

Support to Civil Society Dialogue - “People to People Actions”

Advancing Participation and Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups in Education

National Survey

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Kosova Education Center



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Kosovo Country Report

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1. Desk Research

The Comprehensive Settlement Proposal on the Status of Kosovo, drafted by President Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for the Future Status of Kosovo, says in annexe 2, The Rights of Communities and their Members, article 3, that members of communities have, among other things, the right as individuals or as communities to access public preschool, primary and secondary education in their own language, where the threshold for setting up special classes or schools with this aim is lower than that which is usually identified for educational institutions. The Republic of Kosovo Constitution and the Law for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in the Republic of Kosovo says exactly the same thing, as does Regulation 2002/19 in relation to the promulgation of the Law on Primary and Middle Education in Kosovo, approved by the Kosovo Assembly.

The Martti Ahtisaari Proposal is part of the Kosovo Declaration of Independence, declared on 17 February 2008, and also of the Republic of Kosovo Constitution, approved on 15 June 2008. Moreover, according to article 143 of the Republic of Kosovo Constitution, in cases where there is contradiction between the Republic of Kosovo Constitution and the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal for the Status of Kosovo, the latter prevails.

According to the law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in the Republic of Kosovo, in municipalities where there is an insufficient number of pupils to offer schooling in a community language which is not an official language, the Republic of Kosovo Government is obliged to offer an alternative, including subsidized transport to an area where such schooling is offered, or distance learning, various arrangements for mobile education, or offering boarding accommodation. Educational institutions in Kosovo working in a community language which is not an official language can design their curricula in their own way, on condition that these are in accordance with the general framework for an integrated curriculum and that they meet the standards of attainment specified by the Republic of Kosovo Government. Furthermore, communities have the right to prepare, in collaboration with the government, modules of learning related to their culture, history and traditions.

According to the aforementioned laws, the Republic of Kosovo Government must ensure there is sufficient staff to train teachers, and for those who are to teach in community languages, the training must be held in the appropriate language. In the selection of appropriate candidates, the authorities must take account of the need for teaching in community languages to be offered by qualified speakers of the language, where native speakers have an advantage. The law for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in the Republic of Kosovo says that the Republic of Kosovo Government must ensure that the management and teachers



in public institutions of education carry out their activities in community languages and are mainly representative of those communities and fully recognize the identity of the communities in question. Equally, according to the law, organizations representing the communities must be consulted during the drafting of Kosovan national school curricula, which must cover the history, culture and other features of the communities traditionally represented in the country, with the aim of encouraging a spirit of respect, understanding and tolerance between all Kosovo’s communities.

According to the law on Education in the Republic of Kosovo’s Municipalities, the Ministry of Education has responsibility for promoting a non-discriminatory education system with respect for every person’s right to education and the promotion of the participation of parents and communities in educational activities and the necessary forms of school-community partnerships at the local level. Similarly, regulation 2002/19 on the promulgation of the Law on Primary and Middle Education in Kosovo, approved by the Kosovo Assembly, legislates for the creation of a Kosovo Education Committee of Parents (KPAK in Albanian) made up of nine members with a 4-year mandate, to represent the interests of parents, communicating to the Ministry of Education parent opinion on every aspect of primary and middle education in Kosovo, and representing the main channel of communication between the Ministry of Education and parents.

It should be mentioned that the selection procedure and the responsibilities of governing and professional bodies and other staff in primary and middle schools in the territory of Kosovo are specified in an Administrative Instruction from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, approved on 28 January 2003. On the basis of this Instruction, the governing bodies in school are: the Headteacher and the School Council and the Pupil Council, while the professional bodies in school are the Teachers’ Council and the Council for Year Groups and Activities, and other staff in schools are: teaching staff, professional colleagues, administrative staff and technical staff.

According to the Instruction mentioned above, every school in Kosovo should form a School Council elected by teachers and parent representatives in the school. Teachers have the right to elect five representatives to the School Council while parents have the right to elect three representatives, and the Pupil Council has the right to elect a representative from among the student body. Election of the members of the School Council is done by secret ballot and their mandate is for three years, with the possibility of reelection on condition that they continue to be a parent, a teacher or pupil at the school.

The chair of the School Council is elected every year by secret ballot and must be from among the parents, while the Secretary of the School Council is the Headteacher, who does not have the right to vote. The School Council has responsibility for drawing up school rules to be presented for approval by the municipality, for choosing a parent representative and a teacher representative to take part in selection of the headteacher and teachers, for setting the sum to be asked as parental contribution and other funds to be secured beyond the school budget, for out-of-school activities, and

for keeping a record of all the school’s financial resources. The School Council is consulted on issues of physical development, issues of additional curricula (but not for the regular curriculum as this is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education), the dates of school holidays, and in general to give their perspective on the school.

Since a census hasn’t been taken in Kosovo since 1981, neither the size of the population nor its ethnic make-up is known exactly but it is reckoned that approximately 90% of the population is Albanian, while the remainder is made up of minorities: Ashkali, Bosnian, Egyptian, Roma, Serb, Turk, Gorani... The greatest minority, not only numerically but also politically, is the Serbian minority, which, according to the proposal drafted by Martti Ahtisaari in annexe 3, decentralization, article 7, which relates entirely to education, and the curricula of Kosovan schools offering education in Serbian, has the right to implement curricula or textbooks drafted by the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Serbia, on notification of the Kosovan Ministry of Education, and if the Kosovan Ministry of Education opposes the use of particular curricula or textbooks, the issue is to be referred to an independent commission to review the compliance of the curriculum or textbook in question with the Kosovan Constitution and legislation passed in accordance with this solution.

Nevertheless, since the Serbian minority has accepted neither the Proposal put forward by Martti Ahtisaari nor the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, and particularly given that Serbian pupils in Kosovo are an absolute majority in the schools organized by the parallel structures supported by the Republic of Serbia, this report covers the situation on the participation of ethnic minorities (minus the Serbs) in education in Kosovo.

In writing this report, as well as desk research, some qualitative research was also undertaken with teachers in high schools, headteachers in high schools, parents of minority ethnic pupils in high schools and with pupils in high schools. The research was carried out in five cities in Kosovo:

- in Pristina at the Sami Frashëri school, where there are Turks; the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, four teachers, four pupils and four parents were interviewed;
- in Prizren at the Gjon Buzuku school, where there are Turks and Bosnians; the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, eight teachers, eight pupils and four parents were interviewed;
- in Peja at the Ali Hadri Economics School, where there are Bosnians; the headteachers, four teachers, six pupils and four parents were interviewed;
- in Gjilan at the Zenel Hajdini school where there are Turks; the headteacher and deputy headteacher, four teachers, four pupils and four parents were interviewed;
- in Fushë Kosovë at the Hivzi Sylejmani school where there are Ashkalis; the headteacher, four teachers, three pupils and two parents were interviewed.

2. Qualitative Research

2.1. Sami Frashëri School, Pristina

The Sami Frashëri School in Pristina was founded as a Turkish school prior to 1913, although the exact year is not known. From 1913 to 1941, teaching at the school was in Serbian while from 1941-1945 teaching was in Albanian and it was at this time that the school took the name ‘Sami Frashëri’. From 1945-1955 teaching took place in Albanian and Serbian and it was called the ‘Modern Albanian School’ and the ‘Modern Serbian School’. From 1955-1989 teaching continued in Albanian and in Serbian and the school was called ‘Ivo Lola Ribar’. From 1990 when the Serbian regime excluded Albanians from schools, teaching took place in this school in people’s homes and the school took back the name ‘Sami Frashëri’. Following the end of the war in Kosovo on 12 June 1999, the school continued its teaching back on the site. The school currently has 2315 pupils, of whom 109 are Turkish, the others Albanian, and it has 80 teachers of whom 10 are Turkish and others Albanian.

The study of the concept of participation and involvement in learning/ The school’s Strategy to enable participation and involvement of parents/ pupils/ Parents’/ pupils’ motivation/ Barriers to participation and involvement/ Special preparation for minority pupils

The headteacher of Sami Frashëri School says that there are no activities/ programmes/ initiatives to increase parental/ pupil participation in school. The only project run jointly with parents/ pupils and the school leadership is about building additional accommodation since there is such a large number of applications to the school. According to the headteacher neither is there any Ministry of Education project to increase parental/ pupil participation in the school. At the school level they cannot take important decisions about education because the school management can only organize the appropriate school management. According to school management, pupils and parents have real decision-making power in the school since the most senior body in the school, the School Council, without which no decision can be made, is made up not only of five teachers but also two parents and a pupil. This council is chaired by a parent representative and manages the resources allocated to it by various grants, and is accountable to the Municipal Education Directorate.

The headteacher says that he is interested in parental involvement in the life of the school because without parental involvement, the success of the learning process, including regular attendance, and also success in lessons, will be doubtful. According to the headteacher, parents are involved in the life of the school by helping with resolving any conflicts which might arise in school but, most of all, by contributing to the management of the school and it must be said that initiatives of this kind almost always come from the parents/ pupils. To illustrate this, the headteacher offers the following example:

Since Sami Frashëri school doesn't have constant water from the tap, parents/pupils undertook an initiative to buy a water tank so that the school could have water even when there was none in the pipes. Similarly, given the difficulties with electricity supply, the parents/pupils initiated a project to collect money to buy a generator although, luckily, in the end the Pristina Municipal Education Directorate intervened and allocated money for a generator. It should be added that there are examples of the pupils in particular classes, with their parents' permission collecting money to paint their classes.

Set against what was said above, the School Council is the highest body in the school and the decisions of this council, made up of five teachers, two parents and a pupil, are taken by majority vote. It is therefore clear that parents/pupils can be outvoted, but according to the headteacher at Sami Frashëri, this has never happened. As far as the selection of parents for the Council is concerned, each class elects two parent representatives who then elect the School Parent Council, made up of 11 parents, and then the Parent Council sends its representatives to the School Council. No particular knowledge or experience is required to be a parent representative; it is mainly about a willingness to be active.

According to the headteacher, parents are interested in taking part in important decisions in the school because their own children are involved, but there are cases when they aren't interested in taking part in making such decisions, though these cases are not common. Moreover, parents get involved in extra-curricular activities such as visits within Kosovo, as well as abroad. The school management admits that the school has no particular strategy to encourage parental participation in their children's education.

The school management doesn't inform parents/pupils from minority groups about their rights, either through distributing printed materials or by organizing special meetings with minority pupils. The school management says that when the school organizes cultural activities, for example the school's Founder's Day, minorities are usually invited to take part in the activities organized by the school. Furthermore, according to school management, there is absolutely no kind of linguistic barrier for minority pupils to communicate with the school authorities since they communicate easily in Albanian. The school management says that there is no misunderstanding between teachers and pupils from ethnic minority groups, nor between pupils from minority groups and school staff.

Extent of parental participation in education/ Home-school communication/ Communication with Minority parents/ Teachers' support for improving parental participation

The teachers at Sami Frashëri school say that parental involvement is low even though almost half the parents come to parents' meeting, but they are not as active and interested as they should be – since more than half the parents are well-educated – because of difficult economic circumstances. In their opinion, apart from participation in parents' meetings (participation is not very satisfactory) and

involvement in the organization of school trips, parents can't contribute to decisions about the curriculum because it is only the Ministry of Education who makes such decisions.

The teachers believe that if parents were to get involved and to come to school every week, this would have a positive impact because pupils would learn more, and would also have better attendance. They say that face-to-face meetings with parents are organized four times a year and that they are compulsory but that as well as these compulsory meetings, an hour a week is set aside for parents who are interested in their children's success. Teachers contact parents by telephone and do home visits, but only when parents don't come to find out about their children and when they are doing badly in school (with poor grades, poor attendance, causing trouble...).

The teachers claim that there is no group of parents excluded from the life of the school, and certainly not minority parents who, according to the teachers, have no linguistic barrier to getting involved because they all speak Albanian. They admit that the school has not helped minority parents to have greater involvement because the lack of adequate parental involvement is caused by difficult economic circumstances and nothing else. As far as parental involvement in their children's education is concerned, the teachers say that no training has been organized apart from training on the reform process, organized by the Ministry of Education, the Municipal Education Directorate and the Kosovo Education Centre...

Extent of pupil participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Participation of minority pupils/ Communication between the child and the school

The minority pupils at Sami Frashëri school say that they have influence in the school (even though decisions are made by the majority) because there has never been a case when a decision made by the majority has not been acceptable to them too. The areas where they can successfully get involved in education are regular attendance and successful completion of the work set by their teachers, as well as taking part in extra-curricular activities such as sports, charity work, trips abroad and within Kosovo, visits to museums... but they can't influence the curriculum and the way that it is taught. They take part in activities organized for Founder's Day but they do have a request that this day and these activities should also be in Turkish.

The school has not offered minority pupils any opportunity to help their learning needs to be understood, and nor has it used any strategy to encourage their participation in the school. Furthermore, the school has never informed ethnic minority pupils about their rights as a minority. They say that 23 April is their day and that lessons aren't held on that day: sports, cultural, theatrical and literary activities are organized... but not in school but in the local Turkish community building in Prishtina...

The pupils would like the notices given out by school management to be not only in Albanian but also in Turkish because there are pupils who don't understand all the

content of the notices. Similarly, given that some pupils don't understand Albanian, the school hasn't done anything for them to stop them having problems in communicating with school management. As a consequence, Turkish pupils ask for Albanian lessons in school more than twice a week because, according to them, this isn't enough. They also believe that the English and Latin lessons taught by Albanian teachers should, in the future, be taught by Turkish teachers. According to them, there are two main barriers to their more active involvement in their education:

The first problem is a lack of textbooks. The teachers dictate. We only have textbooks for Turkish language and literature, which we've brought from Turkey, who has sent us free textbooks for other subjects, but we can't use them because they don't match the Kosovan curriculum. The second problem is that we have three classes with Turkish minority pupils and Albanian pupils are registered in those classes for at least three reasons: they couldn't register in the Albanian section at Sami Frashëri; so that it's easier for them to go to Turkey to study; to be able to register more easily in a University of Prishtina department because of the special arrangements for minorities...¹

As far as communication between pupils is concerned, the Turkish minority students say that the school treats them the same as all pupils, but nevertheless the Albanian pupils have more frequent and better communication with the school authorities because of not having a language barrier. So even though they don't have any problem with school management, they are asking for a Deputy Headteacher to be Turkish so that communication could be easier.

Extent of parental participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Participation for minority parents/ Home-school communication/ Strategies and barriers to parental involvement

For parents at Sami Frashëri school, involvement in the school includes parents' involvement in checking whether their children are attending regularly, whether they are learning and whether they are well-behaved and, in their opinion, this is also what the school expects of them. For them, parental involvement doesn't mean anything different for parents of ethnic minority children. Parents have influence in decision-making in school because they are represented on the Parents Council and representatives of the Parents Council are represented on the School Council and this representation is important because it's about their children... As well as taking part in meetings, offering some symbolic financial help (mainly for children who are poor or sick), and sometimes some help in issues of school governance or administration, parents haven't had the chance to help with decisions on the curriculum because such a thing is not allowed.

¹ Sami Frashëri school has 3 classes with Turkish minority pupils, with a total of 109 pupils, and according to the pupils, of these, 37 are Albanians and most of them have problems following lessons in Turkish so the lessons often take place in two languages, and this causes problems.

Parents of Turkish minority pupils have very clear memories of the day when they registered their children at Sami Frashëri school because they were registered more easily than the Albanian children. The school management gave them no information about their rights as parents of minority children and never invited them to take part in any cultural event organized by the school. In their opinion, the greatest problems their children face are:

A lack of textbooks, the large number of pupils in the class, and later the lack of Turkish language departments at the University of Prishtina. Another problem is that Sami Frashëri school is the only high school in Pristina Municipality which offers teaching in Turkish. Everyone knows about these problems, but nothing has ever been done...

Parents of Turkish pupils say that they don't have a problem communicating with the school management since the overwhelming majority speak Albanian, and they don't have any misunderstanding with the school management. Their communication with the school is done by means of meetings held four times a year, but they say that they are involved even when there aren't meetings. They don't receive any written report from the school about the successes or lack of them of their children. The school has no strategy at all for involving parents in their children's education. The main barrier to parents getting more involved in the school is difficult economic conditions.

2.2 Gjon Buzuku School – Prizren

Gjon Buzuku school in Prizren was founded in 1874. Teaching at the school was in Turkish until 1912 and from 1913 until 1941 in Serbian. From 1941 to 1944, teaching was in Albanian, and from 1945 in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish, and the name of the school was Jovanka Radivojević-Kica. In 1991-2, Albanian pupils and teachers were expelled from the site and learning took place in private homes. After the war, on 12 June 1999, Albanian returned once again to the building. The school now has 3100 pupils and 130 teachers; there are 175 Bosnian pupils and 15 Bosnian teachers; 146 Turkish pupils and 15 Turkish teachers. There are four departments in the school: the general department, the science and nature department, the mathematics and IT department and the linguistic and social department. The school has two separate sites and five **punkte** in villages.

The study of the concept of participation and involvement in learning/ The school's strategy for enabling parent/ pupil participation and involvement/ The motivation of parents/ pupils/ Barriers to participation and involvement/ Special preparation for minority pupils

The school management at Gjon Buzuku school says that there is a programme for increasing parent/ pupil participation in school, which plans to have meetings with parents every month, while meetings between parents and class tutors currently take place four times a year. According to the school management, the Ministry of Education has no project for increasing parent/ pupil participation in school.

The management claims that pupils and parents have real decision-making power in the school since the highest school body, the School Council, without whose agreement no decision can be made, is made up of three parents and a pupil as well as five teachers. The headteacher is also secretary of the School Council but does not have the right to vote. Parent members of the School Council are chosen by the parents and, moreover, the School Council is led by a parent representative and no decision can be taken without parent/ pupil agreement even though there are more teachers. The School Council is brought together as needed, but the regulations require that it must meet at least four times a year. The school management says that it is working on parental involvement in the life of the school and expects that this will have an impact on pupils’ attendance, and on their success in lessons. According to the management:

Parents are involved in the life of the school in helping with the activities which the school arranges for particular days such as Founder’s Day (10 June), Kosovo Independence Day (17 February), Flag Day (28 November) and so on; also for school trips in Kosovo and abroad, tidying the school playground, looking after the school site, the sports hall, equipping the school library...

The school informs pupils, via teachers, about every decision taken, and informs parents via pupils. As was said above, the School Council is the only decision-making group involving pupils, teachers and parents while groups involving teachers and pupils include the school magazine group, the literature group, the music group, the sports group... According to school management, parents are interested in taking part in important decision-making in the school – in this school there hasn’t been any project initiated solely by parents – and the motive is entirely their desire for their children to be educated as well as possible. Contact between the school and parents is mainly through parents meetings, but also sometimes between the school management and parents. Usually parents of pupils who are doing well in their learning and are ready to work are interested in being part of the Parents’ Council/ School Council and it is always the parent of a pupil in class 10/11 who is chosen for these bodies so that they can be there longer.

The management doesn’t inform parents/ pupils from minority groups about the rights they have, whether through distributing printed materials or through special meetings organised for minority pupils. The school management says that when the school has cultural activities, like the school’s Founder’s Day, minorities are usually invited to take part in the activities which the school organizes, as well as to present something from their culture. In terms of linguistic barriers for communication with school authorities, according to school management, the majority of minority pupils speak Albanian, but when there are cases of them not speaking Albanian then communication occurs through interpreters. The school management says that the decisions taken by the school are translated into minority languages and, moreover, the school magazine is in three languages: Albanian, Turkish and Bosnian.

In terms of the barriers to more active involvement of parents in learning, according to school management, as well as the difficult economic situation, the fact that parents of

lower-achieving students are embarrassed about coming to school to hear about their children has an impact, even though school management says that it has always insisted that when the under-achievement of any pupil is discussed, it is done so away from other parents. Another barrier is the lack of dedicated spaces for meetings between parents and class tutors so that they can hear about the achievements of their children.

The school management says that teachers communicate no differently with minority pupils and they don't believe that pupils from the ethnic majority have better communication with the school. According to school management there was a problem between Turkish minority students and an Albanian language teacher who had asked them to learn the poem, “Hymn to the flag” by the Albanian writer, Fan Noli, and they refused to learn what they called ‘Albanian nationalist poetry’, but this was an isolated incident that has now been resolved. According to the school management, the greatest problem for ethnic minority pupils – other than that most minority teachers work in more than one school to fulfil their quota of hours – is that a fair proportion of minority teachers are not qualified. Another problem is the lack of textbooks, and the Municipal Education Directorate as well as the Ministry of Education have been informed of this.

Extent of parental participation in education/ Home-school communication/ Communication with Minority Parents/ Support from teachers for improving parental participation

The teachers at Gjon Buzuku school say that there should be greater parental involvement and, according to them, parents should have more contact with teachers. In their opinion, the difficult economic situation means that parental involvement is not satisfactory even though at the end of the year all of them find time to come to school and interfere in the assessment process (improving grades). They say that as well as taking part in parental meetings, parents help financially where they can, but this is mainly in a symbolic manner, and they are involved in organizing school trips, but they can't contribute to decisions about the curriculum because only the Ministry of Education can do that.

According to the teachers, the advantage of parents being involved in the education of their children is that if teachers come to school to see their children's results, pupils realize that their parents are interested and they don't miss lessons and they make sure they learn because they know that their parents are part of the process. They say that meetings with parents are organized directly four times a year and they are compulsory, but there are also occasions when teachers contact parents by telephone and make home visits, but these are rare. According to the teachers of Turkish and Bosnian minority pupils,

The main problem is a lack of textbooks, which urgently need to be translated since the use of textbooks from Turkey or Bosnia/ Herzegovina is not allowed. Another problem is that the minority teachers have to teach in two or more school in order to fulfil their quota of hours. Another problem is the inappropriate nature



of the curriculum for Albanian for minorities and, even worse, the teachers of Albanian put minority students in an unenviable position by giving them Albanian poetry such as ‘Oh how good it is to be Albanian’ to learn. Equally, our communication with the school authorities would be easier if the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher was from a minority.

Furthermore, the teachers say that there is a need for more space; for dedicated rooms for meetings with parents, for laboratories for science, for the library to be equipped with books from minority languages, for pastoral care, a school psychologist and doctor... They also complain that they have not only not had any training on parental involvement in education, but that they haven’t had any training of any other kind, while the Albanians have had a number of training sessions of different kinds.

Extent of pupils’ participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Participation of minority pupils/ Communication between children and the school

Students from the Gjon Buzuku school say that the school expects them to learn and to attend school regularly, but also to get involved in the organization of a range of activities such as the school newspaper, activities for Founder’s Day, in cleaning the school building and playground. As well as these activities, the school’s pupils are also involved in organizing the so-called ‘Dessert Day’ when they make sweets on a voluntary basis and sell them in the town and give the money they make to charity. The pupils complain,

About a lack of space and of a range of laboratories, a lack of sufficient learning resources (chairs, tables, blackboards), not having enough water in school, the poor condition of the toilets... But it’s not just us who know about these problems – so do the teachers, the parents and the school management.

The minority students say that the school hasn’t tried to understand their learning needs, nor has it used any strategy to encourage their participation in the learning process, and nor has it informed them about their rights as minorities. The Turkish students in the school complain that school notices are written in Bosnian as well as in Albanian, but not in Turkish. Similarly, according to them, while the Bosnians have a day off for Bosnians’ Day, the Turkish pupils don’t have a day off for Turkish Day.

Furthermore, the Turkish pupils complain that if they want to continue their education to university level in Turkish they have to go to Turkey, and many good students are maintaining the roads or doing physical labour because it’s not possible for them to go to Turkey to study. On the other hand, the Bosnian pupils don’t have a problem with university education because in Peja and in Prizren there are faculties in Bosnian and in the near future it is expected that a few more faculties operating in Bosnian will open. However, the problem which the Bosnian students have is that even if they want to, they cannot study in Serbia, Montenegro or Bosnia-Herzegovina because these countries don’t accept Kosovan diplomas, only those from UNMIK.

According to the minority pupils, the Albanian pupils have more frequent and better communication with the school authorities because of there being no language barrier. They say that they usually communicate with school management via the teachers so it would be good to have a Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher from among the minorities (Bosnian/ Turkish). They also want the pupils to be represented in the School Council not just by one pupil, who is always from the majority community, but to have a student from the Bosnian community and one from the Turkish community because in this way their needs can be better represented.

Minority students in this school believe that the greatest barrier is the lack of textbooks, apart from in the subjects of Albanian, English and French. In other subjects, the teachers mainly dictate to them and don't allow them to bring textbooks from Bosnia-Herzegovina or Turkey because they don't match the Kosovan curriculum, so they ask that either textbooks should be drafted, or that the use of textbooks from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey respectively should be allowed. Not only the pupils and the teachers, but also parents and school management and the Municipal Education Directorate and the Ministry of Education have been informed about this problem.

The extent of parental participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Participation of minority students/ Home-school communication/ Strategies and barriers to parental involvement

For parents at the Gjon Buzuku school, involvement in their children's education involves creating the conditions for their child's learning, making sure that their children attend school; that they learn, that they behave well, but also understanding what their child's skills are. Parents take part in meetings, they are represented in bodies such as the Parents Council and the School Council, where they offer ideas for administrative issues in the school, such as ideas for creating a school webpage. The parents believe that teachers' pay should be increased and, along with pay, their working hours to be eight hours a day because the teachers should teach pupils how to learn, and not just offer diplomas to people who can't do a job.

Parents say that they have solved a number of problems together with the school, and the greatest problem, in their opinion, was that many pupils smoke in school, this being the reason that the decision was taken for the school to strictly forbid smoking, and this has led to a noticeable reduction in smoking. Similarly, school security was arranged with financial support from parents because of the problems arising from a lack of security: strangers gaining entry and bothering the pupils, stealing valuables from pupils... Another important project which parents took part in was the decision for pupils to wear uniform, which has had a positive impact on school security. According to parents, these examples show that parental participation in their children's education is very important. According to them, as well as setting up cameras in school, one very important project the school initiated was setting up a box where parents and pupils could post their comments.

However, according to parents, although the classes in the school have a capacity for 30 pupils at most, it would be good not to accept up to 40 pupils per class because with more pupils there aren't enough chairs and school desks. The parents also say that the school should open an official email address and have an employee available to reply to the email which parents send to the school address about any concerns they have. They also say that the school noticeboard, which is full of information in Albanian, should have all its material in Turkish and Bosnian, even though the majority can understand the contents, but having the information in minority languages shows respect for the right for them to be informed in their mother tongue. However, parents say that on the other hand, verbal communication with the school authorities is very good because the school authorities take great care and show great respect for minorities. They say that they don't know of any misunderstanding between minority parents and the school. According to them:

The greatest problem is a lack of textbooks and the Kosovan Ministry of Education should come to an agreement on this with the Bosnian and Turkish Ministries of Education or should translate textbooks from Albanian into Bosnian and Turkish. Other issues are: ensuring transport for pupils who live a long way from school; building a school library with more books in Bosnian/Turkish, where pupils can learn after school; twinning the school with schools in surrounding countries; museum visits; knowledge tests, international talent contests...

Parents say that they have informed the Parents Council, the School Council and the Municipal Education Directorate about all these problems. The main barrier to greater parental participation in their children's education is a lack of time for some, and for a greater proportion, difficult economic circumstances. They would like the Deputy Headteacher to be from the Bosnian/ Turkish community. And despite the comments they have, parents say that they have not thought about changing their children's school because, according to them, there is none better in Kosovo. Their idea for improving the relationship between the school and parents consists of increasing the frequency of contact but by using telephone and email because this is a way of saving time and informing parents more quickly.

2.3 Ali Hadri Economics High School, Peja

The Ali Hadri Economics High School in Peja was founded in 1946. Until the middle of the 1960s, teaching was only in Serbian, even though the pupils were from all communities. At the end of the 1960s, teaching began in Albanian. In 1990 the Serbian regime expelled Albanians from school buildings so teaching was done in people's homes and it was at that time that the school took the name of the Albanian historian Ali Hadri. From 12 June 1999, when the Serbian forces left Kosovo, teaching began again in the school. Today the school has 1600 pupils and 112 teachers, of whom 90 pupils and 13 teachers are Bosnian. The school has a total of 15 sectors: general economy, accountability, banks and insurance, wholesale and retail trade, logistics, shipping, customs, business administration, legal assistance,



administrative assistance, social activities organizer, restaurant assistant, hotel assistant and tourist skills, food technology, veterinary science and forestry.

Study of the concept of participation and involvement in learning/ School strategy for enabling parent and pupil participation and involvement/ Parent/pupil motivation/ Barriers to participation and involvement/ Special preparation for minority pupils

The management of the Ali Hadri Economics High School says that parents don't show a great interest in being a part of the learning process. Even though the school is always discussing how to increase parental participation, it has not drafted a concrete programme to address this issue, and it is also unaware as to whether the Ministry of Education has any concrete plan to address the issue.

According to school management, the pupils and parents are included in decision-making in school since the highest body in the school, the School Council, is made up not only of five teachers but also of three parents and a pupil, and no decision can be made without agreement from this body. The headteacher is also the secretary of the School Council but does not have the right to vote. Parent members of the School Council are chosen by parents and, moreover, the School Council is chaired by a parent representative, so that no decision can be made without the agreement of parents/ pupils, even though there are more teachers on the Council. The School Council can take decisions about the school in relation to school management; trips in Kosovo and abroad, teacher training, participation in exhibitions, the school's private income...²

The school management says that they expect parents to ensure that their children attend school, are successful in their learning, and don't make any trouble. According to them, parents should find time to come to school because less than 30% of parents don't come to parents meetings, but those who do come try to help, though these are rare instances because the pupils here are from the villages and the majority are poor, but there are cases where certain parents don't come to school because they are embarrassed because they know that their children are not learning, are not coming to school regularly and are making trouble. Even worse, according to school management, there are some cases where parents have never come to the school in the four years of their children's education. However, some of the parents are committed because they are aware that this is of importance for their children; the initiative on school security, for which each parent pays 5 euros a year, the school uniform initiative.

² According to the headteacher of Ali Hadri Economics High School, this year the Ministry of Education is planning to begin school decentralization in three steps: a) finances so that the school will manage school income; but the school will also do the financial planning, together with the Municipal Education Directorate; b) selection of teaching staff; c) the school governing body will be selected by the school.

The school management says that pupils’ participation in the decision-making process is important because there is no-one better than them to protect their interests and this is the reason why we are asking their opinion on everything in school even though very few suggestions come from them. The school management has a plan that they will solve some school problems, such as damage to the playground together with pupils/ parents, ensuring that unauthorized people can’t gain access; planting in the school playground; placing seats and rubbish bins in the school playground.

According to school management, the greatest problem the Bosnian community has is the lack of textbooks in Bosnian, which is something the Ministry of Education should arrange as soon as possible. Equally, all the material which comes from the Ministry of Education is only in Albanian and the school management translates them and tells the Bosnian pupils about them in their own language, so they say that these materials should come to the school in Bosnian. The school management says that there are no language barriers for the Bosnian pupils because most of the teachers speak Bosnian, and the Bosnian pupils also voluntarily learn Albanian for four hours every week and many of them understand Albanian. According to school management, the Bosnian pupils are included in school activities such as the school Founder’s Day which includes a cultural programme and they present their traditional costume. The school management says,

Minority pupils in our school experience positive discrimination. For example, for security reasons we decided to give them the morning shift because we were afraid that something might happen in the afternoon shift even though nothing has ever happened to them. We wanted to ensure special transport from the villages of Vitimirica and Dobrusha where the Bosnian pupils come from, about 10km from the school, but the Bosnian parents asked for joint transport to be organized for Bosnians and Albanians.

The extent of parental participation in education/ Home-school communication/ Communication with Minority Parents/ Teacher support for improvement of parent participation

For teachers at Ali Hadri Economics High School, parental participation in their children’s education is important because by getting involved in the learning, attendance and behaviour of their children, they contribute to them having successful education. They say that about one third of parents take part in meetings and this is as a result of their difficult economic conditions, level of education and a lack of a sense of the future – the majority of pupils who complete high school are interested in leaving Kosovo – and for another group the reason is because their children are low-achieving students.

The teachers say that they communicate with parents by means of meetings and by telephone, but there are also cases when they make home visits, although these are extremely rare. They say that they don’t have any ideas about how to involve more parents, other than punishing pupils who don’t bring their parents, by excluding them

from school, even though the law says that they have the right to exclude for no more than 3-5 days.

The teachers say that the Bosnian pupils are included in activities such as Founder’s Day where they recite Bosnian poetry and present national dress, but not in the trips that the school organizes since they only arrange them to go to Albania, where only the Albanian pupils go, while the Bosnian pupils are interested in going to Bosnia-Herzegovina or Montenegro, but they can’t because there are very few Bosnian pupils and the economic situation of most of them is difficult.

The teachers say that the school management is correct in its dealings with them and that they feel included in the decision-making related to the school since one of the teachers on the School Council is Bosnian. Even though they speak Bosnian to the representative of the school management and are dealt with appropriately, the Bosnian teachers would like a deputy headteacher who was one of the Bosnian teachers because this would make communication even easier.

The teachers say that there has been no training on parent participation, but they have had other training from a range of international organizations together with the Didactic Centre in Peja. As well as this, the teachers commented on working conditions: the lack of textbooks apart from English language textbooks, the lack of laboratories for a number of areas of the curriculum, the lack of equipment such as tables, chairs, blackboards, oil... They also want the pupils to have more extra-curricular activities: sports, cultural events, and those focused on the environment... They complain that:

Apart from the Business Faculty in Peja and the Education Faculty in Prizren, which are in Bosnian, for other courses students have to go to Montenegro or Bosnia-Herzegovina, or even to Novi Pazar, but Serbia doesn’t recognize diplomas from Kosovo and they have to pay as foreign students. A small proportion of the Bosnian pupils who master Albanian register at the University of Prishtina, where they take lectures in Albanian although they can do their tests in Bosnian.

The extent of pupil participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority pupil participation/ Communication between the child and the school

Bosnian pupils at the Ali Hadri Economics High School say that their school expects them to learn, to attend school regularly, to behave well, and to be involved in the organization of a range of activities. They believe that when possible the school takes account of their requests and they give as an example of this their request to have lessons in the morning for security reasons, particularly for the girls. However, they complain that:

We don’t have textbooks for any subject. We take notes in every lesson except English. And another great problem, since this is a professional school, is the lack

of qualified teachers, the lack of laboratories, especial for professional subjects, the lack of practice opportunities in a number of courses, the lack of tables, chairs, blackboards, but also proper heating and good doors and windows...

The students say that they have complained about all of these problems to parents and teachers and they have complained to school management as well as to the municipal bodies for education, and have received nothing but promises. The school’s minority pupils don’t feel represented on the pupil bodies, or in other activities such as trips. Even worse, they say that there are some Albanian pupils who want to make trouble with them just because they are Bosnian, but these incidents are not common and they say that they don’t have any problem with the school management and teachers.

According to the pupils, the teachers behave the same with all pupils without any distinction, but it’s natural that communication between Albanian pupils and the school management is more frequent and closer because of the language... Half the Bosnian pupils in the school speak Albanian, but nevertheless, pupils who need to communicate with the Albanian teachers or the school management go accompanied by Bosnian teachers. The pupils say that the school management behaves well but that communication would be much better if the deputy headteacher was from among the Bosnian teachers.

Extent of parental participation/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority parent participation/ Home-school communication/ Strategies and barriers to parental involvement

For minority parents at the Ali Hadri Economics High School, parental involvement means observing children in school, which means meetings with teachers and discussions with pupils. The school has a Parents Council where parents work to help the school with their proposals, or financially or by gathering donations for some charity initiative, but the difficult economic conditions mean that parents are not as involved as they should be. According to the parents, it would be good to create an office within the school where a parent could work full-time and paid and could be constantly informed about what is going on in school, what pupils’ needs are, and so on. The parents say that the school expects them to come to school more frequently and to see whether their children are attending school and learning.

Parents say that the school management informs them about the courses where the school can offer the best conditions so that they can direct their children, because they have to specialize in year 11, and many specialisms can’t be followed in Bosnian for financial reasons or because of the lack of teaching materials, a lack of co-operation with the business community and language barriers...

Minority parents remember the day when they registered their children in school because they were happy because this was about their children’s education, but they also say that they were sad because conditions in the school weren’t good because of the lack of textbooks, the lack of qualified teachers, the lack of laboratories as well as

sufficient space, chairs, tables, blackboards... The relevant bodies know about all of this.

Bosnian parents in the school say that the school mainly communicates with them through parent meetings and with great respect. They say that the school contacts them to communicate their children’s success in lessons or school attendance and behaviour. In their opinion, as the majority of the school, the Albanians meet with the school more often than the Bosnian parents, most of whom come from villages and are very poor. As well as the issues mentioned above, the parents complain about:

A lack of training for teachers; a lack of projects in school for involving parents in the education of their children, a lack of punitive measures, because in ten years, not one Bosnian pupil has repeated a year; the lack of a parent office, the lack of a webpage where parents could be informed about all the activities going on in school, the lack of a pastoral support worker, a school psychologist and doctor.

2.4 Zenel Hajdini School – Gjilan

Zenel Hajdini School in Gjilan was founded in 1945. From 1954 the number of classes with Albanian pupils was noticeably reduced, but from 1966 the number of Albanian language classes started to grow and in the school year 1972/3, the separate classes began work in the school in the village of Zhegër, and later there were branches of the school in Bujanoc, Kamenica and Viti. The school currently has 2463 pupils and 3550 m², making 1.44m² per pupil. Teaching is done in three shifts with 30-minute lessons because of the inadequate space and the large number of pupils. The school has 115 teachers. There are 34 Turkish pupils in the school and 9 teachers. The school has 5 courses: general studies, mathematics-information studies, natural sciences, social sciences, and linguistics.

The extent of the idea of participation and involvement in learning/ The school strategy to enable parent/ pupil participation and involvement/ Parent/ pupil motivation/ Barriers to participation and involvement/ Special preparation for minority pupils

Zenel Hajdini school has no project to encourage parent participation in the education of their children. Equally, according to the school management, the Ministry of Education doesn’t have a plan for encouraging parental participation in school, other than that recently some meetings were organized on violence in school, when parents were asked to be more involved and to have more frequent contact with school staff. According to the school management, the teachers are required to involve parents in the learning process because almost every teacher – other than the old teachers – is a tutor for a class and they have parent meetings at least four times a year. The school says that the parents have real decision-making power because they lead the School Council which is made up of three parents, one pupils and five teachers.

The school management says that it asks pupils to attend, to learn and to behave well, and it asks parents to motivate their children and to come to school regularly to find out about them because it is in this way that they can contribute to stopping things such as violence, smoking, drugs and so on.

The school management says that parents help greatly in school and gives as examples the times when parents have offered material assistance, for example in buying paint to whitewash the school; buying fuel for the school heating; repairing doors and windows in the school and so on. But, according to the school management, the school plans to have two projects which will be carried out by pupils; one is about tidiness and cleanliness in the school while the other is about pupil rights and anonymous evaluation of teachers.

The school council is the highest body and decisions are taken there by majority vote, and even though parents/ pupils can be outvoted, according to the school management such a thing has never happened. Each class chooses two parent representatives in the School Council who then choose the School Parent Council, which is made up of 11 parents and sends its representative to the School Council. The parent representative is chosen on the basis of their willingness to be active.

According to the school management, parents are interested in taking part in important decision-making in the school because it involves their children but there are cases, even though they are rare, when they are not interested. Moreover, parents are involved in extra-curricular activities such as trips in Kosovo and abroad. The school management says that there is no strategy for encouraging parent participation in education.

The school management does not inform minority parents/ pupils about their rights. The school management says that when the school has activities it invites minorities to take part. According to the school management, minority pupils have no linguistic barriers to communicating with the school authorities, since they communicate freely in Albanian, and thus have no misunderstandings either with teachers or with pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The extent of pupils’ participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority pupils’ participation/ Home-school communication

Minority pupils at the Zenel Hajdini school think that the school expects them to attend school regularly, to learn, to behave well and to get involved with extra-curricular activities such as sports, cultural or other kinds of activities. They say that the only difference in being a minority pupil is a numerical difference and, in fact, in their opinion, the learning environment is better for minority pupils because they are between 10 and 12 pupils in a class whereas the majority pupils are 40 pupils to a class.

The pupils say that they are not represented in Young People from Schools, but they are involved in cultural and sports activities in school, and also in activities that are

organized for Founder’s Day. Pupil participation in Young People from Schools is important for them because they want to be involved in taking decision related to themselves.

They say that the school doesn’t inform them about their rights as minority pupils, but they say they are happy that from now on Turkish pupils are going to have the chance for a day off school every year on 23 April which is Turkish Day, and for them this is a sign of respecting their rights as a minority, even though the school doesn’t organize any activity on this day.

According to them there is no barrier in communicating with the school management, and no language barrier because all the pupils speak Albanian too, and communication between the school management/ teachers and the minority students is the same as with the others, even though the Albanian pupils communicate more easily with the school because of the language. They say they have no problem with school but,

The greatest problem is that we don’t have textbooks in our language. We spend the whole lesson taking notes. Out of the 14 subjects we study we have textbooks only for English language and Latin. The other problem is that we have some subjects taught by Albanian teachers and sometimes we don’t understand everything they are explaining to us.

They say that the teachers, the school management and parents know about these problems but up till now nothing has been done. The pupils say that Turkish KFOR soldiers and other Turkish organizations have brought them books, but the teachers have said that they can’t use them because they don’t match the Kosovan curriculum. According to the pupils, textbooks should be drafted as soon as possible, or textbooks should be translated because in their opinion this is causing great difficulty in learning.

The extent of parental participation/ Home-school communication/ Communication with minority parents/ Teacher support for improving parental participation

The teachers at Zenel Hajdini school say that parents should be involved at home with their children, checking whether they have done the work they were set at school, and should come to school more often to see whether their children are attending regularly, whether they are learning successfully and are behaving well. According to the teachers, parents are involved in the Parents Council and sometimes involved in some other activity organized by the school such as trips to a range of places within Kosovo, even though these activities are very rare. According to them, the parents who get involved are mainly those who are more intellectually advanced, but there are exceptions to this.

The main reason, in their opinion, for the inadequate involvement of parents, is the difficult economic situation of most parents. The teachers are convinced that

parental participation has a great impact on teaching, attendance and discipline. The teachers say that they meet with parents four times in a school year, and when necessary even more often, but there are also cases when parents come to school without being invited, even though these are very rare. They say that there are cases when they contact parents by telephone, but rarely, while there are no occasions when they are forced to go to the parents’/ pupils’ home.

As far as the involvement of minority parents is concerned, the teachers say that there is no difference, and that, in their opinion, the Turkish parents are well-represented in the Parent Council, as well as in the School Council and they have no barriers of any kind, including no language barriers since the overwhelming majority of them speak Albanian very fluently. In their opinion the school should organize special meetings with parents to persuade them that their involvement in the education of their children is extremely important. The teachers say that there has been no training on involving parents in their children’s education – but that they have had other training, mainly organized by KEC – and that they have no idea of how to encourage parents to be involved in their children’s education.

The extent of parents’ participation in education/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority parents’ participation/ Home-school communication/ Strategies and barriers to parental involvement

According to the parents at Zenel Hajdini school, their involvement means that they should work together with their children’s teachers, and also with the school management and take part in solving problems at school. They say that parents have a role in decision-making in school because they have the Parent Council, whose representatives are on the School Council, which is chaired by a parent. The main barriers to greater parental involvement, according to parents themselves, are economic conditions and the irresponsibility of a group of parents who force their children to work, and this has a bad impact because the children who work cannot attend school as they should. The parents want Turkish teachers’ pay to be greater because a Turkish teacher cannot fulfil their quota of 20 lessons a week in one subject, and is thus forced to teach at least three subjects in order to meet their quota.

The parents say that at home they ensure that their children do the work they have brought home from school and they attempt to give priority to Albanian since it is the main language in Kosovo, and they want the school management to make more of an effort in this respect since there are minority pupils who have problems with communication because of language. They say that when necessary they communicate with the school even when there isn’t a meeting and they take part in the organization of trips in Kosovo, and beyond, in Albania, and also in organizing graduation evening, and similarly trips to the museum in Pristina and so on. Participation in school is important to them because they are making decisions about their children, but they want the school to tell parents when their child does not attend school.

They say that their children registered at the school with very little restriction because this is the only high school in Gjilan Municipality where teaching takes place in Turkish. According to them the teachers are young and most have little experience, and some are unqualified and most of them send their own children to schools in Albanian, not Turkish; there are 25 Turkish teachers in Gjilan and 80% of them send their children to be educated in Albanian. However, for parents the greatest problem is:

The lack of textbooks and staff. We have talked to the school management, the Municipal Education Department and the Ministry of Education, as well as Turkish members of the Kosovan Assembly. A decade has passed and nothing has been done. Maybe there needs to be a representative of the Turkish community in the Municipal Education Directorate so that they can deal with the problems of the Turkish community in our municipality.

2.5 Hivzi Sylejmani school, Fushë Kosovë

Hivzi Sylejmani school in the town of Fushë Kosovë was founded in 1972, initially as a separate annexe to the Sami Frashëri school in Pristina, and became independent in 1979. The school has 743 pupils and 30 teachers and teaching takes place in the annexe to the Selman Riza primary school in Fushë Kosovë, which has 540 m². So the greatest problem faced by the school is space, given that there is 1.37m² per pupil. There are three Ashkali pupils.

Study of the concept of participation and involvement in education/ School strategy for enabling parent/ pupil participation and involvement/ Parent/ pupil motivation/ Barriers to participation and involvement/ Special preparation for minority pupils

Hivzi Sylejmani school has no plan for increasing the participation of parents and pupils in school and, according to the school management, there is no plan for such a thing in the Ministry of Education either. The school management says that it is interested in parental involvement in learning because, in its opinion, the learning process cannot be successful without parental participation because parents help in the life of the school by making sure that their children: come to school regularly; do the work they are given by teachers; don't cause problems... According to the school management parents are involved in initiatives in school such as the initiative for uniform for every pupil and taking on security guards who prevent anyone who is not part of the school from coming in at the entrances to the school playground. Parents and pupils are regularly informed about the decisions they are not involved in directly themselves.

In the life of the school, parents and pupils are involved in the Parents Council and Young People of the School, but also in the School Council and, according to the school management, they have influence on the teaching and as well as educational activities, they are involved in extra-curricular activities. Their participation in school bodies is considered to be important by the school management because it is in this

way that they share their concerns on the progress of learning, the performance of teachers, safety in the school...

The school management says that parents like being involved in important school decision-making because they are making decisions about their children. There are no conditions specified for becoming a parent representative. No decision can be taken without parental participation. Of course many parents don't respond to the invitations issued by tutors or when they are informed about the success or lack of it which their children have had, even though the rules say that at least four times – this is not a restriction – a year they must meet their child's class tutor.

According to the school management, the Ashkali pupils are fantastically integrated so that the school doesn't make particular efforts to inform students/ parents of minority groups about their rights. Furthermore, this minority group doesn't have a language barrier as their language is identical to the majority. Minority parents are included in cultural activities which take place in school. The main barrier to more active parent/ pupil participation is the difficult economic situation faced by most of them. Teachers' communication with minority pupils is in no way different from their communication with pupils who are in the majority. Minority pupils have no misunderstanding of any kind with school staff.

According to the school management, the benefit of parental participation in the education of their children is that the results of their children are higher for knowledge. Equally, with their involvement, there is a financial benefit as well as a discipline benefit, because there are parents who participate financially in the needs of the school.

The extent of parental participation/ Home-school communication/ Communication with minority parents/ Teacher support for improving parental involvement

The teachers at Hivzi Sylejmani school say that for them, parental involvement is important and that without it the school can't function as it should. For them, parents' main responsibility in the education of their children is the creation of all the conditions for their children's education. Similarly, according to them, parents should talk to their children about their views on the condition of the school, so that the parents can use their influence to improve the situation. Parents should come to school because this is how they can ensure that their children come to school regularly, learn and behave well. They say that:

The school should have its own pastoral officer, psychologist and doctor. Equally, the school should have a tutor session once a week, as it had before, when they can talk to the pupils about all their problems. The parent meetings should be once a month because four times a year is not enough. The head of the class should also take part in parents meetings. Similarly, there should be an office where parents can come every day and address their concerns, worries, comments, suggestions, and advice...

In the School Council, which is the highest body in the school and where all decisions are taken, pupils are represented and they represent all their comments related to the school, but there are some things, such as the lack of space, where nothing can be done because it doesn't fall within the school's responsibility. The teachers say that the parents are involved in the school but not as much as they should be and the main reason is the difficult economic situation. According to them, something like half of the parents come to school and they mainly come when they are the parents of good pupils, but there are exceptions.

The main reasons why parents don't come to school to find out about their children is the difficult economic situation and their intellectual level and this, according to the teachers, has a big impact when parents see that their parents are interested, and they then improve. The teachers say that the school doesn't have a strategy to encourage parental participation in school, an issue which has been added to recently because around 123 pupils were poisoned and it's still not known how they were poisoned, but thankfully this has now been overcome.

The teachers say that they communicate with parents through group meetings, individual meetings in school, and also by telephone even though telephone communication is rare, and home visits do not happen. According to the teachers, if parents don't come to school to find out about their children, their children should be excluded from school, but the school only has the power to exclude pupils for three to five days, and no more.

There is misunderstanding between parents and school staff only when the children are excluded or their behaviour marks drop. Minority pupils are completely equal, and minority parents are the same, and there are no barriers. The teachers say that they have had training on applying more modern methods in their teaching from a range of international organizations, and particularly from KEC, but they haven't had training on encouraging parent participation.

The extent of pupil participation/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority pupil participation/ Communication between child and school

For pupils from the Hivzi Sylejmani school, involvement in school means regular attendance at lessons and doing the work set by the teacher. According to them, their involvement also has an impact on the motivation of the teachers to get involved. The minority pupils say that the involvement of pupils is not different at all for minority pupils and that they are positively discriminated against by the teachers and the school management, as well as the majority pupils and in general they do not have misunderstandings with the school.

The pupils choose the head of the class and later the heads of each class in school choose the school presidency, which chooses its chair and representative in the School Council. So they say that there is influence because they have their representative in the School Council, where all the important decisions relating to the school are made.

In their opinion, participation in decision-making in the school is important because it's about them themselves, but also because this is how they learn to take part in decision-making processes that are related to them, even after leaving school.

The pupils don't have the right to decide how the teachers teach lessons, nor to decide what it is they learn, because the Ministry of Education decides this, but they take part in school governance and in arranging activities which are organized in the school for Environment Day, Blood Donor Day, Kosovo Independence Day, Albanian Independence Day, Founder's Day, as well as charity activities to collect money for a sick pupil who doesn't have money for treatment, although on Ashkali Day (15 February) there is no special programme, and teaching continues.

Pupils say that the school did not inform them – either through meetings or the distribution of literature – about their rights as minorities and, in their opinion, this is good because in this way they can consider themselves the same since they speak the same language. They also say that they don't have problems with the school authorities or with teachers even though, according to them, the school has not done anything to understand their needs.

As far as pupils' involvement in the school goes, the pupils say that a range of competitions should be organized in school, where the best pupils are rewarded with certificates, because, according to them, this would encourage pupils to learn. They also say that it would be good to have debates in some particular subjects because this would make school more attractive for pupils and not just an obligation. The pupils say that they are not happy because not only are some teachers unqualified and some unwilling to work because of their low pay, but also because teachers should be trained in using new teaching methods, and that their communication is extremely formal because they want pupils to be afraid of them. Moreover, according to pupils, a small number of teachers use violence against pupils when they don't behave properly or don't learn.

The pupils say that the plan between the school and parents and pupils for all pupils to have a uniform and not even to go into the playground without it has noticeably increased security in the school. They want lessons not to be just opportunities for the teacher to talk, but for there to be debate and for the pupils to be included, too, and thus for the school to have more space because a class has twice as many pupils than there is capacity for and this makes it difficult to make progress in learning.

The extent of parental participation/ Opportunities for involvement/ Minority student participation/ Home-school communication/ Strategies and barriers for parent involvement

For parents at Hivzi Sylejmani school, involvement in the school means first and foremost the creation of conditions for learning, and then working to see whether the child is coming to school regularly, whether they are learning and whether they are well-behaved, and, in their opinion, this is what the school wants from them too. For

them, parental involvement doesn't mean anything different for minority parents, and all parents, just like all pupils, are completely equal.

The parents say that they have an influence on decision-making in school because they are represented on the Parent Council and in the School Council and this representation is important because it's about their children. Despite their participation in meetings and offering some symbolic financial help, parents haven't been able to help in decisions about the curriculum because this is not allowed. The parents say that the greatest problem the pupils face is the lack of space, which makes the learning process much more difficult.

Ashkali parents remember the day very well when they registered their children at the school because they were registered with an easier process than the Albanian children. They say that the school management has not informed them about their rights as minority parents in any way and has never invited them to take part in any cultural event organized by the school.

Minority parents say that they don't have a problem with communicating with the school management and nor do they have misunderstandings with the school management. They say that they communicate with the school through the meetings held four times a year, but they say that they still keep involved even when there are no meetings. They don't ever receive written reports from the school about their children's success or lack of it. According to them, the school does not have a strategy for involving parents in their children's education. Parents say that the main barrier for involving parents more is the difficult economic situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be good if textbooks could be drafted or translated as soon as possible for Bosnian and Turkish pupils, as the overwhelming majority of these are lacking, and if such a thing is not done soon, then in order to stop the practice of dictation, which is causing great difficulty in teaching and learning, it would be good to allow the use of textbooks from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey even though they do not match the Kosovan Ministry of Education curriculum;
- It would be good to increase the space available in schools because in many schools there is a striking discrepancy between the space and the number of pupils; it would also be good to create more laboratories for science subjects;
- It would be good for all decisions to be advertised on the school noticeboard and to be in minority languages because there are pupils who don't entirely understand their contents;
- It would be good not to have professional subjects taught in Albanian and by Albanian teachers because, as was mentioned above, there are minority pupils who don't entirely understand Albanian;
- It would be good for minority pupils to learn Albanian more than twice a week, since Albanian is an official language, and they will find it easier to get an education and employment;
- It would be good for the school leadership to include a Deputy Headteacher from among the minority teachers so that communication between minority pupils and the school management could be easier and more frequent;
- It would be good for the compulsory parent meetings not to be four times a year, but every month, because in this way the parents will have more opportunity to talk about other problems apart from the communication of successes in learning – and also because when pupils know that their parents have to come to school every month, they will be more committed because they know that their parents will know what they are doing;
- It would be good to return to having an hour a week of tutor time shared by the pupils and their tutor because in this way pupils can share their worries, comments and concerns;
- It would be good for the Municipal Education Directorate to have a minority representative so that minority problems in education can be identified;
- It would be good to create an office in school where a parent could work full-time and be constantly informed about what is going on in school, what the pupils' needs are, and where parents can come every day to share their worries, concerns, comments and suggestions; equally it would be good if the school could set up a box, and also open an official email where parents and pupils could send their worries, concerns, comments and suggestions;

- It would be good if one teacher, one parent and one pupil from the minority group could be a member of the School Council because their needs could be better represented in this way;
- It would be good for the schools to have their own pastoral officer, psychologist and doctor;
- It would be good for minority pupils to have time off for their national days;
- It would be good for school libraries, where they exist, to have more books in the minority languages within the school;
- It would be good to organize a project for qualifying minority teachers, but also that especially for minority teachers to have training on involving parents, and also training of other kinds;
- Bearing in mind that some parents of students who are under-achieving do not want to take part in parent meetings, it would be good to have designated spaces for meetings between parents and class tutors, so that they can be informed about the success/ lack of success of their children without other parents being able to hear.

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