# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF FORCED RETURNEES AND ROMA, ASHKALI, AND EGYPTIANS

2014

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Context

Education features in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* not only as a right, but also as a tool for individual development and for understanding among groups of people which differ in background and/or orientation, as well as for promoting respect for human rights in general.[1] Additionally, education is a necessary condition for a functioning and prosperous modern society, with its roles to this end including preparation for sustainable employment and for active citizenship in a democratic society, as well as development and maintenance of a broad and advanced knowledge base.[2] In light of the importance of education for both individual and society, states bear tremendous responsibility for securing access to quality education for their citizens; to paraphrase the sociologist Eugenio Tironi, what kind of education is needed is ultimately a question of what kind of society is desired.[3]

In post-conflict settings such as present-day Kosovo,[4] education is also particularly important for its contribution to institutional stabilization and to the normalization of social relations. Moreover, at the individual level, education is a key ingredient for the overall integration of persons on the margins of society, including (but not limited to) persons forcibly returned to Kosovo from other countries and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.[5]

Recognition of the central and multifaceted role of education for the integration of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo is evident not only in a wide range of policy documents issued by key Kosovo institutions including the Ministry of Communities and Returns (MCR), Ministry of European Integration, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), but also in statements by representatives of these institutions at the conference "Education of returnees and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities: Challenges and solutions." At this conference, Minister of Education, Science, and Technology Ramë Buja spoke of the importance of inclusive education for groups which have not been fully included in the past, whereas Minister of Internal Affairs Bajram Rexhepi attended to language barriers often faced by forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.[6] Deputy Minister for Communities and Returns Husnija Bešković referred to education as a basic right together with healthcare, housing, and access to the labor market, while Deputy Minister for European Integration Gëzim Kasapolli mentioned the problem of dropout.[7]

The conference, held in April 2014, was an integral part of the EC/CoE Joint Programme "Supporting Access to Education and Intercultural Understanding (ACCESS): EU/Council of Europe support in the field of education to forced returnees and to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo."[8] The event also provided the immediate impetus for establishing a

group to channel the joint efforts of key actors within and outside the Kosovo Government on issues related to the education of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians. Established within the framework of ACCESS in July 2014, the "Reflection Group on the Education of Forced Returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians" brings together local practitioners and policymakers to discuss and advance policies on returnees and relevant strategies related to integration of Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo.

The main function of the Reflection Group is to produce recommendations on action, information, and research needed for more effective implementation of policies on returnees and relevant strategies relating to the integration of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. The work of the Group supports and enriches the work of the institutions and cross-institutional bodies dealing with issues related to the education of returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, such that the Reflection Group complements rather than replacing (or seeking to replace) other established mechanisms. At the same time, the Group's position outside government gives it flexibility in relation to its agenda and to make use of additional resources available through ACCESS, which provides expertise and logistical support necessary to facilitate the work of the Reflection Group.

The membership of the Reflection Group is intended to ensure an open exchange of experiences, information, and views on the education of forced returnees and of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians from a wide range of stakeholders in academia, civil society, Kosovo institutions, and international organizations. Additionally, the Reflection Group may decide by consensus to ask non-members to participate in a meeting of the Group for the purpose of sharing relevant information, material, or knowledge. The Reflection Group meets on a quarterly basis, providing guidance to ACCESS and acting as a sounding board for the Kosovo Government in relation to policies and activities on education of returnees and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.

*1.2.    This report*
The purpose of this report is to share with interested readers both within and outside Kosovo the knowledge generated by the Reflection Group on the Education of Forced Returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in 2014. The next two sections of the report accordingly focus on the themes taken up by the Reflection Group in its meetings in the second half of 2014. More specifically, whereas the problem of out-of-school children and youth forms the theme of Section 2, the report's third section attends to cooperation between government and civil society. A concluding section provides a brief review of key points raised in the preceding sections and offers a set of recommendations related to these points.

## 2.  Out-of-school children and youth

*2.1.    Policy*
The documents which jointly constitute the Kosovo Government's policy framework for addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth have been issued since 2011 by MCR, MEST, and MIA. Apparently the earliest valid documents with something to say directly about the problem of out-of-school children and youth come from MEST. Thus, the *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016* calls for collection and systematization of data on dropouts,

including through use of data from the census, while an administrative instruction published the same year offers a broad definition of school leaving which includes failure to register for school in the first place.[9]

MCR issued its *Guidelines for the Implementation of Return Support* in 2012. In this document, Municipal Offices for Communities and Return are tasked with advising Municipal Education Directorates on access to education for actual and potential returnees and repatriated persons.[10] The same document stipulates that Municipal Education Directorates are responsible for managing the provision to returnees (as well as to other local residents) of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education.

The documents mentioned above were followed in 2013 and 2014 by a set of documents from MIA. Among these are the *National Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* and the *Guide for the Implementation of National Policies on Reintegration*, both of which call on MEST on the one hand and municipalities on the other to facilitate enrolment of returnee children through informal procedures where necessary.[11] Additionally, the *Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* foresees the provision of additional classes for pupils in need, as well as facilitation of access to informal education programs.[12] The *National Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* also calls for special attention to ensure that Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities are included in education.[13]

Most recently, the *Guidelines for Assistance and Support of Repatriated Persons for Sustainable Reintegrated Based on Reintegration Policies* provide details on the division of labor between Municipal Offices for Communities and Return and Municipal Education Directorates outlined by MCR in its 2012 *Guidelines for the Implementation of Return Support*.[14] The new *Guidelines* also task MEST with providing targeted training for teachers working in areas with significant numbers of children at risk of exclusion from the educational system.

Beyond general policy on out-of-school children and youth, Kosovo's targeted policy for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians also attends to this phenomenon. Among the provisions of the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015* are catch-up courses for returnees "in all possible languages of instruction chosen for further education", additional instruction, and homework support.[15] Perhaps not surprisingly, attention to out-of-school children and youth comes also in the *Priority Framework 2014-2015* for implementation of the *Action Plan* for implementation of the *Strategy* for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians. Relevant measures include:
- Providing reintegration programs for returnee children (Activity 1.1.3);
- Encouraging increased participation in education (Activity 1.1.4);
- Measures against the violation of the law on compulsory education (Activity 1.3.2);
- Specific measures to ensure school attendance including free and simplified registration, awareness campaigns, and effective attendance monitoring (Education EU/MEI Recommendation #1); and
- Combating drop-out through measures including early childhood and pre-school activities, catch-up classes, and scholarships (Education EU/MEI Recommendation #2).[16]

While the attention to the problem of out-of-school children and youth evident in Kosovo policy documents issued in recent years amounts to a positive development, lacking in these documents is a definition of "out-of-school children". Closely related to this, the notion of dropout remains ambiguous, apparently covering not only interruption of school attendance, but also non-enrolment.[17]

*2.2. Practice*
Despite a general consensus among authorities and within civil society that the situation of out-of-school children and youth in Kosovo remains a problem in need of urgent and sustained attention, there is no comprehensive database to provide a measure of the magnitude of the problem, as MEST's Education Management Information System (EMIS) does not contain data on out-of-school children and youth. Data on the participation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in education are similarly sparse, such that there is general agreement about the overrepresentation of members of these communities among out-of-school children and youth, but relatively few statistics. At local level, Municipal Offices for Communities and Return are responsible for identifying returnees and ensuring that school-age children are enrolled in school, but the relevant data are often not transmitted to central level or shared with local counterparts, such as the Municipal Education Directorates. While these are considerable shortcomings, in recent years there have been modest improvements in both data gathering and in participation, with Kosovo institutions playing an increasingly active role.

The largest-scale research on dropouts in Kosovo to date was carried out by OSCE in 2011. Covering 83 schools in 24 municipalities,[18] the research found that few schools had full records of dropouts and that disaggregation by community (ethnicity) was inconsistent.[19] Where Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians were concerned, none of the surveyed municipalities had data on the number of children not enrolled in compulsory education at age 6.[20] These findings led to the following conclusion: "The poor quality of education data demonstrates the inadequacy and unreliability of monitoring methods used by the MEST and municipal institutions to track school dropouts and non-enrolment."[21]

Also conducted in 2011 was a survey providing the most comprehensive picture to date of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians' participation in education in Kosovo. The survey, which was carried out by the civil society organization (CSO) Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, included a total of 2 436 Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian households in nine municipalities selected for their larger concentrations of these communities.[22] Whereas in all covered municipalities more than 30 percent of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians had not finished primary school, in three of the nine municipalities (Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Lipjan/Lipljane, and Pejë/Peċ) an absolute majority of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians had not completed this level education.[23] Moreover, nearly half (46.2 percent) of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian parents reported not having enrolled children of school age.[24] The reasons given for not attending school were predominantly economic, with the financial burden associated with the purchase of clothing and school supplies cited most frequently.[25] Additionally, the research showed that the frequency of the phenomenon of out-of-school children and youth varies by gender among Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (approximately 30 percent of males versus around 35 percent of females), but also pointed to a decreasing gender gap in this regard.[26] At the same time, while 89.5 percent of respondents indicated that education is equally important for males and females, among Roma in particular (as opposed to

Ashkali and Egyptians) there was more of a tendency to favor education for boys over girls (with 19.2 percent of Romani respondents expressing this preference).[27]

Kosovo institutions have played an increasingly active role in gathering data on the educational situation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians since 2012. Thus, the *Progress Report 2012 on the Implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy* for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians notes that only 18 percent of returnee children (26 out of 142) are enrolled in school.[28] Additionally, data gathered from 15 municipalities in 2013 by the Ministry for European Integration indicated that around half of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian returnees had access to education, with only 16 Romani and 15 Ashkali returnees participating in language courses.[29]

The most recent research on the phenomenon of out-of-school children and youth in Kosovo was conducted by UNICEF in 2014. This research, which covered seven municipalities, examined practices related to identifying out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out, as well as practices for (re-) integrating children from both categories in school, and identified the needs of schools and municipalities for identifying out-of-school children, responding to non-enrolment, and preventing school dropout.[30] Among the findings of this research are that the mandatory local teams for preventing and responding to dropout have not been established in all municipalities, and that Municipal Education Directorates lack accurate information not only on dropouts, but also on children of school age who have never been enrolled in school. Also evident is a lack of inter-sectoral coordination at local level. Finally, dropout in general and registration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians accounted for two of the three issues related to inclusion which the municipalities covered by the research identified as issues which they had failed to address.

## 3. Cooperation between government and civil society

### 3.1. Policy

Attention to the need for cooperation between the Kosovo government and CSOs is evident in policy documents focused on education; forced returnees; and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians. The *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016*, for example, refers broadly to "new roles and responsibilities" for civil society (among other actors) and calls for government-civil society partnerships in the area of adult education in particular.[31] With regard to forced returnees, the Ministry of Communities and Returns' *Guidelines for the Implementation of Return Support* foresee a role for CSOs in collecting information and assessing needs, as well as in distributing information about available support.[32]

More detailed information about desired forms of government cooperation with civil society in relation to forced returnees comes in a series of documents issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2013 and 2014. Thus, the *National Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* encourages civil society participation in the drafting and implementation of programs for reintegration services, with the corresponding *Action Plan* calling for grants to CSOs to provide alternative forms of social services to returnees, as well as for regular coordination meetings between the Ministry and civil society.[33] Most recently, the 2014 *Guidelines for Assistance and Support of Repatriated Persons for Sustainable Reintegration Based on*

*Reintegration Policies* develop a provision of a regulation issued the previous year to make part of the Reintegration Fund available for open calls for funding to CSOs.[34] The *Guidelines* further specify roles for CSOs in overall case management and in cooperation with Municipal Education Directorates to enroll and retain returnee children in school.[35]

An emphasis on cooperation between government and civil society is present also in the education-related provisions of the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015* and in the *Action Plan* for its implementation. Areas of cooperation foreseen in the *Strategy* include research together with MEST on segregation and discrimination of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in the education system, common activities with institutions at local level to improve school attendance, additional instruction and homework support, and financial support for Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian students.[36] Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the *Action Plan* in this regard is that all but one of the 25 activities planned in the education sector include CSOs as supporting institutions.[37]

In addition to attending to the need for cooperation with civil society in policy documents on education, forced returnees, and/or Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, in 2013 the Kosovo Government adopted a general policy on such cooperation. Developed by the Office of Good Governance in the Office of the Prime Minister in cooperation with the forum of civil society organizations CiviKos, Kosovo's first *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* remains in force through 2017.[38] Acknowledging that civil society adjusted quickly to a more active role on issues of policy and governance in general following the 2008 declaration of independence, the *Strategy* notes persistently low levels of understanding on the part of civil servants about the role of civil society as well as "insufficient knowledge about the processes of policy-making and the work [of] governing bodies."[39] Against this backdrop, the *Strategy* identifies as basic needs the establishment of rules and mechanisms for cooperation between government and civil society, as well as increased transparency on the part of both government and civil society.[40] Toward meeting the identified needs, the *Strategy* sets four strategic objectives: civil society participation in drafting and implementing policies and legislation; creation of a system for contracting public services to CSOs; introduction of a set of criteria for government financial support to CSOs; and promotion of an integrated approach to the development of volunteerism. At the same time, the *Strategy* cautions that while its provisions are binding on the Kosovo Government, the same does not apply to the municipalities as such.[41]

*3.2.   Practice*
Consistent with the emphasis in the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* on creating systems for monitoring and reporting on realization of the individual strategic objectives, a council for monitoring overall *Strategy* implementation consisting of representatives of government and civil society was established in October 2014, with a report on government-civil society cooperation published in December 2014.[42] Whereas the report contains little concrete information on realization of the *Strategy*'s four objectives, anecdotal evidence suggests that progress has been limited where the integration of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in education is concerned. Available information is summarized in the table below.

**Table 1. Government-civil society cooperation for education of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians**

| | Strategic objectives | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Civil society participation in drafting and implementing policies and legislation | CSOs consulted to identify needs of forced returnee and Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian populations |
| 2 | System for contracting public services to CSOs | • System not created<br>• MEST cooperates with a CSO on support for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians enrolled in secondary education |
| 3 | Criteria for government financial support to CSOs | • No criteria introduced<br>• MIA plans grant scheme for CSOs which would include educational support for forced returnees |
| 4 | Integrated approach to volunteerism | *No information available* |

Overall, there has apparently been more cooperation between government and CSOs in the area of education than in other fields. However, although CSOs have been consulted in the early stages of developing policies for the integration of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in education, government-civil society cooperation in this field has been largely limited to informal consultation. Moreover, sustainable capacity and access to funding remain widespread problems for CSOs in Kosovo. Taken together, these observations suggest that much work remains to realize the objectives of the *Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* as well as the relevant provisions of policy documents on education, forced returnees, and/or Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in order to bring lasting change in the educational situation of these groups .

The case study below, which focuses on language classes for returnees, provides an illustration of the current state of cooperation between government and civil society in Kosovo and of the potential for improved service delivery to be expected from fulfillment of the objectives of the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society*.

**CASE STUDY: LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR RETURNEE CHILDREN**

The introduction of language classes for children returned to Kosovo is a response to an expanding influx of returnees as the (mostly West European) countries to which hundreds of thousands of Kosovars emigrated since the 1990s increasingly return them to Kosovo. In addition to being required by law,[43] the integration of returnee children into the education system is crucial for their overall integration in Kosovo society. Taking into account that many returnee children did not receive school instruction in Albanian or Serbian before being returned to Kosovo, language support is of particular importance for overcoming the challenges these children face in both academic and social spheres.

MEST first organized and funded language classes for returnee children in 2013. Included in the pilot project were a total of 92 children at four project sites (Prishtinë/Priština, Fushë

Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilić, and Plementinë/Plementina). Of the five learning groups into which the children were divided, four received instruction in Albanian while the language of instruction in the remaining group was Serbian.

In 2014, the project was expanded to a total of 280 children in 10 municipalities, with further expansion to all municipalities in Kosovo with returnees planned to begin in February 2015. Funding for these phases of the project has been provided by MEST together with MIA. While there was direct communication between MIA and parents of potential participants at the beginning of the project and CSOs were informed about the project, this was generally the extent of parental and civil society involvement in the project, with monitoring carried out by MEST and MIA.

An external assessment of the project commissioned in 2014 pointed to significant academic and social benefits for children participating in the courses stemming primarily (but not solely) from the success of the courses in increasing participants' level of knowledge in the target language.[44] At the same time, however, the assessment report made note of a set of weaknesses in project design and implementation.[45] Beyond problems of institutional coordination between local and central levels as well as between MEST and MIA on the one hand and MCR on the other, several of the identified weaknesses could potentially be addressed through closer and more systematic cooperation between government and civil society in such a way as to increase CSO involvement in project design and implementation.

## 4. Conclusions

*4.1. Review of key points*
Education is both a universal human right and a necessary condition for a functioning and prosperous modern society. In the Kosovo context, education is also particularly important for its contribution to institutionalization and to the normalization of social relations, as well as for the overall integration of persons on the margins of society. Education's central and multifaceted role has accordingly been recognized in policy documents issued by key Kosovo institutions, as well as in statements by representatives of these institutions at the April 2014 conference which gave rise to the formation of the Reflection Group on the Education of Forced Returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians. Themes taken up by the Reflection Group since its establishment in the second half of 2014 were the problem of out-of-school children and youth and cooperation between government and civil society.

The documents which jointly constitute the Kosovo Government's policy framework for addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth have been issued since 2011 by the MCR, MEST, and MIA. Kosovo's targeted policy for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians also attends to this phenomenon. While increased attention to this problem in recent years constitutes a

positive development, lacking is a clear definition of "out-of-school children," and the notion of dropout remains ambiguous in policy documents. Although considerable shortcomings remain also in both gathering data on and addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth, some improvements are evident, and Kosovo institutions have played an increasingly active role.

In addition to attending to the need for cooperation with civil society in policy documents on education, forced returnees, and/or Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, in 2013 the Kosovo Government adopted a general policy on such cooperation. While official data on implementation of the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* are not available, anecdotal evidence suggests that realization of the *Strategy*'s objectives has been limited where the integration of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in education is concerned. The design and implementation of language classes for returnee children provides an illustration of the current state of cooperation between government and civil society in Kosovo and of the potential for improved service delivery to be expected from implementation of the *Strategy*.

*4.2. Recommendations*
Based on the preceding sections of this report, the recommendations below are intended to provide a basis for taking priority action to address the shortcomings observed in relation to the education of returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo.

General:
4.2.1. *Strengthen coordination at central level*. While the division of responsibilities among MCR, MEST, and MIA in relation to the education of returnee children and youth is clear in principle, sharing of information between MEST and MIA on the one hand and MCR on the other could improve coverage of educational activities targeting returnees.

4.2.2. *Build local capacity for policy implementation*. Insofar as insufficient capacities at local level to implement relevant policies make for poor coordination in managing cases of returnees in general and their enrolment in school in particular, there is a need for increased attention to training and/or staffing needs, as well as for resource allocations to meet assessed needs.

4.2.3. *Improve data collection and management*. Information about out-of-school children and youth should be added to the central Education Management Information System, with mechanisms introduced to ensure that Municipal Offices for Communities and Return collect relevant data and transmit them to central level. The data collected should be disaggregated by ethnicity, with separate categories for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.

Out-of-school children and youth:
4.2.4. *Clarify categories*. Key concepts related to the phenomenon of out-of-school children and youth should be defined in a single policy document as a basis for appropriately targeted measures. At minimum, the definitions should introduce a clear distinction between dropout and non-enrolment.

4.2.5. *Form local teams*. In order to address the problem of out-of-school children and youth in concrete and timely fashion, the mandatory teams for preventing and responding to dropout should be established in all municipalities.

Cooperation between government and civil society:

4.2.6. *Advance implementation of the* Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society. Toward deepening and extending the role of CSOs in addressing the educational situation of forced returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, the Kosovo Government should implement the measures necessary to fulfill the four objectives of the *Strategy*. Particularly important in this process is that any grant schemes originating in government be based on prior needs assessment with active civil society involvement.

4.2.7. *Institutionalize cooperation at municipal level.* Whereas the *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society* applies primarily to central-level institutions, there is a need also to formalize and stabilize partnerships between authorities and civil society at local level in such a way as to draw on established links between CSOs and communities in need.

4.2.8. *Increase CSO involvement in language classes for returnee children.* The coverage of language classes and their academic and social benefits should be optimized by making use of CSOs' established rapport with local target communities. Specific areas in which CSOs could add value to the program include identifying children in need, promoting regular attendance, building partnerships with parents, and monitoring project implementation at local level.

## Endnotes

[1] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Paris: United Nations, 1948), Article 26.

[2] Committee of Ministers, *Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)6 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007), Article 5.

[3] See Klemen Miklavič, *Conference on Education of Returnees and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities: Challenges and Solutions. General Report* (Prishtinë/Priština: Council of Europe, 2014), p. 3.

[4] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

[5] Notwithstanding differences among Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians as well as between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on one hand and forced returnees on the other, there is considerable overlap in the membership of the categories "Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians" and "forced returnees" and in the needs of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians taken as distinct groups.

[6] Klemen Miklavič, *Conference on Education of Returnees and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities: Challenges and Solutions. General Report* (Prishtinë/Priština: Council of Europe, 2014), p. 2.

[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3.

[8] The principal objective of ACCESS is to ensure higher social cohesion and confidence among communities and to promote socio-economic development of disadvantaged returnees and Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo. The project aims at supporting active measures undertaken towards the integration and inclusion of these communities in the educational system in general and schooling in particular, focusing on three categories of direct beneficiaries: Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; forced returnees from Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; and forced returnees from other communities. ACCESS seeks to build local institutional capacity through direct involvement of Kosovo authorities in its activities, aiming at access to formal education and regular school attendance of Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and forced returnees; integration of principles of inclusive and intercultural education in school policies; integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians as well as forced returnees in local communities with an effective local social support network; and recognition of Romani language in school and the promotion of Romani both right and a tool for building a positive cultural identity for Romani children.

[9] Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011), p. 83; Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, *Administrative Instruction 7/2011: Creating and Strengthening of Teams for Prevention and Response toward Abandonment and Non-registration in Compulsory Education* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2011); see also *Administrative Instruction 19/2012: Establishment and Enforcement of Teams for Prevention and Response toward Abandonment and Non-enrolment in Compulsory Education* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012).

[10] Ministry of Communities and Returns, *Guidelines for the Implementation of Return Support* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Communities and Returns, 2012), Section 5.3.

[11] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Guide for the Implementation of National Policies on Reintegration* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), p.3; Ministry of Internal Affairs, *National Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), Chapter IV.3.4.

[12] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* ((Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), Sections 3.6 and 3.8

[13] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *National Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), p. 7.

[14] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Guidelines for Assistance and Support of Repatriated Persons for Sustainable Reintegration Based on Reintegration* Policies (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2014), Section 5.2.

[15] Government of the Republic of Kosovo, *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015* (Prishtinë/Priština: Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008), pp. 24-25.

[16] Office on Good Governance, *Progress Report 2012 on the Implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for Integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities, 2009-2015; Local Assessment 2013 and Priority Framework 2014-2015* (Prishtinë/Priština: Office on Good Governance, 2014).

[17] Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, *Administrative Instruction 19/2012: Establishment and Enforcement of Teams for Prevention and Response toward Abandonment and Non-enrolment in Compulsory Education* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012).

[18] The municipalities included in the research were Dragash/Dragaš, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Janković, Kaçanik/Kačanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Klinë/Klina, Klokot/Kllokot, Malishevë/Mališevo, Mamuşa/Mamushë/Mamuša, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Pejë/Peć, Podujevë/Podujevo, Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac, Skenderaj/Srbica, Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Viti/Vitina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

[19] OSCE Mission in Kosovo, *Tracking School Dropouts and Non-attendance in Kosovo* (Prishtinë/Priština: OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2012), p. 4.

[20] *Ibid.,* p. 5.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 5.

[22] Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, *School's Out: An Education Survey in Ashkali, Egyptian and Romani Communities in 9 Kosovo Municipalities Kosovo* (Prishtinë/Priština: Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, 2012). The municipalities covered by the research were Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakova/Đakovica, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Lipjan/Lipljane, Obiliq/Obilić, Pejë/Peć, Prizren/Prizren, and Shtime/Štimlje).

[23] *Ibid.,* p. 37.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 52.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 54

[28] Office on Good Governance, *Progress Report 2012 on the Implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for Integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities, 2009-2015; Local Assessment 2013 and Priority Framework 2014-2015* (Prishtinë/Priština: Office on Good Governance, 2014), p. 19.

[29] *Ibid.,* pp. 38-39. The municipalities included in the research conducted by the Ministry for European Integration were Ferizaj/Urosevac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Djakovica, Gjilan/Gnjilan, Lipjan/Lipjane, Mamushe/Mamusa, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Obiliq/Obiliq, Pejë/Pec, Podujevë/Podujevo, Prishtinë/Prishtinë Prizren/Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac, Suharekë/Suva Reka and Shtime/Shtimlje.

[30] Aferdita Spahiu, "Case Study Data on Children Out of School and School Abandonment," PowerPoint presentation made at the second meeting of the Reflection Group, 24 September 2014.

[31] Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011), pp. 48, 142-143.

[32] Ministry of Communities and Returns, *Guidelines for the Implementation of Return Support* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Communities and Returns, 2012), pp. 2-3/

[33] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *National Strategy for the Integration of Repatriated Persons* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), pp. 4-5; *Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), pp. 9, 19.

[34] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Guidelines for Assistance and Support of Repatriated Persons for Sustainable Reintegration Based on Reintegration Policies* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2014), p. 23; *Regulation 20/2013 for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons and Management of the Reintegration Program* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013), Article 32.7.

[35] Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Guidelines for Assistance and Support of Repatriated Persons for Sustainable Reintegration Based on Reintegration Policies* (Prishtinë/Priština: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2014), pp. 14, 20.

[36] Government of the Republic of Kosovo, *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015* (Prishtinë/Priština: Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008), pp. 23-25.

[37] Government of the Republic of Kosovo, *The Republic of Kosovo Action Plan on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities, 2009-2015* (Prishtina/Priština: Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2009). The sole activity in the section of the *Action Plan* on education for which no participation from civil society is foreseen is affirmative action for the education and employment of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (Activity 3.5).

[38] Office on Good Governance, *Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2013-2017* (Prishtinë/Priština: Office on Good Governance, 2013).

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 4.

[41] *Ibid.,* p. 15.

[42] See Office on Good Governance, *Buletini informative: Bashkëpunimi qeveri-shoqëri civile* (Prishtinë/Priština: Office on Good Governance, 2014).

[43] See Law No. 04/L - 32 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo* 17/2011.

[44] Merita Shala, *Assessment of "Integration of Repatriated Children in the Public Education System of Republic of Kosovo, by Offering Language Courses and Additional Classes" Project: Report* (manuscript, August 2014), pp. 5-6.

[45] *Ibid.,* pp. 6-8.

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