



This project is funded by
the European Union

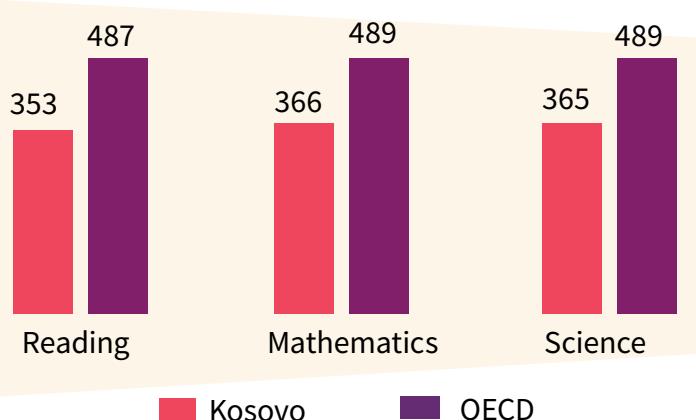
ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education

Policy Brief: Kosovo



During the last decades, Kosovo has undergone major educational reforms, ranging from the decentralization of the education system, to the development of competency-based curriculum framework, introduction of quality assurance mechanisms, teacher professional development and licensing system, expansion of the use of ICT etc. Nonetheless, despite such reforms, quality of education remains poor. This was once again confirmed by PISA 2018 results, which showed that Kosovo 15-year-old students performed amongst the lowest in all of the testing disciplines.

GRAPH 1. Kosovo PISA Results 2018



However, in terms of the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on student achievement, PISA 2018 results showed that the gap between low and high socio-economic groups at age of 15 is 40 score points in reading, which is equivalent to 1.3 years of schooling. The difference is considerably lower than the average difference observed between these groups across OECD countries (89 score points).¹

Enrolment in compulsory education is very satisfactory, however, challenge remains very low levels of participation of children in pre-school level, where **only 6.2%** of children aged 0-5 attend early childhood education and care, which is considerably lower than the OECD average (over 87%) or the Education and Training 2020 targets (95%).²

6.2 %

of children aged 0-5 attend early childhood education and care

¹ Kosovo Country Note – PISA 2018 Results. OECD, 2019. http://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_KSV.pdf

² Kosovo 2020 Report. European Commission. Brussels, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/kosovo_report_2020.pdf



LEVEL OF EDUCATION	GROSS ENROLMENT RATE (%)
Pre-school and Pre-primary education (age 3 to 6)	38 % ³
Pre-primary education (age 5 to 6)	93,1 % ⁴
Primary Education (grade 1 to 5)	100 % ⁴
Lower Secondary Education (grade 6 to 9)	90,4 % ⁴
Primary and Lower Secondary Education (grade 1 to 9)	96 % ⁴
Upper Secondary Education (grade 10 to 12)	82,5 % ⁴



TABLE 1.
GROSS ENROLMENT RATES IN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN KOSOVO

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL STUDENTS
Pre-school/Pre-primary	518	395	913	3,5 %
Primary/Lower Secondary	6,495	6,209	12,704	5,5 %
Upper Secondary	1,265	1,004	2,269	3 %
Total	8,278	7,608	15,886	4 %

TABLE 2.⁴
STUDENTS WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

³ Annual Statistical Report with Education Indicators 2019/20. Ministry of Education and Science, December 2020. <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2020/12/raporti-vjetor-statistikor-me-tregues-arsimore-2019-20.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.



The most vulnerable groups to exclusion in education are children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and children with special educational needs. Nonetheless, due to the lack of referential data on population, it is impossible to assess the gross enrolment rates of these groups in the education system.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	ROMA	ASHKALI	EGYPTIAN	TOTAL
Pre-school and Pre-primary education (age 3 to 6)	9	/	7	16
Pre-primary education (age 5 to 6)	107	186	60	353
Primary and Lower Secondary Education (grade 1 to 9)	1,085	3,676	1,047	5,808
Upper Secondary Education (grade 10 to 12)	182	259	137	578
Total	1,383	4121	1251	6,755

TABLE 3.⁵
PARTICIPATION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES IN EDUCATION

NUMBER OF SEN STUDENTS	TOTAL
Students with special needs in Resource Centers	349
Students with special needs in attached classes	3,903
Total number of SEN students enrolled in pre-university education	4,252

TABLE 4.⁵
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KOSOVO

On the other hand, data on inclusion of children with special needs in the education system remain to be wanting. The accuracy of the existing data provided in the table below is complex due to the fact that not all students with special needs that are enrolled in regular classes have been assessed by professional assessment teams in municipalities.

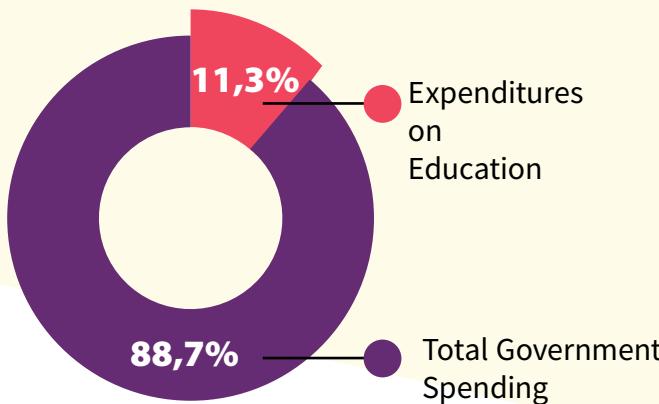
Equity

⁵ Education Statistics in Kosovo 2019/2020. Kosovo Agency of Statistics, June 2020. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/education-statistics-in-kosovo-20192020>

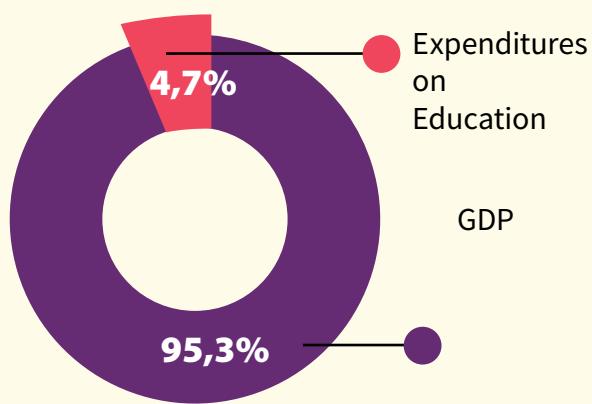


Kosovo continues to spend less on education as compared to other regional and EU countries. The level of public spending on education in 2020 was 4.7% as a percentage of GDP or 11.3% of total Government spending. Even though the amount as a percentage of GDP is comparable to EU countries, per pupil capita spending is considerably lower, which derives as a result of a low level of GDP base and government budget, and the significant large number of pupils per total population as compared to other EU countries.

EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION AS A % TOTAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING



EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION AS A % OF GDP 2020



In addition, two categories where the expenditures are focused are mainly in wages and salaries and capital expenditures and less on resources that would directly improve learning and teaching.

MAIN REFORMS AND CHALLENGES IN ENSURING EDUCATION EQUITY

The right to education and development of a child's full potential is one of the fundamental rights and as such is guaranteed by the Constitution of Kosovo. To this end, Kosovo's legal framework envisions and supports a comprehensive approach, which combats dropouts from compulsory education and ensures equal access to education regardless of ethnicity, gender, race, economic status etc.

However, despite the fact that such measures are rooted in the constitutional and legal framework, there is a large gap between policy development and policy implementation.

Policy Measures to Reduce Inequities in Education

- Equal access and free of charge compulsory education;
- Free textbooks for all students in compulsory education;
- Free transport for children living within four (4) km distance from the school;
- Free of charge pre-school education for children from vulnerable categories (social assistance, children with special education needs, children without parental care);
- Establishment of Learning Centers to support children from vulnerable groups in education;
- Establishment of mechanisms to prevent drop-out and non-enrolment (PRTAN), and in promoting diversity through an integrated education system;
- Scholarships for students from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities enrolled in upper secondary education.



Several challenges that hinder the implementation of policies are as following:

- **Lack of accountability and monitoring mechanisms** to ensure proper implementation of policies at national, local and school level;
- **Low budget for education** and inefficient allocation of resources;
- **Lack of professional services** (psychological and pedagogue) at school level in supporting students' ability to learn, succeed academically, socially and emotionally;
- **Dysfunction of school governing bodies**, namely steering council, parents' and students' councils;
- **Lack of teacher professional development programs** to acknowledge student identities and different ways they learn best.

In light of the foregoing considerations, **other recommendations** on future directions of change with the aim of improving education equity are listed as following:

- Revision of Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme to Target Poverty;
- Revision of Pre-university Education Funding Formula to meet School Needs;
- Organization of supplementary classes and other mentorship programs at school level to improve student learning and school involvement;
- Provision of professional services at school level to address the needs of students from low SES and students with special educational needs, by providing ongoing support and making sure that they can cope with the learning process;
- Increase of parental engagement in schools;
- Provision of teacher professional development (TPD) programs based on teachers' needs;
- Implementation of Administrative Instruction No. 19/2018 on Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centers;
- Strengthening of accountability, monitoring and other evaluation and supportive approaches that aim to improve implementation and effectiveness of the reforms in education sector.

PROMISING POLICY EXAMPLE: SCHOOL INTERVENTION – NEEDS-BASED BUDGETING OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the hardest the poorest and the most vulnerable communities. In the same vein, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing education disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged students hence highlighting the role of schools in providing further support and reducing disparities in achievement.

Among other factors (e.g. poverty, segregation, discrimination), systemic inequities in education also persist from the lack of and unequal funding in schools. In this regard, the current funding formula of the education system in Kosovo does not take into account school specific needs.

Given the above, the **Ministry of Education and Science (MES)** shall **review the financing formula to meet school needs** which shall in particularly take into account higher financing needs for those schools that are attended by communities, children with special educational needs, children from low SES etc. The goal shall be to align the budget with school infrastructural situation to ensure equal educational opportunities for children from above-mentioned vulnerable groups. In addition, low spending on education is considered to be an obstacle which negatively impact the quality of the education system in Kosovo. Therefore, it is critically important that the government increases per capita investment on education to include non-salary expenditures, such as: libraries, outdoor environment, school labs for practical learning, computers and organization of other extracurricular activities.

Additionally, **further fiscal decentralization and needs-based budgeting**, would allow schools to plan and undertake different measures to reduce disparities in education. This might include but not be limited to: organization of supplementary classes, organization of school projects and other extracurricular activities, development of school policies, teacher professional development, involvement of parents and community in general etc.