of this publication) and two doctoral dissertations in Macedonian Studies.

During this time, we also carried out some interesting extra-curricular projects. In 2006, the Department of Slovenian Studies FF UL published the publication *Sončeva sestra: makedonske ljudske pravljice* (The Sun's Sister: Macedonian folk tales) with 23 Macedonian folk tales and in 2007, the collection *V mesečini svet: makedonska fantastična kratka proza* (The World in the Moonlight: Macedonian short fantasy prose) with 20 texts by 12 authors. The texts for both books were translated by the

students under my tutelage at the Macedonian literature seminars. This form of work was very intense and yielded good results. The students expressed an interest in researching Macedonian literature and culture and it also turned out that some of them are talented translators. The publications are still used today as study literature for students of South Slavic languages and others. In 2006, we staged the play *Жив човек* (Everyman) by Macedonian playwright Goran Stefanovski. In 2012, we put on an adaptation of the Macedonian folk tale Siljan Štrk and staged a puppet show which we also performed at the quiz for the students of the remedial class in Macedonian in Kranj. In 2008, which was declared as the year of the Macedonian language by the government of the Republic of Macedonia, we prepared a special lecture on the works of Blaže Koneski, which also hosted the delegation of the Macedonian parliament and the ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia in Slovenia. In 2009, we researched the intermedial connections between Macedonian historic novels and movies, so we collaborated with the embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Ljubljana, the Macedonian film collection, and the Slovenian film collection to organise a mini film festival and the well-attended projections of the films *Solunski atentatorji* (The Salonika Terrorists), *Prekleta seme* (Black Seed), *Rdeči konj* (Red Horse) and *Velika voda* (The Great Water) with introductory lectures and discussions about the novels of the same name. Between 2007 and 2012, we were included in three international European projects for the preparation of textbooks and tests for Macedonian as a second language. Since 2005, we have been collaborating with the Saint Cyril and Methodius Macedonian Cultural society from Kranj to organise the Prešerenovo oro cultural event, which features predominantly young authors and scientists from Macedonia and students. It is important for different educational, cultural, and other institutions from Slovenia and Macedonia to collaborate on such projects with a common goal: to promote creative exchange of our cultures.

Another fact that could contribute to an increased interest in studying the Macedonian language, literature, and culture in Slovenia is that the curriculum was accredited in 2008 with Macedonian as the elective language in the last three years in elementary schools (Subiotto, Namita, Arizankovska, Lidiija, Dolžan, Sonja. Curriculum, Elective subject: Elementary school education programme, Macedonian. Ljubljana: Ministry of Education and Sport: National Education Institute RS, 2008: http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/os/devetletka/predmeti_izbirni/Makedonscina.pdf). This means that Macedonian also has the status of an elective subject, which means schools can organise it for interested students. The class can run for three years 2 hours at a time, 204 hours in total and the students can choose it for only one year or each year individually. When we were preparing the school curriculum, we took into account that Macedonian and Slovenian are related (South Slavic) languages and that Macedonian is one of the languages of the former common country of Yugoslavia. This proximity could make learning Macedonian interesting for other students in Slovenian schools, not only for those with Macedonian as their first language. The curriculum also includes a communicatively contrastive approach, as special emphasis is placed on the differences between Macedonian and Slovenian, which means that by learning Macedonian, the students can also improve their knowledge of Slovenian.

I believe this publication will demonstrate how important it is to nurture a good tradition of teaching Macedonian in Slovenian elementary schools with remedial classes and I hope this will enable the class to become accessible to even more interested students as an electoral subject.

5 Documents – appendices

This chapter aims to give the majority of the important information that the publication requires for documenting the events, such as:

- The intergovernmental agreement on collaboration in education, culture, and science between the government of the Republic of Slovenia and the government of the Republic of Macedonia;
- We will give an example of the confirmed curriculum for a school year,
- An example of the questions at the end-of-the-year quiz.

In order to save space and, the statistically analysed data on the class participants and cities where the classes are held will only be stated in the written form. Other data and the added video footage will only be available in digital form.

5.1 Statistical depiction of the remedial class in Macedonian in Slovenia

Unfortunately, we were unable to acquire reliable data on the number of participants of the remedial class from the last century, so most of the data for the statistical analysis is from this century. Table 1 shows the places where the classes were held according to year and number of participants from 2001/2002 up until today.

Table 1: Places where the classes were held and the number of participants according to year

School year	Cities where the classes were held	Number of students
1993/94	Ljubljana, Kranj	
1994/95	Ljubljana, Kranj, Maribor	
1995/96	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Maribor, Velenje	
1996/97	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Maribor, Velenje	
1997/98	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Celje	
1998/99	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice,	
1999/00	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice,	
2000/01	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice	
2001/02	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Nova Gorica	34
2002/03	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Nova Gorica	33
2003/04	Ljubljana, Kranj, Jesenice, Nova Gorica	49
2004/05	Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica	26
2005/06	Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica	49
2006/07	Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica	24
2007/08	Ljubljana, Kranj, Nova Gorica	35
2008/09	Ljubljana, Kranj, Hrpelje, Nova Gorica	34
2009/10	Ljubljana, Kranj, Hrpelje, Nova Gorica	31
2010/11	Ljubljana, Postojna, Hrpelje	16
2011/12	Ljubljana, Postojna, Hrpelje	31
2012/13	Ljubljana, Postojna, Hrpelje, Kranj	61
2013/14	Ljubljana, Postojna, Hrpelje, Kranj, Koper	64
2014/15	Ljubljana, Postojna, Hrpelje, Kranj, Koper	53

Total		540
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Table 1 shows that the class was being held in two to five cities across Slovenia. The number of students taking the class was smallest in the 2010/2011 school year (16) and biggest in the 2013/2014 school year (64). On average, 38 children took the class each year and the class was being held in 3.7 cities. The depicted table and the corresponding chart illustrate that the number of students follows the numbers of places where the class is held. The individual rises and falls indicate the coming and going generations that are being included in the class. Since the 2001/2002 school year, 540 students have taken the class. If we assume that each student took the class for four years on average, that means that the class has been attended by more than 135 students in the past 15 years or even more than 200 in the entire area.

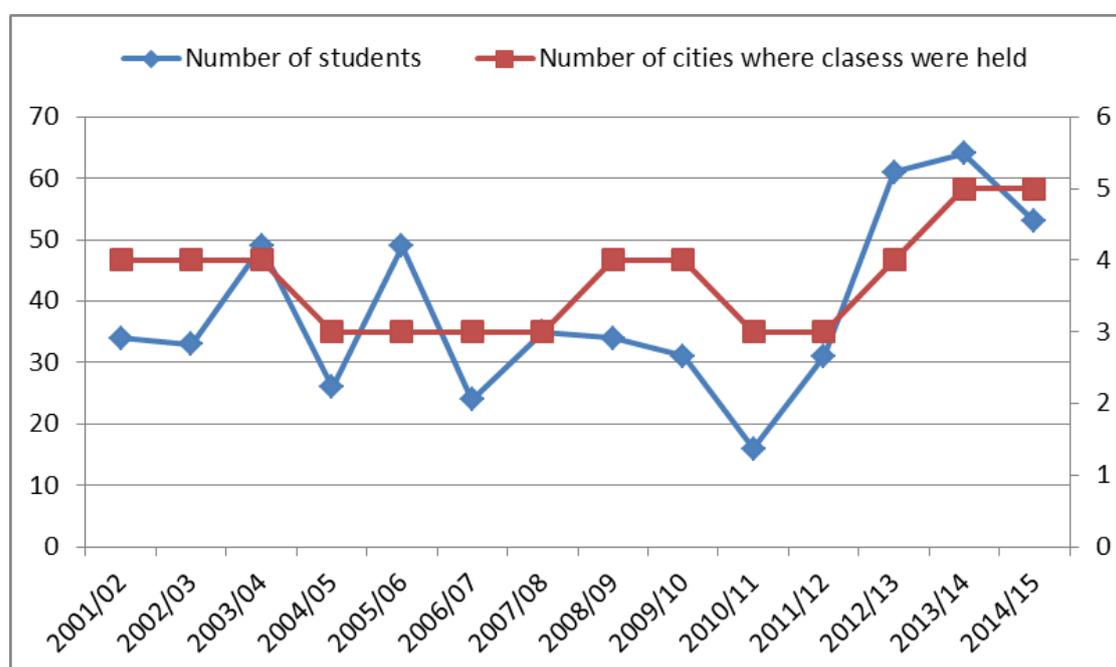


Chart 1: The number of cities where the classes were held and the number of students

During the making of this publication, the question arose: how many Macedonians are declared as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia? Since we did not know the correct answer, we studied the official data in the publication “RELIGIOUS, LINGUISTIC, AND DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION OF SLOVENIA Censuses 1921–2002”, published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, accessible online at: <http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/default.htm>. The data is gathered in Table 2 and relates to the period from 1948 to 2002.

Table 2: Macedonians in Slovenia – censuses from 1948 to 2002

Year of census	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
Number of people	366	640	1009	1572	3227	4371	3972
% of RS inhabitants	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.18	0.23	0.20

Table 3 gives information on the age structure of the registered Macedonians in the 2002 census.

Table 3: Age structure of the declared Macedonians in the Republic of Slovenia in the 2002 census

Age group	Number of people	Percentage of people
0–4 years	84	2.114804
5–9 years	81	2.039275
10–14 years	171	4.305136
15–19 years	250	6.294058
20–24 years	338	8.509567
25–29 years	347	8.736153
30–34 years	340	8.559919
35–39 years	373	9.390735
40–44 years	497	12.51259
45–49 years	545	13.72105
50–54 years	368	9.264854
55–59 years	196	4.934542
60–64 years	158	3.977845
65–69 years	114	2.870091
70–74 years	60	1.510574
75–79 years	38	0.956697
80–84 years	unknown	unknown
85+	unknown	unknown
Total	3972	99.70

The statistical overview of the structure of the inhabitants with a Macedonian heritage from 2002 is given here so that we may estimate what percentage of the school-aged children was included in the remedial class in Macedonian. If we suppose that the practically active population that took remedial classes of Macedonian was in the categories 0–4 and 5–9 years in the 2002 census, their number amounted to 165 children. A comparison of this data with the data on the participants of the class demonstrates that a considerable share of that population, significantly more than 50% of the children were included in the class.

6 Conclusion

We certainly wish we had the comparison that prof. Dragi Stefanija revealed in his lecture about the 3500 students of the Ohrid Literary School in the 9th century, who spread the Cyrillic alphabet, literacy, literature, and culture practically across the entire Slavic territories. Of course, such comparisons are pointless because of the enormous time and other differences. Still, Macedonians in Slovenia have proven that we can nurture our cultural heritage and our language even in modern times. With the help of institutions from our mother country of the Republic of Macedonia and the institutions of the Republic of Slovenia, we were able to organise remedial classes of Macedonian, attended by a large share of school-aged Macedonian children. This is an example of good cooperation between the Macedonian cultural societies and corresponding institutions of both countries, which has been lasting for over 20 years. It is precisely this cooperation that this publication has attempted to highlight.