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

2015

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[*], 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.[4]

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, Ministry of European Integration, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 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.[5] 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.[6]

The conference, held in April 2014, was an integral part of the EU/CoE Joint Programme "Supporting Access to Education and Intercultural Understanding (ACCESS): EU/Council of

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[*] 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.

Europe support in the field of education to forced returnees and to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo."[7] 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 was 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 supported and enriched 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 complemented rather than replacing (or seeking to replace) other established mechanisms. At the same time, the Group's position outside government gave it flexibility in relation to its agenda and to make use of additional resources available through ACCESS, which provided expertise and logistical support necessary to facilitate the work of the Reflection Group.

The membership of the Reflection Group was 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, non-members were asked to participate in some meetings of the Group for the purpose of sharing relevant information, material, or knowledge. The Reflection Group met 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
In addition to sharing with interested readers within and outside Kosovo the knowledge generated by the Reflection Group on the Education of Forced Returnees and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in 2015, this report is intended to assist the Kosovo Government in finalizing the education-related measures of the policy document that will replace the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo* and the associated *Action Plan*, both of which expire in 2015.[8]

Notwithstanding the importance of continued attention to the educational situation of returnees, this report reflects the emphasis of the work of the Reflection Group in 2015 on Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians with an eye to contributing to ensuring that the experience of implementing the current *Strategy* and *Action Plan* is taken into account in designing the new policy document. The themes of the meetings of the Reflection Group in 2015 were: status of *Strategy* implementation; the annual reporting framework for the *Strategy*; and building a holistic strategy for the education of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.

The second section of the report begins with an overview of the *Strategy* and *Action Plan* for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in regional context, then offers a more detailed look at the treatment of education in these two documents, as well as in the *Priority Framework 2014-2015* adopted for the purpose of accelerating implementation of the *Strategy* in its last two years. Drawing on the findings of the Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2013-2014, Section 3 examines the gaps between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on the one hand and the general population on the other in relation to participation in education near the end of the period covered by the current *Strategy*, offering an inventory of factors which contribute to these gaps. Section 4 provides a critical examination of reporting practices in relation to the current *Strategy* as a basis for improvements in reporting on implementation of the new policy document. The report's fifth and final section offers a brief review of key points raised in the preceding sections and offers a set of recommendations related to these points.

2. Targeted policies for the education of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo

2.1. Policy framework for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians

The 11 sectors structuring the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo* constitute a larger number than that present in the respective strategies of most of Kosovo's neighbors and EU member countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion.[9] Of these 13 countries, only two (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) divide their strategy into more than 11 sectors.[10] Montenegro has adopted a strategy containing 10 sectors,[11] while the remaining countries' respective strategies are organized around 5-7 sectors.[12]

With regard to the coverage of the strategies for Roma, Ashkali, and/or Egyptians adopted by Kosovo's neighbors and EU countries participating in the Decade, all have in common with Kosovo's *Strategy* the incorporation (in separate sections of the respective documents) of the Decade's four "priority areas": education, employment, health, and housing.[13] Ten of the 13 strategies also devote a section to preserving and promoting Romani, Ashkali, and/or Egyptian culture, while eight contain a section on anti-discrimination. Sections on registration and documents, gender issues, and political participation and representation appear in five strategies each. Less common is the inclusion of sections focused on policing (done in Albania and Czech Republic) and return and re-integration (only in Serbia).

Greater differences between Kosovo, on the one hand, and its neighbors and EU member countries participating in the Decade, on the other, are apparent in the action plans for Roma, Ashkali, and/or Egyptians drafted in all 13 countries and adopted in all except Romania.[14] The only country with action plans for a larger number of sectors than Kosovo's nine is Serbia (with 13). Whereas Croatia's action plan also covers nine sectors, all other countries' action plans are divided into eight sectors or fewer, with most organized around 4-6 themes.

As is the case with strategies for Roma, Ashkali, and/or Egyptians, all action plans include separate sections devoted to education, employment, health, and housing. Of the other sectors included in *The Republic of Kosovo Action Plan on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities*, the one most common in the action

3. Remaining gaps in participation in education

3.1.Documenting the gaps
In light of its thematic coverage and its sample of Romani, Ashkali, and Egpytian households, the Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2013-2014 provides the most up-to-date picture of gaps in participation between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on the one hand and the general population on the other from pre-school through secondary education.[15] A relatively narrow focus on participation in education rather than on education in general reflects the need for national policy documents to be designed around addressing specific problems through a holistic and coordinated approach which allows progress to be measured. In this manner, policy documents amount not only to declarations of principle, but also to commitments to reach clear and concrete goals and, in so doing, to make a real difference in the lives of those targeted.

As shown in Graph 1, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians have less access to each level of education and higher dropout rates than does the general population. While declining rates of participation from primary education to lower secondary education and from lower to upper secondary education for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians and for the general population are typical also of Kosovo's neighbors (as are growing gaps in participation from one level to the next), a particularly noteworthy feature of the MICS findings is that the participation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians is higher and the gap relative to the general population smaller in pre-school education than in secondary education.

At a more general level, the MICS findings suggest some improvement in school attendance among Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children since the adoption of the *Strategy* and *Action Plan*. At the same time, they show that Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children often do not receive needed learning support outside school, such that their attendance does not necessarily result in effective learning.

Graph 1. Participation in education among Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians and in the general population
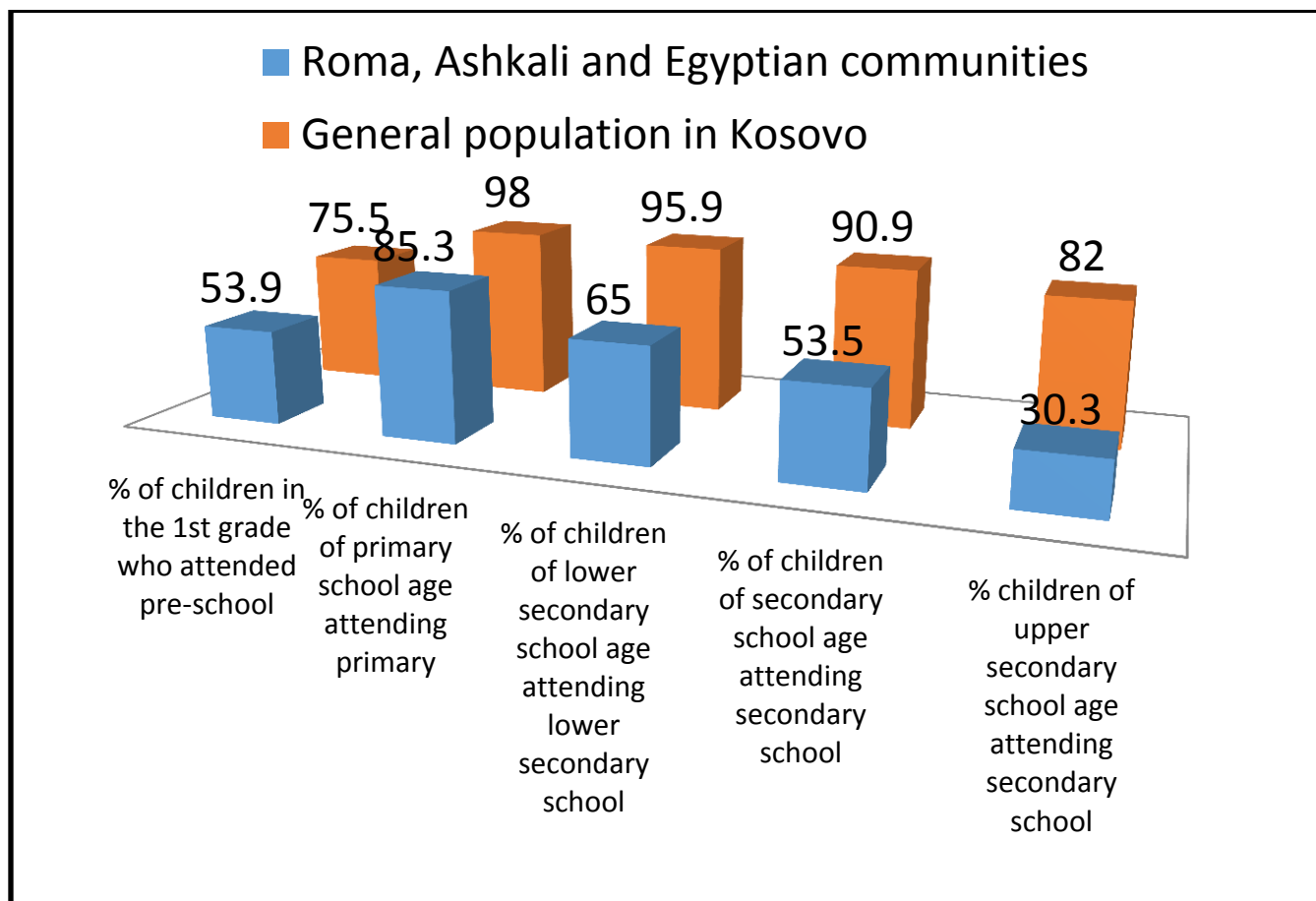
Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics

3.2.Explaining the gaps

The observed gaps in participation in education between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on the one hand and the general population on the other are the result of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians' extremely disadvantaged socio-economic position. This socio-economic disadvantage combines with the cultural differences between these populations and the majority population to make access to education all the more important for the integration of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. At the same time, both Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian parents and relevant institutions are often poorly equipped to ensure effective inclusion. More specific factors accounting for the lower participation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in education relative to the general population are described below.

Access to pre-school education. Even if more Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children attend pre-school education than attend secondary education, the fact that nearly half of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians *do not* attend pre-school education combines with the greater differences between cultural and linguistic environment at home and that at school to leave Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children at a greater disadvantage relative to children from the majority population who

do not attend pre-school education. Pre-school education is neither obligatory nor free of charge, and the capacity of pre-school programs is smaller than the number of children of pre-school age.

Costs of school attendance. Insofar as much of the Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian population lives in poverty, the expenditures for books, clothing, food, school supplies, and travel associated with participation in education are often prohibitive.

Child labor. Closely related to the costs of school attendance, the poverty of many Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian families plays a key role in expectations that school-age children (especially from the age of 10) earn income for the family through activities such as collecting recyclables, selling consumer goods, and washing car windows.

Gender roles. The participation of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian girls in education is adversely affected by practices including early marriages, headscarf wearing (as a factor in bullying), and the expectation that older girls stay home to take care of their younger siblings while their parents generate income for the family.

Language barriers. In the case of Roma (but not Ashkali or Egyptians), the absence of education in the mother tongue results in difficulties in the early years of school, with these difficulties reflected in an insufficient knowledge base in later years.

Migration. Considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians are overrepresented among displaced persons and returnees, such that Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children often lack necessary documentation as well as experience with the Kosovo education system.

Outreach. The various institutions responsible for ensuring that all children are in school rarely initiate communication with families, whether to encourage participation in education or to impose sanctions for non-participation.

Parents' levels of education. As a result of low levels of educational attainment, some Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian parents are insufficiently aware of the importance of education for their children's wellbeing. The same low levels of educational attainment often constitute a problem even where awareness does not, as parents are not able to provide their children with needed support in completing school assignments.

School conditions. Teachers often do not provide support to children in need, including Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children. Further, schools do not generally organize the legally required additional classes.

Self-confidence. Low levels of self-confidence on the part of many Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children as members of a visible and disadvantaged minority negatively affects their performance in school, as well as their relations with teachers and with their peers from the majority population.

4. Reporting on *Strategy* implementation

4.1.Annual reporting framework
Thanks in large part to technical assistance provided by UNICEF to the Office for Good Governance (OGG) for developing a monitoring and reporting system, the quality of reporting on *Strategy* implementation has improved considerably since 2012.[16] Perhaps most notably, reporting has become more concrete and specific, as reflected in an increase in the proportion of indicators for which data were reported: from 72 percent in 2012 to 79 percent in 2014. The availability of data on budgeting for implementation of the *Strategy* also increased over the same period.

Notwithstanding the improvements in the framework for reporting on *Strategy* implementation and their application in producing the annual reports since 2012, several challenges remain. First, although indicators and statistical data have become an integral part of the reporting methodology, assessing the status of the indicators is complicated by the limited comparability of available data. In similar fashion, the availability of data on budget allocations is limited, as is meaningful information on the allocations' specific contributions to *Strategy* implementation. Preparation of annual reports by OGG is further complicated by the lack of a unified model for reporting on *Strategy* implementation by line ministries to OGG. Moreover, there is no system in place for verifying the information received from relevant institutions, whether by another institution or by civil society organizations. Finally, the reporting process – like implementation of the *Strategy* in general – is adversely affected by the weakness of coordination between OGG and line ministries directly responsible for implementation of relevant measures foreseen in the *Strategy*.

4.2.Reporting on education
The improvements in reporting on *Strategy* implementation in general are apparent also in relation to the education sector, with the share of education indicators for which data were reported increasing from 73 percent in 2012 to 78 percent in 2014. Presumably contributing to this positive development was a reduction in the number of education indicators from 101 in 2012 to 77 in 2014, effectively reducing the burden associated with reporting. Also increasing between 2012 and 2014 was the availability of data on budget allocations and spending in relation to education. While reported levels of spending by MEST were nearly constant in 2013 and 2014 (EUR 231 000 and 232 000, respectively), MEST's share of total spending on *Strategy* implementation dropped from 14 percent to eight percent from one year to the next.

Perhaps not surprisingly, education also has in common with other sectors of the *Strategy* that even the improved reporting practices leave some pressing needs unfulfilled. For example, the text of the annual report for 2014 makes clear that some activities relevant to the *Strategy*'s provisions in the education sector have been implemented, but there is no clear and consistent relation between the text of the report and the 24 numbered activities and eight EU/MEI Recommendations of the *Priority Framework 2014-2015*. As a result, the extent to which the *Strategy* has been implemented is not readily assessed, such that information on the *Strategy*'s impact is extremely sparse. Whereas a concrete example of the lack of clarity and consistency characteristic of annual reporting is given in Box 2, more problematic still is the complete and unexplained absence of reporting for 2014 on one objective of the education sector, despite the

fact that three of the four activities foreseen under this objective were planned for implementation in 2014 under the *Priority Framework*.[17]

Another unfulfilled need of the new reporting system relates to the reporting of quantitative data. Generally, the figures included in the annual reports are absolute numbers, such that they tell the reader how many people benefited from a given measure. Given that improving the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians is about covering an increasing share of these populations with supportive measures, however, quantitative data are most relevant when they convey information on the proportion of coverage.

The annual report for 2014 also contains three recommendations for the education sector:
* "There is a need for greater commitment from the municipalities for the implementation of the Action Plan";
* "Increased cooperation between sectors and municipal authorities"; and
* "MEST should continue to provide scholarships and review an increased number in order more students of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to participate in high school."[18]

While the recommendations may seem reasonable, the lack of any mention in the preceding text of the report of problems which these approaches could help in resolving leaves unclear how implementation of the recommendations can be expected to contribute to realization of the *Strategy*'s four educational objectives.

Box 2. Reporting on an educational objective of the *Action Plan*

The *Republic of Kosovo Action Plan on the Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities* foresees four activities and as many actions toward implementation of the second objective in the education sector, "Prevention of discrimination and segregation in the Education System," as shown below.

Activities	Actions
2.1. Analysis of the state of affairs with regards to segregation and discrimination in education	2.1.1. MEST, in partnership with NGOs, organizes research on the presence of segregation and discrimination against Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the education system of Kosovo.
2.2. Prevent segregation and discrimination through legal acts	2.2.1. Approve acts and administrative directive for the prevention of acts of segregation
2.3. Training for education employees and officers on elimination of prejudice	2.3.1. Education employees and officers are trained on elimination of prejudice topics, as well as on inter-ethnic and inter-cultural tolerance programs.
2.4. Raise the awareness of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities on forms of discrimination and segregation in education	2.4.1. Build capacities of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to recognize segregation in education, prove it and subsequent actions.

OGG's *Evaluation Report of Framework Priorities for the Period 2014 on Implementation of the Action Plan and Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2014-2015* provides the following information on the implementation of activities toward realization of this objective:

Objective 1.2: Prevention of discrimination and segregation in the Education System
In schools were organized workshops for teachers in the elimination of prejudices, also 6 official and 6 education employees who have been trained in the elimination of prejudice. But, still an analysis of the situation regarding segregation and discrimination in education within the framework of priorities not performed.

Last year, after quick reaction by MEST in cooperation with MED regarding the placement of pupils of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in a separate parallel, there has been no case of segregation in schools. Students of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian are attending education with students with majority communities.

There has been no obstacles in achieving this objective. Government's education policies are in accordance with the objective and these policies are implemented directly in the classroom.

The reported information is clearly relevant to the objective. More specifically, the narrative provides information on implementation of two of the activities planned under the objective (albeit without the numbering used in the *Action Plan*):
- Anti-discrimination workshops for teachers and education employees were held, such that Activity 2.3 was implemented.
- The analysis of segregation and discrimination foreseen under Activity 2.1 was not completed.

At the same time, however, the narrative is missing information on the status of the other two planned activities (i.e., Activities 2.2 and 2.4).

5. Conclusions

5.1. 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.

Taking into account the fact that the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo* and the associated *Action Plan* expire in 2015, the work of the Reflection Group throughout the year focused on systematizing learning from the experience of implementing the *Strategy* and *Action Plan* with an eye to contributing to the policy document that will replace the current *Strategy*. The themes of the meetings of the Reflection Group in 2015 reflect this emphasis: status of *Strategy* implementation; the annual reporting framework for the *Strategy*; and building a holistic strategy for the education of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.

Kosovo's *Strategy* and *Action Plan* cover a larger number of sectors that do the corresponding documents of most of Kosovo's neighbors and EU member countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Coverage of education, however, is common to all, with education one of 11 sectors of the *Strategy* and one of nine sectors of the *Action Plan*. Toward realization of the overall goal of establishing an education system that contributes to the full integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in society, the *Action Plan* includes 25 activities under four objectives. The *Priority Framework 2014-2015* compresses all but one of the activities into a much shorter timeframe while adding eight joint recommendations from the EU and the Ministry of European Integration. As the timeline of the current *Strategy* approaches its end, the goal and objectives of the *Strategy* remain relevant.

The findings of the Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-2014 show that Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians continue to have less access to each level of education and higher dropout rates than does the general population. The observed gaps in participation in education between Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians on the one hand and the general population on the other are the result of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians' extremely disadvantaged socio-economic position. This socio-economic disadvantage combines with the cultural differences between these populations and the majority population to make access to education all the more important for the integration of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. At the same time, both Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian parents and relevant institutions are often poorly equipped to ensure effective inclusion.

While the quality of reporting on *Strategy* implementation has improved considerably since 2012, remaining challenges are apparent in relation to the document as a whole and to the

education sector in particular. As a result, the extent to which the *Strategy* has been implemented is not readily assessed, such that information on the *Strategy*'s impact is extremely sparse. Moreover, the basis for the recommendations offered in the annual reports on *Strategy* implementation is unclear.

5.2. Recommendations
Based on the preceding sections of this report, the recommendations below are intended to provide a basis for finalizing the education-related measures of the policy document that will replace the *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo* and the associated *Action Plan*.

General:
5.2.1. *Take a holistic approach at central level*. OGG should bring relevant institutions and organizations together to ensure coordination in preparing and implementing the new policy document. At the same time, cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare should be strengthened to better link social assistance for parents to children's participation in education. Other key ministries for the development of a holistic approach to the education of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo include the Ministry of Communities and Return and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

5.2.2. *Ensure coordination at local level.* With support from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology as well as from relevant civil society organizations, Municipal Education Directorates should increase their focus on schools attended by children belonging to Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. The legally mandated (and multi-sectoral) group for prevention of school dropout should be operational in every school. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of dedicated municipal-level mechanisms for coordinating implementation of central-level policy for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, applying learning from the model of Romani Information Centers in use in Macedonia.

Increasing participation in education**:**
5.2.3. *Engage parents*. Civil society organizations should work on motivating parents to support their children's education. Additionally, members of Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities should be involved in school and parents' councils.

5.2.4. *Provide education for adults*. With an eye to enabling Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian parents to support their children's education more effectively and to compete more effectively on the labor market, education programs for adults should be prepared and delivered.

5.2.5. *Improve access to pre-school education*. Taking into account the importance of pre-school education for the later scholastic achievements of children whose cultural and linguistic environment at home is different from that of the majority, as well as the fact that this level of education will soon become mandatory, attention to pre-school education for Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children should be increased.

5.2.6. *Institutionalize Learning Centers*. The roles of Learning Centers and the associated mediators in improving Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children's participation in school

through measures including pre-school preparation and the provision of additional classes in primary education should be transferred to state structures. In so doing, particular care should be taken to ensure that the motivation provided through the Learning Centers to local Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities (as demonstrated by the higher participation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in pre-school education than in secondary education) is preserved following the transfer.

5.2.7. *Prepare schools for Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children*. School staff should be provided with the training on inclusive education necessary to enable them to serve address the educational needs of and to serve as role models for all pupils, regardless of community membership.

5.2.8. *Showcase positive Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian role models*. Beyond measures taken in schools, civil society organizations have a role to play in building self-confidence among Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children by exposing them to examples of adults from their respective communities who have attained success based on their education.

Improving reporting and planning:
5.2.9. *Consolidate coordination*. A dedicated unit should be created with sufficient authority and resources (both human and material) to coordinate the activities of central-level institutions involved in implementation of policies for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians; oversee implementation of relevant policies at local level; commission regular external evaluations of measures implemented toward realization of policy priorities; and compile, synthesize, and disseminate information on implementation. The unit should be staffed to the extent possible by qualified Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.

5.2.10. *Institutionalize communication among relevant institutions*. With an eye to maximizing the ability of the Action Plan Technical Working Group or its successor to coordinate, share information, monitor, and prioritize in relation to policy for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, the composition of this group should include the key institutions responsible for all sectors of the new policy document. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics should also be included in this group.

5.2.11. *Focus on impact*. Data reported on the situation of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians should be compared with the baseline values included in strategic documents, extracting lessons learned where a lack of impact or a negative impact is apparent.

5.2.12. *Involve civil society*. Inclusion of civil society in different stages such as providing inputs or verification of data can contribute to the quality of reporting. The European Commission's consultations with civil society organizations provide a positive model in this regard.

5.2.13. *Ground recommendations*. The recommendations provided in reports should be explicitly linked to the data reported on the realization of relevant objectives.

5.2.14. *Link reporting to planning*. In order to allow annual report findings to be taken into account in planning activities and accompanying budget allocations for the following year, the reporting process should be completed no later than the end of the first quarter of that year.

Expected publication dates should be made known well in advance with an eye to facilitating a coordinated response to the findings.

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] 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.

[5] 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.

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

[7] 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.

[8] See Government of the Republic of Kosovo, *Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015* (Prishtina/Priština: Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008); *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); also Office of 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* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2014).

[9] The countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) which have adopted a strategy for Roma are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Slovenia differs from the other countries which have adopted a strategy in that it is an observer rather than a full member of the Decade. The other observers in the Decade – Moldova, Norway, and the United States – have not adopted a strategy on Roma. The Decade began with a declaration by the governments of nine East European countries and a set of international partners under the leadership of the Open Society Institute and the World Bank for the purpose of "eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society." See International Steering Committee, *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015: Terms of Reference* (Budapest: International Steering Committee 2005); www.romadecade.org.

[10] See Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia* (Belgrade: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, 2010); Vijeće Ministara Bosne i Hercegovine, *Strategija Bosne i Hercegovine za rješavanje problema Roma [Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Solving the Problems of the Roma]* (Sarajevo: Vijeće Ministara Bosne i Hercegovine 2005).

[11] See Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, *Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2012-2016* (Podgorica: Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, 2012).

[12] See Government of the Republic of Albania, *National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions* (Tirana: Government of the Republic of Albania, 2003); Government of the Republic of Slovenia, *National Programme of*

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[13] More recently, these same four themes were also adopted by the European Commission in its call to EU members to adopt National Roma Integration Strategies. See European Commission, *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM (2011) 173 final* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2011).

[14] See Government of Bulgaria, *National Action Plan: Roma Inclusion Decade 2005-2015* (Sofia: Government of Bulgaria, 2005); Government of the Czech Republic, *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015: National Action Plan* (Prague: Government of the Czech Republic, 2005); Government of the Republic of Hungary, *Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme Strategic Plan* (Budapest: Government of the Republic of Hungary, 2007); Government of the Slovak Republic, *Revised National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 for Years 2011-2015* (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, 2011); Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava, *Akcioni plan za sprovođenje Strategije za poboljšanje položaja Roma i Egipćana u Crnoj Gori 2012-2016 za 2012. godinu [Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2012-2016 for 2012]* (Podgorica: Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava, 2012); Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, *Revizija na Nacionalnite akciski planovi od "Dekadata za vklučuvanje na Romite 2005-2015" i Strategija za Romite vo Republika Makedonija za period 2009-2011 [Revision of the National Action Plans of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia for the Period 2009-2011]* (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2009); *Nacionalen akciski plan za unapreduvanje na opštestvenata položba na Romkite vo R. Makedonija 2011-2013 [National Action Plan for Advancement of the Societal Position of Romani Women in the Republic of Macedonia 2011-2013]* (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2010); Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, *Revised Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Roma Educational Needs* (Sarajevo: Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, 2010); *Revised Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Addressing Roma Issues in the Field of Employment, Housing and Healthcare 2013-2016* (Sarajevo: Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, 2013); Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, *Action Plan for the Development of the Roma Population 2010-2012* (Madrid: Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, 2010); Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia* (Belgrade: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, 2010); Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, *National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2010-2015* (Tirana: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2009); Vlada Republike Hrvatske, *Akcijski plan za provedbu Nacionalne strategije za uključivanje Roma, za razdoblje od 2013. do 2015. godine [Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma, for the period from 2013 to 2015]* (Zagreb: Vlada Republike Hrvatske, 2013). Romania and Slovenia have not adopted separate action plans for realization of the goals set in their respective strategies on Roma, but both strategies contain information on planned measures. See Government of the Republic of Slovenia, *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010-2015* (Ljubljana: Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2010); Government of Romania, *Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to Roma Minority* (Bucharest: Government of Romania, 2011).

[15] Conducted by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics with technical support from UNICEF, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey covered a total of 4 406 households, including 1 177 Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian households. See http://ask.rks-gov.net/eng/mics.

[16] See Office of 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* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2014); *The Fourth Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy for Integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities for 2013* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2014); *Evaluation Report of Framework Priorities for the Period 2014 on Implementation of the Action Plan and Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2014-2015* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2015).

[17] Activities under Objective 4 ("Raising the awareness of communities and stakeholders to support the education of members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities") slated for implementation in 2014 under the *Priority Framework* were organizing sports and cultural activities (Activity 1.4.1); promoting values, heritage, and identity of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (Activity 1.4.3); and building relations of trust between schools and families (Activity 1.4.4). See Office of 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* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2014).

[18] *Evaluation Report of Framework Priorities for the Period 2014 on Implementation of the Action Plan and Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2014-2015* (Prishtina/Priština: Office of Good Governance, 2015).

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