



ROADMAP FOR POLICIES DIRECTED AT SUPPORTING DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE

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Consulting

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Executive Summary

— As part of the European Union/ Council of Europe action “Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools” in Kosovo, schools have piloted a number of approaches to promoting democratic school culture. The main goals of the action were to enhance the professional competences of teams of teachers to engage in school development processes, while also ensuring democratic participation by students and parents. A number of good practices were developed by the schools, including (but not limited to):

- › the engagement of school teams to use self-evaluation and action planning based on self-evaluation as a tool for school development;
- › developing rules of conduct together for better understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities and participation;
- › community engagement in school life and school improvement;
- › Diversity Days, celebrating diversity in the community;
- › innovative approaches to pedagogy to promote democratic values and respect for diversity – e.g. experiential learning;
- › re-invigorating the work of Student Councils.

— These and other good practices have been listed and described in this Roadmap document together with relevant policy documents by Council of Europe and Kosovo government, and recommendations have been developed for new policies supporting democratic school culture in Kosovo. These recommendations include a number of steps to supplement the Strategic Action Plan (the main documents describing key strategic measures for the development of education in Kosovo), as well as measures to improve teacher training, curriculum and school policies, in order to ensure that democratic school culture is real and sustainable.

Introduction

— This Roadmap is intended to inform and guide policy-makers in the education sector in Kosovo* on how to foster democratic culture in schools. The Roadmap is intended as one of the outputs of the joint European Union/ Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey action “Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools” in Kosovo.

— For the purpose of this Roadmap, democratic school culture is understood to be defined in the Council of Europe’s principles of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and subsequent Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC). Proceeding from this, democratic school culture is based on the principles below, and does not openly contradict any of them:

I. EDC principles:

- › (democratic) rights and responsibilities;
- › active participation;
- › valuing diversity.

II. CDC whole-school approach and key concepts of school governance and school culture:

- › leadership style nurtured by respect for human rights, democratic principles, equal treatment, participatory decision making and responsible accountability;
- › participation of all stakeholders in the review of the whole-school environment and its capacity to promote democratic citizenship and respect for human rights;
- › inclusive and participative decision-making structures and procedures, including powers for teachers, students and parents in setting agendas and participating in policy decisions;

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- › school policies reflecting the values and principles of democratic citizenship and human rights;
- › functioning rules at school that guarantee equal treatment and equal access for all students, teachers and other members of staff regardless of their ethnicity, cultural identity, lifestyle or beliefs;
- › student participation.¹

— Based on the exploration of the principles of EDC and the key concepts of school governance and school culture in more recent Council of Europe literature, the roadmap pays particular attention to the following significant dimensions of democratic citizenship principles as revealed in school culture:

- › Rights and responsibilities imply also knowledge and critical understanding of rights, politics, culture, etc. This implies not just a legal understanding but political and socially emancipating approach to rights and responsibilities (recognizing rights, promoting equality, striving for non-discrimination);
- › Active participation also means participating in how decisions are made in the school, i.e. shared leadership among administration and teachers, and among teachers and students;
- › Valuing diversity means also action, e.g. asserting the right of minority students and students with special needs to quality education.

¹Council of Europe (2016) Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Volume 3 Guidance for implementation, 93-94 (School Governance and Culture).

The Roadmap document includes:

1. Background section I: Analysis of international standards such as Council of Europe documents on democratic school and Competences for Democratic Citizenship;
2. Background Section II: Analysis of Kosovo policy documents on democratic school, citizenship education and inclusive education;
3. Background Section III: Examples of best practices of EDC and support for diversity and inclusive education already piloted in Kosovo schools within the project “Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools”; and
4. Roadmap: Recommendations for policies supporting democratic school culture and respect for diversity at the level of national and municipal authorities.

Background Section I

Analysis of international standards

This section offers:

- › A summary of policy standards and best practices to promote democratic school culture, inter-ethnic understanding and respect in education context;
- › A brief assessment of which policy-level and school-level interventions are identified by international research from Western Balkans region as most appropriate for these goals.

1. Policy standards and best practices to promote democratic school culture and inter-ethnic understanding in education context

— In Europe, the promotion of democratic school culture and related policies and practices is part of national education policy across a number of countries. This trend is spearheaded by the Council of Europe, which initiated policy projects on Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) in 1997.² While the European Union has its own set of recommendations on promoting democratic values through education (notably in a series of Council Conclusions), the Council of Europe work on EDC presents a systematic approach to the principles and stages of democratic school-based education. This work was followed by the development of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) which give a more systemic and holistic expression to policy principles needed for promoting democratic citizenship.

² COE (2000) Project on Education for Democratic Citizenship.

1.1 Policy standards for democratic school culture, valuing diversity and respect

— Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE) is aimed at ensuring the contribution of education to developing democratic citizenship.

— Recent developments in this area include the Declaration passed at the Conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe (2017), which highlights the need for policy actions to include EDC/HRE in national, regional and local policy and practices for formal and non-formal education.³ Of particular importance for this paper is the section on access, which highlights that states should ‘ensure access to EDC/HRE, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups’.

The three principles of EDC are:

- › rights and responsibilities;
- › active participation;
- › valuing diversity.

— In 2007, the Council of Europe published a manual on Democratic Governance of Schools.⁴ The emphasis was on ensuring that the school is a democratic institution, rather than just a well-managed institution – thus stressing the need to respect the needs and interests of all stakeholders. Democratic school governance was discussed across 4 Key Areas:

- › governance, leadership and public accountability;
- › value-centred education;
- › co-operation, communication and involvement: competitiveness and school self-determination;
- › student discipline.

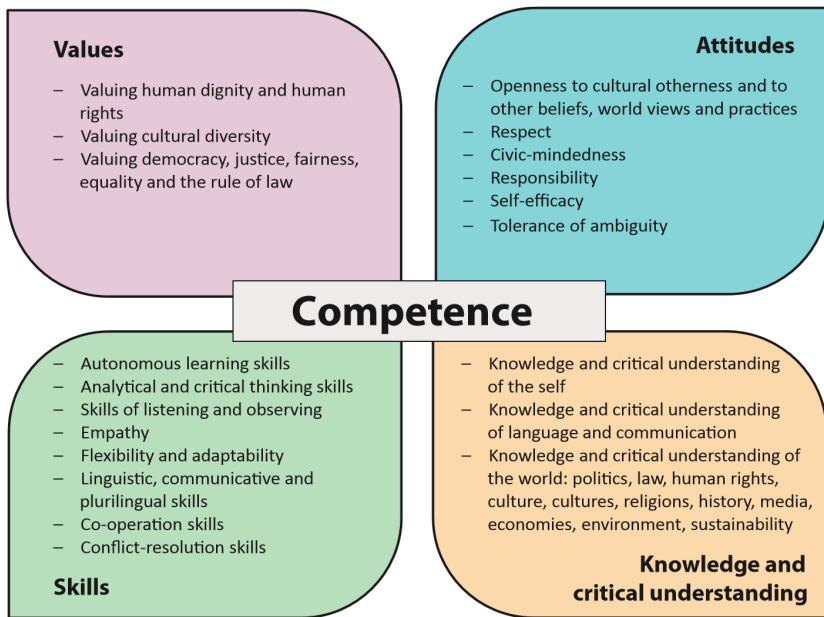
³ Declaration of the Conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe (2017), <https://rm.coe.int/declaration-key-actions-and-expected-outcomes-on-education-for-democra/1680734485>.

⁴ E. Bäckman, B. Trafford (2007) Democratic Governance of Schools. Council of Europe.

— For each Key Area, the authors of the manual have proposed indicators that show to which extent a school’s policies and practices correspond to the EDC principles of rights and responsibilities, active participation and valuing diversity.

— In 2016, Council of Europe adopted Competences for Democratic Culture, based on ‘a conceptual model of the competences which citizens require to participate effectively in a culture of democracy’. Like most competence models, this one includes values, attitudes, knowledge and skills.⁵

Figure 1: Competences for democratic culture (COE, 2016).



— Unlike the initial EDC and Democratic school governance standards, the Competences for Democratic Culture offer a framework for all age groups, without main focus on school or formal curriculum.

⁵ COE (2016) Competences for Democratic Culture. Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies.

— Also in 2016, the Council of Europe published Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, which provides both a new reference framework of democratic competences (Vol. I) and guidance on its implementation (Vol. III).⁶

According to Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, competences for democratic citizenship are supported at school level by the whole-school approach:

A whole-school approach to CDC ensures that all aspects of school life – curricula, teaching methods and resources, leadership and decision-making structures and processes, policies and codes of behaviour, staff and staff–student relationships, extracurricular activities and links with the community – reflect democratic and human rights principles. In turn, this may create a safe learning environment where these principles can be explored, experienced and even challenged in a peaceful way.⁷

— This whole-school approach is underpinned by key concepts of school governance and school culture:

- › leadership style nurtured by respect for human rights, democratic principles, equal treatment, participatory decision making and responsible accountability;
- › participation of all stakeholders in the review of the whole-school environment and its capacity to promote democratic citizenship and respect for human rights;
- › inclusive and participative decision-making structures and procedures, including powers for teachers, students and parents in setting agendas and participating in policy decisions;
- › school policies reflecting the values and principles of democratic citizenship and human rights;
- › functioning rules at school that guarantee equal treatment and equal access for all students, teachers and other members of staff regardless of their ethnicity, cultural identity, lifestyle or beliefs;
- › student participation.⁸

⁶ COE (2016) Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (3 vols).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁸ Council of Europe (2016) Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Volume 3 Guidance for implementation, 93-94 (School Governance and Culture).

— Some aspects of the whole-school approach according to the Reference Framework manual are closely linked to the manual on Democratic Governance of Schools. E.g. the principle of leadership style nurtured by respect for human rights, equal treatment and participatory decision making is closely linked to the understanding of leadership in democratic governance of schools (see Box 1.1 below).

Box 1.1 Example: leadership in the context of democratic school governance

Key Area 1 (Governance, Leadership and Public accountability)

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- the school leadership is responsible to higher authorities, but recognizes and protects the primary duty to stakeholders;
- leadership shares power with stakeholders;
- management and day-to-day routines recognize the rights of those affected by decisions; execution of decisions respects ethical dimensions and human dignity.

2. Active Participation

- Leadership recognizes and promotes shared ownership and responsibility of all stakeholders.

3. Valuing Diversity

- Leadership values and promotes diversity.

— Perhaps most importantly for the current background paper, the link between curriculum, teacher practices, school culture, and school governance is well traced in both the CoE manual on Democratic Governance of Schools and in the more recent Reference Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture. The former outlines a school's progressive journey from an authoritarian, monocultural, ethnically biased and non-democratic school to a

truly democratic and inclusive school. The latter emphasizes the role of school culture and its transformation through the school's organizational development.

— An example of the progressive approach to school development from the Democratic Governance of Schools manual can be seen in Box 1.2 below.

Box 1.2 Example: Stages of value-centred education.⁹

Stages of Value-centred education

Stage 1: Transfer of knowledge is the purpose of education. Order and stability are the important values, homogenous society is desirable. Curriculum and subject matter is decided in detail by the state. The curriculum aims at conformity. School textbooks hold up majority/ dominating view as the norm, and minority values as deviations. Girls are not encouraged to follow traditional 'male' subjects.

Stage 2: A certain openness to the democratic values and students' rights is expressed in official documents. Teachers choose what and how to teach, but sometimes students are given a freedom of choice, the main purpose being to keep them happily working. It is important to level out cultural or other differences as much as possible. A different cultural background is seen as a handicap that can be cured. The purpose of measures taken is adaptation to the majority, not inclusion.

Stage 3: EDC/HR values are expressed in the curriculum as fundamental in all education. Teachers are encouraged to involve students in the teaching process. There is room for individual choices. Democracy is not studied as an isolated subject, but practised in many various situations. Critical and analytical thinking are important competences and can be learnt within many topics. The curriculum is appropriate for all learners. Biased school books are not allowed. The achievement and unique cultural features of minorities are identified and celebrated.

Stage 4: EDC/HR values are expressed not just in printed curricula but as a fundamental and central element of the operation of school life. Teaching procedures are evaluated systematically by the students. The students also evaluate their own work. School leaders show in action and words a respectful and open attitude to diversity. Every sign of disrespectful or otherwise unethical tendencies is taken seriously. Where unbiased texts are not available, the school develops its own materials.

⁹ E. Bäckman, B. Trafford (2007) Democratic Governance of Schools, 24-26.

— Setting a very high benchmark in Stage 4 criteria, this guideline nevertheless may be helpful for assessing the following aspects of school policy and national education policy:

1. Curriculum and textbooks.
2. Teaching and learning.
3. School policies towards minorities.
4. School policies towards diversity and inclusion.

— A change towards democratic school culture should aim at transition from Stages 1 and 2 to Stages 3 and 4, which implies considerable differences in all 4 of the above areas.

— More recent CoE policies, such as Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, make a point of reminding that while democratic competences of citizens are crucial, they are not enough – and sustainable democracy is not possible without democratic institutions and policies. Therefore organization learning should be at the basis of school development, and democratic school policies and practices are crucial. The more recent CoE approach to organizational development of schools is also informed by academic research on the conscious and unconscious impact of school culture on student achievement and wellbeing.

— To sum up, the key standards from the Council of Europe on promoting democratic school culture, inter-ethnic understanding and respect in education context include:

- › Education for Democratic Citizenship/ Human Rights Education (initially mostly curriculum-related, but later developed into all areas of education policy);
- › Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (including whole-school approach and emphasis on school culture);
- › Democratic School Governance (targeting the transformation of school culture and governance).

— For the purposes of this policy synthesis, the criteria set out in the Reference Framework (the section on school governance and school culture) as well as some guidelines from the Democratic Governance of Schools manual will be taken as a basis.

1.2 Implementing the democratic school culture standards: what do we know?

— Rigorous evaluations on the implementation of democratic school policies in the Western Balkans are scarce. Sometimes project reports do not even contain a detailed outline of the actions undertaken in schools or at national/local policy level, let alone measurable results.

— Some studies and academic articles between 2000 and now have contributed to the debate about democratic education and education for living with diversity in the Western Balkans region, making the following points relevant in the context of this paper:

- › Democratic education and multicultural education in South-East Europe can only work through the empowerment of students, “instilling in students a sense that they can make a difference”.¹⁰
- › School leaders need to be treated as important actors in building democratic society and their capacity to perform this role has to be enhanced.¹¹
- › In post-conflict areas where different communities maintain separate schools and little interaction is taking place, support for community school projects explicitly aimed at interethnic understanding and participation of different groups in common activities should be encouraged.¹²
- › Staff capacity building and training should include emphasis on inclusive practices and aim to transform school discourse in order to improve inclusive values and approaches. The aspect of social inclusion (inclusion and support of students from fragile socio-economic background as equal members of school community) should be more pronounced¹³.

¹⁰ T. Mavrikos-Adamou (2003), Multicultural Education and Democratic Enhancement <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED482439>

¹¹ J. Tim Goddard, (2004) "The role of school leaders in establishing democratic principles in a post-conflict society", Journal of Educational Administration, Vol. 42 Issue: 6

¹² A. Korbar, M. Golubeva (2013) Living together, learning together. Network of Education Policy Centres and Forum for Freedom of Education, Croatia. <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/05-Living-together-learning-together.pdf>

¹³ M. Golubeva (2014) Synthesis Report. Regional Support for Inclusive Education, CoE. <https://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/1473702/8306757/Synthesis+Report+by+Maria+Golubeva+FINAL.pdf/995ea6fb-c145-4d6c-9402-d874146dc3e2>

— These ideas and recommendations are worth considering when analysing the desirable interventions for fostering democratic school culture and inclusive approach to diversity in Kosovo schools.

Background Section II

2. Policies and practices in Kosovo* that promote the goals of inclusive and democratic school and policies that don't

— There are at least 4 areas of national policies that have to be considered in order to grasp, where Kosovo is currently standing in terms of democratic values, policies and practices in school education:

- › Protection of children's rights, inclusion and non-discrimination;
- › The presence of democratic values and EDC/ HRE goals in the curriculum;
- › The presence of inclusive education and democratic school criteria/ requirements in teacher policies;
- › The presence of inclusive education and democratic school criteria in school development and school quality assurance policies.

2.1 Protection of children's rights, inclusion and non-discrimination

— Kosovo does not have a law on a child rights.¹⁴ Some groups in the population are frequently experiencing various forms of social exclusion – e.g., in a recent study nearly 16% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian parents answered that their children do not attend school. The majority cited poverty and health as main reasons their children do not attend school¹⁵, and more than 10% of surveyed Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children said they were discriminated at school or by their peers.¹⁶ This suggests that in many cases schools do not provide social inclusion to those in need.

— Education Strategic Plan adopted by the Government in 2016 includes *Strategic objective/SO 1: Participation and Inclusion* Increasing participation and

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¹⁴ Save the Children (2015) A Research Looking into Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Child Rights, 41.

¹⁵ Ibid., 44.

¹⁶ Ibid., 60.

providing equal opportunities for the development, training, and education of every individual in pre-university education.¹⁷

— The Action Plan attached to this strategy defined targets for inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream primary and secondary education, and also for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary and secondary education.¹⁸ Measures underpinning these targets include, among others, training of teaching staff on inclusive education, introducing regulations for municipalities supporting inclusion, and awareness raising activities for minority (Roma) communities.

— The 2017 monitoring report mentions that instruments for assessment of pedagogical needs of children with special needs have been drafted and were undergoing piloting in 2017-2018. Implementation of these instruments in all schools is expected to begin in 2018/19.¹⁹ According to the monitoring report, most children with special needs in Kosovo are already being educated in regular classrooms.²⁰ Data on the participation of Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali children in education is insufficient and makes it impossible to assess the progress of participation of these groups in the education system.²¹

— The Action Plan also includes *Result 1.8. Effective mechanisms and policies in place to promote diversity through an integrated education*. This policy outcome is expected to be reached through:

- a strategy for promoting interethnic dialogue and contact among communities,
- reviewing language teaching provision and supporting the teaching of Albanian language as a second language,
- development of community-specific education modules for minorities, and
- developing a policy on how to teach diversity and human and communities' rights to all pupils.²²

¹⁷ Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021

¹⁸ Action Plan of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2016), 2, Indicators for measuring the achievement of the objective.

¹⁹ KEEN (2018) Implementation of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan in 2017, 31.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 32.

²² Action Plan of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2016), 9.

— As can be seen from the above list of measures, inclusion and diversity are primarily treated through the paradigms of inclusive education (perceived in terms of education of SEN students and Roma) and of minority education and education about diversity. Other aspects of inclusion (e.g. based on socio-economic status) and aspects of democratic citizenship and its role in dealing with diversity are not directly covered. These gaps have to be addressed by future measures, recognizing the role of democratic school culture in inclusion, living with diversity and promotion of human rights.

2.2 The presence of democratic values and EDC/ HRE goals in the curriculum

— The new Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education²³, adopted in 2016, puts slightly less emphasis on intercultural understanding and living with others, compared to the 2011 Framework Curriculum.

— The 2011 curriculum stated that “For Kosovo, as a multiethnic society, “Learning to live together” is both a challenge and a priority, bearing in mind the European Union’s integration process in which it aims to play an active role. This entails the promotion of values and practices associated with inclusion, intercultural vision, democratic citizenship and human rights in the context of public, professional and private lives.²⁴”

— Nevertheless, Civic competence is still one of the Core Competences in the new curriculum. It includes:

- › Competences for interpersonal, inter-cultural and social relationships
- › Understanding and respecting diversity among people
- › Exercising tolerance and respect for others
- › Assuming accountability for issues of general public interest, and responsibility and civic participation
- › Supporting and undertaking useful changes in one’s private life, for the entire society and for the environment:

²³ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2016) Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo.

²⁴ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2011) Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, 10.

— The new Curriculum Framework also gives detailed learning outcomes for every Core Competence. The Learning Outcomes for Civic Competence are defined, including emphasis on valuing diversity, respecting the rights of others, participating in a democratic way in public life and in decision-making at all levels, and promoting human rights and non-discrimination.²⁵

— According to the curriculum document for lower secondary education from 2012, Civic competence is mostly understood in terms of abiding by the rules or negotiating rules, as well as showing compassion to victims of discrimination and taking part in activities promoting tolerance and diversity.²⁶ There is some emphasis on active participation (also in the competence “Life, work and environment related competence “Productive contributor”), more on responsibilities and less on rights. Valuing diversity is recognized as important part of the competence, and a competent Kosovo citizen is expected to ‘fight prejudice and discrimination, fight poverty and marginalization, promote gender quality’.

— Recent evidence suggests that secondary school level textbooks in Kosovo use discriminatory language and gender stereotypes.²⁷ This issue needs to be addressed without delay, and adequate measures to improve the situation should be added to the Action Plan.

²⁵ 2016 Curriculum Framework, 24.

²⁶ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012) Core Curriculum for Lower Secondary Education. <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/10/ang-working-2-masht.pdf>

²⁷ Youth Initiative for Human Rights (2018) Discriminatory Language in School Textbooks. An Analysis of Upper Secondary Level School Textbooks in Kosovo. http://yih-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/YIHR-KS_Discriminatory-language-in-school-textbooks.pdf

2.3 The presence of inclusive education and democratic school criteria/ requirements in teacher policies

— The Framework for Standards for Teachers' Professional Practice in Kosovo outlines basic competences in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes for teachers. This Standard includes as key Attitudes and Values the following points:

- › To consider oneself as an agent for change;
- › To support, respect and practice democratic principles and human rights.²⁸

— Also the skills that a teacher is expected to possess according to the Standard include some key skills necessary for transforming school culture towards being more democratic and fully inclusive, e.g.:

- › To create and use a broad repertory of professional skills as a sustainable basis for an individual creative style of teaching;
- › To exercise leadership with full competence in the classroom.²⁹

— However, teacher education and training does not provide sufficient basis for teachers to be able to exercise these competences en masse. Initial teacher training in Kosovo does not as a rule equip teachers with practical skills to be the driving force of a socially constructivist curriculum. Quite recently, theoretical aspects still tended to dominate the initial teacher training curriculum for secondary school teachers, whereas pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies and school practice constituted only about 2-4% of their study time.³⁰ This presents a problem when we think of democratic school culture in terms of Stages outlined in Part I of this paper – in a democratic school (Stages 3 and 4), teachers are encouraged to involve students in the teaching process and school should be able to develop its own teaching materials on topics for which unbiased quality textbooks are not available. Such an approach requires teachers who are confident designers of their own curriculum and apt methodologists.

²⁸ M. Anastoska-Jankulovska (2013) Teacher Education and Training in Western Balkans. Report on Kosovo. European Commission, 18.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ A. Duda, M. Golubeva, T. Clifford-Amos (2013) Teacher Education and Training in Western Balkans. Synthesis Report. European Commission, 34.

2.4 The presence of inclusive education and democratic school criteria in school development and quality assurance policies

— In Kosovo, local authorities are responsible for designing and implementing municipal Education Development Plans. Some of these include measures related to inclusive education goals and measures intended to improve engagement with and participation by parents (e.g. in Education Development Plan of Pristina, active engagement of parents in the curriculum is foreseen). However, most activities engaging parents and communities are framed as ‘information and consultations’, not as joint planning and engagement in defining common goals and working towards them.³¹ On the positive side, education development plans foresee a number of activities for inclusiveness, friendly learning environment and combatting bullying and violence. On the negative side, all measures are described in terms of inputs, often without any indicators for measuring outcomes.

Documents defining the parameters of school quality in Kosovo include:

- › Framework for ensuring quality of school performance in Kosovo;
- › Strategy for ensuring quality in for pre-university education in Kosovo;
- › Manual for quality assurance;
- › Guidelines for internal evaluation (self-evaluation) of schools.

— In all of these documents, inclusion is required as part of school policy, however, discrimination or non-discrimination is not directly mentioned. There is no requirement for anti-discrimination policies or measures to prevent discrimination at school level. However, representation of interests of all students is required. Social inclusion is a transversal topic in all five fields of self-evaluation of schools.³²

— More on-site research has to be conducted to establish whether democratic processes such as students’ participation in the evaluation of teachers’ work and in the development of school policies is part of actual reality in schools.

³¹ See e.g. Municipality of Pristina (2017) Education Development Plan 2018-2022, Outcome 5.2. Schools in Pristina are open to families, community and most recent trends in education and in society.

³² Source: Council of Europe office, Prishtina.

Background Section III

3. Examples of good practices of EDC and support for diversity and inclusive education piloted in Kosovo schools within the project “Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools”

— This section identifies good practices of democratic school culture, education for democratic citizenship and support for diversity and inclusive education from 20 pilot schools that took part in the European Union/ Council of Europe project (including teachers and school principals, as well as students).

— The main goals of the Project were to enhance the professional competences of teams of teachers to engage in school development processes. These main goals can be defined as follows:

- › Enhancing knowledge and understanding of school improvement processes;
- › Supporting the schools in actively engaging in school development processes aimed at building a democratic and inclusive school culture;
- › Raising awareness of teachers on their role and responsibility for the development of all their students, as well as on the importance of addressing issues like discrimination, social inclusion and intercultural understanding;
- › Applying methodologies and resources, with a sound theoretical background, and relying on the experience of Council of Europe in this field, which can be of practical use for activities to be organized at classroom and school level, and are based on a whole-school approach to school development;
- › Responding constructively to the diversity in their classrooms and in creating appropriate classroom setting for the different needs of their pupils;
- › Engaging in exchanges of experiences with peers;
- › Collaborating with school consultants.

— The section provides analysis of a number of good practices implemented by pilot school teams for promoting democratic culture in their schools.

3.1 The context

— The schools visited in Kosovo serve different communities and their students come from different social and ethnic backgrounds. Many of the schools have also students with special education needs (SEN).

— In terms of ethnic diversity, the following features are important in the context of this project:

- › In some schools, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students are showing lower education outcomes, according to the school teams. This is a reflection of bigger challenges faced by these minorities throughout the region.
- › In one of the schools, Albanian, Bosniak and Turkish students in Prizren study in separate classes/ streams in their mother tongues;
- › One of the schools is serving Turkish and Albanian community students in Prizren.

— Regarding the situation of SEN students, in most schools they are integrated in mainstream classes, with or without assistants.

— Some schools serve rather impoverished urban and rural communities, and their access to basic equipment and funds for renovation and maintenance of school buildings is extremely limited. Municipalities do not necessarily provide regular support even for basic needs and since the procurement of all necessary supplies and equipment is centralized through municipality, schools usually do not have control of their budget for such resources. This creates material constraints for creating a safe and psychologically welcoming atmosphere in schools.

3.2 Good practices and new approaches piloted by Kosovo schools

— The good practices were selected from among the interventions implemented by pilot schools on the basis of criteria related to the EDC understanding of democratic school culture and to the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

— Democratic school culture is based on the principles below, and does not openly contradict any of them:

- › (democratic) rights and responsibilities;
- › active participation;
- › valuing diversity.

Democratic school culture and governance involves:

- › democratic school leadership;
- › participation of all stakeholders in the review of whole-school environment;
- › participatory decision making;
- › school policies reflecting the values and principles of democratic citizenship and human rights;
- › functioning rules at school that guarantee equal treatment and equal access for all students;
- › student participation.

— This list of short descriptions of good practices can be used for information by schools in Kosovo and by policy-makers for the purposes of promoting democratic school culture, positive engagement with diversity, and student participation.

3.2.1 Good practices related to pedagogical approaches and curriculum

— **Peer teaching and learning.** Particularly when this involves professional supervision by a teacher or school psychologist and the goals of the activity involve an ethos of equality, mutual help and striving to overcome disadvantages for all students, especially those who experience difficulties. In this way, children's rights to quality education are supported and students' democratic citizenship competences are improved through participation.

— Student to student peer learning is a way of improving solidarity and mutual respect among students, as well as their commitment to equality and sense of responsibility for others.

- › In one of the schools in Pristina, students from Years 8 and 9 created the so-called “Happy Child” group to work with students of Years 3-5, helping them to address learning difficulties and other problematic issues that they encounter in school. The group helps also students with SEN. The action plan for this group was developed by senior students with the supervision of school psychologist. Its focus is wider than just help with learning – e.g. it encourages younger students’ social skills, an activity that is further enhanced through the “Magic Formula” exercise supervised by teachers, which encourages younger students to use polite formulas in everyday life and to be friendly. Both students and teachers say that these activities make students feel more comfortable at school, as well help to improve their learning.

— **Peer learning about children’s rights** was another form of peer learning practiced in some schools – with students given the task to study resources about children’s rights and then holding learning sessions with their peers. Most schools felt the urge to supplement this exercise with a component on children’s responsibilities (mostly viewed from the perspective of conformity of behavior to school rules).

— **Experiential learning.** Raising students’ awareness of societal diversity and the need to live with others and to prevent discrimination can be successfully taught through experiential learning such as roleplay.

— Some schools do not experience ethnic diversity in the classroom and do not have SEN students (or have few), thus students’ direct experience of living with respecting people from minorities and people with disabilities is limited. In some cases, such schools chose to teach their students about living with diversity and respecting those who appear different through experiential learning, especially role playing. Experiencing exclusion (e.g. through role play) is what some COE manuals recommend (eg. Compasito manual for human rights education for children³³). Schools teams had positive feedback from such exercises. Thus, a teacher from primary school in Mitrovica said:

³³ <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/pdf/Compasito%20EN.pdf>

“Our students from years 4 and 5 were acting as if one was Albanian and another was Serbian. At first, we could feel they acted as if they felt anger towards each other. But then they interacted, became closer and played together.”

— It is important to have a teacher or psychologists trained in conflict resolution or at least sensitivised to issues of non-discrimination to supervise such activities, having a clear vision what they wish to achieve with this activity and what will be the lessons learned for students (not to increase ethnic tensions).

— **Developing school’s own curricula for elective subjects to support students’ democratic competences.** While a horizontal/ transversal approach to citizenship education is important, the reality in most Kosovo schools suggests that students’ democratic citizenship competences still need strengthening through some emphasis in curriculum. Developing own curriculum for an elective subject dedicated to democratic citizenship competences is a way to enhance the school’s efforts to teach these competencies by reflecting on the school’s own experience with learning and living democratically.

— In one of the schools (in Pristina), the teachers used the pilot project as inspiration for developing elective subject curriculum “Education for Democracy”. This action addressed the overall goals of the project in the most direct way. The curriculum, intended for the 6th Grade, uses videos, discussions and student research to teach the competences of living in a diverse democratic society. It addresses both universal issues such as human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination and specific topics such as communities in Kosovo and in the students’ neighbourhood. The feature/ animated films used in the curriculum description are appropriate for the students’ age group.

3.2.2 Good practices related to whole school approach

— **The engagement of school teams to use self-evaluation and action planning based on self-evaluation as a tool for school development.** Within the project “Fostering a democratic school culture and diversity in schools”, school teams were invited to conduct a self-evaluation of their school using a unified methodology based on Index for Inclusion. This self-evaluation then

served as a basis for planning activities and organizational learning leading to school development.

— **Developing rules of conduct together** leads to better understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities and participation. It also serves to improve students' sense of ownership of the school space, if they are genuinely allowed to take part in discussing and proposing the rules and then in creatively visualizing them in school space.

— **Community engagement in school life and school improvement.** It is important for community engagement to enhance the sense of contribution of all community members, especially parents and families from disadvantaged background. Good examples of that have been mentioned in some schools, e.g. unemployed parents helping to make school a more welcoming place, or participating in the Diversity Day celebrations.

— In some cases, community engagement took the form of re-invigorating the work of Parents' Council. In one school, an informal database of parents' professional and informal skills was created, identifying what kind of work parents were willing to perform to improve their children's school. Every parent could feel appreciated, as skills required for this voluntary work do not depend on social status, employment or salary. This gave parents a sense of empowerment, which, in one principal's words, "*was immensely helpful for the school*".

— **Anti-bullying awareness days and anti-bullying policies.** The importance of anti-bullying policies and practices as a way to ensure that all children's rights are respected cannot be overestimated. It is very important that activities in this area should not be limited one-off information days or events, but be translated into permanent school policies, which are maintained and implemented.

— Many of the pilot schools chose to conduct activities focused on raising students' awareness of the harm done by bullying. Videos and discussions in the classroom were the most usual formats used for this activity. In some cases, students were asked to conduct presentations raising awareness of bullying for their peers. Some school teams report that incidence of bullying has decreased in their school after these awareness-raising activities, particularly in cases when students were encouraged to actively resist bullying practices.

— **Diversity Days** can constitute a good practice if, along with showcasing diversity, they also include some social critical perspective – i.e. discussion/ reflection on issues such as removal of barriers for full participation of disadvantaged groups in society, e.g. people with disability, and combatting intolerance and discrimination that also exist in all societies.

— As several mentors pointed out, schools could work on diversity topic beforehand, at least a month, then showcase the results of their reflection and discussion as well as celebration of diversity on Diversity Day. Schools would need methodological support to implement this recommendation.

3.2.3 Good practices related to students' participation in decision making

— **Student Councils** and other forms of democratic participation within the school are extremely important as a way to learn living in a democracy and acquire democratic citizenship competencies. It is essential that the procedures for electing student representatives are transparent and fair, and the choice is really exercised by students. The scope of responsibilities of student councils could be broadened, involving them in decisions beyond the usual choice of school excursions and the colour of classroom walls – e.g. they could take active part in developing school anti-bullying policies.

— A number of schools have implemented activities that were intended to improve internal democracy in the school through student participation. These included more open/ democratic procedures for electing Student Council (previously often appointed by teachers rather than elected by students). Other activities of this kind included surveys with questionnaires asking students to evaluate the atmosphere in their school, the presence/ absence of bullying and the teacher-student relations.

IV Roadmap

4. Recommendations for policies supporting democratic school culture and respect for diversity at the level of national and municipal authorities

— This Roadmap includes recommendations on changes and support measures to support democratic and inclusive school culture at the level of national policy and municipal policy. It is based on the analysis of European and international standards in Background Section I and analysis of Kosovo education policies in Background Section II, as well as on the analysis of good practices piloted within the framework of the joint European Union/Council of Europe project in Kosovo schools.

4.1 National-level education policies

4.1.1. Education Strategic Plan and Action Plan

— Education Strategic Plan adopted by the Government in 2016 includes *Strategic objective/SO 1: Participation and Inclusion* - Increasing participation and providing equal opportunities for the development, training, and education of every individual in pre-university education.³⁴

— Strategic Action Plan objectives for inclusion need to be boosted through a transformation of school culture towards inclusion. Steps for supporting this transformation are outlined below.

— The Action Plan attached to this Strategy defines targets for inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream primary and secondary education, and for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary and secondary education.³⁵ Measures already foreseen in the Action Plan for supporting participation and inclusion list, among others:

- › training of teaching staff on inclusive education,

³⁴ Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021

³⁵ Action Plan of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2016), 2, Indicators for measuring the achievement of the objective.

- › introducing regulations for municipalities supporting inclusion, and
- › awareness raising activities for minority (Roma) communities.

- › **The Action Plan should be supplemented to include measures such as:**
 - › developing in-service teacher training programmes that are based on a systemic approach and interconnected, as they need to address different aspects of democracy and school development, and providing support for implementation of newly gained teacher competences in teaching practice (e.g. through mentoring);
 - › support for teacher assistants in every school where there are students with SEN and students from socially disadvantaged (poor) background;
 - › methodological support and training for teachers on how to develop individual learning plans for students with special education needs;
 - › methodological support for developing school's own curricula for elective subjects to support students' democratic competences (such curricula should adapt the Council of Europe recommendations on education for democratic citizenship to Kosovo context, in order to ensure that the process of developing students' competences is grounded in engagement with the social reality of Kosovo);
 - › methodological support for schools to develop school policies on inclusion and non-discrimination;
 - › methodological support for schools to develop anti-bullying policies.

- › It is important to ensure that good practices developed and implemented during the joint EU/COE project in pilot schools are maintained and disseminated other schools. For this purpose, a supporting document could be attached to the Action Plan, providing examples of good practices for promoting inclusion and participation in Kosovo Schools. Background Section III of this document could be used for this purpose.

- › The Education Strategic Plan and the Action Plan itself should be evaluated on a regular basis, focusing not only on implementation (as e.g. done by KEEN in 2017-2018), but also on the appropriateness of planned measures given the new evidence from recent projects and studies.

4.1.2. Responsibilities of central and municipal education authorities

— Division of functions between central government, municipality and schools should be made clearer, as at the moment many schools fall into the gaps between government and municipal responsibilities to provide for their basic equipment, safety and teaching supplies.

— Municipal departments of education (MDEs) are obliged to implement legislation, including laws and regulations on curriculum and inclusive education, but not all MDEs are implementing this legislation in the same way (e.g. providing funding for the same activities). This issue has to be resolved. Possibly there is a need for a national fund to compensate for shortages of funds in some MDEs, to ensure that there is a minimum basic level of education services that are provided to the same standard in all municipalities.

— Monitoring of quality of the education system has been inconsistent according to many stakeholders. Schools are very rarely monitored. Project participants have stressed that there are schools that never had any kind of monitoring by the authorities. It is important to make sure that monitoring of quality, safety and access to the education system is maintained by both central and municipal authorities in close cooperation, and improvements are made where needed on a rolling basis.

4.1.3. Teacher education

— Teacher education and training in Kosovo does not provide sufficient basis for all teachers to be able to develop their own teaching methodologies and approaches. Initial teacher training in Kosovo does not as a rule equip teachers with practical skills to be the driving force of a socially constructivist curriculum. Theoretical aspects still tend to dominate the initial teacher training, while pedagogical approaches, teaching methodologies and school practice recently constituted only about 2-4% of teachers' study time.

- › Initial teacher education curricula have to include a much greater emphasis on developing individual pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies to enable teachers to approach the development of social and civic competences and social knowledge of students with high awareness and professionalism. Critical analysis of existing social context of schools (poverty, inter-ethnic relations, bullying, gender stereotypes and other issues) should be part of preparation for the teaching profession. Emphasis on emancipatory pedagogical approaches, empowering students to overcome social prejudices and difficult circumstances, and to realise their full potential, should be at the centre of teacher training curriculum.
- › In-service teacher training should focus on school development and encompass various aspects of whole-school approach (teaching and learning, curriculum, organizational learning, school policies and practices). It should be accompanied by mentoring at school level, providing feedback on how the teachers are succeeding in implementing the newly acquired competences in practice. Teachers need further support in building a supportive and democratic teaching/learning environment in their school. In-service training on social and civic competences, and strategies for social inclusion of all children, would be useful. Training curricula for in-service training should also address normative issues, such as equal rights of all children and adults, mechanisms of exclusion, prevention of discrimination.
- › There is a perceived need for school-based training for school teams to enhance level of communication and joint efforts towards organizational learning for school development. This school-based training can be based on the model of the EU/CoE project.

4.1.4. Curriculum

— According to the curriculum document for lower secondary education from 2012, Civic competence is mostly understood in terms of abiding by the rules or negotiating rules, as well as showing compassion to victims of discrimination and taking part in activities promoting tolerance and diversity.

— A greater emphasis on active engagement in society, including engagement in struggle against inequality and discrimination, should be part of curriculum intended for developing civil competence. For example, the curriculum developed by one of the pilot schools for the elective subject “Education for Democracy” uses videos, discussions and student research to teach the competences of living in a diverse democratic society. It addresses both universal issues such as human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination and specific topics such as communities in Kosovo and in the students’ neighbourhood.

- › There is a need to address gender stereotypes in textbooks and to reflect on issues of gender equality in the curriculum. Since a recent study (referred to in Background Section II) suggests there is discriminatory language and gender stereotypes present in textbooks, it is particularly important to make sure that the curriculum and textbooks reflect an approach based on gender equality.

4.2 Municipal-level education policies

— Currently, many municipal education departments in Kosovo are lacking professional expertise for supporting schools to develop new policies on inclusion, diversity and democratic school culture. The socio-economic and social aspects of inclusion and inclusive education are practically ignored.

- › Dedicated funds are needed for MEDs for hiring experts to help schools with inclusive strategies at municipal level (e.g. methodologists, social pedagogues). Such experts could then help schools and individual students to resolve problems of inclusion, behavior, and advise on creating a safe environment at school and support for successful learning of all students. Examples of successful scheme of regional centres supporting inclusive education and helping students to resolve behavioural issues and learning difficulties exist e.g. in Estonia (the so-called Pathfinder Centres).

— Centralised procurement of all school equipment and works by MEDs leads to a very slow and uncertain process of improvement of the school's learning infrastructure.

- › Ways to empower schools to use their own budget for improving school buildings, purchasing educational equipment and supplies, should be developed.

— Political appointments of school principals sometimes are a hindrance to the development of democratic and collegial school leadership, and the whole school suffers as a result.

- › Despite the fact that school principals are appointed externally, they need to undergo a mandatory training on school leadership, distinguishing a school leader from a manager. Shared leadership, engaging teachers in the governance and strategic development of schools is very important. Political influence on schools has to be diminished.

Conclusions

— This Roadmap document outlines the existing good practices for promoting democratic school culture in Kosovo, developed by pilot schools during the European Union/Council of Europe project, and suggest further ways of enhancing democratic school culture in Kosovo through new policies at national and local level.

— At national level, the Strategic Action Plan has to be supplemented to include a number of new measures that would ensure the development and sustainability of democratic school culture. Teacher education policies and curriculum also have to be improved and supplemented with a number of measures such as teacher training curricula including a much greater emphasis on developing individual pedagogical approaches and on inclusive education. School curricula have to include greater emphasis on active engagement in society, including engagement in struggle against inequality and discrimination.

— The role of municipal education authorities in ensuring that schools are safe and friendly spaces for students has to be strengthened. Monitoring of quality of education has to be more rigorous and supported by local and national authorities.

— The good practices that were developed by pilot schools have to be disseminated to other schools and studied by education authorities, in order to ensure sustainability and future development of democratic school culture.

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