

# Country Context Report for KOSOVO

by

Dukagjin PUPOVCI

## 1. Extent of stakeholder participation in schools in your country

Following the Declaration of Independence from February 17, 2008, the Kosovo Authorities firmly committed themselves to the implementation of President Ahtisaari's Kosovo Final Status Settlement Plan. Since then, the provisions from the Plan have been embedded in the Kosovo Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo 2008), as well as in the national legislation. The Law on Education in Municipalities (Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo n.d.) promulgated in June 2008 devolves great deal of responsibilities for management of the education system from central to local level. This devolution of responsibilities is still ongoing, whereas the Government is in the process of reviewing education legislation in order to harmonize it with the Constitution.

The Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Kosovo (Law on Primary and Secondary Education 2002/19 n.d.) provides legal base for participation of stakeholders in school (chapter 5). It defines the role of the school director, Ministry of Education, municipal authorities, school councils and students' councils in school governance.

The Law on Vocational Education and Training (Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 02/L-42 2006) in Chapter 7 describes arrangements related to participation of stakeholders in decision-making. The Law on Pre-School Education (Law on Pre-School Education No. 02/L-52 2006) in article 10 sets forth basic provisions for stakeholder participation in decision making which need to be further elaborated by administrative instructions (bylaws). A Stocktaking Research (Pupovci & Hyseni, 2002) (Pupovci and Hyseni 2002) provides an overview of interim arrangements for stakeholder participation in school decision making in the period 1999-2001 (pp. 10-12).

### Government and Local Authorities

From 1974-1989 the education system in the former-Yugoslavia was decentralized, and many important decisions were made at the level of municipality and school. In the nineties further devolution of responsibilities to schools took place as a result of the necessity to ensure the functioning of the system in very difficult circumstances. Following the takeover of responsibilities by UNMIK in 1999, the education system became quite centralized. This policy was embedded in systemic laws approved later by the Kosovo Parliament.

According to new legal provisions, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible to develop national policies and standards in education, as well as to promote a non discriminatory education system, in which each person's right to education is respected and quality learning opportunities are available to all. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Law on Education in Municipalities, it is the responsibility of the Ministry "to promote parental and community participation in

educational activities, and appropriate forms of school-community partnerships at the local level”.

By Law, all management responsibilities, with exception of few, are devolved to municipalities and schools. But, in practice, the process is still ongoing and requires considerable capacity building activities to empower municipalities and schools exercise their responsibilities. Municipalities have full and exclusive powers, insofar as they concern the local interest, while respecting the standards set forth in applicable legislation with respect to the provisions of public pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including registration and licensing of educational institutions, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of education instructors and administrators.

In order to ensure the maximum transparency and objectivity, the Law reaffirms a committee based selection system of schools directors which brings together representatives of the municipality and the Ministry. The school directors are appointed by the municipality, following the recommendations of a selection committee.

The municipalities are responsible for allocating funds to schools in their territory and for planning and administering such funds in a cost-effective way. In the long term it is expected that the school director and school boards will be responsible for a major part of spending on the school. Many school directors feel they have serious difficulties in managing the school budget, because of bureaucratic procedures and the not completely implemented devolution of financial responsibilities.

### **School Director**

A central role of the school director is to organize and implement the curriculum, taking account of the legal requirement for teaching to be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual student. In addition to the national curriculum, the director is responsible for proposing the school-based curriculum. A director should keep the teachers informed of all relevant changes in either the national or school-based curriculum and make sure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered.

### **School Board**

In order to base school autonomy on a participatory system, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education (Law on Primary and Secondary Education 2002/19 n.d.) has introduced mandatory school boards for all schools in Kosovo. Created with the aim of increasing parental involvement and oversight, such boards were expected to become important pillars of the future school system. The school boards are made up of: three parent representatives, five teacher representatives, one pupil (in secondary schools only) and the school director as a non voting member. The school boards have power to co-opt additional representatives with no voting rights, taking account of the need to ensure that all communities with substantial numbers of pupils at the school, employers and representatives of the wider society are represented on the school board.

The school board has the right to receive and review regular reports on the management of the school and to express views on any matter relating to the school, or to primary and secondary education in the Municipality or in Kosovo as a whole. This includes being involved in writing the development plan for the school. However, the powers of the school board have important limits. Firstly, the Board works within the framework of the Law and the authority of the Ministry and the

Municipality. Secondly, it must respect the right of the Director and other professional staff to autonomy in how they perform their tasks and how they run the school from day to day.

The Board has important rights and responsibilities. By Law it has the right to:

- draft school rules for the approval of the Municipality;
- elect one parent and one teacher representative to take part in the appointment of the director and teachers to the school;
- decide on the allocation of funds contributed to the school by parents and others outside the public budget;
- decide on extra-curricular activities.

In addition the School Board is entitled to be consulted about:

- the physical development of the school;
- school-based curricular matters;
- responses by the Municipality to any policy or consultative documents relating to education in Kosovo;
- dates of local holidays.

### **Staff**

For a long time, the functioning of schools in Kosovo has been based on “corporate” responsibility of the staff for school performance. There are regular whole-staff meetings in schools where teachers discuss organizational and curriculum issues, but there are also lots of activities taking place in smaller groups consisting of subject teachers. The school directors are encouraged to delegate certain responsibilities to staff members, in order to develop corporate work practices. Typical responsibilities and tasks delegated to staff members are:

- Drawing up the timetable, allocating rooms/classes, ensuring supervision throughout the day;
- For each subject area, one teacher takes lead responsibility to keep up to date on curriculum and assessment and inform other teachers;
- Specialized teacher gives advice to the school, produces reports on special needs education at the school and liaises with parents;
- Extra-curricular activities.

### **Pupils’ Councils**

School Boards in all secondary schools must establish a Pupils’ Council, with at least one representative for every class, elected by secret ballot. Its function is to work towards the improvement of the learning environment, working conditions and welfare interests of pupils and to make representations on these matters to the Director and School Board. The Director should draw up a draft constitution for the Pupil Council, along with rules for nomination and election of class representatives and procedures for meetings. Once established, the Pupils’ Council should be permitted to make representations to the School Board on any aspect of its procedures.

## **Parents' Councils**

Pursuant to the Law on Primary and Secondary Education, Kosovo Parents' Committee for Education (KPCE) was established. The functions of the KPCE are to represent the interests of parents, make representation to the MEST on any aspect of primary or secondary education in Kosovo and be the main channel of communication and consultation between the Ministry and parents. One of the first recommendations of the KPCE was to establish parent councils in all primary and secondary schools in Kosovo.

## **2. Mapping existing initiatives seeking to improve stakeholder participation in schools**

### **Introduction**

Traditionally, people in the community such as the parents of children attending the school often make contributions to meet the costs of repairs, rebuilding and equipment for schools, or for extra activities such as school excursions or sports activities. These contributions are voluntary. However, it is evident that in the post-conflict period the contribution of the community to the school has significantly declined.

In the post-conflict period there were numerous aiming at increasing the role of stakeholders in school-decision making, three of them calling for special mention:

- School Development Planning
- Parent-School Partnership
- Professional Development of Education Leadership

### **School Development Planning**

With World Bank funding and technical advice, a system of decentralized financial administration and governance has been set up. This represented a substantial devolution of responsibility from the central Ministry down to municipalities and schools. Under the new system, schools enjoy increased administrative and financial autonomy. As a result, they are responsible for the planning and spending of their goods and services budgets, as well as for the development of some school based curricula. However, this does not always function in practice, and it could be said that the lines of authority are still being defined. It is assumed that the school budget will be based on a school development plan which sets out the aims and objectives of the school, but, in reality, the school budget is based on the number of students.

According to the Handbook on Municipal Education Governance (Handbook on Municipal Education Governance 2002) "a school development plan should set out the aims and objectives of the school within the context of the law and the official curriculum, identify any long-term needs such as buildings or major equipment, decide on priorities according to the resources available. The draft plan should set targets for education and administration in the school, including timetables for necessary improvements. These targets should be sufficiently high to challenge the

school, but not so high as to be out of reach. The plan should be reviewed annually as part of the process of ensuring continuous improvement in the work”.

The World Bank funded Education Participation Improvement Project (EPIP) (The WB Report No. 2557 2003) implemented in the period 2003-2006 intended to provide financial incentives to schools in order to motivate the school management to engage in activities that help improve access and attainment. In order to achieve this, the EPIP worked through expert advice and training in strengthening local planning and management capacities and strengthen the role of school boards (The WB Report No. ICR000343 Implementation Completion and Results Report on Education Participation Improvement Project 2007). A five day training program targeting leaders of the planning process was organized and followed by on-site consultancy offered by outreach officers in charge. (Hyseni 2003) (Pupovci 2003)

As municipalities receive a major part of the public budget allocated for education, the EPIP also focused on increasing their capacity to allocate and distribute operational funding in an efficient, timely and equitable manner. At the same time, the schools and their stakeholder communities, by involving local education authorities in their planning and implementation cycles, improved their capacity to follow their own budget entitlements at municipal level.

In course of 3 years more than a half of Kosovo’s primary and secondary schools benefited from this Project. In this Project, school development planning was one of the most important concepts, being disseminated to participating schools and municipalities. All participating school were requested to prepare three-year rolling school development plans reflecting the needs of the communities they serve, and not merely the internal needs of the school. Therefore, the active participation of school boards in the planning process was crucial.

Further to school development plan, the participating schools were requested to develop a project proposal in order to address priorities defined by the school development plan. The project proposals were initially evaluated at the level of the municipality, whereas final approval was given the School Grant Approval Board established by the Ministry of Education.

The second phase of EPIP with similar approach to development planning, but focusing on the improvement of the quality of education was implemented January 2008 through January 2009 involving additional 90 schools in the process. The new World Bank Project targeting the quality of provision is in the start up phase aiming to continue this type of support for schools in next three years. On the other hand, the school development planning initiative has become one of the most important strategic measures for development of pre-university in Kosovo in the period 2007-2017. The Strategy for Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007-2017 (Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007) describes the action in the following way:

“All pre-university education institutions in Kosovo must function based on their development plans drafted by these institutions, in cooperation with the community and local authorities. Clear procedures are determined for this purpose, which ensure broad participation in drafting of development plans and provide for monitoring of their implementation. The plan should serve as a basis for mid-term planning of education spending at the municipal and national level. Special attention should be paid to building of capacities for developmental planning at school, municipal, and regional level. This will be achieved through handbooks for developmental planning, through training programs, and by offering other kinds of professional assistance to

entities involved in this process. Relevant monitoring capacities at the municipality and regional level will also be built.”

The Government planned a budget of around 700,000 EUR in the period 2007-2012 in order to support the development, implementation and monitoring of school development plans.

### **Parent-School Partnership**

The Parent-School Partnership program was a civil society development initiative operated by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in nine countries of southeastern Europe between 1996 and 2006 (CRS 2006). Variouslly stated – depending on where it was being implemented – the program sought to promote civic engagement in education through the creation of parent-school councils. Among the intended results of this engagement were improved school quality; local empowerment for pro-active problem solving; encouraging, practicing and supporting the acceptance of diversity within and between societies; and supporting democratic processes. Schools were selected for participation in the PSP program based on initial interviews by CRS staff with the school director and other relevant school officials. Once a school was identified, a series of meetings were held with community members to explain the program and mobilize interested people. Once formed, the PSC began an intensive schedule of trainings and seminars. Using skills from the trainings, the councils quickly identified and prioritized their immediate needs.

One of the key aspects of the capacity building process for the PSCs was the small grants program. This was a series of three annual grants given in amounts of declining value to the councils based on project proposals for school improvement submitted to and approved by CRS. For their part, PSCs were required to secure a local, matching contribution, the minimum level of which increased as the value of CRS’ contribution declined. In reality, local contributions were often much higher than required; in many cases equaling a 100% match. CRS actively tried to foster networking and collaboration among the PSCs. This took a couple of different forms. Joint trainings and seminars were held for PSCs from the same or nearby communities.

### **Professional Development of Education Leadership**

The Handbook on Municipal Education Governance recognizes the need for training the school administrators to successfully handle all administrative and technical tasks. The municipal education directorates are responsible for carrying out needs analysis, whereas training should be provided either by the Ministry or by the municipalities. However, this structure is not yet operational. Instead the responsibility for training school administrators has been assumed by independent and not-for-profit training providers.

Kosovo Educator Development Project (KEDP) “Educator Development Program,” <http://www.edprogram.ca/english/kedp.htm>. developed an introductory 45-hour training program for school administrators to reflect the needs of school directors as identified in 2001. The Kosova Education Center (KEC) has developed a more comprehensive program (Hyseni et al. 2003) of 140 hours that has more depth and breadth than the Introductory Program. Both programs are open to school

administrators from primary and secondary schools in Kosovo, and attendance is valued in the appointment process. The comprehensive program contains modules related to stakeholder participation in school decision-making.

The National Strategy for Pre-University Education sets the following target: “until 2012 all managers of education institutions have got needed qualifications for quality leadership and management”. In order to achieve this target, the document sets the following measures:

- Analysis of development needs of human resources;
- Support and coordination of the development of programs for in-service training of education leaders and managers.
- Setting up of training mechanisms and capacities for quality governance, leadership and management.
- Capacity building for financial planning and management at the school level.

The Faculty of Education is in the process of developing a master level program for education administration.

### 3. Key issues affecting stakeholder participation

Lack of institutions and programs for capacity building of central administration, lack of independent providers of training services, low community awareness on their role in institutional leadership, lack of relevant information and analysis on education and training needs, as well as the overt centralization of the system are considered to be aspects of governance which had caused relative politicization of education, restriction of school autonomy, traditional leadership educational institutions and the insufficient inclusion of community in the school issues, which had in return caused difficulties in leadership and management of education institutions (in spite of relative achievements and in spite of a gradual process of improvement identified in the strengths part of the analysis).

This quality of leadership and management had resulted in significant errors in hiring of personnel, underutilization of human resources, and lack of monitoring, inspection and evaluation, as well as lack of reliable data on the system of education. All these, coupled with inadequate tracing of students after leaving an education institution seem to have resulted in unsatisfactory quality of education services.

From legal and policy perspective there are no obstacles to increasing participation of stakeholders in school decision-making. In contrary, there are incentives for school in terms of anticipated support for implementing the school development plans drafted with wide participation of stakeholders. On the other hand, the Pre-University Strategy explicitly encourages participation of stakeholders in decision making by means of the following strategic measure:

<b>Measure 4.1.6.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring full participation and transparency in the decision-making process</li> </ul>
<b>Description:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEST, municipalities, and education institutions will provide:</li> </ul>

- Broad participation of all involved parties in the decision-making process by making school governing bodies more functional;
- Full transparency in the decision-making process also through various events with participation of media and community;
- Closer cooperation and coordination with the community and with the sector of local and international civil society on issues of schooling;
- Teachers' field departments (for e.g. science department) are set up and empowered by assigning more responsibilities to chairs of these departments;
- There is support in setting up of teachers' associations in subjects or groups of subjects (Association of Science Teachers of Kosovo, Association of Teachers of Mother Tongues of Kosovo etc.);
- Committee of Parents of Education in Kosovo (CPEK) is made fully operational and its work is supported at all levels of the system.

Despite disruptions caused by the conflict much of the school-level administrative and organizational culture established during the socialist period remained largely intact. In terms of school governance, the inheritance was a highly politicized form of organization. The appointment of school directors, for example, is strongly influenced by party politics. Until recently the Ministry of Education appointed school director, and the municipalities were in charge with hiring teachers. This missing link between central and local level often created misunderstandings with the school community. With the responsibility for appointment of school directors devolved to municipalities there is some hope that the hiring process will be more consistent, though, not completely relieved from political influence. Traditionally, in rural areas the sense of ownership of the community towards the school is much stronger than in urban areas. Whereas in urban areas a school has always been perceived as the property of the Government, in a rural area a school "belongs" to the community.

Interaction between students and teachers also bears the imprint of the previous system. The teacher is the central feature of the classroom and functions as the giver of knowledge, of which the students are expected to be passive and obedient recipients. However, significant efforts have been made to introduce the concept of child-centered classrooms in Kosovo schools.

It is clear that participation in school management and governance was traditionally restricted to approved and tightly controlled structures. This orientation carried over into the relationship between the school and the community. The school director and teachers were considered unquestioned authorities in the realm of education, and communication with students and parents flowed only one way. This distance between community members and governing structures exists throughout society and has been slow to change. Civil society and volunteerism are still largely foreign concepts, understood and practiced only by the few who have participated in newly-formed groups.

#### **4. Role of school directors in participation**

One of the first tasks of a school director is to begin consultations on drafting a school development plan. The draft plan should be discussed with parents, teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, representatives of the local community and particularly the School Board. Once approved, the Director should regularly refer to the development plan to ensure it is being achieved and recommend corrective action in the event of any shortfall in meeting the aims, objectives and targets.

The Director of the school is secretary of the School Board and is responsible for administering its affairs, including drafting the agenda in consultation with the chair, giving notice of meetings, taking minutes, conducting correspondence and preserving the minutes and reports of the Board. The Director reports to the Board on the activities and finances of the school and has the right to propose resolutions and contribute to debate, but not to vote.

In relation to parents, the Director is responsible to deal with their complaints related to the quality of teaching or facilities of the school. Schools should take positive steps to encourage the participation of parents by holding regular meetings in the school; sending home regular reports on their children's progress; encouraging them to read to their children and help them with homework; making them welcome to visit the school or to help in the running of the school on a voluntary basis (for example, as classroom assistants); involving them in cases of indiscipline by their children and encouraging them to take a positive approach to school, including education for girls and for pupils with special educational needs.

#### **Bibliography**

Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. 2008. Available at:

[http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=130&Itemid=54](http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=130&Itemid=54).

CRS. 2006. "The CRS Parent-School Partnership Program - Evaluation Case Study."

Available at: [http://crs.org/education/pubs/Edu200702\\_e.pdf](http://crs.org/education/pubs/Edu200702_e.pdf).

Educator Development Program. Available at:

<http://www.edprogram.ca/english/kedp.htm> [accessed December 31, 2007].

Handbook on Municipal Education Governance. 2002. Available at: [http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id\\_kosovo.htm](http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/id_kosovo.htm).

Hyseni, H. 2003. *Handbook on School Development Planning (Albanian and Serbian)*. Prishtina: KEC.

Hyseni, H. et al. 2003. *Governance and Management in Education (Albanian)*. Prishtina: KEC.

- Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo. Available at:  
[http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=56](http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=56).
- Law on Pre-School Education No. 02/L-52. 2006. Available at: [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/RE2006\\_11\\_ALE02\\_L52.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/RE2006_11_ALE02_L52.pdf).
- Law on Primary and Secondary Education 2002/19. Available at:  
[http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/unmikgazette/02english/E2002regs/RE2002\\_19.pdf](http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/unmikgazette/02english/E2002regs/RE2002_19.pdf).
- Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 02/L-42. 2006. Available at:  
[http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/RE2006\\_24\\_ALE02\\_L42.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/RE2006_24_ALE02_L42.pdf).
- Pupovci, D. 2003. *Planning School Projects (Albanian and Serbian)*. Prishtina: KEC.
- Pupovci, D., and H. Hyseni. 2002. "Policy on Education for Democratic Citizenship and the Management of Diversity in Southeast Europe – Stocktaking Research Project, Country Report: Kosovo." Available at: [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/edu\\_pol\\_demo\\_cit-yug-kos-enl-t05.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/edu_pol_demo_cit-yug-kos-enl-t05.pdf).
- Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education in Kosovo. 2007.  
Available at: [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/StrategyDevelopPreUniversityEducationDraftStrategyEnglish.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/StrategyDevelopPreUniversityEducationDraftStrategyEnglish.pdf).
- The WB Report No. 2557. 2003. Washington D.C: World Bank. Available at:  
[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/05/13/000094946\\_03042604002460/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2003/05/13/000094946_03042604002460/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf).
- The WB Report No. ICR000343 Implementation Completion and Results Report on Education Participation Improvement Project. 2007. Available at: [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/07/20/000310607\\_20070720094748/Rendered/PDF/ICR0000343.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/07/20/000310607_20070720094748/Rendered/PDF/ICR0000343.pdf).