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Annual report 2020

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
ASSET	After School Support for Teens
ARISE	Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education
EU	European Union
OS	Outreach Staff
DPRT	Dropout Prevention and Response Team
EWC	European Wergeland Centre
FACE	Families and Children in Education
GIZ	German Development Agency
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KEC	Kosovo Education Center
K-RAE-EYN	Kosovo RAE Early Years Network
NQC	National Quality Council
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
PASCH	Schools: Partners for the Future
PEACOCK	Peace through Cooperation, Competencies and Knowledge
PHZH	University of Education Zurich
PISA	The Programme for International Student Assessment
TACA	Together Against Child Abuse
QAIN	Quality, Accountability, Integrity and Transparency in Higher Education
REF	Roma Education Fund
REYN	Roma Early Years Network
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YEPP	Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects

INTRODUCTION

Global COVID-19 pandemic and the turmoil in the local political scene have been the two dominant aspects of life in Kosovo during 2020. The announcement of the COVID-19 Pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 was followed by the decision of the Kosovo government to lockdown the entire country, including educational institutions. Similar decisions were also made by authorities in other parts of the world, therefore 91% of the population of children and students from around the world or 1.5 billion children and young people remained outside the educational institutions.

In such circumstances, when it was believed that total lockdown would be the best way to manage the pandemic, the only alternative was to organize distance learning, using information and communication technology. Very soon it was proved that not only Kosovo, but most countries in the world, were not prepared for such a form of teaching, especially for the pre-university level. The solution was found in the form of live streaming classes through public television, which had to be accompanied by online communication between teachers and students. This is where problems arose, because the responsibility for such organization remained with teachers, who could not have any assistance, given that the movement was allowed only for supplies and in case of emergencies.

In the end, it has been estimated that the maximum was done to organize online learning as good as would be possible, while about 10% of students did not participate in this type of learning due to the lack of technological equipment or other reasons. During March-June 2020 the learning process was defined by numerous disarrangements, not only due to the organization of online sessions, but also due to other limitations such as: short hours, lack of supervision and professional support, lack of skills for the use of technology, etc. According to the World Bank, the disarrangement of the teaching process in this period has resulted in learning loss which is estimated at 9 PISA points for students who have attended online lessons, namely 16 PISA points for students who have not attended online lessons¹.

Despite all the difficulties caused by the pandemic, the country faced unpredictable political developments. Only two weeks after the announcement of the pandemic, on 25 March 2020, the Government in power for 50 days, was overthrown with a motion of no confidence, thus causing political tensions in the country. Under these circumstances, not only was no progress made in the field of education, but defects in the management of the pandemic-related consequences appeared. So, the new Government appointed on 3 June 2020 canceled the achievement test for the ninth grade, while the Matura test was postponed for August, causing new disruptions in the education system. Also, during the summer of 2020, the opportunity to organize any other form of supplementary classes for students who had been left behind due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic was lost.

Preparations for the new school year were also marked by significant delays and did not bring any innovations in the organization of online learning. On the contrary, learning was preferred to be organized in-person, but according to the predetermined scenarios and the protective measures there were deviations from the common school program. Hence, in many schools, especially in urban ones, the number of students in the classrooms was halved, while the class duration was significantly reduced. In the event of any positive case with COVID-19 in a classroom,

¹ One school year is equivalent to 40 PISA points

all children had to be isolated, while switching to online learning remains a challenge, because most schools are not prepared for such a form of learning. It is expected that this school year will also result in learning losses, while there is no room for substantial improvements in the education system.

The activity of KEC was also largely affected the pandemic. This way, during 16 March – 31 May 2020, the work was done remotely, adapting to the new working conditions. In the first days of the pandemic, the adaptation of training programs for online platforms started, followed by substantial changes in the communication manner within the organization and with the beneficiaries. Necessary changes in the project implementation plans were also made, in order to better serve the beneficiaries.

KEC programs were profiled in four interrelated areas this year too:

1. Improving the quality of education:

This year, within the "Early Childhood Education", a TV series called "Afër jush" was developed, aiming at addressing problems of preschool children under the conditions of COVID-19. The "After School Support for Teens (ASSET)" program entered its fourth year of implementation, adapting most of its activities online. Whereas, the "Quality, Accountability, Integrity and Transparency in Higher Education (QAINTE)" program faced problems in the implementation, despite its significant achievements.

2. Human Rights

In the field of human rights, in addition to current ongoing projects, two new projects have been launched: "Together against Child Abuse (TACA)" funded by European Union and "Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects (YEEP)" in cooperation with SOS Children's Villages. Projects under this category were largely focused on overcoming the consequences caused by the pandemic for the well-being of children from marginalized groups.

3. Networking and participation in policymaking

In March 2020, the implementation of the project "Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education" – ARISE started, a regional initiative developed by a group of CSOs from 6 countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey aiming at supporting schools, community-based organizations and policy-makers in developing initiatives and policies to reduce the effect of low economic status on student achievement by reducing inequalities in education. This 4-year project is funded by the European Commission through the Civil Society Facility and Media Program 2018-2019 and is coordinated by KEC.

4. Research in the field of education

In 2020, KEC appointed a research manager, who conducted a great number of researches within other programs. Meanwhile, a special project that was implemented within the research program is the UNESCO's "Global Education Monitoring Report 2020", where KEC drafted the report on Kosovo.

Even in 2020, KEC continued to pay attention to the advancement of the quality assurance system. From the beginning of the year, the quality assurance manager took over all the responsibilities and all this effort resulted in the re-certification of the organization for ISO 9001:2015. In addition, staff trainings were organized with a focus on the use of online platforms and related software.

1. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

1.1. Education in early childhood

During this year in the field of early childhood several projects have been implemented, such as: "FACE & PEACOCK" supported by the University of Education Zurich (PHZH-IPE), KRAEYN 3- funded by OSF-London, and during the pandemic a cycle of TV shows "Afër jush" was developed, to raise awareness among children and families about the situation.

1.1.1. FACE and PEACOCK

The FACE-PEACOCK project is supported by the University of Zurich (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich-PHZH) and consists of two components. The FACE (Families and Children in Education) component is an educational project that aims to support children from disadvantaged environments to make them aware of their competencies. FACE offers age-appropriate activities to students to discover who they are and what they are able to do, as a first step towards a positive self-concept. FACE is dedicated to children from pre-primary level to fourth grade. On the other hand, the PEACOCK (Peace through Cooperation, Competences and Knowledge) component helps students develop skills for life and career guidance, and is dedicated to students from fifth to ninth grade. During 2020 more has been done on the PEACOCK component, especially in creating training materials and modules.

FACE - In February 2020, according to the plan, monitoring took place in 4 preschool and school institutions. During the monitoring, it was assessed how much these institutions use FACE materials in their daily life. The monitoring report was shared with the PHZH. In October, a training of FACE was conducted for Serbian schools and was attended by 6 schools. The training was led by PHZH trainers.

PEACOCK - During the first part of the year, with the assistance of PHZH, the work on the development of teacher materials was intensified. Several workshops were organized and attended by representatives of the PHZH and the Faculty of Education (FE). In October, books for teachers of grades 5-9 were completed. The books have been translated into Albanian and formatted to be used online. The Faculty of Education and KEC developed plans for piloting materials in schools, with students. Another achievement of the project is the design of an online training program with 8 modules. These modules have been piloted and will continue to be piloted in 3 schools. The modules are still in English and after being piloted by the schools will be translated into Albanian. The Microsoft TEAMS platform was used for the organization of online trainings, where all materials, modules as well as books have been placed.

In October 2020, a training for trainers on PEACOCK materials was conducted, attended by 16 participants from the Faculty of Education, primary schools and KEC trainers. Trainers will be engaged in providing training according to the "Skills for life" program for teachers and students.

1.1.2. K-RAE-EYN Network

The purpose of the K-RAE-EYN network is to support equal access to early childhood education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children of age 0-10 by the inclusion and improved quality of service provision. The network continues to support early childhood professionals and pre-professionals who support children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The network cooperates with more than ten partner NGOs in Kosovo; all with extensive experience in providing early childhood development services to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children.

Activities organized during 2020 were:

- In the beginning of the year, together with KOMF, the recommendation policy for early childhood education was finalized. After the publication of the recommendation policy, a press conference was held on February 27th where the document was presented. The Deputy Minister Xhavit Rexhaj also participated in the conference, who on behalf of the MES vowed that the recommendations would be taken into account.
- In March, an advocacy meeting with all REYN countries was held in Belgium. The meeting initiated the drafting of labour infographics in the field of education among communities of each country, as a document that will be used for advocacy. This infographic was completed in summer in both Albanian and English and shared on social networks.
- With the unfavorable situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, which most affected the vulnerable communities, in April 2020 the Network member organizations established a task force to help the families and children of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Supported by REYN and PHZH, packages with hygienic and educational tools were provided to 108 families in Prizren and Plemetin-Obiliq. Swiss Caritas also joined this initiative, providing another 200 packages for children in Mitrovica.
- As every year, during the summer, the Network member organizations were supported on conducting advocacy campaigns for enrolling children in schools and kindergartens.
- The movie "Danielli", which addresses the topic of the education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, supported by KRAEEYN, and the success story "Nefi's story", along with infographics, were planned to be launched at an advocacy event where various institutions, organizations and agencies would be invited. Due to the situation with COVID-19 this event could not be organized in September as planned. In agreement with the organizers of the festival "Rolling film festival", we agreed that the movie "Danielli" and "Nefi's story" to be launched at the festival that will be organized in March 2021, where the movie would also open the festival.
- In February 2020, the "Step by Step" training, organized together with the REF project, was held in Prizren. The training was attended by 24 teachers from different schools as well as members of the KRAEEYN Network.
- The study visit planned for May, for a group of members, in Croatia, due to the pandemic did not take place. In addition, the regional meeting scheduled for the end of April could not be organized either.

The KRAEEYN project will end at the end of September, but because some activities could not be carried out due to the pandemic, the donor was requested to extend the project for several months with some new activities, which were approved by the donor such as:

- Provision of 73 tablets for preschool children to be distributed during January 2021.
- Drafting an analysis of the situation of Early Childhood at the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The two main issues addressed in this analysis are: 1. Enrollment and attendance of children in pre-primary classes and first grades, and 2. Presence of workforce from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities at preschool and primary level. This analysis was planned to be conducted in Fushë Kosova, Prizren, Ferizaj and Obiliq (Plemetina) as municipalities where teaching is conducted in two languages.

1.1.3. TV show “Afër jush”

The TV shows made in response to the state of emergency due to the COVID 19 pandemic, aimed at reaching the largest number of vulnerable families and children who lack information and advice during the social isolation related to the pandemic. The shows were broadcasted live, according to the agreement with the media house Kohavision (KTV), every Wednesday and Friday from 16:30-16:55, starting from 1 May to 19 June 2020. In addition to KTV, all 15 shows were also broadcasted online on Facebook. They were also rebroadcasted on TV "Arta" and during the weekend on KTV. Each show had in the studio one or two guests in the role of expert/s, and in almost every show, messages from public figures were delivered. A very important part of each show were the videos with activities done by parents, educators, teachers or tutors which were always related to the topic, where instructions on how to perform various activities or tips were provided. The shows addressed topics relevant to the current situation, such as: increased hygiene during the pandemic, fun games at home, the importance of healthy food, providing and receiving psycho-social and pedagogical services during pandemics, the danger of cyber violence - Cyberbullying, conflict management in children, etc.



Photo 1. Moments from the show “Afër jush”

1.2. After School Support for Teens (ASSET)

The ASSET program is a five-year initiative, designed for the benefit of high schools in Kosovo and their students (grades 10-12) which started being implemented in June 2017. The main objective of ASSET is to develop skills for jobs and entrepreneurship among young people, increase the opportunity for them to make informed decisions about their careers and increase their positive attitude towards the future. The motto of the Program is "Preparing Kosovo Youth for Life and Work in the 21st Century". The goals and activities of ASSET are in line with the Strategic Education Plan in Kosovo, its curricular framework and the core curriculum for upper secondary schools (in particular the "Life and Work" curriculum area).

During 2020, the Program has completed the equipping and functionalizing of all creative spaces, thus reaching at 16 spaces in partner schools and municipalities, worked on the design and implementation of teacher professional development as well as extracurricular activities for students of partner gymnasiums. The program advanced the partnership in the implementation of extracurricular activities with students by offering new activities.

Student clubs became operational in all partner schools, through which more information about and wider involvement of students in the activities of the Program was made possible. Since 2020 was marked by changes because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Program adapted most of its activities to remote implementation. Activities such as school projects, formative assessment, and soft skills assessment were successfully conducted online. Also, student clubs organized career sessions and internship opportunities online, offered by various organizations. The main results of the Program are summarized below:

Activity 1: Development of life and work competences

Enabling project based practical learning

- Opening of 7 career and entrepreneurship centers in Prizren, Peja, Istog, Rahovec, Suhareka, Obiliq and Lipjan (renovated, equipped with educational technology and functional for use by students);
- Organization of the "Design Challenge" competition, in partnership with IPKO Foundation, which was attended by 22 schools with 55 projects in the following challenges: creating a video of professions; creating the equipment for regulating air humidity; creating a walking stick for the elderly people; and creating a board game. The best works/projects were awarded with the first three places in each category;
- Organization of 4 new types of short trainings for students and teachers: establishing Wiki-clubs, training and installation of weather stations, Open Street Map and training on Arduino-Electronics, in cooperation with the FLOSSK organization; and
- Organization of a competition for the best essay, in cooperation with the IPKO Foundation and the Kosovo Foundation for Career Development, where 213 students of high schools in Kosovo attended and the 5 best essays were awarded.

Capacity building for teachers

- Design of the "Soft skills development and assessment" course;
- Adaptation of 3 courses for online implementation;
- Certification of 225 teachers for project-based learning, who developed 50 projects with the participation of 1218 students;

- Certification of 133 teachers for the "Assessment for Learning" course;
- Certification of 25 teachers for the "Technicians Clubs" course;
- Organizing short courses for music technology and computer sewing machine with 36 teachers and 119 students;
- Certification of 14 teachers as school facilitators.

Development of assessment tools

- The soft skills assessment package was used by teachers trained in the "Project-Based Learning" and "Assessment for Learning" courses to assess the skills of around 3400 students;
- Organization of a midline study with students on the students' opinion about education and the future, in which 1309 students from the 2 partner schools of the first phase were surveyed.

Activity 2: Career and entrepreneurship education

Design and implementation of the training on career education

- Certification of 9 teachers on the "Career guidance and orientation" course.

Improvement of virtual career portal for use in general education

- Registration of 2,776 students in the Busulla portal, through teachers trained by the Program;
- Publication of 22 career materials (11 videos and 11 career essays made/written by students) on the Busulla portal;
- Creation of 7 career corners in the partner schools of the third phase.

Creating student enterprises

- Certification of 8 teachers for entrepreneurship and financial education; and
- Establishment of student enterprises by trained teachers, with the participation of 309 students within the 18 enterprises established.

Activity 3: Linking schools with businesses and community

Linking schools to businesses

- Establishment and functioning of career clubs by students in the 7 partner schools of the third phase;
- Reaching 68 cooperation agreements between schools and businesses;
- Organization of 83 informative sessions with professionals of different fields from career clubs.

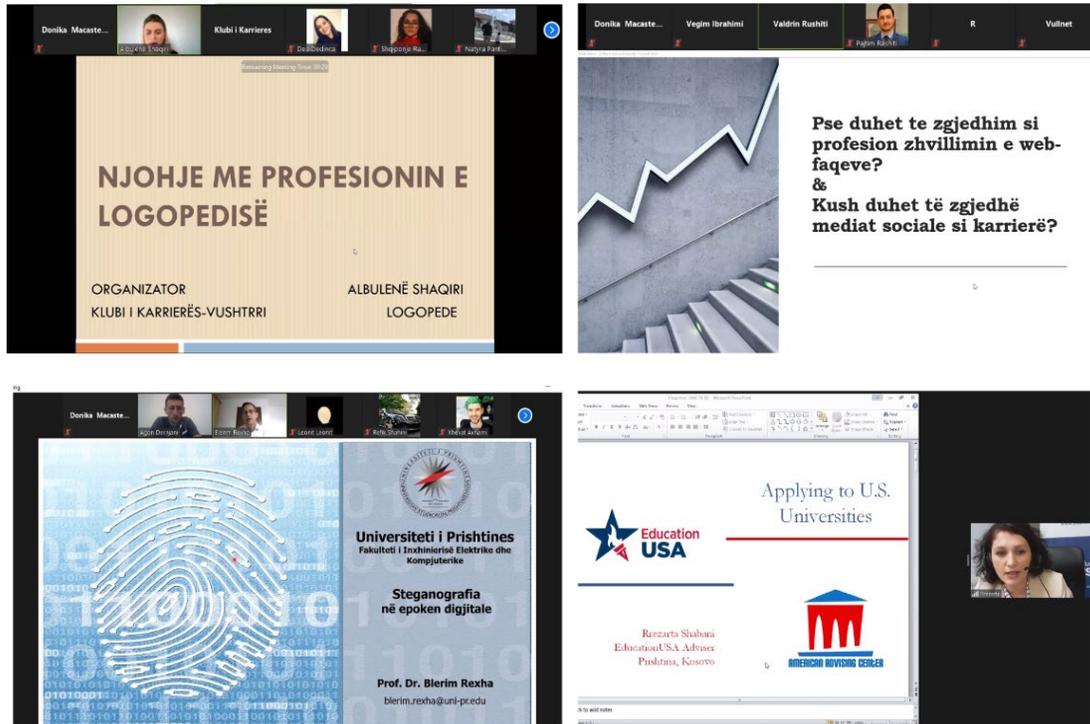


Photo 2. Online informative sessions organized by Career Clubs of ASSET program

Adapting an Asset

- Engaging 438 students in practical/voluntary work.

Community Youth Mapping

- Involvement of 219 students in research and drafting research reports on "Community Youth Mapping", with the support of teachers.

Other activities:

- Organizing the Program Conference with the educational community in Kosovo, with four different working sessions and a plenary session, where recommendations for the education sector on the use of technology in teaching, assessment for learning and soft skills assessment, project-based practical learning, as well as school and business linkage, were presented.
- Organizing sessions on negative phenomena in schools, attended by 91 teachers, school management staff and parents as well as 284 students.

The Program marked important dates with students, such as:

- International Youth Day, on 12 August 2020, by presenting success stories of youth from partner schools;
- International Day of the Girl Child (12 October 2020), in cooperation with IF and UN organizations in Kosovo. Around 60 girls participated in the 1-week research on the impact of the pandemic on education, the findings of which were published during the event.
- Other online events and acknowledgment ceremonies for students or other contributors.

1.3. School Development Grants

Since June 2017 this project has been implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), as part of the ESIP project, financed by a loan received from the World Bank. The aim of the project is to promote civic engagement through the participation of teachers, parents and the community in the planning, implementation and monitoring of school activities.

Within this project, the beneficiary schools are required to draft development plans and project proposals in advance, which should be in line with the objective of the project. After school development plans and project proposals are approved by the School Grants Approval Council (SGAC), schools win the right to implement the project through the MES funds. In 2017, within the SDG project, 160 beneficiary schools from all over Kosovo were selected. From the beneficiary schools, 140 of them were selected based on the criteria set out in the SDG manual and other 20 schools won based on a competition organized between the grant beneficiary schools from the implementation of previous projects. The success achieved in the implementation of the project in the period June 2017 - December 2019 made the MES amend the contract with KEC and extend the implementation of the project in 2020 with the request to support additional 80 new schools, and monitor the schools of the first phase (2017-2019) that had remained unmonitored.

Activities with the schools of the first phase (2017-2019)

In January 2020, 36 monitoring visits were conducted to the beneficiary schools of Peja region as well as Prizren and Suhareka, which had not been monitored during 2019. During January and February all the OS have been engaged in supporting 160 beneficiary schools to draft final reports of their projects. Despite the commitment of the OS, by the end of February the final reports of the 150 beneficiary schools were accurately prepared. The final reports of the last 10 schools, mainly of the Municipality of Vushtrri and Lipjan were completed in March, despite the difficulties posed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities with the schools of the second phase

Organization of information sessions at the regional level. – Following the MES publication of the call for applications for schools interested in receiving grants under the second phase of the SDG project, KEC project officials held 1 information session in each of the 7 main regions of Kosovo, in the first part of January. The regional sessions were attended by 301 school representatives, who were informed about the application procedures, the necessary documents for application as well as how to complete them.

Building school capacities in the procurement of goods and services.– In the beginning of February, SGAC selected 80 beneficiary schools of the second phase of the SDG project. Despite this, the memoranda of understanding between the beneficiary municipalities and the MES were not signed until the beginning of June. Seeing that the PCU was late with the signing of memoranda of understanding with the beneficiary municipalities, KEC project officials cooperated through online platforms with beneficiary school principals to draft procurement plans based on their project proposals. The increased engagement of KEC project officials and school principals resulted in the preparation and submission of the procurement plans of 80 beneficiary schools to the PCU by April 14th. Given that the situation with COVID-19 was getting worse, in the period of 12 May - 27 May 2020 online trainings on procurement for 80 representatives of the beneficiary schools of the second phase of the project were organized.

Supporting schools in the procurement of goods and services.– After signing the memoranda of understanding between the beneficiary municipalities and the MES, as well as after transferring grants from the Ministry of Finance to the municipalities in June, 6 OS supported schools in the preparation of their packages of goods and services. Despite the difficulties that the winning companies had in providing goods and services due to the serious situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased commitment of the OS and school representatives made that by 24 December 2020, the following be realized:

- 290 packages of goods;
- 154 packages out of 157 approved packages of goods from savings;
- 7 packages for the publication of school magazines;
- 1 package for the digitization of school documents;
- 11 packages for organizing online trainings.

In addition, during this period, 169 packages were submitted to the PCU for the organization of in-person trainings with teachers, however they have remained pending by the PCU due to the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures imposed by the Government of Kosovo to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by limiting movements and prohibiting gatherings. From the school packages, 47 packages of study visits remained unprepared (because the MES suspended their realization), including 1 package for the organization of a knowledge quiz and 1 package for the organization of a round table due to the difficult situation with COVID-19.



Photo 3. Some of the equipment and different materials purchased for the beneficiary schools by the project

Mentoring and monitoring the implementation of packages – During the preparation of the packages, the OS mentored school representatives by providing professional advice on the implementation of the procurement procedures for the purchase of goods and services. After the start of the package preparation, the OS monitored 80 beneficiary schools regarding the implementation of their packages. The results of the monitoring of packages were processed and placed on the project database. From the processed monitoring results it was observed that all schools had reached the level above 2.50 out of the level 3, which was the maximum. This shows that despite the difficulties, all schools have managed to successfully implement their packages, except for the ones for the organization of in-person trainings for teachers, which were suspended by the MES due to the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the OS uploaded on the project database the quarterly reports of the 80 beneficiary schools. After the preparation of the packages by 24 December 2020, the OS started supporting schools in the preparation of the first drafts of their final reports and upload them on the project database. The reports could not be finalized by the end of December because the MES had indicated that the schools would continue with the realization of the remaining packages during the first half of 2021.

On 5 December 2020, the contract for the support of 80 beneficiary schools of the second phase of the SDG project between the KEC and the MES ended. Despite this, the KEC continued supporting schools until 31 December 2020 without additional compensation, while in January 2021 the contract was amended for extension until June 2021.

1.4. Quality, Accountability, Integrity and Transparency in Higher Education (QAIN)

The project "Quality, Accountability, Integrity and Transparency in Higher Education (QAIN)" aims to coordinate the higher education system in Kosovo with international standards of quality, transparency, integrity and accountability. The long-term impact of this project is to improve the quality and competitiveness of the higher education sector in order to contribute to the social and economic development of the country.

The main achievements in 2020 according to the four Project objectives are summarized below:

Objective 1. Enhanced capacity of the KAA to monitor providers of higher education and advise the MEST on results of the quality assessment, and improved credibility of the accreditation process.

- After the analysis of the situation in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) conducted by an expert engaged by the QAIN project in March 2020, according to the recommendation from this analysis, two international experts were also engaged to work together with the local expert in the development of the methodology for monitoring. The three experts completed the draft monitoring methodology based on desk research and similar procedures applied in higher education systems in other countries as well as based on the information obtained during the interviews conducted in the KAA. The draft monitoring methodology was submitted to the KAA in September 2020 and it should have been immediately subject to the public hearing for a 30-day periods for additional comments before being finalized. Although the document was very well received and positively evaluated by the director and administrative staff of the KAA, this process has stalled due to disagreements within the KAA.
- NQC meetings continued being monitored by ORCA this year, despite the disagreements between few NQC members at the beginning of this year regarding the continuation of monitoring. No irregularities in the process or decisions have been identified during this period. The last report was published in January 2020. The report which covers the monitoring conducted during this year will be published in early 2021.

Objective 2. Improved transparency, integrity and accountability in the higher education system

- In February 2020, two reports on monitoring the process of academic appointments/promotions taking place during the period June - October 2019 at the University of Peja and the University of Prizren were published.
- During this year, the process of academic appointments/promotions was monitored in the University of Gjakova and the University of Mitrovica, in addition to the continuous monitoring of this process in the University of Prishtina. The full report, which covers the monitoring conducted during this year, will be published in early 2021.
- Regarding the transparency of public universities in terms of the number of documents they publish on their official websites (27 documents identified by ORCA as a minimum standard that must be met by all universities), 5 out of 7 public universities have had higher numbers this year. The only exception is the University of Prishtina, which already publishes all documents, and the University of Prizren, which publishes 23 of the 27 documents since last year. As a result, the ranking of universities in Webometrics has been improved (according to the Edition 2020.2.4, July 2020). The University of Prishtina, the University of Peja, the University of Gjilan and the

University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj have marked an improvement in their international ranking, while other universities have maintained their previous ranking.

- During this year, ORCA has also published two reports on the financial transparency of public universities (in January 2020 and October 2020), according to the monitoring conducted in the period 2018-2020.
- The monitoring of the National Academic Recognition Information Center (NARIC) Kosovo, namely the National Council for Recognition has also continued. During this year, two reports were published, one in February 2020 (on the monitoring conducted during 2019) and one in November 2020 (on the monitoring conducted during this year). Due to the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the last report was made public at a press conference organized for this purpose, which was livestreamed on Facebook.



Photo 4. Publication of the monitoring report of ENIC / NARIC

- To respond to a repeated request of the academic staff of public universities, the QAIN project team has engaged an expert to draft a summary of informative materials and a list of recommendations to overcome the main challenges they face during the entire process of their research work for the purpose of academic advancement. Two workshops - with the academic staff of the University of Peja and the University of Gjakova - were held. The third workshop that had been planned to be held with the staff of the University of Prizren was not held because they did not show interest in finding a suitable time for this workshop.
- As for the cooperation with the University of Prishtina - established last year - to create conditions to implement the system of open data, the QAIN project, with the assistance of two experts, drafted a regulation in accordance with the basic principles of open data to the public and the existing legislation in the country. This draft regulation will be further reviewed by the management of the University of Prishtina and constitute the legal basis for the implementation of an open data system, initially at the University of Prishtina, and with the possibility of replication in other public universities too.
- The second competition for student grants, which had been initially planned for March 2020, however postponed due to the pandemic, was announced in August 2020. Although the number of applications was not large (a total of 8 applications from which 6 were selected) and despite the measures, the number of students involved in grant-supported projects exceeded expectations of the last year. A total of 275 students were

involved, from whom 71% were female. There were also 30 volunteers who supported the activities, from whom 56% were women. The projects addressed issues that concern students, such as the provision of support to improve their overall academic experience (supporting new students, student evaluation, critical thinking, research work, etc.). The closing ceremony of this cycle of application was held through the Zoom platform in December 2020, where the projects implemented by beneficiary organizations and informal student groups were presented and the best project of this cycle was selected by ADA.



Photo 5. Informative session with students, as an activity carried out through student grants

Objective 3. Improved legislation (regulations, procedures and practices) related to academic issues in higher education.

- The QAIN project supported with expertise the drafting of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 of the University of Peja, which was welcomed and highly appreciated by the representatives of the University of Peja. The strategic plan was approved by the Senate in February 2020 and marked a significant improvement in the preparation of the University of Peja for the next institutional accreditation compared to the previous year when this university had not been accredited. Among others, as a result of the work done in this direction, the University of Peja received the institutional accreditation from the KAA in 2020. The drafting of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 of the University of Peja was also highly evaluated by the KAA representatives in the Steering Committee meeting of the QAIN project, held in June 2020.
- The review of the legal framework related to issues of good governance in higher education, that had been drafted by the expert of the QAIN project in September 2019, was reviewed and supplemented according to the MES Legislative Plan 2020 for secondary legislation in higher education and was submitted for review to the MES in March 2020. Due to the political situation and the situation created by the pandemic, the review of any legislation by the MES became subsequent; therefore this document has not yet been reviewed.

Objective 4. Enhanced capacity of young faculty members (young university assistants and/or post-docs) to carry-out research-guided teaching.

- Continuous and repeated delays in the MES impacted especially the activities envisaged under the Program to support research-based teaching for new staff of public universities. This program should be based on the administrative instruction, the draft of which was prepared by the expert of the QAIN project, in cooperation with the MES working group, and regulates the entire course of the program. This draft administrative instruction was submitted to the MES for review in early 2020 and, having already been approved by the working group and the legal office, it must be approved by the Minister. Lately, the adoption of the administrative instruction was postponed due to disagreements between the Minister and ORCA that arose after ORCA made public the evidence of plagiarism published by the Minister during his work as a professor at the University of Prishtina. These disagreements have also affected the delays in the implementation of activities in the KAA.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS

2.1. Preparing Future Teachers: Education for Democracy and Human Rights

“Preparing Future Teachers: Education for Democracy and Human Rights” project, supported by the Government of Norway, through The European Wergeland Centre (EWC), started in March 2019. The project aims to improve the quality of education for future teachers in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Montenegro, through regional partnerships of pre- and in-service institutions for teachers, including national educational authorities. Modules on Citizenship and Human Rights will be drafted and delivered to support the implementation of democratic educational reforms in Western Balkans.

Having in mind that this is a regional project and it is implemented by the EWC, below we will present only the activities developed or supported during 2020 by the KEC, as a project partner:

- The third meeting of the Project Steering Committee took place on February 2020 in Prishtina. Hosted by the KEC and attended by representatives of all Western Balkan countries involved in the project, the meeting aimed to present the project outputs and to revise the work plan for the second year of the project. Activities foreseen with the Universities involved in the project were revised again at the end of March 2020, adjusted to new circumstances created due to global COVID-19 pandemic;
- Modules on Democracy and Human Rights to be piloted in the Universities involved with the project were finalised. The KEC assisted the team from the University of Prishtina – Faculty of Education during the process;
- Six webinars for University Teams were organized;
- A Manual for School Mentors to be involved in the project, was written and translated in all languages of Western Balkans;
- Schools hosting for practice students involved in the prepared Module were identified;
- Mentors from selected schools, who will be part of the Training for Mentors and who will mentor students in practice were identified;
- Training for Mentors for the first group of Universities involved in piloting the Modules during the winter semester was conducted; The KEC supported the activity, providing technical assistance in platforms used and in providing interpreters during the training sessions.

2.2. Expanding access to quality early childhood education and primary education

The Project aims to increase participation of Roma children of age 4 to 6 and 6 to 8 in quality early childhood education and primary education. The overall project objective is to improve early education outcomes and readiness for children, including repatriated children of Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali communities, to register for the first and second grade in locations covered by the Project, respectively Prizren. The project also aims to improve parenting skills, strengthening the link between parents and educational institutions. The Project consists of 4 components:

Component 1. Improving the access in mainstream, non-segregated early childhood development services

The barriers and needs of beneficiaries continued to be addressed also this year by the project staff. Needs were addressed on time during the pandemic through other forms remotely. As part of this activity, books were purchased and distributed to children of age 5-6 in “Lekë Dukagjini” school. In February, transport was provided for students attending “Abdyl Frashëri” school, having a great impact on regular school attendance of children. The mediators did at least 15 field visits to families each month. Suitable forms of communication were used in meetings with parents to encourage enrolment of children in pre-primary education and first grade. During the pandemic, meetings had to be modified and organized online. Children who finished the pre-primary cycle enrolled in the first grade, children who finished preschool cycle registered in pre-primary cycle in partner schools, therefore all children identified for the year 2020-21 have been involved in teaching and learning process.

Component 2. Improving the quality of early childhood development services

In 2020, the Toy Library continued to be used by beneficiaries every day of the week, and in addition to children of age 4-5, it was used by children of age 5-6 and first grade students too. Toy Library activity had an impact in regular school attendance of children. Toy Libraries have been refreshed with different sound books, so-called artistic publications, 6 books per 1 location, in total 12 books for the 2 Toy Libraries. Prior to the beginning of the new school year 2020-21, the KRAEEYN network and the KEC donated 158 toys for the Toy Libraries. For the second time, the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) was conducted in October 2020 with children of age 5-8 and 3-5. Forty one (41) assessments were completed. Forty one (41) assessments of parents were successfully completed as well. The Step by Step training – initial level - for the first grade was organized, in cooperation with the KRAEEYN network.



Photo 6. Distribution of packages with hygienic supplies and didactic materials

Component 3. Expanding access to quality primary education

As part of this activity, early identification of children to be enrolled in first grade and second grade was done through mediators. All children who finished first grade continued on second grade, and children who finished the preschool level enrolled on first grade. To help with the school enrolment process, the mediators also met with municipal officials (administration staff) in the Municipality of Prizren. Online awareness raising campaigns were organized, informative leaflets and guidelines on measures to be taken to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic were prepared and distributed to families, partner schools' staff and associates. The leaflets were posted also on the KEC Facebook page. Numerous meetings, almost on monthly basis, took place with partner schools' leadership, addressing the enrolment of students in preschool, pre-primary, first grade level, and sharing information about the plans for the third year of the project. In meetings with school principals, special attention was paid to children already enrolled and their accommodation in different classes to avoid segregation. In addition, free-time activities with children of preschool and pre-primary level were organized.

Component 4. Improving the parenting skills and practices of Roma parents

Mothers' club activity was organized by two project facilitators on monthly basis. In partner schools, within PRTAN action plans, project related activities were added and redefined (data collection, children attendance and enrolment, etc.). The project staff met with the teams and exchanged their contacts. In addition, a non-formal project network was created, and two meetings were organized in less than three months.

2.3. Technical support for Municipalities to implement the Action Plans for educational reintegration and social inclusion of repatriated children, members of ethnic minorities, and children with special educational needs

The project aims to strengthen the capacities of targeted municipalities to create a suitable environment for the implementation of legal framework towards reintegration of repatriated children and marginalised groups in educational system, through advocacy, coordination, support, capacity-building, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning activities. The project is funded by GIZ, and implemented from November 2019 to January 2021 in 4 municipalities (Gjakova, Obiliq, Podujeva and Shtime). It includes two outputs:

Output 1 - "Increased capacity of municipalities and effective reintegration measures among municipal mechanisms"

Output 2 - "School communities have the capacity to ensure reintegration of repatriated children through implementation of inclusive school approaches"

During this one-year period, the project has been actively involved in supporting and building capacities in municipalities mentioned above so that they implement their action plans for reintegration of repatriated children, ethnic minorities, especially Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and children with special educational needs. Consequently, project's main achievements for this period include:

- Training on Cross-sectoral Cooperation was organized in the four (4) project partner municipalities;

- Training on building the capacities of Prevention and Response Teams towards Abandonment and Non-Registration (PRTAN) was organized in the four (4) partner municipalities;
- Training on Individual Education Plans (IEP) was organized for teachers of the four (4) partner municipalities;
- Training for additional language classes for repatriated children was organized for teachers of the four (4) partner municipalities;
- Four (4) awareness campaigns were organized about the importance of education and school enrolment on time;
- Action plan implementation in municipalities was monitored;
- A Manual was drafted, including the best practices used in municipalities to implement their action plans for educational reintegration and social inclusion of repatriated children, members of ethnic minorities and children with special educational needs.

2.4. Empowering youth for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future in Kosovo

“Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo” project, supported by UNICEF Office in Kosovo, started in August 2019 and ended in June 2020. Due to situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a considerable part of budget had not been spent, therefore in June 2020 a request for the project extension for six more months was submitted, which was approved by the UNICEF. The second phase of the project started on September 2020 and will end in February 2021. The project has three main outputs:

Output 1: By the end of project, teachers and children from 40 schools in selected municipalities will have the knowledge and skills to deal with conflict through “Non-violent conflict resolution” and “Peer Mediation” methodologies.

Output 2: By the end of project, capacities of school officials are strengthened to monitor and support children to implement “Non-violent conflict resolution” and “Peer Mediation” methodologies.

Output 3: Strengthened cooperation among schools and local authorities to share best practices and to promote a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable environment for youth.

During 2020, the following activities were implemented:

- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, from 16 March 2020, all project activities were implemented online. The situation forced us to cancel the activities planned. Anyhow, from 16 March 2020, based on newly created circumstances, the implementation of activities was revised and reconsidered. Initially, a Manual for Trainers was drafted on how to implement the "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation" training online. After the Manual was finalized, in consultation with the trainers, from March 30th, online trainings for teachers from the beneficiary schools started. The two-day training was rearranged and organized in 6 online sessions of 90 - 120 minutes each. Therefore, from 30 March 2020, 6 online trainings, respectively 37 online sessions, were organized with the participation of 183 teachers and school principals.
- From January to March 2020, 4 trainings were organized addressing the Peer Mediation topic for the schools that were part of the project. Seven (7) participants (5 students and 2 teachers) from each school attended the

training. Five (5) other trainings on “Peer Mediation” were organized online during the period October-November 2020.



Photo 7. “Peer mediation” training - February 2020, in Prishtina

- The schools involved in the project were constantly visited to provide them with support/mentoring. According to the plan, most of the visits were going to take place during the school project implementation, but due to situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of school visits, the implementation of activities was monitored via online consultations. Consequently, two monitoring reports were drafted.
- The training of school officials on monitoring and mentoring the implementation of non-violent conflict resolution methodologies in schools, was organized in June. Fifty two (52) school principals and teachers joined this training organized online via ZOOM. The aim of the training was to inform school officials on how to mentor the Mediation Groups and how they may monitor their work. In addition, during the training, special attention was paid to project sustainability. To this aim, some concrete ideas were proposed on how the schools may include Mediation group’s activity in their plans.
- Four (4) camps were organized so that schools finalize the project idea to have functional Mediation groups in their schools. Due to the situation caused by COVID-19, the activity had to be adjusted and implemented online. Therefore, in the beginning of June 2020, the program was adjusted and from 2 - 4 June 2020, two Camps were organized, one with Primary and Lower Secondary Schools and the other one with Upper Secondary Schools. In addition, from 2 - 4 December 2020, 2 other Camps were organized for the 20 schools of the second cycle. Each camp started with an instructional plenary session to introduce camp tasks and activities. After the first session, with every school having taken their tasks, under mentors’ supervision, they organized meetings, workshops, discussions, aiming to brainstorm and generate a project idea to implement Mediation in their schools. During the three camp days, meetings, workshops, activities were organized, resulting in 40 project ideas that were implemented in respective schools.

- After generating project ideas, the 40 schools implemented the projects in their school. The project ideas were financially supported by the project, with each school receiving a grant of EUR 500. Twenty (20) schools implemented their projects in June 2020, while the 20 schools from the second cycle implemented them in December 2020. The main purpose of these projects was to operationalize mediation corners, which would create opportunities to implement the Mediation Group activities in schools.



Photo 8. The work done to arrange the Mediation Class/Corner in “Mehmet Gjevori” school in Prishtina

- Best practices of project implementation were presented in a virtual conference organized at the end of June 2020. In addition, some of the best practices from the two cycles of project implementation will be included in an edition to be issued in February 2021, as a final project output.
- With the financial support of UNICEF, all schools involved will be equipped with laptops. In total, 92 laptops will be distributed to 40 beneficiary schools. Subject to the number of students, schools will receive 1-3 laptops. Distribution of laptops will be done in January - February 2021.
- To inform the public about the project outputs and to promote school activities related to Peer Mediation, the project created a Facebook page, periodically posting and displaying project outcomes. A Plan on how to communicate and disseminate this information on Facebook page was drafted by the KEC Information Officer.

2.5. Together Against Child Abuse (TACA)

The Kosova Education Center – KEC and the Center for Advanced Studies - FIT started the EU-funded project “Together Against Child Abuse” in February 2020. The project will continue till 30 January 2023. The specific objective of the project is: To protect children from any form of abuse, and minimise the effects of abuse experience by improving individual and institutional capacities for abuse prevention and protection of victims. The project includes three components:

1. **Component 1:** Supporting authorities and schools to deal with abuse-related risks.
2. **Component 2:** Educating students, teachers and parents to prevent child abuse in schools and respond to abuse in an appropriate way.
3. **Component 3:** Awareness raising through activities aimed to increase general public sensitivity to child abuse issue.

Components 1 and 3 are concentrated in Vushtrri, Ferizaj and Kamenica, whereas component 2 at country level. Few weeks after the project was launched, Kosovo faced COVID-19 pandemic, and this imposed numerous adjustments in project structure. However, activities were implemented with several modifications.

The main achievements for the year 2020 include:

- Teams for violence prevention and referral were established in beneficiary municipalities and schools, and trainings were organized for all their members: 23 municipal officials and 431 participants from beneficiary schools. In addition, a detailed plan was drafted for the activities of the school year 2020/21.
- To achieve project objectives, with the help of the consultant engaged, action plans were drafted for each municipality, with concrete activities to be implemented jointly with schools. Field associates provided support for the implementation of action plans. In cooperation with the Office of Good Governance - Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Education and Science, beneficiary municipalities and, based on the monitoring by field associates, schools will be monitored and the ones meeting the criteria to be qualified as friendly and abuse-free schools will be rewarded. Therefore, within the project, a manual containing these criteria was finalized.
- E-learning courses on abuse prevention and response for students, teachers and parents is in progress. The experts decided to have the Moodle Platform used for e-learning courses. The Platform www.kec-elearning.org is still being developed and visually enriched by the company in charge.

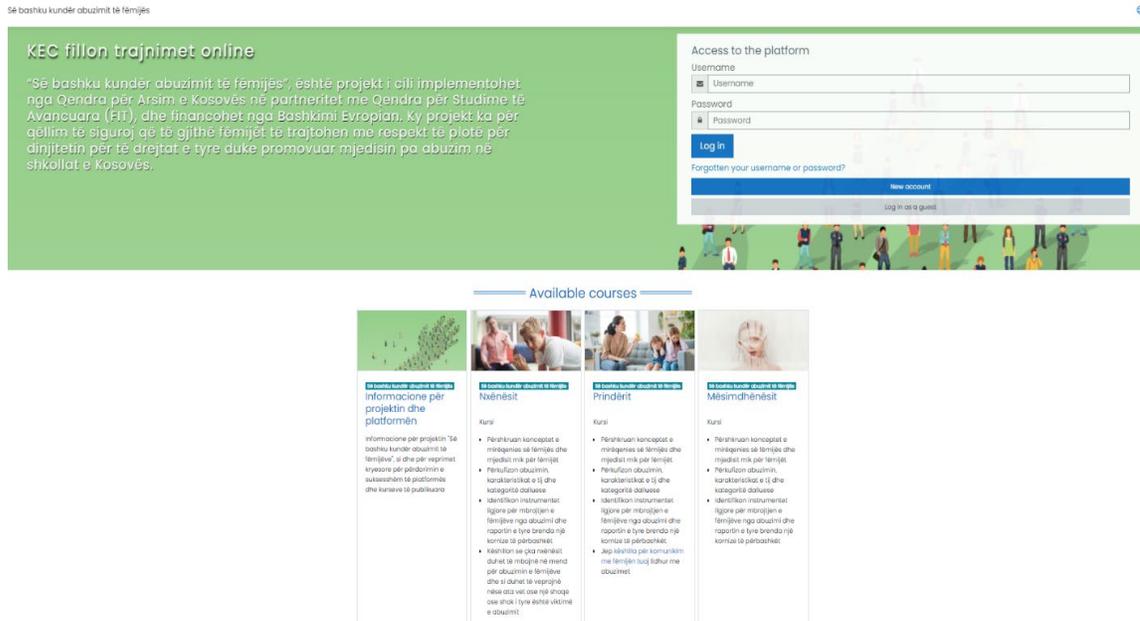


Photo 9. The platform enabling registration for and attendance of e-learning courses

For platform testing purposes, trainings were organized with two groups of teachers, one group of parents and three groups of students.

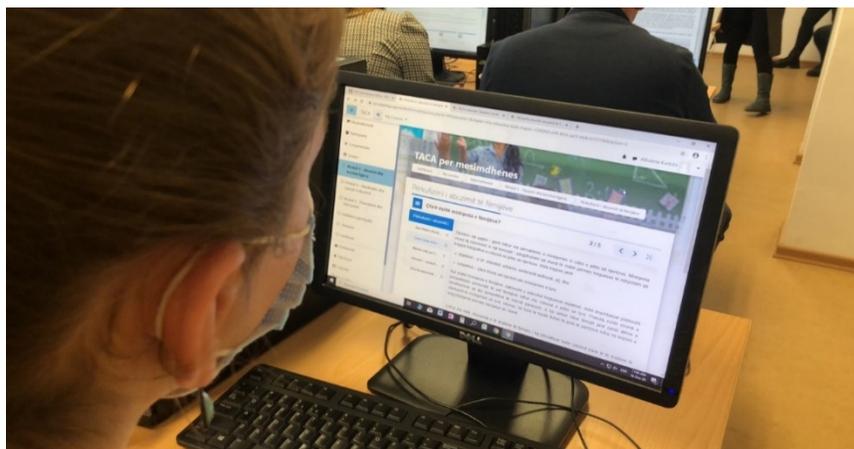


Photo 10. Test training with teachers using the online platform

- Social campaigns were organized to raise public awareness of abuse-related risks and disseminate information on good practices. On June 1st, the International Children’s Day was celebrated in three beneficiary municipalities. Each municipality chose their way of organizing this activity, emphasizing the topic of children rights and abuse prevention. From the beginning of November, when awareness raising campaign activities for protection of children against abuse were launched, various workshops were organized within the project as well as with the initiative of beneficiary schools.

2.6. Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects (YEEP)

“Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects (YEEP)” project is a two-year initiative designed to develop employment and entrepreneurship skills for youth, creating a positive perspective for their future. The project is focused on improved employment prospects and active participation in labour market of vulnerable and disadvantaged youth. YEEP project is funded by The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), SOS Children’s Villages Worldwide, Hermann-Gmeiner Fund Germany (HGFD), implemented in cooperation with the *SOS Children’s Villages (SoS Fshatrat e fëmijëve) Kosovo*.

The project is implemented in the Municipality of Gjilan, therefore contacts were established in the beginning with all relevant institutions, such as: The Employment Agency, Municipality of Gjilan, officials for economic development and youth, and various organisations. After the selection of project staff, *SOS Children’s Villages* organized a three-day online training for trainers/mentors and during the training all the duties and expectations from the trainers/mentors were specified. In addition, project staff with the *SOS Children’s Villages* hosted workshops on “Finance and Procurement” and “Policies on children protection”.

The lists of job seekers were received from relevant institutions and different organisations to define the groups of beneficiaries. Fifty (50) potential candidates were interviewed and project documentation was completed, resulting in 21 candidates who met the criteria, such as age, gender and economic status, to be qualified as beneficiaries in the first group. Training materials (books, modules, worksheets), promotion materials and protection ones against COVID-19 were prepared initially and they were distributed for the first beneficiaries.

In meantime, the pandemic situation created and the new approach of online trainings, required the need for modification of training program, therefore in cooperation with the *SOS Children’s Villages* and Aflatoun - training program designers, an online training with beneficiaries was organized. To motivate participants, in-person trainings were organized later on, complying with all safety requirements recommended by relevant authorities.



Photo 11. “Basic Life skills and Employability” training

2.7. Education for Active Citizenship and Human Rights Education for youth

As part of our continuous cooperation with the DVV International – Office in Kosovo, in 2020, the project aimed at raising the capacity of youth and teachers of social studies was developed and implemented in order to get to know the concepts of active citizenship and human rights. The training on “Education for Active Citizenship and Human Rights” was organized during November-December 2020. To provide equal opportunities for all the parties interested, participants were selected through an Open Call which was published on the KEC official communication channels. Of 32 applications received, 25 participants who met the criteria were selected. It should be mentioned that the group was highly heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender and profession.

Due to circumstances created by COVID-19 pandemic, the three-day training was adjusted and provided online. The online program consisted of 7 online training sessions, 120 minutes each. As planned in the project, participants would be equipped with Tablets (smart devices) that would enable all the participants to join the training sessions. Furthermore, tablets distributed contributed to full attendance of all sessions by participants. After the training was completed, on December 23rd, a certification ceremony was organized and certificates were distributed to participants.



Photo 12. Certification ceremony for the participants of the training “Education for Active Citizenship and Human Rights”

3. NETWORKING AND PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING

3.1. Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education – ARISE

The “Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education-ARISE” project was created by a pool of NEPC member CSOs, research institutes from Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA countries) that will support schools, grassroots organizations and policymakers in developing initiatives and policies aimed at mitigating the effect of low economic status on students’ achievement, by reducing inequalities in education.

Consortium members include: Kosova Education Center - KEC (Project Coordinator), Network of Education Policy Centers – NEPC from Croatia, Sabancı University - Egitim Reformu Girisimi – ERG from Turkey, Children Are the Future – CAF from Albania, Centre for Education Policy – CEP from Serbia, proMENTE social research from Bosnia and Hercegovina, Centre for Educational Initiatives Step by Step – CEI SbS from Bosnia and Hercegovina, Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives “Step by Step” from North Macedonia. This is a 4 year project (March 2020 – March 2024). The project is funded by the European Commission through Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2018-2019.



Photo 13. Project Steering Committee meeting

The project started in March 2020, when a global pandemic situation was declared in Kosovo and throughout world. Therefore, since the beginning of the project, the planned activities had to be adjusted, i.e. switching to online approach. Although activities were adjusted within initial planning and nothing was changed in the activities foreseen, in few cases the achievement of outputs was difficult.

The project is divided into 5 components (WP - work packages). Activities implemented during 2020 for each of them are described below.

WP1. Policy analyses & research

- 1.1. In this component, the first activity was the appointment of two main researchers, one from the Centre for Education Policy – CEP from Serbia and the other one from Sabancı University - Egitim Reformu Girişimi – ERG from Turkey. They developed a research methodology that is used at national level by project partners from the IPA countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Turkey).
- 1.2. The second activity included an informative meeting with national researchers selected from the organizations of IPA countries involved with the project. In addition to this initial meeting with researchers, other meetings took place to review and finalize the research methodology and accompanying instruments.
- 1.3. After the finalisation of research methodology and accompanying instruments, and their translation into local languages, national researchers started their research in respective countries. Various areas of intervention were included, such as education, social welfare and health.
- 1.4. The research process continued for 6 months, resulting in 6 national reports drafted. They analysed the education system and the possibilities for the system and other responsible institutions to offer equal access in education for children. Moreover, a policy brief was drafted for each country, summarizing the main findings and recommendation.

WP2. Policy outreach and advocacy

- 2.1. During the first months of the project, a Visibility Plan was drafted. All consortium members contributed in drafting this Plan, presenting in detail the activities that would be implemented and how the dissemination of information to stakeholders and general public would take place. In addition, during the first six months of the project, a number of measures were taken for a better communication with stakeholders and general public, always in compliance with visibility guide for EU-funded projects. Therefore, a project logo was designed to be used in all project official communications and documents. A Facebook and Twitter page was created and is being maintained, a domain and hosting was registered, and training was organized for the NEPC staff and the KEC staff from the company that developed the webpage to raise the capacities for webpage administration.
- 2.2. This component foresees also the selection of 6 grassroots organizations that will be supported with grants of EUR 30,000, to develop activities addressing issues related to inclusiveness, equal approach to education for everyone, with a focus on low SES children. Each of 6 IPA countries selected a grassroots NGO as a partner to implement the project at country level. The process passed through these steps: a) A Call was drafted for NGOs and translated into local languages; b) Assessment framework, including criteria for applications, was defined; c) Call was published by all countries and deadlines defined; d) Information about the Call was disseminated via official channels; e) Additional information were provided for interested NGOs; f) A correct and transparent selection process of beneficiary NGOs was ensured; g) Beneficiary NGOs were selected and application assessment report was drafted; h) Contacts with the NGOs selected were established; i) MOUs with selected NGOs were signed; j) Support was provided for NGOs selected to develop the project idea and preserve the unitary nature of intervention

- maintaining a synergy in activities of NGOs projects with the activities of parent project/ARISE project;
- k) Contracts were signed with NGOs to start the implementation of projects from January 2021.

WP3. Consortium learning

- 3.1. In the third component, the first activity is focused on having an expert at regional level to draft a Manual for Training and Mentoring the NGOs selected. The purpose of this manual is to guide project partners in supporting NGOs selected to raise their capacities to become an important voice in addressing issues related to inequality in education. The first part of the Manual was drafted in November-December 2020, with a focus in activities of raising NGOs capacities in the area of internal governance, respectively in quality project management, quality financial management, fund-raising, etc. From next year, consortium partners, in cooperation with NGOs, will implement these activities to raise capacities of organisations based on needs they identify.
- 3.2. It should be emphasized that this component also foresees two other activities for consortium members and partner NGOs. A study visit is planned for consortium members as well as a summer school for consortium members and partner NGOs. However, due to circumstances created with the global pandemic COVID-19, these activities have been postponed for the second year of the project, hoping that the conditions will allow for the implementation of these activities as planned.

WP4. School interventions

All activities included in this component will begin in the second year of the project. However, during this time, the issue of school selection was addressed to ensure synergy with local projects and interventions that will be implemented by the NGOs selected.

WP5. Project Management

The fifth component is directly related to activities and actions to be taken by the KEC as a project coordinator, ensuring a quality implementation of the project. All administrative aspects related to consortium members were organized and completed during the first six months of the project. Tools and instruments to facilitate narrative and financial reporting by partners were developed. In addition, a Monitoring Framework was developed to monitor project implementation. Project Steering Committee has been established, and the first meeting already took place. The second meeting will take place in the end of first year to assess project implementation and achievement of results. In addition, the Steering Committee, as an advising mechanism, will offer support in planning the second year of the project. The project components presented above are led by consortium partners, however, to ensure dissemination of information and communication with all consortium members, coordination and consultation meetings were organized on bimonthly basis.

4. INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

KEC profile management in Facebook

In 2020, KEC Facebook page was considerably active. Currently, the page has 12,529 followers, of whom 10,379 are organic reach followers and around 2,213 are followers of sponsorships. KEC project and program activities were posted in this Facebook page during the whole year, accompanied by photos, videos and other data. In addition, we regularly communicated with our followers, answering their requests for information and questions related to our activities.

KEC webpage management

KEC webpage was updated during 2020 with news and activities implemented during the year, including information about the projects that were launched this year. In addition, all KEC publications related to current and past projects have been published in the webpage. In 2020, KEC webpage was visited by 73,951 people, of whom 86.5% were new visitors. Of them, 45.85% are female, 54.15% are male. In terms of age, 27.50% are of age 18-24, 33.50% of age 25-35, 15.50% of age 35-44, 12.5% of age 45-54, 5.50% of age 55-65 and 5.50% are 65+. 561 various documents were downloaded during the year and 11,000 visitors visited “Work with us”, a section displaying Calls for consultants, associates and other vacancies within our organization.

KEC Youtube channel maintenance

The video produced by the KEC staff to celebrate the 1st of June - “International Children’s Day”, and the TV program “Afër jush” produced in cooperation with the “Kohavision-KTV”, were published.

Revision of the Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy document was revised during this year. It foresees different measures and activities that would improve external and internal communication in the organization. The strategy is intended to provide guidance for Communication Officer and for all the staff in the organization, to ensure a quality promotion of organisation’s activities and outcomes.

Celebrating International Days

During this year, specific international days were celebrated by organizing various activities within projects; special posts were drafted and posted on Facebook page. The video produced by the KEC staff for the 1st of June was a very special activity and was well-received by audience. In addition, staff attended various media programs and special activities, such as the seven-day training to celebrate the 10th of December - “Human Rights Day” were organized.

Material preparation and printing

Informative and promotion materials were printed during the year for several KEC projects, including banners of various size, leaflets, posters, notebooks and various publications of projects. In addition, promotion materials were prepared, including the ones for the end of year for the staff and associates.

Continuous engagement with media regarding activities organized by the KEC

The interest and support of media for the KEC activities continued during this year as well. Although, due to COVID-19 pandemic, activities were mainly organized virtually, using different platforms or in small groups of participants, the coverage of activities by media was satisfactory. Moreover, for different KEC project and program activities, Press Releases were sent to media, and the latter supported these activities by publishing them. In addition, the KEC staff attended different TV and radio programs.

5. "MILENIUMI I TRETË" NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL

As for all the schools around the globe, for the “Mileniumi i tretë” school, due to pandemic, this year will also be marked as the most extraordinary year in history. Although the second semester of 2019/20 school year started quite well, with a higher number of children enrolled compared to past years, the satisfaction faded with the complete change of approach in teaching and learning. New school enrolments were announced in February, which were filled in in record times, producing the need for a higher number of classrooms.

March was the most challenging month for the school, with regular school attendance interrupted, and Kosovo and the whole world experiencing a complete lockdown. Although technology and research teaching were practiced for years, distance learning was an issue itself. Senior management organized online learning, and 5 days only after the lockdown (11 – 16 March), the school platform began to operate (through web page) with open access for all Albanian-speaking students, where all the classes/topics would be published as per curriculum areas, for each of the 5 weekdays. Similarly, staff professional development continued with online trainings due to emergence of urgent requests for using online teaching tools. From Google forms and Classroom, video registrations of lessons and online Zoom meetings were added (initially weekly meetings, to continue with the classes as well), achieving the learning results for three months in a row.

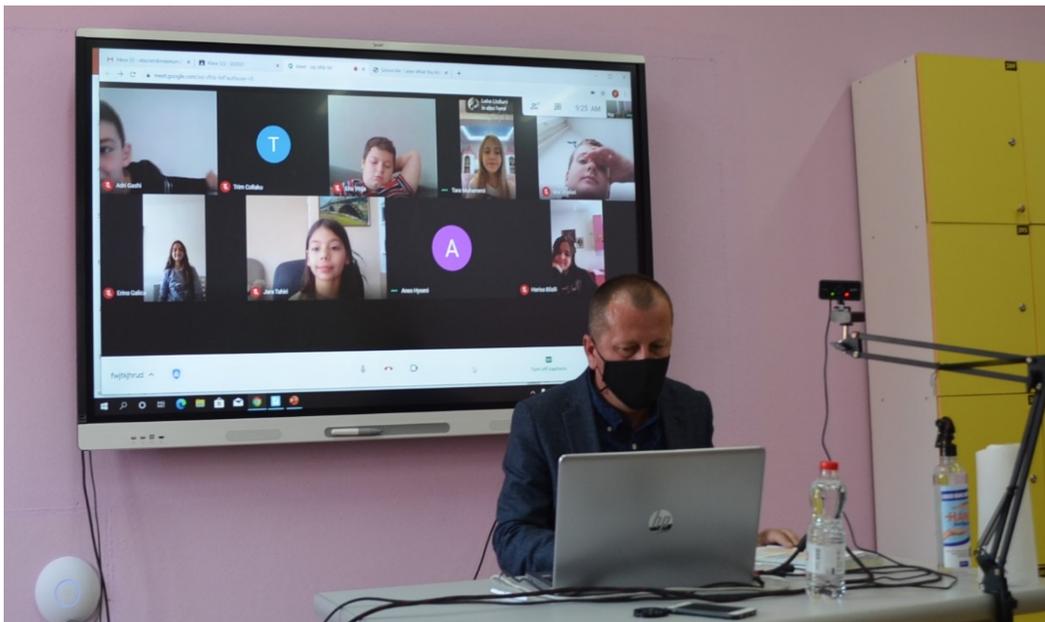


Photo 14. E-learning in school

During this period, the school image was further improved; the school became a model of distance learning approach with a variety of activities organized based on a competent planning by organizational council. In addition, the school principal drafted a manual on assessing children while learning in distance and trained the staff to do it. At the same time, the school psychologist organized online meetings with students who needed motivation and emotional support. An extraordinary week with various projects, addressing the topic of the Global COVID-19 pandemic, was organised as well: COVID-19 pandemic paralysed the globe! Earth is breathing freely! What about

us? What after that?. The projects were presented and the school rewarded the best groups of students with books from the “Dukagjini” bookstore, which were delivered by mail.

In May, with the school year still going on, senior management resumed their work at school, whereas the administration continued to work in shifts as before. Due to increased demand for enrolment, another first grade was added, resulting in a total of 4 first grades. In addition to end of year activities, the school began planning potential scenarios for the next school year, since the pandemic situation seemed to continue. A task force was assigned to analyse every detail of future plans. The school was constantly supported also by the founder, and the implementation of a hybrid model of learning was decided: grades 1-5 would attend school in 2 shifts, and hybrid learning would apply for grades 6-12, with half of students attending school and half of them attending livestream classes while at home. In addition to 4 regular classes at school, foreign language classes were organized online for grades 6-12. To comply with the preventive measures against COVID 19, classes operated with the half number of students, a total of 12-13 students per class.

During the summer, to be better prepared for the situation that was going on, the school appointed an E-learning Coordinator and a Public Relations Manager. A thorough analysis of all school environments took place and it was decided to use the main building for all the classes, complying with the distance requirements, in conformity with the rules from the Public Institute and the Ministry of Education. 1/1,2,4 grades only would attend school in the small building. A coordinator for COVID-19 management was appointed, who along with the school task force, would analyse the situation with the pandemic in school on weekly basis.

Investment was done in technology devices as well: cameras were installed in all classrooms, bluetooth and headphones provided for each teacher, and “writing pads” for teachers of Maths, to advance the online learning. From this year, the school will use the G-Suite for Education package for teaching and learning.

Before the school year started, 2 trainings were designed and were implemented online and in person with teaching staff, masks with the school logo were provided for all students and staff, and face shields were provided for teachers. New cleaning rules applied and disinfection with alcohol was done across all school environments several times a day; a temperature check, shoes and hand disinfection was applied to each person at school entrance.

A folder to manage COVID-19 cases in school was created, logging in all the cases (those infected, isolated and active ones), creating a database for the situation with infections. To have the best protection against Coronavirus, the school decided to use air cleaners in all classrooms and in a number of offices, which seemed to have a positive effect. During the semester, it was concluded that there was no case of infection spreading from the classes and that all cases were coming from families.

There was an increasing need to develop teachers’ technology skills and this brought up the idea to improve also some other components of livestream, such as visibility, sound, various teaching games, etc. Therefore, it was decided to have SMART Boards for each classroom, which was considered a revolution in teaching technology, and all staff was trained by the E-learning coordinator.



Photo 15. Hybrid teaching in school and at home, using a SMART Board

The school provided continuous support to have them creatively used, performing observation during the classes and online observation of classrooms. School management drafted a classroom observation protocol, used to observe 40 teachers during November - December, with divided roles for 4 observers, assessing the aspect of technology, class organisation, planning and methodology. Each teacher was given individual feedback and substantial suggestions to improve their teaching practices. This approach, DIFFERENT from the usage of the platform in Lockdown, positively affected professional development of teachers, providing the school with measurable indicators of improvement in school results. Teachers' performance assessment wasn't done this year due to the extraordinary situation. Similarly, school kitchen didn't operate either and students provided for meals by themselves.

Due to pandemic restrictions, to keep the school community safe, several traditional activities in school were substituted by individual approach. With the German project - "Schools: Partners for the Future" (PASCH), students participated in 4 online workshops - "Back to the past", and a photo competition was organised for grades 6-12.

To help the learning process, all students of gymnasium were equipped with tablets, and the school, this year awarded 4 scholarships for students of ninth grade.

With the end-of-year holidays approaching, the school distributed presents for all students, staff and their children, and children in the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the charity club organized a humanitarian action, distributing the presents prepared by school students to the *Happy Mothers and Kids* NGO ("Nëna dhe fëmijë të lumtur").

Achievement Test (9th Grade) was cancelled by the Ministry of Education, whereas State Mature Exam result, of a total of 100 points, on average was **62.14** points.

Nominal success, at the end of school year, is **4.99** – for primary level, **4.58** - for the lower secondary level, and **4.09** for the upper secondary level, with a total of **4.55** at school level.

In the first semester, school year 2020/21, the number of students in school was 654 or 3.5% higher compared to previous school year. Of them, 338 students are registered in grades 1-5, 171 in grades 6-9 and 145 in grades 10-12.

Annex 1: Certified people by training programs

Code	Name	Number of courses	Participants	Total hours
010	Step by Step (BasicTraining – first grade)	40	43	1,720
050	Standards of Learning facilitation	24	14	336
070	Mediation between peers	24	239	5,736
073	Project based learning	24	190	4,560
074	Entrepreneurship and financial education	24	8	192
075	Career guidance and orientation	24	9	216
076	Assessment for Learning	24	133	3,192
Total			636	15,952