

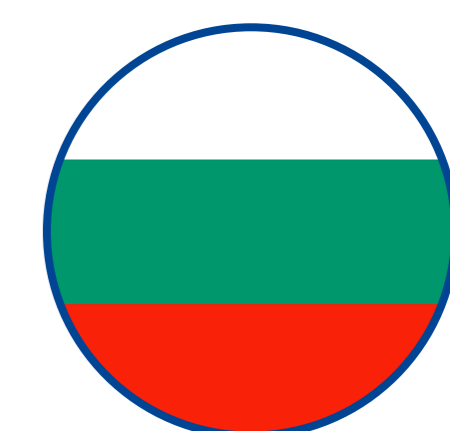


CONFERENCE ON THE EVALUATION OF EU COHESION POLICY

POLICY LEARNING FOR COHESION AND GROWTH

BRUSSELS, 12 FEBRUARY 2026

EVALUATION OF THE REACT EU SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT 'EQUAL ACCESS TO SCHOOL EDUCATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS'



BULGARIA

Executive Agency "Programme Education"

FUNDS COVERED ESF

PROGRAMMING PERIOD

► 2014-2020

PROGRAMME COVERED

► Science and Education for Smart Growth

THEMATIC SCOPE

► Fostering crisis repair and resilience

TYPE OF EVALUATION

► Impact

YEAR OF COMPLETION

► 2025

MAIN OBJECTIVES



To evaluate the project's success in achieving its objectives within this challenging context. Additionally, it explores lessons learned beyond the project's immediate goals, offering insights for improving educational programming in Bulgaria and enhancing the Bulgarian education system's resilience in future crises.

METHODOLOGY USED



Realist evaluation (theory-based approach)

DATA SOURCES



Qualitative data including national and international data, analysis also incorporated perspectives from sub-groups, including Roma communities.

MAIN FINDINGS



- **Relevance:** Activities under the programme responded to clear needs and priorities within Bulgaria's school system, such as digital access and skills, and parental engagement, and were adapted in line with the evolving crisis.

- **Effectiveness:** Activities successfully increased access to digital devices in Bulgarian schools, but a focus on basic digital skills limited the impact on teaching and learning.
- **Efficiency:** Despite the cost of purchasing devices and delivering training, providing equal access to digital tools and skills provided considerable societal value in a context where equity is a major challenge.
- **Coherence:** Activities were cohesive, coordinated and aligned to national and European education and skills strategies.
- **EU added value:** The project provided impactful crisis response measures at a scale which would not have been feasible without REACT-EU funding.
- **Sustainability:** Stakeholders largely agreed that the activities improved the school system's preparedness for future crises; however, a more system-based approach could also have enhanced digital education for the longer term.

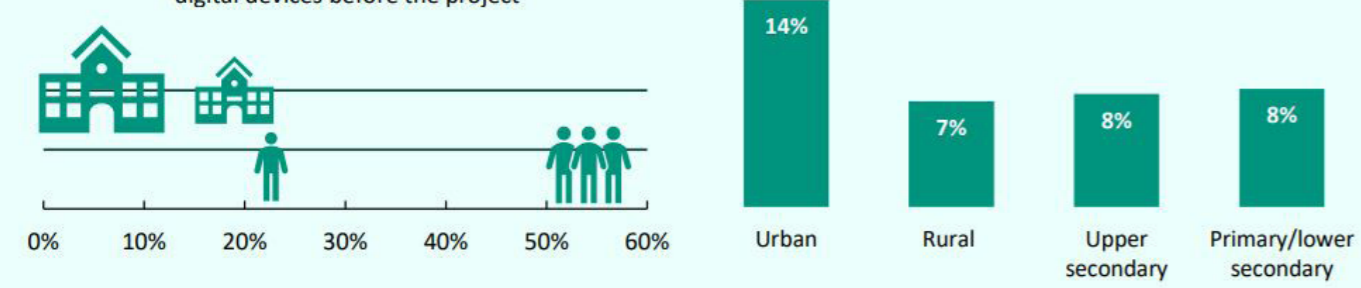
CONCLUSIONS



- Integrating measures promoting high quality digital education for all students to increase the potential impact on learning outcomes
- Developing advanced digital skills among teachers and students
- Strengthen efforts to engage parents in students' distance learning by expanding the support offered by educational mediators and providing them with adequate training
- Promote systems-based approach to digital education policy, even in times of crisis, by addressing needs across the digital ecosystem
- Better focus monitoring efforts on learning and improvement, going beyond compliance requirements to help stakeholders identify ongoing needs and shared lessons for current and future digital education projects

Key data

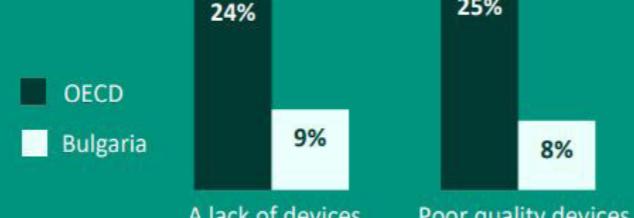
The project was highly relevant: improving equal access to digital devices and skills were key needs



The project successfully addressed gaps in access to digital devices within schools

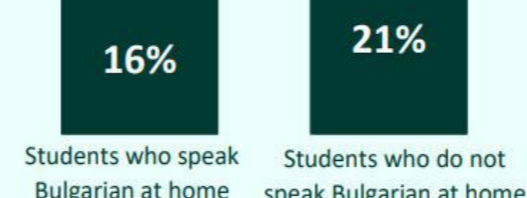
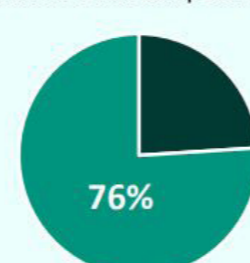
Nearly all schools received devices through the project, based on their own identification of students' needs. By 2022, fewer principals in Bulgaria reported problems with digital access than on average across the OECD.

99%



Training improved many teachers' basic computer skills, but gaps remained in some students' capacity to learn via digital devices

Most principals reported that the training increased teachers' basic computer skills. But many students reported having trouble using digital devices for learning, even after receiving training.



Almost all schools surveyed reported feeling better prepared to respond to future disruptions to in-person learning

90%



OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
SCIENCE AND EDUCATION
FOR SMART GROWTH

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LINK

<https://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/evaluations/BGE36.pdf>