



# CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULAR REFORM IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KOSOVO







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## Challenges of Implementing the Curricular Reform in Pre-University Education in Kosovo

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# 1. Executive Summary

This study aims to identify and analyze current challenges in implementing the curricular reform in pre-university education, and in this context to provide recommendations on the further development of education policies and improvement of school practices in terms of the implementation of curricular reform.

In order to identify challenges in the implementation of curricular reform, this study uses a qualitative research approach which includes an analysis of policies, legal and sub legal acts, interviews conducted with senior officials of relevant departments within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Kosovo Pedagogical Institute (KPI)<sup>1</sup> and focus groups realized with nine (9) quality coordinators at the municipal level as well as 25 quality coordinators (CC) at the school level. In order to better understand the reasons behind certain challenges, focus groups with quality coordinators at the school level were conducted separately as following:

- (a) Quality Coordinators in the schools that were involved in the first pilot phase of the curriculum (school year 2013/2014); and
- (b) Quality Coordinators in the schools that are involved in the full implementation phase of the curriculum (school year 2017/2018).

A special focus group was organized with quality coordinators in gymnasiums, in order to identify the specific challenges with which this educational level faces<sup>2</sup>. Finally, based on the findings from the research, this study provides recommendations to address the identified challenges.

It is expected that, through interviews and focus groups challenges faced by schools as well as possible solutions from the perspective of officials and teachers, who are directly involved in the implementation, will be identified. To verify findings from focus groups, after each meeting the summary of discussions was shared

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1 List of officials interviewed: Selim Mehmeti, KPI (18.10.2018; 22.11.2018); Afet Morina, Quality coordinator, MEST (22.10.2018); Shqipe Gashi, Division for curricula and school textbooks - MEST (23.10.2018); Feime Llapashtica, Division for Curricula and School Textbooks- MEST (23.10.2018); Nezafete Kutllovci, Division for Quality Assurance, Assessment and Standards - MEST (25.10.2018); Arbër Salihaj, Division for Curricula and School Textbooks - MEST (23.11.2018); Habibe Buzuku, Division for Teacher Professional Development (27.11.2018).

2 List of participants in focus groups: Elmije Grajqevci, MED Fushe Kosova; Enver Bajrami, MED Vushtrri; Lulzim Krasniqi, MED Rahovec; Majlinda Hoxha, MED Gjilan; Xhevdet Zekaj, MED Istog; Arben Zabeli, MED Skenderaj; Teuta Berisha, MED Lipjan; Enver Mazreku, MED Malisheva; Alltane Tërshnjaku, MED Dragash; Zahide Kastrati, Gymnasium 'Hamdi Berisha' Malisheva; Lindita Kalicanaj, Gymnasium 'Haxhi Zeka' Istog; Shemsedin Zogaj, Gymnasium 'Hivzi Sylejmani' Fushe Kosova; Lulzim Paci, Gymnasium 'Eqrem Qabej' Vushtrri; Halil Desku, Gymnasium 'Luigj Gurakuqi' Klina; Shkelqim Latifi, Gymnasium 'Zenel Hajdini' Gjilan; Xhemajl Shala, HTS 'Anton Cetta' Skenderaj; Avni Gerguri, Vushtrri; Fadil Berisha, LPSS 'Azem Bejta' Klinë; Gani Kryeziu, Rahovec; Mehdi Neziri, Vushtrri; Shaban Ibrahim, LPSS 'Daut Bogujevci' Fushe Kosova; Vjollca Kryeziu, LPSS 'Beqir Gashi' Malisheva; Vloran Krasniqi, Gymnasium, Dragash; Avdi Azemi, Lipjan; Dhurata Xhemajli, LPSS 'Rexhep Elmazi' Gjilan; Valentina Gjocaj, LPSS 'Martin Camaj' Istog; Azim Cengaj, Dragash; Astrit Buja, Lipjan; Asim Hoti, Rahovec; Hafir Rexha, Malisheva; Selvete Sylejmani, Gjilan; Arton Binakaj, Istog; Muhamet Rukolli, Skenderaj.

with the participants to ensure that their views were properly recorded. Also, the draft report of this study was shared with all participants and their feedback is included in the final version of this study.

On the other hand, the analysis of the documentation was focused on the analysis of the curriculum package as well as other supporting policies for implementation of the curriculum<sup>3</sup>, with the aim of assessing the consistency of cross-sectorial education policies against the measures set out in the curriculum framework and identify gaps in the completion of cross-sectorial policies, necessary to implement the curriculum.

**The key challenges in implementation of the curricular reform identified in this study include:**

- Fragmented and incoherent approach to implementation of reform elements;
- Non-consolidation of the mechanism for supervision, support and accountability in the process of curriculum implementation;
- Inadequate orientation and insufficient support of teachers and schools in the planning and implementation of learning processes based on the principles of the Curriculum Framework;
- Failure to set out standard requirements for learning progress, access and criteria for assessing certain competences for curriculum level;
- Inadequate preparation, supervision and support of teachers and management and professional staff for the implementation of the curriculum;
- Poor quality of education management of schools;
- Insufficient engagement of the Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) in the process of the curriculum implementation;
- Lack of consolidation of quality assurance mechanisms;
- Insufficient use of school autonomy in the curriculum implementation, in accordance with specific conditions of the teaching staff, students' needs, school infrastructure, and specifics of the locality where the school operates.

Recently, significant progress has been made in completing the regulatory framework, however the full legal and regulatory framework remains to be completed and harmonized, as well as all relevant implementation mechanisms to be consolidated and functionalized.

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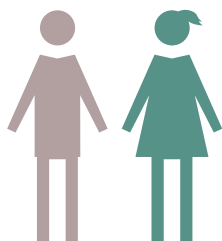
3 The reviewed documents include the following: MEST (2016). Kosovo Strategic Education Plan 2017-2021; MEST (2016). Framework quality assurance of school performance in Kosova, KPI, Prishtina, 2016. MEST (2014). Administrative Instruction no. 32/2014 on the Criteria and a Procedures for Quality Assurance in the Vocational Education and Training Institutions - Internal processes. MEST (2013). Administrative Instruction No. 14/2013 on Teacher Performance Evaluation. MEST (2013). Administrative Instruction No. 16/2013 Implementation of teacher professional development. MEST. (2010). Administrative Instruction No. 5/2010 on Licensing Teachers.

## 2. Introduction

In 2011, MEST approved the Pre-University Curriculum Framework in Kosovo in order to establish a regulatory framework for pre-university education reform. In 2016, after the second pilot phase, MEST issued the revised version of this document entitled Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in Kosovo. This document regulates the entire pre-university education system and serves as an umbrella for efforts on improving quality and equality in education services for all students.

The principles set out to guide the implementation process of the new curriculum system refer to the curriculum review and evaluation systems, the review of the role of teachers and establishment of a new organizational and pedagogical culture of the school in order to develop competencies. The school is expected to prepare students for lifelong learning by cultivating the natural curiosity of young people for new information, developing their interest in learning and preparing them for independent learning.

However, lack of human capacities and institutional commitment on the one hand, and lack of economic stability, on the other hand, are hampering the full implementation of the curriculum framework and the consolidation of the quality assurance and control system. Curricula and textbooks continue to be overlaid and focused on knowledge rather than skills development, while schools lack the support needed for implementation of the curricular reform.



Curricular  
Framework for  
Pre-university  
Education in  
Kosovo



### 3. Curricular Framework for Pre-university Education in Kosovo

**The curriculum system in Kosovo is comprised of two main pillars:**

- Conceptual pillar, defined in the Curriculum Framework and
- Operational pillar, expressed through Core Curricula and education curriculum.

Other documents of curriculum that enable implementation at the school level include textbooks, supplementary teaching and learning materials as well as assessment tools.

With the Curriculum Framework, MEST has been determined for a competency-based approach, i.e. an approach towards expected outcome that should be achieved by all students at different periods of schooling. Competency-based approach shifts the focus from the pressure to realize the content defined by curricula and school textbooks in development of the competencies defined within the curriculum.

The main differences between the organization of teaching in a content-based system from a competency-based system are summarized in the following table<sup>4</sup>.

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4 Guide to manage the implementation of school curriculum, KPI, Prishtina, 2016, page 46.

## Content-based approach

- Focus on realization of contents planned and memorizing factual data
- The organization of work at school is based on time/teaching class (*what can be realized for one teaching class?*)
- The process of teaching and learning is mainly based on textbooks
- Fragmented content
- Learning at school is often meaningless for students
- The process of learning refers to average students

## Competency-based approach

- Focus on what students will learn and be able to do at the end of a certain period of time, namely a curriculum level
- The organization of work at school is based on the results we want to achieve (*how long does it take to achieve the specified outcome?*)
- The process of teaching and learning is based on diversified research and resources
- Integrated and inter-disciplinary content
- Learning at school is closely related to the real world, it is meaningful and reflects students' interests and experiences
- The process of learning respects and is based on the students' diversity

**In the Curriculum Framework, the platform for curricular solutions to improve school practice so that the competences are achieved, is set up through:**

- principles for the process of drafting and implementing the new curriculum system;
- curriculum levels;
- criteria for the design and use of teaching materials and resources;
- evaluation system, and
- new role of teachers and school.

As described in the Guide to manage school in the implementation of curriculum<sup>5</sup>, the principles set out in the Curriculum Framework ensure the coherence and consistency of the process of implementing a competency-based approach and should therefore be addressed comprehensively given their inter-relation.

**This guide also describes the implications of principles in the school's work during the implementation of the curriculum, including:**

- **Inclusion** refers to the right of each child and young person to equal inclusion in quality education. Led by this principle, school provides equal access and inclusion by contributing to the full realization of the individual potential of each child/young person. This principle should guide the school's approach to the school community and beyond, and especially to children who are inside and outside the learning process. School performance is not evaluated only on the basis of the level of achievement of the students who attend the school, but also on the basis of the degree of children involvement in the locality where it operates.
- **Competence development** means the measurable achievement of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are considered necessary for all citizens of Kosovo by the society. In the curriculum system, key competencies are broken down through the learning outcomes that must be progressively and continuously achieved by all students during pre-university education, namely until the completion of Grade 12. This principle should guide the entire process of planning, realization and evaluation of school work.
- **Integrated teaching and learning** means full learning that reflects the inter-relations and inter-dependencies of nature and the world created by human being with the knowledge and information we have about them. Driven by this principle, the school should enable:
  - plan and implement integrated learning processes within subjects that cover a curriculum area, in order to master the learning outcomes set out for the respective curriculum area;
  - inter-relation of curriculum areas towards a full and multidimensional process that highlights the interconnection of different aspects of learning processes that are addressed by different curriculum areas;
  - the meaningful interrelation of learning with life, through:

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<sup>5</sup> Guide to manage the implementation of school curriculum, KPI, Prishtina, 2016.

- planning teaching contents that reflect student, social and environmental concerns in schools and beyond;
- use of tools, situations and resources for the realization of learning processes;
- continuous update of contents with the ones that reflect developments in the social, economic, cultural or scientific sphere;
- implement learning processes that enable the application of knowledge and the use of certain skills, attitudes and values in the context of solving the practical and real problems of everyday life.
- **Autonomy and flexibility at the school level** , enables the school to build its profile in the best interest of its students and the locality in which it operates, in accordance with the specific conditions of the teaching staff and its infrastructure and within the regulatory framework established by MEST. This means that a competency-based approach implies equal opportunities and not equality of opportunities, and therefore, the Curriculum Framework and Core Curriculum have increased the autonomy of the school in organizing and implementing learning processes.
- **Responsibility and accountability**, implies that the decentralization process of educational services and the increase of school autonomy should be accompanied by a functional mechanism for quality assurance and accountability for the entire education system hierarchy. Quality assurance in education is achieved only by developing a culture of (self)evaluation and continuous improvement of the school towards raising the level of student achievement<sup>6</sup>.

Curriculum levels, according to which the curriculum system is structured, represent the reference point for defining the key competences to be mastered by all students, learning progress requirements, learning experiences organization, approaches, and evaluation criteria. The curriculum levels cover one (1) to three (3) school years, enabling respecting of students' individual rhythms to master the competences and the flexibility necessary to plan and organize educational work at the school level. For each grade, the Curriculum Framework foresees the determination of standard requirements for the learning progress, the organization of learning experiences, access and evaluation criteria for certain competencies<sup>7</sup>.

The criteria for the design of teaching resources, defined in the Curriculum Framework, emphasize the need to avoid routine learning and memorizing and to encourage active and creative participation during the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills development, values and attitudes which lead to the gradual acquisition of six key competencies<sup>8</sup>.

The directions for the student assessment system determined in the Curriculum Framework place the focus on the ongoing evaluation of the level of achievement of the key competences. The evaluation system for the learning outcomes, set out in the Curriculum Framework, determines that what is assessed, when, how and by whom, should be done in various forms of assessment<sup>9</sup>.

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6 Guide to manage the implementation of school curriculum, KPI, Prishtina, 2016, page 10-12.

7 Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, MEST, Prishtina, 2016, page. 33.

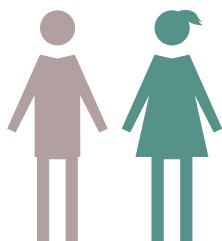
8 Ibid, page. 53.

9 Ibid, page. 48.

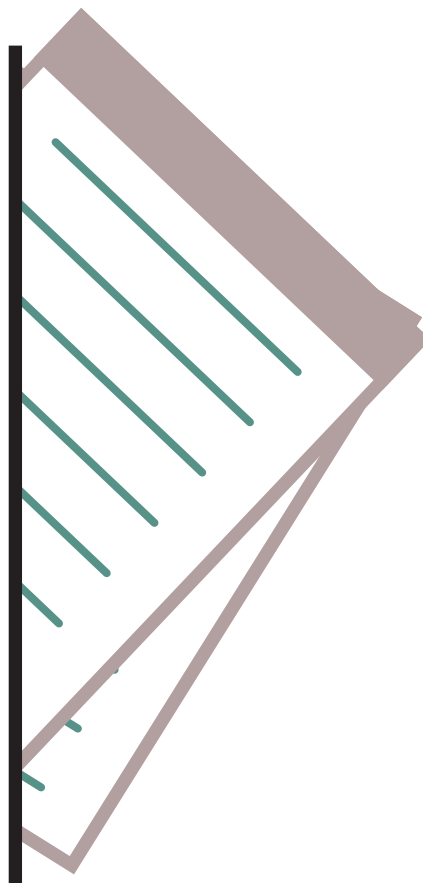
The Curriculum Framework also describes the role of the main stakeholders within the school to ensure a favorable environment for the implementation of the curriculum, including: the role of students, teachers, school professional service, school director, student council, parent council and school steering committee<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, MEST, Prishtina, 2016, page. 56-58.



Progress and  
Challenges in  
Implementation  
of Curriculum  
Framework



## 4. Progress and Challenges in Implementation of Curriculum Framework

### 4.1. Core Curricula

Unlike the conceptual character of the Curriculum Framework, the Core Curricula(um) represent/s the basic operating document of the curriculum for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, the provisions of which are set by MEST and are mandatory for all institutions of pre-university education. They set out general and mandatory guidelines for planning, organizing and implementing educational processes in schools. In Core Curricula, the core competencies defined in the Curriculum Framework are further broken down through more concrete learning outcomes that are specific to each curriculum level and curriculum area thus orienting the school and teachers to independent content planning and learning processes in order to achieve those outcomes.

However, in Core Curricula, in addition to determining the learning outcomes per curriculum level and area, other aspects such as: description of the curriculum levels, description of core competencies within the curriculum, curriculum areas (reasonableness, concepts, methodical guidelines, guidelines for assessment and guidelines for teaching resources) are treated very generally by not sufficiently highlighting the characteristics of the curriculum levels, respectively the curriculum areas. The evaluation aspect is also not addressed at the required level. Determining standard learning progress requirements, access and evaluation criteria for certain competences are not part of core curricula, thus preventing the establishment of a unified, accurate and reliable system for evaluation of student achievements when completing curricular levels.

As such, Core Curricula do not sufficiently orient teachers and schools in planning and implementing educational processes according to the autonomy foreseen with the Curriculum Framework to enable the development of competences, thus preventing the proper implementation of these aspects at the school level. This is also reflected in the discussions of the focus groups with QC in schools. A progress to meet these orientations was made with the Guide to Implementing the Implementation of the Curriculum in Schools,

published by KPI<sup>11</sup>, which is focused on clarifying the new expectations of school and provision of concrete instructions to:

- plan and guide the curriculum implementation process;
- ensure an environment that enables the implementation of the curriculum;
- plan and realize quality education according to new curriculum requirements;
- professional development of teachers for curriculum implementation;
- overall performance self-evaluation from the perspective of its impact on improved student achievement; and
- continuous improvement of performance in view of full implementation of the requirements of the new state curriculum<sup>12</sup>

School challenge in using the autonomy for the preparation of curricula was also evidenced by MEST during the pilot phase of curricular reform. To address this challenge, MEST prior to starting implementation of the curriculum in all schools, has revised the Core Curricula where, among others, has fixed the curriculum for the school year.<sup>13</sup> In addition, MEST has prepared the content matrix for each classroom and has drafted curricula and learning programs for the grades in which the new curriculum has started.

However, the discussions in focus groups with quality coordinators in schools reveal that they are concerned about the quality of these documents. In many cases, they are considered overloaded and with inadequate order of topics, while the involvement of teachers in this process has not been sufficient. On the other hand, the learning outcomes within subjects of teaching in many cases do not coincide with the learning outcomes for the respective curriculum area. Furthermore, the schools have been informed late about this initiative of MEST; after the drafting of curricula by the teachers themselves.

Another challenge faced by schools is the overload of teachers by plan, who, according to focus group participants, due to the limited time<sup>14</sup> are not contributing to harmonization of curriculum areas with improved teaching quality<sup>15</sup>. Consequently, teachers feel unprepared for classes.

As for the forms of catch up and supplementary classes, on the one hand, and non-curricular activities, on the other hand, according to focus group discussions, there is lack of support for their organization at the school level. Core Curricula provide orientations for differentiated teaching and non-curricular activities but

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11 Guide to manage implementation of school curriculum, KPI, Prishtina, 2016.

12 This guide was prepared based on the experience of pilot schools during the implementation of the new curriculum, namely the difficulties identified during the monitoring of the implementation process in these schools by KPI and MEST - Division for curricula and textbooks.

13 In the previous version, the education plan with core curriculum was defined for the curriculum level, leaving the preparation of annual plans under school's autonomy.

14 Non-defining the way of using the 20 hours available to teachers for planning hampers the engagement of teachers in other activities that are not directly related to the teaching process within the respective subjects of teachers.

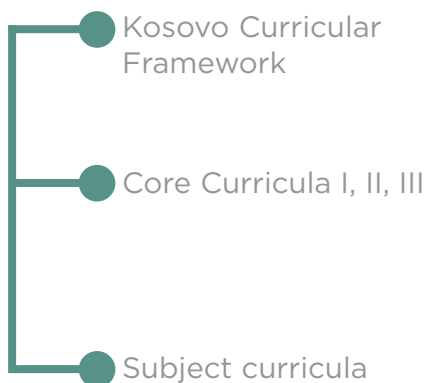
15 A special emphasis was given here to the weekly planning.

more of a recommendation and non-mandatory character for schools<sup>16</sup>. Also, in the job descriptions of the teachers (within their employment contracts) this commitment is not defined<sup>17</sup>.

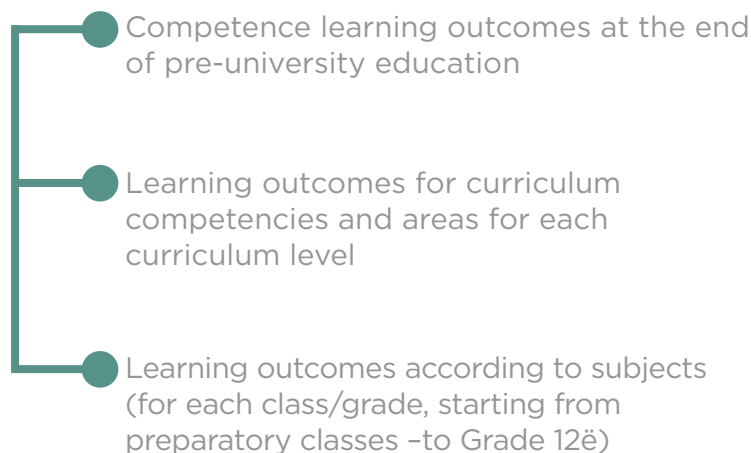
## 4.2. Student Assessment

According to the Curriculum Framework<sup>18</sup>, the assessment of students is based on the learning outcomes for competencies, curriculum areas and subjects as defined in the curriculum documents below:

### Curricular documents



### Learning outcomes



16 Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Grade and Primary Education in Kosovo, MEST, 2016, page. 101, 103; Core Curriculum of Lower Secondary Education in Kosovo, MEST, 2016, page. 105, 108; Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education in Kosovo, page. 105, 107.

17 Norm of class hours for teachers is determined based on the 'minimum' teaching time in Core Curricula.

18 Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo, MEST, Prishtina, 2016, page. 47.

**The Curriculum Framework also defines the types of internal evaluation, including:**

- Continuous evaluation
- Final evaluation
- Evaluation per grade

The period for implementation of each type of evaluation, the evaluators, the main goals and the ways of documenting/evidencing student achievements are also determined in the Curriculum Framework, but, as mentioned above (within the Core Curricula) the aspect of assessment in the spirit of the new curriculum has not been addressed to the required level and the schools involved in piloting have faced many challenges during the assessment of students.

A step forward was marked in 2016, with the issuance of AI 08/2016 on Student Assessment according to the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in Kosovo.<sup>19</sup> This instruction regulates in detail the ongoing assessment and final assessment, but however not the assessment per level. A concern raised during the focus groups with the schools in relation to this sub-legal act is the shorter duration of the third period (especially for high school graduates, for whom this period is only one month), while the assessment for each period is equivalent.

**Other concerns of focus group participants were in relation to pedagogical documentation, including:**

- The record book and personal book with data (which in some cases are considered irrelevant);
- The 2016 civil register is not compliant with 2014 record books, and schools do not have instructions on how to deal with this situation;
- Diplomas (for secondary schools) are not reviewed.

However, the main challenge remains the lack of a framework document for student assessment that determines the criteria, procedures and instruments for all types of evaluations. As a consequence, schools lack orientation on how to carry out assessment for the curriculum level (whether assessment of competency results or the assessment of curriculum areas).

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<sup>19</sup> AI 08/2016 on Student Assessment according to the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo.

### 4.3. Textbooks and other school books

From the perspective of student-centered work at the center and competency-based work, the Curriculum Framework highlights the requirement that learning sources should motivate students and stimulate their progress<sup>20</sup>. It also stresses the need for students to have access to a wide range of learning sources in order to avoid students' routine learning and memorization and prepare them for lifelong learning.

Law No. 02/L-67 on the publication of textbooks, teaching aids, schoolbooks and pedagogical documentation has not been revised after the approval of the Curriculum Framework. This law defines the "textbook" as the basic and mandatory book that serves as a fundamental tool and source of knowledge for a given field and with the use of which the educational objectives included in the curricula are achieved<sup>21</sup>.

AI 05/2011 on the implementation of standards for textbooks<sup>22</sup> contains general and specific standards, according to subjects or areas, for the evaluation of textbooks of pre-university education. This AI was issued by MEST in order to improve the quality of textbooks and didactic tools and it contains:

- 15 general standards, divided into four areas<sup>23</sup> with a total of 72 indicators, which apply to all textbooks; and
- Specific standards for each subject.

There were many debates<sup>24</sup> about the quality of textbooks and the level of implementation of this sub-legal act, but the main challenge with which schools face is the fact that the current textbooks do not comply with the curricula and programs offered by MEST (in many cases 20%). Moreover, given that the respective textbooks are offered free of charge by MEST, the selection of textbooks and other resources by the school is limited. In this regard, parents refuse to purchase alternative/supplementary materials while schools do not have conditions and equipment needed for their preparation or access to other learning resources.

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20 Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, MEST, Prishtina, 2016, page. 53.

21 Law No.02/L-67 on publishing school textbooks, educational teaching resources, reading materials and pedagogical documentation, General provisions.

22 AI 05/2011 Implementation of standards for school textbooks.

23 (1) Formal aspects, presentation and appearance, (2) Methodic and didactic aspects, (3) Pedagogical aspects, (4) Practice related aspects.

24 Special analysis of the quality of textbooks exceeds the scope of this study.

#### 4.4. Teacher Professional Development

Teachers have a key role in implementing the curriculum, therefore teachers are required to have their skills developed to use the opportunities offered by modern information and communication technology; social skills that enable the necessary interaction with students, parents and colleagues; planning, evaluation, monitoring skills and independent professional development skills; skills to organize effective teaching processes, taking into account differences in the social and economic background of students as well as differences in their interests, affinities and opportunities<sup>25</sup>.

Legislation and education policies for the professional qualification and development of teachers in Kosovo provide opportunities for adequate teacher training, however the mechanisms for their implementation are not yet functional and at the desired level of performance.

In terms of preparation of teachers prior to serving, the standards of teacher training programs during studies are defined in Administrative Instruction 16/2005, so that schools and students achieve the general education goals<sup>26</sup>. These criteria include aspects of starter teacher training, aspects of the study program, implementation, and quality assurance.

Policies that regulate teachers training before their service also provide a reasonable framework for applying a competency-based approach to higher education institutions that offer teacher training programs. In addition, they oblige these institutions to continuously update their programs in accordance with the changing needs, policies and requirements in pre-university education.

The aspect of the implementation of these policies exceeds the frameworks of this study and therefore has not been addressed. But in principle, without a reflection on the competency-based approach to pre-service teacher training systems, the change of practice cannot be achieved; therefore cooperation between MEST, the university and the schools is necessary.

The need for substantial adaptation of teacher training programs within the University of Prishtina to the new requirements of pre-university education reform set out in the Curriculum Framework has been raised by various partners of MEST who support the implementation process of the new curriculum system in the country.

One of the challenges identified during the implementation of the programs for teacher professional development was the incomplete functioning of the licensing system, which resulted in the demotivation of

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25 Key requirements of the curriculum in relation to realization of learning process and their interpretation with practical terms, described in Guide to manage the implementation of the curriculum, KPI, 2016, page. 67-69.

26 AI 16/2005 on Standards of the programs for training teachers while studying determines the quality criteria for teacher preparation in Kosovo.

teachers to continue with the trainings<sup>27</sup>. Progress in this direction was made at the beginning of 2017 with the entry into force of AI 05/2017 on Teacher Licensing and Career Development System<sup>28</sup>, AI 06/2017 on the Accreditation Criteria and Procedures for Teacher and Education Employee Professional Development Programs<sup>29</sup> and the approval of the Strategic Framework for Teacher Development in Kosovo<sup>30</sup>.

The Strategic Framework defines the standards of the teacher's profession throughout the career (pre-service, initial phase of service and career development), breaks down competencies by different career stages, determines the implementation of the TPD system throughout their career (including School-based Professional Development) and responsible persons for teacher professional development. Pre-service standards will support the development and approval of initial university teaching programs, initial stage standards will be used to support the initial occupational processes, while the standards for further career stages apply to further professional development and performance evaluation for the purpose of licensing and career advancement. The framework also identifies the needs for professional development of teachers, combining the priorities of MEST with the priorities identified at the school level (based on teacher performance evaluation).

AI 05/2017, according to which the teacher licensing system is implemented in conjunction with the teacher career development system, defines the parties for the implementation of the licensing system; their duties and responsibilities in this process<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, AI 06/2017 establishes a quality assurance system for TPD in order to implement the system for teacher licensing in pre-university education, defining the procedures for the approval of TPD programs, procedures of application and approval of institutions/providers and programs for professional development of educational workers<sup>32</sup>. Within the duties and responsibilities of MEST, the definition of criteria, requirements and needs for TPD is foreseen<sup>33</sup>.

However, the increased responsibilities of municipalities in the field of teacher professional development cannot be realized without the establishment and consolidation of responsible structures. As for the role and responsibilities of the school for teacher professional development, school-based professional development is foreseen, based on the annual assessment of the school needs for professional development. The school-based professional development is also strengthened through AI 05/2017<sup>34</sup>, but it remains that this

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27 The teacher licensing process started in 2008 through the licensing system set out in the Administrative Instruction 16/2008, which set out teaching standards, levels of payment, and defined career advancement through a credit system. In 2014, AI 25/2014 on Teacher Licensing creates a coherent system of licensing and career advancement based on qualification, experience, professional development and performance as well as establishes the structure of payments according to this system. Renewal of a license and career advancement are possible only on the basis of a positive performance assessment and successful completion of training programs during the time of respective license. This approach is intended to contribute to the motivation of teachers for continuous professional development in order to improve their performance, and career advancement.

28 AI 05/2017 System of teacher licensing and career development.

29 AI 06/2017 on Accreditation Criteria and Procedures for Teacher and Education Employee Professional Development Programs.

30 Strategic Teacher Development Framework in Kosovo.

31 AI 05/2017 System of teacher licensing and career development.

32 Preparation of regulatory framework on school-based professional development is ongoing.

33 AI 06/2017 on Accreditation Criteria and Procedures for Teacher and Education Employee Professional Development Programs , Article 3, paragraph 2.

34 AI 05/2017 System of teacher licensing and career development, Article 8 (paragraph 2 and 4).

TPD component to be regulated with a special sub-legal act. The challenge that schools face with currently is the lack of a financial code for budgeting the needs for TPD.

Regarding teacher preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum, focus group participants expressed their concern about the decreased quality of trainings (compared to the first phase of trainings<sup>35</sup>); also lack of support at the school level and as a consequence the preparation of teachers for the implementation of curriculum is considered insufficient.

The so far experiences of teacher professional development in Kosovo show that if new approaches, promoted through different TPD programs, are not part of the job descriptions for teachers and if they do not serve to their performance evaluation, they are not sufficient to motivate the teachers' commitment for their implementation. Innovative approaches to the implementation of the new curriculum require teachers' enthusiasm, dedication, accountability, and continuous self-critical reflection on their performance, so teacher evaluation mechanisms and career advancement should encourage and recognize these values. This approach, followed by continuous monitoring and evaluation of their performance, opens opportunities for teachers to understand their position as learners and motivates them for continuous professional development thus establishing a culture of professional background maintenance and advancement of.

#### **4.5. School services and professional bodies**

The main role of the school's professional services should be to supervise and support teachers in planning and implementing learning practices according to curriculum requirements. According to AI 34/2014 on the functioning of the pedagogic-psychological service in schools, the pedagogue contributes to the realization and progress of the educational work in the school institutions in line with the laws and pedagogical documents of MEST.

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35 Within the preparation of pilot schools on the implementation of the new curriculum, the capacities of the teachers were built by Kosovo Pedagogical Institute through the program "Building the capacities of pre-university education teachers for the practical implementation of the new curriculum". The program was conducted through three workshops (within 10 training days with 80 direct contact hours).



**In the further breakdown of duties, the work of the school pedagogue is as follows:**

- To plan, program and organize educational work;
- To effective realize the education process;
- To follow-up, research and analyze the school's work;
- To cooperate with teachers;
- To cooperate with students;
- To cooperate with parents;
- To cooperate with professional institutions and the community;
- Professional development;
- To care for school documentation;
- To cooperate with the psychologist.<sup>36</sup>

Whereas, the work of the school psychologist involves facilitating in the learning process and promoting the cognitive, emotional, social and personal development of students through the development of programs that aim to promote learning and adapting pupils and staff at the school, conform the expectations determined with the MEST pedagogical documents.

While this Administrative Instruction determines the work of the school's pedagogue, in case the school has a psychologist, the work of the latter when the school has no pedagogue is not defined. From the experiences of the schools that have psychologist, the performance of the psychologist is often limited to the individual treatment of cases of children with unacceptable social behavior.

<sup>36</sup> MEST AI 34/2014 on functioning of pedagogic-psychological service in schools. Articles 6-16.

Lack of professional services in many schools remains an ongoing concern. On the other hand, within preparations for the extended implementation of the new curriculum at national level, the focus for professional development has been placed on teachers and school directors, but not on professional services<sup>37</sup>.

Given the importance of these services in implementing the curricular reform in the country, each school should have relevant services (as defined by AI 34/2014), irrespective of the location of the professional service staff or transitional modalities for which MEST and/or MEDs is/are determined<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, the consolidation, functionalization and professional development of these services should be considered as one of the main priorities within the measures for implementing the new state curriculum.

As for the school's professional bodies, in relation to the curriculum implementation process, they have a very important role. These bodies should ensure the cooperation with the teaching staff when planning, implementing and assessing student performance and learning processes. AI 22/2016 on Professional Actives (Departments) of the School determines the functioning of professional actives including: organization, types, duties and responsibilities<sup>39</sup>. While the duty and the way of functioning of professional assets in the curriculum areas are defined in detail and in the spirit of the new curriculum, the duties and the functioning of professional assets for educational levels, namely class councils have not been elaborated<sup>40</sup>.

Regarding the experience of schools, all professional bodies in schools are consolidated, active and functional according to AI 22/2016<sup>41</sup>.

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37 In 2016, with the authorization of MEST, within the USAID Basic Education Program, three guides for vocational school service were prepared, but MEST or MED didn't continue with it to increase the capacity of professional services in schools based on these guides.

38 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2014). Administrative Instruction No. 34/2014 on functioning of pedagogic-psychological service in schools.

39 AI 22/2016 on Professional Actives (Departments) of schools.

40 Recommendations on the role of professional bodies for the implementation of new curriculum are provided in the Guide to manage the implementation of the curriculum, KPI, 2016, page. 85-86.

41 In all schools participating in focus groups.

## 4.6. School Management

The school's staff is responsible for the school's educational performance, namely for the development of students competencies and for the advancement of students achievements. Therefore, the quality of school management directly affects the quality of the implementation process of the new state curriculum, especially in the early stages of the process.

The new curriculum provides an increased level of school autonomy to plan and implement the implementation of the curriculum in accordance with the specific conditions of its teaching staff, school infrastructure, and local characteristics of the school. As such, the new curriculum enables each school to build its own profile in the best interest of students and the locality where it operates. But as much as the school's autonomy increases, that much increases the responsibility of the school leadership to ensure that this autonomy is used within the spirit and the requirements defined by the Curriculum Framework and Core Curricula, as well as in the best interest of the students and the locality where it operates<sup>42</sup>.

On the other hand, a competency-based approach requires an essential change in the way of cooperation between the parties that make up the school community. This implies the cultivation of a school organizational culture that pays attention to the involvement of students and parents in school processes, the involvement of external experts, cooperation between teachers and cooperation of teachers with school leadership, cooperation with other schools, partners and other service providers as well as continuous reflection on the effectiveness of teaching and organizing practices of the school.

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42 Guide to manage implementation of school curriculums, KPI, Prishtina, 2016, page. 80.



**The role of the school director according to the Curriculum Framework includes the following responsibilities:**

- To ensure that school is a friendly, safe, and entertaining environment;
- To ensure the continuous improvement of the quality of education in school and teacher accountability;
- To ensure that the general culture of the school and the atmosphere in the classroom contribute to the cultivation of values and attitudes defined by the curriculum package;
- To provide opportunities for differentiated teaching both in curricular and non-curricular activities;
- To administer effectively the flexibility and autonomy added for the planning and implementation of the curriculum in accordance with the specific conditions of the teaching staff, school infrastructure and the specifics of the locality where the school operates;
- To work, in cooperation with stakeholders, towards the development of a clear concept for the school, including the school’s vision and mission as well as the ways through which schools plans to improve the quality, equality and accountability of the educational services;
- To engage in sharing good experiences, coping with challenges and finding solutions to the problems identified during the Curriculum implementation process;
- To ensure the cooperation of the school with other child services in order to support students to overcome learning difficulties and student barriers while attending school;
- To ensure respect for the principles of the school democracy, including students, parents and other responsible persons for education in school decision-making processes;
- To ensure that school rules and procedures for operation are clear and transparent;
- To ensure respect for accountability to stakeholders, the community and education authorities<sup>43</sup>

43 Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, MEST, Prishtina, 2016, page. 57.

MEST has also drafted national standards for school directors, which serve as the basis for employing school directors, assessing their performance and professional development<sup>44</sup>. These standards affect six key areas that affect the improvement of teaching and learning, including:

- 1 Leadership and motivation;
- 2 Quality teaching and learning;
- 3 Planning and management;
- 4 Cooperation and interaction;
- 5 Legislation and society;
- 6 Professional ethics<sup>45</sup>

In order to increase the capacity of the school directors to implement these standards, to understand the practical implications of the decentralization process in education and to understand their roles and responsibilities in school management at school level, MEST provided a training program for all school directors. However, the performance of school directors leaves much to be desired against the expectations listed above; the focus of their engagement remains the administrative aspects, while the level of engagement and the capacity of school directors to manage the implementation process of new curriculum were expressed as a concern by all the focus groups.

A challenge remains the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of directors and the increase of responsibility and accountability for quality assurance at school level.

### 4.7. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

In 2016, significant progress was made in completing the legal and regulatory framework for the consolidation of the quality assurance system, the preparation of guides and manuals to support the external and internal school evaluation processes as well as increase the capacity of central, municipal and school authorities for the implementation of these processes. The quality assurance framework for school performance is the basic document for the quality assurance system in pre-university education, which serves as the main reference for the evaluation and self-evaluation of school performance, its development planning, and continuous improvement of school quality. The framework defines the areas of school performance quality, school performance quality criteria, school performance quality indicators, school performance assessment levels, and school performance quality scales.

Through the quality areas, criteria and performance indicators of the school this document breaks down the

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44 Administrative Instruction no. 04/2012 on standards of professional practice of school directors.

45 Administrative Instruction no. 04/2012 on standards of professional practice of school directors.

new expectations from the school, based on the main principles of the Curriculum Framework. As such it directly assists the measures for the implementation of the Curriculum Framework in the country, namely the establishment of the accountability and responsibility mechanism in educational institutions.

In 2016 the package of administrative instructions on quality assurance in education institutions was adopted including: AI 24/2016 on quality assurance in pre-university education<sup>46</sup>; AI 04/2017 on performance assessment in education institutions<sup>47</sup>; AI 23/2016 on school development plan and municipal education development plan<sup>48</sup>, and AI 22/2016 on professional actives (departments) of schools<sup>49</sup>.

AI 23/2016 on the School Development Plan and the Municipal Education Development Plan defines the format, content, structure, responsible parties, criteria and procedures for drafting the development plan of pre-university education institutions as well as the responsibilities and procedures for drafting the municipal development plan.

AI 24/2016 on Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education defines the mechanism and procedures for quality assurance, responsible parties and related duties, the workload and planning and reporting procedures related to quality assurance activities.

According to the Administrative Instruction 04/2017 on Performance Evaluation in Education Institutions, the assessment of school performance is compulsory for all schools in Kosovo. The school performance assessment system consists of internal evaluation/ self-evaluation, which is implemented by the school through its mechanisms, and external evaluation, which by legal provisions is determined to be implemented by the Education Inspectorate<sup>50</sup>.

Despite these developments, the initial process of implementing the quality assurance regulatory framework had many challenges, such as defining quality coordinators, at school and municipal level<sup>51</sup> as well as building their capacities, in the functionalization of school-level teams for the internal evaluation of school performance, and in the implementation of internal evaluation (in the schools in which this process started with the support of KPI)<sup>52</sup>.

46 AI 24/2016 on Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education.

47 AI 04/2017 on Performance Evaluation in education Institutions.

48 AI 23/2016 on School Development Plan and Municipal Education Development Plan

49 AI 22/2016 on Professional Actives (Departments) of schools.

50 The quality assurance process in the vocational education and training institutions in Kosovo started earlier, respectively immediately after the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority (2011) and the responsibility determined for Internal and External Quality Assurance Authority (IEQAA). Quality assurance of IEQAA evaluation is done by KAA pursuant to the Law on National Qualifications (Article 18, Quality assurance in vocational education and training, 2013). The "Quality Assurance and Improvement in Vocational Education and Training Institutions in Kosovo" research, focusing on the impact of the internal performance self-evaluation of the institution/school on quality assurance and improvement, shows that vocational education and training institutions face challenges related to the self-evaluation process, such as improper understanding of the SIA process, but also its importance on the continuous improvement and advancement of school performance (Zylfiu, 2017). Also, findings of the study show that there was a lack of school support during the self-evaluation process through monitoring and mentoring the process, carrying out specific trainings on implementation of self-evaluation, integrating findings into school development planning etc.

51 Since the process was piloted prior to the effectiveness of the respective AI.

52 For more details see: First experiences in school performance assessment in Kosovo, KPI, Prishtina, 2018.

As far as assigning the position of the quality coordinator in the MED, none of the municipalities participating in the focus group<sup>53</sup> have the position of the quality coordinator as a particular position. On the other hand, AI 24/2016 does not determine the ways on how to select a quality coordinator in MED. Duties of the quality coordinator are usually assigned to education officials in the lower/upper primary/secondary education. This function to most municipalities was assigned in 2017 (mainly through the exchange of e-mails between MEST and the Director of MED). The overload of respective officials with administrative duties makes the fulfillment of their function as a quality coordinator more difficult.

Until the beginning of November 2018, no special training was conducted for quality coordinators in municipalities, therefore the support for quality coordinators in schools (especially in internal evaluation processes) was not possible<sup>54</sup>. Only a few QC in the municipalities that were covered by KPI project, supported by UNICEF, benefited from the respective training. Regarding cooperation with MEST, after the pilot phase of the new curriculum, communication has been greatly reduced. However, after the appointment of the QC to MEST (in the beginning of 2018), a clear communication line has been established and the first steps of cooperation are promising<sup>55</sup>.

The consolidation process of quality assurance mechanisms at the school level has not yet been concluded<sup>56</sup>. In some municipalities (2 from 9 participating in the focus group) the quality coordinator position has not been assigned to any school yet. In schools where quality coordinators have been assigned, by the beginning of November 2018 less than 30% of them have been trained (e.g. in the municipality of Rahovec only 4 out of 29 quality coordinators were trained, in Fushe Kosova only 3 out of 9 QC were trained, in Vushtrri 12 out of 35 QC were trained). An exception is the Municipality of Klina where QC in MED is also a trainer for the internal school evaluation and he conducted the training for all quality coordinators in schools<sup>57</sup>.

One of the challenges with which quality coordinators at the school level face (in cases when they are trained) is the limited time available to fulfill their function and the lack of support from the quality coordinator at the MED (due to their overload and/or the fact that they have not yet been trained for this function). In most cases, this communication is reduced only to conveying the information/requests from MEST. Another concern of school quality coordinators is the lack of working conditions (office and necessary equipment). Moreover, in the schools where self-evaluation has started, members of the Self-Assessment Teams often do not fulfill their obligations, thus leaving this burden to quality coordinators.

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53 Vushtrri, Fushe Kosova, Rahovec, Gjilan, Istog, Lipjan, Malisheva, Dragash dhe Skenderaj.

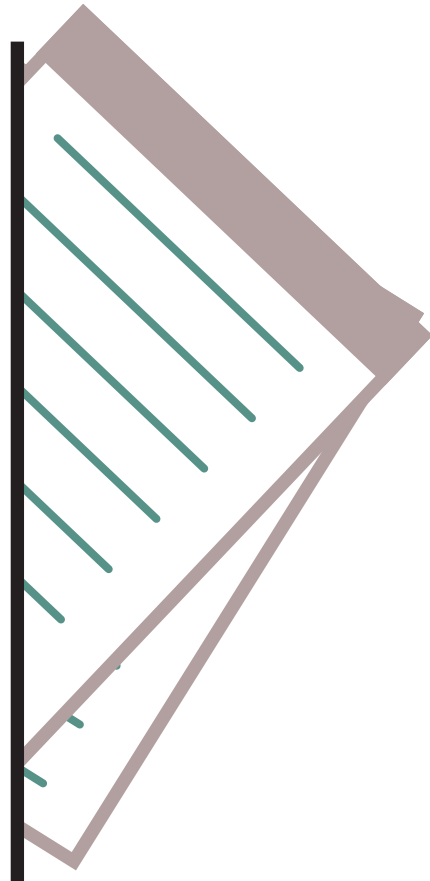
54 Prior to formalizing this position, KulturKontakt conducted training on general quality issues, however not on the basis of the documentation package for quality assurance which was approved in 2016.

55 Engaging quality coordinators in MEST was highlighted by both QC in MED as well as QC in schools.

56 The QC position was formalized in 18 out of 25 schools that were represented in the conducted focus groups, but at the country level, the position of QC has been formalized at a very low level (around 20% of schools).

57 Similar cases are present in the municipalities of Suhareka and Podujeva (which were not represented in the focus group).

# Conclusions and Recommendations



## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of Kosovo provides a clear vision and orientation for pre-university education reform and is fully compliant with the European Council and European Parliament Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning. However, unlike developments in European Union countries, the implementation process of curricular reform in Kosovo is characterized with a fragmented and incoherent approach to implementing reform elements. This is because education development strategies and relevant action plans cover all important aspects of the intervention, but lack the timely coordination of the processes, namely their chronology. Moreover, the implementation agenda is largely driven by donor priorities.

On the other hand, within the engagement on decentralization of education, no clear division of responsibilities has been achieved and the mechanism for monitoring, support and accountability has not been consolidated.

### 5.1. Recommendations

- Consolidation of quality assurance mechanisms should start with a detailed analysis of the school situation according to the new curriculum requirements (through a comprehensive external evaluation)<sup>58</sup>. This way, the current situation in all schools would be identified and the necessary measures that should be taken by MEST, MEDs and schools to provide the essential conditions for implementation of the new curriculum would be identified. Based on this, an operational plan for the implementation of the curriculum (with all accompanying elements<sup>59</sup> and clear division of responsibilities) should be prepared providing a reasonable and based dynamics of implementation, support, monitoring and accountability.
- In the Core Curricula (and consequently in the experience of schools in the implementation of curricula) there is an abstraction of curriculum areas and curriculum levels. This is noted in both, the planning aspects of the learning processes and the assessment of student performance. As operational documents for teachers and schools, Core Curricula should provide the entire platform necessary to implement the basic principles set out in the Curriculum Framework, because they are the only obligatory documents within the curriculum system of pre-university education in Kosovo. As such, they should determine not only expectations in relation to the concrete and measurable achievements of students when completing a curriculum level, but at the same time they should also establish clear expectations and orientations in relation to planning, implementation and evaluation of all educational processes (not only the learning process) for each curriculum scale, thus setting the overall framework for the functioning of schools. Such an approach would encourage the innovative energy of teachers and schools and would enable the validation of good school-based initiatives. In this way, a balanced combination of quality control based on clear expectations with the flexibility for application of different pedagogical solutions at the school level for competency development would be achieved.

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58 This activity would also contribute to the development of school performance assessment mechanisms and instruments by building the necessary capacities for the sustainability of this system and by providing schools with a verified package of instruments necessary for internal assessment that should take place on an annual basis.

59 Including the supplement and full harmonization of all sub-sectorial policies.

- Due to insufficient preparation of schools to plan school curriculum, MEST, while supporting schools in implementation, could propose to schools subjects for each curriculum area/scale, the necessary learning classes for each theme and subject. This curriculum package would serve the schools in the early stages of curriculum implementation by keeping them within the spirit of the principles of the Curriculum Framework and towards mastering the competences. An attempt in this direction has been made with the preparation of curricula, but they are not necessarily mandatory. Also, concerns of schools about their quality should be taken into account.
- Increased attention by MEST is also needed to support and encourage schools for an innovative approach to compiling curricula for specific subjects during a school year and selecting content and learning resources for realization of effective and meaningful learning processes.
- One of the most important measures to promote competencies is their adequate reflection on the assessment system. School autonomy in the drafting of curricula and their flexibility in identifying and applying different pedagogical solutions at school level can be used in favor of competency development only if they are adequately involved in assessment systems. This is due to the fact that, in principle, the engagement of teachers and schools is focused on the development of aspects that are part of the assessment, including both, the student achievement assessment system as well as the teacher and school performance evaluation system. Therefore, the assessment standards for all learning outcomes set out in the Core Curricula should be defined, including respective instructions to assess the level of competence acquisition at the end of the curriculum level.
- According to AI 08/2016 on Student Assessment according to the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education, the assessment for each period is equivalent<sup>60</sup>. Therefore, the school calendar needs to be reviewed so that enables balanced periods of the realization of learning and the assessment of students.
- School textbooks do not fully comply with the curricula since the textbooks prepared before the curricula were drafted by MEST are in use. The process of preparing new textbooks is under way, however according to the current applicable law which is not in line with the Curriculum Framework. Implementation of AI 05/2011 on the implementation of standards for textbooks<sup>61</sup> would contribute to improved quality textbooks and didactic tools. Whereas, the revision of the Law No.02 / L-67 on the publication of textbooks, teaching aids, schoolbooks and pedagogical documentation<sup>62</sup> should be done based on the principles of the Curriculum Framework. In addition to adequate content and illustrations, the depth and quality of student interaction with textbook is key to achieving learning outcomes.
- Recognizing the importance of school professional services in implementation of curricular reform in the country, each school should be covered by relevant services, regardless of the location of professional service staff or transitional modalities for which MEST and/or MED are determined. Therefore, the consolidation, functionalization and professional development of these services should be considered as one of the main priorities within the measures for the implementation of the new state curriculum.
- The implementation of the new curriculum spirit requires perceptual change of teachers so that they see themselves as students, respectively they understand the need for continuous personal and professional development. On the other hand, they should be aware of their role as facilitators of learning processes that focus on developing student capacity to construct their knowledge as a basis for further development. In this way, the preparation of teachers (before and during service) should focus on:

60 AI 08/2016 on Student Assessment according to the Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education.

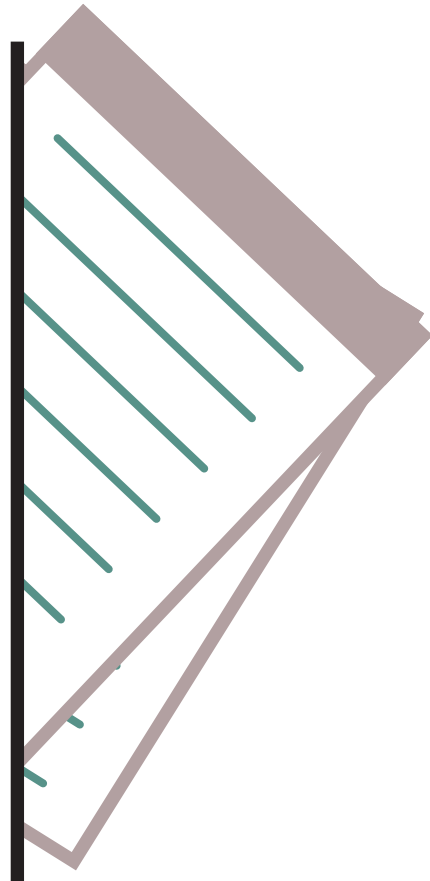
61 AI 05/2011 on Implementation of Standards for School Textbooks.

62 Law no.02/L-67 on publishing school textbooks, educational teaching resources, reading materials and pedagogical documentation, General provisions.

- preparing them to facilitate the process of mastered competences by students, respectively the methods and practices that contribute to this process, and
- supporting teachers to initially master their core competencies so that they can promote them to their students.
- Reflection of the competency-based approach to pre-service teacher training systems is necessary in order to change school practice, therefore the cooperation between MEST, the university and schools is essential.
- The National Framework for Teacher Professional Development, coupled with clear evaluation criteria for teacher performance evaluation, enables a balanced system of MEST expectations with the individual needs of teachers for professional development towards a continuous improvement of their performance. Whereas, the School-based Teacher Professional Development Framework should contribute to the concept of professional development as a sustainable school activity, addressing the specific needs, difficulties and challenges of the respective school teachers in teaching and learning.
- The teacher's job description in their employment contracts should be revised, in line with the new curriculum requirements for greater engagement of teachers beyond the learning process (enhancing peer cooperation, catch-up and supplementary learning, extra-curricular activities, etc.). The work norm should determine the number of hours for these engagements, while the division of responsibilities should be done at the school level (on an annual basis), in accordance with the affinities and opportunities of individual teachers, balancing the engagement of all teachers. This detailed description of the annual duties and responsibilities for each teacher could also serve as a key reference for continuous performance evaluation and the identification of needs for professional development.
- Increased municipal responsibilities in the field of teacher professional development, performance evaluation of school directors, quality assurance and school support in the implementation of the new curriculum require the establishment and support of relevant structures within MEDs for their implementation. As a first step, the division of administrative and professional responsibilities within MED, and the increase of the capacity of the relevant officials to meet the new obligations would contribute to strengthened role of MEDs in these processes.
- Competency-based approach requires a radical change in the way of interaction between the parties that make up the school community. This implies the cultivation of a school organizational culture that pays due attention to the involvement of students and parents in school processes, the involvement of external experts, cooperation between teachers and cooperation of teachers with school management, cooperation with other schools, partners and other service providers as well as continuous reflection on the effectiveness of teaching practices and school organization. The school director has an irreplaceable role in this regard, therefore the system for monitoring and evaluating the performance of directors should be prioritized and functionalized. This intervention, coupled with capacity building of directors in line with identified needs, would contribute to improved quality of school management.
- All school initiatives that are planned and implemented at the school level should be based on the principles of the Curriculum Framework, thus contributing to inclusion and competence development. Significant progress in this respect has been made with the School Performance Quality Assurance Framework, which sets out new school expectations and criteria for assessing school performance based on the interaction between key principles of the Curriculum Framework and quality area of school performance. In this way, this document should serve schools as an orientation to review organizational culture towards fulfillment of their new role.



Annexes



## 6. Annexes

### Annex 1.

#### Summary from the focus group with municipal coordinators for quality in education

**Date: 1 November 2018**

Purpose of the meeting: to discuss the current challenges in implementation of the new curriculum – a perspective of quality coordinators in MED



**Subject**

Role and function of QC (comments on their role as defined with AI 24/2016)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

In any of the municipalities the position of QC is a special position. Duties of the QC are usually assigned to lower/upper primary/secondary education officials. This function in most municipalities was formalized in 2017 (mainly through the exchange of emails between MEST and the Director of MED).



**Subject**

Current difficulties/challenges in operation

**Conclusions of the discussions**

The huge workload of officials with administrative duties makes it difficult to fulfill their function as a QC.

No specific training for QC was provided in municipalities, therefore their support for QC in schools (especially in internal evaluation processes) was not possible. Before this position was formalized, training by KulturKontakt on general quality issues, however not on the basis of the quality assurance package, adopted in 2016, was conducted. From the training on this subject, only a few QCs in municipalities covered by the KPI project, supported by UNICEF (which was highly rated) benefited.



**Subject**

Ways of communication with QC at the school level (quality of cooperation, forms of supervision/support, main QC requirements in schools by KKC, main challenges they face with)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Communication with QC at the school level is limited, except for the schools in which piloting of the curriculum took place (whether in the first or second phase). Schools that were involved in piloting continue to keep QC informed in municipalities on the developments and challenges in implementing the curriculum.

The internal evaluation process was not implemented in any school (except in those where this process was piloted with KPI's support). There was no explicit request from MEST in this regard.

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**Subject**

Ways of communication with QC in MEST (quality of cooperation, forms of supervision/support to MEST or other MEST, KPI divisions by QC)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

After assigning the QC in MEST, a clear communication line has been established and the first steps of cooperation are promising.

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**Subject**

Forms of communication with other divisions within MEST, KPI and IA

**Conclusions of the discussions**

After the pilot period, the communication with other MEST departments has been greatly reduced.

QC from two municipalities submitted a request to KPI for training of self-evaluation teams in schools, however no answer has been received.

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**Subject**

Challenges with which schools currently face while implementing the new curriculum

**Conclusions of the discussions**

The process of consolidating quality assurance mechanisms has not yet been concluded. In some municipalities (2 out of 9 participants in the focus group), the QC position has not yet been formalized. In schools where QC are assigned, only about 30% of them are trained (e.g. in the municipality of Rahovec only 4 out of 29 QCs are trained; in Fushe Kosova only 3 out of 9 QC trained; in Vushtrri 12 out of 35 trained). An exception is the municipality of Klina in which QC in the MED is also a KPI certified trainer for the internal school evaluation and has conducted the training of all QCs<sup>63</sup>.

Other challenges in curriculum implementation include:

- Strategic documents/sub-sector policies that regulate the implementation process are not harmonized, which causes confusion;
- The cooperation of MEST with MEDs has been significantly reduced (e.g. so far no meeting of MED Directors with the new Minister took place);
- The performance of school directors is not at the desired level;
- There is lack of professional/pedagogical services;
- Responsibility and accountability mechanisms for the curriculum implementation are not clearly defined and determined;
- School textbooks are not in line with the requirements of the new curriculum;
- Standard reporting instruments on curriculum implementation have not been made available to schools and municipalities;
- Student assessment process is not clear to teachers;
- Pedagogical documentation is not complete (there is a lack of matrices and record books for students with special needs);
- Large number of students.

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<sup>63</sup> Similar cases are present in the municipalities of Suhareka and Podujeva (which were not represented in the focus groups).



**Subject**

Possible solutions in addressing the defined challenges

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Review of AI 24/2016:

- QC position is not only appointed by the school director, but in cooperation/consultation with the Steering Committee or the Teachers Council;
  - Regardless of the number of students in the school, the director should not be able to exercise the function of the QC (because the position of the director is of a limited mandate);
  - The position of QC in the municipality and school is unique;
  - Clarify the procedure for replacement of the QC (in case of illness, maternity leave or other situations when the respective teacher is not able to exercise that function).
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## Annex 2.

### Summary from the focus group with Municipal Quality Coordinators in gymnasiums

**Date: 1 November 2018**

Purpose of the meeting: to discuss the current challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum – a perspective of quality coordinators in gymnasiums



**Subject**

Role and function of QC at the municipal level (comments on their role as defined by AI 24/2016)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

In 6 out of the 7 schools represented in the focus group, QCs are assigned with the decision of the School's director (mainly in 2017<sup>64</sup>).

All schools have been involved in the curriculum pilot phase and teachers who coordinated the curriculum implementation process (Coordinators for Curriculum) have been assigned in the QC position (ensuring continuity of the process).



**Subject**

Current difficulties/challenges in operation

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Lack of trainings on the internal school assessment and other functions that must be fulfilled by QC.

Limited time for the fulfillment of the function.

In some cases there is an overlap of responsibilities of the QC and school director.



**Subject**

Ways of communication with QC at the municipal level (quality of cooperation, forms of supervision/support, main requirements, main challenges they face with

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Regular and positive – support within the MED's capacity.

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64 In one of the schools this position was formalized in 2018 while in the other it has not been formalized yet.



**Subject**

Functioning of school professional bodies

**Conclusions of the discussions**

All professional bodies in schools are consolidated, active and functional.



**Subject**

Internal School Assessment process (the support provided/missing, teachers cooperation, materials/guides and instruments available)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Internal assessment was carried out only in schools that were supported by KPI (4 out of 7 participants in the focus group). The package of documents provided for realization of ISA completed and useful.



**Subject**

Initial self-evaluation results (if this process has started in respective schools)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Identified challenges during the first self-assessments:

- Insufficient involvement of parents
  - School infrastructure (cabinets, physical education room, equipment)
  - Teacher/student relationships
  - Quality and relevance of student assessment
-



**Subject**

Challenges with which schools currently face while implementing the new curriculum (preparing teachers, understanding the process, difficulties, the support provided/missing)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Non-compliance of textbooks with curricula;

Delay of MEST to notify schools on the developed curricula;

Large number of students in classes;

The decreased quality of trainings for teachers (compared to the first training phase);

Record book overloaded with data (which in some cases is irrelevant);

The dilemma among teachers regarding the assessment process.



**Subject**

Recommendations

**Conclusions of the discussions**

The position of QC in municipality and at school (over 500 students) should be a special position;

Review of textbooks

Clear and complete instructions on the assessment process

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### Annex 3.

#### Summary from the focus group with Municipal Quality Coordinators in the schools that have started with the implementation in the first pilot phase

**Date: 8 November 2018**

Purpose of the meeting: to discuss current challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum – a perspective of quality coordinators in the schools that have started the implementation in the first pilot phase.



**Subject**

Role and function of QC at the municipal level (comments on their role as defined by AI24/2016)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

In 8 out of 11 schools represented in the focus group, the QC position has been formalized (mainly in 2017<sup>65</sup>).

All schools have been involved in the curriculum pilot phase and (in most cases) teachers who have coordinated the curriculum implementation process (Coordinators for Curriculum) have been assigned to the QC position (ensuring the continuity of the process).



**Subject**

Current difficulties/challenges in operation

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Contracts for the position of QC are not harmonized within the country - the same obligations for a QC that has been free from the teaching process for only 2 hours to the other QC for 10 hours or more.

Lack of trainings on the school's internal evaluation and other functions to be met by QC.

Limited time to fulfill all the obligations determined in the AI.

In schools where self-assessment has started, members of Self-Evaluation Teams often do not perform their functions (passing the burden to QC).

In the case of vocational schools, AI 24/2016 and AI 32/2014 have not been harmonized.

65 In one of the schools, this position was formalized in 2016, in the other school in 2018, while in 3 schools the QC position has not yet been formalized, but quality coordinators have been selected/appointed by the school director.



**Subject**

Ways of communication with QC at the municipal level (quality of cooperation, forms of supervision/support, main requirements, main challenges they face with

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Communication with QC in the MED is mainly done through the school director.

Communication with QC in the MED, in most of the cases is only to convey information/requests from MEST.

In 6 out of 11 schools, there is a lack of support and direct communication.

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**Subject**

Functioning of school professional bodies

**Conclusions of the discussions**

All professional bodies in schools are consolidated, active and functional, according to AI on Professional Actives in Schools.

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**Subject**

Professional services

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Professional services are in place in 5 from 11 schools that participate in the focus group.

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**Tema**

Internal School Assessment (the support provided/missing, teachers cooperation, materials/guides and instruments available)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Internal assessment was conducted only in schools that have been supported by KPI.

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### **Subject**

Challenges with which schools currently face while implementing the new curriculum(preparing teachers, understanding the process, difficulties, the support provided/missing)

### **Conclusions of the discussions**

Assessment of competencies at the end of the curriculum level

Evaluation of curricular areas at the end of the curriculum level

Student assessment (different changes to instructions) ... ambiguity about assessment tools ... conflict instructions: however, recent changes are evaluated as positive

School textbooks do not comply with the curriculum provided by MEST (in many cases not even 20%)

Challenging (weekly) planning: does not fulfill the function of correlation (teachers do not have enough time for coordination)

The quality of the curricula is not satisfactory

Pedagogical documentation

- Record books (in the pilot phase) were not adequate - revised
  - The 2016 civil register does not correspond to the 2014 record books
  - Revised certificates (for secondary schools) are missing
-

## Annex 4.

### Summary from focus groups with Municipal Quality Coordinators in schools that started the implementation in the school year 2017/2018

**Date: 8 November 2018**

Purpose of the meeting: to discuss the current challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum – a perspective of Quality Coordinators in schools that started the implementation in the school year 2017/2018.



**Subject**

Role and function of QC at the municipal level (comments on their role as defined by AI24/2016)

**Conclusions of the discussions**

In 4 out of 7 schools represented in the focus group, the position of QC has been formalized (mainly in 2018);



**Subject**

Current difficulties/challenges in operation

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Limited time to fulfill all the obligations foreseen by the AI;

Lack of working conditions (office/basic means for operation);



**Subject**

Ways of communication with QC at the municipal level (quality of cooperation, forms of supervision/support, main requirements, main challenges they face with

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Lack of support and communication (workload for QC in municipalities with other commitments);

Communication with QC in MED, in most cases only to convey information/requests from MEST;



**Subject**

Functioning of school professional bodies

**Conclusions of the discussions**

All professional bodies in schools are consolidated, active and functional (especially since the entry into force of the AI for Professional Actives);

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### Subject

Challenges with which schools currently face while implementing the new curriculum

#### Conclusions of the discussions

Insufficient support for teacher professional development (career advancement and curriculum implementation)

- Lack of a financial code to budget the needs for TPD

Insufficient preparation of teachers for curriculum implementation (duration, quality of training program, trainers);

Training of directors, after the one for teachers;

School textbooks do not comply with the curricula provided by MEST;

Loaded curricula and inadequate chronology/order of topics;

Inadequate conditions in schools for the preparation of materials;

#### Planning

- Sharing plans between schools
- Lack of harmonization-coordination between curriculum areas

Workload of teachers with administrative work (planning, descriptive evaluations): as a consequence unprepared for the teaching process;

Lack of support for the development of extra-curricular activities (competitions, activities, ...);

Lack of information technology skills of old teachers;

Large number of students;

School documentation;

- Personal teacher's notebook for planning is not unique and is not provided by institutions ... different models on sale
- Personal evaluation record book (many sections for assessment)

#### Student Assessment

- Periodic assessment: the time of PA1 and PA2; the third period is only one month for graduates
- Assessment of competences acquired at the end of curricular scale (no instruction)

Implementation in grades 1/6/10 is an issue, when the same teacher teaches in classes that apply the new curriculum and also in others;

The monitoring teacher's time/obligations not paid -monitoring class not planned in the schedule;

The teacher's position in society (challenges in the geographical distribution of good teachers).



**Tema**  
Recommendations

**Conclusions of the discussions**

Dividing class hours equally over the periods - as the evaluation in each period is equivalent

Quarterly plans (instead of two months ones).

Prior to preparing new textbooks, the curricula compiled by MEST should be reviewed.

Unification of school textbooks.

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