MAPPING STUDY

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERVENTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF VARIOUS PROJECTS SUPPORTING INCLUSION IN EDUCATION OF ROMA,ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN BOYS AND GIRLS

INCLUDE – Building Capacity
for Inclusion in Education

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1. Introduction

1.1 The research problem and the goals of the Mapping Study

Despite many projects to help persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities access quality inclusive education and their successful completion of education at all levels, those persons still face many obstacles and they achieve disproportionally lower levels of education than their counterparts belonging to the majority population.[1] Drop-out rates continue to be significant, and overall education lower. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has reported that there has been a steady improvement in that "school abandonment is no longer a systematic problem" and there is a positive trend in secondary school attendance, aided by scholarships from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST).[2] However, the overall gap in education perseveres, which is reflected in poor inclusion of persons belonging to the three communities in the labour market.[3] Both, the authorities at different levels (the government and the municipal authorities)[4] and many other actors (particularly international donors and international and national implementing organisations) have been seeking to address these problems for years. Further, the civil society has been heavily involved, frequently taking on the responsibility to address the gap in educational outcomes (not only for the achieved level of education but also for better participation and acquisition of learning outcomes) of persons belonging to different 'vulnerable/marginalised communities', whereby vulnerability/marginalisation can be associated with a gap in measurable data between the general population and those communities, as well as with perceptions and feelings of powerlessness, long-term neglect and a perceived inability to actively fight for equality.[5]

Many projects – see the non-exclusive list of projects covering (also) education of persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Annex I – have helped address individual many of those issues. However, most projects have had, understandably, a limited scope of application, be it geographically (covering some municipalities), the levels of education or in terms of issues addressed as well as duration of activities. Still, some progress – indeed, in some cases significant progress – has been achieved also due to those projects, but the overall issues of inequality in terms of effective access to quality and inclusive education and equal educational outcomes for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities remain to be addressed. This Mapping Study seeks to pursue two research goals:

- firstly, it seeks to examine the existing (past and present) projects in this field from the perspective of establishing what the projects have covered, what has worked well, what issues have been addressed successfully and to what extent (in terms of geographical and personal scope, as well as at which levels of education and covering which problematic issues), and what problems have been encountered during the implementation of those projects and afterwards (once projects have finished – i.e. what can be seen in terms of the sustainability of those achievements);

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1 OSCE: Overview of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 2020.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

3 Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, Chapter 3.

4 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live mainly in 24 Kosovo municipalities, whereby they are present more significantly in the municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Pejë/Peć and Prizren. See OSCE: Overview of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 2020, p. 4.

5 On the existence of such perceptions, which tend to be stimulated also by the lack of role models from an own community, among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth in Kosovo see Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, p. 43.

- secondly, it seeks to establish the framework for the implementation of the joint EU/CoE project "Building Capacity for Inclusion in Education – INCLUDE" most efficiently, by providing the missing gaps in the relatively dense landscape of education-focused projects and by conducting an original survey with the relevant stakeholders in the field of education with the goal of establishing the existing obstacles to inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education and to achieving equality in terms of educational outcomes – i.e. to provide access to quality and inclusive education to persons belonging to vulnerable/marginalised communities in general.

1.2 The structure and methodology for the Mapping Study

The Mapping Study has been conducted using a combination of different research methods. Desk research focusing on the analysis of relevant primary sources first aims to explain the **international framework** for quality inclusive education and present the situation with respect to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education (in the Introduction) relying on the existing statistical data and information available in different documents (above all, reports of projects and secondary sources). A detailed analysis and interpretation of relevant primary documents is then used to present the **institutional and legal framework** for inclusive education. This includes the analysis of international standards as well as the legal analysis of the educational legal framework for inclusive education in Kosovo*, and the analysis of international standards on managing diversity. The latter is needed as outcomes of inclusive education in a diverse society will depend also on broader societal attitudes towards diversity and the organisation of the educational system in terms of managing diversity. This analysis is based on the assumption that the legal, institutional and societal contexts need to be thoroughly understood for effective implementation of inclusive education for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, as well as those belonging to other so-called 'vulnerable/marginalised communities'. The first part of this study thus analyses the context within which all individuals receive quality education – i.e. have access to education and can achieve equitable educational outcomes.

With a view to **analysing the relevant educational projects** (as listed in Annex I), desk research then benefits from a detailed and systematic analysis of documents (mainly project reports) and other materials. This section aims to establish what has been achieved in terms of quality inclusive education, what has produced desired results and which were the obstacles faced by the many projects implemented to this effect by various actors (see Annex I).

The analysis of the past projects is followed by the **empirical analysis of attitudes** of potential stakeholders of the INCLUDE project. Specifically, a set of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with relevant stakeholders involved in the subject matter was conducted (the list of the interviewees was composed during desk research of all relevant projects). Finally, the Mapping Study closely examines views and attitudes of different stakeholders to both, inclusive education and various projects was carried out to this effect. A primary survey has been carried out, although its scope and the manner in which it was conducted had to be adjusted to the pandemic (to avoid personal contacts). The study aimed to cover the most relevant selected municipalities where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians live and all levels of education covered in the INCLUDE project. Other diversity factors have also been taken into account (different age groups and gender of teachers, as well as their different experience with diversity in schools). Additionally, other staff in school (in the educational sector) have been included in the survey, above all school

directors, other pedagogical workers, as well as educators in non-formal educational institutions (such as learning centres) and representatives of the authorities (the MEST).

Based on all these different types of data the final section of the Mapping Study includes **recommendations** for the authorities as they can be drawn from this study.

2 Assessment of the societal, legal and institutional context

The goal of this chapter is to analyse the context in which inclusive education is to be carried out, with a focus on analysing different obstacles to inclusive education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in general, and in Kosovo in particular. This chapter first focuses on the international legal framework for quality inclusive education for all. The chapter then puts these standards into the context of access to quality inclusive education of persons belonging to 'vulnerable/marginalised communities', including communities whose vulnerabilities are complex (e.g. the so-called dual minorities – national and socio-economic). It then presents a brief overview of education indicators demonstrating the gaps in education between the population at large and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and policy responses by the authorities to diminish discrepancies and reduce those gaps.

2.1 A legal framework for quality inclusive education for all: core international standards and national documents

The right to education is a basic human right. This international norm has been included in all core human rights global and regional instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, Article 26), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960/1962), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966/1976, Articles 13–14), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989/1990, Article 28) and the (European) Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (First) Protocol (1952/1954, Article 2). This right has evolved over time to a complex international norm that is based on the duty of states (i.e. their authorities at all levels) to provide full, free and equal **access to education** (in the form of free and compulsory primary education for all, accessible secondary education with a progressive introduction of free education also at the secondary level, and with equally accessible higher education on the basis of merit) and the **duty to prevent discrimination in education**.

Importantly, the right to education as a fundamental human right "can only be fully exercised if the education is of adequate quality", as noted by the Council of Europe (CoE) Committee of Ministers (CM) in 2012.[6] For only quality education can ensure that societies develop and that individuals fully realise their potentials and ambitions. Quality education has been defined as education that:[7]

    a. gives access to learning to all pupils and students, particularly those in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, adapted to their needs as appropriate;

    b. provides a secure and non-violent learning environment in which the rights of all are respected;

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6 Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 December 2012; hereafter referred to as CM/Rec(2012)13.

7 Cm/Rec(2012)13, para. 6.

c. develops each pupil's and student's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and encourages them to complete the educational programmes in which they enrol;

d. promotes democracy, respect for human rights and social justice in a learning environment which recognises everyone's learning and social needs;

e. enables pupils and students to develop appropriate competences, self-confidence and critical thinking to help them become responsible citizens and improve their employability;

f. passes on universal and local cultural values to pupils and students while equipping them also to make their own decisions;

g. certifies outcomes of formal and non-formal learning in a transparent way based on fair assessment enabling acquired knowledge and competences to be recognised for further study, employment and other purposes;

h. relies on qualified teachers who are committed to continuous professional development;

i. is free of corruption.

Quality education presupposes **inclusive education**, and it extends beyond merely access to education. Such education will prepare students for democratic citizenship and democratic culture, economic activity and for proficiency in intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, sustainable development is dependent on quality education, which has been included as the fourth sustainable development goal in the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, in which UN member states committed themselves to:[8]

> providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society. We will strive to provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realisation of their rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend, including through safe schools and cohesive communities and families.

Inclusive education should therefore not be reduced to physical inclusion alone (although any barriers to this have to be removed) or only to prevention of discrimination in education in the sense of individuals having limited access to educational opportunities due to their affiliations, socially-ascribed or perceived differences. Instead, **inclusive education systems**, as consistently emphasised by UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)[9] and other international institutions, promote on the one hand **equal access to education and the participation in education** without any barrier to this effect, and on the other hand **equal achievement of all** learners, whilst respecting their diverse needs, abilities and characteristics. The learning environment has to be **free from discrimination** on any grounds.

In such an inclusive education system, **all children are able to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in the community as children and as adults. Inclusive education thus provides better opportunities for learning for everyone.** Reaching out to excluded and marginalised, vulnerable communities and persons belonging to them with a view to providing them with inclusive quality education requires the

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8 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, para. 25, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

9 UNESCO: Inclusion in Education, https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education.

development and implementation of inclusive policies and programmes – that is: **inclusive education systems that remove the barriers limiting participation and achievement of all learners; respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics; and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment.**

Education as regulated by international instruments, including legally binding international treaties, is important not only in terms of states' duty to ensure implementation of the right to education **to everyone**, but also to ensure such **substance** of education that the latter "shall be directed", as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, Article 26), "to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" and it "shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups". This is particularly important for ethnically, linguistically, religiously and culturally diverse societies – i.e. societies where different ethno-national communities reside – and for persons belonging to these communities, regardless of their dominant or non-dominant, majority or minority situation.

All these international standards have been applied also to Kosovo's current strategic documents on education (**Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021**[10]) and on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (**Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021**[11]), both seeking to improve educational outcomes of persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian[12] communities as well as other marginalised groups.

2.2 Inclusive education in a diverse society: its significance for persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious or linguistic communities and for societal integration

Education in a diverse societal context needs to achieve two important goals, in addition to help all individuals achieve quality education: firstly, **quality education needs to be equally accessible to everyone** (whereby access is not limited to physical access to education, but rather to the possibility to acquire the qualifications and all expected learning outcomes), regardless of their national or ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliations, and the educational outcomes should not depend on these affiliations; secondly, education needs **to actively promote such diversity as a value** thereby contributing to societal integration. By implication, education can neither ignore diversity, nor – in a worst case scenario – can it promote national unity by promoting one ethno-national community and the identity of persons belonging to it at the expense of all other communities and all other identities and affiliations. **Diversity is conducive to creativity and innovation. In education and careers, there will be better outcomes if the diverse strengths, identities, abilities, perspectives and interests are recognised, understood and supported.**

But despite this notion of diversity as a value, many ethno-national (minority) communities and persons belonging to them are marginalised as states seek homogenisation, which they view

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10 Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, July 2016, available at https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/20161006-kesp-2017-2021-1.pdf.

11 Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021, April 2017, https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/27/strategy-for-inclusion-of-roma-and-ashkali-communities-in-the-kosovo-society-2017-2021--kosovo.

12 Note, however, that the Egyptian community has not been covered by the new strategy and action plan, which made the Advisory Committee recommend that "alternative ways for persons belonging to the Egyptian community to benefit from similar measures to those provided for in the strategy should also be identified without delay." See Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Kosovo* - adopted on 8 March 2017, ACFC/OP/IV(2017)001, para. 29.

as a precondition for stability and even security. Homogenisation in the form of accepting and promoting one language, one culture, one ethnicity, one history and one religion, separating the dominant 'us' from the marginalised, vulnerable and problematic 'them'. This is bound to lead to **discrimination, inequalities and unequal opportunities, and thus to dissatisfaction, grievances and possible open conflicts.** In other words, **eliminating diversity based on any perception of it as problematic has negative consequences for individuals and societies writ large.**

Indeed, it has been precisely this fear of instability that has caused states to manage national/ethnic/linguistic and religious diversity by adopting multilateral documents on minority protection, such as the CoE's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,[13] which is also applicable in Kosovo.[14] **Minority rights** as part of the universal system of human rights protection have been developed to prevent conflicts and instability by protecting and preserving diversity – i.e. with a view to enabling persons belonging to national minorities to protect, preserve and develop their distinct ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious identities. States have realised that these identities need to be protected as they are non-dominant in a state dominated by one (or several) dominant communities, constitutional or state-bearing nations. But the non-dominant position of minority communities is not defined by ethnicity, languages, cultures or religions alone. Instead, some of these minorities are further marginalised by **their socio-economic situation**. These communities are typically referred to as vulnerable/marginalised minorities/communities. It is important **to recognise and understand their dual 'minority' situation**: as socio-economic minorities (deprived of equality in socio-economic terms) and as national/ethnic/linguistic/religious/cultural minorities. This duality is important for inclusive education and for quality education in general. Crucially, 'vulnerable/marginalised communities' cannot and should not be reduced to socio-economic minorities alone as this encourages, if not forces, assimilation, and at best a denial of their cultures, languages, identities, which will negatively affect educational outcomes of persons belonging to these communities.

Inclusive and quality education thus needs to be carried out in the broader international normative framework of human rights and minority rights (as human rights). Indeed, minority rights are a tool and a means, in many different fields with <u>education being one of the most important ones</u>, for achieving **effective equality at the level of individuals and integration at the level of diverse societies**. In diverse societies, minority rights thus provide a tool for achieving societal integration, coherence (but not uniformity or homogeneity). Societal integration or cohesion is:

> a dynamic, multi-actor process of mutual engagement that facilitates effective participation by all members of a diverse society in the economic, political, social and cultural life, and fosters a shared and inclusive sense of belonging at national and local levels. To support the integration process, States should adopt policies that aim to create a society in which diversity is respected and everyone, including all members of ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious groups, contributes to building and maintaining a common and inclusive civic identity. This is achieved by securing equal opportunities for all to contribute to and benefit from the polity. It requires that the State ensures that the rights of all are respected and creates the conditions for all members of society to take on their share of responsibilities. Society as a whole benefits from such a policy. This process can lead to changes in majority and minority cultures.[15]

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13 For the text of the convention see https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/text-of-the-convention.

14 The monitoring process as applicable to Kosovo*, with all documents, available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/unmik/kosovo.

15 The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, 2012, pp. 3–4.

Consequently, **integration applies to a diverse society**, rather than to minorities or to individuals belonging to those minority communities. Individuals need to be **included** in decision-making processes, in institutions, in policies etc., but they **cannot be expected to integrate (adjust/ assimilate) into the dominant (ethno-national) community**. Societal integration is **a two-way process** of mutual co-ordination, of mutual adaptation and of mutual change to accommodate everyone, regardless of their ethnic/linguistic/religious affiliations. An integrated, coherent diverse society is based on respecting the human rights of everyone, including of minority rights, and it values all communities, including national minorities, as integral and equally important parts (rather than as a potential socio-economic or linguistic 'problem' or a security threat). An integrated society, furthermore, **respects all forms of diversity, including intra-community diversity (e.g. by gender, age, profession), and seeks to overcome the obstacles to access all human rights, free from discrimination.**

Integration should not be mistaken for assimilation, or pressures on (persons belonging to) national minorities to change or abandon their minority identities, rather than freely express and promote them. Societal integration is an on-going process that will lead to expected results only if any policy-making is assessed though the lenses of effects on all communities, including minorities. Issues need to be addressed permanently and mechanisms created to this effect need to be established. Societal integration therefore should not be mistaken for ensuring equal opportunities based on the promotion of the dominant identity alone.

It is the **responsibility** of the state (authorities at all levels) to enable conditions for persons belonging to all minorities to fully preserve and develop their minority identities whilst having equal access to human rights (including the right to quality education), free from discrimination, and enabling them to achieve effective equality (or equity). When fully realised, all this serves as a precondition for societal cohesion and integration. However, protection and development of minority identities should **not be understood as segregation or separation of minorities from the rest of the diverse society.** For example: 1) separate schools for Roma children, or even separate classes for Roma students are not acceptable; 2) learning and speaking a minority language is a right that can be exercised in addition, rather than as a replacement of, the state/ official/dominant language(s). Both languages (in fact several, as societies are diverse in a multiple rather than binary sense) need to co-exist. Acceptable (i.e. reached in a meaningful consultation process) solutions need to be sought to ensure a suitable combination in any given diverse society, but without an up-front division between the acceptable 'us' and the problematic 'them'.

Education is an important field for achieving the goal of preserving, protecting and developing minority identities and for achieving societal integration. In education, persons belonging to minorities have the right to learn their language or in their language, and to learn about their community. Importantly, however, international documents such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities are not addressing only persons belonging to minorities. On the contrary, it is **entire societies that need to be involved** in the process of ensuring societal integration through minority rights and human rights more generally. Importantly, some norms in what may appear as specialised legal instruments for minority rights, such as the Framework Convention, have the broadest scope of application and thus apply to everyone in a society, rather than only to persons belonging to different minorities, including vulnerable/marginalised communities or other so-called social minorities. Broadly speaking, these all-inclusive norms refer **to the promotion of tolerance (i.e. respect of diversity)** and **to the promotion of intercultural**

dialogue, whereby education, culture and the media, are particularly important fields for the promotion of these objectives.

The legally binding Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Article 12) thus establishes that education and research should foster knowledge of the history, cultures, languages and religions of the minorities and of the majority, thereby clearly addressing society as a whole. Article 12 further calls for the development of intercultural exchanges and competencies through the facilitation of "contacts among students and teachers of different communities". As explained by the Advisory Committee,

> adequate information on the composition of society, including national and other minorities, must form part of the public curriculum and of textbooks and education materials used in all schools throughout the territories of states parties, not only to promote intercultural understanding and respect among all students, but also to raise the prestige and self-awareness of persons belonging to numerically smaller or disadvantaged/vulnerable or marginalised/ groups.[16]

Persons belonging to minorities should be able to preserve their identities also through education, but education needs to **educate everyone**, including persons belonging to the majority (dominant) community or communities, to learn about minorities as an **equal, valued and integral part of the diverse society. Inclusive education is therefore much more than merely presence of persons belonging to minorities and prevention of their discrimination for their educational results will be dependent on their self-perception as persons belonging to non-dominant, often vulnerable/marginalised minorities that are not appreciated or viewed as a valued part of the diverse society.** It requires co-ordinated and purposeful activities and efforts. The Advisory Committee has thus explained further that

> education materials featuring content on minorities must further be prepared in close consultation with representatives of the respective groups and must not be limited to stereotyped images. Moreover, adequate professional development opportunities and training must therefore be available to all teachers to prepare them for the handling of linguistically and culturally /also socially and socio-economically/ diverse environments. With respect to the teaching of history throughout states parties, critical thinking and the accommodation of multiple perspectives must be promoted in all efforts.[17]

Intercultural dialogue and multilingualism will benefit tolerance and respect for diversity in societies. Both can and need to be promoted through(out) educational systems.

There is a strong mutual link between **societal integration and inclusive education. Inclusive education is critical for societal integration and for ensuring that every individual, regardless of his/her personal circumstances, develops their full potential. Educational outcomes of persons belonging to vulnerable communities will thus depend on the ability of the authorities at all levels to address the socio-economic dimension of vulnerability, whilst not ignoring or making them forcefully abandon their national or ethnic, religious or linguistic identities.** On the contrary, **societal integration presupposes respect for diversity and its active promotion through different policies**, including on the use of languages, also in education, and on access to information for everyone about minority communities through the curricula.

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16 Advisory Committee, Fourth Thematic Commentary: **The Framework Convention: a key tool to managing diversity through minority rights. The Scope of Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,** 2016, para. 59.

17 *Ibid.*, para. 60.

In this context, and without a detailed analysis of <u>the legislation in Kosovo</u>,[18] it is relevant to recall that discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, language, culture, religion or gender is prohibited in Kosovo. Furthermore, Kosovo's legislation on the protection of community rights and the rights of persons belonging to communities is generally in line with European norms, but it needs to be **better implemented**, particularly in the context of strengthened divisions between communities and increased monolingualism.[19] Indeed, the authorities are aware of the need to improve implementation,[20] which has led to a "proliferation of strategies and action plans targeting persons belonging to national minorities without proper monitoring, co-ordination, division of responsibilities and without a clear chain of accountability", which all "undermines their effectiveness."[21] Moreover, as noted by the Advisory Committee, these

> policy documents targeting persons belonging to national minorities often appear to have been adopted with a view to complying with international requirements and do not always reflect a clear understanding of what inclusion of persons belonging to minorities actually means in a democratic society. Similarly, capacity building seems not to have ensued from the articulated institutional framework. The multiplication of bodies dealing with communities' affairs has made for an unclear division of responsibility, including the overlapping of mandates, while at the same time the staff of these bodies do not appear to be sufficiently trained to fulfil their tasks. Finally, there is a lack of co-ordination and interinstitutional dialogue among the different bodies in charge of communities' affairs at central level and between central and local levels. As to the financial resources made available to improve access to rights promoted by the Framework Convention, there is an extensive reliance on means provided by international donors, which undermines ownership of the implementation process by ministries and municipalities.[22]

These problems are complemented by the lack of mainstreaming of diversity management through minority rights in other policies. A practical effect of this is difficult co-ordination of addressing community affairs on one hand, and inclusive education on the other, which is reflected in the lack of progress with respect to target 1.8 of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017-2021 that deals with promotion of diversity (see section 2.3 below).[23] It is important to understand that societal integration will only occur if diversity, including linguistic and ethnic diversity, is understood and respected as a value and minority communities are viewed as an integral and valued part of the Kosovo's diverse society – i.e. the views and values that need to be actively promoted through education. Even the existing programmes such as the Roadmap on diversity and inclusion in the pre-university education in Kosovo (2016), do "not compensate for the Strategy for promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and contact among communities and other activities as planned in the KESP 2017-2021 to ensure effective mechanisms and policies for diversity promotion through an integrated education system."[24]

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18 For the analysis of the Kosovo legal, institutional and policy framework, at the national and local levels, see, among many other reports, Perspective of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, Chapter 4.

19 Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Kosovo* - adopted on 8 March 2017, ACFC/OP/IV(2017)001.

20 EU/KFOS: Implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society in 2017. Evaluation Report, 2017.

21 *Ibid.*, Summary, see also para. 4.

22 *Ibid.*, para. 4.

23 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, p. 35.

24 *Ibid*.

2.3 General situation at different levels of education relevant for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and for strategic targets

Access to quality education of persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo has been severely limited and continues to be limited despite the intensive efforts of many actors involved in education, including the authorities at all levels, the civil society and international actors. Access to quality education is limited both in terms of physical inclusion of those persons in educational institutions at all levels (where their unequal representation in higher levels of education is particularly worrying), and in terms of their educational results. The gap between the population at large and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities can be seen in education indicators, measured in 2013–2014, presented in the table below.[25]

Table 5. Education indicators, 2017			
Indicator	**Description**	**Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (per cent)**	**Overall (per cent)**
Net intake in primary education	Percentage of children of school-entry age who enter the first grade of primary school	68.1	91.6
Primary school net attendance ratio	Percentage of children of primary school age currently attending primary or secondary school	85.3	98.0
Lower secondary school net attendance ratio	Percentage of children of lower secondary school age currently attending lower secondary or higher	65.0	95.9
Upper secondary school net attendance ratio	Percentage of children of upper secondary school age currently attending upper secondary or higher	30.3	82.0
Secondary school net attendance ratio	Percentage of children of secondary school age currently attending secondary school or higher	53.4	90.9
Transition rate to lower secondary school	Number of children attending the last grade of primary school during the previous school year who are in the first grade of lower secondary school during the current school year divided by number of children attending the last grade of primary school year during the previous school year	91.1	99.6
Transition rate to upper secondary school	Number of children attending the last grade of lower secondary school during the previous school year who are in the first grade of upper secondary school during the current school year divided by number of children attending the last grade of lower secondary school year during the previous school year	69.9	91.5

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2014. 2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

25 The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2014): Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-2014. The table is copied from: Perspective of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, p. 20.

Table 6. Indicators for measuring the achievement of MEST objective of inclusion		
Indicator for measuring the achievement of the objective	**Baseline**	**Target**
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary education	53.9 per cent	70 per cent
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary education	85.3 per cent	95 per cent
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in lower secondary education	65 per cent	85 per cent
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in upper secondary education	30.3 per cent	50 per cent
Transition rate to upper secondary education for children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities	69.9 per cent	80 per cent

Source: MEST, 2017. Action Plan of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020, Available at: http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/20161006-action-plan.pdf.

The gap in education indicators between the general population and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities led the MEST to develop, in the 2017 KESP 2017-2021, a set of measurable targets regarding inclusion of persons belonging to these three communities at different education levels, as presented in the table below.[26]

As the time set for achieving these goals in the action plan is coming to an end in 2021, it will be soon clear if all these targets have been reached and what specific actions may still be needed to fulfil these targets and to continue the work to achieve full equality in access to inclusive and quality education for everyone, regardless of their ethnic affiliation or any other personal circumstance. According to the mid-term report evaluating implementation of the KESP 2017-2021 by the Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN; funded by the EU), which has assessed each of the eight targets within the Strategic Objective 1 (Participation and Inclusion), the following issues are particularly relevant for inclusive education as applicable to vulnerable/marginalised communities:[27]

Target 1.1.: Participation in quality preschool education reaches 20% of children aged 0–5. In Kosovo, this issue remains a challenge (although the target is set as a relatively modest one) due to the **lack of adequate investment, infrastructure and awareness of the significance** of quality pre-school education for the entire educational vertical. Only 7.2% of children are included in pre-school education, and the **priority** should be given to children aged 3–5 (i.e. before their entry into school). Only 49.5% of the age group 4 and 5 years were included in pre-school education in 2018/19, which is a minor increase in comparison to previous years.[28] Most recent numbers are also not encouraging.[29]

Target 1.2.: All 5 year-old children are included in pre-primary quality education. There has been progress towards meeting this target, which rose to 92.7% (2018/19).[30] Following an agreement

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26 Copied from: Perspective of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, p. 21.

27 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, chapter 2.1.

28 *Ibid*., pp. 17–18.

29 According to the latest data by SMIA in 2019/20, 9 Roma children are part of preschool (not including pre-primary), 0 Ashkali and 7 Egyptian children, available at http://masht-smia.net/Publikimet/40ALB.pdf, 2020, p. 27.

30 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, p. 22.

between the MEST and Swiss Caritas, 56 pre-primary classes across Kosovo were equipped with inventory and materials in 2017–2019.[31] Importantly, **no data** is available on the training of educators on curriculum implementation, on monitoring educators' competences and **no evaluation database** has been installed in schools, which makes implementation of these activities dependent on projects implemented by the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) and Save the Children.[32]

Target 1.3.: 50% of children with special needs are included in the pre-university education system. The evaluation of this target suffers from the **lack of available data** regarding students with special needs in regular classes. Still, the number of children with special needs in regular classes has been decreasing, whereas their number in resource centres has been increasing. Furthermore, the meeting of this target also suffers from a lack of assistants, thus putting a financial burden on some parents who have to engage them on their own, which is particularly problematic for poorer families. In addition, training for educational needs assessment of children with special needs has not been implemented across Kosovo. Training of teaching staff on inclusive education has been supported by Save the Children and UNICEF, co-financed by the MEST, and attended by only 556 teachers in 2018/19, which leaves **teacher training** as a challenge to be addressed adequately. The phenomenon of '**attached classes**' still exists and their transition to resource centres has not progressed further since 2018. The **engagement of assistants** for children with special needs is not systematically financed (but dependent on a grant), and **some municipalities fail to plan and report on time** to the MEST their needs for assistants.[33]

Target 1.4.: Inclusion of children of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in primary school has increased by 10%, and in lower and upper secondary education has increased by 20%. Participation at all levels has shown "a relatively stable trend", but " participation of children in preschool, pre-primary and higher secondary education remains a challenge."[34] The process of institutionalisation of learning centres has not been completed, and 83 learning centres in 20 municipalities, benefitting 5,555 children in 2017/18, continue to be largely dependent on international donors.[35] Within the EU-SIMRAES 2, most of the training activities were carried out in 2017–2018. Municipalities, with the sole exception of Obiliq/Obilić, have not drafted **a regulation to facilitate enrolment and attendance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-school and higher secondary level**. In 2018/19, 600 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in higher secondary education received scholarship (within the MEST-REF Roma Education Fund), and a further 150 received a partial (50%) scholarship from the GIZ programme implemented by VoRAE, which is almost 50% more than in the previous year. However, **clear criteria for earning a scholarship** in a unified document are yet to be adopted.[36] **A regular monitoring system** for the enrolment of persons belonging to the three communities in preschool and upper secondary school is **yet to be developed**.[37] **Training for teachers for teaching in Romani is not systematically organised** by the MEST and **a lack of interest of teachers** has been reported.[38] **Raising awareness of the significance of school enrolment and attendance** among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities has

31 *Ibid.*
32 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
33 *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 26 and p. 25, respectively.
35 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.
36 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
37 *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
38 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

been carried out by a round table, leaflets on higher secondary education, several meetings with ninth-graders and a summer camp attended by 26 students.[39]

Target 1.5.: All repatriated children are included in the education system and mechanisms for organising education in the Diaspora are strengthened. The MEST has reported that all repatriated students have been included in the education system, but there are problems, among others, with data availability, **timely evidencing, support for supplementary teaching and access to adequate training** for municipal officials and teachers.[40] No special information is provided on help for repatriated students belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and the need for such support can be established based on recent data by the OSCE.[41]

Target 1.6.: Effective mechanisms to prevent drop-out and non-enrolment in pre-university education are established. To address this problem, Teams for Prevention and Response towards Abandonment and Non-Enrolment (PRTAN) are being established in municipalities and schools. Informative sessions and capacity-building training were organised. Still, challenges remain and they mainly include the ability of the PRTAN teams to address the **complex social situation** so that cases referred to by schools are properly supported and to help schools in **co-ordination with parents** to address individual cases. **Consolidated support and constant monitoring of municipal and school teams needs to continue, including in higher secondary schools.** Instruments on data collection on drop-outs and non-enrolment are in place, but **action plans for the prevention of drop-outs and non-enrolment are still to be drafted in all municipalities**. **Awareness-raising** regarding education of vulnerable students is to be strengthened. **Monitoring and assessing progress** on prevention of drop-outs and non-enrolment need to be **better supervised**, including by building capacities of the Education Inspectorate. **Accelerated learning for students who have dropped-out and early identification** of such cases need to be improved.[42]

Target 1.8.: There are effective mechanism and policies in place to promote diversity through an integrated education system. This target has not been achieved as hardly any action has been completed. The single activity in 2017/18 by the Division for inclusive education, Office for communities, i.e. the Guidelines for the promotion of dialogue between communities, was drafted with support by the OSCE, but not signed by the minister.[43] Similarly, the activity regarding teaching in local area languages as envisaged for 2018 did not materialise, and four activities planned for 2018 and 2019 were not implemented: "(i) Development of an Administrative Instruction on teaching in local area languages; (ii) Teacher professional development in the Albanian language as a second language; (iii) Development of relevant teaching materials; and (iv) Needs assessment for the development of specific community education modules."[44]

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39 *Ibid*.

40 *Ibid*., p. 29.

41 OSCE: Overview of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 2020.

42 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, pp. 31–32.

43 *Ibid*., p. 35.

44 *Ibid*.

3 Analysis of all relevant reports, interventions and achievements accomplished by other donor-funded projects or civil society organisations regarding the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary, primary and secondary education

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the relevant reports, interventions and achievements accomplished by other donor-funded projects or civil society organisations regarding the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.[45] The analysis focuses on issues covered by these projects, on their geographical scope (and possible missing areas – not covered by projects so far), on the duration and sustainability of projects, on donors and their preferences in the field of education, on local actors involved and on the beneficiaries (how many individuals were involved, what their benefits received under individual projects were and for how long they could benefit from projects). The chapter concludes with an overall assessment of the 'project landscape' in the field of education at the three levels covered in the INCLUDE project.

3.1 Project landscape

3.1.1 Issues covered

A number of projects have focused either exclusively or partially on the issue of **data collection**. This is very important to complement the census of 2011 and the regular data collection by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Projects covered the whole of Kosovo or only some municipalities (the majority of projects), some relied on collecting data that provide information about the status and situation of these communities and persons belonging to them, whereas many projects also sought to understand the reasons for certain data (numbers) and views/perceptions of different stakeholders. To these effects, projects typically rely on focus groups and individual (semi-structured) interviews, which have also been used for assessing the impact (effectiveness, efficiency) of projects.[46] Projects on data collection have, on the one hand, analysed the situation of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, including in education with a focus on school inclusion and school completion, with the data then serving for planning of concrete substantive policies or specific projects to address some of the problems. On the other hand, some projects collected data in the context of a specific project in an area of education (e.g. the functioning of learning centres through children's attendance and school drop-out rates). Both types of analyses are valuable for planning by the authorities further policies and projects for this can only be done in an informed way, based on reliable and comprehensive data, collected over time.

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45 A list of relevant projects is in Annex I below.

46 See a well-structured research methodology of the Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, pp. 11–13.

Some projects on data collection specifically focusing on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities and persons belonging to them secured additional funds for the Kosovo Agency of Statistics to be able to provide detailed data on the situation of these communities and persons belonging to them, also taking into account the intra-community diversity and the gender perspective on data collection. One such comprehensive project, which monitored the situation of children and women in these communities, was carried out in 2013–2014 by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics,[47] which was financially supported by UNICEF, Austria, Luxembourg, the United Nations Population Fund and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, whereas technical support was provided by UNICEF (this survey was part of their global multiple indicator cluster survey thus ensuring the collection of globally comparable data). The survey results (in which 1,118 households, 1,439 women, 599 men and 735 mothers (or caretakers) on behalf of children under five were interviewed) presented and analysed in a comprehensive report (more than 300 pages) providing a detailed overview of the socio-economic situation (characteristics of households, child mortality, nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, reproductive health, early childhood development, literacy and education, child protection, HIV/AIDS and sexual behaviour, access to mass media and use of information/communication technology, subjective well-being, tobacco and alcohol use).

As a separate multiple indicator cluster survey following the same methodology was conducted for the entire Kosovo, results for the three communities could be compared against the general population. The study demonstrated,[48] among others, that only 54% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children who were attending the first grade of primary school had attended pre-school the previous year (pre-school education was attended by only 16% of children from these communities), whereas this percentage was even lower (48%) amongst the poorest 60% of the population; school attendance was low (15% of all primary school age children were out of school, with 38% of male children aged 6 being out of school; 21% of lower secondary school aged children were out of school, with more females now being out of school than males – a shift of the trend from primary school; 70% of children of upper secondary school age were out of school, of these 74% of female children were completely out of school in rural areas compared to 45% of males), with the gender parity decreasing; male to female ratio was more than 1.00 in primary school (slightly more females attending primary school than males), and dropped to 0.94 at the expense of females in lower secondary school and to 0.80 in upper secondary school and even to 0.41 in rural areas, which means that females are disproportionally vulnerable in upper secondary school in rural areas.[49]

> As many projects and strategies have been implemented since this major study, international donors should provide any support needed to continuously gather **comparable data**, thereby allowing for identification of specific problems these communities and persons belonging to them face, of problems that have been addressed successfully and of issues that need more efforts or a different approach. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic factors, from a **gender perspective** as well as taking into account other elements of **intersectionality** such as rural/urban settlement, but it is important that the data are combined with the data on **demographics** (ethnic, linguistic, religious affiliations of population) so as to take into account the dual vulnerability (dual minority status) of these communities. The on-going MICS survey 2019–20 by UNICEF and its data will provide a step in the direction of an on-going comparable data collection so as to assess the effects of policies and projects.

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47 The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2014): Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-2014.

48 The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2014): Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-2014, p. xxviii.

49 *Ibid*.

The significance of quality inclusive education for work opportunities has been demonstrated in a 2018 study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the municipalities of Gjakovë/Djakovica, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Graçanicë/Gračanica.[50] Focus groups held with young persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to determine their experience with and perception of obstacles to equal access to the labour market – following a project on Promoting decent work opportunities for Roma Youth in Central and Eastern Europe (implemented by the ILO and funded by Israel, 2015–2016) – have unveiled a number of challenges, including low education attainment, inadequate skills, poverty and discrimination, but also the lack of knowledge of Albanian among most Roma youth (but not amongst the Ashkalis and Egyptians) and 'cultural norms' concerning women's roles in society, which negatively affect the presence of women, even more so young women, in the labour market that is beyond the reach for many Roma, Ashkalis and Egyptians with an unemployment rate of 49% (which is 17% higher than that of neighbouring communities and 22% higher than the national average).[51]

Worryingly, 78% of persons belonging to the three communities aged between 18 and 24 were not in education, employment or training (NEET), as opposed to 30% nationally, which requires broad and well-co-ordinated referral mechanisms for early school leavers.[52] Importantly, as this survey (whose results cannot be generalised to the all communities or to the whole of Kosovo due to the problems with the inclusion of individuals in the survey)[53] has highlighted and that is of relevance for other projects and activities applicable to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in other fields, cultural norms affect women's participation in the labour market more than their ethnic affiliation or education (which makes Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women particularly vulnerable), and individuals' perceptions of institutions (i.e. trust in institutions) affect their motivation for co-operation with institutions.

Positive results in terms of involvement of persons belonging to these communities in the field of employment have been achieved by including them in the drafting process of local action plans in this field. Their participation and co-operation with institutions paved the way for reciprocal trust-building and for their motivation to co-operate with public institutions.[54] This study has also demonstrated that progressive legislation could only be implemented effectively if all sectors and institutions co-operate in addressing the challenges facing persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, particularly young women who are most disadvantaged in the labour market.[55] A gender perspective needs to go beyond data collection alone and should make all programmes and policies "address different needs and concerns that are generated because of or exacerbated by gender."[56]

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50 Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018.

51 Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, Chapter 5.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 18 and p. 45.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14 (on research methodology).

54 *Ibid.*, 2018.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

> **Effective participation** of persons belonging to the communities that are typically perceived as beneficiaries is crucial for the effectiveness of measures adopted and implemented as such participation paves the way for **trust-building**, it **increases motivation** to get involved and it helps to address negative perceptions about and experience with institutions. Furthermore, the issue of **gender** needs to be **mainstreamed** in all policies and projects as cultural norms concerning women's roles in society (negatively) affect women's inclusion in society. **Public institutions need to co-ordinate** their activities to effectively implement otherwise progressive legislation – projects need to take this into account and support such **inter- and trans-sectoral co-operation.**

The most recent and very comprehensive analysis of the situation of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in 24 municipalities (22 based on the results of the 2011 census and in Leposaviq/Leposavić and Mitrovicë North/Mitrovica, for each municipality separately and disaggregated by the three communities if applicable, has been prepared by the OSCE, based on data available in March 2019.[57] The overview covers five areas (housing and infrastructure, representation in decision-making, education, employment and social welfare and healthcare) and includes information on Romani in official use at the municipal level where applicable, and on the issue of repatriation. These data provide a very important overview of the situation across all municipalities where the three communities reside.

Most of the projects in the field of education have addressed <u>specific needs and specific problems</u> which persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities face. The biggest problems in this respect that have also attracted much attention and support by international donors are: **irregular school attendance, high drop-out rates and non-enrolment** (disaggregated by different levels of education), **unsatisfactory school performance and early conclusion of education**, as well as **lack of social inclusion** (measured by indicators such as a basic level of well-being, full access to resources and activities, social participation, equal opportunities, acceptance and recognition),[58] **which negatively affects school inclusion**.[59]

Several projects have supported **<u>learning centres</u>** (in 2015, there were over 40 learning centres in 15 municipalities,[60] whereas their number has increased to 83 in 20 municipalities in 2017/18[61]), established to help children **to be enrolled in regular schools** (to get enrolled or to re-enrol), assisting them with homework, education materials and school packages, educating children who have dropped out of school and helping them re-enter school, as well as providing preschool programmes (in some learning centres) and other extra-curricular activities (in sports, culture, arts), and to **raise awareness** among parents about the importance of quality education for all.[62] In 2015, a comprehensive study covering the period between 2011 and 2015 concluded that the learning centres played an important positive role for children of all communities in the field of education, whereby this assessment was shared by all stakeholders, including donors, parents, teachers, school directors.[63] The positive contribution of learning centres has been continuously

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57 OSCE: Overview of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 2020.

58 EU/CoE: Guidelines for teachers for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in schools, 2015.

59 Many of these issues have been addressed within individual projects and supported by international donors as listed in section 2.3 above.

60 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015.

61 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, pp. 26–27.

62 The Colourful Book: A story of Leaning Centres (published in four languages), an EU funded project managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, 2012; Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015. The same recommendation has been suggested also in Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018, p. 47.

63 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, Chapter 4.

recognised, but the shift in supporting learning centres has moved to the process of their institutionalisation (in line with the governmental administrative instruction (MEST): 12/2017[64]), which should bring them closer to schools, thus enabling a closer co-operation with teachers, and which should provide them with a more stable financing, including in terms of availability of premises. This process is yet to be completed and adequately supported by different stakeholders and co-ordinated action is needed, included by donors, the authorities (local and central) and NGOs managing learning centres as recommended in a comprehensive 2018 study conducted within the "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, supported by the EU and the Open Society Foundation.[65]

> **The formation and institutionalisation** of learning centres should continue and be completed faster to decrease their dependence on individual donors and to help in their integration in the education system, based on national standards, adequate training and support so that they will be able to continue providing services in support of strategic education goals in Kosovo education system.

Training programmes: Within the joint programme between the EU and the CoE "Increasing Access to Education and Intercultural Understanding: EU/CoE Support in the field of Education to forced returnees and to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo*", a curriculum for the in-service teacher training course was developed, entitled "Inclusive schools supporting the education of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and returned children".[66] The curriculum has been designed for teachers of all levels of pre-university education. Training is to be provided to school teams, formed and supported by the school director and the school board, and teams are advised to be composed of three primary and three secondary teachers, both experienced and less experienced. Three training sessions are to be attended and participants are expected to be motivated and committed to experiment with new teaching methods, to implement activities and to transfer information and training experience to their colleagues.[67] This curriculum is particularly helpful as it addresses issues such as **co-operation with parents, with mediators and learning centres, conflict management in classrooms teamwork**, and issues such as **intercultural education and social inclusion, role of teachers in reproducing inequalities, racism and discrimination, repatriation and returns, vulnerable children, emotional support, promotion of language awareness and cultural diversity, intercultural education across the curriculum**.

'Guidelines for teachers for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in schools', written within the joint programme ACCESS: Increasing access to education and intercultural understanding, funded by the EU and implemented by the Council of Europe,[68] were developed as a result of a participatory working process in 11 pilot schools. The guidelines provide a comprehensive analysis of challenges for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in schools, they focus on general principles and guidelines for social inclusion at school such as a human rights framework, a positive school ethos, a participatory approach, valuing diversity, welcoming returned and

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64 Administrative Instruction (MEST): 12/2017 on Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres), approved by the MEST on 28 August 2017, available at https://kosint2020.net/site/assets/files/1384/ua_masht_nr__12-2017_per_themelimin_dhe_funksionimin_e_qm_pdf.pdf.

65 Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018. See recommendations on pp. 46–48.

66 EU/CoE: Curriculum for the in-service teacher training course: Inclusive schools supporting the education of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and re-turned children, 2015.

67 This is very much needed given the problems identified by researchers in the understanding and above all in the application of moder teaching methods to classrooms in Kosovo (see, among others, Zabeli, Anderson and Saqipi, 2018).

68 EU/CoE: Guidelines for teachers for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in schools, 2015.

repatriated children.[69] They also offer strategies and tools for social inclusion in schools and for strengthening it. As the guidelines focus on the promotion of access to education and on fostering intercultural understanding among all groups living in Kosovo, they remain very relevant in the context of meeting the strategic objectives in the KESP 2017-2021 on inclusive education, including on the issue of diversity promotion. The guidelines have been informed by the model of comprehensive and targeted school development for social inclusion of vulnerable/marginalised communities and persons belonging to them that is based on comprehensive and targeted policy and school plans, classroom development, support services and strong school-parent-community links.[70] **Social inclusion** requires **comprehensive measures** within the **conceptual framework for democratic and inclusive school development**.

Reliance on the moral commitment of individual schools and educations or on isolated activities and extracurricular initiatives cannot compensate for the lack of <u>comprehensive measures</u>.[71] These guidelines take a systemic approach as they aim to support "the ongoing efforts of the Kosovo education system to promote access to education and social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian pupils as well as the reintegration of returnees" – be it in diverse school environments or in homogenous schools as the guidelines "promote the idea that all pupils need intercultural education to be prepared for living in a multicultural society."[72] The guidelines seek to raise **teachers' awareness** of their role and responsibilities in this process, to provide information on **holistic approaches and methodologies**, to promote strategies and activities at schools and in classrooms, to create opportunities and for the **active involvement of teachers in a critical reflection of their practice, peer-to-peer exchanges of experiences**, and to create opportunities for **co-operation with the wider community**.[73] The guidelines are necessary but not sufficient for effective social inclusion practice; they need to be supported by training and teaching materials, which requires support by policy-makers and education authorities.

> Different training programmes and opportunities should be systematised and expanded into **regular and relevant training programmes as an essential part of the professional development of teachers, school directors and other educational staff.** Similarly, systematic training should be developed and offered regularly to **officers**, particularly at municipal levels, working in the field of inclusive education as applicable to vulnerable/marginalised communities and in line with Kosovo strategic objectives in the field of education. Training programmes should be systematic and **involve entire target audiences**, rather than merely a certain number of individuals in some parts of Kosovo.

Inclusion in education, with a particular focus on preschool and upper-secondary education: There have been many activities to address the issue of school attendance,[74] especially in pre-school and upper secondary education where the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continue to be under-represented. Consequently, municipal action plans have envisaged a number of measures (e.g. quotas, transportation, school packages, scholarships) to improve school

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69 *Ibid.*, chapter 3.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

74 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015.

attendance, but only a few of those measures have been implemented.[75] An earlier project[76] had revealed that a series of factors affect school attendance and they can be grouped into individual factors, family factors, school factors (including teachers' values and attitudes not in line with the principles of democratic society and inclusive education) and social factors.[77] Consequently, only **a multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-actor approach** can effectively address this issue, which persevered despite the many projects and significant attention being devoted to the matter (although some progress has been achieved over the years). Such a co-ordinated approach is needed also in addressing the problem of school non-attendance by the learning centre, whereby the authorities, donors, NGOs need to play a proactive role in allocating the resources to systematically, without duplication of work, help the learning centres to provide the relevant and needed support to children from vulnerable communities to be able to attend and complete all levels of education, whilst disproportionate resource allocation to learning centres should be avoided by donors and regular funding by the state budget should be advocated for and secured.[78]

> As the issue of school inclusion (school attendance) is subject to many factors, the gap with respect to this matter between the general population and the Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian or other vulnerable/marginalised communities requires **a multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-actor approach**. Attention should be devoted to **co-ordination and co-operation** of the relevant stakeholders, in a timely and systematic manner to secure school attendance at all levels of education for all individuals.

Awareness raising: Although awareness of the significance of inclusive education continues to be insufficient (and there is a need for raising awareness even to combat discrimination),[79] including among parents,[80] whereas some other stakeholders seem to lack a full understanding of inclusive education and means of implementing it in practice, projects have failed to develop and implement systematic and effective awareness raising activities and focused on singular events instead. Some other projects have demonstrated the power of targeted and well-planned awareness raising programmes[81] so this aspect has to be strengthened.

> Awareness-raising should be based on an action plan to shift from individual events to an **all-encompassing strategy** that will seek **to target individual stakeholders** based on needs assessment and in line with the best approach for the specific category of stakeholders and their expected role in helping to meet the Kosovo education strategic objectives.

Training of municipalities/municipal officers: One of the rare(er) projects focusing on municipal officers with a view to improving the delivery of education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is the manual prepared by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Kosovo in 2012.[82] The manual was prepared as part of the project Improving the Delivery of

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75 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019.

76 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015, pp. 17–19.

77 See also Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018.

78 *Ibid*., recommendations on pp. 46–48.

79 EU/KFOS: Implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society in 2017. Evaluation Report, 2017.

80 *Ibid*.

81 E.g. GIZ: Accompanying Study on the Implementation of Project Activities of GIZ CDBE. Component on Education Inclusion of Returnees and Ethnic Minorities, GIZ, 2018.

82 ECMI Kosovo: Improving the Delivery of Education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities: Good Practices and Recommendations Manual for Municipal Officials, 2012.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education in the Municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje (2011–2012), supported by UNICEF, with a view to strengthening the capacities of municipal officials to implement the education part of the municipal action plan within the previous national Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009–2015. Although the manual was prepared in a specific policy framework, its systematic approach to the preparation, operationalisation, implementation and monitoring of a municipal action plan provides a very useful framework for any specific objective in the delivery of services at the municipal level, which includes recommendations on **data collection, needs assessment and research, outreach, co-ordination and co-operation between relevant stakeholders** and on how to prepare **comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting** (if required). As such, the manual can serve as the basis for any training programme helping municipal officials meet education objectives.

> As municipalities play a very important role in the entire education system, **targeted training for municipal officers** should be developed and offered as an essential part of their **professional development**. Such training should be developed based on assessment of actual needs and with a view to improving their **capacity and competences** in meeting the education strategic objectives with respect to quality and inclusive education as applicable to vulnerable/marginalised communities and **taking into account the diversity of a specific local context and diverse needs of persons belonging to those communities.**

Preparation of local action plans and their monitoring: The bulk of projects analysed cover the development of local action plans for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (e.g. in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje,[83] Ferizaj,[84] Gjakova,[85] Gracanica,[86] Lipjan,[87] Prizren[88]),[89] education development plans in municipalities (e.g. in Ferizaj,[90] Gjakova,[91] Gjilan,[92] Mitrovica,[93] Peja,[94] Pristina,[95] Prizren,[96] Suhareka[97]), and monitoring[98] of the implementation of those local action plans. All these activities have been supported by the EU-funded project "Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN", implemented by Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) in co-operation with several partners: Employment Promotion Agency of Kosovo (EPAK), Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo (BSFK), Academy for Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA) and Stichting SPARK. Worryingly, their **implementation is problematic**: "municipalities pay very little attention to the implementation of the activities foreseen with the strategic plans", "the strategic objectives determined in the field of education and employment remain far from being met, mainly due to

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83 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje 2018-2021.

84 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Ferizaj 2017-2021.

85 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Gjakova 2018-2022.

86 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Gracanica 2018-2022.

87 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Lipjan 2018-2022.

88 Local Action Plan for Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipality of Prizren 2019-2023.

89 Note that all documents are referred to following their actual titles, which is why in many cases, the names of municipalities appear in one language alone.

90 Education development plan of the municipality of Ferizaj 2018-2022.

91 Education development plan of the municipality of Gjakova 2017-2021.

92 Education development plan of the municipality of Gjilan 2017-2021.

93 Education development plan of the municipality of Mitrovica 2018-2022.

94 Education development plan of the municipality of Peja 2018-2022.

95 Education development plan of the municipality of Pristina 2018-2022.

96 Education development plan of the municipality of Prizren 2017-2021.

97 Education development plan of the municipality of Suhareka 2019-2023.

98 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019.

the lack of political willingness and financial and human resources to implement activities" and poor co-ordination between central and local levels and CSOs focused on the field so it should not be surprising that "most of the activities carried out are mainly the ones carried out by CSOs and development partners engaged in this area, which proves the lack of willingness of the local authorities to implement the activities."[99] Importantly, some plans contain activities that are difficult to implement so there is a need for their review based on needs and competences of municipalities.[100]

3.1.2 Geographical scope of projects

In Kosovo, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are dispersed, mainly living in 24 municipalities, but they are more concentrated in the municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Pejë/Peć and Prizren. Accordingly, projects in the field of education focusing on these communities have been carried out in all of these (more rarely) or in some of these municipalities. Some municipalities seem to be particularly involved in these projects. In this respect, a lot of effort has been invested in local action plans in the field of education and employment in municipalities of Prizren, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje, Gracanica, Lipjan, Peja, Pristina, Mitrovica, Gjilan and Suhareka.[101] These action plans on the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and education development plans provide both a very comprehensive view of the situation in individual municipalities and of the needs (issues) to be mitigated, but their implementation has been overwhelmingly insufficient.[102]

With respect to some specific issues to be addressed, there appears to be the need to move from municipality-based projects to **a more systematic** (Kosovo-based) approach that is to be supplemented by projects supported by individual donors, rather than driven by some of the otherwise essential international donors.

> **Municipal action plans and education development plans** have been prepared based on the assessment of needs on the ground, but they now **need to be effectively implemented**. To this effect, **political willingness and commitment** need to be significantly improved and, consequently, **adequate financial and human resources allocated** to their implementation. In this context, international donors should promote **local ownership** and support initiatives and strategic orientation in this direction.

3.1.3 Duration of projects and continuation

The projects analysed in this study have had very different lengths, but what is common to them is that the length depended on the financing cycles of donors, rather than the needs on the ground. However, some donors have been involved in a longer period, but with repeating rather short-term projects. Many projects lasted for only a year or two years. Whereas donors' help and support has been essential and continues to be crucial, such short-term project cycles are in many respects

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99 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019, p. 8.

100 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019, p. 9.

101 See the list of projects in Annex I.

102 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019.

burdensome for the implementing partners as well as for effectiveness of policies that require a continuous long-term support and involvement.

3.1.4 Donors and their specific focus

It is impossible to decipher any specific focus of donors to some aspects, or even their possible unwillingness to support other initiatives, as well as their share in the overall funds secured for the functioning of individual programmes, activities or in order to address individual problems the three communities (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities) and persons belonging to them have been facing. Still, the EU has financially supported many system-based initiatives, frequently implemented by the CoE and local professional civil society organisations working in the field of quality inclusive education. Such system-based initiatives have included the development of guidelines, curricula, or policy documents, including action plans, but also monitoring of their implementation including at the level of municipalities. The development of local action plans in the field of education and employment and their monitoring stands out in this respect, but also the very support to the Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN).

With respect to particular issues applicable to improving access to inclusive education, typically, several donors support individual programmes and it is unclear from the reports available if there is any overall competition or lack of co-ordination among them or between the local implementing partners and donors. An issue that appears from the analysis of donors for programmes such as learning centres is a relatively high number of donors for centres run by an individual NGO: e.g. 25 international (international organisations and charities), national (MEST) and local donors (municipalities) for the Balkan Sunflowers Learning Centres (five in four municipalities).[103] Such a high number of donors very likely impacts the functioning of the centres due to administrative burdens as well as co-ordination with so many donors. Indeed, a high number of donors supporting learning centres was marked by "evident lack of cooperation and coordination between them."[104] Representatives of donor organisations, in interviews to assess the functioning and financing of learning centres, themselves admitted that there was duplication of funding of the same or similar projects and that there was a need for the authorities (municipalities) to co-ordinate donors, and for the central authorities to bring these centres into the formal educational system, develop a strategy to this effect,[105] and to implement effectively the administrative instruction 12/2017.[106]

On the other hand, Terre des Hommes Learning Centres (seven in four municipalities) have been supported by two main donors: the Swiss Church Aid and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.[107] In general (and not necessarily applicable to this case), this presents a risk of being dependent on the specific interests and values of a sole donor, as well as a risk of running out of funds should this donor (or a small number of them) decide to withdraw their support to the specific programmes. Such a risk is increased in the absence of any national guidelines on a specific activity or programme, which in the case of the learning centres in the analysed period (2011–2015) meant that their operation was dependent on NGOs, local communities or

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103 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, pp. 15–16.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

105 *Ibid.* See also Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018.

106 Administrative Instruction (MEST): 12/2017 on Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres), approved by the MEST on 28 August 2017.

107 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, pp. 17–18.

donors.[108] Indeed, this risk has been recognised by the MEST, which has kept its promise to draft an administrative instruction on the formation and operation of learning centres,[109] with the approval in august 2017 of the administrative instruction 12/2017.[110]

In general, several international organisations (e.g. the EU, the UN with agencies and funds, programmes and trusts, the CoE, the OSCE), governments (e.g. of Austria, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, United States of America, the Czech Republic, Switzerland and others) and NGOs and other (governmental-based) international donors (e.g. the GIZ,[111] Open Society Institute – OSI,[112] the Open Society Foundation – OSF,[113] the European Centre for Minority Issues – ECMI, USAID) appear most frequently as donors in projects that address different aspects of access to quality education for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities as well as other vulnerable communities. These projects, frequently implemented by the CoE and by local NGOs/CSOs and networks (such as the KEEN network, the Kosovo Education Centre – KEC, Kosovo Foundation for Open Society – KFOS,[114] VoRAE, HEKS, REF and others) are particularly effective when they are formulated and carried out **to support national strategies** (in education or with respect to inclusion of persons belonging to minority communities) to help these communities and persons belonging to them address their vulnerabilities and achieve equality in access to quality education with a view to achieving their equal educational outcomes. Similarly, when **specific problems have been identified by international monitoring bodies** (such as the Advisory Committee under the CoE's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities),[115] those could be dealt with directly by individual projects, which has not been the case in the projects analysed for this Mapping Study.

The problem that is reappearing across different projects is the problem of **donor dependence** for the implementation of many aspects of inclusive education, particularly due to the lack of financial and human resources at the local level, but also the lack of political will to secure them and implement local action plans in the field of education.[116] With respect to donor support for learning centres, a change has occurred over the years.[117] Namely, the authorities (the MEST, municipal directorates of education and learning centres) have signed a number of memorandums to ensure school space for the learning centres and to compensate monthly costs for rent, electricity, heating etc. This is an important step in at least two respects: firstly, to overcome the problem of donor-dependence for running the centres and for increasing the finances to actual activities rather than the basic infrastructure; secondly, to keep children visiting learning centres and attending

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108 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

109 *Ibid.*

110 Administrative Instruction (MEST): 12/2017 on Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres), approved by the MEST on 28 August 2017.

111 E.g. GIZ: Accompanying Study on the Implementation of Project Activities of GIZ CDBE. Component on Education Inclusion of Returnees and Ethnic Minorities, GIZ, 2018.

112 See, among many others, EU/Kosovo Foundation for Open Society: The Colourful Book: A story of Leaning Centres (published in four languages), an EU funded project managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, 2012.

113 Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018.

114 EU/KFOS: Implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society in 2017. Evaluation Report, 2017.

115 Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, p. 41; Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Kosovo* - adopted on 8 March 2017, ACFC/OP/IV(2017)001.

116 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019, p. 9.

117 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, p. 24.

different activities in school or to bring them back to schools. However, it is important that the learning centres do not become (perceived as) segregated spaces for only children belonging to the vulnerable communities. Instead, support should be provided for e.g. extra-curricular activities for all children with specific interests (e.g. in sports, arts, music), regardless of their ethnic affiliations. Such projects will contribute to intercultural and cross-cultural interactions and competences, and ultimately to societal integration.

3.1.5 Local actors involved (implementation of projects)

Many of the projects are implemented by the civil society (NGOs/CSOs), both local/national and international, who played and continue to play important roles on different aspects of supporting inclusive education. For example, organisations which were part of the KEEN network[118] played a key role in developing municipal action plans and education development plans for the periods between 2017 and 2023, depending on individual municipalities – see further below), the KEC and many other CSOs. Moreover, the learning centres were fully managed by six NGOs in the period 2011–2015: Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, Caritas Kosovo, The Ideas Partnership, and international CSOs such as Terre des Hommes and Bethany Christian Services.[119] A project on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education in the municipalities of Prizren, Gjakova/Đakovica and Ferizaj/Uroševac was implemented by the KEC.[120] The KRAEEYN – Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians Early Network is still active.[121]

3.1.6 Beneficiaries (number, benefits, duration)

There can be no generalised conclusion regarding the beneficiaries; indeed, the various reports about projects hardly discuss these issues, except when specific activities are carried out in person and the number of direct beneficiaries (e.g. students, teachers, municipalities) can be provided. However, a notable exception to this are several analyses that have been conducted on the effectiveness and efficiency of learning centres, which have generally been recognised as having played a very positive role in helping persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, as well as increasingly also other marginalised children from vulnerable communities (other minorities or migrant children), access quality education, both in terms of going to school regularly and in terms of educational outcomes. Although it is difficult to establish the direct link between involvement of a child in a learning centre and his/her better performance in the formal education system, which is what some studies claim,[122] their effects are undoubtedly positive. This has been demonstrated in a three-year assessment of school performance of some 50 children who attended primary school (grades 1 to 5) and programmes in a learning centre.[123] Notably, the number of children involved in these centres is significant. Between 2011 and 2015, the activities in about 40 learning centres in 15 municipalities, managed by six NGOs, were attended by 8,310 children, with an average cost per child being 123.10 EUR,[124] whereas the 83 learning centres in existence in 2017/18 in 20 municipalities are

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118 The KEEN network was an EU funded project managed by a coalition of NGOs, the KEC and partner organisations, the Academy for Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA), the Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (BSFK) and SPARK.

119 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015.

120 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015.

121 See at https://www.facebook.com/kraeeyn/.

122 The Colourful Book: A story of Leaning Centres (published in four languages), an EU funded project managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, 2012.

123 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, pp. 28–29.

124 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

reported to have benefitted 5,555.[125] Furthermore, the impact of the work of the learning centres has been continuously measured in the improvement of drop-out rates and school attendance (whereby other factors may have also played a role in this process).[126]

As projects have a different focus, the beneficiaries will necessarily differ. Those that are more activities-oriented will typically provide precise numbers and other pieces of information about who benefitted and how. But these are also typically short-term projects that have a limited scope and address a specific issue in a relatively narrow space (one or a few municipalities). Projects that, on the other hand, aim to address more strategic objectives regarding inclusive education from a system-based approach (e.g. development of a curriculum or guidelines to be adopted or promoted by the government, or the development of a municipal action plan) have a much broader scope of application and will potentially include a much broader set of beneficiaries. Given the systemic issues identified by many reports and analyses in terms of implementation of the otherwise adequate legislative and policy framework for inclusive education in Kosovo, it is indeed such **systemic issues** that are yet to be strategically addressed by the authorities and supported by international donors, with a view to helping the Kosovo authorities at both levels to provide a conducive environment for effective access to inclusive education for everyone, including persons belonging to the vulnerable/marginalised communities.

In the context of assessing and measuring the impact of individual projects on actual inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and of returnees into the education system, a study by GIZ needs to be mentioned as it has provided a framework for measuring such impact.[127] The study took into account the voices of beneficiaries and stakeholders in activities regarding educational inclusion. Similarly, a study funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF)[128] assessed the actual work of learning centres and their impact on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education and it suggested a number of recommendations to improve their work and impact on the ground, including the need for more **systematic support by donors and central institutions** so that learning centres could enrich their activities, programmes, and build their capacities (through capacity-building trainings for the centres' staff and teachers), the need for NGOs to actively avoid any duplication of work, increased co-operation with parents, providing economic support for students in grave circumstances, awareness raising campaigns and many others.[129]

3.2 Overall assessment of the scope of donor-funded projects and other interventions in the field of education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children from the pre-primary to the secondary levels

International organisations, as donors and/or implementing agencies, have undertaken many initiatives to address problems faced by persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities of which those in education are very sensitive and with severe long-term consequences for individuals, communities and the society at large. The biggest problems are

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125 KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019, pp. 26–27.

126 See, among many others, EU/Kosovo Foundation for Open Society: The Colourful Book: A story of Leaning Centres (published in four languages), an EU funded project managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, 2012; KEEN: Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, November 2019.

127 E.g. GIZ: Accompanying Study on the Implementation of Project Activities of GIZ CDBE. Component on Education Inclusion of Returnees and Ethnic Minorities, GIZ, 2018.

128 Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018.

129 *Ibid.*, pp. 46–48.

lower school attendance, high drop-out rates, lower school performance and early conclusion of education. Although much has been achieved, these problems persevere and education continues to be a challenge for the 'vulnerable communities' and persons belonging to them. Donor dependency has appeared as an overarching problem across many projects and activities with some being supported by many different donors, which has proven difficult to co-ordinate (among donors and between donors, other stakeholders and beneficiaries) as well as posing a significant administrative burden on individuals struggling to implement the activities and help persons belonging to marginalised communities to do well in education.

Although significant steps have been taken to develop the legislative and policy frameworks at central and municipal levels for quality inclusive education, **implementation remains a problem** identified in all most recent evaluation studies and by international monitoring bodies. As implementation is a system-wide problem, donor-funded projects will need to support the development of **system-wide approaches to improving and monitoring implementation** of otherwise well-developed education plans. This process will require **close co-operation between the authorities and donors** in identifying the needs for improving implementation. International donors will be crucial, but it is also their responsibility to work with the authorities on how best to address the systemic issues and in what time, given the tangible (e.g. data on drop-outs, or socio-economic factors affecting individual families and students) or intangible problems (e.g. **attitudes** of officers and teachers on inclusive education, or parents on significance of quality education for all, or attitudes of students towards diversity in general, or school diversity in particular, as well as cultural norms that affect educational inclusion, particularly at higher levels of education). Similarly, the **specific needs and concerns of the beneficiaries** (vulnerable communities and persons belonging to them, whereby the intra-community diversity is not to be ignored, including the notable **gender gap** in education inclusion and outcomes) in specific local environments need to be taken into account. In the spirit of **effective participation** of all actors, one can expect an increased **sense of local ownership** as well as a strengthened **sense of local responsibility** to carry out the action plans and strategies with a view to achieving the Kosovo education strategic goals as applicable to quality inclusive education for all, including for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

4. Analysis of goals of the projects, successes (good practices), difficulties and obstacles

This chapter is based on a qualitative analysis of the results of the projects analysed in the previous chapter three. The analysis focuses both on their goals and fulfilment of those goals and on overall good practices that have been established within individual projects and could be used in the future planning of internationally supported or implemented projects, including the INCLUDE project. Furthermore, this chapter analyses also obstacles faced during the implementation of these projects as well as possible difficulties in achieving those projects' goals. Again, the goal of this assessment is to avoid facing the same problems in present and future projects in the field of quality inclusive education, and to look for possible solutions to overcoming the identified obstacles to inclusive education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education. The chapter concludes with lessons learnt from the already implemented projects and it seeks to identify the missing gaps in effectively implementing inclusive education for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

4.1 Good practices and obstacles in achieving the goals of projects

Overall, projects that have either produced good outcomes or that have been praised by the beneficiaries and other stakeholders have relied on **committed, competent individuals** carrying out such projects, they have been **supported by the relevant institution** (directors, municipal staff), those projects have been prepared or later implemented in **co-operation between donors and beneficiaries or implementing partners**, they have provided for at least a minimum level of **sustainability**, and they have allowed for a margin of **flexibility**. Furthermore, projects were assessed as good if they **covered the actual costs** and led to some **award or recognition of individuals** involved in implementing them.

Specifically identified good practices include **participation and responsibility of entire school communities** (i.e. of teachers and school staff, of students whereby Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students were always present, of mediators and of parents who are considered as partners whereby special support needs to be provided to less educated parents and, if needed, interpretation/translation to facilitate communication) – e.g. in drafting and implementing a school action plan in Gjakovë/Đakovica, which helped to transform school culture into an inclusive one, also with the help of activities such as peer-mentoring and peer support,[130] mentoring and tutoring,[131] mediation, supplementary lessons for students who had dropped-out and catch-up classes for repatriated students,[132] as well as teacher visits to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian families.[133] Success of learning centres was partially due – not merely to their educational activities such as help with homework

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130 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015, p. 22.

131 E.g. GIZ: Accompanying Study on the Implementation of Project Activities of GIZ CDBE. Component on Education Inclusion of Returnees and Ethnic Minorities, GIZ, 2018.

132 EU/CoE: Guidelines for teachers for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in schools, 2015, p. 32.

133 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015, p. 23.

but also to a functioning kitchen and extra-curricular activities such as sports and arts,[134] which can all help children and youth develop different skills and competences that will help them build a positive self-identity and that will eventually empower them in formal education, as well as due to psychosocial support and coaching provided by mediators.[135] Thus, as problems in education are **complex**, so needs to be the approach in addressing them. This presupposes **a thorough understanding of the situation, of the needs in addressing the issues and speedy and good co-operation between all relevant actors in the field of education.** In addition to short-term actions, **ongoing long-term activities need to be carried out to address the negative attitudes towards diversity or persons belonging to specific vulnerable/marginalised communities**. This includes **understanding diversity as a value**, rather than a problem, **by everyone**.

An overall good example of implementing the foreseen activities in its municipal action plan has been the municipality of Gjakovë/Đakovica, where **good co-operation** stands out between MEDs, MOCRs, NGOs and educational institutions.[136] Another good practice identified in a project at the level of municipalities is **a new budgetary line** for the implementation of an action plan for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities' inclusion in the municipality of Prizren.[137] Still, such good practices are not to suggest that persons belonging to the vulnerable/marginalised communities benefit equally from quality education in these municipalities, but they certainly help to create **positive attitudes and trust in municipal institutions**, which is not to be ignored as a factor that affects access to inclusive education.

Among the biggest obstacles to effective access to quality and inclusive education for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and other vulnerable/marginalised communities remain **the lack of financial and human resources, the lack of political willingness and commitment** to effectively implement the existing legislation and policies including strategies and action plans at central and local levels, and **the lack of co-ordination** between different stakeholders.[138] **Lack of disaggregated data**, disaggregated by municipalities, also poses an obstacle to effective policy planning on inclusive education as applicable to vulnerable/marginalised communities and persons belonging to them. Some specific projects have suffered from the lack of adequate guidelines[139] for the operation of certain activities, a possibility of educators involved in the implementation of projects who have no adequate certificate or competences, and the lack of any possibility for adequate training or certification of educators. In terms of finances, the biggest problem is the **lack of sustainability** created by donor dependency and individual projects.

The number of continuous projects not only creates **uncertainty** (which presents an obstacle to long-term planning which is essential in education, e.g. to train competent teachers) but it also poses a significant administrative burden on the already under-paid and over-burdened employees

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134 See, among many others, EU/Kosovo Foundation for Open Society: The Colourful Book: A story of Leaning Centres (published in four languages), an EU funded project managed by the EU Office in Kosovo, implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, 2012.

135 E.g. GIZ: Accompanying Study on the Implementation of Project Activities of GIZ CDBE. Component on Education Inclusion of Returnees and Ethnic Minorities, GIZ, 2018.

136 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Fushe Kosova, Gracanica and Lipjan, 2019, p. 104.

137 KEC: Quick Analysis. Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in preschool and primary education (Prizren, Gjakova and Ferizaj), 2015, p. 21.

138 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Ferizaj, Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje, Graçanicë/Gracanica and Lipjan/Lipljane 2019.

139 Study on the impact of sustainability of learning centres, 2015, p. 40.

or volunteers. The problem of **insufficient human resources** secured by the authorities has led to **outsourcing of activities and responsibility to NGOs/CSOs and development partners** – i.e. stakeholders that should be partners, rather than the main implementing actors when it comes to responsibility for meeting the core Kosovo education strategic objectives.

As the Kosovo **education system continues to be divided** with the Serbian parallel system not recognising Kosovo institutions, this presents an obstacle to full implementation of strategic objectives as well as individual projects across Kosovo. When meeting targets depends on co-operation with the Serbian parallel system, implementation of such activities has suffered and the targets cannot be met so there is a need to adjust them in a way that they are measurable and implementable (whilst political solutions are sought to address the very issue in the first place).[140]

As many of the activities are outsourced to donors and NGOs/CSOs, there is **a problem of local ownership** as well as a certain **lack of a sense of responsibility by the authorities at all levels** to implement the existing legislation on inclusive education. This over- and long-term reliance on donors also lowers the efficiency of the allocated funds. Representatives of donor organisations, in interviews to assess the functioning and financing of learning centres, themselves admitted that there was duplication of funding of the same or similar projects and that there was a need for the authorities (municipalities) to co-ordinate donors, and for the central authorities to bring these centres fully into the formal educational system and develop a strategy to this effect.[141]

4.2 Lessons learnt and missing gaps

The wealth of very diverse projects, many of which have been reviewed for the purpose of this study, provides a solid foundation for future planning of projects as several lessons can be learnt from the previously implemented projects and good practices that have been or can be identified. Also, there are some missing gaps in the coverage and scope of projects dealing with quality inclusive education as applicable to persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and other vulnerable communities.

Projects will be most helpful when they **promote and support national programmes and strategies and/or address specific problems** identified as gaps in meeting European standards and norms. Importantly, the central authorities play a crucial role by providing a **framework** (with general guidelines) on the scope and functioning of individual activities and programmes. Projects can support the drafting of such guidelines or other national documents, based on an assessment of the situation and the **existing needs**, at central or local levels, to address a specific issue. This is important so that projects are **synchronised** with the overall goals in the field of quality inclusive education (i.e. Kosovo education strategic goals) in line with international (European) standards and norms, rather than dependent on individual priorities of donors or NGOs/CSOs or other stakeholders.

There is a need to help the central authorities develop **effective nation-wide measures**, applicable to the entire education system that will promote engagement and performance of

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140 KEEN: Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the municipalities of Kosovo. Monitoring Report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Ferizaj, Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje, Graçanicë/Gracanica and Lipjan/Lipljane, 2019, pp. 104–105.

141 Study on the impact and sustainability of learning centres, 2015, p. 31; Open Society Foundation. Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT" Project, 2018.

all stakeholders involved in securing inclusive education in general, and particularly as it applies to persons belonging to vulnerable communities. These measures are particularly needed for **improving implementation**, at both levels, of otherwise well-developed legislation and policy documents such as national strategies and actions plans at the national/central and local/municipal levels. **Active participation** of all stakeholders, including municipalities, schools and their staff, as well as of persons belonging to vulnerable communities whilst taking into account intra-group diversities, provides a better guarantee for designing measures that will address the actual needs on the ground.

As needs are different for different communities and persons belonging to them, including diversity that is associated with gender, such **diversity has to be mainstreamed in all processes** that are aimed at securing quality inclusive education for all, including for persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. **Gender-based equality** can be secured through gender-mainstreaming so that every aspect of education policies is assessed and adjusted also from the perspective of effects on educational outcomes for students of different genders.

The **lack of political willingness** as one of the core obstacles, together with the **lack of adequate human and financial resources** and **problematic attitudes**,[142] prevents effective implementation of education policies and thus causes long-term negative effects for the entire society and for its members, particularly those who belong to vulnerable/marginalised communities. For effective implementation of Kosovo education strategic goals, this lack of political willingness and other obstacles need to be addressed systematically, which should then result also in better allocation of trained staff and financial resources at all levels. In turn, this will ensure **a better sense of local ownership** of education strategic objectives.

Similarly, experience with learning centres established as in-school or as out-of-school institutions has demonstrated that bringing such institutions and their activities within the formal educational system is beneficial. This is due to several factors, including proximity and better conditions, but also co-operation with teachers and the possibility to monitor children's progress by educators in the learning centres and in schools. This demonstrates the need **to bring different projects and donations within the formal educational system** and thereby address the problems faced by persons belonging to 'vulnerable communities' **systematically**, across Kosovo, and **sustainably**. This includes the need for the central government to further develop **a framework for running of specific programmes and activities**, including an official certification programme for educators involved in programmes and addressing different needs of the beneficiaries, including linguistic issues (i.e. with a view to promoting diversity as a value). These programmes and activities will work best if they are in line with the compulsory educational system as supplementary activities seeking to help children achieve better (i.e. equal) learning outcomes in the formal educational system, at all levels.

Whereas numerous **international donors** are welcome and their financial contribution is essential for helping the authorities to address problems in access to quality education for all, their presence and practice have demonstrated that there is a need for **better co-ordination of donors and their activities** so as to avoid duplication of work and to streamline their activities to the most pertinent ongoing problems. There is therefore **a need for the authorities to set priorities and co-ordinate, nationally and locally, donors and their activities, strategically**

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142 See chapter 5 below.

and taking into account the time dimension (what requires urgent attention and how the authorities could ensure long-term stable finances of certain programmes and activities and thus their **sustainability**). Sustainability cannot be achieved by relying on donors alone so it is essential for the authorities (the central government and municipalities) to prepare and implement plans on donors' support activities and programmes for which the authorities, rather than the donors, assume primary **responsibility**.

In general, the implemented projects have focused on persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities as vulnerable/marginalised communities, but **vulnerability has been largely one-dimensional** – i.e. associated with their socio-economic situation (poverty, lack of adequate housing, poor infrastructure etc.). The ethno-linguistic dimension of these communities and persons belonging to them has been largely overlooked (as the failed implementation of the goal 1.8 on diversity promotion in the KESP 2017-2021 has demonstrated). Still, some notable exceptions can be mentioned, but projects that helped children learn and even use their first languages (in areas where other languages are official) have been often confined to extra-curricular activities and to out-of-school premises. This is an important **gap, particularly in the formal educational system,** that warrants more attention. It is particularly important for persons belonging to any national minority community, including the vulnerable communities marked by a double minority status, **to feel comfortable in expressing their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious identities** (which remains to be an issue for many persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who do not self-identify as such out of fear of prejudice[143]), rather than being helped solely as socio-economically vulnerable communities. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of an official language may pose an obstacle to any student with a different first language to perform well.

Similarly, this aspect of providing **access to minority rights** with a view to enabling persons belonging to these communities to preserve and develop their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious identities in the field of education has been also omitted in the projects reviewed in this Mapping Study (except in the development of a curriculum and guidelines within the joint programme funded by the EU and implemented by the CoE). In particular, for minority rights to be effectively enjoyed, the entire society needs to participate. There are therefore opportunities and needs for donors to support **the development of 'integration-orientated curricula'** and their implementation in practice (with all aspects of this process, including pre- and in-service teacher training, preparation of teaching and learning materials, raising awareness among all parents and other stakeholders of the importance of valuing diversity for societal integration) – i.e. curricula that will pave the way for **societal integration as a process that leads to societal coherence whilst respecting diversity as a valued and integral part of the society**.

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143 See Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018, p. 43.

5. Survey about attitudes of schools towards different aspects of inclusive quality education

The goal of this survey (carried out by Hana Zylfiu-Haziri) has been to establish attitudes of stakeholders in the educational system and thus also stakeholders of the INCLUDE project regarding both inclusive education (with a specific focus on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education at all levels) and regarding various projects carried out to this effect. The initial methodology and the survey sample (as explained in section 5.1) have been adjusted to the Covid-19 pandemic as physical access to schools was restricted so data was mainly collected via videoconferences (zoom) and with the help of written questionnaires.

The survey provides a comprehensive overview of the situation in four municipalities in Kosovo, as perceived by children, teachers, school directors, learning centres, local authorities, and central authorities. As a result, the survey has analysed the importance of inclusive education in views and attitudes by different stakeholders, regarding both inclusive education and ways of providing it (including through various donor-supported projects and other programmes). The results have indicated significant differences in perceptions of inclusive education as held by different stakeholders and in different municipalities, which raises a number of issues for further interventions in this area. It is of crucial relevance to work on **raising awareness on the importance of inclusive education** among students as well as on **building synergies** between various stakeholders with a view to ensuring sustainable and long-lasting effects of intervention in quality inclusive education for all.

5.1 Methodology and samples

A sample from four municipalities was used to collect the information for this study, aiming to choose four primary schools with different levels of social inclusion and interventions from donors per each municipality in Gjakova/Đakovica, Prizren, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Obiliq/Obilić. The selection process followed a predefined set of criteria, which included: rural and urban settlements; a geographic area of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian settlements; and the presence of donors supporting projects on inclusive education.

In all four selected municipalities, survey participants have included students, teachers, school principals, municipality representatives and representatives of learning centres. Additionally, the survey included interviews with representatives of central level institutions: the officers for communities from the (newly re-named) Ministry of Education and Science (MES).

The following schools have been included in the survey: Zef Lush Marku, Brekoc-Gjakova/Đakovica, Daut Bogujevci , Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Abdyl Frasheri, Prizren, Pandeli Sotiri, Plemetin-Obiliq/Obilić. The survey included boys and girls from grades 7, 8 and 9; 22 girls and 8 boys participated. Out of 36 teachers who participated in the survey, there were 19 teachers from primary schools and 17 from lower secondary school. In terms of gender, 20 were female and 16 male.

Municipality representatives participating in the survey were: a communities officer in Gjakova/Đakovica; a director of the MDE in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje: a communities officer in Prizren; and a director of the MDE in Plemetin-Obiliq/Obilić.

5.2 Findings and their analysis

5.2.1 Students Perceptions of Social Inclusion in school

As all interviews took part virtually students hesitated to answer the questions, and usually after one answer to the question the others agreed to his/her response. Responses to the question if their school is welcoming and secure for all students, in all groups, all students stated that their school was a safe place and they felt welcomed. To the question if multicultural visuals are displayed at their school, they all stated that they did not have any visuals displayed in their respective school. Only one student in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje responded that schools should allow children from all ethnic communities to feel respected in the school and pictures and photos representing different ethnic groups and diverse communities should be displayed.

In general, it is notable that students do not have a good understanding of the projects that are happening in their schools. When students were asked if they know of any projects that took place in their schools, they usually referred to the activities that are taking place in the school or to extra-curricular activities. When asked about possible changes that projects have created in schools, students thought of only physical changes, such as the yard arrangements, decorating the walls, visits outside the school.

When students were asked if they had friends from other ethnic communities, no student answered the question. While in a school in Plemetinë/Plemetina where the answers were provided in writing, all students have claimed to associate with children of another community. In all four schools, the only time that students referred to supporting and gathering with persons belonging to other ethnic communities is during extra-curricular activities, such as collecting clothes for people in need, cleaning the garden, different visits. Not even a single student claimed that they spent the break between courses together with someone of a different ethnic affiliation.

When asked whether teachers are friendly with all students, the majority of participants responded with "very much", while in school in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje students stated that teachers are friendly only with "good students".

5.2.2 Teachers

Teachers mainly associate the problem of education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children with three issues: 1) difficult socio-economic conditions; 2) the level of education of the parents; 3) the age of some of the children that exceeds the age of their peers. When asked about the obstacles of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in the educational process, teachers mainly believe that the key obstacle is the lack of support at home, and their failure to participate in preschool programmes, which both made it very difficult for them at the beginning of their schooling. Some children are missing school for a long time, and there are cases that students of second or third grades still do not know how to read or write.

In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, teachers' attitudes towards poor academic results of students belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are directed towards families; they believe that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian parents do not understand the importance of education. This attitude is shared by a few teachers in other schools as well.

Regarding the problems that the education process is facing, the enrolment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the first grade is no longer seen as a problem or is considered as a very minor one since all first graders are registered and attend school. In the Brekoc school, the comparison has been made in terms of the increased number of students (i.e. 12) who have been enrolled in the preschool class last school year, whereas in previous years, there were only one or two students. This increase has been attributed to the commitment of learning centres and donors. In the Prizren and Plemetin schools, teachers also stated that the lack of a psychologist and a pedagogue is causing problems, and students from vulnerable communities could benefit significantly if adequate support by professionals were to be provided.

When asked who supports them in their work with vulnerable students, teachers have answered that they often try to solve social problems on their own, and that they try to help children and their families with clothes, school bags, school supplies. Teachers in schools in Brekoc and Plemetin have emphasised that they practice meetings with parents and family visits. A teacher in Brekoc has pointed out that "Different projects have raised awareness among both teachers and students and donors have left a mark on their schools and the results of the projects are evaluated by comparing the school to ten years ago." It has been due to donors and organisations that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are now present in the school. Teachers in Plemetin stated that even parents are more interested now in comparison to past, but still, there is much more to be done, and that in particular that parents need more support.

Most of the teachers think that they have personally benefited from the projects, both in managing the relationship with their students and professionals. When asked how they evaluate the projects that are run by donors, a teacher in Plemetin has emphasised that "Projects lasting one or two years, after being completed, do not have much impact. A project usually involves certain teachers, but we have a lot of teacher movements to other schools, and with them go the initiatives that come out of the projects". A teacher in Prizren stated that "projects should focus on extra-curricular activities to create stronger bonds between students from different communities." Two teachers from Prizren do not see any benefit stemming from the projects, and they are not willing to take part in them. In Prizren, teachers also think that it is more important to work with parents than to be engaged in a school-based project. In Plemetin, teachers estimate that it is thanks to the projects that inclusion in schools is higher and the school is better prepared with pedagogical tools. In Brekoc, teachers stated that they benefitted from the trainings that have resulted in quality improvement and they are more active in extra-curricular activities.

When asked how the teachers are selected to participate in projects, 80% of teachers stated that the one who makes the selection was the director, while 20% said that the selection was made by curricular areas or by a teacher council.

Teachers believe that learning centres should remain a bridge between parents and schools. Teachers in Plemetin generally value the work of the learning centre and they emphasise that they have very good co-operation with the facilitator regarding the issue of student school

attendance, whereby meetings are organised in the learning centre with the student's parents. In Brekoc, teachers regularly share lessons plans with facilitators so they can follow the school work of students and understand what is expected from students. On the other hand, teachers from the school in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje do not co-operate with the learning centre and they do not see any benefit in such co-operation. One teacher stated: "In the learning centre, children only play, they do not learn at all."

Some teachers used the expression "magjup" or "rae" during the interviews and they believe that it is not offensive to call Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students by those names. Teachers in Prizren also believe that in their school, there has never been any division or a barrier between students, or as one teacher stated: "Children do not know who is Roma or Ashkali or Albanian, we do not talk about their origins."

Although schools have participated in various educational projects, there are still gaps in valuing students equally and in terms of increasing participation of students from vulnerable communities. Usually, teachers who have been part of a project do not share information gathered within projects to their colleagues. Also, some teachers do not know the basic concepts of inclusion in education and are not unaware that change is needed in their school. Teachers do not see a difference between students as a resource in need of support in their learning; instead, they see students from vulnerable/marginalised communities as a problem that needs to be overcome.

5.2.3 School principals

The principals of all schools have been very open to discussion. They have emphasised that projects are always welcome and donors have done a great job with their interventions. All principals have pointed out that donor interventions through projects have affected the number of drop-outs and enrolment in the first grade: at present, 100% of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities begin schooling. According to school principals, the most prominent donors are GIZ, the CoE, USAUD, KFOS, KEC, BSFK and BCS. When asked about the motivation to apply for these types of projects, a school principal in Plemetin emphasised that the benefits are multiple, children return to school, teachers benefit from training, teachers' approach toward children is improved. In Plemetin and Brekoc, schools have also benefited from technological equipment. The principal in Plemetin stated: "Equipping the school with modern tools has motivated teachers who are encouraged to be more active."

Regarding the question as to how the school finds donors, all principals confirmed that they are contacted by different organisations and they do not need to find donors themselves. Only the principal from Plemetin has pointed out that there are cases when he follows the websites of the KEC and the MES where he finds information about opportunities for the projects. When asked which donor was most suitable for his school, he stated that the most appropriate was the CoE with a project "Supporting Access to Education" 2015, when they had a chance to be part of study visits, training, and they got various technological tools. On the other hand, the same director thinks that the World Bank has a lot of procedures and due to the many challenges, it is likely that the project may be discontinued. Other principals are pleased with each project and donor. Regarding the question about the continuation of project activities after their completion, principals of Prizren and Brekoc have stated that mainly the activities end with the projects, or with the departure of their staff that had been involved in projects to other schools. This suggests that the staff involved

in the projects do not always share ideas with others and schools do not have any strategy on how to organise the whole school approach when they participate in the project.

In selecting staff to participate in projects, all directors have emphasised that usually professional councils select participants in projects, but there are cases when they have to intervene and determine who is to take part, depending on the importance of the project. They have also pointed out that projects have a great impact on teachers who are changing in terms of adopting different approaches to students. This includes their ability to give to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children more space and respect. Also, they all believe that the relations between students from different communities are very complex. The principal from Prizren has pointed out that there is a great need to work with parents, to help them to be involved in their children's education.

5.2.4 Representatives of Municipalities

All municipality officials are grateful to the donors for the implemented projects supporting Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, in particular for projects related to education. Depending on the municipality, the approach to donors varies significantly. The most well-organised municipality in this respect is Gjakova/Đakovica, which also has an advisory group responsible for action planning for campaigns, activities as well as for co-ordination of work by various organisations. This plan is reviewed annually, in April. Such practice has been initiated by the Terre Des Hommes, and it has been applied for four years. In Gjakova/Đakovica, the municipality seems to closely follow project activities and they have improved co-ordination. The communities officer highly appreciates the work of the organisations: "The organisations have assisted much more than the institutions. Institutions are often dependent on organisations, such as establishing learning centres and assisting children, and thus they are irreplaceable for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children."

According to a communities officer, a completely different approach is used by the municipality of Prizren, where donors are mainly in contact with the Nevo Koncepti NGO, which is focused on education of communities, acting also in Suhareka/Suva Reka and Gjakova/Đakovica. In recent years, the main focus has been on students returning from Western countries. The main donors are GIZ, USAID, KFOS. In Prizren, the most emphasised organisation is Swiss Caritas, which in co-operation with the VoRAE and MES grants scholarships to secondary school students. Also, the REF is considered a donor that supports communities.

In the municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, the director of the MED has emphasised that current projects have a completely different approach. In the beginning, they supported literacy, encouraging the education of girls, while nowadays, they are more focused on quality education and inclusion. In the municipality with the highest number of persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, many donors, such as USAID and GIZ, have been involved, but organisations such as the Balkan Sunflowers and The Ideas Partnership has been active for a number of years and continue to be so.

A challenge noted by an official is the short duration of projects in Gjakova/Đakovica. She has emphasised that "projects start and end, and institutions do not take responsibility to continue what the organisations had started and built". This is apparent in all the municipalities included in this survey. Municipalities do not undertake to follow-up and monitor the activities after the

projects end, therefore many initiatives lose track of the progress after a while. Even in Obiliq/Obilić, the director of MED has emphasised that after the end of a project, the continuation of activities is rarely ensured and the projects are not followed-up.

When asked how they find donors, all officials have said that donors are the ones that contact the municipality. All officials highlighted that donors have their own goals and when they are contacted, projects are already drafted, so the municipality is contacted for the implementation phase of the projects. Details are then defined in a memorandum of understanding. In Obiliq/Obilić and Gjakova/Đakovica, donors mainly contact the mayor and then the issue of communities is addressed through the MED or the office for communities. The municipality of Gjakova/Đakovica has a project with GIZ for which the municipality had initiated the application for the project and they had identified the needs with an action plan and had invited organisations to participate in implementing the plan.

When asked whether these projects meet the needs arising from the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021, Gjakova/Đakovica considers that the Action Plan adopted by the municipal assembly, applicable for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, helps organisations and donors in carrying out their activities. All officials think that not all donors base their projects on the Strategy. Regarding donors and considering the challenges that projects face, an official from Gjakova/Đakovica has stated that there are organisations that are very serious but there are some that are not very committed to work thus not achieving the planned goals. Officials of other municipalities stated that they are satisfied with donors. Gjakova/Đakovica is the only municipality with a strategy to follow-up the impact of projects on schools: "We review annual reports and understand what is done by which organisation and then make a work plan for the following year. If any plan could not be achieved, we try to continue it. This is an initiative of the office and not what the municipality requires. It keeps us updated and helps us follow-up the work of organisations."

When asked what else their schools need to support the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, all municipal officials have stressed that work with parents should continue, but also that they need educational tools, school bags, clothing, transportation, and IT equipment and tools. An official from Gjakova/Đakovica thought that well-functioning of learning centres or after school activity for supporting students with homework should be available in each school.

In comparison to other municipalities, the official from Gjakova/Đakovica, when asked whether Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students are being monitored during the pandemic, which poses a set of disproportional burdens on vulnerable communities, she replied that "children who were inactive at school have continued to be inactive in online classes, too. All others were active." Other municipalities mainly rely on the support of learning centres, from which they also request reports on students' attendance during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, none of the municipalities has a strategy to support facilitators and tutors who depend on donors. This is very problematic and there is no solution envisaged. An official from Prizren emphasised that learning centres require assistance from the municipality because they do not have the means, but the municipality cannot assist much or provide staff, which often results in staff leaving the centre.

Municipalities are very grateful to the donors. Municipalities are not involved in the development of projects, although the needs are very great. As they are not part of project development processes, they consequently do not take responsibility to monitor the impact of projects after they end. Municipalities are very interested in the well-functioning of learning centres, but they do not have special budget lines for that.

5.2.5 Representatives of learning centres

In four municipalities, the learning centre representatives were contacted virtually. At the time of the interview, none of the four learning centres was open for activities with children due to the Covid-19 pandemic. When asked which projects and donors managed to fulfill the needs of the learning centres, in different municipalities different donors have been present. In Brekoc, a representative of the learning centre said that all projects had different focuses. In general, project funds were not big, thus being able to manage them easily. EUSIMRAE as a bigger project, in two phases, was managed by the KEC and it was easy for us to carry out activities with children. Also with KFOS, we continue having different projects which also include parents; while lately, together with the UNICEF, we support pre-school children. In the Gjakova/Đakovica region, we have established four other learning centres with GIZ, while the KRAEEYN-KEC project continues to directly support tutors and facilitators in their work. In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, many donors supported literacy, such as Diaconia from Austria, British Embassy and the Norwegian Embassy which funded the pre-school programme.

The representative of the learning centre in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje believes that "results of children who attend the centre's programme prove to be better in the first grade compared to other children. This is because primary schools in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje do not have pre-school programmes". Also, GIZ has projects supporting the centre.

It is estimated that in Prizren, "projects have greatly fulfilled the needs of communities, especially in education". Today, "90% of children attend primary education, and this has been greatly supported by EUSIMRAE project". In 2003, the upper secondary education level had only 12 students, but there are about 200 students at present. The number of girls in secondary schools has been increased to just over 50%. In 2004, there was only one student, whereas today, 60 students are active, from whom 60% are female students. Various projects have assisted these developments: the KFOS supported homework, Save the Children preschool education, Swiss Cartas educators, etc. All of these resulted in reduced school drop-outs. A lot of work has been done in media, too, i.e. on radio and TV, and there are shows in the Romani language.

When asked whether there are projects that have not managed meeting community needs, the representative of the learning centre in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje thinks that "donors meet their goals, but the needs are never met, because there are many". In Prizren and Plemetin, the projects are considered short and their impact on the ground is also short-term. Regarding how the learning centres manage getting involved in projects, the Brekoc learning centre has been initially activated by the KFOS, and later by other donors. But in general, donors have approached the beneficiaries. The representatives of learning centres in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Prizren and Plemetin think that good results and needs on the ground have brought donors. A representative in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje has emphasised that unfortunately there are no calls for projects dedicated to learning centres so they depend on donors' interests. The municipality does not take the initiative to apply for projects that would support learning centres.

Regarding the question as to whether it is easy to work with projects and how they are managed, in Plemetin, they think that that this is a routine, however, when the donors and officials change, everything starts from the beginning. In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, the representative of the learning centre considers an issue the fact that donors now prefer to finance a big project implemented by one organization whereas small organisations are then invited to participate but with smaller benefits. They have also emphasized that "when working with communities, many components need to be covered (schools, children, mediators, parents) and often these are not planned in projects."

Regarding the relationship with the Ministry of education and the municipality, and whether they are supported by these institutions, officials from Brekoc have explained that they had been supported by the MEST during 2003–2007 in the education of older students and persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who completed two academic years in one year. The municipality, on the other hand, provided the building for the purpose of the learning centre. No other concrete support was provided. The learning centre in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje has not been supported by institutions. The only support mentioned were two symbolic grants of up to 2,000 EUR. In Prizren, however, they hesitate to co-operate with the municipality due to close political interests. While the best co-operation with the MES was with regards to optional education such as classes of Romani language, but this has been stopped. All representatives of the learning centres are convinced that the community considers the learning centres as very important for education of children. The school also considers them very important for liaison, however on the municipality side, although they are aware of their importance, no initiative was taken to support them.

When asked whether inclusion in schools is as a result of projects, the representative of the learning centre in Brekoc has affirmed and provided the example of the school principal who changed attitude a lot as a result of the projects and the learning centres' commitment. Also, he thinks that teachers' approach to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children has changed and they have learnt how to accept these children. The representative of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje also thinks that the projects have influenced schools to be more inclusive, but not yet sufficiently: "Policies have been changed, but there are cases that demonstrate that the mentality of teachers and children has not changed at all." In Plemetin, the situation is a little different. They emphasize that the school is much more open, not only to children but to the centre, too. Teachers visit the centre time after time and participate in the centre's activities.

The current challenge in Brekoc is a social one, especially work with parents. Often children who do not attend school work in streets. Parents are more committed, compared to the previous period, however, a lot of work still has to be done. "Currently, our centre's main challenge is that we do not have many projects. Now we have only one preschool programme with the UNICEF. Through the projects, we see that many children are neither registered nor vaccinated. This is an indicator that should be addressed through projects." In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, sustainability has been identified as the main problem:

> We have programmes for children but there is still a need for more programmes. Children who left the country a few years ago are now back but their results are behind those of other children, therefore we should find ways to support them. We have a problem with the functioning of the centre. There are cases when we pay the workers part-time and therefore there are cases when they leave. We never manage to cover 100% of the expenses.

The representative has also stated that for as long as there are no specific funds for learning centres, there will be no co-ordination, a lack of networking of learning centres and a lack of co-ordination at the central level.

In Prizren, the learning centre's representative also shares the need to ensure sustainability, therefore a membership fee is considered an option. Prejudices are also considered a challenge in need of specific attention: "Although sometimes you try and work hard, prejudices still exist, and schools tell us 'your classroom' when referring to learning centres." The representative also considers that sometimes affirmative measures are not the best solution. For example, food provided by a donor project does not continue with another donor and this presents a problem for the affected children and parents. Indeed, no centre has a mechanism to continue project activities. They think that to ensure this, registration of the learning centres would help because it would oblige the institutions to be more responsible.

All representatives highlight four issues when asked about support that schools need to provide to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities: 1) support with school materials that is continuous; 2) schools should work and have more frequent meetings with a small number of parents; 3) schools should co-operate more with the learning centres to establish joint programmes and extracurricular activities; 4) schools should co-operate more with PRTAN. Moreover, the representative in Prizren has emphasised that indirect discrimination is still present in schools and therefore it is an issue that also needs to be addressed.

Although the learning centres do an excellent job for children belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, they still dependent on donors. The main challenge for them is to work with parents and co-operate with schools, which are also two aspects that crucially affect student inclusion in education. They also estimate that a lot of work should be done with schools in order for teachers to become open and treat Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children equally. Prejudice and discrimination are still present in schools and thus need to be properly addressed.

5.2.6 Ministry of Education and Science official for communities

A representative of the MES who is the official for communities has stated that donors mainly have their agenda and plans, and when they come in contact with the ministry, they have already defined where and how they will act. The main donors she has mentioned are the ones that are supporting scholarships for students, such as the KOFS/KEC (EUSIMRAES project), VoRAE and REF, whereby the VoRAE is the organisation that she has the most contact with. GIZ has provided a great contribution to the drafting of the Administrative Instruction for Learning Centres and the CoE has mostly had projects that have been implemented directly in schools, and now with the new project INCLUDE the learning centres will be supported as well. The REF is also a very active donor that has several projects/programmes with several organisations, and recently the OSCE and Roma Versitas Kosova have provided two interns at the MES.

As a notable result in support of these communities, the representative of the MES appreciates the application of the Administrative Instruction for learning centres, whereby 11 centres have applied for registration, of which nine are under review. When asked how they find donors and how projects are designed, the MES officer has answered that usually, donors express interest when contacting them, always according to the project plan they have. The donor determines

the needs and priorities in the projects, depending on their mission. There may be meetings with the minister (and the minister's cabinet), but not with officials to design the project. When asked if these projects meet the needs of the Strategy of Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities, she has been unable to make an assessment in the absence of any reports. The Office for Good Governance organises regular meetings with donors, but specific information on the projects is not shared Non-reporting is considered the biggest challenge with donors according to her. One example is the REF project that supports scholarships, but even after the school year has begun they are still not sure if they are going to be able to provide scholarships. She also points out that after the end of a project, there is no mechanism to monitor the continuation of their impact on schools.

The official believes that schools still need financial support and technological equipment to support Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children to ensure that they can attend distance learning caused by the pandemic. When asked if there is monitoring due to the pandemic, she stated: "It is done through the municipalities, we do not have much information. The organisations work directly in the field and assess the needs. The MES offers distance learning for all children including those belonging to minorities."

Regarding any plans or a strategy of the MES to support persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, especially as tutors and facilitators whose jobs are at risk, the official has emphasised that although the Administrative Instruction on learning centres requires staff to have completed higher education, the experience has now allowed to help facilitators and tutors not to jeopardise their workplace, while being supported by various organisations with salaries.

6. Conclusions and recommendations for the relevant authorities

Focus on **effective implementation** of the legislative and policy framework regarding quality inclusive education in general, and social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in particular. In this context, **systematically address the obstacles**, at central and local levels, to meeting the strategic goals in the field of inclusive education as they apply to persons belonging to vulnerable/marginalised communities such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Among the obstacles in need of urgent and systematic attention are the lack of political will, lack of human and financial resources and negative (stereotypical) attitudes and perceptions about the vulnerable communities and persons belonging to them and about the value of diversity as such.

Take **responsibility** for meeting the education strategic objectives within the adopted timeframes and **plan resources accordingly**. **Co-ordinate activities with donors** so that donor-supported projects contribute to specific goals as planned by the relevant authorities and other stakeholders (which will help in overcoming the problem of donor-driven activities and increase **local ownership** of projects and the results). Plan activities by taking into account their **sustainability** and **the existing needs**, which are to be determined by adequate procedures for needs assessment. Develop **effective monitoring mechanisms** for assessing the implementation and progress regarding the specific targets.

Develop **specific actions** that will support the authorities at the central and local (municipal) levels to implement national strategies applicable to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and to quality inclusive education, and/or actions that will address specific problems identified by international monitoring bodies, all in close co-ordination with the authorities so as to both **avoid any duplication** of work and to **increase the impact** of the actions by supporting **national and local ownership** of actions, including through a broad participatory process.

Overcome the largely one-dimensional understanding of vulnerabilities and develop programmes that will address the dual minority status of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and persons belonging to them, as well as of any other vulnerable/marginalised community. To this effect, when designing concrete measures, assess the beneficiaries by applying the concept of **intersectionality** thus taking into account, among others, gender, socio-economic status, but also linguistic competences and cultures. Importantly, as minority rights are part and parcel of human rights, promotion and protection of cultural identities of persons belonging to any community needs to be in accordance with human rights. Cultural practices that are discriminatory or not in line with universal human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot be promoted as minority rights.

Apply a **gender-sensitive approach** at all levels, including in policy making at the ministry of education, to support combatting the high(er) drop-out rates of girls belonging to these vulnerable communities and to effectively target the underrepresentation of girls in pre-school education, as well as in higher levels of education (upper secondary education). **Gender-mainstreaming** should be applied to all policies and actions to pay attention to gender-specific sensitivities in the

field of inclusive education as it applies to persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

When addressing the dual minority status by seeking ways to **help persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to preserve and develop their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious identities** avoid folklorisation and stereotypical, gender-biased presentation of their communities, their cultures and histories, and apply international (Council of Europe) standards and norms regarding minority rights and **promote competences for democratic culture** as these are essential for the development of a broader societal environment that will accept and value diversity and in which all individuals will be able to contribute to such goals as an essential prerequisite for an integrated diverse society that will be coherent but still diverse. Importantly, develop programmes and teaching and learning materials that will raise awareness about these communities as national minorities among the entire population and the perception of these communities as a valued, integral part of Kosovo society, rather than solely as socio-economic communities that will be (or need to be) integrated into the dominant society.

Ensure that the **principle of effective participation** is followed in all stages of project development, implementation and assessment. This applies particularly to persons belonging to vulnerable communities as well as to all other stakeholders. It applies also to individuals or offices responsible for quality education and for community relations (minority protection). In practical terms, effective participation will begin with the **assessment of needs of all stakeholders**. Stakeholders will be both the beneficiaries as well as the authorities responsible for ensuring quality, inclusive education for all, and other actors in the field of education. Many projects have been based on needs assessment of the beneficiaries ('vulnerable communities' and persons belonging to them). It is important that these are regularly assessed, but equally important are the needs of those who will help to address those beneficiaries' needs (the authorities at all levels, public administration, civil society organisations, and stakeholders in the educational system – teachers, school directors, school staff). It is on the basis of such needs assessment that further specific actions have to be developed.

Take a **multi-sectoral approach** and **multi-actor** to ensuring quality, inclusive education for all. Simultaneously include public administration dealing with education as well as public administration responsible for community relations, or women's issues, or children with special (educational) needs. Develop a system of effective participation and co-ordination among all relevant stakeholders. In this context, the **institutionalisation of learning centres** should be speeded up, and comprehensive support provided in all instances of school non-attendance or gaps in education outcomes between the general population and persons belonging to vulnerable/marginalised communities.

Develop and implement projects that adopt **the whole-school approach**, that enable the development of learning communities among teachers with a peer-to-peer transmission of teaching methods that are essential for inclusive education.

Develop activities and **programmes for strengthening expertise** within the ministries and municipalities to be able to better support schools to implement policies on inclusive education as well as diversity management with a view to achieving societal integration whilst valuing diversity. This has to apply to all levels of education, and particularly those where persons belonging to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities under-perform based on indicators of social inclusion.

Awareness-raising activities are needed at all levels and in different contexts (the broader society, public administration, teachers and school staff, parents, including those belonging to the Albanian community, as well as students), above all to help promote and support the understanding of diversity in the Kosovo society and of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and all other communities as a valued and integral part, and well as in terms of understanding and implementing quality inclusive education for all.

Work with **committed individuals who have good access to the communities** (that understand the situation, are able to communicate in a community language, are prepared to take the extra step to address the needs of every beneficiary whilst understanding the institutional and normative framework). Projects and the results will largely depend on such individuals, who need to be carefully selected, trained and adequately awarded for their work. A gender-based perspective needs to be taken into account, then evaluate how the motivation of these individuals can be supported within the system, and applicable to everyone.

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