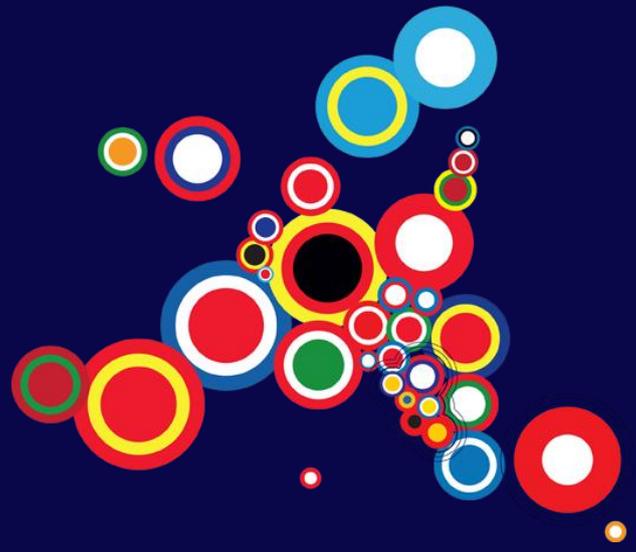




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

Kosovo*
EU for Education



Action summary

This Action aims to contribute to development of a quality-based, all-inclusive and accountable education and training system, in line with the best international practices, by supporting the implementation of measures from the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 in three different sub-sectors.

In the Pre-University sub-sector, the Action aims to increase student achievement through the improvement of inclusiveness, quality assurance and recruitment practices, as well as the integration of new curriculum and of advanced teaching practices in schools. In the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET), the objective is to improve the quality and the labour market relevance of education and training programmes through the piloting of modern pedagogical teaching and learning practices in selected VET schools. It also aims at establishing tracer studies at Kosovo level and developing further the National Qualification Framework through the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	Annual Action Programme for Kosovo for the Year 2018
Action Title	EU for Education
Action ID	IPA 2018 / 041246 / 09/ Kosovo/Education
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	7. Education, employment and social policies
DAC Sector	11110
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 15 000 000 (+ 200 000 co-financing from CoE)
EU contribution	EUR 13 000 000
Budget line(s)	22.02.01.02
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct management and Indirect Management
<i>Direct management:</i> <u>EU Delegation</u>	European Union Office in Kosovo
<i>Indirect Management</i> Entrusted entity	Council of Europe (Component 1, Activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) LuxDev (Component 2)
Implementation responsibilities	European Union Office in Kosovo
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Kosovo
Specific implementation area(s)	Kosovo
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	At the latest by 31 December 2019
Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management	At the latest by 31 December 2019
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 114(2) of the Financial Regulation
Final date for operational implementation	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

(date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)			
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The public education system in Kosovo operates through a network of 43 pre-school institutions, 952 primary and lower secondary schools, 119 upper secondary schools, and 9 public higher education institutions. In addition, there are 10 licensed private institutions offering primary and secondary education, as well as 21 licensed private higher education institutions. There are also a number of private institutions offering pre-school services.

Pre-University Education

Access to education - In the school year 2016/17, participation of children in pre-school education has reached 17.6%¹ of the age group 0-5, which represents progress in relation to 15.7% in 2014/15². Low participation rate can mostly be attributed to the low intake capacity of pre-school institutions at affordable cost, despite investments by Kosovo and EU in constructing new pre-school facilities.

The participation of children aged 4-5 in pre-school education in the school year 2016/17 was 46.4%³ which represents an increase compared to the situation in the school year 2014/15 when it was 40.7%⁴, and is one step closer to KESP target of 55%⁵. However, this is still far from EU standards where participation of children from age 4 to compulsory school age reached 93.9% (2012)⁶. There is a significant increase of enrolment in pre-primary education, where participation has reached 85.5%⁷ in 2016/17 as compared to 79.6% in 2014/15⁸.

The number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-school education has increased from 373 in 2015/16 to 601 in 2016/17⁹, mostly due to activities of CSOs facilitating their enrolment at this level of education, whereas enrolments in compulsory and upper secondary education show relative stability⁹. However, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children constitute 57.5% of all drop-outs from compulsory education, whereas their drop-out rate is 1.85%, which is considerably higher compared to average of 0.07%¹⁰ at Kosovo level. It should be noted that participation of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Education has improved in the last decade due to continuous support from EU and other donor agencies to the network of around 40 learning centres addressing educational needs of those communities. In August 2017, Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) has issued the Administrative Instruction on the establishment and functioning of learning centres¹¹, which sets conditions that centres have to meet in order to be eligible for Kosovo institutional support. It also includes the provision of scholarships for upper secondary students, in the form of cash transfers conditioned by regular school attendance of beneficiaries, which are proven to work as leverage for the enrolment of students in that level of education.

Data on inclusion of children with special needs are still incomplete. In fact, the official statistics reports 5,294 students with special needs in mainstream classes and 271 in special schools¹¹. Compared to school year 2015/16 this represents a decline in participation of 9.8%, which, given overall mobilization of central and local authorities to improve inclusion of children with special needs, confirms serious flaws in the system for identifying children with special needs. MEST is in the process of piloting new assessment instruments in seven of Kosovo's largest municipalities.

¹ Number of children aged 0-5 in pre-school education, 29,473 (Source: MEST Education Statistics 2016/17) as a percentage of population aged 0-5 in 2016 (Kosovo Population Projection 2011-2061, KAS, Dec 2013, p.41)

² Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

³ Number of children aged 4-5 in pre-school education, 25,348 (Source: MEST Education Statistics 2016/17) as a percentage of population aged 4-5 in 2016 (Kosovo Population Projection 2011-2061, KAS, Dec 2013, p.41)

⁴ Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00179&plugin=1>

⁷ Number of children aged 5 in pre-school education, 23,394 (Source: MEST Education Statistics 2016/17) as a percentage of population aged 5 in 2016 (Kosovo Population Projection 2011-2061, KAS, Dec 2013, p.41)

⁸ Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

⁹ MEST Education Statistics 2015/16 and 2016/17.

¹⁰ Data from MEST/EMIS 2016/17

¹¹ <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/08/ua-masht-nr-12-2017-per-themelimin-dhe-funkcionimin-e-qmpdf.pdf>

Management and quality assurance - One of the major challenges in the Kosovo Pre-University Education System is to establish an effective quality assurance system that would clearly reflect the division of responsibilities among MEST, municipalities and schools. Based on bylaws approved in November 2016¹², 140 Kosovo schools have appointed quality coordinators, as well as 20 municipal education directorates (MED). The budget for 560 full-time school quality coordinators is earmarked for the period 2018-2020¹³, which should be sufficient for all schools in Kosovo. With support from the EU-funded Twinning Project (2014-2017), the quality management manual was developed and the school- and MED-based quality coordinators were trained by the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute (KPI). As part of efforts to introduce school performance evaluation system, MEST approved bylaws¹⁴, which define the evaluation methodology and gives Education Inspectorate powers to steer the evaluation process.

Municipalities are direct employers to nearly 44,000 citizens, whereas the unemployment rate in Kosovo continues to be very high – 30.2%. Therefore, employment is often tied to the political powers creating clientelist relationships within the municipality. This is also the case with Education and Primary Health sector that account for vast majority of municipal employers. Whereas school directors are appointed by the mayors for a term of 4 years, teachers are employed by Municipal Education Directorates. There are frequent reports of recruitment being based on partisanship and clientelism rather than on merit. MEST Administrative Instruction No. 17/2009 provides a general procedure for the appointment of new teachers, whereas minimum qualification requirements are set by other bylaws for each level of education and subject area. In principle, municipalities are free to determine their own specific criteria for the recruitment process. These criteria usually appear to be of quantitative nature including the grade point average during the studies, level of qualification, and years of experience, followed up by an interview. The current reality is that different municipalities determine various standards and assign different weight to different criteria, frequently ignoring the important dimensions of motivation and skills relevant for the profession. This issue is addressed by the IPA 2016 assistance, which anticipates initial support for introducing transparent and merit-based practices in teacher recruitment. Such intervention requires a high level of coordination between central and local authorities, as well as changes in legislation, as to establish a clear indication of the need to continue support beyond the IPA 2016 funded action.

After years of piloting, the new Kosovo curriculum is gradually rolled-out to all schools. One of the key factors that hinders this process is the lack of textbooks suitable for the competency-based curriculum, which represents a challenge on its own, since there is no experience with such learning materials in Kosovo.

The development of child-friendly, safe and healthy environments, including through the construction and maintenance of school infrastructure in line with the relevant standards, remains an important priority for the Education Sector. As the focus in recent years has been placed on increasing the physical space for learning, the current challenge is - in addition to continued growth of school space – to work towards the adequate infrastructure management and maintenance and making safer, healthier, and more friendly environments, including physical education facilities, hygiene facilities, school kitchens, and so on.

Vocational Education and Training

While Vocational Education and Training (VET) remains relatively attractive at upper secondary level, with half of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational programmes (around 51% in 2016 with a decrease of around 8% since 2010), the dropout rate is higher in VET (3.5%) compared to Gymnasium (0.8%), with most pupils leaving school in the first year of upper secondary education. Inadequate results in VET point to a need to:

- i) Better address teacher training and school management;

¹² <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2016/12/rotatedpdf180.pdf>

¹³ Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2018-2020.

¹⁴ <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/08/4-2017-ua-vleresimin-e-performances-se-institucioneve-arsimore-ne-arsimin-parauniversitar-rotated.pdf>

- ii) Improve the quality of VET profiles based on accurate and timely information about skills demand at local level and labour market outcomes of graduates;
- iii) Reinforce the support given during transition to work phase;
- iv) Strengthen career guidance for pupils.

Business representatives are constantly referring to the fact that the skills of VET graduates are insufficiently developed or inappropriate, which in turn presents a major impediment to business development. In addition, the high number of VET students enrolling to tertiary studies is an indicator that the system is not giving the intended result. Furthermore, a full lifelong learning (LLL) perspective for skills development is still to be achieved in Kosovo, especially as regards training provision and incentives to increase the access and participation of adult learners, including those most vulnerable to social exclusion.

Improvements in the effectiveness of teaching and learning in all schools are an essential part of Kosovo's Strategic Education Plan 2017-21. The absence of robust assessment data in relation to vocational subjects and as assessment data is hardly used to inform vocational teaching and learning, it is difficult for teachers to design learning which addresses learning needs and difficult for school managers and stakeholders to judge the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Textbooks and other instructional materials that are adapted to modern pedagogies and to the new curricula are lacking in Kosovo, thereby reducing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Vocational programmes should, at least in part, be work-based, as this contributes to more effective teaching and learning. If teachers are to change their teaching methods, they must be supported through professional development. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) should be designed to support the teaching of vocational curricula using modern pedagogical practices and instructional materials, work-based learning and formative assessment. Professional development should be sustained over time and be closely linked to practice in classrooms and workshops. Individual schools cannot achieve all these improvements without collaboration with employers, other schools and providers of CPD and support from municipalities and from Kosovo agencies as well as the MEST.

Poor transition from school to work, unemployment and inactivity are major problems in Kosovo. There is a need to consolidate internal capacity for regular organisation of surveys on graduates' pathway to employment, including access to affordable and adapted tools for data collection (survey), processing and primary analysis of results. The ETF has initiated cooperation with Kosovo education and employment ministries with the aim to build capacity of VET institutions for carrying out regular tracer studies both for initial and continuous VET. This included the organisation of learning events and expertise sharing, a pilot testing of tracer study methodology as well as a preliminary feasibility assessment of VET school capacity to roll out such a survey. The results of pilot testing inform the actions designed under the current IPA intervention. From a policy perspective, a system that would embed a tracer study solution for initial and continuous VET, would respond to the top priority of Kosovo, which is to bridge the gap between labour market needs and the education and training system. This solution is in line with the latest strategic and action planning documents on education, employment, development policies, including youth activation as the Economic Reform Programmes (adopted over the last years) and the European Reform Agenda. It would also respond to the recent EU recommendation on tracking graduates (COM 2017/249) which calls EU Member States to establish by 2020 graduate tracking systems, including graduate surveys (such as tracer studies).

The Kosovo's Qualifications Framework and its referencing of the European Qualifications Framework poses a significant set of challenges to the local authorities regarding the development, validation and quality assurance of already existing and newly requested qualifications. It also sets new challenges as regards the portability of skills and qualifications and the mobility of people, not only in the education and training system of Kosovo, but across borders. In particular, its relevance in and acceptance by the labour markets of the EU Member States poses a challenge. Trust in and transparency of the Kosovo's qualification system is gradually improving, as new and more demanding assessment criteria are used for the validation of occupational and qualification standards at all levels and types of qualifications. Simultaneously, flexible and lifelong learning opportunities are in high demand as new labour market demands emerge. Therefore, in 2014, the Administrative Instruction No. 31 /2014, of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has regulated the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Kosovo. Since then, the National Qualifications Authority

undertook significant efforts to develop the required conditions for its further implementation. The ETF has been supporting these efforts, by:

- (i) Providing training to the NQA staff and to potential Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practitioners (coordinators, mentors and assessors);
- (ii) Exposing local RPL experts to EU member states' good practices in this field;
- (iii) Preparing a sound and appropriate methodology for assessing the knowledge, skills and competences through RPL procedures in Kosovo;
- (iv) Piloting such procedures in a limited number of occupations/qualifications and providers (both private and public). The main challenge ahead is to up-scale the RPL intervention to the system level, and to widen to all over Kosovo. The undertaking of such an IPA intervention will enable a systemic answer to a significant number of Kosovo's citizens that lack formal certification of its skills and qualifications acquired by non-formal and informal learning processes in Kosovo and abroad.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

Priority areas to be addressed by this Action are the increase of students' achievement through improvement of inclusiveness, quality assurance and recruitment practices in the pre-university education system, as well as the integration of new curriculum, technology and advanced teaching practices in schools; the improvement of the quality and the labour market relevance of education and training programmes through tracer studies, and further development of the National Qualification Framework through the implementation of recognition of prior learning (RPL).

As a direct consequence of the implementation of the Action, the following results will be achieved:

Component 1: Pre University Education.

Result 1.1. Improved access to education of students from disadvantaged groups in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

Result 1.2. Strengthened capacity for accountable and effective management and quality assurance at central, municipal and school level including the teaching and learning material in primary and secondary education.

Result 1.3. Improved physical infrastructure in primary and secondary education.

Component 2: Vocational Education and Training.

Result 2.1. Planning and provision of vocational education is responsive to the needs of learners and employers in selected vocational schools.

Result 2.2. Graduate tracking systems are in place in the field of VET to ensure the consistent evidence on graduate employability and skills relevance to labour market needs.

Result 2.3. Arrangements and provision of RPL at Kosovo level are in place and operational in the most needed economic sectors/occupations as a form of employment enhancement and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The proposed Action is fully aligned with the IPA Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) 2014-2020. Within the education sub-sector, the ISP puts strong emphasis on the need to expand pre-school facilities, ensuring increased access to education for all by increasing enrolment in pre-primary and primary education, enhancing relevant infrastructure, improving the quality of primary and secondary education, vocational education and training, and ensuring the skills provided are relevant with the labour market needs. In the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the priorities for IPA II assistance for human rights and minorities sector shall also contribute to the reaching of Goal 16 – "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". With regard to rights of persons belonging to minorities, IPA II will continue to support Kosovo in effectively implementing the new (2017-2021) strategy and action plan for the Roma, Ashkali and

Egyptian communities. Efforts will focus on education, social services, civil registration of these communities, as well as their integration into the labour market, particularly for women.

In addition, the Action follows two recommendations from the Kosovo Report 2018 – “1) set up efforts on curricular reform in pre-university education (including vocational education and training programmes), focused on competency-based learning and 2) improve access to quality education for pre-school enrolment and disadvantaged groups”.¹⁵ The Action is designed to lead to the progress towards two out of seven benchmarks from the EU strategic framework “Education and training 2020 (ET 2020)”¹⁶: 1) at least 95% of children (from 4 to compulsory school age) should participate in early childhood education; 2) fewer than 15% of 15-year-olds should be under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science.

The Action is directly linked to four interventions from the first pillar (“Human Capital”) of the National Development Strategy 2016-2021¹⁷: 1) increasing participation of children in the preschool education; 2) enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in school’s system; 3) linking education programs with the labour market demands; 4) improving testing, inspection and accreditation in the education sector. Also, the action contributes to the achievement of the following results from KESP 2017-2021:

- 1) 50% of children with special needs are included in the pre-university education system;
- 2) Inclusion of children of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in primary education has increased by 10%, while in lower and upper secondary education has increased by 20%;
- 3) Effective mechanisms to prevent dropout and non-enrolment in pre-university education are established;
- 4) Defined standards for recruitment of educational staff;
- 5) Improved educational infrastructure through construction, renovation, expansion and equipping of educational institutions with adequate teaching resources;
- 6) Effective quality assurance mechanisms in pre-university education in Kosovo based on the division of powers between MEST, MEDs and schools are in place;
- 7) There are quality assurance capacities at the central, municipal, and school level;
- 8) Improved quality of pre-service training;
- 9) The competency-based curriculum is implemented in all schools of the pre-university education level in Kosovo;
- 10) Textbooks and other teaching materials developed for all grades and subjects;
- 11) All vocational programs are aligned with labour market needs.

The Action is in line with the Strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in the Kosovo society 2017-2021, objective 1 – “Increased inclusion and provision of opportunities for development, training and quality education for Roma and Ashkali community members”. The aim is to improve participation of Roma and Ashkali community members in education as well as performance of learners from those communities. Inclusion of the Egyptian community in this Action, alongside Roma and Ashkali, is in line with recommendations from the “Fourth Opinion on Kosovo” of the Council of Europe (CoE) Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁸.

Furthermore, the Action is in line with the Strategy for the Western Balkans (“**A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans**”)¹⁹, launched by the European Commission in February 2018 as well as the 2018 Kosovo Report²⁰. Furthermore, the present Action is expected to contribute substantially to at least three out of six

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

¹⁶ Education and training policies based on evidence, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/indicators-benchmarks_en.htm.

¹⁷ http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/National_Development_Strategy_2016-2021_ENG.pdf

¹⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-kosovo-adopted-on-8-march-2017/1680779af8>, p.13.

¹⁹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-561_en.htm

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

flagship initiatives included within the Strategy for Western Balkans, namely: a) socio-economic development; b) digital agenda and; c) reconciliation and good neighbourly relations.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) , an EU-only agreement, signed in October 2015 between the government of Kosovo (GoK) and the EU, outlines necessary reforms and obligations in the field of Education related to raising the level of general and vocational education and training, employability, achievement of adequate quality standards of higher education institutions and programmes consistent with the objectives of the Bologna process and Declaration, and free access to all levels of education and training for all (especially for vulnerable groups, such as women, LGBTI and members of non-majority communities).

In the short term, the **European Reform Agenda (ERA)**²¹ calls for an urgent education reform which would link postsecondary education and training with gaps in the labour market and quality improvement of pre-university education, and the immediate and medium-term priorities in this area aim to improve the quality of higher education and VET. The **Economic Reform Programme's (ERP)**²² first objective under the Education and Employment heading is the better linkage between educational programmes and required skills in the labour market, which is a requirement found in all the aforementioned documents.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Over the past 18 years, the sector has received substantial EU and other donor (bilateral and multilateral) assistance aiming at the development of the education system. Demonstrating the link between aid effectiveness and improved sector performance is not always straightforward due to frequent failures of the aid recipient to build on donor support and ensure the sustainability of the assistance. To this end, efforts by both Kosovo and donors to develop common instruments for mutual accountability are critical. The basic pre-condition for ensuring such mutual accountability is the accepted and agreed framework and strategic plan, prioritisation and financing arrangement. In particular, the aid recipient has to ensure the consistency of the sector goals with other development objectives, and a solid link between the sector priorities and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, which in the past has not always happened. Additional lessons learned for future financial assistance are:

Any reform at a sectorial level represents a major challenge in the international aid context. It requires strong and effective leadership at sector ministry and commitment to the process at the centre of the Kosovo institutions and at the senior political level.

Support to designing or reviewing new policies needs to be followed by at least initial support for their implementation. For any sector reform to embed, the duration of assistance should be longer than three years. Lack of follow up may result in lost momentum and lack of political support.

In terms of education support programmes financed by multilateral and bilateral donors in Kosovo, some important lessons need to be addressed. While there has been significant amount of funding for project and programme implementation, its effectiveness has at times been questionable. The reasons for greater success of some programmes rather than others are in most cases project- and environment specific.

The local non-governmental sector has developed capacities, although limited, for education consultancy and community mobilisation, and is well-positioned to draw on regional expertise for specific knowledge and skills deficient locally. In turn, this lowers the implementation costs significantly, hence contributing to greater aid efficiency. Another important dimension to be considered is the capacities of local institutions and at Kosovo level to absorb the technical assistance and support on one hand, while taking leadership and ownership of processes on the other. These two aspects combined account for a crucial determinant of the success of projects. While challenges to implementation have been overcome in most institutions through the build-up of experience in

²¹ https://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era_final.pdf

²² <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/575DDCA8-52DD-451F-AFE8-F5DBBC247F7A.pdf>

cooperating with donor-funded projects, challenges to long term strategic and policy planning remain for most public institutions.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to development of a quality-based, all-inclusive and accountable education and training system, in line with the best international practices.	OO1. Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria (EC) and Barcelona Objectives; OO2. Employment rate 15 to 64 years, total % disaggregated by gender.	Source OO1. EC Kosovo Report; SourceOO2. KAS Labour Market Survey.	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1. To increase student achievements in PISA tests and to enhance equal access to schools.</p> <p>2. To improve the quality and the labour market relevance of education and training programmes to facilitate transition from school to work of VET students and to enhance employability of VET graduates.</p>	<p>Indicator 1. The percentage of 15 year olds who do not show a satisfactory performance in reading, mathematics and science;</p> <p>Indicator 2. Improved quality and relevance of VET system in Kosovo.</p>	<p>Source 1. Kosovo PISA Results 2021;</p> <p>Source 2. Reports from MEST, NQA, MLSW, EARK (including tracer studies and qualification achievement);</p> <p>Source 3. Reports from ENQA.</p>	Kosovo is committed to implementing KESP 2017-2021.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Result 1.1. Improved access to education of students from disadvantaged groups in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.</p> <p>Result 1.2. Strengthened capacity for accountable and effective management and quality assurance at central, municipal and school level including advanced teaching practices and related teaching and learning material.</p> <p>Result 1.3. Improved physical infrastructure in primary and</p>	<p>Indicator 1.1.1. Percentage of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children currently attending pre-primary, primary or secondary education;</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2. The total number of children with special needs attending primary and lower secondary education, regardless of their age, expressed as a percentage of children with special</p>	<p>Source 1.1.1. Multiple Indicator Clustering Survey (MICS) by KAS</p> <p>Source 1.1.2. Report of Kosovo Education Indicators by EMIS/MEST</p> <p>Source 1.2.1. Reports from MEST</p>	<p>R1.1. Central institutions and local authorities are committed to integration of children from disadvantaged groups in the education system</p> <p>R1.2. Municipalities assume responsibility for</p>

<p>secondary education.</p> <p>Result 2.1. Planning and provision of vocational education is responsive to the needs of learners and employers in selected vocational schools.</p> <p>Result 2.2. Graduate tracking systems are in place in initial and continuous VET to ensure consistent evidence on graduate employability and skills relevance to labour market needs.</p> <p>Result 2.3. Arrangements and provision of RPL at Kosovo level are in place and operational in the most needed economic sectors/occupations as a form of employment enhancement and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners.</p>	<p>needs aged 6-14 years;</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.1. Percentage of school directors recruited by using a new, transparent and criterion-based methodology;</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.2. Number of trained staff members from educational institutions and MEDs on quality assurance;</p> <p>Indicator 1.2.3. Number of textbooks aligned to the new curriculum;</p> <p>Indicator 1.3.1 Number of primary and secondary schools refurbished;</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1 Participation of workforce in CPD addressing sectoral core curriculum and VET profile frameworks (hours per year);</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.2 Fit for purpose teaching and learning materials (electronic or paper based) supporting priority profile subjects are in use in selected schools and student assessment informs teaching and learning in selected schools;</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.1 Number of VET staff trained on tracer study/graduate tracking;</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.2 Percentage of initial and continuous VET providers implementing tracer studies;</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.1. Number of candidates enrolled in RPL processes;</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.2. Number of RPL practitioners trained by function</p>	<p>Source 1.2.2. Reports from MEST;</p> <p>Source 1.2.3. Reports from MEST Textbook Council;</p> <p>Source 1.3.1. MEST Department of Infrastructure;</p> <p>Source 2.1. Reports from MEST, AVETAE, Municipalities and EARK (including education and employment information management systems) and schools;</p> <p>Source 2.2. Reports from MEST and EARK (including education and employment information management systems);</p> <p>Source 2.3: Reports from NQA on RPL implementation and accreditation reports;</p> <p>Reports from the Employment Agency of Kosovo on the implementation of ALMM, including RPL.</p>	<p>accountable management of the pre-university education sector;</p> <p>R1.2.3 Kosovo publishers have capacity to provide quality textbooks, following the dynamics of the curriculum rollout in schools;</p> <p>R 1.3.1 Full commitment of local, municipal and central level during implementation of the action;</p> <p>R2.1. Schools have the autonomy and capability to bring about sustained and systemic changes in teaching and learning and organisational development</p> <p>Schools collaborate successfully with municipalities, employers, MESP, AVETAI and other agencies at Kosovo level</p> <p>Internal school evaluation operational and aligned with external evaluation process;</p>
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	(coordinators, mentors, internal and external assessors).		<p>R2.2. MEST and MLSW and EARK commitment to develop capacity and implement regularly tracer studies;</p> <p>School staff is assigned with tracer study related tasks;</p> <p>R2.3. NQA institutional responsibilities on NQF further implementation, including RPL are kept;</p> <p>Human and financial resources are deployed for NQA activities;</p> <p>RPL is included in the ALMM portfolio of the MLSW/EARK.</p>
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DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

This action consists of two different components.

Component 1: Pre University Education

Result 1.1 Improved access to education of students from disadvantaged groups in pre-primary, primary and secondary education

Activity 1.1.1: Support to improving participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary, primary and secondary education

The Council of Europe will work on this activity, which aims to improve the enrolment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys in pre-university education by strengthening capacities of local community offices and civil society organisations to reduce any barriers to enrolment, particularly at the pre-school level where children gain pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills necessary for the successful start of compulsory education. Community mobilisation in the respective regions, support to learning centres and schools serving targeted communities are tools to improve attendance and learning outcomes of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary and secondary education. Provision of mentoring to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in upper secondary education will improve their performance and retention, as well their chances for enrolment in tertiary education and access to the labour market.

Activity 1.1.2: Improving participation and support services for children with special needs in primary and secondary education

The Council of Europe will implement this activity, which will support the municipalities and regional resource centres introduce and strengthen guidance and support services for children with special needs. The main focus of this activity will be to facilitate initial expert assessment of their needs by developing appropriate methodologies and building capacity of local specialists for such an assessment. The aim is accommodate all children in schools, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions and promote integration and contact between children. The primary target group of this activity will be resource centres and their staff, whereas the beneficiaries are the children with special needs and the teachers in mainstream schools.

Result 1.2 Strengthened capacities for accountable and effective management and quality assurance at central, municipal and school level including the teaching and learning material

Activity 1.2.1 Establish and strengthen mechanisms for quality and criterion-based school-director recruitment at local level

This activity will support MEST (including MEDs) to establish a transparent and criteria-based process for the recruitment of school directors, in addition to a transparent and criteria-based process for teacher recruitment, which is currently being developed under IPA 2016. The teacher recruitment process will be monitored through an activity so to assess the implementation of the policies adopted under the previous project. The crucial goal for this dimension is to abandon practices of political interference at municipal level as regards the recruitment of school directors and teachers and the introduction of a standardised process at Kosovo level that will be based on clear professional criteria and transparent procedures. Municipalities will receive technical support to implement the new regulations, whereas responsible inspectorate will be assisted to carry out advisory and inspection function with respect to implementation.

Activity 1.2.2 Support to improvement of quality management at municipal and school level

Municipalities and schools will be further empowered to carry out their quality assurance functions through a range of capacity building activities, which include training of responsible staff, as well as on-the-job mentoring and coaching. The technical assistance will target municipalities that would have appointed

quality coordinators at MED level and schools that would have appointed school-based quality coordinators as prescribed by legislation. The focus will be on a range of quality assurance activities, such as training of quality assurance coordinators at school level. There are local trainers and the relevant training programs available as a result of the EU funded Twinning project in education. These quality assurance coordinators have been allocated by the Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs), however, they are not assigned with the tasks indicated in line with the Quality Assurance Strategy adopted by MEST. The technical assistance will support the establishment of a Quality Assurance Network among Municipal Education Directorates and will also provide capacity building to Quality Assurance coordinators at Municipal Education Directorate (MED) level.

The technical assistance will also support the efficient use of the data regarding Quality Assurance: it will assist MEST in its role to coordinate the overall Quality Assurance approach, ensure the flow of information between school – MED – MEST levels. The technical assistance will focus on the proper use of self/external evaluation data for Quality development; ensure that further monitoring data (e.g. external student assessment data, EMIS data) flows into the different levels of the Quality Assurance process. Eventually, it will ensure that key reform steps at Kosovo level, relevant to the proper implementation of the new curriculum, will inform properly the Quality Assurance processes at school level.

Activity 1.2.3: Support the process of developing new textbooks

The technical assistance will provide support to the Council of Textbooks and MEST in general to review existing textbook publication policies, develop new standards and quality criteria for textbooks based on and in line with the new, competence based, curriculum. The technical assistance will also review the current work of the Council for Textbooks by defining the criteria for participation/ membership to the Council. It will also ensure that the selection of Council members is done based on transparent selection processes. Furthermore, the State Council will be supported to draft the content part of the tender for the publishing houses and the methodological approach for these books. Capacities of teachers and trainers will be enhanced to enable them to deliver new curriculum with new textbooks and be able to apply new and advance teaching methodologies and approaches. Support will be provided to guides and training for teachers on the appropriate use of textbooks in order to facilitate integration of advanced teaching practices in schools.

Result 1.3 Improved physical infrastructure in primary and secondary education.

Activity 1.3.1: Improved physical infrastructure in primary and secondary education.

The activity will support a limited number of school-community based initiatives targeting improvement of school infrastructure. This includes support to refurbishing school facilities, including physical education facilities, the construction, refurbishment of hygiene facilities and school kitchens. A limited number of education institutions may receive support for refurbishment of infrastructure for children with special needs, including the establishment of resource rooms and adapted classes for pupils with physical disabilities. It is foreseen that a technical assistance is needed in order to undertake the identifications of the schools, preparation of the needs assessment, including the design of the Technical Specifications and the supervision of the related works contracts related to refurbishment. According to Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 a number of 50 schools should be renovated by 2021. In this line, this action aims to target a minimum of 40 primary and secondary schools.

Component 2: Vocational Education and Training

Result 2.1 - Planning and provision of vocational education is responsive to the needs of learners and employers in selected vocational schools

Activity 2.1.1: LuxDev will:

- Develop criteria and process for selection of 3-4 vocational schools, by taking into account their development needs and their capacity to participate and potentially to match the needs of local and at Kosovo level employment markets;

Activity 2.1.2: LuxDev will:

- Support the capacities of the selected vocational schools to improve their teaching and learning by modernising the existing pedagogical practices; improving their teaching methodologies, and enhancing their planning capacities (teaching properly planned and organised);
- Support the improvement of existing teaching and learning materials ;
- Support further development of the work-based learning of VET students;
- Support the preparation of the curriculum; the enhanced use of technologies in formative assessment;²³
- Support the selected vocational schools to develop the capacities of their staff, including their management and support staff. This will be achieved through coaching, observation, teamwork, and redefinition of roles, incentives and responsibilities in order to increase motivation, collaboration with the business sector, innovation and entrepreneurship.²⁴

Result 2.2 Graduate tracking systems are in place in initial and continuous VET to ensure consistent evidence on graduate employability and skills relevance to labour market needs. Thus, LuxDev through this action will:

Activity 2.2.1: Develop mechanisms (legal framework, roles and responsibilities, data collection arrangements) for implementing tracer studies in initial and continuous VET;

Activity 2.2.2: Create at Kosovo level a network of tracer study specialists within initial and continuous VET and training on design, implementation, interpretation and dissemination of tracer study data;

Activity 2.2.3: Implement full-scale tracer study in initial and continuous VET, including report draft and dissemination.

Result 2.3 Arrangements and provision of RPL at Kosovo level are in place and operational in the most needed economic sectors/occupations as a form of employment enhancement and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners. Through this action LuxDev will achieve to:

Activity 2.3.1 Develop the needed occupational standards to implement RPL mechanisms in priority sectors/occupations (additionally to the already piloted ones – welders and electrical installers), and accredit them through the NQA procedures;

Activity 2.3.2 Create a pool of external assessors for RPL through a call at Kosovo level to be carried out by NQA, and train the accredited ones on RPL methodologies and practices;

Activity 2.3.3 Formalise the engagement of the private sector on RPL implementation through formal partnerships for the development of complementary on-job training, participation on assessment panels and use of companies' facilities and equipment;

Activity 2.3.4 Establish the legal framework and operational arrangements for including RPL as a complementary active labour market measure available for registered unemployed jobseekers, to be

²³ Initiatives to improve teaching and learning should be integrated within whole school improvement measures and designed to operate at appropriate levels, for example, at the level of a branch, within or across schools and also in partnership with employers and other actors.

²⁴ Schools will develop their capacity to plan, implement and monitor workforce development, working in partnership with Kosovo agencies, municipal authorities and training providers, where there may need to be some capacity building.

implemented through the National Employment Agency in cooperation with Vocational Training Centres under the National Employment Agency;

Activity 2.3.5 Develop the capacities of RPL coordinators, mentors and assessors through training in order to scale up implementation with respect to the already tested occupations and introduce new ones.

RISKS

One of the major issues with implementation of such Actions is the limited absorption capacities of central and local authorities. MEST already has a five-year strategic plan, KESP 2017-2021, which includes almost all activities of this Action, but it should be better reflected in annual implementation plans and budgets. With support from an EU-funded project, seven municipalities have developed multi-annual local action plans aligned with KESP 2017-2021, whereas five municipalities have developed similar plans for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities aligned with the Strategy for inclusion of those communities approved by the Kosovo institutions. Ongoing monitoring of implementation of the two central level strategies and 12 local action plans by a network of local civil society organizations supported by the EU, will provide regular feedback on the progress and recommendations for corrective action.

Budget constraints form another group of risks that could affect the implementation of the Action. One sound example is the fact that in order to make possible publication of new textbooks that will meet high quality standards, the Kosovo institutions will need to review its policies for free provision of textbooks to all elementary school students. In addition, the Ministry should secure sufficient budget in regard to production of the new textbooks. Furthermore, the civil society organisations active in the field of education will be supported to advocate for the proper public expenditure in the field of education.

The quality of teaching and learning in VET depends upon many other factors. Currently, the pre-conditions for effective teaching and learning are not yet fully in place. Reforms are underway but there are risks that delay or failure of these reforms will hold back progress. RPL is a rather innovative but effective approach in skills development. The main risk is the lack of appropriate human resources capacities, equipment and infrastructures that could hinder the proper application of the steps and procedures. Attracting suitable candidates for certification via RPL through a rigorous selection and guidance process is also a key-element for avoiding unnecessary risks of miss-certification. Few tracer studies were implemented ad-hoc or on project based initiatives without a clear strategy for upscaling at system level. To achieve that, this IPA intervention should ensure adjustment of procedures/bylaws to accommodate regular implementation and a feasibility check of each step in the tracer study design, implementation and use of results.

Close and regular monitoring from MEST, NQA, MLSW and EARK, and overall coordination of reforms are critical elements for a successful and quality assured intervention. Risk of not having such monitoring and coordination mechanisms in place may be mitigated by building in communication and coordination of multiple reforms at the level of planning and implementation. It is essential that stakeholders and actors at Kosovo, local and school level understand and remain engaged in reforms and that they communicate and work together. Flexibility and customisation should be built into the design and the timetable so that developmental opportunities are tailored to needs and existing levels of development and actors can take ownership of reforms.

Ensuring independent operation of the KAA and providing resources for its inspection function are two challenges related to the higher education component of this Action. Ratification of the newly appointed KAA Board by the Kosovo Assembly is still pending, and it is expected that accountability mechanisms will be in accordance to the Law. Furthermore, the Kosovo institutions needs to allocate additional resources to the KAA to fulfil its inspection function.

Assumptions for the proper implementation of the present action are:

Full commitment by MEST to work towards the fulfilment of the present action in line with the priorities identified in the existing strategies (National Development Strategy, and Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-21).

For the activity related to teacher and directors recruitment: the new Law on Education Inspectorate (expected to be adopted soon), will clarify the division of responsibilities on overseeing the education staff employment between the Education Inspectorate and Labour Inspectorate.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The pre-conditions for proper implementation of the present action are:

- 1) For the activity related to the transparent and merit-based teacher and director recruitment (activity 1.2.1): approval of bylaws, prior to the signature of the service contract, related to selection of school teachers and directors that will be based on clear criteria and merit and subsequent implementation.
- 2) For the activity related to improving physical infrastructure in primary/secondary schools (activity 1.3.1): activity can commence only once Kosovo institutions confirm their co-funding equal to EUR 2 million.
- 3) For the activity related to VET (activity 2):
 - Accreditation of the targeted VET schools and Centres of Competence by MEST, prior to the signature of the Delegation Agreement;
 - Both Tracer studies and Recognition of prior learning need to continue being implemented by the schools which piloted these activities with the assistance of ETF; Continuity in implementation will guarantee a smoother transition to implementation at Kosovo level of both activities planned under this action.
- 4) For the activity related to developing new textbooks (activity 1.2.3): MEST has reviewed the existing textbooks and areas of improvement have been clearly identified, prior to the signature of the service contract.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main partner for implementation of this action is the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), which is the highest Kosovo institutional body responsible for the Education Sector in Kosovo. MEST and the State Council for Textbooks will play a key role on implementation of activity 1.2.3

One of the most important departments of MEST, the Education Inspectorate, will be involved in the activity 1.2.1, potentially in cooperation with the Labour Inspectorate, which is an independent agency operating under supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW).

One agency under MEST jurisdiction, the National Qualification Authority (NQA), will take the lead in implementation of activities under component 2.

Municipalities are responsible for hiring of teachers and school principals, paying of teachers and staff salaries, infrastructure and school maintenance, training of teaching and administrative staff, monitoring of schools at all pre-university levels, etc. Thus, targeted municipalities, represented by respective Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs), will have key role in implementation of activities 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, as well as activity 1.3.1. They will have advisory and support role with respect to implementation of the activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.

Coordination will be ensured through a Project Steering Committee that will consist of MEST – Chair, EU Office co-chair, Ministry of European Integration (MIE) and other relevant stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING

This action will be implemented through direct management and indirect management as follows:

Component 1: Pre-University Education – the two activities of this component, namely activities 1.1.1. and 1.1.2 will be implemented via Indirect Management/Delegation Agreement with Council of Europe.

The choice of having Council of Europe as implementing partner of this action relates to the fact that the Council of Europe disposes of the appropriate expertise and experience to conduct this action.

The rest of the activities (i.e. 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.3.1) under this component will be implemented via direct management through service/s and works contract/s.

Component 2: VET

This action will be implemented via Delegation Agreement (PAGODA) with LuxDev.

LuxDev has been supporting the implementation of similar activities in the VET field in Kosovo and therefore disposes the necessary expertise to undertake the component.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this Action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

Project monitoring should be set up in each grant, twinning, service and supply contract and call for proposals, through the following actions:

- a) Contractor will ensure that monitoring requirements are promoted in information to potential beneficiaries;
- b) During calls for proposals/tenders, the Contractor and CA will ensure that monitoring requirements are explained to potential beneficiaries in the guidelines for applicants, and that the requirements for financial, outputs and results information in the application form is compatible with the strategic documents (financial table and measure-level monitoring indicators) and the operating structure's monitoring needs;
- c) The request for payment from contractors, including the financial, outputs and results data, will be checked by the CA and verified by Beneficiary, as part of the financial management and control system, before being forwarded for payment, to ensure they are compatible with the contractual obligations
- d) The verification of operations by the CA/ Beneficiary through sample on-the-spot visits to projects will include checks as to whether the expenditure claimed has actually been incurred and the outputs achieved.
- e) The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will hold the main responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the projects. The PSC will also be responsible for establishing the methodology and instruments for monitoring the implementation of the project.

The overall coordination of monitoring the financial and technical progress of the Action will be obtained by the EU Office for Kosovo (EUO) as Contracting Authority.

The European Commission (EUO) may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this Action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (value + year) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2022) (4)	Source of information
CSP indicator				
OO1. Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria (EC) and Barcelona Objectives				SourceOO1. EC Kosovo Report
OO2. Employment rate 15 to 64 years, total % disaggregated by gender.	30.5 M: 48.1, F: 12.5 (2017) ²⁵	33 M: 50, F: 15	38 M: 52, F: 20	SourceOO2. KAS Labour Market Survey
Indicator 1. The percentage of 15 year olds who do not show a satisfactory performance in reading, mathematics and science ²⁶	Reading: 77% Maths: 78% Science: 68% (2015)	N/A	Reading: 60% Maths: 60% Science: 50%	Source 1. Kosovo PISA Results 2021
Indicator 2. Improved quality and relevance of VET system in Kosovo	0%	20%	40%	Source 2. European Quality Assurance Framework – Indicator no. 5 “Placement rate in VET programmes”.
Indicator 1.1.1. Percentage of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children of primary school age currently attending primary or secondary education	85.3% ²⁷ (2014)	95% ²⁸		Source 1.1.1. Multiple Indicator Clustering Survey (MICS) by KAS, KESP 2017-21
Indicator 1.1.2. The total number of children with special needs attending primary and lower secondary education, regardless of their age, expressed as a percentage of children with special needs aged 6-14 years.	Total: 44.6% ²⁹ (M: 50.3%, F: 37.2%)	60% ³⁰		Source 1.1.2. Report of Kosovo Education Indicators by EMIS/MEST, KESP 2017-21

²⁵ <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3729/afp-tm3-2017.pdf>

²⁶ This indicator forms the basis of our overall intervention in education sector in Kosovo

²⁷ Multiple Indicator Clustering Survey 2013-2014 – Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities (MICS), Final Report, KAS, Prishtina 2014, p. VII. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/images/files/Komunitetet%20Rome,%20Ashkali%20dhe%20Egjiptiane%20ne%20Kosove.pdf>

²⁸ KESP 2017-2021 Action Plan

²⁹ Statistical report with education indicators 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 p. 20. <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/08/raport-statistikor-me-tregues-arsimore-2012-13-dhe-2013-14.pdf>

³⁰ KESP 2017-2021 Action Plan

Indicator	Baseline (value + year) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2022) (4)	Source of information
Indicator 1.2.1. Percentage school directors recruited by using a new, transparent and criterion-based methodology	N/A	80%	100%	Source 1.2.1. Reports from MEST
Indicator 1.2.2. Number of trained staff members from educational institutions and MEDs on quality assurance	635 ³¹ (2016)	2,500	3,300 ³²	Source 1.2.2. Reports from MEST
Indicator 1.2.3 Number of textbooks aligned to the new curriculum	N/A	60	120	Source 1.2.3. Reports from MEST Textbook Council
Indicator 1.3.1 Number of primary and secondary schools refurbished	62	95	95	Source 1.3.1. MEST Department of Infrastructure
Indicator 2.1.1: Percentage of vocational teachers and instructors participating in CPD addressing sectoral core curriculum and priority VET profile frameworks	0 ³³ (2017)	20%	70%	Source 2.1.1: MEST, AVETAE, selected schools, professional portfolios, Professional Development Centres, Municipalities
Indicator 2.1.2 Fit for purpose teaching and learning materials (electronic or paper based) supporting priority profile subjects are in use in selected schools and student assessment informs teaching and learning in selected schools	0 (2017)	At least 2 vocational subjects per school	50% subjects per school	Source 2.1.2: MEST, AVETAE, selected schools,
Indicator 2.2.1 Number of VET staff trained on tracer study/graduate tracking	50 (2018)	150	200	Staff includes both VET providers' level, and coordinating agencies and ministries, and any other relevant institutions
Indicator 2.2.2. Percentage of initial and continuous VET providers implementing tracer	0	50%	100%	MEST and MLSW/EARK reports NB: final target refer to all MEST and

³¹ KESP 2017-2021 Action Plan

³² KESP 2017-2021 Action Plan

³³ KESP 2017-2021 Action Plan provides at Kosovo level baseline for all teachers in all kinds of CPD (2015) 39%

Indicator	Baseline (value + year) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2022) (4)	Source of information
studies	(2018)			EARK VET providers (assuming the number remains the same as in 2018)
Indicator 2.3.1. Number of candidates enrolled in RPL processes	0 (2017)	100	300	NQA database on RPL
Indicator 2.3.2. Number of RPL practitioners trained by function (coordinators, mentors, internal and external assessors)	16 (2017)	60	180	NQA records/reports

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The first pillar of the **National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS)** is dedicated to development of the Human Capital. The interventions directly linked to Education and Employment include: 1) increasing participation of children in the preschool education; 2) enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in school's system; 3) linking education programs with the labour market demands; 4) improving testing, inspection and accreditation in the education sector.

The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (KESP) is the basic document for the development of the education sector in Kosovo. The document was developed in the period June 2015-July 2016 through a highly participatory process led by MEST, and based on the assessment³⁴ of the previous strategic plan – KESP 2011-2016. The planning process was organised around seven thematic areas that cover all relevant segments of education in Kosovo: 1) Participation and Inclusion, 2) Management of the education system, 3) Quality Assurance, 4) Teacher development, 5) Teaching and Learning, 6) Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, 7) Higher Education. The KESP has 7 strategic objectives, one for each thematic area. In general terms, the development of the KESP took place in the context of an awareness of the four common EU objectives to address challenges in education and training systems by 2020, detailed in Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020)³⁵.

In April 2017, Kosovo approved the **Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021** which, based on the EU Framework on National Strategies for Integration of Roma until 2020³⁶, addresses four priority fields: education, employment and social welfare, health, and housing.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) anticipates cooperation between Kosovo and the EU in raising the level of general education and vocational education and training, as means to promote skills development, employability, social inclusion and economic development.

The European Reform Agenda (ERA)³⁷ calls for an urgent education reform which would link postsecondary education and training with gaps in the labour market and quality improvement of pre-university education while the immediate and medium-term priorities in this area, improve the quality of higher education and VET. On the other hand, **Economic Reform Programme (ERP)**³⁸ includes actions from the NDS agenda as well as sectorial strategies that aim to remove current or potential obstacles in the field of education and skills, focusing on three reform measures:

- 1) Harmonization of skills supply and demand by drafting occupational standards and reviewing curricula;
- 2) Reform in Pre-University Education by implementing competency-based curricula and introducing the teachers' career system;
- 3) Increasing the Quality and Competitiveness in Higher Education by developing mechanisms for quality assurance, ranking, quality-based funding, linking higher education programs to labour market demands and improving career orientation services.

Kosovo manages development of policies, strategies and action plans aimed at enhancing the Education Sector's performance through the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)** which is responsible for overall education policy and legislation, including higher education and life-long learning, research and development and libraries. Two dependent agencies of MEST will also be involved in implementation: **Kosovo Accreditation Agency** responsible for assessing and promoting quality of higher education in Kosovo and **National Qualification Authority (NQA)**, an independent public body, which regulates the National Qualifications System. **Municipal Education Departments (MEDs)** are directly responsible for operation on pre-university institutions and will be involved in all activities taking place in schools from their area of responsibility.

³⁴ Evaluation Report for KESP 2011-2016, MEST, 2015.

³⁵ Strategic framework – Education & Training 2020 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm).

³⁶ EU Framework on National Strategies for Integration of Roma until 2020, Brussels, 05.04.2011, COM (2011) 173. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf

³⁷ https://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era_final.pdf

³⁸ <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/575DDCA8-52DD-451F-AFE8-F5DBBC247F7A.pdf>

Within the Kosovo institutions, the **Ministry of European Integration** is responsible for coordinating donor assistance. The Aid Management Platform, established with EU support, is the main tool for monitoring donor activities. Sector working groups, established with the aim to coordinate donor activities, are not yet fully functional and lack substantial involvement from donors and line institutions.

In general, there are discrepancies between SPD and budget planning. Such discrepancies are observed also with regard to the KESP 2017-2021. The total cost of implementing the KESP during the period of 2017-2021 is estimated at EUR176.94 million. Relying on MTEF 2017-2019 and information from other sources, the KESP 2017-2021, has determined the gap between the required and the available funds to implementing the KESP estimated at EUR 87.2 million: EUR17.4 million in 2017, EUR 22.4 million in 2018, EUR 21.1 million in 2019, EUR 13.2 million in 2020 and EUR 13.1 million in 2021.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

There is a rather balanced participation of men and women in all levels of the Education Sector with a clear improvement trend in last 3 years, as shown in the table below. Additional efforts are needed to improve participation of girls in pre-school and upper secondary education and, in particular, inclusion of girls with special needs in the Education System, which is currently at 37.2% as compared to 50.3% for boys³⁹. On the other hand, there is a rather strong gender imbalance in the field of employment – only 20.2% of working age women participate in the active labour force as opposed to 66.6% of men⁴⁰. In addition to appropriate active labour market measures, this issue needs also to be addressed through education system reform.

Table 1. Gender parity index by education levels

Gender Parity Index ⁴¹	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Demographic GPI ⁴²
Pre-school (Age 0-5)	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.95
Pre-primary (Age 5)	0.94	0.93	0.94	0.93
Primary (Age 6-10)	0.93	0.91	0.93	0.94
Lower Secondary (Age 11-14)	0.94	0.92	0.94	0.93
Upper Secondary (Age 15-17)	0.89	0.91	0.91	0.94
Tertiary (20-24)	n.a	n.a	0.96	0.92

Source: KESP Monitoring Report 2017, KEEN, Draft.

We will work with the entire central and local authorities as well as all implementing partners to ensure both men and women have equitable access to education opportunities and career opportunities in the Education Sector. This shall be reflected in new education staff recruitment policies to be developed with support from this Action. Also, all supported capacity building efforts will feature the integration of gender so that all stakeholders become aware of gender issues in education including the role of gender socialization⁴³ in re-enforcing gender stereotypes and other forms of gender bias or discrimination, the pattern of differentiated treatment and expectations of boys and girls by teachers, and the need to address the gender insensitive messages contained in teaching and learning materials. In supporting development of new textbooks all measures will be taken to ensure proper representation of women and break down stereotypes and other gender bias thinking on the part of students.

³⁹ Statistical report with education indicators 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 p. 20. <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/08/raport-statistikor-me-regues-arsimore-2012-13-dhe-2013-14.pdf>

⁴⁰ Labour Force Survey Q3/2017, KAS, 2017.

⁴¹ Gender parity index represents the number of female students enrolled at the respective level of education divided by the number of male students enrolled in the same level.

⁴² Demographic GPI represents the number of total female population of the respective age group divided by the number of total male population of the same age group, according to the results of 2011 Population Census.

⁴³ Gender socialization is the process by which people learn to behave in a certain way as dictated by societal beliefs, values, attitudes and examples.

All planned interventions of the action should take into account the specific impact on women, as part of the overall gender mainstreaming agenda adopted in Kosovo. Sex-disaggregated data will be collected to follow the progress on regular basis. Gender-sensitive budgeting should also be applied throughout programming cycles to ensure proper division of support to men and women, and ensure consequent results and impact.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The promotion of inclusive education, equity, equality of opportunity, is the basis and fundamental objective of the action. Minority inclusion and inclusion of disadvantaged groups is their primary focus. The action's design and implementation will ensure gender equality and the full participation of minority communities, long term unemployed persons in particular girls/ women and persons with disabilities.

Kosovo is fully committed to a policy of equal opportunity. Kosovo has put the necessary legal framework in place such as the Law No. 05/L-021 on the protection from discrimination, the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo and its amendment 04/L-020 etc. The present action will support through the activities described the necessary implementation of the relevant framework by ensuring the equal participation of youth women, men, and people from disadvantaged groups.

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the action will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Equal access to all benefits of the Action will be promoted. More specifically; training and other capacity building activities in this action (timing and schedule) will be fully adjusted to the needs of women with children, training and meeting premises will be fully adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities, equal opportunities principles and concrete measures will be embedded in all strategic documents that will be produced under this Action (local strategies, legislation.) while by specifically targeting to these groups in the VET activities (enhanced teaching and learning in VET schools where minority students attend, launch of tracer studies and RPL at Kosovo level) better skills and increased employability opportunities for all groups in the society will be actively promoted.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The promotion of inclusive education, equity, equality of opportunity, is at cross-cutting level the basis for all activities included in this action. Minority inclusion and inclusion of disadvantaged groups is their primary focus. Substantial part of this action targets at increasing the participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children as well as of children with disabilities to primary and secondary education. The infrastructure relevant action will ensure that the needs of schools where the attendance of children belonging to minority groups is high will be addressed. Thus, the action's design and implementation will ensure gender equality and the full participation of minority communities, girls/women and children with disabilities. Translation and interpretation in minority languages will be provided and efforts will be made to ensure disability access to all trainings.

Kosovo is fully committed to a policy of equal opportunities and inclusiveness of its whole population of the Kosovo municipalities, including municipalities with minorities. The action will cover at least 5% of disadvantaged groups. In minority municipalities focus will be minority groups.

The Action will take a pro-active approach to facilitating participation of minority community members to by targeting VET schools where minorities are present. Special attention will be given to the need to ensure that the students from minority communities take part to the tracer studies and minority community adults, men and women, will benefit from the lifelong learning opportunities that the RPL activities at a Kosovo level will bring along.

Vulnerable and social disadvantaged/excluded groups represent the main focus of the Action. Therefore, all the activities will try to maximise the benefits for women and men, youth and children amongst the most vulnerable groups including: ethnic minorities (notably those in poverty and social exclusion), girls and women in rural areas, people with disabilities and their families, and children in need of care.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

Civil society organizations, as well as, membership organizations are an important stakeholder in the processes for implementation of the proposed interventions. They have been an inclusive part in all relevant policy framework planning processes in the past and will continue to be such in the future as well, especially since adoption of the Kosovo Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society. The Action will draw on experience of local civil society organizations in working on improvement of education opportunities for minorities and vulnerable groups, and will work closely with organizations monitoring the progress in those areas, as well as in the Education Sector as a whole. Also, youth organizations, women organizations, parent associations and teachers' unions will be involved in the Action when deemed appropriate.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Environmental considerations will be duly reflected in all IPA financed activities. Kosovo has already undertaken concrete steps to implement EU directives of waste management and has jointly with the European Commission invested in beginning to implement these measures. Adequate environment protection measures will be foreseen as per EU financing requirements and Kosovo laws. It should be noted that the legislation in the field of environment protection has been improved, but significant challenges remain to achieve EU standards. Environmental education is one of the most important cross-cutting topics in the competency-based, Kosovo curriculum and existing textbook standards. By advancing the standards and supporting the development of new textbooks, the Action will contribute to building the awareness of young generations on their role in protecting and fostering the environment. The implementation of Tracer studies and Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL, under VET, will be activities committed to energy efficiency by promoting green businesses and innovation and relevant skills.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

Without a conducive environment for introducing new policies, regulations and practices in the system, any impact on enhancing the quality of education will be negligible. Therefore, in this Action, sustainability will be ensured through **developing capacity and sense of ownership** among key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Improved participation and performance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary primary and secondary education, combined with community mobilization, will contribute to building the sense of responsibility within targeted communities for improving education achievements of future generations. Guidance and support services for children with special needs will be integrated in regular operation of MEDs and schools.

Municipalities will receive support to implement new recruitment regulations, whereas responsible inspectorate supports to oversee the process in the future, leading to improvement of outcome in the future. Likewise, by building capacity for education quality management at school and municipal level, new practices and quality culture will be introduced in the system. The development of the new textbooks should be supported under this component.

A selected number of schools, both primary and secondary, will receive support to improve the school infrastructure in refurbishment of the existing facilities with school hygiene facilities, libraries, auditoriums, annexes etc.

The present action will also build capacity for tracer studies within the VET system by training around 200 specialists. Also, with 180 trained RPL practitioners RPL will be provided in most needed occupations, enhancing employment and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the Action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

The contractors shall strictly adhere to the EU Visibility Guidelines and any instructions/guidance issued by the Contracting Authority. Each contractor will be required to develop and implement an Information, Communication and Dissemination (ICD) Strategy using appropriate communication tools to raise awareness among relevant actors/stakeholders and, most importantly, among the main target groups. Such ICD Strategy shall, at minimum, describe methods of communicating with identified target audiences (e.g. web page, social media); visibility events for identified target audiences (e.g. annual conferences, press events); written materials (e.g. factsheets, newsletters); promotional materials (e.g. calendars, pens); press monitoring, and so on.