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KEC



BRIEF SITUATION ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN KOSOVO

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Kosovo Foundation for Open Society's project



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Input for the Progress Report 2014



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Foreword

The Kosovo Foundation for Open Society has supported Kosovo's European integration process since 2006, when it founded the European Integration and Good Governance program. Since then, the Foundation has constantly supported the non-governmental organizations' engagement in the process with their analysis, monitoring of policy developments, public discussions, and advocacy processes. The support has resulted in numerous analyses through the years and acquisition of essential knowledge and expertise over the processes by Kosovo's civil society organizations. Hence, in joint effort with a number of organizations already active in certain segments of integration process, the Foundation initiated the project "Civil Society for the Progress Report 2014" through which it offered the organizations an opportunity to channel their contribution to the upcoming Progress Report and the current Stabilization and Association Process Dialogue through focused and well-informed analysis, built on their multi-year experience and engagement.

Each analysis produced within the project addresses a specific segment of the current dialogue between Kosovo and the European Union, informing about the current situation, from the civil society's point of view, followed by the recommendations on the needed improved performance.

We hope that this exercise has produced will be of value not only to Kosovo's civil society organizations for further amplification of their voice within the integration process, but also to the European Union and the Government of Republic of Kosovo towards building of a standing cooperation with this segment of the state-building process. Ultimately, we hope that as a result of all the stakeholders' engagement, Kosovo's European integration process will accelerate, overcoming all the political barriers that stand on our way to this destination.

Iliriana Kacaniku
European Integration and
Good Governance Program

Content

5	Executive summary
7	Methodology
9	Identification of issues / description of situation Secondary legislation
9	Preschool education
10	Pre-university education
11	Vocational Education and Training
12	Higher Education
15	Research and innovation
16	Cross-cutting issues
19	Recommendations

Executive summary

The progress of Kosovo accession in the European Union is monitored and evaluated on ongoing basis. Assessment is presented in the Progress Report which is published every year in October. Contributions to the Progress Report by the civil society are very important. Unfortunately, the contributions of Kosovo civil society to the Progress Report are insufficient.

Taking this into consideration the Kosovo Education Center - KEC, supported by Kosovo Foundation for Open Society - KFOS has developed this brief analysis of the problems that the education system in Kosovo is facing at all levels. Findings and recommendations from this study will be addressed to the European Commission Office in Kosovo, in the form of contributions to the Progress Report.

The analysis covers all levels of education and has the inclusion of communities in education system as a cross-cutting issue. This analysis focuses more on the data available on the work and activities undertaken in the past year; the analysis does not attempt to reflect the general situation in the field of education, but will emphasize activities, policies and priorities implemented over the last year (2013-2014).

In addition, the analysis is based on the findings and recommendations of the Progress Report from previous years, on the Action Plan for the negotiation of the Agreement of Stabilization - Association of Kosovo government. Even though the analysis has a comprehensive character, it is focused on key issues in relation to Kosovo process of European integration.

Methodology

The analysis is developed so that its findings and recommendations can be used as contributions to the Progress Report of the European Commission for Kosovo. The Analysis is done based on the following methodology: first an analysis of legislation was carried out / the situation of education system in Kosovo in all levels, then specific issues were identified to be covered with analysis and thirdly concrete recommendations are given for the identified issues.

Legislation analysis: possible advantages and disadvantages of this legislation, compliance of legislation with needs of the sector, covering of specific issues (cross-cutting issues);

Identification of issues / description of situation: short description of all levels of education, progress achieved and needs

Concrete recommendations: for every identified problem, concrete recommendations are given

References used to draft this analysis:

- Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo (No. 04/L-037)*
- Law on Pre-university Education in the Republic of Kosovo (No. 04/L-032)*
- Law on Preschool Education (No. 02/L-52)*
- Law on Adult Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo (No. 04/L-143)*
- Law on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo (Nr. 04/L-138)*
- Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo (Nr. 03/L-068)*
- Law on National Qualifications (Nr. 03/L-060)*
- Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam (Nr. 03/L-018)*
- Law on inspection of Education in Kosovo (Nr. 2004/37)*¹
- Progress Report of European Commission 2008 – 2013
- Various reports from various governmental and non-governmental agencies

¹ All laws and administrative instructions that regulate the field of education are found here <http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/#id=61>

Identification of issues / description of situation

During this phase of the analysis main issues and activities / interventions that were made during 2013/14 were identified. In the following there is a description of current situation and main challenges. While specific recommendations for each area will be presented in section 2 of this report.

1.1. Preschool education

Preschool Education in Kosovo, is the segment of education where little intervention has taken place over the past years, it can easily be concluded that it is the most neglected segment of the education sector.

Kosovo has the lowest enrolment rate of children in preschool education compared to other countries of Western Balkan. Currently preschool education in Kosovo is organized in specialized preschool institutions for children aged from birth – 6 years old. The total number of children that attend 42 public specialized preschool institutions (kindergartens) in Kosovo is about 5398² (~ 3.5% of children from birth - 5years), whereas the number of teachers / educators is 511.

There is no information about the exact number of children in private Preschool Institutions. It is believed that there are about 2000 but this number is not verified because these institutions are not licensed.

Pre-primary level (age 5-6) is an optional preschool program which includes a short stay of 2-3 hours / day and aims to facilitating the enrollment in primary education for children who do not attend the specialized preschool institutions. Pre-primary program is offered in most of the primary schools in Kosovo, and it includes a relatively large number of children of this age, about 19.939³ children (~ 70%).

2 http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/Shenime_Statistikore_2013_14_Arsimi_Parauniversitarr.pdf

3 http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/Shenime_Statistikore_2013_14_Arsimi_Parauniversitarr.pdf

While the pre-primary level offered in primary schools is free, the cost of attending the public preschool institutions are divided between parents and municipalities with average monthly fee per child starting from 30 to 60 Euros. Whereas in private institutions fees range from 80 to 150 Euros.

Main challenges:

- Low participation of children in preschool education compared to other countries in region
- Preschool education lacks a system for monitoring the quality from the Inspection offices or the MED,
- The lack of any form of systematic assessment of progress in preschool education.
- Ignoring the private institutions, most of them work illegally, while the licensed institutions are not supported.

1.2. Pre-university education

During 2013/2014 in all levels of pre-university education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) 382,809⁴ children have been included. Primary education (1-5) and lower secondary (6-9) consist of the compulsory education in Kosovo.

During this year in this segment of education system there was a continuation of implementation of activities that are related to the achievement of priorities in education, according to Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2011-2016).

Kosovo Curriculum Framework has been piloted in 10 schools, whereas preparations were carried out to include 114 other schools in piloting from September 2014. Along with piloting of Curriculum Framework, the process of developing school based syllabi has started.

Kosovo has started preparations to participate on the Program for International Student Assessment PISA. In addition, during this period national examination tests took place, the test of achievement and Matura exam.

4 http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/Shenime_Statistikore_2013_14_Arsimi_Parauniversitarr.pdf

Teacher professional development has continued. Various training programs were offered for school directors.

The government has approved the “Protocol for prevention and referral of violence in pre-university institutions of education” which obliges schools and other institutions to take measures for prevention and referral of violence. In cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and line ministries the strategy for safety in schools is being developed.

Main challenges:

- The large number of students in classes, especially in upper secondary education (gymnasium) in urban areas, where the number of students per class is sometimes over 40.
- Limited capacity of the Office of inspection as well as the MEDs for monitoring and evaluation
- Limited capacity of MEDs to exercise the legal authorization given with the decentralization of education
- Insufficient capacity of MEST and MED to properly administer national tests, consequently, national tests this year have been associated with many irregularities.
- Serious problems in the process of teacher licensing.
- Implementation of documents dealing with school safety and violence prevention.

1.3. Vocational Education and Training

Law on Vocational Education and Training was approved in 2013 (Nr. 04/L-138)⁵. In early 2014 several Administrative Instruction were developed that derived from this law and the Law on Adult Education and Training. The Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education is established and the action plan of the agency is developed.

The strategy for improved inclusive professional practice has been developed as well as the strategy for career orientation.

Main challenges:

5 http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/Ligji_per_aftesimin_profesional_2013_alb.pdf

- Financial sustainability of Vocational Education and Training Institutions
- Unsatisfactory quality of skills gained in vocational education
- Strengthening the Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education to meet the needs and requirements
- Missing support for institutions that offer programs for adult education.
- Entering the program PIAAC - Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

1.4. Higher Education

The higher education sector in Kosovo has been characterized by intermittent reforming efforts with the goal to target the key challenges of increased attendance in higher education. Main developments in the sector of Higher Education have been characterized by a significant increase of the number of public higher education institutions in Kosovo in last three years. Today, higher education in Kosovo consists of 7 public universities and about 25 private higher education institutions (including colleges, institutes and higher vocational schools), providing over 400 academic programmes for about 120,000 students.

Despite that the Law on Education in Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo prescribes that the University of Mitrovica operates under the authority of the Municipality of Mitrovica North, this university continues to operate within the framework of Serbian education system.

All public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo, except for one (American University of Kosovo) follow the Bologna Process requirements.

The Government of Kosovo has issued decisions for establishing five new public universities in Prizren, Peja, Gjiilan, Gjakova and Mitrovica. These decisions were made without any previous planning that would include a proper feasibility analysis, and therefore they have been assessed as misuse of higher education for political purposes. The establishment of these public universities was done in circumstances of a lack of necessary financial means and lack of qualified academic staff. These institutions now

are facing basic challenges for finding qualified academic and administrative staff, while mismanagement often attributed to their leadership

The system of Higher Education in Kosovo is regulated by the Law on Higher Education, approved in 2011 and based on the Higher Education Strategy 2005-2015. In 2013, MEST sent to the Assembly for approval the revised law on higher education, but the Kosovo Assembly sent it back with the suggestion to provide opportunities for more substantial changes. It should be emphasized that the process of revising the Law on Higher Education has been criticized for lack of transparency, non-involvement of relevant actors and lack of proper public discussion. Many experts have called for amending the law on higher education to prevent political influence in academic and managerial autonomy of public universities, suggesting that these changes are followed with by revision of the statutes of public universities.

The budget for higher education remains quite small and insufficient for the implementation of necessary reforms. Expenditures in higher education constitute 2.85% of the total government costs, or 20.32% of overall expenditure for education sector. Public higher education in Kosovo is financed by the consolidated budget of Kosovo including the income generated by students' enrolment. The budget of Higher Education Strategy is not reflected in the Medium term Expenditure Framework and therefore there are gaps in financing objectives foreseen in this strategy.

Recently, the Government of Kosovo has made a decision to reduce the tuition fee by 50% for public universities. Such decision will have direct negative implications in the revenues of the University of Prishtina, i.e. it will hinder the normal functioning of the University of Prishtina and will harm the quality of studies offered.

During recent years, higher education has gone through a phase of an intensive growth in the number of students enrolled in universities. However, this has not been followed by a corresponding increase in financial means, investment in infrastructure or increasing the number of academic staff, thus causing serious problems in normal functioning and damaging the quality of studies offered for students. According to data of 2003/04 for 27,000 students in UP there were 861 professors and associates, whereas in the academic year 2010/11, for 44,000 students there were 1,023 professors and associates. Thus, while the number of students was increased for 60% in seven years, in the same period of time, academic staff has been increased for only 20%.

Another challenge is the lack of research or analyses of labour market needs in defining study programmes. Study programmes of public and private higher education institutions should reflect the needs of labour market and improve the employability of graduates, and also be in line with development priorities and employment strategies in place.

In terms of international cooperation, MEST aims to apply by the end of the year for a formal membership in the Bologna Process. In this regard, MEST has hosted a visit by representatives from the Bologna Secretariat. It is encouraging that higher education Institutions in Kosovo have benefited 11 projects from the EU TEMPUS program, of which 4 projects are for the University of Mitrovica North.

University of Prishtina remains the central institution in the higher education system in Kosovo. This university faces serious problems with limited budget options, external interference in its managerial and financial autonomy, poor quality of studies, limited application of modern teaching and assessment methods, lack of adequate literature, lack of libraries in faculties, inefficient functioning of administration, small number of academic staff, student representation. Another serious problem is the lack of correlation between teaching-learning aspect and scientific aspect which represents a key foundation for the functioning of a university.

Recently, the University of Prishtina has faced charges for serious violations of basic norms of academic integrity which not only severely damaged its already vulnerable reputation, but also created serious consequences in its normal functioning. These charges included the leaders of the university and a considerable part of the academic staff who had published articles of extremely poor quality in suspicious international scientific journals in order to promote themselves in higher academic calling. As a result, the University of Prishtina was engulfed by a wave of student protests which were supported by civil society activists and media representatives. The protesters demanded the resignation of the rector and after unswerving efforts their demands were granted, when the whole management of the University of Prishtina (rector and vice-rectors) together with half of the members of the Steering Council of the university offered their resignations. Currently, in the University of Prishtina an interim management has been put in place, while the main body that was supposed to address the issues of violation of academic integrity in UP, the Ethics Commission, still continues to be dysfunctional.

Participation of minority communities in Kosovo also presents a challenge with respect to access to higher education. With regards to participation of members of minority communities in Higher Education, Kosovo has reserved quotas for non-Albanian communities in the University of Prishtina for Turks, Bosnians and Egyptian (including assistance to cover some expenses during studies - such as placement in dormitories). The agreement on acceptance of university diplomas reached in the Belgrade/Prishtina dialogue in July 2011 is currently stalled and is not being implemented.

1.5. Research and innovation

Research and innovation continue to remain marginal areas in Kosovo. There is lack of even basic research and technological statistics. There is no functional system of research and innovation. Investment in science in Kosovo is small and insufficient, while still there is a lack of incentive policies for supporting scientific research.

There is a very small number of institutions in Kosovo that do scientific research. Research activities are sporadic, uncoordinated and based on individual initiatives, rather than institutional. Universities are primarily focused on teaching and have limited capacity to undertake research activities. The University of Prishtina as the central institution of higher education in Kosovo, is characterized as an environment where there is a lack of interest of academic staff to engage in research activities, and there is a lack of motivation to publish research papers in internationally recognized journals. In the other hand, the demand for scientific research from the industry is of a very low level and the cooperation between local and international research institutions and economic operators leaves much space for improvement.

The situation of scientific research in Kosovo is not promising. Research institutions face numerous challenges, to mention: lack of funding, inadequate capacity for research, very few centres for managing projects, insufficient and outdated collection of books and journals in university libraries, lack of courses on scientific research methods, lack of MA and PhD studies and programmes, lack of capacities for writing research projects and insufficient capacities to absorb international funds in research projects. Kosovo has gained only 4 projects within the European Union FP7 Program.

The legal and policy framework for Research and Development of Technology is provided

by the Law on Scientific Research Activity, as well as the National Research Program that offers a conceptual framework for increasing scientific capacities in Kosovo, by identifying scientific-research priorities. The strategy has foreseen the creation of a fund for scientific-research activities, which has been made available for researchers since 2010 and it has been used mainly to support small scientific projects, short term mobility and to publish scientific papers.

It remains a problem that the laws, strategies and the other documents can't be implemented because of the lack of financial means. With the Law on Scientific Research Activity it is foreseen that 0.7% of the total Kosovo budget is divided for scientific research, whereas in the Law on Budget this division of expenses for the implementation of the Law on Scientific Research Activities does not exist. According to NRP the budgetary demands for implementation of the Program for 2013 in total should have been €4,268,800.00, whereas for 2014 - e €5,393,953.69. On the other hand, the annual budget allocated for science is only €500,000.00.

The National Research Council, the most relevant policy making body in the field of research continues to be non-functional because the Kosovo Assembly for three years failed to appoint the members of the Council.

Lately the Kosovo Strategy for Innovation 2013-2020 has been approved. This strategy creates the needed infrastructure to link the scientific community with the industry and economy in functioning of increasing the employment and the economic development.

1.6. Cross-cutting issues

Kosovo has a Strategy for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians communities for the period 2009-2015. The strategy consists of 11 areas, while education is among the main areas. However, so far little progress has been seen because of problems such as: lack of budget, limited cooperation in local and central levels and insufficient coordination of all parties.

The education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians communities in Kosovo it is characterized by a rather low level of attendance in compulsory education, and even with a smaller number of attendance in secondary and higher education and with a considerable

number of dropouts, especially among girls⁶.

By comparing the data from the census and education statistics, we can conclude that the involvement of students age 6-14 in compulsory education by of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians communities is just over 80%, but this percentage is drastically decreased in the upper secondary level where only 20% of children from these communities (age 15-18) attend schooling.

A number of local and international non-governmental organizations have established Centres for Learning and support for children of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. These centres are developed with self-initiative of organizations and they offer additional classes for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children for pre-school and primary levels. They operate independently from the formal education system and are totally depended on donations, which puts their sustainability at risk.

In the same situation are children with special needs. Low level of awareness in the community causes for the children with special needs not to be integrated in the education system. The effort so far has been insufficient.

Main challenges:

- Economical factors including extreme poverty.
- Administrative obstacle in enrolling children, especially those returning from the region or from western countries.
- According to a study made by ECMI⁷ there is a significant need to train teachers on prejudice and discrimination because of a big number of reported cases of the negligent approach towards students of Rom, Ashkali, and Egyptians communities.
- The number of Rom, Ashkali, Egyptians community children that do not attend

6 Rrograek, raport monitorues për zbatimin e çështjes gjinore në strategjinë dhe planin e veprimit për integrimin e komuniteteve romë, ashkali dhe egjiptasë në republikën e kosovës (2009 - 2015) nëntor 2012. [Http://rrograek.Org/rrograek/pdf/raporti_monitorues_shqip.Pdf](http://rrograek.Org/rrograek/pdf/raporti_monitorues_shqip.Pdf)

7 Baseline Study- Delivery of Education to Roma Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Fushe Kosove/ Kosovo Polje municipality. ECMI - Kosovo October 2012

compulsory education is still too high despite the progress made in the last ten years, whereas participation in upper secondary education is concerning.

- A very small number of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities attend pre-primary education.
- Even though there is the quota for the students, the number of students from Rom, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is still very low.
- Currently, MASHT (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) manages a scholarship fund for Rom, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, but most of this fund is from external donors than from the government of Kosovo.

Recommendations

Preschool education

- Strengthening the mechanisms for quality monitoring in pre-school education
- Strengthening the mechanisms for progress evaluation in pre-school education
- Strengthening of the public-private partnership aiming at increased attendance
- Licensing and supporting private institution of pre-school education

Pre-university education

- Increasing capacities of the staff in inspection sector
- Acceleration of teacher licencing process
- Building human capacities for implementing the new curriculum
- Providing necessary teaching and learning materials for schools.
- Strengthening MEDs to exercise their duties
- Strengthening the division for standards, monitoring and evaluation to ensure reliability for national tests

Vocational Education and Training

- Strengthening the Agency Vocational Education and Adults Education to meet the needs and demands
- Meaningful improvement of practice and its relation with the labor market
- Supporting institutions that offer programs for adults education

Higher Education

- Increasing the budget for higher education in Kosovo to provide for the implementation of necessary reforms

- Ensuring the completion of standards of quality, including both infrastructure and academic development (increasing the number of academic staff)
- Determining a financing formula and a regulation for managing revenues for public higher education institutions which offers flexibility in utilizing financial means, removing the limitation for using the revenues, as well as raising the accountability.
- Creating special funds with the purpose of encouraging students to orient towards important strategic fields for Kosovo economic development, particularly in agriculture, engineering and medicine.
- Universities should operationalize the Ethics Commissions, and they should work correctly and professionally. Strengthen quality assurance component in all higher education institutions.
- To revise the criteria for the selection and advancement the academic staff
- Universities should create a common electronic archive of all PhD-s, and a list of scientific work publishing from their academic staff.
- Developing policies for the inclusion of marginalized groups and minority communities in higher education in accordance with the new Law. To establish an additional fund for including all minority communities in higher education (the fund for minority and the visiting teachers)
- To promote the decentralization of higher education institutions, in order to improve the quality and encourage scientific-research projects.

Research and innovation

- Invest in research capacity building through various programs, motivating researchers, development of appropriate physical infrastructure (laboratories, libraries and equipment) and sufficient funding to promote relevant scientific research.
- MEST is working on building administrative and research capacities to participate in the European Research Area. MEST should establish and

functionalize the System of National Contact Point for the EU Programme for Research and Innovation “Horizon 2020”. The System of National Contact Point should engage in mobilizing the scientific community in Kosovo to apply with research projects in EU funds.

- To review the implementation modalities for Science Fund that is managed by MEST. Develop a good information campaign for opportunities that are provided by the fund to support research projects. Also there should be a revision of application procedure for absorption of these funds and to provide adequate mechanisms for monitoring the way the research funds are spent.
- MEST should consolidate the mechanisms for effective use of fund of the National Research Programme that ensure transparency and accountability
- The investment in science and innovation should significantly increase. Sufficient funds should be allocated for effective implementation of the PKSH. Funds for the implementation of the National Program of Science should be reflected in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework as separate from the funds of the Central Administration program because this program was approved by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo for a period of 5 years.



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