

“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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FIRST MEETING OF THE POLICY TEAM IN KOSOVO*¹ *-REPORT-*

Prepared by
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Focal Point for
Kosovo*

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^{1*} This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Introduction

Date and Place of the Meeting: 28 February 2014, Lesna Center, Prishtina

Participants: 7 participants from the PolicyNet group (Mr. Defrim Rifaj and Igballe Cakaj were not present; Eljona Elmazi and Delina Cici from the CoE project and Blerim Saqipi as the focal point.

Moderator: Blerim Saqipi, Focal point

Preparation of the Meeting

The agenda for the meeting was proposed by the CoE project and was discussed with the local focal point before being finalized. The invitations were sent by email directly by CoE staff in Tirana while local focal point has made additional contacts to confirm the attendance. The logistical arrangements were coordinated by the CoE staff in Tirana. The necessary arrangements were made that the meeting was chaired by Mrs. Drita Kadriu, the Steering Board member of the project from Kosovo*.

Presentation of the Project and Policy Component

The presentation of the project was made by Eljona Elmazi by describing the main idea behind the project, the partnership as well as the detailed activities to date and the projected activities for the upcoming months of the project implementation. The presentation was followed by a brief questions and answer session to clarify the details of the project implementation.

Following the presentation of the project, Kosovo* focal point presented the scope of work and rationale behind the PolicyNet as well as the role of the local focal point. In addition, a summary of the main outcomes of the expert meeting in Belgrade in October 2013 and the regional conference in Tirana in November 2013 were presented as well.

A small question and answer session was allowed after this presented on the clarification issues around the role of the PolicyNet. This was followed a more substantial session on discussions around the Kosovo* context, priorities and challenges in inclusive education.

Outputs of the Meeting

(2-3 issues and challenges regarding of inclusive education of country by levels and types of institutions, cross-cutting issues and challenges)

The discussions were held around the challenges and priorities of the Kosovo* inclusive education context and the following were agreed by the Team as the key points and priorities for the Kosovo* education context:

1. Promoting the inclusive education concept to lead to advanced understanding, as well as sharing of it by key players and practitioners;
2. Gaps in the legislation and the implementation of specific parts of the legislation;
3. Inter-sectorial cooperation including the coordination and coherence of the activities between the Ministry – Municipal Education Authorities – School level;
4. Teacher training – preparing pre-service teachers and supporting and developing the in-service ones.

In addition a number of issues were raised and discussed by the group:

- The sustainability of the project results may be further empowered by addressing the pre-school level education through project activities;
- Ensuring the links between the practice level and policy level; Kosovo* has had substantial external support and legislation developed is in a good shape but requires practice level support;
- The support to teachers should be provided by ensuring that every teacher training program in future should have a compulsory module on inclusive education. School inspection experiences speak about the practices of teachers showing insensitive to working with students from different background and level.
- School management training programs should also have an inclusive education module as well.
- There has been a number of previous projects in inclusive education so it will be a challenge how to build on those projects;
- The new Kosovo* Curriculum of 2011 provides for flexibility at school based curricula and this is a good momentum, however it is a critical point whether teachers are able to make use of the autonomy in the right way.
- VET sector is faced with a specific serious challenge in the lack of textbooks; VET teachers lack pedagogical background training though teachers have had some methodological in-service development, in last years through different projects. The difficulty in VET sector is in ensuring the practical side of the training despite the strategic plans in place for that to happen.

Cross- beneficiary Teams:

Level/type of institutions	Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team
Primary education	1. Drita Kadriu 2. Artan Bllaca 3. Lulavere Behluli
General secondary education	1. Besa Zagragja 2. Igballe Cakaj 3. Refik Azemi
Secondary education –VET	1. Beke Mulliqi 2. Avdurrahman Simnica 3. Defrim Rifaj

Note: Focal Point will participate in activities of all three teams.

Conclusions of the Meeting

The participants of the meeting were very satisfied for the opportunity to meet as a team, the opportunity to know more about the project overall, the opportunity to understand their role as a PolicyTeam member.

Lessons learned:

Future PolicyNet meetings should be organized related to more substantial elements following this introductory meeting. The studying of relevant legislation and practices should be made integral part of the agenda for future meetings.

The PolicyNet meetings should also be linked with other activities in the project such as activities of school net and teacher net so that the good practices from the ground will inform the work of the PolicyNet.