Financial Education for Children and Young People in South East Europe

SYNTHESIS NOTE

Financial education for children and young people in South East Europe:

Policies, good practices and challenges in the new digital reality

18-19 November 2020, 12.00 -15.30 CET

Webinar via Zoom

Background

Recognising the growing importance of financial literacy, OECD governments launched a comprehensive initiative on financial education in 2002. In 2008 they established an International Network on Financial Education (INFE), which meets twice a year to share experiences, discuss strategic priorities and develop policy responses to topical issues. The OECD/INFE has high-level membership from over 240 public institutions – including central banks, financial regulators and supervisors, ministries of finance and ministries of education – in 130 countries. OECD/INFE methodology and high-level principles on financial education have been endorsed and/or supported by G20 leaders and other international and regional fora.

In 2020, the OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial level , adopted the OECD Recommendation on Financial Literacy aiming to support governments in fostering financial resilience and well-being through a comprehensive approach encompassing also improved financial access, adequate consumer protection and regulatory frameworks.

About the technical assistance project for South East European partners

Building on the OECD/INFE's internationally recognised expertise and longstanding commitment to advancing financial literacy around the world, a five-year project was initiated in 2018 aiming to provide guidance on the design and implementation of effective financial education initiatives in seven countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Romania (hereinafter SEE countries), considering their specific needs.

The project encompasses the following three work streams, in addition to mutual learning and knowledge sharing:

- **Research**: mapping current activities, establishing the current level of financial literacy within participating countries and identifying priorities and target groups;
- **Development**: supporting the design of a national strategy for financial education (where relevant) and the development of an evaluation process to measure its effectiveness;
- **Implementation**: supporting the implementation of national strategies and their evaluation.

This initiative is being undertaken with financial support from the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands and benefits from the technical expertise of its Money Wise Platform.

The 2020 Annual meeting

The Annual Meeting focused on the theme of "financial education for children and young people in the new digital reality". The two-day virtual meeting focused on the process of developing financial education policies and initiatives for children and young people, underlying challenges and good practices from the SEE region and beyond.

The first day set the scene by presenting the status of financial literacy of young people in the region, and the expected impact of the current COVID-19 crisis. Participants briefly discussed the potential role of financial education in enhancing financial well-being of young people in SEE in the medium to long term. Good practice examples were provided on designing financial education policies and programmes, based on research and financial literacy core competencies, as well as on the introduction of financial education in formal education curricula.

The second day was dedicated to exploring new ways of reaching children and young people, leveraging digital technologies and other innovative means. Speakers were invited to reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of financial education to youth, and share experiences on the adaptation of financial education policy design and provision to the new digital reality.

High-Level Conference

Opening session

Mr. Andre Laboul, Chair of OECD/INFE and Senior Counsellor for Financial Affairs in the OECD. Mr. Laboul welcomed the participants and thanked the partners from the Netherlands' Ministry of Finance and the Money Wise platform for their financial support and strong commitment to the OECD/INFE Technical Assistance Project on Financial Education in South East European countries from the Netherlands' Constituency Programme. The Annual Meeting was co-organised with Romania, whose authorities he thanked and commended the leadership of the National Bank, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Financial Supervisory Authority and the Banking Association of Romania in fostering financial literacy, resilience and well-being through financial education. He welcomed the representatives of a wide range of partner institutions and stakeholders from Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Romania.
Mr. Laboul reminded participants that the world economy is undergoing a profound transformation, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sustainability, resilience, progress and well-being are increasingly recognised as shared priorities at global level. A stronger and more inclusive world economy can be shaped by putting people - and youth in particular - at the centre of development. Through financial education, young individuals can learn how to take sound life changing decisions, such as evaluating a job contract, purchasing a first home or managing retirement savings. Financial literacy is also critical for managing the opportunities and risks of rapid financial digitalisation to ensure that no youngster is left behind.
Adults in South East Europe (SEE) scored on average 57% of the maximum possible literacy versus 64% and 65% respectively in EU and OECD economies. Young populations (18-29 years old) in most surveyed SEE countries scored below the rest of the population in terms of knowledge, behaviour and attitude. This requires tailored attention and policy action. Mr. Laboul emphasised that the 2020 OECD Recommendation on Financial Literacy is a valuable resource in this sense and invited all partner countries to consider adhering to the Recommendation as a next step of the journey towards greater financial resilience and financial well-being for youth and all their citizens.

Mr. **Leonardo Badea** (Deputy Governor, National Bank of Romania, BNR) reflected on the fact that, today, education is at a crossroads everywhere in the world, and that there is an ongoing underlying transformation of education at large. Digitalisation, generational changes, the rise and fall of global networks and other complex processes put huge pressure on the education system. Learning should also adapt to consider the respective needs and preferences of young people: visuals and inter-activity are only some of the new tools that can be used.
Financial education is, now more than ever, a critical life skill. The more complex the financial system and its instruments, the higher the need to educate the public and young people to understand it. Effective financial education should also consider behavioural insights. Romania is pleased to co-host the event together with the OECD and the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands.

Mr. **Jean Badea** (State Under-secretary, Ministry of Education and Research, Romania) shared ongoing financial education initiatives of the Ministry at the pre-university level. He emphasised how financial education and financial inclusion are major priorities both at national and European Union level and that they can support the development of an integrated financial services market accessible to all citizens of the member states. As such, the Ministry has taken steps to increase financial literacy of young people by:

- designing and diversifying a curricular offer related to financial education at national level;
- encouraging and supporting schools and other governmental or non-governmental institutions with relevant expertise in the field of financial education to implement various non-formal educational activities complementary to the formal ones;
- establishing partnerships for the development of financial education projects or programs intended for children and young people, as well as for teachers.

As early as 2010, the Ministry of Education and the BNR signed a cooperation protocol in the field of financial education. This was followed in 2015 by several others with the Financial Supervision Authority and the Romanian Association of Banks (ARB). In 2018, the Ministry signed an inter-institutional cooperation protocol together with the BNR, the Ministry of Public Finance (MFP), the Financial Supervision Authority and the ARB. The Protocol provided for the development of the National Strategy for Financial Education and the implementation of financial education activities in partnership, to which the Ministry of Education and Research has committed to contribute substantially, together with all the other partners involved.

Mr. **Daniel Armeanu** (Vice-president, Financial Supervisory Authority, Romania) mentioned that the Authority (ASF) is dedicating important resources to implement various national educational programmes to raise the financial literacy levels of Romanians. The 2008 global financial crisis highlighted the importance of financial literacy as part of consumer protection in relation to financial stability. In the current context, new instruments are needed to deliver financial education effectively. New vulnerable target groups, new risks affecting the stability of financial markets require new financial literacy approaches. Technology and digitalisation are more important than ever in this context. Understanding finance is essential for daily life, in the new context of constant digital communication and complex financial instruments. More robust and inclusive responses are required, focusing on financial inclusion and consumer protection alongside education.

Mr. **Sergiu Oprescu** (President, Board of Directors, Romanian Association of Banks) emphasised that the current crisis is unprecedented. At the same time it offers an opportunity to reset and put things in order as we reflect on the more important and overarching issues of our societies. The Romanian Association of Banks (ARB) has decided to build its strategy on three pillars namely digitalisation of the economy, boosting financial intermediation and financial education, as there is a direct correlation in the long term between the high levels of financial literacy and the high level of financial and economic well-being of individuals.
According to **Mr. Oprescu**, the results of the OECD study on financial literacy levels of individuals in SEE provide an accurate picture of the level of the financial literacy and its building blocks in the region. The low level of financial literacy in Romania is a warning sign that should not be ignored. Still, financial education is not a sprint, but a marathon that needs to run over generation, it is a continuous effort of the entire society. Young people are eager to learn, they understand the importance of financial education and how big of a game changer it can be in their lives. There is a need for a long-term vision to achieve higher financial literacy levels, planning, progress monitoring, and well-known champions are all necessary building blocks, alongside stakeholders and partners that move from talking the talk to walking the walk.

Mr. **Michel Heijdra** (Deputy Treasurer General and Director for International Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Netherlands) shared his appreciation for the fruitful collaboration between the countries belonging to the Dutch constituencies at IMF, World Bank and EBRD. He also mentioned that the Netherlands Ministry of Finance is hosting the Money Wise Platform, a unique collaboration between different stakeholders that aims to improve the financial fitness of Dutch citizens. MoneyWise is keen to share knowledge on financial education at an international level and is active in the OECD/INFE. Mr. Heijdra mentioned that reality has moved financial literacy and financial resilience to the top of the agenda of policymakers in many countries. Against this backdrop, the current project and regional cooperation have become even more relevant. COVID-19 has shed new light on the limited financial resilience of individuals and households. Key factor in the financial resilience is the ability to manage money effectively and plan ahead. If children are taught these skills from an early age the foundation for future financial resilience may be built. Young people are also keen users of digital financial services and face an evolving and challenging financial landscape. This calls for starting early with educating people about making sound financial choices. In the Netherlands MoneyWise, together with its partners, has accelerated the digital implementation of materials for all educational streams which can be used both during the National Money Week and other events. Financial education is most effective when students learn by doing and when decision making in daily lives is integrated in education. Research shows the need to focus on attitudes and behaviours. And this is important for the financial stability of the individual citizens, and also for the stability of countries as a whole.

DESIGNING FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Session 1. Setting the scene. Financial literacy of young people in SEE: where do we stand?

The OECD Secretariat presented the results of the 2020 OECD/INFE Financial literacy survey of adults in SEE, with a focus on youth, alongside highlights from the 2018 PISA financial literacy measurement and socio-economic trends likely to affect the financial well-being of young people in the region. Low levels of financial literacy and financial inclusion of young people in SEE may have negative consequences for youth empowerment and financial well-being along with potential longer-term economic and social implications. The OECD Secretariat presented key issues outlined in a policy brief on Financial Education for Young People in South-East Europe (available here). Specifically, the policy brief and the OECD presentation highlighted that:

- Improving financial literacy and inclusion of young people is a shared challenge and priority acknowledged across SEE countries, especially in the context of severe implications from the COVID-19 pandemic
- In spite of increasing efforts to step up financial education provision, financial literacy and inclusion levels of youth in the region remain low
- Significantly lower access to basic financial products of young people than older adults is coupled with lower levels of youth formal savings
- The majority of the SEE countries are contemplating young people financial education prioritisation through their integration in National Financial Education Strategies, which are under preparation or at final stages of implementation (Georgia) or revision (Croatia)
- Youth core financial literacy competency frameworks are not uniformly available in SEE countries; integration of financial education in education curricula is advancing slowly and teacher training opportunities need to be increased
- Financial literacy measurement for youth is scarce in most countries, making regional and international comparisons more difficult
- Monitoring and evaluation of financial education programmes for youth are in their infancy.
- SEE policy makers need to advance youth financial literacy and inclusion *inter alia* through:
    - developing and implementing evidence-based policies and financial education programmes leveraging innovative approaches, including digital delivery and digitalisation
    - enhancing stakeholder collaboration, synergies and scaling up of successful initiatives
    - pledging continuous improvement through testing, measuring and evaluating policy impact on youth financial literacy in favour of greater financial resilience and well-being.

Mr. Lasha Gzirishvili (Head of Department, Consumer Protection and Financial Education Department, National Bank of Georgia, NBG) provided a few examples on how financial education for children and young people has been implemented in the country. He also emphasised the importance of collaborations to achieve impact and effective delivery, for example through the development of a National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE). Children and young people are one of the target groups of the NSFE of Georgia, and implementation of specific programmes is done through action plans, under the leadership of a steering committee composed of a diverse range of stakeholders. Specifically, when it comes to financial education for children and young people, in Georgia, the NBG collaborated with the Ministry of Education to integrate financial education in the formal school curriculum and started teacher training with the support of the teachers' forum. Textbooks have also been developed for school children of different age groups.

In terms of informal education, financial education is delivered through a number of collaboration efforts with national and international organisations. The main issue encountered by the national coordinator (NBG) is the necessity to attract as many stakeholders as possible in the development and delivery of financial education. Secondly, the low levels of financial literacy of the entire population and specifically of the "multipliers" and trainers themselves (such as the teachers) is another key challenge. **Mr. Gzirishvili** highlighted that it is important to ensure that teachers are confident in their own financial education skills. Finally, he stressed the need to reach as wide an audience as possible, which can be done through diversification of the delivery channels as well as diversification of stakeholders involved in financial education programme delivery.

Mr. Daniel Apostol-Bîrzu (Director communication and inter-institutional relations, Financial Supervisory Authority, Romania) recognised that low financial literacy and financial inclusion are an issue in Romania and overall in SEE countries. The negative consequences of low literacy and financial inclusion are now multiplied by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is currently prompting everyone to find new solutions to reach target audiences. Financial education needs to be adapted to new challenges as well, and the FSA is re-thinking its approach to financial education, focusing more on online interaction. The FSA is also taking the issue of financial education of young people very seriously. Starting early with financial education paves the way to the future financial capability of the individuals and their future success and the ability to access education and employment. The FSA has started financial education for young people in 2015, and it aims to improve the level of knowledge, develop specific abilities and ensure a better understanding of how the financial market operates. Several projects are being implemented targeting specifically children and young people: Youth Financial Club (FinClub, dedicated mostly to high school students, plus a host of virtual activities), Start2Teach (online training sessions addressed to teachers, to help integrate financial concepts within lessons; most innovative online teaching plans awarded) or online publications for teachers, on topics of interest related to the non-financial markets.

However, **Mr. Apostol** highlighted that switching to online can be challenging as it can sever the ties with the most vulnerable groups, where some may be digitally illiterate or simply lack access to digital devices (such as children living in remote areas, which lack access to any digital devices and hence to education at all in the current situation). At the same time, continuous evaluation of efforts is key to the success of any initiative, especially in the current context, to ensure that the audience continues to stay engaged and that the messages are relevant and tailored to their needs. Some of the metrics currently used by the FSA to track the online programmes are audience building metrics (e.g. rate of response, actual attendance), feedback questionnaires and qualitative interviews with stakeholders, media impact of, and social media engagement with financial education topics.

Session 2. Developing financial education for youth based on evidence

The second session discussed the importance of collecting financial literacy evidence in the process of defining needs and designing financial education programmes for children and young people. The OECD set the scene by highlighting that successful youth financial education programme design should start with well-defined and commonly agreed financial literacy core competencies and data collection to create a solid knowledge base on the levels of financial literacy of young people, their financial behaviours, their needs and learning preferences. Such an approach will ultimately help policy makers to track progress over time but also to raise political awareness and support, and develop better strategies in the future.

Speakers presented examples of tools and strategies utilised to measure the financial literacy of children and young people, and highlighted how results have been used for policy and programme design.

Ms. Ryoko Okazaki (Director, Promotion of Financial Education Group, Public Relations Department, Bank of Japan) first presented Japan's experience in developing a survey of children and young people's lives and their behaviours towards money, and its role in the promotion of financial education. The survey is conducted by the CCFSI every 5 years since 2005. More than 50.000 students participated in 2015. In this paper-based assessment lasting 50 minutes, questions cover topics such as pocket money, conditions for receiving money from parents and if children keep records of their spending. Children are asked what they think about money, whether they talk about money with their parents and their experience with working part time jobs. **Ms. Okazaki** concluded by highlighting how, over the years, the survey had an important role in the promotion of financial education in Japan. The teachers of the schools participating in the survey receive feedback from the CCSFI, while mass media refers to the data from the Survey and stimulates the citizen's interests in financial education. The CCFSI also uses the information to plan and revise the Financial Education Programme and the Financial Education Goals by age groups.

Ms. Dora Li (General Manager, Investor and Financial Education Council, Hong Kong, China) discussed the essential role of the parents in educating children about money matters. She mentioned that since 2015, four parenting studies have been conducted to understand parents' difficulties in teaching their children about money. Children's education needs can be understood through parents, and some of the key findings that **Ms. Li** highlighted include: only 54% of the parents have taught their children to set financial goals; 60% of parents were concerned that their children did not understand that money comes from hard work or 57% of parents commented their children lacked discipline to save money. IFEC has therefore started to reach out to parents both through face to face and online means, and support them in developing their skills and confidence to speak to their children about money. IFEC also developed activity sheets for parents, that they can use and work together with their children, covering a range of topics such as expenses tracking kit, pocket money and others as well as several face to face workshops for children or parents. The financially literate schools is a programme implemented recently through which IFEC is supporting 20 schools to develop whole-school financial education and integrate financial education in curriculum lessons, extra-curriculum initiatives and parent education. Through this strategy, the IFEC has a 360 degrees approach to induce financial education for children at a young stage, through research and development.

Mr. Carlo Di Chiacchio (Researcher, National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System - INVALSI, Italy) presented Italy's experience in participating in the PISA financial literacy assessment, and how PISA 2012 represented the starting point of scientific and political interest in financial literacy. In Italy, the importance of Financial Education has been acknowledged well before PISA 2012. The Bank of Italy, for example, had been promoting financial education activities in schools since 2007, signing an agreement with the Ministry of Education. It was a large project involving primary schools as well as lower and upper secondary schools. The project design also considered students' pre-post assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. At that time, the main topics covered were: 1) for elementary schools, money and saving; 2) for lower secondary schools, economy and the market; 3) for upper secondary schools, economy and finance. Another example of pre-PISA development and delivery of financial education activities to schools regards the Foundation for the Financial Education (FEDUF), a private institution that started its work in 2006, followed by other important public and private players e.g. National Commission for Corporates and Stock Market – CONSOB; Junior Achievement.

The PISA 2012 results were a shock for Italy: the ranking of Italy was very low. Completely unexpected results despite the great involvement of schools in financial education activities. Possible causes of this failure were identified as the fact that school across the country participated in different projects voluntarily, even at the class level rather than at the whole school level, and the lack of the integration of financial education in the national school curriculum. Not having financial education in the curriculum meant also not having evaluation strategies for students' assessment. As such the PISA 2012 results triggered awareness amongst stakeholders and politicians for the need of more efforts to improve the situation. In 2013, the Senate made a proposal for a law regarding the enhancement and integration in schools of financial education based on the works of INFE and OECD recommendations. In that proposal, financial literacy was referred to as "Economic Citizenship".

After the publication of the national report, the Italian PISA team at INVALSI started to disseminate PISA results across schools from North to South of Italy in collaboration with several organisations. As many monitoring projects reported, the number of financial education activities in schools increased across all school ages. During seminars and workshops, INVALSI not only showed strengths and weaknesses based on the results, but also the role of contextual factors as well as the relation of financial literacy with reading and mathematics as cues to work on. On the other hand, scholars published several articles targeted to address factors and mechanisms at the school level as well as at the students' level related to the Italian results, also in comparison with other countries.

PISA 2015 results gave hope, because Italy showed a significant improvement. More importantly, in 2017 the Italian Government appointed the "Committee for Planning and Coordination of Financial Education Activities". Experts from finance and economic institutions as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies are members of the Committee.

The most important action that the Committee took was the release of the National strategy for financial education and the accompanying Operational plan to achieve the objectives specified in the strategy. The National strategy has considered financial education activities for specific target groups: children, young people, adults and at-risk groups such as the elderly, women and low-income people. For youngsters, results from PISA are the most important benchmark for financial education programmes evaluation. 2018 set the start for important activities such as the Month of Financial Education, and the Economic and Finance Olympic Games for upper secondary students. Other important results were the publication of the second wave of the census on financial education activities, the publication of the guidelines for the development of financial literacy for young people, adults and for women. The guidelines for the development of financial literacy for youngsters – based on the PISA framework - from primary schools to secondary schools offer a very useful tool for designing and implementing financial education activities for targeted competencies and the relative assessment.

Session 3. Integration of financial education into the school curriculum

In session 3 speakers shared their countries experience in introducing financial education in the core curricula, including details on coordination mechanisms with educational authorities, involvement of the private and not-for-profit stakeholders, and the role of core competencies and learning frameworks. **Mr. Nicusor Ruiu** (Director of the Museum and Financial education, National Bank of Romania) moderated the discussion.

Firstly, **Ms. Araks Manucharyan** (Expert in Financial Education, Central Bank of Armenia, CBA) informed that the CBA started financial education for children and young people in 2014, and in 2018 financial education was introduced in Armenian schools, thanks to close collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, municipalities and administration from the regions. Financial education is integrated as cross-curricular subject in the Armenian curriculum (in four subjects), for students from the second to eleventh grade. A very important part of the successful integration of financial education in the school curriculum is the teacher training, which the CBA is implementing in several modules for teachers of different subjects over the course of school holidays. **Ms. Manucharyan** also discussed a few examples of behavioural and cognitive biases contributing to or preventing the digital delivery of financial education: the Pygmalion effect, Golem effect, IKEA effect and the false dilemma effect. In online delivery environment, it is important that teachers are motivated and encouraged, but also to have ownership of the lessons and content they are creating and delivering. Finally, she provided three recommendations for policy makers when delivering financial education to children and young people: to choose the right channel for the specific target group, to use the EAST framework (Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely) to direct the audience to behavioural change, to provide the same information in different ways while keeping the consistency, but not being afraid of repetitions too.

Ms. Susana Cristina Narciso (Head of Market Monitoring and Financial Education Division) discussed how Portugal implemented financial education in the school curriculum, through a partnership between three financial supervisors and the Ministry of Education under the Portuguese National Plan for Financial Education. This project was implemented in a few key steps: firstly, the development of the core competencies for financial education (2013) for kinder garden, primary and secondary school children. Starting with 2014, the teacher training began and evolved to a training the trainers model by 2018. Teachers participating in the teacher training received professional credits, following a 25 hrs of classroom training and teachers' assessment based on a project to implement financial education in the school. In the academic year 2018/2019 financial education became compulsory in some school years as part of Education for Citizenship. The following very important step was the development of the financial education workbooks, which are available for free download from the NSFE website and each workbook targets one stage of education, following the core competencies already developed in 2013. Formal financial education curriculum is complemented by additional activities, such as the "Todos Contam" financial education competition (since 2012) which awards prizes both to students and teachers. Finally, **Ms. Narciso** mentioned the key factors that contributed to successful implementation of financial education in schools in Portugal: a strong involvement of the Ministry of Education; a long term commitment; a comprehensive approach which includes definition of core competencies, training the teachers, development of pedagogical materials, awareness raising campaigns and finally the evaluation and reassessment of the programmes to ensure their effectiveness.

Presenting the experience of Bulgaria, Ms. **Evgeniya Kostadinova** (Director Preschool and School Education Contents Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria) explained how the education system in Bulgaria is structured. Competencies concerning financial literacy are imbedded in several subjects in the Bulgarian curriculum, such as technology and entrepreneurship, mathematics, geography and economics and civic education, across knowledge, skills and competencies which are to be acquired during the primary education, lower secondary education and during the secondary education stage. Ms. **Kostadinova** highlighted the importance of financial literacy assessments. In Bulgaria this is done through curricular activities (state tests and exams) but also through extracurricular activities (national financial literacy competition and national Olympiad). In terms of challenges and opportunities for financial education in schools in Bulgaria, Ms. **Kostadinova** highlighted the importance to support the teachers through re-skill and upskill in terms of digital competencies, rethinking methods used and competence-based teaching and learning; secondly the available resources are not focused enough on financial education and are also not interactive and engaging enough. She concluded with a reminder that implementing financial education in school curricula is crucial but not enough and that financial literacy means not just having the right skills, but demonstrating effective behaviours.

Mr. Eugen Stoica (Head of curriculum monitoring and school inspection service, Ministry of Education, Romania) finally presented the experience of Romania. In Romania, financial education is included in the pre-university level through the formal curricular education offered by teachers and in a complementary way through the non-formal extracurricular education offered by educational or other institutions and organisations independently or in partnership.

In terms of the formal curriculum, financial education is integrated in several compulsory courses for high schools and vocational schools and starting in 2020, in a new curricular subject for lower secondary schools, namely economic and financial education. This subject includes several elements, such as general skills, specific skills and examples of learning activities and touches upon several content elements, such as citizenship, the economy, money and budget and consumer relationship with banking and financial institutions. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the transition from teaching in the classroom to the virtual classroom has been facilitated by the launch of an online portal (digital.educred.ro) a space created for all teachers involved in distance learning activities. Resources provided through this website include information about platforms for managing classes, learning resources, educational resources in digital format, resources for learning activities, online tools for learning platforms and communication tools. In addition to compulsory courses there are several optional financial education courses in the national curriculum of Romania, for the lower secondary schools, the upper secondary education and for primary schools which include each several different content elements related to personal finance.

Finally, financial education in Romanian schools may also be provided through non-formal and extracurricular education, where activities are developed in partnership with several other organisations and national financial regulatory authorities (such as the National Bank and the Romanian Financial Supervisory Authority). **Mr. Stoica** highlighted that teacher training programmes at national level is a key issue for financial education delivery in Romanian schools.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGIES TO DELIVER FINANCIAL EDUCATION
Session 4. Digital delivery of financial education in and out of schools

Session 4, moderated by **Mr. Olaf Simonse** (Head of the Money Wise Platform, Ministry of Finance, Netherlands) focused on effective ways to use technology to deliver financial education to young people in and out of school settings. Digital delivery channels include a variety of tools, ranging from web portals and videos to online games, mobile apps and other mobile resources. They bring a series of advantages both for the users as well as for policy makers, such as easy access and flexibility, potentially higher reach and lower costs. Digital tools are particularly appealing to younger audiences.

Firstly, **Professor Kristof de Witte** (KU Leuven, Faculty of Economics and Business, Campus Leuven) provided a few examples of digital financial education course materials tested through randomised control trials in Flanders. A first tool, an online escape room was designed to specifically deal with classroom heterogeneity. The 'escape room' is a computerised serious game consisting of four lectures of 50 minutes each on the topic 'means of payment'. In the escape room, students need to crack a safe in a bank by finding codes and solving financial literacy questions. This format was used in order to create an interactive environment that directed to a clear goal and provided immediate feedback to students. Apart from the practical implementations, so called serious games are found to be more effective in terms of learning and retention as compared to the conventional instructional methods. During the lectures, students are made familiar with different means of payment, how to use them and the risks and costs involved. This topic is part of one of the four content areas of the PISA financial literacy assessment, 'money and transactions'. Students can work individually or together in pairs and have to solve several questions on the topic. To solve these questions, the serious game includes additional course materials. The material is divided into three modules and students are able to start the next module only when they correctly answered all questions of the previous module. If students answer incorrectly, they are requested to revise the information once more in order to find the correct solution. To guarantee a uniform implementation in all schools, the teachers receive clear instructions that explain the material as a deliberately autonomous task for students in which the teacher should intervene as little as possible. In addition, the material leads students independently through the different steps, making a teacher intervention uncalled for. The teachers are only requested to give a short introduction to the entire class explaining the purpose of the course and instructions on how to navigate through the material. The game was tested and **Prof. De Witte** provided some of the key insights from the research: the programme results to be highly effective and students from disadvantaged socio economic backgrounds benefit most from the programme.

The effectiveness of a digital homework assignment was also studied from the point of view of parental involvement. The homework was structured as an online digital quiz, with several visual aids and specific roles for parents. The study suggested that parental involvement helped disadvantaged students and increased the communication at home around money matters. The urban trail was another tool used to study the effect of parents tutoring on students learning. The results of the study indicated that the tool was highly effective, and that the behaviour impact was higher when the students did the urban trail with parental tutoring.

Mr. Martin Taborsky (Head of Financial Literacy Unit, Central Bank of Austria, CBA) shared experience in delivering financial education to young people digitally during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent data showed that 15% of children in homes where the parents have low education, do not have a computer at home, which posed important challenges in reaching these children. Mobile phones were also considered. In light of such limitations, the CBA tried to adapt its financial education programmes to extend its reach to children and young people during the pandemic. Mr. Taborsky shared how the CBA transformed offline initiatives such as Euro-active, Euro-logo online challenge, Meins (a budgeting tool) for delivery online using Webex and Slido enabling students to participate in surveys, or using smartphones through which students could answer real life questions, solve problem oriented tasks and share experiences. Mr. Taborsky highlighted some challenges of transforming content for digital use, stemming from changes related to school attendance or at-home schooling and technical equipment of students/schools. One key recommendation in transforming face to face teaching into online sessions is the implementation of the programmes with the support of one extra person for technical support.

Ms. Izabella Tebeli (Head of Department, Deputy State Secretariat for Financial Policy Affairs, Ministry of Finance Hungary) presented the framework for financial education for children in Hungary according to a 7-year strategy and yearly action plans. Relevant textbooks and workbooks have been developed and delivered to young people free of charge, with online versions available too, while more than 3000 teachers have been participating in teacher training on financial literacy since 2015 (officially accredited, following 30-hour financial and economic training courses for secondary and primary school teachers). Financial education is delivered to students through a variety of online and offline initiatives. For example, in vocational training schools financial education and skills are a mandatory subject. Students are also reached through printed and online magazines, mobile applications (financial hero training), online quizzes and games (the Big Financial Quiz Online, the stock market race, OK Moneytainment Box, the FinLitStory), financial education awareness campaigns (Global Money Week) or short video clips shared online.

Finally **Mr. Patrick Hommel** (Director financial education, Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier, CSSF) shared some examples of digital tools to promote financial education and literacy in Luxembourg. The CSSF has launched in Luxembourg a financial education initiative under the name of *lëtzfin*. Some of the digital tools developed as part of the *lëtzfin* programme are: an information portal with essential information on money matters for everyone, credit simulators, budget calculator and explanatory tutorials, customised according to users age (young person, adult or senior); a YouTube channel with videos on over-indebtedness and budgeting; the Financial game of life targeting an audience of over 16-year olds, simulating adults' financial lives (a dynamic educational game in the form of a chatbot, developed by students at the Luxembourg tech school); the junior App Financial game of life (for young people under the age of 16, with simplified content); the *lëtzfin* budgeting App; the lëtzfin pocket money App (which actively involves parents, who assume the role of banks and guide the pupils in their financial choices).

Session 5. Teacher training development and delivery: leveraging technology and peer learning

Teacher training is a key component of successful financial education programmes. Effective training should be designed to empower teachers to feel confident and well prepared to teach financial education but also to manage their own finances. Session 5, moderated by **Mr. Anton Comanescu** (Senior Expert, National Bank of Romania), examined a few examples of designing and delivering teacher training, with a specific focus on ways to effectively leverage technology. To kick-start the discussion, **Mr. Comanescu** shared when working on teacher training, such as access and skills to use technology or the lack of financial knowledge of the teachers.

Mr. Carlos Medina (Director, National Institute of Educational Technology and Teacher Training, Ministry of Education, Spain) spoke about the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the digitalisation of the education system and to teachers in particular. The Institute is responsible for educational technology, training and collaboration, and educational resources. A portal (called "aprendo en casa") was created by the Institute to centralise all the digital resources for teachers, and attracted about 23 million visits each day. At the same time, a teacher training course drawing on a dedicated digital competence framework, helped not only to boost the competencies of teachers, but also to increase the training offer for students. The Institute also created short teacher training activities with specific tips with regards to assessment, communication with students or with families. A national programme was also developed to support students who were not digitally connected with content delivery via TV and to provide digital devices to those in need.

Children and youth are one of the priority groups of the National Strategy for Financial Education in Georgia. **Ms. Tinatin Gujabidze** (Specialist, National Bank of Georgia, Georgia) focused on the collaboration of the NBG with the Ministry of Education to integrate financial education in both formal and informal education. In the framework of the *SchoolBank* project (implemented in a number of public and private schools in capital city and regions), five teacher trainings were held between 2017 and 2019. The teacher trainings are a 2-day intensive training on all topics covered by the project, including active learning methods. The trainings were evaluated through pre and post surveys and equipped the participants with essential educational materials. NBG also implemented follow up lesson monitoring, remaining in touch with the teachers and supporting them to adopt the materials according to teachers' recommendations**. Ms. Gujabidze** mentioned that a new teacher training module and additional learning materials for 7th grade were developed for the newly introduced financial education topics, included in the mandatory school curriculum under the civic education subject. More than 300 teachers were so far trained including online. The NBG faced numerous challenges, including; the generally low level of financial literacy of teachers and in particular the low level of understanding of new topics; the difficulty of adapting the *Schoolbank* project to digital channels; its limited reach due to the lack of multiplies; and the challenges of starting financial literacy topics in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Ms. **Olena Trygub** (Project Manager, Financial Literacy Development, National Bank of Ukraine) shared key difficulties and challenges in engaging school teachers in Ukraine. She highlighted, in particular, the high dependency of schools on the Ministry of Science and Education, the lack of teacher motivation and of information about possibilities for teaching and learning financial literacy at school, as well as generally low digital literacy levels of teachers. Additional difficulties stem from the limited availability of teaching materials and limited opportunities for using gadgets. To overcome these challenges, the NBU has decided to develop a strong network of financial literacy trainers for teacher training development and delivery. To develop this network the NBU used four, so called "ITEM" principles that apply to teacher training: Inform, Train, Equip and Motivate. To inform the teachers, NBU used different channels, such as social media, emails websites and information campaigns, as well as collaboration with local branches of the Ministry of Education. In terms of training, these were mostly provided offline in pre-COVID-19 times. However, due to the pandemic the courses have transitioned to online delivery on MOOC platforms with obligatory certification; soap operas are also used. After completing the courses, teachers receive certifications. The NBU also prepared learning material tools for the teachers, such as books, educational videos, games, website and information campaigns. Finally, to motivate teachers, the NBU organises events, provides certificates after each course, develops competitions for schools, involving teachers and children and youth, as well as promotes cooperation with parents.

Ms. **Melissa Machado de Moraes** (Division head, financial education, Central Bank of Brazil) presented the programme *Aprender Valor*, developed by the Bank which aims to support Departments of Education and public schools in implementing financial education in public elementary and middle schools (from 1st to 9th grade ages 6 to 15, for a total of about 21 million students). The programme delivery is based on the principle of double commitment, meaning that schools will have access to the entire programme and teachers are reached only if both the respective Department of Education and the school adhere to the programme. The approach is teacher centric, aiming to help the teachers to be confident and equipped with what they need to teach financial education. Financial education is delivered as cross curricular subject and developing supporting materials for the teachers proved to be an essential and challenging step. *Aprender Valor* provides an on line platform for teachers offering financial education content for classroom use embedded within core curricular subjects, especially Mathematics and Portuguese. The online platform also offers: teacher training and training for the schools' management teams (also available for Department of Education personnel); educational resources (8h - 12h school projects for 1st to 9th grades) with activities, routines, and lesson plans; student learning assessments and impact evaluations; as well as management tools, including protocols for application, participant registration and monitoring of key indicators of programme development. The teacher training is divided into 3 modules, and can be considered as a double intervention as it is also providing financial education that teachers can apply in their own lives. Provision of specific training to the management teams is also part of the programme. In terms of challenges, **Ms. Machado** mentioned a few as well: learning to navigate the public education sector through an articulated expansion strategy, the need to compete for teachers' time and attention, the fact that the school projects were originally designed for in-class application and needed to adapt to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital divide or the lack in technology (internet, equipment) for teachers, students and schools alike.

Session 6. Financial education integration into university, vocational and youth career support programmes

For young people, transitioning from education to employment and receiving a first pay check, are important life events, which need to be leveraged by programmes integrating youth career/employment support with access to basic financial services and financial education. Speakers in session six presented their country experiences with financial education delivery to university students, or programmes that have successfully integrated elements of financial education into youth employment or youth entrepreneurship programmes. **Mr. Valentin Lazea** (Chief economist, National Bank of Romania) moderated the discussion.

Ms. Louisa Quittman (Director, Financial Security/Education, US Treasury) started her presentation with a quick overview of the recently released US National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE). The NSFE, in particular, emphasises the importance of building young people's executive functions, their financial habits, knowledge and decision making skills. The presentation also discussed a recent publication providing recommendations on Best Practices for Higher Education Institutions on financial education, including: provision of clear, timely, and customised information to inform student borrowing; effective engagement students in financial education; targeting different student populations; communicating the importance of graduation on repayment of student loans; preparing students to meet financial obligations upon graduation. Financial education in the US is also focused on student debt and the cost of higher education, which underlined the importance for colleges to make related information in a clear, understandable, consistent and comparable fashion, including also relevant aspects of students' borrowing. Employment programmes can improve financial capabilities and according to one such example, young people are primed to learn more about money management when they receive their first pay check, as this is a just-in-time opportunity to make a timely and informed choice about managing their new income. This could be done by, for example, opening a first bank account and starting to learn about financial education issues. Some key learnings from the US highlighted by **Ms. Quittman** include: the relevance of partnerships across sectors can be helpful in promoting financial capability, education and inclusion for both youth and post-secondary students; the importance to respond to specific needs of students/youth to empower them to make informed decisions and provide targeted information, products, and services to meet their current needs. Digital tools can help reach more people efficiently, but one-on-one guidance is considered the most powerful tool to enhance financial literacy of young people.

Ms. Nangse Dema (Head of financial education and financial inclusion, Royal Monetary Authority, Bhutan) mentioned that financial inclusion and literacy journey is very new for Bhutan, staring in 2017. Bhutan has adopted both a National strategy for financial inclusion and one for financial education, which are in the implementation phase. There is a strong focus on youth in both strategies, with emphasis on career building and entrepreneurial development. Financial education is implemented in the national curriculum, however it is also complemented through various field experiences and practical learning. Financial literacy is linked and often provided alongside entrepreneurship education and support.

Ms. Yousra Hamed (Technical Expert, Social Finance Programme, Enterprises Department, ILO) presented the example of a project on financial education for youth run with and through the Tunisian national employment services (ANETI). Tunisia is grappling with high-youth unemployment, and these young people are often also university graduates. The objective of the programme is to help ANETI offer tailor made and innovative support on soft skills (including financial education) and entrepreneurship to strengthen youth employability. The intervention is a mix between training and tutoring, where the job seeker meets first with an adviser who is trained in financial education and able to spot when a job seeker needs financial education training. The financial education trainings start with collective meetings in which the programme is presented, followed by 26 hours of collective financial education training, and subsequent group meetings to exchange on practical questions, alongside inputs and support from the tutors. At the end of the training, each participant will have an individual action plan that will guide them towards finding employment.

Mr. Mihai Curiman (Head of division financial education) presented together with **Mr. Bogdan Buzuriu** (Chief officer of financial education Timis office, National Bank of Romania) the experience of the National Bank of Romania. **Mr. Curiman** presented two programmes: *Academica NBR* addressed to university teachers and *Economic Hub* targeting entrepreneurs and benefiting from collaboration with the Romanian Chamber of Commerce. The projects are implemented through debates and public conferences on current issues in the financial banking field. Financial education is also delivered through the NBR territorial network, consisting of 6 local branches and 13 agencies. NBR representatives are reaching schools across the country to provide financial education programmes, including on topics such as the functions of the central bank, the history of money, basic economic and financial notions. Students also often visit the NBR branches and get involved in financial education awareness campaigns. The NBR has developed an online platform in order to support school teachers and students with financial education materials.

Next Steps & Closing remarks

Ms. **Flore-Anne Messy** (Head of Insurance, Private Pensions and Financial Markets, OECD) provided concluding remarks and presented the next steps of the technical assistance project. Ms. Messy reminded the participants of the main deliverables and activities implemented in 2020, including a report on the financial literacy survey results in the region, mapping documents, actions plans. In 2021, the team will research and analyse the importance of culture and social norms on financial literacy and financial education outcomes. Knowledge sharing will continue, as well as targeted country technical assistance with specific work focusing on key socio-demographic groups. Ms. Messy invited the project countries to contribute with comments and ideas on the next steps and suggested substantive areas of co-operation.

To conclude, Ms. Messy thanked the speakers and all the participants for their active contributions and for sharing their experiences. She thanked the Romanian co-hosts for the excellent collaboration and the colleagues from the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands for their contributions and support of the technical assistance project.

Finally, she emphasised the importance of providing financial education to young people as they are more vulnerable today than the older generations. It is the role of policy makers to support the young generation, and to achieve this, coordination amongst different stakeholders is essential. The work on financial education should continue to be based on evidence and on financial competencies frameworks, alongside continued monitoring and programme evaluation.

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