

## Article #11

# UNIVERSITY OF IOWA SHARES EDUCATION ANALYTICS PRACTICES WITH COLLEAGUES FROM KOSOVO'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES:

## Enhancing Analytic Capabilities and Access to Labor Market Data in Kosovo

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For more photos on this article go to this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15Dcr3ugzb3SCEppOKO7MPNT2zUOVHmmX>



Figure 1: Education Analytics training session at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Prishtina

This fall, as part of USAID's *Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity*, staff from Kosovo's public universities consider a new approach to embracing data with a series of Education Analytics training sessions led by Dr. Cassie Barnhardt, University of Iowa (UI) Associate Professor and the Director of UI's graduate certificate in Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education is a USAID-funded activity implemented by the University of Iowa in partnership with Iowa State University and Kosova Education Center (KEC). The educational analytics sessions aim to achieve the Activity's first objective – increasing universities' analytic capabilities and access to labor market data in partnership with the private and public sector.

Educational analytics involves systematically gathering, processing, and utilizing data to understand organizational conditions, performance, strategy, and decision-making in higher education. Making effective use of data is crucial for universities in describing, explaining, and

predicting a range of outcomes of higher education practices. Universities performing educational analytic functions are engaging in institutional research and effectiveness work. This approach empowers universities to evaluate student learning and to produce graduates with industry-relevant skills.

Staff from partner universities, comprised of academic, administrative, quality assurance, and career services personnel, were identified to serve on the educational analytics leadership teams. They were identified due to their professional responsibilities that require them to use data in decision-making, accountability processes, and organizational planning. Throughout the life of the *Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity*, educational analytics team members are undergoing training on institutional research and effectiveness approaches, in addition to being directly involved in implementing data initiatives that support the universities in transforming their routines in long-term ways that embed data in their processes.

In September 2023, a training session provided a conceptual and practical understanding of educational analytics. The training emphasized how to use internal and external data to inform organizational actions and provided the foundational skills and leadership required for universities to assume greater analytic capabilities. The teams also engaged in discussions on how to establish sustainable data practices and how to evaluate student success on a variety of dimensions. These discussions addressed how to assess educational impact and evaluate it in ways responsive to the needs of multiple stakeholders- students, universities, and the private sector.

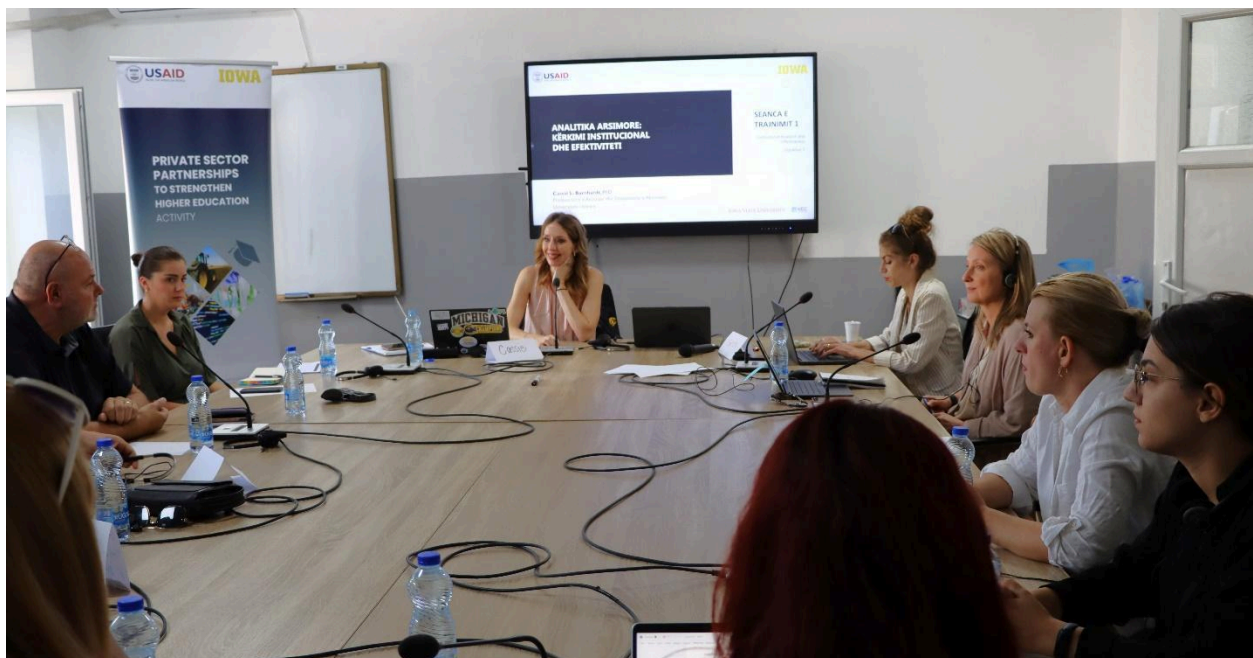


Figure 2: Education analytics training session at the Faculty of Agrobusiness, University of Peja

In October 2023, the educational analytics teams from the three partner universities applied their efforts by developing a comprehensive longitudinal survey that takes stock of how universities are supporting students and companies with respect to technical and professional

skills, field and experiential learning, and research. This survey will assess stakeholder perspectives, gathering insights from students, university staff, and businesses, with a specific focus on the ICT and agriculture sectors. The survey will allow analytics teams to describe the current state of functioning, provide feedback to study programs, university management, and industry, and take action where the needs for change are most acute.

By training university personnel and pairing those trainings with subsequent application of skills, the teams will give universities' greater internal capacities to be data-driven organizations—organizations that can prioritize outcomes that matter to their diverse stakeholders, namely students and companies. Better integration of data practices will ensure that decisions are based on evidence and observable patterns. The evidence supports investing in pursuing reforms and improvements in education that are specific, timely, and consistent with stated goals and stakeholders' needs. Moreover, students and companies will gain a great deal from universities centering data in their work; doing so will support more strategic approaches to designing student field placements in the private sector, organizing university research in intentional ways that relate to industry needs, and the making curricular changes that cultivate of a pool of highly proficient graduates.

*"Data analytics plays an important role in enhancing decision-making processes for assessing organizational needs and anticipating growth. Universities face escalating accountability demands that require substantial data sharing and analysis. Our focus on institutional research and educational analytics at the University of Iowa offers substantial expertise in methodology for educational research, evaluation, and assessment. We are committed to sharing these practices with colleagues in Kosovo with the intent of improving educational institutions' use of information and data to transform educational practice across the globe. Specifically with our Kosovo university partners we seek to strengthen the academic enterprise in ways that use data to nurture partnerships with Kosovo's private sector."* – **Cassie L. Barnhardt, Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs and Director of the UI graduate certificate in Institutional Research and Effectiveness**



Figure 3: Education Analytics training session at the Faculty Life and Environment Sciences, University of Prizren