

Country Context Report – Albania

Section 1: Legal situation

Collaboration among the parents' community and other social partners with the school is regulated by law: *a) Public educational institutions must collaborate with parents for realization of their mandate; b) The public school community, composed of students, teachers, and all other school staff, parents and other social partners, aim at the increase of the student's.*¹

According to the Normative Dispositions, parents have the right to ask the education institutions for ensuring normal education conditions, to contribute in the progress of the education process, to ask for information on the education programs, objectives, regulations and activities, to ask for information on their child's progress, to be elected in and elect the school board, to participate in the school/extraschool activities, to complain and propose to the school head, school staff or school board and to receive an answer no later than 30 days from the complaint submission.

The School Parents Council, the Class Parents Council and the Parents Associations are consultative structures. The Class Parents Council is created within 20 days from the school year start with the facilitation of the responsible teacher of the class. It is composed of 3-5 members and meets every two months. The School Parents Council is created within 30 days from the school start under the care of the school head. It is composed of 5-15 members and meets once in each semester, although even more often if needed.

The *Parent Council* collaborates with the school leadership to ensure the education progress, collaborates with the smaller Parent Councils, ensures a closer collaboration with the families of students, community, local government, clients and donors. The Council assists, advises and proposes efficient solutions for school democratization, moral, ethical and cultural values development. Representatives of the Council participate in the analysis of the Teachers' Council work.

Parents Associations can be created with the free initiative of the parents in the local level or in the national level. The education authorities support and encourage the parents

¹ Article 12 of Law No. 7952, date 21.06.1995 "About the Pre-University Education System" (Revised date 30.07.1998).

associations in their legal rights, allow them to use the school space for their activities, offer financial and material support, respect their right of information and access.

The *School Board* is a new structure introduced to the education system in Albania. The Board is supposed to be part of the school fund raising, decision making, influencing the education process. Given the misunderstandings and misconceptions on the duties of the Board, a new Guideline was adopted in 2007.² According the new Guideline, the Board is not established by the school head, but by the RED (Regional Education Directory). The Normative Dispozitions defined the role of the school head as a member and secretary of the Board, but according the new Guideline, the school head is not a member any more.

Section 2: Parental participation issues

Parental participation is not a well studied issue in Albania. A 2008 Study Report of the Centre for Democratic Education highlighted several achievements and unresolved issues of the parental involvement in Albania.

Among achievements in the area of parental involvement were mentioned: a) a generally satisfactory level of appreciation of schools and teachers' work from the parents' side; b) for both parents and teachers it is clear what the benefits of an extended participation are for children, parents and schools; c) teachers and moreover the school and RED managers are quite positive towards the experience of enhanced cooperation with parents through their boards and councils. School directors and RED are willing to include parents in the decisions that regard school personnel recruitment and dismissal; d) the readiness from parents and teachers to increase the level of their knowledge and skills as educators and for the mutual cooperation is at a satisfactory level.³

However, according to the study there are also weaknesses in the parental involvement regard. Parents' low level of awareness on their role and obligations as educators of their children, and the tendency to delegate everything to schools is one of them. One of the indicators is the limited participation of parents – school meetings which are attended from less than 50%. Also the quality of participation is low, meaning passivity instead of activism and being proactive. Another weakness is the poor education for teachers and school managers regarding communication and cooperation with parents. Also, there is visible weakness of parents regarding abilities to self-organize and represent themselves in school structures. This is expressed through the dominance of teachers in the parents' councils and that of the school directors in the boards. The study defines as a weakness also the lack of parents' representation in structures above school level (RED, local government, MoES), and visible weaknesses in the functioning and the coverage of parents' associations especially on national level.⁴

² Guideline No. 40, date 17.10.2007 "For establishment and functioning of the Board School."

³ Centre for Democratic Education. (2008). Situation of Parents Involvement in Education in Albania: Study Report. Supported by UNICEF. March 2008. p.42-43.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.43-44.