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**STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KOSOVO
2007-2017**

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

Immediately after the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) was established in 2002, the then leadership set up a mixed working group consisting of local and international experts and officials to start the process of drafting a short term strategic plan for development of the Kosovar education for years 2003 – 2007. This group completed its work in May 2003 and produced the first strategic plan for moving the Kosovar education from its emergency phase to consolidation phase and, at the same time, for retaining the unity of the system and foreseeing measures for its integration into relevant European education processes. Even though drafted by a narrow group of experts and officials of the MEST central administration and without the participation of other education practitioners or other relevant sectors of the society, this plan and other annual action plans inferred from it, provided for a relatively well planned development of the education system during the period of 2003 – 2004. This plan foresaw that efforts of education structures and administration focus in development of new curricula and in drafting new school textbooks for implementation of the same subject curricula.

However, in the beginning of 2005, after the evaluation of the curriculum development process by the London based Institute of Education, when the process of development of new curricula was coming to its end, when most of international support programs and projects of the post-war period were either closing or had advanced into their second phase, when the World Bank supported Education Participation Improvement Project was slowly coming to its end, and when another Strategic Plan for the development of Higher Education 2005 – 2015 was already in place, it became clear that the first strategic plan 2003 – 2007 could not provide any longer for a coherent development of the education system and, most importantly, it did not suffice to provide for the development of human resources and capacities both in teaching and in administration. The above mentioned developments in the education system had changed the broader professional framework and could not keep up with the swift changes in the broader social context either. On the other hand, the Process of Lisbon (on education reforms in Europe until 2010), the Copenhagen Declaration (on development of vocational education and training), together with regional and European integration processes, gained growing importance (compared with the emergency phase of rebuilding and consolidation of the system of education between 2002 and 2004) and exerted increased impact in developments in the sector.

As a consequence of these changes, a planning session on future developments in the education system with the participation of key leaders and experts of the MEST was held in Durrës of Albania in July 2005. They decided there on the main benchmarks of an important process for the development of a mid-term 2007 – 2016 strategic plan for the development of the pre-university education in Kosova. The main decisions from these planning sessions were the following:

- a) To establish the Council of Experts for the Pre-university Education for the coordination of efforts within the process of development and implementation of the Strategy;

- b) To build the process of development of the pre-university strategic plan on positive experience of the process of development of higher education strategic plan 2005 - 2015;
- c) To establish the support structure for the process (an implementing agency, a secretariat, consultancy) to ensure for a coherent and unimpeded development of the process and
- d) To draft a special strategy of communication both for the strategy process and for information of the opinion on education developments in Kosova in general.

Key elements of the process of this pre-university strategy rest on its outreach, inclusion, coherence, communication, and expertise. By outreach we imply extending the participation and ownership over the strategic planning process to all interested parties (including ethnic affiliation) whether benefiting from or providing education services. This has been achieved through various workshops organized in seven regional centers with the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the education system. Teachers, educators, administrators and education officials from all around Kosova participated and contributed actively in these workshops. On the other hand, outreach to various communities and other targets of education services is also achieved through other events and activities organized within the new communication approach of the strategy process. This has also allowed for more participation and ownership of involved parties not only over the strategic planning process, but also over the education system in general. These events have made for a unique and almost all-inclusive process which also made way for sustainability of measures and activities foreseen for the accomplishment of objectives set out in the strategy for the development of pre-university education in Kosova. In this context, aware that system of education is a unique system and inseparable, MEST has been very cautious in planning a coherent process of development of all levels of education by including experts from the strategic planning process for the higher education plan 2005 – 2015. The overall process of pre-university strategy has involved, in at least one of its many events and activities, the most relevant national and international experience and expertise available in Kosova, as well as all relevant sectors that in one way or another communicate with the education system and provision.

A series of workshops with wide participation across various education levels, sectors, aspects, and segments, started from identification of weaknesses and strengths, identified the fields to be addressed, defined the vision and mission of the strategy, set out strategic objectives of development and finally provided for concrete measures and actions which would best advance the education system in the important years to come for the Kosovar society. These measures were further made more operational in the detailed plan of action for the years 2007 – 2010 and in the comprehensive plan of action for years 2011 -2016.

The strategy focuses also in the right assessment of the directions in which the Kosovar education would best develop in the future and the capacity of the government and the society to support such development. It also takes in consideration the need to provide the necessary international support to allow for proper and coherent development – especially until the year 2011 when the Kosovar economy is expected to look up and the

society is expected to be in a better position to prioritize education and provide adequate support for development from its own resources.

In the end, for practical reasons, experts, officials and teachers who participated in drafting of this strategy decided to divide the information available and the education reality in seven issues – fields:

1. Managing capacities of the system
2. Quality and effectiveness
3. Inclusion and equity in education
4. In-service and pre-service teacher training
5. Infrastructure
6. Education and society and
7. Financial situation of education.

Several working groups and expertise available were divided and organized based on these issues – fields.

2. Pre-university education in Kosova – the current situation

2.1. The social and political context

In the year 2005, when drafting of this strategy began, Kosova was going through a very important phase of the post-war transition period.

Developments in the field of education were sketchily discussed in the introduction of this document, whereas in the political and economic sphere there were a series of developments in the last few years that essentially changed the overall social, political and economic context for the education sector in Kosova.

Firstly, a series of political elections had taken place in the local and national level, which were evaluated as very successful and democratic by the international community. Last elections in the row produced a relatively stable government with a functioning position and opposition structure. This governing structure managed to overcome serious challenges in spite of significant political and financial restrictions.

Secondly, there was the process of implementation of standards for Kosova – a series of conditions that the international community set for Kosova and its institutions on its road to and a condition for independence. In October 2005, the UN Secretary General special envoy for standards of Kosova, Mr. Kai Eide, gave an overall passing mark to the process of standards implementation, but, at the same time, asked for continued efforts in meeting the remaining requirements before any final settlement could be reached on the future political status of Kosova. A number of these standards directly involved the education

sector, whereas others less directly influenced the functioning of this sector. For illustration, the standard of sustainable returns involves the education sector since every returnee must be provided with the opportunity to educate one's children. The process of standards for Kosova continues to influence the education sector both (1) as a field for engagement on the part of education institutions and (2) as a priority for the government which does not allow for the attention of the society and institutions to focus on education..

The third important element during this period, which significantly influenced in setting the broader context of the education sector, was the process of privatization. The slowness and inefficiency of the process of privatization has only further deteriorated and deepened the economic crises in the post-war Kosova. This has worsened the material situation and the capacities of the society to properly invest in the education sector. Thus, the very clear idea and good intentions of the government to prioritize the education remained only a lip service done to education because of lack of public funds.

Consequently, even relatively high percentages (12.5 %) of government funds allocated for education from the consolidated budget were insufficient due to the low gross domestic production and government budget.

Another important aspect of this period was the transfer of authority from UNMIK administration to the provisional institutions of government of Kosova. Most of the powers in the field of education – with the exception of those referring to minority communities - were transferred to the MEST when it was established in 2002. However, this situation of partial authority to regulate the education of minorities did not help to address issues pertaining to education of the Serbian community. At a time when all other minorities were fully integrated in the Kosovar education system, members of the Serbian community, instigated and supported by Belgrade government through its so called Serbian Coordination Center, set up a parallel system of schooling to use for the purposes of the official Belgrade daily politics (as happened in March 2006 when teachers - members of the Serbian community - were ordered to give up their salaries from the Kosova budget to serve the needs of the Serbian government within the process negotiations taking place at that time in Vienna, Austria). This abuse of education for political purposes and ghettoization of education in Serbian language has caused for education services provided for children with instruction in Serbian to be of a lower quality compared to those offered to other children in Kosova, the region and wider in Europe. This parallel system, schooling of Serbian children and their integration in the Kosovar society will most probably remain one of the risks for the further development of the education system in Kosova; it will also be a challenge to be dealt with in the process of development and implementation of the strategy for pre-university education in Kosova.

Finally, as a result of relatively satisfactory implementation of standards and due to the non-sustainability of the status-quo, the awareness built in the international community for the need to start talks for the future status of Kosova. These talks somehow sidelined other issues in the Kosovar society, including the issue of more investment in education (in spite of the declared policy of three “E” priorities: Economy, Education and energy). However, the potential successful completion of the status talks may make way for better investments in education. This so because the settlement of the status issue allows for

faster economic development due to opened access to financial loans with various international institutions like the World Bank, the European Bank for Development etc. In that case, the declared government policy of three “E-s” would be of help for proper prioritization of education.

Regional integration processes in the framework of the Stability Pact or other bilateral or multilateral cooperation initiatives have also changed the context in which education institutions operate. These processes have also affected the mission of education to promote European values, cooperation, tolerance, entrepreneurship and other aspects that promote regional and wider European integration. More openness and readiness on the part of the European Union to facilitate access of countries from the Western Balkans in the framework of the stabilization and association process and the Pre-Accession Instruments (IPA) manifested in the conclusions of recent meetings of the European Commission and of other bodies of the European Union, as well as recently closed agreements for the start of accession negotiations with a number of countries from the region (FYR of Macedonia and Albania), have been clear signals for the Kosovar institutions for the need to speed up efforts in implementation of standards and in taking measures to adapt to pre-accession requirements for membership into EU. Education does not appear among the EU “communitaire acquis” (formal conditions for membership into EU); however, several European conventions in the field of education, minority rights in education, inclusion in education, European values in curricula and textbooks, etc., can not but be taken as necessary standards on the way towards European integration.

In the wider international context we encounter a world characterized by swift changes, by a growing globalization, and by a growing complexity of social, cultural and economic relations ever more lead by information and knowledge. None of these could even be imagined without the omnipresence of computers and other appliances of the information and communication technology. This context of breathtaking changes is of course necessarily reflected in the future objectives of education and training systems and in any strategic planning process whether in education or in any other sector of the society.

On the other side, we find standards set in the Program of Reforms in European Education until 2010 and the respective Declaration of Lisbon, we encounter the Copenhagen Convention on vocational education and training and the process which started therein, the objectives set in the Bologna Declaration and the following declarations of Prague (2001), Berlin (2001), Bergen (2005) and the benchmarks set in these documents for a harmonized development of education in European countries. All these documents and processes have brought about essential changes of the broad regional and European context for the Kosovar education. This new context requires new strategies, policies and approaches of the Kosovar education system and its community. All these, together with the UNESCO Education For All initiative have been duly analyzed and addressed by the Kosovar and international education experts that contributed in the process of drafting of the Strategy for Development of Pre-university education 2007 – 2016.

2.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the education system

2.2.1. Managing capacities of the system

Strengths

The Kosovar system of education came out of the decade long isolation period and from the war of the late nineties almost completely destroyed both regarding its physical infrastructure and the human resources and capacities. From the perspective of management the post-war education system was characterized by

- a) A strong motivation of the local education leadership and administration to improve performance of the education system and
- b) A strong international role and presence in the form of a large number of foreign education experts and administrators both within UNMIK structures and in the many government and non-government organizations engaged at that time in various programs for the support of the Kosovar education.

The strong motivation of the local education leadership and administration made local educators and officers highly open and receptive to the new training programs offered by foreign organizations. This in return increased effectiveness of these training programs and at the same time improved efficiency and management in education institutions in general. Training programs in education leadership were initially organized and / or coordinated by the Canadian Kosovo Educator Development Program (KEDP), which also served as a lead agency in the field of teacher and educator training until late 2003. From the year 2000 until 2005 over 700 education leaders participated in some form of training in education leadership in different levels of administration and in various institutions of the system. As will be later seen, these programs lacked depth of addressing issues of leadership; however, they played a key role in offering basic education services in the beginning (during the emergency phase until 2002), and in increasing quality of these services in the phase of system consolidation (2002 – 2005).

Another characteristic of this period was the direct transfer of up-to-date experience in the field of education leadership from the large number of international experts to the local managers. This ‘live’ and in-service training took place in all levels of administration and management with a direct effect in the quality of management of education institutions and services offered. Only in the central administration of the MEST in 2002 over 30 international consultants, experts, and officials were active. For illustration, at that time, this administration hired 50 local experts. Other international experts were engaged at the regional level, in various non-government organizations and government education support projects, which were involved in active daily interaction and cooperation with the Kosovar education leaders and managers at all levels. Parallel with the growing of managerial skills and expertise of the local staff the power was transferred from UNMIK officials and structures to the local staff including the most senior positions. Thus from a management and policy making position UNMIK withdrew slowly to an advisory and monitoring role in education during the coming four year period. As a final result of this process we witnessed a more democratized system of education compared to the pre-war one. Positive results came very quickly coupled with

more humanized learning environment and working conditions. Among the positive effects of this democratization were also various initiatives for improvement of management, greater inclusion of involved parties in school governance (also provided for in the legislation), as well as the resulting relative increase in their quality of education services. Finally, as strong aspects of education leadership with potential for further improvement were (a) institutionalization of training programs of education leadership, (b) restructuring of the MEST central administration and further development of the human resources therein, (c) wider and stronger inclusion of involved parties, (d) provision of relevant and comparable data and information regarding population of education system, and (e) further prioritization and clearer distinction between administrative and professional functions of the MEST.

Weaknesses

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 were found as 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 group discussions).

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 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 insufficient quality of education services.

Findings from discussions on strengths ('there were preconditions present for a process of increase and development of capacities for management and leadership') and on weaknesses (which however indicated on 'an insufficient quality of education leadership and governance') in managing and leadership capacities have laid the grounds to properly address and overcome weaknesses by building on positive practices of strengths and by proposing concrete measures for accomplishing the set objectives – always within the framework of the jointly set vision and mission for the Kosovar system of education.

2.2.2. Quality and effectiveness

Strengths

Together with the whole Kosovar society, the Kosovar system of education has been going through intensive transformation processes from a state of emergency of 2000 to the consolidation and development phase of 2005. Apart from necessary measures in the field of physical infrastructure during the emergency phase, new realities created in the Kosovar society were coupled with more typical 'software' measures in the sector of

education. As time passed, these measures brought relative results in increased quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the system. The omnipresent readiness for change in the ranks of the academic and schooling community in Kosova was a necessary precondition and warranty for the implementation of the foreseen measures. The first measures were taken to set the main pillars on which to base future reforming actions for the Kosovar education system. For this purpose mixed local and international expert working groups started working on the new Curricular Framework of Kosova, intensive teacher training programs on new approaches in teaching and learning started being implemented, and the new structure 5 – 4 – 3 (4) was set for the system of pre-university education in Kosova.

In retrospective, we could conclude that the last five year period of the renewal of the Kosovar education focused around curricular reform, including teaching methods, contents of the subject curricula, school textbooks, student evaluation and new philosophies and approaches in teaching and learning. This period saw large number of ‘novelties’ piloted and implemented in our schools including inclusive education, Montessori method, learner centered instruction, “Child friendly school” projects, projects on democratization of relations between school agents, projects for closer involvement of community in school governance and in providing support for schools, more diversity in student testing, assessment and evaluation, to mention only a few. In spite of the lack of a well planned and systematic approach in implementing these novelties, we can still not avoid the strong impression of the impact these novelties have had in the school life in Kosova. On a visit to any, even the most remote schools, one can not avoid noticing a new arrangement of desks in classrooms, a new spirit and a lax atmosphere in teacher – student interaction, more diversity in student assessment, an increased awareness on children rights etc.

To sum up, we find that new subject curricula (for the general and vocational education and training), new school textbooks, new methods of teaching and assessment have all had an impact in increasing quality of education provision and the effectiveness of the education system in Kosova.

Weaknesses

Obvious strengths aside, discussions of experts found that a lot could and must be done in various aspects of the education reality in Kosova.

These discussions found a serious deficiency in the lack of mechanisms and institutions for accreditation, for setting the standards of achievement and for external evaluation; they also noted the lack of a functional National Council for Curricula and school textbooks, lack of capacities research in education, as well as the lack of affirmative policies for development, publication and distribution of school textbooks and didactic resources. All these and other shortcomings of the system, like lack of adequate human resources and the social and economic instability had resulted in the lack of a system for quality assurance and quality control, overburdened subject curricula with a serious lack in entrepreneurship and key competencies, primarily due to the unnecessary focus in repetition skills in stead of life skills. Apart from these, there is a problem in determining the basic notion of key competences (presentation or interpersonal, individual or social, technical or professional, in the form of cultural and artistic awareness, etc.) Naturally,

this inability of definition of basic notions has affected their non-implementation in the developed subject curricula.

On the other hand, in the field of school textbooks and teaching and learning resources experts stressed the lack of alternative sources of information, lack of school textbooks for vocational education and training, lack of resources and textbooks for specific subjects and the lack of new textbooks developed based on new approaches and new curricula.

As a result of all these, in spite of the significant accomplishments the end result is an unsatisfactory quality of education services and of education provision. This situation requires drafting and approval of policies and strategies and building of mechanisms for improving quality of education and effectiveness of the system. **In this regard, experts pointed out the need to focus efforts in teacher training, in setting and in implementing national standards of achievement, in improving student assessment methods, and in improving the education context – the material situation of education and school infrastructure – with the final aim of improving the overall quality of education.**

2.2.3. Inclusion and equity in education

Strengths

In the recent years a lot has been done in the Kosovar education in increasing access and inclusion and in providing more equity and quality in the education offer for all citizens of Kosova. This was made possible thanks to the new reality built up after the war and as a result of unreserved engagement of local officials who enjoyed maximum support by the international community.

More access resulted from a wider spectrum of education services offered by education institutions (primarily in the field of informal and non-formal education), by promoting and implementing the philosophy of inclusive education, by democratizing education contents and practices, and by ensuring equal access to minorities in all levels of decision making across the system. In concrete terms most of the teachers and educators have been involved in some kind of training programs on democratization of relationships in schools. They were also included in various training events with the topic of transferring good practices of interaction both within the school and between the school and community. Special attention in this respect was given to the inclusion in the system of the so called groups in danger. Thus, catch up classes have been organized with 3,580 students of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, 865 of which went on to join regular schooling. Intensive catch up instruction is being organized for 329 pupils of age between 9 and 16. Implementation of grade nine of lower secondary education, measures of positive discrimination for minority students (25 % more funds allocated for every minority student compared to funds for majority Albanian students and 30 % more teachers allowed to be hired for minorities for the same number of majority students), implementation of good practices in classrooms coupled with improvement of physical

infrastructure in schools have resulted in improved access, inclusion and participation of children and youth in respective levels of schooling in Kosova. Inclusion of children in compulsory education has reached the 97 %, whereas inclusion in the upper secondary education, especially of girl students has gone up for 30 % from 1999 to 2004. In this regard the World Bank project for improvement of participation in education (EPIP) has been critical. This project has helped in different ways the implementation of school development plans also by supporting various projects inferred from these plans. Over 500 primary and secondary schools have benefited a financial aid in the amount of 5.000 to 15.000 Euros between years 2003 and 2006 in the framework of this project. Another important asset of this project was the significant participation by the community in in-kind contributions but also in cash (sometimes matching the grant funds by 100 %); municipalities (active in the municipal teams), Kosova Education Center with its experts, the MEST officials and benefiting schools also played a significant role in successful implementation of the project for the benefit of the children and youth. The first and second phase of the Finnish Support to the Development of Education in Kosova (FSDEK) played an important role in increasing participation and in promoting and implementing the philosophy of inclusion in education. Over 80 experts have been trained in three rounds of two year programs of professional development, 15 others are attending postgraduate studies for master in inclusive education, two experts have been sent to doctoral studies, dozens of teachers and experts have been trained in teaching children with special needs, two resource centers have been equipped and teachers trained for the purpose, over 30 special needs attached classes have been established and supported for children in special needs in regular schools etc.

Even though education of our children in Diaspora does not directly affect the inclusion of children in the education system in Kosova, the Ministry has also paid close attention to education programs, textbooks and didactic resources and to cooperation with Kosovar Albanian teachers in Diaspora with the purpose of increasing quality and inclusion of children with supplementary instruction in Albanian in Diaspora. For this reason, training seminars and other events for exchange of experience and good practices between Kosova and our Diaspora have been organized.

Weaknesses

However, in spite of significant accomplishments, which came as a result of unreserved efforts of local and international experts and officials, inclusion of children and youth in the education system in Kosova and the equity provided by it can not yet be compared with the access and inclusion offered in the developed countries and even in those in the region.

Thus, due to the lack of the needed funds, the lack of awareness on importance of education, because of the lack of adequate education policies promoting inclusion and equity, and because of the low level of cross-sector cooperation with the purpose of increasing inclusion in education, there are still significant gaps in inclusiveness and equity of the Kosovar system of education. This goes especially for participation of girls in all levels of education and for insufficient inclusion of children with special needs.

During the process of development of the strategy there was general agreement that the system of education in Kosovo does not provide adequate conditions for universal education. This situation is manifested either geographically (low participation of children in rural areas), seen from the gender perspective (insufficient inclusion of girls), education needs (low level of inclusion of children with special needs and not catering for children with learning difficulties), and provision for various groups (street children and groups at risk). This has resulted in frequent cases of drop outs, in increased numbers of functional illiterates and finally with citizens who grapple to get integrated in the society.

All these situations, difficulties, problems and their respective manifestations are in fact challenges with which drafters of this strategy have had to face in order to accomplish the universal right to education and schooling and, at the same time, to accomplish the UNESCO initiative on Education For All (EFA) as a basic precondition for a democratic society which caters for the needs of its members for a normal personal and collective development. Another challenge rests with the need to set conditions for lifelong learning be it for reasons of further qualification, for promotion in the workplace, for re-qualification, for surviving in the labour market or for personal professional development with the purpose of keeping up with the breathtaking speed of technologic, economic and social changes.

2.2.4. Pre-service and in-service teacher training and development

Strengths

During the process of drafting the strategy general consensus prevailed on the priority importance of quality teaching but also of various teacher training and development programs both pre-service and in-service. There was also unanimous agreement on accomplishments achieved from efforts to regenerate and to reform the teaching and teacher training in Kosovo during the short period of six years since the end of the war and of the decade long isolation from trends in teaching elsewhere in the world. Making the new Faculty of Education the hub of the numerous fragmented pre-service teacher training programs in Kosovo, including over 7,000 teachers in the large number of training program offered on learner centered instruction and on new philosophies of teaching (such as general inclusion, interaction and stronger focus on skills – in stead of repetitive knowledge), setting up and functioning of the Teacher Training Review Board and the work of Didactic Centers, activities of the Canadian Kosova Educator Development Program (KEDP), implementation by the Kosova Education Center (KEC) of the Step by Step program and training and certification of over 3,000 teachers in Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking methods by the same organization, capacity building of the resources of the MEST and Regional Education Offices in the field of advancing teacher training were only a few among the accomplishments which had had an impact in improving quality of teaching and in changing relations in the classroom. Apart from these measures and activities, more policies and regulations were drafted and approved to ensure sustainability of changes; more local training capacities had been built and various publications on the field of teaching and teacher training drafted, published

and distributed. The working group discussions appreciated the presence of the Canadian experience and expertise in this field (both pre- and in-service) through the KEDP office. This office had played a key role in coordination of efforts of different organizations which offered training programs in teacher development; the KEDP had also helped in drafting regulations and policies in teaching and TT, had coordinated efforts and directly supported the establishing of the Faculty of Education, had worked on setting up in-service teacher training program within the Faculty of Education, had organized a large number of seminars and supported publication of the needed literature and other resources for training and professional development of teachers etc.

Weaknesses

However, in spite of accomplishments and unreserved efforts of local and international institutions, expert groups found numerous difficulties and problems in the field of pre-service and in-service teacher training in Kosova. In the first place, they stressed the large numbers of unqualified teachers in Kosovar schools (between 15 and 18 % of the total number of teachers depending on level of education), lack of a relevant database in the field of teaching, lack of regulations on accreditation of programs and organizations offering teacher training programs, delays in implementation of teacher licensing and, especially, problems with the very low level of teachers' salaries and the wrong and non-motivation pay and grading system in education. Inability to include all teachers in training programs and relative superficiality of training programs were some of the concerns that asked for urgent treatment by experts in the process of development of the strategy.

All these problems found in the field of teaching only further stressed the importance of quality teaching in order to ensure an effective and quality system of education. **For these reasons, there was common understanding that now, after completion of the curricular reform, respective policies, programs and projects be developed which would shift the focus of attention from the curricular process in order to prioritize teaching and teacher training. Another important challenge brought forth by the experts from both working groups (including group on finances) was the proposed necessity to reform the pay and grading system in the sector of education, in order to ensure a fairer and more motivating system of payments for the teaching staff based on merit, experience, skills and on qualification.**

2.2.5. Infrastructure

Strengths

It took immense investments by international donors, local institutions, but also significant investments by the community to make it possible to restart education in the 1999 – 2000 school year in relatively normal conditions of work. International donors, lead by UNICEF, the European Agency for Reconstruction (ECHO in the beginning) and by other donors such as the Islamic Bank for Development and individual countries like Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Kingdom of Netherlands and other, invested

significant amounts in construction and repairs to create optimal physical conditions for the organization of the process of instruction after the destructions of the nineties and after the lack of any maintenance of schools by the state in the previous twenty years. These efforts, coupled with activities to equip schools with the needed equipment and technological appliances, together with promotion of programs for a healthy school, had a positive impact in improving the environment for learning and teaching and, consequently, in creating the preconditions for higher quality instruction. Later, efforts doubled to improve the physical infrastructure to meet the needs of the children with special needs in accordance with the philosophy of inclusive education. After the year 2002 there was a gradual shift of responsibility to provide school infrastructure from various international donors to local institutions and local budget. In the period from 2002 to 2005 the MEST has financed renovation of 39 school buildings in the total amount of 1,793,001 € and construction of 28 new school facilities in the amount of 8,192,425 €.

Weaknesses

All these joint efforts significantly improved the physical conditions of instruction in the Kosovar education. However, until 2002, all reconstruction efforts were carried out only based on requests from the community and on assessments done by various donor organizations. At that time, there was a lack (although there are positive exceptions like the mapping done by the International Management Group – IMG) of a planned and systematic approach in addressing the problem of school infrastructure. Thus, most of the schools constructed after the war were built on the sites where the old pre-war school used to be. There were also extreme cases when movement of population (from mainly rural to urban areas) was not taken in consideration at all and the new school was built to cater for a very limited number of students. Such a discrepancy between demographic movement and reconstruction of schools was very obvious in various parts of Kosova and as a consequence, some cities ended up with overcrowded schools (working in two, three and even four shifts), whereas in some villages there was ample space for a single shift daily instruction. Due to a more organized approach there were also cases when state of the art information technology was installed in school facilities in areas with frequent lack of electrical energy.

On the other side, there were lapses in the ways new facilities were maintained and managed, there was little or no cooperation with the community in this regard, there were complicated procedures of financial management and procurement, lack of funds for management and maintenance, practices of embezzlement of funds and ill-management with equipment installed, and so on, which altogether lowered the impact of immense investment done in the field of school infrastructure and in lowering quality of instruction due to shortages of physical learning environment.

Such a situation required well planned efforts in order to maximize the effect of funds invested after the war and to produce higher quality of education services for the same amounts of invested funds. All research has shown that better infrastructure results in higher quality of services in education. Planning of measure to enable work in two shifts

until 2010 and ensuring a balanced development of school technology and infrastructure between rural and urban areas remain two main challenges for both this strategy and for the functioning of education institutions in the coming midterm period.

These problems, together with putting more priority on utilization of information technology in the process of instruction, have been addressed by the respective working group and concrete measures for improvement of this situation are part of this strategy. All these measures will work to ensure that infrastructure and information technology are in direct function of providing high quality instruction.

2.2.6. Education and society

In this problem area it was important to see the interaction and the mutual influence between education and society. The discussions had to find if education still retained the utmost priority it cherished during the nineties when it functioned as a parallel system, and, if education still exerted the same influence on the society as it did during the nineties when it was the propelling power and the backbone of all developments in the society. It came out that during the post-war period education stood as a societal priority only on paper and at a declaratory level since the lion's share of the government budget went on social welfare, whereas issues pertaining to political status and to implementation of standards were the main preoccupation of political action. On the other hand, it was found that education was not the propelling force of societal and economic developments either. As a result, cooperation between education and other sectors, with the community or with economy was almost inexistent during this period.

Strengths

In spite of what is said above, the post-war period saw several serious efforts for changing and improving legislation so that to improve interaction and to increase the role of education in society and to strengthen the role of community in education. Thus members of the community won the decision making majority in the very important school boards, whereas Parent/Teacher Councils at all levels of education had gained the partner role in leading and governing the system of education in harmony with the legal provisions and with regulations adopted by the MEST. UNICEF and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) played a key role in efforts to humanize the school environment and relationships therein, as well as in opening up the school to the community. The MEST attempted to promote opening up of schools towards economy by allowing opening of bank accounts for vocational schools in cases when they engage in projects with the community or with economy with the purpose of improving working conditions in the school (implementation of this initiative has encountered difficulties in the current laws on public finance in Kosova). At the same time, the curricular reform in Kosova had created pre-conditions for more cooperation with economy by opening school curricula and schools to their community and environment.

Curricula of vocational education are more adapt to the needs of the labour market offering more skills which are badly needed by the young population in Kosova. In this

respect, special merits go to the German government organization for international technical cooperation, but also to the Swiss Contact and to KosVet project. They have supported the vocational education and training in Kosova in many ways: they have developed curricula for 11 professional streams, they supported eight pilot vocational schools with technological equipment for respective professions, they trained MEST staff and vocational school principals on management of relevant processes and institutions, they trained most of the teachers in modern methods and approaches, they developed curricula and implemented concepts of virtual enterprises, they helped MEST in developing policies and strategic plans in the field of vocational education and training, they assisted MEST and participated in various events of local and international character etc. The partnership that evolved between MEST and the GTZ project in Kosova facilitated all curricular reforms in VET and contributed to building of significant human capacities for this purpose in Kosova.

Various information campaigns and projects for career counselling had assisted in getting the youth closer to the education offer in vocational schools in Kosova. These had facilitated inclusion and active participation of the community in activities in these schools, but they also helped to increase the interest of the youth for their education services.

Weaknesses

Notwithstanding relative accomplishments, it seems that the rapport society – education may remain one of the key challenges of this strategy due to the difficult conditions in which the system operates, due to the unfavourable position of the educator in the society, because of the lack of an economy which would absorb the experts produced by the education system, because of the lack of genuine analyses on the needs and trends in the labour market, because of the limited capacities of state and education institutions, due to the lack of higher education institutions in the field of applied sciences, due to the lack of awareness in the society and the resulting insufficient cooperation between institutions and with the community with the purpose of overcoming difficulties and problems in education and serving for the general social and economic development etc.

All these had brought to a situation there was no authority for determining and implementing a system of qualifications, when there was a discrepancy between needs of the market and the profiles offered by the education system, where there was little or no interaction between education and economy, when career counselling was going through immense difficulties, and when there was not a taxonomy of professions in place. This situation made the accomplishment of the mission and vision set out at the beginning of this strategy even more difficult. **Therefore, in the coming several years it remains a key challenge of Kosovar education institutions to make it possible for education to serve for economic development, social cohesion, for preparing individuals for life and for economy, to offer skills for life and key competencies, as well as to ensure a system of lifelong learning which facilitates keeping up with the fast changes in technology and in the labour market.**

A key precondition for accomplishing such objectives is a close cooperation between all parties relevant for the development of education in Kosova. In this context, it is

necessary more engagement and better coordination between the MEST, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Non-residential Issues, including private and public economic entities, the sector of health, and other institutions.

2.2.7. Material position of education

The Kosovar education is nowadays squeezed between budget restrictions of the poor Kosovar society and the wrong setting of priorities by the government. This has made that only 4.1 % of the GNP are allocated for the needs of education (pre-university and higher education), and for science and technology, which is lower than the European average where only higher education or research receive in average 1 % of the GNP. If we keep in mind that Kosova has a very weak structure of budget revenue (most the income comes from taxes on imports) and, consequently, a very low GNP, even when compared to countries in the vicinity, which is barely built on local production, then we understand what can education institutions do with the funds allocated in this percentage.

If we add to this the non-motivating structure of the teacher salaries, inherited from the former Department of Education and Science (DES), which are distributed almost evenly as stipends not as salaries based on merits, experience and on qualifications, then we get not only a fuller picture of the difficult material position of the Kosovar teachers, but we also come to understand the reasons behind teachers' strikes for several years in a row every beginning of the school year. On top of these, we get to also have a better grasp of the relatively low level of the quality of education services in Kosova. This situation has also had an impact in the low level of capital investments, in providing schools with information technology, and in equipping schools with the needed equipment and other teaching resources.

The immense assistance and support coming from international donors was to no avail in this situation, since they supported programs and projects, but would not interfere in improving the financial situation of the teaching staff or in restructuring expenditures for education. An attempt to restructure the system of pay and grades in the civil service in Kosova resulted in a series of teacher strikes in all levels of education.

To sum up, insufficient infrastructure, cases of mismanagement and embezzlement of public duties, the unfavourable status of teachers and educators in the society, inability to engage in promoting teachers due to the wrong pay and grading system, general shortage of funds, have caused fleeing of good teachers and experts from the system and, consequently, low quality of education services.

This aspect of the education system is and will remain the weakest facet and the biggest challenge for every government and for every ministry of education, as well as for this development strategic plan. We can not expect any development or improvement in quality of education services without more funds and without an adequate system for distribution of salaries in the sector of education.

After discussion and analysis made to this aspect, the expert groups came to identify perhaps the key issue in this sector, which will remain a challenge until the proper solution is found as a precondition to make possible real development of education. Measures proposed by experts in this strategy, and supported in an inclusive process of consultations and communication, should be supported by the government and become a must for the entire Kosovar society, as the only way for proper development of education and, consequently, for the development of human resources, which is the only comparative advantage of Kosova in relation to the countries in the region and wider in Europe. This is the only path and opportunity for the Kosovar society to move in the road of development and dignified integration in the large family of developed European countries. **Only well educated and trained human resources will make Kosova competitive in the European market of labour.**

3. Principles of development of the system – Vision and mission

3.1. Principles for development of the system

Practical implementation of the Strategy for pre-university education for 2007 – 2017 will make it possible that the changes it foresees reach the classrooms, laboratories, and specialized classes. Thus it will become a powerful lever of organized changes of the current education system and will contribute to respect the clearly defined principles which allow for an efficient and continuous development of the education system.

The principles, on which the development of the system of education will be based as set out in this strategic plan, are the following:

- 3.1.1. Principle of usefulness, benefit and philanthropy
- 3.1.2. Principle of openness, transparency and flexibility
- 3.1.3. Principle of monitoring, follow up, measurement and evaluation of the process and of achievements in the education system and its impact on the overall development of the Kosovar society
- 3.1.4. Principle of effectiveness and efficiency
- 3.1.5. Principle of justice and participation in education
- 3.1.6. Principle of order and stability
- 3.1.7. Holistic principle – systematic approach
- 3.1.8. Principle of national interest

3.1.1. Principle of usefulness, benefit, and philanthropy

Changes instigated and started by this Strategy should bring positive changes, should be useful and beneficial to all citizens of Kosova regardless of their age, gender, ethnic, racial or religious affiliation, social, economic and cultural status or any other affiliation. This principle builds on the moral and human purpose of changes aiming the development of human and social resources. Respect of this principle in the development of the system of education in Kosova makes development and wellbeing of man the focal point of the system. This also gives the system of education a genuine human and philanthropic orientation in pursuit of a friendly society based on cultivation of diversity of needs, cultures, interests, and of various opinions. In other words this principle has its genesis in honesty and implies that all changes will be human and honest, since any other changes would make the system unstable, unjust, discriminating and a generator of crises and conflicts in the society.

3.1.2. Principle of openness, transparency and flexibility

There can not be a dynamic development of the education system unless it is open to the needs and interests of the citizens of Kosova, regardless of their age, ethnic, racial, religious, gender, social, economic, cultural and any other diversity. This principle requires the system of education to maintain a dynamic and sustainable development and to remain in tune with the parameters of education systems in other countries and, at the same time, to meet the needs and interests of Kosovar citizens. In order to meet these requirements, the system of education must be transparent and flexible. This means that the system had to maintain a state of permanent change in order to be able to meet all the needs of Kosovar citizens.

Fulfilling the principle of openness, transparency and flexibility is a necessary precondition for the dynamic development of the education system in Kosova. This means that any proposed changes and repairs will be debated and discussed, and some of them piloted. This will not only make all changes transparent to the public opinion, but it will also increase the number of participants in these events. This process of broadening of decision-making will result in democratization of the education system, which, on the other hand, is a necessary condition for its fast growth and development.

In order to implement this principle, planned strategic cooperation will be established with local and international experts and creative and fruitful cooperation will be carried out with international government and non-government agencies with a mission to promote education in general

3.1.3. Principle of monitoring, measurement and evaluation of the process and of achievements in the system of education and of its impact in the overall development of the Kosovar society

The system of education cannot develop, advance and get integrated in contemporary systems of education without a very sophisticated and functional system of monitoring,

measurement and evaluation of the education process and of its achievements, as well as of their impact in the development and democratization of the Kosovar society, in setting up of a state based on the rule of law built on social justice. Therefore, development of the system of education in general, and of the pre-university education, in particular, is unthinkable without setting up of a pragmatic and functional system for collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the process of education, on results of student achievement, on accomplishments of teachers and of institutions of pre-university education and their comparison of these data with the standards set at the school, municipal, regional, national and international level. Respect and implementation of this principle will help authorities and other entities to have available any relevant information on the system at any moment.

3.1.4. Principle of efficiency and effectiveness

Mere existence of a functioning system is not built on adapting to the actual situation but in the quantitative and qualitative development both of the system as a whole and of its specific parts which make that system. This principle requires setting up of such development mechanisms and policies which guarantee a continuous qualitative and quantitative development of the system.

In order to be efficient a system of education has to yield maximum results for shortest time and for minimal human, financial and material resources. This principle requires setting up of functional mechanisms for systematic follow up, measurement and evaluation of investments in education and monitoring of allocation of funds, utilization of resources, intake and leaving of the system of education etc.

Another important aspect is effectiveness. Effectiveness implies not the quantity of accomplishment, but the benefit and gains of the Kosovar citizens and of the entire society from the education provision. There will be effective education once it benefits all citizens of Kosova. Whereas efficiency is determined through analyses carried out to assess the quantity of outcome and the resources spent for the maximum result, effectiveness has to do with ensuring maximum benefits for the given resources.

The principle of efficiency and effectiveness should provide maximum development of human resources, which according to OECD, are the gains which come from education expressed in higher income, higher level employment, stronger links with the labour market, better public health and a range of other non-monetary benefits.

3.1.5. Principle of justice and participation in education

The principle of justice requires creation of a system of education in Kosova which would enable to all its citizens equal opportunities to choose their preferred type of education. This principle calls for quality education to be provided to all citizens of Kosova and not only to a chosen few. It underlines the necessity of promoting and creating social and economic opportunities for education of all students, regardless of their developmental potential, age, gender, religious, racial, and ethnic affiliation, or their social status (Education For All, Dakar, 2000; **European Agency for Development of**

Education for Special Needs (???) 2003a; European Commission, 2002b; Convention on Children Rights, Article 2. UN 1989; Global Declaration for Education For All – EFA 1996); Memorandum on Lifelong Learning; Rules and standards for equal opportunities UN,1994, Communiqué of Salamanka,1994; OECD reports and documents on labour of children at risk and of children with disabilities). This principle also requires setting up of mechanisms through which to eliminate school dropout from compulsory education by facilitating access and, consequently, increasing participation in education which creates opportunities for a quality life for all regardless of national or any other affiliation. In harmony with this principle, the Kosovar system of education will pay special attention to: children coming from poor families, children from various minority communities, orphan children, children with special needs, children whose parents died or are missing from war, children discriminated on gender basis, children begging in streets, children who are victims of violence, discrimination, sexual abuse, trafficking, and children involved in sweated jobs harmful for their physical and psychological development etc.

3.1.6. Principle of order and sustainability

Implementation of this principle the system of education maintains norms and standards comparable to those set in developed democratic countries. By drafting and setting “rules of the game” in all segments and levels of education, the education system in Kosova would maintain a dynamic and sustainable balance of development. This principle sets the structure, functions and links between different elements of the system.

3.1.7. Holistic principle (the systematic approach)

This principle requires that the system of education is seen as one indivisible entirety, because education is closely related to all spheres of life in a society. Thus efficiency of preschool education depends on efficiency and effectiveness of the Faculty of Education, from developments and results in science, from trends in economy, health and technology etc., whereas primary education depends on the quality of preschool education and so on.

3.1.8. Principle of national interest

According to this principle, education is seen as the most propulsive economic category and as the highest national interest since only through quality education Kosova can turn into a society of knowledge, ready for European integrations.

In harmony with this principle, a new awareness will build among all citizens in the Kosovar society, and especially among the policy and decision makers, on the role and importance of education for development of the society. With this awareness it will become clear that there will not be any economic development, poverty can not be fought, unemployment cannot be lowered, public health cannot be improved, and new human values cannot be produced for a diversity of cultures, needs, and interests without quality education.

3.2. Vision and mission

Through this Strategy, Kosova should become one big house of learning since only if all citizens of Kosova get accustomed to lifelong learning will they be able to communicate, plan, think critically, use two or more languages, and use new techniques and technologies. Only citizens in a continuous quest for new and sustainable knowledge will be able to move, find new jobs, enjoy wellbeing, be useful for their communities, and will be able to help the development of their society.

3.2.1. Vision

Based on the current situation of education in Kosova, having in mind universal principles of change in education and striving for integration of Kosovar education in the trends of democratic systems of developed countries, especially in the European Union, the expert working groups have outlined the following vision for the Kosovar education:

Kosova – a knowledge society, integrated in European trends with equal opportunities for personal development of all its members, who contribute to the sustainable economic and social development.

The accomplishment of this vision will not be an easy endeavour having in mind the difficult transition phase Kosova is grappling through, coupled with the unsettled political status, and with ethnic feuds between the majority population of Kosova and the Serbian ethnic community. This will require immense creativity, broad inclusion, and involvement of a large number of partners. *On the other hand, as Kosova is facing these problems, the world is moving fast towards an economy and society built on knowledge.* More than ever, Kosova today needs to catch up with the European integration processes. This will not be feasible without a sustainable development of education in tune with the basic principles of these integration processes. Of course, there are not only obstacles and difficulties on this road to a knowledge society – Kosova has also got its opportunities and advantages. One of these is the open opportunity for contemporary knowledge and information, coupled with the motivation and training for rational utilization of these resources for the purposes of the individual and the society. This opportunity is the key for solving all economic, social and political problems because, regardless of their differences and interests, individuals have a vital interest in Kosova's integration in the society of knowledge. This interest is the common denominator that brings about consensual support and approval for this strategy in its endeavour to establish a strong system of pre-university education and for accomplishing this vision, which should be the common voice of all citizens of Kosova.

Therefore, we strongly believe that the set vision is a common dream of all Kosovars, who must all work to make it come true. This vision is also best solution for the future of the young Kosovar generations. Its accomplishment will enable Kosova to be an equal part of the civilized world, characterised by strong social cohesion and ample well being of its citizens.

3.2.2. Mission

The mission creates conditions to accomplish the set vision. The Mission of this strategy is to:

Build an all-inclusive system of education that provides conditions for quality education and training of all individuals by actively involving in and promoting practices of lifelong learning and values of democratic society.

Implementation of this mission will be made easier by bringing about mechanisms for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of the system of education and training and by promoting and instilling among citizens skills for lifelong learning in the light of strategic goals of education in the European countries, as well of the requirements of the knowledge society.

The mission is an obligation for the Kosovar system of education – as a roadmap to accomplishing the commonly set vision.

4. Strategic objectives and measures

Expert groups have identified seven strategic objectives which need to be accomplished during the period of 2007-2017:

- 4.1. Quality and efficient governance, leadership, and management of the system of education
- 4.2. A functional system of providing quality learning based on standards comparable with those of the developed countries
- 4.3. All-inclusiveness, equity, and respect of diversity in education
- 4.4. An effective system of in-service and pre-service training of the teaching staff
- 4.5. An adequate and healthy physical environment for teaching and learning
- 4.6. A sustainable connection of education with general social and economic developments
- 4.7. Advancing the material situation in education

The order of these objectives does express also the order of their priority since each of them is considered very important for enhancing the system of pre-university education. In the meantime, for every strategic objective the following aspects have been defined:

- Objectively verifiable indicators which would be used to measure and demonstrate their accomplishment.

- Measures (activities) that express actions taken for achieving the strategic objectives. A number of these measures are entire projects, which need to be further elaborated.

Below is given a detailed description of strategic objectives and of corresponding measures.

4.1. Quality and efficient governance, leadership, and management of the system of education

Governance can be defined as *an exercise of political authority and using of institutional resources to manage social problems*. **Leadership** is part of governance, but whereas governance takes strategic decisions, *leadership takes operational and working decisions*. On the other hand, **management** is present both in management and governance, but, in general is characterized by five functions: planning, organization, leadership, coordination, and control. Of course, quality governance, leadership and management are necessary pre-conditions for a system of education to perform its social function.

INDICATORS

1. Complete legislation comparable to that of EU countries
2. Thorough implementation of legislation
3. Until 2017 all leaders of education institutions have got needed qualifications for quality leadership and management
4. An Education Management Information System is fully operational and functional
5. Continuous evaluation of institutional performance is in place
6. There is an increased transparency and participation in the process of decision-making
7. All education institutions have got their development plans in place
8. Functional relations of communication and interaction between institutions are in place

MEASURES

Measure Review of existing laws and drafting of new ones

4.1.1.

- Description:**
- Review and harmonization (until end of 2007) of existing laws and other bylaws with the relevant education documents and trends in Europe
 - Review of laws and other bylaws with the purpose of overcoming legal collision between them

- Change and amendment of legal infrastructure for more accurate decision of authority and competences
- Reviewing and analyzing the financial feasibility of existing and new laws,
- Drafting of new laws (such as the Law on National Framework of Qualifications etc.)
- Clear description of the mandate, duties, responsibility and competences to the various sectors of the MEST, MED, REO and in schools

Measure 4.1.2. Implementation of legislation

- Description:**
- Development of strategies and concrete action plans for implementation of legislation in education
 - Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of laws in all levels and in education institutions and drafting of relevant recommendations.
 - Transfer of corresponding responsibility and competences to schools – in harmony with legal provisions in effect.
 - Development of handbooks and setting of the criteria for institutional leadership;

Measure 4.1.3. Building of human capacities for governance, leadership and management

- Description:**
- Analysis of development needs of human resources.
 - Development of programs for pre-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.*

Measure 4.1.4. Setting up of infrastructure for processing of education data

- Description:**
- Development of the advanced software for data processing

- Installation of physical infrastructure for EMIS at the level of municipality, region, and the MEST
- Training of personnel responsible for data maintenance, processing and analyzing
- Publication of data at least once a year to increase transparency and accountability

Measure 4.1.5. Setting and implementation of evaluation and self-evaluation procedures of leadership and governance

- Description:**
- Building of mechanisms for evaluation of leadership and management of education institutions
 - Drafting of methodology of self-evaluation for education leadership
 - Setting of mechanisms for monitoring of performance of education institutions with reference to their action plans
 - Encouraging exchange of experience between education institutions in the field of self-evaluation

Measure 4.1.6. Ensuring participation and transparency in the decision-making process

- Description:** MEST, REO, MED, and schools will provide:
- Broad participation of all involved parties in the decision-making process through more functional governing bodies of the schools;
 - Full transparency in the decision-making process among others through various events with participation of media and community;
 - Continuous communication with the media by setting up of the “group for communication” in the school
 - Closer cooperation and coordination with the community and with the sector of civil society on issues of schooling
 - Founding and empowering of (teachers’) field departments (for e.g. science department) by assigning more responsibilities to chairs of these departments;
 - Support setting up of teachers’ associations in subjects or groups of subjects (Association of Teachers of Sciences of Kosova, Association of Teachers of Mother Tongues of Kosova etc.);
 - Carry out needed changes to allow for schools and community to

decide on investment and expenditure priorities based on their concrete and specific needs

Measure 4.1.7. Setting up of mechanisms for drafting and monitoring of implementation of development plans in all education institutions

Description: All pre-university education institutions in Kosova 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.

Measure 4.1.8. Full coordination between different levels of education leadership

Description:

- Joint and coordinated planning of operations between MEST, REO and MED
- Regular meetings MEST-REO-MED and REO-MED-Schools
- Regular meetings and coordination of activities with parents' associations

RISK ASSUMPTIONS

Analysis made by the expert working group has indicated that a protracted reflection of political conflicts in the field of education could result in further deterioration of the quality of services rendered by the education system. Also, persons in leading positions must show readiness to change, by taking up approaches that bring about quality governance, leadership, and management. Two critical assumptions can be inferred from these:

1. Lessening of political conflicts in the education arena
2. Readiness for change among persons in leading offices

4.2. A functioning system for ensuring quality learning based on standards comparable to those in the developed countries

Expression “quality assurance system” in this document has the widely accepted meaning internationally. Characteristic features of such a system are:

- Through an all-inclusive process of debates on the education objectives and the government curricula, the system determines what the term “quality” means referring to the performance and results of the public education system in the country.
- It determines responsibilities of the key agents for quality assurance in the system of education, including schools and teachers. The system makes sure that these agents have all relevant data on their performance and offers needed mechanisms for meeting their needs.
- System requires accountability from the teachers and schools for their performance by ensuring an inner dynamics for achieving high performance standards.

It is impossible to see a quality assurance system separate from other aspects of functioning of the system of education (such as governance and leadership, teacher training etc.); the fact that this segment of the education system is given specific attention in this document speaks of the striving to build an education system which offers conditions for quality training and education of all individuals.

INDICATORS

1. Existence of quality standards
2. Functional mechanisms for evaluation and certification
3. Functional mechanisms for accreditation and licensing
4. Existence of mechanisms for monitoring and follow up of students after leaving of schooling
5. Functional mechanism for monitoring and evaluation

MEASURES

Measure Establishing of independent institutions for research, evaluation, certification and accreditation in the system
4.2.1.

Description: Institutions are established, which engage in education research, in development of standards and in evaluation of quality of education. Authority for accreditation and certification will be responsible for

accreditation of programs and of education and training institutions in harmony with the National Framework of Qualifications.

Measure 4.2.2. Reviewing of the Curricular Framework, of standards of achievement and standards of content, as well as fine tuning of subject curricula with the student and societal requirements and needs, and their comparability with those of developed countries

Description:

- MEST, in cooperation with other independent and specialized institutions will monitor current programs and standards, will evaluate them and will propose their improvements in accordance with the needs of the schools and with requirements of the time (reviews based on gender, democratic citizenship, entrepreneurship, health education etc.). A management system for this process will be set up which will undergo continuous improvement in order to ensure its professional character. This process will assure quality education for preparing pupils and students for further education, for the needs of the labour market, and will follow trends of technologic, scientific and cultural developments.
- MEST, in cooperation with relevant institutions, will develop national program for learning and teaching of mother tongue.
- MEST, in cooperation with other relevant institutions, will develop national program for learning and teaching of foreign languages.
- MEST, in cooperation with relevant institutions, will develop national program for utilization of information technology in the process of instruction.

Measure 4.2.3. Drafting and providing of quality textbooks and other teaching and learning resources

Description: There will be a capacity building process (of authors, reviewers, readers, publishers and teachers) through exchange of experience, public discussions, seminars, etc., for the improvement of quality of textbooks and other teaching resources in harmony with accepted international standards.. This includes more extensive usage of alternative textbooks, handbooks, guides and workbooks by the teacher and students.
MEST / government of Kosova draft (until June 2007) a plan for equipping of all schools with information technology hardware;
All schools in Kosova will have access to Internet (until the end of 2008).

Measure 4.2.4. Creation and implementation of the legal basis for quality assurance in education

Description:

- Development of legal infrastructure by drafting laws, administrative instructions, regulations and other bylaws which promote and help implementation of quality in education.

- Regular inspection of schools by inspectors will help to build awareness for implementation and respect of legal acts and other norms for regular functioning of the education process. Specific inspections will be performed according to the needs and requirements of institutions.

Measure 4.2.5. Creation of conditions for implementation of practical instruction

Description: Students are provided with physical space and equipment needed for practical instruction. Links are established with various institutions and economic and social entities for implementation of practical instruction and linking of schools (especially vocational ones) with the economy with the purpose of dual system school – enterprise. Modes of active and participative learning are supported with the purpose of acquiring practical skills, knowledge and habits with the pupils and students.

Measure 4.2.6. Active participation in projects of mutual, regional and wider international cooperation.

Description: Activities are organized serving for the exchange of experience among students and teachers on programs, methodologies, textbooks, implementation of sports, cultural and artistic activities, etc., which contribute to the increase of quality of education. Such cooperation creates opportunities for investment and fundraising for schools to implement various activities for the benefit of work and instruction in schools.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Sufficient capacities on the part of education institutions for offering services and for increasing quality of learning is a most welcome situation, which is partially out of control of drafters of this strategy, primarily because of the difficult situation of the education system in Kosova. For objective reasons, a large number of education institutions, still cannot focus in increasing quality of their services, which poses a real threat for the process of strategy implementation.

4.3. All-inclusion, equity and respect of diversities in education

Inclusion of citizens in the education system is one of the indicators of the level of development in a society. Equity implies being equal in status, having equal opportunities, to receive an equal treatment, free of any discrimination, barriers and prejudice. This principle requires that all persons and institutions involved in the schooling arena (as are teaching and administration personnel, students/pupils, groups at

risk, schools etc.), are given equal rights according to their status, are treated equally for a normal individual and institutional development and for successful accomplishment of their duties and responsibilities. Equity can be expressed in numbers and in proportions. Respect of equity is seen as a minimal standard of today's moral and educational culture, whereas providing equal opportunities for all is a pre-condition for ensuring active participation of citizens in the social life.

Diversity implies a little bit more than ethnic affiliation and includes aspects like age, gender, religious affiliation, social status of the citizen, etc. Education for knowing about diversity involves skills like: openness, understanding for other cultures, a critical approach to social reality, etc.

INDICATORS

1. Until 2017 all children will be included in compulsory education;
2. Until 2017, at least 70% of children of age-group 5-6 are included in some form of pre-primary education, whereas 35% of age group 0-5 are included in pre-school education;
3. Until 2017, at least 85% of the respective age-group are included in the programs of upper secondary general and vocational education and training ;
4. Until 2017, majority of children with special needs are included in compulsory education;
5. Various programs are provided to support return of adults in the system of education.

MEASURES

Measure 4.3.1. Drafting of adequate policies which ensure full inclusion of all children in the system of education

Description:

- MEST develops all-inclusive policies and an adequate environment that promotes gender equality, equal access and cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial and other diversity.
- MEST and other relevant institutions engage in amendment and full implementation of legal infrastructure in pre-university education.
- Awareness raising activities are organized with parents and community on importance of education in early childhood through campaigns, seminars, training events, and other activities.
- MEST encourages and supports alternative forms for inclusion in pre-school education.
- Reasons for school drop outs are researched and analysed and respective strategies and programs of activities are designed for

addressing the issues and problems.

- Alternative programs are developed for reintegration of children who missed getting enrolled in schools or who dropped out during schooling.
- Funds are provided for setting up a network of transportation of students from rural areas and town suburbs in order to increase student participation, which could be done through cooperation with local authorities, school authorities, and representatives of communities.
- Measures are taken to provide funds for stimulation of enrolment of youth in technical and science subjects;
- Existing dormitories are reactivated and new ones are constructed for students of upper secondary schools;
- The Strategy for promotion of healthy schools and child friendly schools is finalized and implemented and the network of schools where this project is implemented is extended to receive more schools.

Measure 4.3.2. Setting up of mechanisms for equalization of informal and formal education

Description:

- Programs are designed for further qualifications based on social and economic needs of the individual and underpinning the principle of lifelong learning
- Systems of standardization, accreditation, licensing, and recognition of previous qualifications are developed to promote personal professional development
- A national advisory body is set up to cover issues of non-formal education, responsibilities of ministries are clearly defined and cooperation between ministries, NGO-s and the private sector develops with the purpose of promoting informal education.
- Partnerships are built and communications networks (government, NGO-s, private sector and community) for providing informal education
- Funds are provided for organizing informal education and respective mechanisms are set up (small grants fund) to support community initiatives in this sector
- The qualifications authority sets up a data base on informal education

- Activities are organized for increasing awareness among adults in rural areas for training in literacy, numeracy and basic skills
- A catalogue is compiled with various institutions and NGOs offering services of informal and non-formal education
- Legal infrastructure is drafted and adopted to set up and implement the National System of Qualifications
- Development and implementation of the document on classification of professions
- Development and making operational of the career counselling system
- Development of modular programs for informal and non-formal education
- Development of a dual system in vocational education and training

Measure 4.3.3. Development of social partnership for inclusion of groups at risk in social and economic processes

- Description:**
- MEST, in cooperation with other relevant agents, sees to open institutions responsible for designing adequate programs/curricula dedicated to education of marginalized and groups at risk based on gender, cultural, linguistic, and racial aspect.
 - Projects are designed for reading and writing and on basic skills for lowering the level of illiteracy
 - Developing and implementing national policies for work with youth

Measure 4.3.4. Providing adequate conditions for inclusion of children with special needs in the system of education

- Description:**
- MEST, in cooperation with other institutions, creates conditions for supporting processes of inclusion of children with special needs in all levels of education
 - Activities are organized for raising societal awareness on the importance of inclusion of children with special needs
 - Designing and implementation in schools of an inclusive curriculum that meets the individual needs of the child by implementing an Individual Education Plan
 - Qualification and re-qualification of teachers in the field of inclusive education

- Transformation of special schools into Resource Centers to assist processes of inclusion in regular schools
- Setting up of psychological and pedagogic councils in schools to facilitate inclusion
- Organizing of the diagnosing and education evaluation
- Building of cross-sector partnerships between education, health, and social welfare with the purpose of enhancing services of inclusive education;
- Development of rehab services at the level of municipalities;
- Setting up of quality and professional standards for experts in the field of rehabilitation.

CRITICAL ASSUPTIONS

1. Integration of all ethnic communities in the society
2. Fighting and decreasing poverty in the population
3. Increasing awareness on inclusive approach in education

4.4. In-service and pre-service teacher training and professional development

Quality of teaching is the most important factor in student achievement, therefore pre-service teacher training and professional development should be attached significant importance. Whereas the concept of pre-service teacher training is clear and implies regular studies in a certain field at a certain university, professional development in Kosova is more complex since it involves not only various training programs, but also opportunities for participation various events for refreshing and updating knowledge and skills, such as participation in conferences, study trips, exchange programs, etc. In Kosova, professional development also implies re-qualification of teachers for other fields.

INDICATORS

1. Until 2017 all active teachers are included in accredited programs of professional development;
2. Until 2017 all teachers must hold at least one license;
3. Until 2015 institutions of higher education offer quality programs for pre-service teacher training in harmony with internationally accepted standards;

4. Until 2012 all teachers will be trained to operate computers and basic application in IT;
5. Functional programs offering credits for in-service re-qualification of teachers are in place.

MEASURES

Measure 4.4.1. Review of study programs for training of student teachers and for re-qualification and in-service professional development.

Description: MEST and University of Prishtina ask from teacher training faculties to tune their study programs so that they observe the TTRB Administrative Instruction on Professional Standards for Pre-service Teacher Training. This administrative instruction foresees harmonization of study programs with those of the developed countries and with the requirements of the Bologna Process.
Programs for in-service training of teachers are designed and accredited.

Measure 4.4.2. Review of the MEST administrative instruction for teacher licensing and its implementation

Description: MEST shall review its regulation on teacher licensing and should provide funds for its implementation. This would motivate teachers for quality teaching. Grading and promotion of teacher should be carried out based on the qualifications, on their level of professional development, on their performance and based on student results.

Measure 4.4.3. Inclusion of experts from non-education fields in education

Description: MEST and University of Prishtina carry out development of programs for in-service teacher training and for those recruited to teach in vocational schools. During recruitment process not only education qualification is taken in consideration, but also individual professional level of the person, results from class observations and monitoring activities, and references from responsible authorities and persons. Therefore, a teacher should meet Standards of Professional Practice. Responsible institutions ensure inclusion in education also of professionals, who own high skills in a given field and can therefore be useful in quality implementation of professional practice.
MEST, UP and other partners design and implement program for training of teachers in using information technology in the process of instruction.

Measure 4.4.4. Building of capacities for regular supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of performance and achievements of teachers.

Description: Development of professional capacities is done at three levels, (1) school level (principal, teaching staff and community), (2) municipality and (3) central level (MEST) for supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of teacher training with the purpose of quality assurance. Apart from these, there will be analyses of student achievement in various local and international activities.

Creating adequate conditions which would stimulate teachers for successful work, for continuous personal professional development and for constant improvement of quality of teaching. Stimulation of teachers could be both financial and in other forms, such as public acknowledgment, rewards for successful work, participation in various activities at home and abroad, etc.

Sanctions should also be foreseen for underperformance or insufficient preparation of teachers.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The current material position of teachers is seen as a risk factor for improvement of quality of education. *Therefore, incentives should be found to increase motivation of teachers, and ways invented to increase the interest of youth for the teaching profession.* The latter is closely linked to the fact that the teaching profession is losing its attraction and, as a result, many teaching positions remain vacant.

4.5. An adequate and healthy environment for teaching and learning

The proper physical environment of learning is one of the key features of an effective school. Numerous researches and analyses indicate to the organic connectedness of the physical environment with the other parameters of effectiveness, such as: professional leadership, high expectations, turning the school into a learning organization, etc. In the case of Kosovo, accomplishing of this objective is a very challenging issue since it requires courage and strong commitment on the part of policy-makers to engage in immense financial investments which do not yield returns in the short term.

MEST, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning are in the process of developing a strategy for healthy schools, which aims at providing a healthy and safe school environment through health education, promotion of protection of environment and through strengthening of partnerships between school, family and community. Therefore, this strategic objective of our Strategy is outlined in the strategy for healthy school, too.

INDICATORS

1. The process of instruction will be carried out in maximum two shifts until 2017
2. Until 2017 basic services of school infrastructure are provided (drinking water, heating, sewerage, Internet, etc.) in all schools
3. Until 2017 basic conditions are ensured for implementation of practical instruction in all vocational schools
4. Needed conditions are provided for physical and sports activities in all school in Kosova
5. All schools are equipped with didactic resources according to accepted norms

MEASURES

Measure 4.5.1. Drafting and approval of standards, norms and administrative regulations for building and equipment of school facilities

Description: The guide providing standards for primary school construction will be reviewed and improved. This document will foresee all standards for design and construction of school facilities, including norms for facility size in relation to the number of students (square meter per student), conditions of the building site, basic configuration, orientation, internal and external learning areas, square meters for administration, lighting, quality of air, basic infrastructure, equipment, safety norms, types of construction, materials, maintenance, etc.)
Similar norms will also be set for secondary schools
Norms will also determine criteria for furniture, equipment, and for didactic resources
Norms and standards should be in harmony with European standards (EUROKOD) and should be applicable to Kosova.

Measure 4.5.2. Setting up of the sector database

Description:

- In the framework of EMIS database a separate database will be set up to apply for the infrastructure sector alone
- Setting up of this database is critical as a decision-making tool while developing (especially mid and long term) strategies and setting priorities. This database must be updated in intervals not longer than 6 to 12 months.

Measure 4.5.3. Improvement of existing school infrastructure

- Description:**
- In accordance with the set norms entire infrastructure of existing school buildings must be repaired and improved in constant striving to meet European standards.
 - All facilities which do not meet the set standards shall be repaired by:
 - Fixing and improving school building
 - Fixing and improving infrastructure for water supply and sewerage, telephone, internet, etc.
 - Arranging external areas, such as: playgrounds, schoolyards, green areas, gardens and other courts

Measure 4.5.4. Building of new schools

- Description:**
- MEST, in cooperation with partners, will focus its efforts in building new school facilities in areas where children learn in more than two shifts and in areas where school facilities pose a threat to students life and/or health.
 - MEST will engage in building additional school space by:
 - o Building new schools,
 - o Extension of existing buildings,
 - o Building sports halls and gyms,
 - o Building external areas, such as: playgrounds, sports courts, schoolyards, green areas, gardens and other multi-purpose areas.
 - Better coordination and harmonization of budget allocation and spending policies with the municipal level.

Measure 4.5.5. Maintenance and safeguarding of school property and assets

- Description:**
- MEST will work for designing policies and for putting in place of system for management and maintenance of school property and assets;
 - MEST and MED-s will engage to look after school facilities and school areas, for their maintenance and security (improve the legal documents providing against mismanagement of these

facilities)

Measure Equipping schools with teaching and learning resources
4.5.6.

- Description:**
- MEST will invest to furnish schools with standard didactic resources and with lab equipment. Special attention will be paid to utilization of new technologies in instruction and practical learning and teaching.
 - Consolidated purchase of equipment and organizing of practical instruction in vocational education in consolidated centers to allow for more students and schools using the same equipment and thus make better use of the same.
 - Establish cooperation with regional centers for vocational training in order to better use the teaching resources and equipment for education purposes.
 - MEST, in cooperation with MES-s, will furnish schools with furniture in accordance with norms for given age of students.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

A typical phenomenon for school infrastructure in Kosova is the overloaded capacities in urban areas and low utilization in some rural areas. Therefore, the chances for improving the situation in infrastructure are closely related to the two following assumptions which are out of control of the experts working on this Strategy:

1. *Stabilization of migrating processes*
2. *Development of rural areas*

4.6. Sustainable linkage of education with global economic and social developments

It is well known that the economic development of a given country is closely related to the level of education of its population and with the ability of that society to utilize achievements in education to serve for a sustainable development of human resources. Development of human resources goes beyond the increase of GDP, beyond production of goods and more than accumulation capital, which are all but ways of offering more opportunities for people. Human development has to do with creation of an environment in which a person can fully develop one's potentials and can live a productive and creative life in accordance with one's needs and interests. Human resources are the best

asset of every nation, whereas human development implies additional opportunities for a life according to their likes.

For this reason, linkages between education and global economic and social developments are a normal status for higher expectations and a pre-condition for building a democratic society with the citizen at its center.

INDICATORS

1. Increased employability and mobility of citizens within the local and international economy and labour market
2. Existence of functional programs and mechanisms for career counselling
3. Reduction of illiteracy rate in Kosova to 5 %
4. Education programs and curricula meet the needs and requirements of the labour market
5. The system of national framework of qualifications is made fully functional until 2015
6. Increased involvement of school in supporting of civil initiatives to better serve the social development

MEASURES

Measure 4.6.1. Integration of Kosova in European and global development processes

- Description:**
- Closer cooperation and links between education institutions and economy and enterprises
 - Exchange of experiences in the region and wider internationally
 - Better exchange of experiences across sectors and with social partners and employers (for example, vocational schools using spaces and equipment of Centers for Professional Development);
 - Using of labour market analyses for opening of new streams and profiles in formal and informal education
 - Implementation of the Lisbon Declaration (on a knowledge base society and economy)
 - Better implementation of mobility through the system of qualifications
 - Implementation of grade 13 in vocational education (as a bridge between upper secondary and higher education)
 - Application to the EUROPASS project (Framework for

Transparency of qualifications and competences)

- Creation of possibility to apply to Socrates II (Comenius, Lingua, Minerva, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.)
- Application of e-learning

Measure 4.6.2. System of education provides citizens with life skills

- Description:**
- System of education offers opportunities for gaining skills for lifelong learning
 - Development of competences through methods of active learning, critical thinking, active listening, functional reading and writing, mathematical skills, use of information technologies, learning of local and foreign languages, entrepreneurship skills, inter-personal and social skills, etc.
 - Development of principles of democratic citizenship through civil initiatives (encouraging initiative, participation in decision-making, promotion and application of tolerance, etc.)

Measure 4.6.3 Harmonization of curricula with trends and tendencies in society, local economy, and wider

Description: Institutions of pre-university education carry on research on needs of Kosovar society and economy, as well on trends of developments in European education and economy to determine the need to coordinate existing programs and to develop new curricula based on employability of certain professions in the labour market.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

At a time when Kosova is going through a transition phase and when there is a gap between results obtained from the education system and the requirements posed by the local economy, there are two main assumptions on which the accomplishment of this objective depends:

1. *An increased interest of employers on development of education*
2. *An accelerated economic development.*

4.7. Improving the material situation in education

Even though this Strategy foresees a range of capital investments and additional expenses for other budget categories, expert groups considered that one separate strategic objective should be focused only in improvement of material situation in education for a longer period. This reflects the commitment of experts working on this strategy to move parameters of pre-university education in Kosova to values comparable to those in developed countries in such a way that they also reflect strong commitment of all towards education.

INDICATORS

1. School grant variables are reviewed
2. Annual percentage of expenses per student capita is reviewed
3. Mechanisms on decentralization of financial assets is in place

MEASURES

Measure Increasing funds for education
4.7.1.

- Description:**
- MEST asks from the government an increase of budget funds (€/sty) for education. These funds should continue to increase until they reach parameters of per student investments in education in European countries;
 - The government will fulfil its pledges to prioritize education and for this priority to be reflected in the distribution of budget, by increasing capital investments, expenses for goods and services and funds for salaries;
 - MEST will propose to government to apply special taxes for education (luxury goods, etc.)
 - Increase of percentage of expenses in municipalities from self-generated revenues;
 - Identification of potential donors and coordination with them on allocation and spending of funds;
 - Identification and using of other financial resources at the central and local level, such as:
 - Per student participation in non-compulsory education,
 - Assistance and support through various contributions by parents
 - Assistance and support through community contributions

- Fundraising through development loans with low interests. After the settlement of the status of Kosova, it will be possible to obtain financial loans. MEST will work closely with the government to guarantee for international loans obtained for education.
- Generation of own income through decentralization at all levels;
- Making operational of mechanisms for generation and use of own income through cooperation with economy and community;

Measure 4.7.2. Waiving of tax duties off pre-university institutions

Description: MEST will send an argued memo to the government and Assembly of Kosova asking for full or partial waiving of education institutions from various taxes and duties, such as: customs duties, **excise**, VAT, property tax, tax on profit, etc.

Measure 4.7.3. Review – improvement of financing criteria

Description:

- MEST initiates forming of a inter-ministerial expert group (MEST-MEF-MPS) for reviewing the formula of municipal grants
- MEST in cooperation with Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Public Services will determine merit based criteria for salaries based on the following criteria:
 - Working position
 - Qualifications
 - Working experience
 - Professional experience
 - Extra teaching engagements
 - Overtime work
 - Trainings
- MEST will insist for improvement of criteria for goods and services, as well as opening a separate budget sub-line for:
 - Expenses for communal services (heating, electrical power, water supply, etc.) needed to provide basic conditions of work.
 - Expenses for supply with didactic resources
 - Expenses for maintenance of school facilities
 - Expenses for reparations and for wearing off of facilities

in order to extend the lifetime of existing facilities.

- Increasing quantity of capital investments in harmony with needs for new construction, extension of facilities, renovations and auxiliary infrastructure.

Measure Process of decentralization and management of financial resources
4.7.4.

- Description:**
- Setting up of mechanisms for decentralization
In order to offer more efficient services, MEST supports decentralization of finances depending on weight down to school level.
This allows for municipalities and schools to easier, faster and more transparently to manage their financial resources.
 - Setting up of monitoring mechanisms
Parallel to delegation of authority for financial management to schools and municipalities, mechanisms for monitoring and inspection must be set up at the central level, which would take needed measures in cases of mismanagement of these resources during implementation of programs and activities).

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Improving the material position of education depends on the following two assumptions:

1. *An accelerated economic development and*
2. *Finding of alternative funding resources*