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STUDY

Adult Learning and Education in Kosovo



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Dear Readers,

DVV International and DIE Bonn started planning and implementing a complex regional project in 2019 which aimed to analyse the state-of-the-art of adult learning and education (ALE), and the participation of adults in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning). The qualitative study was conducted in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo, and the adult education survey was implemented in Armenia, Georgia and Kosovo.

The purpose of the complex project was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the ALE sector, and to provide data that would be used when creating policy and legislation in the ALE, vocational education and training, employment, lifelong learning sectors, and in other relevant areas.

The qualitative and the quantitative studies, as well as the seven country reports, were conducted and prepared from the second half of 2019 until June 2021. The quantitative study was commenced first, and the implementation of the qualitative studies started when the initial results began to arrive.

Monitoring progress on the basis of data-based surveys plays an important role in European strategy development on lifelong learning. The studies and AE surveys presented constitute a substantial stock-taking effort for the countries represented here (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo), aiming to provide

a comprehensive picture of adult learning, as well as of its prerequisites and challenges.

Closely following the Adult Education Survey (AES) – which is a well-established international survey on adult learning –, national specificities and information needs were identified in the coordination of the cooperation partners and through the involvement of national experts. The standard questionnaire was thus adapted to national circumstances and supplemented with additional questions on learning attitudes and motivation, as well as on educational and support needs in the face of massive changes on the labour market. Questions concerning access to education and (digital) learning during the pandemic were added at short notice in response to the Covid pandemic. The survey results answer a number of questions, and provide information about the extent and quality of adult learning. How are learning and attitudes towards learning distributed in the adult population? Which groups are involved, and to what extent? Are particular forms of learning used by different groups? What role do socio-economic conditions play, e.g. the employment context or residence in rural or urban areas?

The qualitative country reports provide additional in-depth information on the specific national context of the education system, and on the location and promotion of ALE, gathered in qualitative studies by a team of international and national experts according to a standard outline. Together,

er, the two reports form an excellent basis for the participating countries to assess the current situation against the background of education policy objectives and to develop political strategies for improving the ALE system.

Since the studies were carried out in four countries according to a uniform scheme, the comparison offers additional possibilities for classifying the respective national situation. As such comprehensive analyses and studies and surveys in the ALE sector were conducted for the first time in all the countries involved in this project, we are confident that a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations in these four countries and beyond will use the data and knowledge obtained.

We hope that these publications will provide a basis for discussions on further policy development, and thus contribute to the establishment of an evidence-based design of the ALE systems in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of the project working group, the authors, and the research institutes, for their professional and fruitful cooperation, and for the excellent results and achievements, which were largely finalised in a difficult period during the coronavirus pandemic.

We hope that you enjoy reading the reports!



Ramadan Alija

Country Director
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Preface

The qualitative study on adult learning and education conducted in Kosovo is a document that analyses qualitative aspects of the adult education system in the country for the first time. This qualitative study on ALE in Kosovo targets improved conditions in ALE policy, legislation and financing, as well as professionalism in practice and theory for ALE, and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations and other ALE providers in Kosovo.

Kosovo faces a number of challenges when it comes to achieving appropriate education for all. Access to knowledge and learning throughout people's lives is one of the major and most serious challenges and conditions in fighting poverty in Kosovo, in reducing the unemployment rate, and in enabling social inclusion. Poverty, social exclusion, and the lack of opportunities in life, as well as in education and employment, pose a threat to the stability of Kosovar society. There is still no real understanding in Kosovo that skills and knowledge supported through adult education programmes are very important for the economic growth and social development that is needed in Kosovo. Adult education ensures people's access to knowledge and learning throughout their lives, and thus creates possibilities to enjoy cultural, social and economic development.

Based on the analysis of the situation, this qualitative study identifies several broad recommendations for the medium- and longer-term development of adult education in Kosovo. The greatest relevance will attach to agreeing on a shared

terminological and conceptual understanding of adult education in the framework of lifelong learning which could facilitate the development of a stand-alone system of adult education in the future. Moreover, the quality of ALE (vocational education, civic education, personal development courses, literacy programmes, rehabilitation programmes, etc.) should be strengthened by the governmental and local authorities through awareness-raising and financial incentives. The implementation of appropriate adult education for all in Kosovo will require government, other stakeholders and civil society in Kosovo to coordinate their efforts.

This qualitative study has been conducted in order to support our partners in Kosovo in the process of further developing ALE, and to create new learning opportunities, especially for disadvantaged population groups in Kosovo. It can be used as an excellent baseline for elaborating new strategic documents.

The current state strategic document entitled “Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017-2021)” will expire at the end of 2021, and it is necessary to revise priority fields and analyse the relevant institutions’ performance in achieving the objectives and indicators that have been set for the new Strategy (2022-2026), which must provide a path for extending the successes achieved, and open new fields and issues for adult education in Kosovo to become more closely aligned to the European frameworks and international recommendations for adult learning and education (ALE).

Abbreviations

AE	Adult Education	ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ALE	Adult Learning and Education	ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
AI	Administrative Instruction	LLL	Lifelong Learning
ALMM	Active Labour Market Measure	KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education	KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
CoC	Centre of Competence	MED	Municipal Education Departments
CONFINTEA	Conférence Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes	MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
CVETAE	Council of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education	NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
DIE	German Institute for Adult Education	NFE	Non-Formal Education
DVVI	Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (the German Adult Education Association)	NQA	National Qualifications Authority
ECVET	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training	NQF	National Qualifications Framework
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe	ODA	Official Development Assistance
ETF	European Training Foundation	OS	Occupational Standards
EU	European Union	PIAAC	The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
FED	Formal Education	RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PRL	Recognition of Prior Learning
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GRALE	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education	UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
		UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
		UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
		VET	Vocational Education and Training
		VNFIL	Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning
		VTC	Vocational Training Centre

Executive summary

This study was commissioned by DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVVI), and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of the adult education (AE) sector in Kosovo, and identifies recent developments and challenges. The study is part of a series of four country studies in the South Eastern and Caucasus region, where DVVI has been an active advocate for strong adult education systems since the early 2000s (since 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2002 in Georgia and Armenia, and since 2005 in Kosovo). Information on the various topics reflected in this country study – AE terminology, country profile, historical development, legal framework, financing, providers, programmes, participation, professionalisation, international context – was gathered online using desk-based research, which in turn, was verified in a second step and then compared with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of five national experts through online interviews. The analyses reveal remarkable progress and dynamic developments in the Kosovan AE sector, but also identify the gaps that should be addressed in the future.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad conception of adult education which considers all forms of

formal adult learning and education (ALE) after the initial education cycle (such as compensatory education and vocational education and training (VET)), and all intentional non-formal and informal forms of further and continuous training, as well as community, popular or liberal education, along with learning that aspires to promote professional or personal development.

The study shows that, in contrast to EU terminology, adult education in Kosovo is predominantly conceptualised as formal and non-formal education. The relevant legislation uses the term “Adult education and training”. In terms of the Law on Pre-University Education (2011), the Law for Vocational Education and Training (2013) and the Law on Adults Education and Training (2013), adult education and VET are governed by a sound legal infrastructure. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), are the lead political institutions for adult education. Strategic development objectives for AE and VET for 2017-2021 are defined in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan. There is no national strategy specifically dedicated to adult education. The close interrelation of AE with initial formal education conceals the international understanding that life-long learning and ALE should ideally go beyond

the economic or employment perspective, and also incorporate aspects of personal, civic and social learning.

According to the 2019 Kosovan state budget, public spending on education accounted for about 4.2% of the country's overall planned budget expenditure. There is no specific line for adult education in the state budget. The budget for VET (which includes funds for AE) has increased slightly in recent years. The KESP 2017-2021 allocates 3.8% (EUR 6.8 million) of the total education budget to the priority area "Vocational and Adult Education", most of which is spent on teachers' salaries, and less on special development projects which could be relevant for adult education, such as curriculum and teacher development.

Similar to the situation regarding legislation, governing structures and financing, adult education is not a standalone, but rather a cross-cutting component in the education system in Kosovo. There are four types of institutional setting all in all in which adult education is provided in Kosovo: formal secondary or post-secondary qualification at VET schools, vocational training, usually job-related or as a job creation measure, offered in public or private vocational training centres, compensatory education for early school-leav-

ers, and adult learning of various types, such as language training, ICT, handicrafts, arts, music or culture courses offered by private providers or NGOs. Continuous professional development at the workplace is not yet widely recognised.

Detailed analysis of participation and non-participation in adult education in the Kosovan context is difficult due to the lack of a comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation system. Only fragmented information exists with regard to people who participate in adult education programmes. The data is reduced to participation numbers and, occasionally, age groups. Precise information about adult learners, as well as their motivations and preferences, can be expected to ensue from the Adult Education Survey, which is currently being conducted with accompanying expertise and advice from DVVI and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). First results are estimated to be published in the spring of 2021.

Continuous professional development in vocational education has received increasing attention in the KESP 2017-2021, albeit there is room for improvement. The Faculty of Education at the University of Pristina currently offers a Master's degree for VET teachers entitled "Master of Ped-

agogy for Vocational Schools”. The special need for andragogical qualification among trainers or teachers of adults, as opposed to pedagogical qualification, has not been explicitly incorporated in the strategic framework for teachers’ professional development in Kosovo. Andragogy is not offered as a degree programme at any University. Despite their proficiency in the subjects that they teach, adult educators in Kosovo often lack the methodological and didactical knowledge and tools needed to work with adults. A common understanding of professional and ethical standards and societal orientation among adult educators in the formal and non-formal AE system, and an understanding that highlights the special requirements of the adult education profession, is missing so far.

Since Kosovo is not a member of the UN, it does not officially participate in the most important international ALE activities such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SGD 4, and UNESCO CONFINTEA conferences. Kosovan institutions are nevertheless committed to the SDGs, and strive to accomplish them as part of their European integration efforts. All in all, however, concrete plans and actions to implement the SDGs remain limited. Kosovo is still among the countries with the highest rate of in-

ternational monetary assistance per capita. The most important international donors for the development of adult education in Kosovo include German development cooperation (through DVVI and GIZ), the EU institutions, as well as the Luxembourg and Austrian development agencies.

Based on the situation analysis, the study identifies several broad recommendations for the medium- and longer-term development of adult education in Kosovo. The greatest relevance will attach to reaching an agreement on a shared terminological and conceptual understanding of adult education in the framework of lifelong learning which could facilitate the development of a stand-alone system of adult education in the future. Moreover, non-commercial and non-monetary qualities of adult education (civic education, literacy programmes, rehabilitation programmes, personal development courses) should be strengthened by the government and local authorities through awareness-raising and financial incentives. In order to progress towards a true learning society, national efforts should focus on increasing participation in ALE on the part of middle-aged and older age groups, as well as vulnerable groups, and using comprehensive monitoring and evaluation for evidence-based policy and strategy development.

Scope and research approach

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state of the adult learning and education sector in Kosovo, and to identify recent developments and challenges. The basis for the study structure is a comprehensive table of contents which serves as a guide and has been developed by DVVI and DIE. The study was conducted by a team of researchers who worked closely together and were selected by DVVI. The team was made up of two international consultants, Hannah Pfanzelt and Andreas Pfanzelt, and one national expert, Teuta Danuza.

The methodological approach that was adopted combined intensive desk research with semi-structured expert interviews. This enabled data and information to be gathered and added step by step throughout the research process. A first step involved a systematic review of existing data, central national and international documents and strategies, as well as literature provided by DVVI and the national consultants. The main source of information was secondary data, which was available at national, regional and international level, such as academic literature, analytical papers, policy briefs, evaluation documents, reports and publications from governments, international agencies and civil society organisations. Primary data from surveys or international databases was also considered wherever available.

The main goal in the first research phase was to collect relevant data along the predefined chapters and identify knowledge and data gaps. The resulting preliminary country portfolios set the stage for qualitative data collection in the next research step. Directed by the results of the desk research, semi-structured interviews

were conducted, face-to face and via video call, to externally verify, complement and supplement the preliminary research findings with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of national ALE experts. These supplementary interviews were a decisive source of information about the state of ALE where online information was scarce. Based on their expert knowledge and experience, a total of five ALE experts from macro, meso and micro levels in Kosovo were selected as interview partners (including one expert from the DVVI country office in Kosovo). For all the interviews, questionnaires with guiding questions were developed and shared with the interviewees in advance. These questions served as a broad thematic guideline during the interviews. The interviews lasted an average of one hour, and were held from mid-November 2020 to January 2021.

In a third phase of the research process, data and information gathered by means of desk research and interviews were clustered and put into written text. Comments from the DIE, DVVI and the national experts guided the preparation of the final study document.

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter I is dedicated to the concept of ALE, outlining use and interpretation in Kosovo, and its relation to UNESCO and European Union (EU) terminology. Chapter II describes the country structure with information about the current socio-demographic, economic, political and education situation. The historical development of ALE, outlined in Chapter III, helps to contextualise the subsequent classification of ALE in Kosovo. The latter results from a comprehensive analysis of the present national macro- (legal framework, policies, and financing), meso- (institutions, providers, professionalisation and programmes) and micro- (participation) level circumstances for ALE, reflected in Chapters IV-IX. International efforts (actors, projects and state commitments) regarding ALE in Kosovo are scrutinised in Chapter X. The results from all the preceding chapters help identify current challenges and potentials for the future in Chapter XI. The final Chapter XII summarises the assessments, and narrows them down to precise recommendations for the future development of ALE in Kosovo.

I. Concept and terminology – understanding and perception of the ALE concept

International and EU conceptualisations of ALE, lifelong learning and adult learners

Education is frequently associated with formal education only, that is education delivered by pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education institutions to children, adolescents and young adults. International human rights law has however repeatedly stressed that the main principle of education is universality, according the right to education to everybody, regardless of age.¹ The continuous aspect of education and learning, which is rooted in the principle of universality in education, is aggregated in the concept of “lifelong learning” (LLL). According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), one of the most important international actors in the field, lifelong learning is in essence “founded in the integration of learning and living covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, whether girls or boys, women or men), in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands”². The following paragraphs outline the relationship between the concepts lifelong learning and adult learning and education, introduce major international actors and initiatives to enhance access to and provision of LLL and ALE opportunities, summarise the aims of ALE, explain different modalities, and present the different learning contexts.

The relationship between lifelong learning and adult education and learning is established by the vision that, within the universe of lifelong learning, ALE covers all forms of education and learning that “aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work”³. Thus, ALE is a core component of LLL, and, when viewed in relation to the period in life covered, presumably the most substantial and long-term form of education. Accordingly, ALE, embedded within the broader concept of LLL, addresses the particular group adult learners.

In general, an adult learner can be considered a “person who systemically attends some form of adult education, belongs to a chronological period following adolescence, and voluntarily opts to partake of the learning and teaching process. Adulthood is characterised by different types of maturity, from biological to emotional and psycho-social, to professional, cultural and political”⁴. This implies that adult learners are an extremely heterogeneous group which is defined less by chronological age than by learning needs and motives. The “entry age” when a person formally takes on the status of an adult therefore also differs between countries, and is not necessarily linked to the age of legal maturity.

¹ Right to Education Initiative (2018). [Adult education and learning](#) website

² UNESCO UIL (2014). [Literacy & Basic Skills as a Foundation for Lifelong Learning](#)

³ UNESCO UIL (2015). [Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 6

⁴ Mavrak (2018). Legal Socialization program – Adult Education Manual. PH international: Sarajevo

On a global level, the UNESCO UIL promotes LLL, and specifically ALE, with various programmes and projects. It has installed amongst others the “Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning”⁵, and monitors recent developments in National Qualifications frameworks. International exchanges about advances made in ALE are facilitated in **International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA)**⁶, and progress in ALE around the world is visualised in regular Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE). GRALE 3 provides the following definition of adult education:

“ ALE encompasses all formal, non-formal and informal or incidental learning and continuing education (both general and vocational, and both theoretical and practical) undertaken by adults (however as this term may be defined in any one country). ALE participants will typically have concluded their initial education and training and then returned to some form of learning. But there will be young people and adults in all countries who did not have the opportunity to enrol in or complete their schooling by the requisite age, and who participate in ALE programmes, including those aiming to equip them with literacy and basic skills or as a ‘second chance’ to obtain recognised certificates.⁷ ”

The institutions of the European Union can be considered the most important drivers when it comes to addressing the supply of and access to ALE and the harmonisation of adult education provision on the European continent. EU policy on education is currently guided by the **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Framework**, and is based on the lifelong learning approach, which has been defined in the **EU’s Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning**. Similar to the UNESCO definition provided above, lifelong learning according to the EU

“ must cover learning from the pre-school age to that of post-retirement, including the entire spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, lifelong learning must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective⁸. ”

In its glossary on key terms used in European education and training policy, the EU defines adult education as “general or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training”, and thereby stresses the difference between initial education and training and continuing or general education for adults.⁹

⁵ UNESCO UIL [The Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning](#) website

⁶ UNESCO UIL [International Conferences on Adult Education \(CONFINTEA\)](#) website

⁷ UNESCO UIL (2016). [3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 29 and Schweighöfer, B. (2019). Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Bonn: DVV International

⁸ European Council (2002). [COUNCIL RESOLUTION of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning](#). Official Journal of the European Communities C 163/1

⁹ CEDEFOP (2014). [Terminology of European education and training policy \(2nd edition\)](#)

In order to support adult education within LLL in particular, the EU Council has adopted the **Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning**¹⁰. The Resolution highlights the need to significantly increase adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning, be it in order to acquire work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. A further initiative by the Council was the adoption of a **Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways**¹¹, which aims to enable all adults to reach minimum levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The European Commission has established a Working Group on adult education consisting of experts, representatives of social partners, and civil society. Moreover, it has set up the **Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)**, “a European, multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers”.

As indicated by the definitions and activities above, aims and objectives of ALE in the sphere of LLL are manifold and may target different levels of society. On the individual level, ALE aims to develop the capacities and capabilities of each individual to be a socially responsible, critical, self-reliant citizen who is able to shape the developments taking place in both the personal and professional environment. At societal level, a community of aware, active adults helps create what is known as a “learning society”, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, engage

and participate in society in order to achieve sustainable development and solidarity among people and communities. All in all, comprehensive ALE fosters sustainable, inclusive economic growth, which in turn is indispensable for reducing poverty, improving health and the well-being of all, and protecting the environment¹².

The above aims and objectives can be achieved with various types of ALE:

- **compensatory learning and qualification for basic skills** (such as literacy and numeracy), targeting individuals who may not have acquired them in their earlier initial education or training,
- **continuous education, training and professional development**, targeting adults who are interested in acquiring, improving or updating knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field related to their work environment,
- **community, popular or liberal education** (also citizenship education), which provides general education and learning opportunities for adults on topics that are of particular interest to them for their personal development, to engage with social issues and lead a decent life.

While basic education is commonly associated with formal learning, ALE refers to the entire range of formal education (FED), non-formal education (NFE) and informal learning (INF) activities. All forms of education are comprehensively defined in the International Standard Classification of Education

¹⁰ European Council (2011). [Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning](#). Official Journal of the European Union C372/1

¹¹ European Council (2016). [COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#)

¹² UNESCO UIL (2015)

(ISCED)¹³. A second document providing detailed definitions of learning activities is the “Classification of Learning Activities (CLA) Manual” issued by the European Statistics Office Eurostat¹⁴.

Formal education and training is delivered “institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bodies [constituting] the formal education system of a country”¹⁵. The recognition of the programme by the relevant education authorities or other institutions cooperating with national or sub-national education authorities is decisive for a learning activity to be formal. FED is usually associated with the continuous pathway of initial full-time education until an individual first enters the labour market. However, it may also include part-time vocational education, education for people with special needs and other types of adult education, and thus education “for all age groups with programme content and qualifications that are equivalent to those of initial education”. In any case, formal programmes must have a minimum duration of one semester of full-time studies (equivalent to 30 ECTS).

Non-formal education, similar to formal education, is “education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider”. However, the crucial characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an “addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning”. NFE programmes may lead to qualifications, but in general these are not recognised by education authorities as equivalent to formal qualifica-

tions. In some cases, formal qualifications may be obtained through specially-recognised NFE programmes. In contrast with formal education, NFE needs to follow a continuous pathway of education and learning, and therefore it is better able to address all age groups than are formal education programmes. NFE programmes are often short-term in nature, with lower intensity offered in workshops, courses, seminars, guided on-the-job training (organised by the employer with the aid of an instructor) and private lessons. This enables NFE to cater for all three types of ALE mentioned above: compensatory education in the shape of literacy education for young people and adults, or formal education-substitution for out-of-school children, professional skills development and programmes on life skills and social, political or cultural development¹⁶.

Finally, **informal learning** covers all those “forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate, but are not institutionalised”¹⁷. Unlike education in formal and non-formal settings, informal learning is much less structured and organised. It may take place in daily-life contexts within the family, at the workplace, in the local community, through voluntary work, in the digital domain, in museums or in libraries. The learning content is self-selected to meet personal learning goals or to keep up with societal development; the pace of learning is usually self-directed.

ALE as such, including all forms of education and learning for adults, profits from recent significant developments in the information and communications technology sector, especially with respect

¹³ UNESCO UIL (2012). [International Standard Classification of education ISCED 2011](#), p. 11f

¹⁴ Eurostat (2016). [Classification of learning activities \(CLA\) MANUAL 2016 edition](#)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ UNESCO UIL (2012), p. 11f

¹⁷ Ibid.

to access and inclusion. With Information and Communication Technology (ICT), formal and non-formal face-to-face settings of education and learning are opened up, and individualised learning is enabled through the use of mobile devices, digital social networking and online courses, anytime, anywhere.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad view on adult education which considers all organised forms of adult learning after the initial education cycle (such as retraining, further or continuous VET), and all intentional forms of non-vocational, community, popular or liberal education, and learning aiming to enhance professional or personal development.¹⁸The term adult learning and education (ALE) will be used below in order to express all the relevant dimensions of this sector.

Understanding and perception of the concept of ALE in Kosovo

The Kosovan Government outlines adult education as an integral part of the education system, and provides concrete definition criteria which are largely in line with the international conceptualisation. All citizens above the age of 15 are considered adult learners.

“ Adult education and training mean all public and private learning and training offered to adults and/or for young persons over 15 years of age who are eligible to attend the learning programmes designed for adults. Adult education and training is an integral part of the educational system in Kosovo. Adult education and training can be offered in public and private institutions.¹⁹ ”

The overall objective of adult education in Kosovo is to create an enabling environment for young people and adults which provides access to high-quality basic learning opportunities. This in turn increases the knowledge and competences of the adult population, and thereby promotes equitable access to high-quality training for disadvantaged individuals and minorities. A functioning adult education system in Kosovo is meant to contribute to the creation of a lifelong learning society, and to marked improvements in people's lives. “Priorities of the adult sub-sector focus on the following key areas: access and equity, quality enhancement, improved partnerships, capacity development, and strengthening of lifelong learning”²⁰.

Fundamental boundaries of adult education in Kosovo are laid down in Law No. 04/L-143 on Adult Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo²¹. Public and private education and training activities provided for adults are summarised under the term “Adult education and training”

¹⁸ Deviating from the definition of ALE provided in the 3rd GRALE, which also comprises incidental learning in ALE, this report focuses on intentional education and learning activities only, as defined in ISCED and the CLA.

¹⁹ State Portal of the Republic of Kosovo, [Adult Education](#)

²⁰ Likaj, R. et al. (2015). [Challenges and Achievements In Adult Education In Kosovo](#)

²¹ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2013b). [Law No. 04/L-143 on Adults Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo](#). Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/No. 2/21 January 2013, Pristina

(AET). Lifelong learning is briefly defined as “all learning activities undertaken throughout life for the development of knowledge, competencies and qualifications”. This conception is broadly in line with the international one, although it fails to stress the fact that learning should ideally go beyond the economic or employment perspective and include aspects of personal, civic and social learning.

The law differentiates between formal, non-formal and informal education. The definitions are however kept quite brief. In the absence of clear examples, the differentiation between the forms of education remains rather vague, an aspect which is likely to cause conceptual misunderstandings. Some terminological confusion arises from the interchangeable use of the words “education”, which in the proper sense stands for the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a structured, institutional, deliberate setting, involving a curriculum and interaction between teachers and learners, and “learning”, which potentially happens anywhere and anytime, is an individual or collective process, is largely self-determined, and does not necessarily require the existence of criteria or formal teachers.

In accordance with international conceptions, formal education is understood as education that is structured, institutionalised, intentional and leads to a formal qualification. Formal education may be delivered in structured environments such as “an educational or professional/training institution or at work”. The law does not explicitly relate formal education to initial education or basic compensatory education. In practice, however, formal adult education in Kosovo is equated with basic

or compensatory education that adults may make up for at levels 2, 3 and 4 of ISCED and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

There are two broad definitions provided for non-formal education which are not clearly conceptually distinct. On the one hand, the law describes non-formal education as learning “other than that provided through programmes covered by the definition of “formal education” provided in this Law”. On the other hand, it mentions non-formal education and training which is intentional and “refers to education which has clearly-defined activities, but which is not named in an explicit manner as education (referring to learning objectives, the time or support of learning)”. The definitions do not refer to the purpose and place of learning, or to the important characteristic of functioning additional education, alternatively or complementarily to formal education, to or the possibility of leading to a formal qualification²². Confusion about what non-formal adult education actually means in the Kosovan context should not therefore come as a surprise. What becomes clear in the subsequent chapters of this study, however, is that non-formal adult education is understood in practice as education delivered both in public vocational training centres (VTCs), managed by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), and through public and private training providers. State providers of NFE are recognised and accredited by the National Qualifications Authority (NQA), and their certificates are recognised according to the credit system in Kosovo and by some countries abroad. Even though such training activities can thus lead to formal qualifications in the NQF at levels 3 and 4, they are not considered to constitute forms

²² The definition of non-formal education provided in the Law on Vocational Education and Training is still differently formulated.

of formal education. NFE programmes are targeted at individuals who seek qualifications, re-qualification and professional development in order to gain access to the labour market, keep their jobs, or advance up the career ladder. NFE in Kosovo is thus closely linked to continuous education and training and professional development, while less attention is paid to citizenship education.

Informal learning is termed in the Law as “informal education”. The understanding essentially reflects the international conception, as it covers learning activities in the private or social spheres which are not structured or authorised.

As suggested above, adult education and training in Kosovo is strongly linked in practice to vocational education and training, and to the economic context. Support for career development is considered an “integrated part of lifelong learning”, and a guiding principle of VET²³. A central institution in the context of VET is the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. AVETAE is in charge of overseeing and developing VET, as well as training for adults (for a more thorough description of AVETAE’s role in adult education see Chapter IV). The close link between adult education and vocational education and training can be attributed to high unemployment rates during recent decades, and to the Government’s strategy of tackling this challenge by increasing adults’ general level of education.

The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017-2021 acknowledges the lack of an effective, open system for adult education:

“ One of the primary challenges in the education sector is building a sustainable system for the promotion of adult education and lifelong learning, and providing funding for this priority. Currently there is no funding scheme or funding formula for adult education. Functioning and capacity building of the [...] AVETAE, as well as its Council, is a challenge, and is a prerequisite for creating a more coherent approach to adult education. Moreover, there is no capacity among the staff to address the needs of adult education, and the priorities of this sub-sector are mainly implemented within vocational education and by non-governmental organisations and businesses.²⁴ ”

The same strategy underlines the importance of providing lifelong learning opportunities for citizens who have not completed their basic education, those who do not have any qualifications, or those who want to re-qualify for the purpose of employment or a career change.

This brief overview and the following chapters suggest that adult education in Kosovo is predominantly conceptualised as formal and non-formal education. It is realised through continuous education and professional development, as well as via compensatory learning and qualification for basic skills. The community, popular or liberal education component of adult education, and its potential positive contribution to economic and societal development, has not yet received significant attention in the policy debate.

²³ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2013a). [Law No. 04/L-138 for Vocational Education and Training](#). Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/No. 7/26 March 2013, Pristina

²⁴ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2016). [Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021](#)

II. Country profile

Kosovo is a small, landlocked country in South-Eastern Europe. It shares borders with Albania in the south-west, with Montenegro in the north-west, with Serbia in the north-east, and with Macedonia in the south, and covers a total land area of 10,905.25 km².

Kosovo's capital city is Pristina.

Socio-economic characteristics

According to the latest census data from 2011, Kosovo is home to 1.78 million inhabitants, largest share of whom (92.9%) is ethnically Albanian. Serbs, who live mainly in the north of Kosovo and in small enclaves in the south, make up 1.5% of the population, and thereby constitute the largest ethnic minority. Smaller ethnic minorities composed of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities account for 5.6% of the population. The population share of Kosovo Albanians has grown continuously in recent years, also due to the fact that many Kosovo Serbs have left the country for political reasons.

Kosovo has two official languages: Albanian and Serbian. To cater for the linguistic diversity in the country, minority languages such as Turkish, Bosnian and Romani have official language status at local level. Around 30% of the Kosovan population speak Serbian or English in addition to their native language; 14% speak German, 6% Turkish, 5.8% Bosnian, 3.4% Albanian, 3% French and 0.3% Romani²⁵.

By its Constitution, Kosovo is a secular state which promotes neutrality in religious matters as well as religious freedom. Its society is largely secular-

ised, as national identity is developed along the lines of ethnic origin rather than by religious affiliation. 96% of the population (mainly Kosovo Albanians) practice a moderate form of Islam; other religions practiced are Serbian Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism²⁶.

Kosovo's citizens are comparably young, with the average age being 30.2. 28% of the population are under 15, almost 50% are younger than 25, and only 7% are 65 and older. To compare, the average share of under 15-year-olds in the 27 countries of the European Union (EU-27) is 15%. 51.19% of the population is female. People reach an average age of 76.7 before they die. Women tend to live longer than men (79.4 years).

According to census data from 2011, 73% of the population aged 10 and older have received at least nine years of schooling (lower secondary school) (see Figure 1). A significant 6% of the population has had no formal education. In general, educational attainment is closely related to geographic location, ethnic origin and gender (see section 4. Education System). According to the UNICEF Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) survey in 2020, 2.8% of the population between 15 and 49 are estimated to be illiterate²⁷.

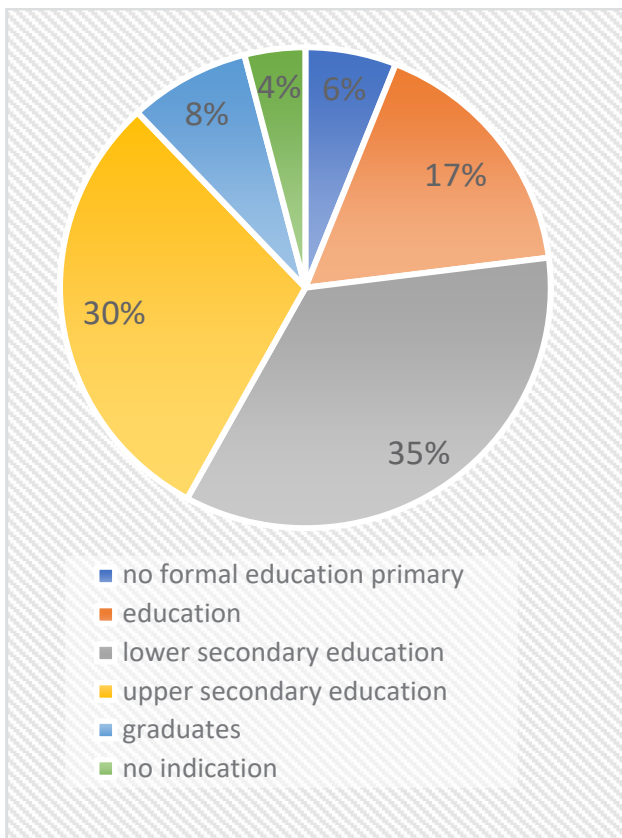
²⁵ [Language Commissioner of Kosovo](#) website

²⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018). [BTI Country Report - Kosovo](#). Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, p. 9

²⁷ Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF (2020). [2019-2020 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2019-2020 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities. Survey Findings Report](#). Prishtina: UNICEF

The highest literacy levels of 99.4% are reached among young people aged between 15 and 24. Literacy levels decrease among those with lower secondary school as their highest level of education. Furthermore, illiteracy is more prevalent among RAE communities. Only 63.8% of RAE women, and only 56% of RAE women, with primary or lower secondary education as their highest educational level know how to read and write.

FIGURE 1 Levels of education among the population aged 10 and older (in 2011)



Source: Own presentation based on data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2011).

Main indicators of education 2011.

A share of 61% of the Kosovan population lives in rural areas outside the capital Pristina. There is a trend towards migration from rural to urban and suburban areas. The state registers an overall population density of 163.42 inhabitants per km². Population numbers are growing (e.g. birth numbers are exceeding deaths), but at a decreasing rate. The statistics office registered a natural population increase of 7.7 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2018. Instead, net migration has varied widely throughout the past decade, with a negative tendency (i.e. more people emigrated from than immigrated to Kosovo).

Kosovo has a large diaspora of citizens living abroad. Particularly the violent conflict in the period between 1997 and 1999 caused many people to flee the country²⁸. The latest wave of outward migration was registered in 2014/15, when around 100,000 Kosovan citizens applied for asylum in the EU²⁹. Almost 35,000 citizens from Kosovo were issued with their first residence permit in countries of the EU in 2018, and 3,295 people applied for asylum in the EU for the first time³⁰. The number of Kosovan citizens currently living abroad is estimated to range between 700,000 and 800,000³¹. Kosovan migrants have settled mainly in Germany, followed by Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Slovenia³². The main reasons for international migration were and still are economic and social aspects. Due to high national unemployment, first-time migrants tend to be young and of working age, which results in a reduction in the supply of labour within the country.

²⁸ UNDP (2016). [Kosovo Human Development Report 2016](#)

²⁹ Quirezi, B. (2015). [The 2015 Kosovo migration Outflow to European Union: Who, Why and How](#). Prishtina: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

³⁰ Eurostat (2020e). [Statistics on migration, residence permits, citizenship and asylum for the enlargement countries 2020 edition](#)

³¹ Judah, T. (2019). [Kosovo's demographic destiny looks eerily familiar](#). Reporting Democracy Portal

³² Möllers, J. et al. (2017). [Study on rural migration and return migration in Kosovo](#), Discussion Paper, 166. Halle (Saale): Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), p. 14

The largest immigration flows were registered in 1999, 2000 and 2010, when Kosovo agreed on the large-scale repatriation of citizens with several countries. Most immigrants had Kosovan citizenship, and they mainly came from Germany, Serbia and Switzerland.

Kosovo is mainly a transit country for refugees. 320 individuals sought asylum in Kosovo in 2019, 33 of whom received a positive decision³³. A major challenge is protracted internal displacement. Although more than 28,000 displaced persons returned to or within Kosovo between 2000 and 2019³⁴, around 16,200 remain displaced within Kosovo (mainly Serbs, but also Albanians and RAE)³⁵.

At the time of the most recent population census in 2011, around 40% of all households had no computer or Internet access, more than two-thirds of them living in rural areas. Rapid development has taken place since then. 93% of all households had access to the Internet from home in 2019 (which is 3% more than the EU-27 average). 61% of all households had access to a personal computer³⁶.

With a score of 0.741, and ranking 85 (in 2016), Kosovo belongs to the less developed countries in the south-east European region, coming in

alongside Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina. The Gini coefficient stood at 29 in 2017 (the EU-27 average was 30 in 2019)³⁷. Its development is hampered by high poverty rates, poor performance of the private sector in job creation, as well as a pronounced link between unemployment and socio-economic exclusion³⁸.

Economic characteristics

Despite fairly constant positive economic growth figures, at 4% of GDP between 2015 and 2019 (even without major declines during the global financial crisis), Kosovo is categorised as a lower middle-income country, and one of the poorest countries in Europe³⁹.

Kosovo's GDP (at current prices) stood at EUR 6 billion in 2018, well below the average of the EU-27, with EUR 13.484 billion. Similarly, the value of per capita GDP, at EUR 3,740, is low in an international comparison, even though it more than doubled between 2008 and 2018 (increase of 110%)⁴⁰.

With an upward tendency since 2015, national debt figures amounted to EUR 1.2 million in 2019 (around 17% of GDP), a value which is comparably low in an EU-27 comparison (79.9% in 2018)^{41,42}. The low value can be attributed to the

³³ European Commission (2020). [Kosovo 2020 Report](#)

³⁴ UNHCR (2019). [Fact Sheet Kosovo](#)

³⁵ UNHCR (2018). [Profiling of Internally Displaced Persons in Kosovo](#)

³⁶ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019b). [Results of the Survey on Use of Information and Communication Technology 2019](#) and Eurostat (2020b). [Enlargement countries - information and communication technology statistics](#)

³⁷ The Gini coefficient measures income inequality in a society. A value of 0 means perfect equality (everyone has the same income), a value of 100 perfect inequality (all income is owned by one person).

³⁸ UNDP (2016)

³⁹ World Bank (2020). [Macro Poverty Outlook Kosovo October 2020](#)

⁴⁰ Eurostat (2020d). [Enlargement countries - recent economic developments](#)

⁴¹ Ministry of Finance and Transfers (2019). [Annual Bulletin 2019 on Public Debt](#)

⁴² Eurostat (2020a). [Enlargement countries - finance statistics](#)

state's short history of independent political decision-making, but it is concerning nonetheless. Owing to a weak export base, Kosovo has to deal with a considerably large trade deficit of 29.2% of GDP. At the same time, Kosovo can rely on stable foreign direct investment and a large amount of remittances, which represent around 15% of GDP. All in all, Kosovo's economy is currently driven by remittances, consumption and imports, rather than by investment, trade and exports. This tendency hampers economic diversification, and decreases employment incentives⁴³.

Services accounted for 58.5% of the gross value added in Kosovo in 2018. While industry accounted for 21.8%, construction as well as agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed 10.8% and 8.9%, respectively.

Insufficient investment, a lack of quality jobs, and mismatches between education levels and labour market needs, have resulted in sizable unemployment and high inactivity, particularly among the female population. Only 20% of women aged between 20 and 64 are economically active, meaning either employed or unemployed⁴⁴. Only 30% of the labour force was employed in 2019 (46% of men and 13.9% of women). Men work in construction, trade and electricity sectors, whilst women tend to be in education, health and social work and trade. Especially for women, educational attainment is decisive for employment, as their employment rate rises to 50% with tertiary education.

About one-quarter of the Kosovan labour force is unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 25%, which is considerably higher for women (34%). Unemployment is most common among people without formal education, and decreases with higher education, particularly among men. Female unemployment rates remain higher than 30%, regardless of education level. It is mainly young people who are affected by unemployment. Almost 70% of all unemployed persons in Kosovo are below the age of 35. At the same time, the unemployment rate for this age group stands at 40% (52% for women, 35% for men)⁴⁵.

High youth unemployment is partly related to limited opportunities for young people to attend further education and training measures. As a consequence, the share of young people aged 15 to 24 who are not in employment, education and training (NEET) accounted for 27.4% in 2017. Young women are a greater risk of belonging to the NEET group (31.4%)⁴⁶. According to the Kosovo Human Development Report 2016, decisive NEET factors are gender, age, education and household size. In addition, the receipt of remittances increases the likelihood of inactivity⁴⁷.

⁴³ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018)

⁴⁴ Eurostat (2020c). [Enlargement countries - labour market statistics](#)

⁴⁵ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019a). [Labour Force Survey 2019](#)

⁴⁶ Viertel, E. (2019). [Policies for Human Capital Development Kosovo – an ETF Torino Process Assessment](#)

⁴⁷ UNDP (2016), p. 41

High unemployment rates cause very high poverty rates in Kosovo⁴⁸. 18% of the population lived below the national poverty line of EUR 1.85 in 2017; 5.1% lived in extreme poverty (with less than EUR 1.31 per day). Women (18.9%), children (22.8%), people living in rural areas (64.8% of the poor population lived in rural areas in 2017), unemployed (25.5%), and people who have only completed primary education (21.6%) are at greater risk of being poor. The lowest poverty rates were registered among households that primarily receive wages and salaries from the public sector (7%) and remittances from abroad (11%). A higher risk of poverty applies to households depending on per diem work (29.3%) and on pensions (29.3%). The highest poverty rate is observed among households depending on social assistance (here the poverty rate is 80.2%). Members of households depending on wages and salaries from the private sector constituted the largest category of the poor population in 2017 (34.7%).

Political system

During the time of the Yugoslavian Republic, Kosovo belonged to the Republic of Serbia. It was an autonomous province with rights granted similar to Yugoslavia's other republics. In the 1980s, Kosovo Albanians started to demand the status of a constituent republic for their autonomous province, thus igniting the 1981 protests. Ethnic tensions between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs remained high during the whole decade. They resulted in the growth of Serb opposition to the significant autonomy of the provinces, and the ineffective system of consensus

at federal level across Yugoslavia, which was seen as an obstacle to Serb interests. Serbia deprived Kosovo of its autonomy in 1989, and introduced a repressive military regime in the region. All Kosovo Albanians had to leave their positions in the public service, and the province was ruled directly from Belgrade. After the unsuccessful attempt to resist peacefully, antagonism between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs resulted in war in 1998. NATO military intervention was able to end the conflict in 1999, and an international administration was formed with UN Resolution 1244⁴⁹. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) held civilian responsibility over the territory from 1999 to 2008, while NATO's presence in Kosovo (Kosovo Force, or KFOR) was in charge of internal security. Stimulated and supervised by the UN, Kosovo developed self-government structures, and the Kosovan Parliament declared independence in 2008. Since then, Kosovo has been recognised as an independent state by 116 nations (most EU Member States, and more than half of the Members of the UN). While Serbia still does not officially accept Kosovo's sovereignty, the two states agreed to normalise their relationship with the Brussels Agreement in 2014, and after disputes over taxes recently also agreed to normalise their economic relations⁵⁰.

Kosovo is not a member of the UN today because of China's and Russia's veto positions. An application to become a member of UNESCO in 2015 was unsuccessful. However, Kosovo is a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission.

⁴⁸ Kosovo Agency of Statistics and World Bank (2019). [Consumption Poverty in the Republic of Kosovo](#)

⁴⁹ United Nations Mission in Kosovo (1999). [United Nations Resolution 1244](#)

⁵⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018), p. 5

As regards relations with the EU institutions, Kosovo has the status of a potential candidate for EU accession. The EU-Kosovo political dialogue and cooperation are defined in the “Stabilisation and Association Agreement” (SAA), which entered into force in 2016. The European Reform Agenda (ERA) guides the reform process in Kosovo, implementing priority actions in the areas of good governance, the rule of law, competitiveness, employment and education⁵¹. Kosovo received bilateral EU support amounting to EUR 573 million between 2014 and 2020 from the “Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance” (IPA II).

In administrative terms, the state of Kosovo is subdivided into seven districts, 38 municipalities and 1,469 settlements. It is organised unitarily with two levels of governance, one at central and one at local (municipal) level⁵². Municipalities retain three kinds of competencies: own competencies, extended competencies, and delegated competencies including financial autonomy for the competences within their responsibility. Education is part of local governments’ own and enhanced competencies⁵³. De-facto competencies however deviate, as according to reports municipal assemblies have poor effective budgetary powers, and local governance is weakened by excessive political influence from the national level⁵⁴. While Kosovo intends to integrate municipalities with a Kosovo-Serb majority into its institutional system, those municipalities maintain

far-reaching autonomy rights and operate de facto largely beyond the control of state government institutions.

The 2008 Constitution established a multi-party parliamentary democratic republic in Kosovo^{56,57}. The President is the official Head of State, elected by two-thirds of the assembly for a term of five years. The unicameral assembly (Kuvendi) is composed of 120 deputies, 100 of whom are directly elected through a proportional representation electoral system. The other 20 seats are reserved for Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic community representatives. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister. The latter is elected for a four-year term by at least a two-thirds majority in the assembly.

The most recent (early) parliamentary elections in Kosovo were held in February 2021. The centre-left party Vetëvendosje led by Albin Kurti won the election with almost 50% of the votes. The centre-right Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) received 17% of the votes, and the centre-right Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) came in third with 13% of the votes.

Education system

With the implementation of the KESP 2017-2021, Kosovo has made progress in improving access to education and the quality of the education sector. The overall quality of education nonetheless

⁵¹ European Commission (2020)

⁵² European Committee of the Regions, [Kosovo Potential Candidate](#) website

⁵³ European Committee of the Regions, [Kosovo Education](#) website

⁵⁴ European Commission (2020)

⁵⁵ Grasniqi, G. (2019). [Kosovo](#). Swedish International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD)

⁵⁶ Freedom House, [Kosovo 2020](#) website

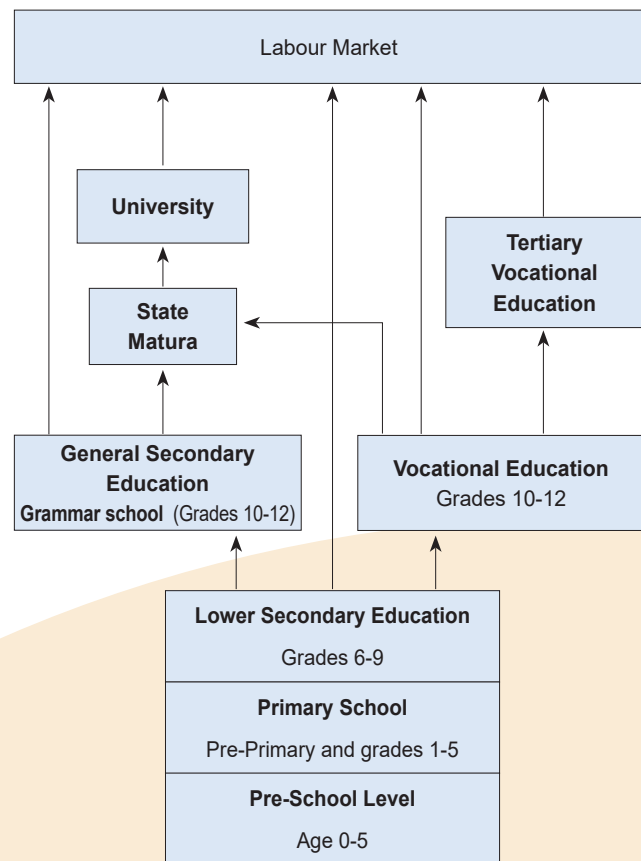
⁵⁷ European Commission (2020)

remains a concern⁵⁸. The level of pre-school education is low, and Kosovo ranked 3rd from the bottom in the latest OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessment⁵⁹. According to the World Bank Human Capital Index, “[c]hildren in Kosovo can expect to complete 12.8 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 7.7 years, which means that there is a learning gap of 5.1 years”⁶⁰.

Public expenditure on education amounted to 4.2% of GDP in 2018 and 2019, an amount which is lower than among regional neighbours, and which mainly flows into the wages and salaries of educational staff. Due to the large share of young people within society, Kosovo spends only 13% of per capita income on each student in primary and secondary education (the EU average ranges around 20%)⁶¹.

The education system in Kosovo is structured along the ISCED levels, and comprises pre-school (ages 0-5), pre-primary (ages 5 until primary), primary education for grades 1-5 (ages 6-10), lower secondary for grades 6-9 (ages 11-14), upper secondary for grades 9-12 (ages 15-18), and higher education offering 3-to-4-year Bachelor’s and 1-to-2-year Master’s programmes. Upper secondary education is divided into grammar schools and vocational education schools^{62,63}.

FIGURE 2 Structure of the Education System in Kosovo



Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2016), p. 20.

Kosovo children’s educational careers get off to a difficult start, as there are only 44 public kindergartens spread over 23 of the 38 municipalities. The pre-school enrolment rate is correspondingly low. As primary and lower secondary education are compulsory in Kosovo, enrolment rates are comparably high (see Table 1). A gender gap in enrolment emerges during upper secondary education, as the share of women without upper secondary education is 23.4% higher than that

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ OECD (2019). [PISA 2018 Results – Combined Executive Summaries](#)

⁶⁰ World Bank (2018). [If Kosovo Acts Now, Its Children Born Today Could Be Healthier, Wealthier, More Productive](#). Press Release 11 October 2018

⁶¹ World Bank (2017). [Republic of Kosovo Systematic Country Diagnostic](#), p.104

⁶² Aliu, L. (2018). [Analysis of Kosovo’s Education System](#). Pristina: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

⁶³ European Commission (2017). [Overview of the Higher Education System Kosovo](#)

of men. This points to higher dropout rates for girls than for boys aged 15-18⁶⁴. All in all, girls and young women are underrepresented at all educational levels besides grammar school and university, where they make up 58% and 53% of the student bodies, respectively⁶⁵.

Education in Kosovo mainly happens in public schools. 89% of all children, pupils and students attended public education institutions in 2017/2018. The largest share of attendance at private institutions is registered at university level (36%)⁶⁶.

TABLE 1 Enrolment rates and numbers of public /private education institutions

	Net attendance ratio	Number of public education institutions	Number of private education institutions
Pre-schools	15%	44	88
Pre-primary	83.8%		
Primary	96.1%	927	10
Lower secondary	93.7%		
Upper secondary	86.8%		
Higher education		9	30

Source: Own presentation based on European Commission (2020), Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018), Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF (2020).

When it comes to choosing the upper secondary education track, vocational education and training (VET) is frequently regarded as the second choice. Grammar school and university education are considered more valuable for entering

the labour market⁶⁷. VET only becomes an option for many students if they do not meet the grammar school entry criteria. Around 50% of all upper secondary students opted for VET programmes in 2018/2019. A large proportion of VET graduates (97%) continue to enrol in higher education, which shows that VET qualifications have a low value on the labour market. In general, the VET system in Kosovo is in need of more practical and applied courses, as well as publicly-supported cooperation with business entities. While most teachers at VET schools are qualified, there are deficiencies in further professional development and teaching as well as in learning material (see Chapter IX)⁶⁸.

Kosovo has just started to implement its National Qualifications Framework, which has been developed largely in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The NQF and the NQA were established by Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications. The NQF development process started in 2009. It was approved and published in 2011, then reviewed in 2017 with support from DVVI, and an implementation handbook was published and approved in 2020⁶⁹. The NQA has overall implementation responsibility for the NQF, and is mainly in charge of quality assurance of vocational education and training qualifications. While the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for the quality assurance of the general education qualifications, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is responsible for the higher education qualifications. Kosovo is not part of the Bologna process,

⁶⁴ European Commission (2020)

⁶⁵ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018). [Education Statistics in Kosovo](#)

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Aliu (2018)

⁶⁸ European Commission (2020), p. 85

⁶⁹ National Qualification Authority (2020). [National Qualifications Framework](#)

but plans to join the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)⁷⁰.

Educational attainment in Kosovo is still related to socio-economic status and ethnicity. Data from the latest UNICEF MICS 2020⁷¹ indicates that children from the richest households are more likely to attend education programmes at all levels. The gap between attendance rates for children from the poorest and richest households widens with increasing education levels. The data suggests that only 70% of children from the poorest quintile attend upper secondary education, compared with 96% from the richest quintile. Non-enrolment for children in households which are defined as poor is around 7% in primary education, with increasing differences at higher levels of education. Similar to the socio-economic status of the household, school attendance particularly at upper secondary level is related to the educational attainment of mothers. While 97% of those children whose mothers had attained higher education attend upper secondary schools, the share decreases to 87% for children whose mothers have attained lower secondary education.

With the implementation of the KESP 2017-2021, Kosovan authorities are making efforts to increase the number of RAE children in basic and secondary education by providing scholarships and awareness-raising activities, and establishing learning centres. There are currently 83 learning centres operating in 20 municipalities⁷². Progress has been made with respect to increasing access to primary education for children from RAE com-

munities. While only 68% of RAE children (92% of all children) attended the first grade of primary school in 2014⁷³ (60% males, 76% females), the net attendance ratio increased to 84% (96% of all children) in 2020. However, a gap still exists in lower secondary education where the net attendance ratio of RAE children is 63.7%, compared to 93.7% of all children. The upper secondary completion rate for young people from RAE communities stands at 23.8%, compared to 87.2% among all children.

Kosovo is characterised in 2020 by a relatively young population structure, high unemployment and inactivity rates, especially among women, and a resultant readiness among young people to leave the country to find more decent work abroad. A diverse offer of adult education and learning programmes of all types and forms has been shown to trigger positive welfare effects for societal and economic development. As mentioned earlier, lifelong learning not only increases the quality of social life and participation, but it also decreases social inequalities, as children of higher (further) educated parents receive better support. Further training moreover increases economic productivity and a country's flexibility to respond to labour market needs. Women in particular can benefit from further training that builds their capacities, and increases their self-confidence and willingness to participate. The following chapters explore the state of adult education in Kosovo from various perspectives in order to draw conclusions about challenges and potentials for Kosovo's future development.

⁷⁰ CEDEFOP (2019). [Kosovo European inventory on NQF 2018](#)

⁷¹ Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF (2020)

⁷² Mehmeti, S. et al. (2019). [Mid-term Evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021](#). Pristina: KEEN, p. 16ff

⁷³ The Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF (2014). [2013-2014 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo* Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Summary Report](#)

III. Historical development of ALE in Kosovo

After World War II, as part of the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo had a similar education structure as its neighbouring countries, including adult education. The education system consisted of primary education, secondary education, and university for young people from the age of 18 upwards⁷⁴. From the 1970s onwards, education in Kosovo was officially delivered in three languages (Serbian, Albanian and Turkish), and children with different ethnic backgrounds were taught under one roof. Adult education in Kosovo was provided in “evening schools, adult education units in regular schools, and educational centres in industrial and other enterprises”⁷⁵.

Kosovo Albanians were increasingly discriminated against during the 1980s, with the death of Tito and the onset of the Milosevic regime⁷⁶. Relative continuity in education was interrupted in the period between 1990 and 1999, when the Serbian authorities expelled Albanians from large parts of the formal education system for political reasons. Education for Albanians, especially at secondary and higher education levels, had to be organised in private schools and houses⁷⁷. The fact that only Kosovo Serbs and other communities (Turks and Bosnians) were allowed access to education in public facilities established a so-called “parallel system of education”. The parallel education system was self-financed, mainly by

the Kosovo-Albanian diaspora⁷⁸. No information is available regarding the provision of non-formal and adult education during that period.

Following the end of war the in 1999, Kosovo experienced a period of significant social, economic and political change, and this had a major impact on the system of education, including adult education. The country had to face war destruction, and lacked functioning governance structures. The Joint Interim Administrative Structure under the auspices of UNMIK centralised the Kosovan education system. With the first national elections, provisional self-government institutions were established, and some powers relating to education administration were transferred to the municipalities, for example administration of educational facilities (see also Chapter II). The law on primary and secondary education, adopted in 2002, was the first piece of legislation to be endorsed⁷⁹. The law did not outline adult learning as such, but it included the provision of basic education, and consequently also the provision of compensatory education and vocational education.

The post-war education system was clearly orientated towards developing a basic education policy and establishing a governance structure, including the development of the school infrastructure, the revitalisation of the institutional

⁷⁴ Lljunji, V. (2013). [Challenges adult education in Kosovo](#)

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 3

⁷⁶ Lljapi, G. & Peterson, C. (2015). [Education Interrupted: Kosovo 1980-1999](#). Paper presented at the Commission for International Adult Education (CIAE) International Pre-Conference (64th, Oklahoma City, OK, Nov 15-17, 2015).

⁷⁷ Kastrati, A. (2016). [The Role of Education for Identity Formation Among Albanians and Serbs of Kosovo: the Application of the Difference-Blinded Approach for Establishing Citizenship Regime in a Multi-Cultural Society](#). *European Journal of Social Sciences, Education and Research*, 3(1), pp. 146-153

⁷⁸ Lljunji, V. (2013)

⁷⁹ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2002). [Law No. 2002/2 on Primary and Secondary Education in Kosovo](#). Official Gazette of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo / No. 8 / 15 December 2006, Pristina

network, and as well as the elaboration of a new education concept and a core curriculum framework. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) has established Vocational Training Centres in seven regions of Kosovo, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), in order to offer adult training for registered job-seekers, operational from 2000 onwards⁸⁰. At this stage, adult education was not regulated, and was organised mainly at the initiative of private providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The private provision of adult education mainly targeted meeting the requirements of the market economy by qualifying and re-qualifying adults, while the NGO sector mainly focused on civic education.

A strategy for adult education, covering the ten-year period between 2005 and 2015, was developed in 2005, with the aim in mind of supporting the country's economic development and reducing poverty by regulating and enhancing the provision of AE. However, due to a lack of social partnership, inadequate financial resources, and insufficient commitment on the part of the MEST in support of the sector, the strategy did not result in the activities being implemented satisfactorily⁸¹.

The provisional self-government adopted the Law on Adult Education and Training⁸² as early as 2005, aiming to regulate the provision of adult education, including compensatory learning and other training for adults which had not yet been regulated by the Laws on Primary and Secondary Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training. Even though the law stipulated the aim to

promote lifelong learning for all individuals, it has tended to fail in that respect. The law outlined a framework to exclusively meet the needs of the Ministry of Education regarding adult learning. It failed to cater for the differing needs of adults in society, such as cultural and social development, democracy, respect for human rights and freedoms, tolerance and understanding, as essential prerequisites for inclusion in the democratic, social and economic transformation. Furthermore, non-formal programmes provided by other ministries were not regulated by this Law.

The Law on Vocational Education and Training, endorsed in the same year as the Law on AE, aimed to regulate the system of formal vocational education and training in accordance with the country's economic and social development needs, including economic and technological change, labour market demands and the needs of individuals, optimising the use of financial, human and infrastructural resources during the transition to a market economy. The framework did not envisage the regulation of non-formal VET provision.

With the declaration of independence in 2008, the country was eager to develop its constitutional and legislative framework to largely meet European core principles and standards. In the adult education sector, development has been largely affected by goals specified in the Lisbon Strategy, the Copenhagen Declaration, and the European Qualifications Framework which aimed to enhance quality in VET, enable individuals to acquire the skills necessary for the labour market and, most importantly, to make lifelong learning a tool

⁸⁰ Interview with MLSW representative

⁸¹ Interview with AE expert

⁸² Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2005). [Law No. 02/L-24 for Adult Education and Training](#)

to support their employment. All in all, the priorities in the education sector shifted from infrastructure to enhancing the quality of education and training.

It was therefore necessary to improve the policy and legislative frameworks and to shift towards a form of multi-level governance structure in education. The Law on National Qualifications⁸³ was endorsed in 2008, since when it has served as a major reform tool in education and training in Kosovo, including AE. It established the NQF as a national mechanism for classifying qualifications. Moreover, it introduced the learning outcome approach at all levels of education, a credit system in VET, the recognition of prior learning (RPL), and VET quality assurance.

In pursuit of achieving inclusive education and improving the quality of education and training provision, the government of Kosovo drafted and approved the first Kosovo Education Strategic Plan in coordination with the MEST, and with commitment from all the other relevant stakeholders, covering the period from 2011 until 2016. The process was substantively supported by the international community. The plan endorsed a sector-wide development approach outlining analysis, challenges, strategic objectives, activities and expected outcomes in eight main priority programmes. Adult education was one of the eight priorities. The overall objective of AE was to ensure quality and inclusive education for all, including the most disadvantaged groups, in cooperation with civil society, in order to equip

adults with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences. Revising the Law on Adult Education by 2016 was one of the targets.

Accordingly, the Law on VET and the Law on Adult Education and Training were revised and endorsed by Parliament in 2013, as outlined in the KESP and in order to align with the NQF requirements. Despite the initiative to improve the situation of AE in Kosovo, the revised law did not install the necessary prerequisites to create a holistic system of adult education which would enable individual progress, improve quality of life, instigate creativity and innovation among adult learners, and enable the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills to achieve economic, technical and technological, cultural and social change. It covers AE only partly, and meets the basic needs of regulated adult education (both formal and non-formal), similar to the previous law (see also Chapter IV).

Further initiatives were taken to improve AE governance by enhancing stakeholder involvement at different levels in policy-making and implementation. In this regard, a number of executive agencies and different advisory boards were established such as: NQA, AVETAE, the Council of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (CVETAE), and the EARK.

The next chapter describes the policy and institutional landscape of adult education in Kosovo in greater detail.

⁸³ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2008). [Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications](#)

IV. Governing structures and legal framework

Governing structures

The governing structure of adult education in Kosovo is quite complex. Tasks and responsibilities are divided between several stakeholders at central and local level.

The main institution responsible for supervising adult education in Kosovo is **the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**. It oversees the planning, development and implementation of adult education policies. Furthermore, the MEST is responsible for the development of the VET and AE curricula, in-service teacher training, and monitoring the quality of education provision. The MEST is also in charge of listing private VET and AE providers and administering the state “Matura” secondary-school leaving exam. A division for lifelong learning has recently been established within the department for VET. However, despite the existing specific Law on Adult Education, AE still has no distinct department in the Ministry, and is tackled as part of VET or compensatory adult education.

The mission of the **Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS)** is to empower young people and create a supportive environment for their social and personal development. The goal is to create opportunities for promotion, development and participation of young people in active social life, and to provide services which enable the development of life skills and social values, while respecting the individual characteristics of young people.

Adult education efforts in the education sector are matched by activities in the **Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**. The MLSW is responsible for developing employment and training policies

in the country. It develops and monitors the implementation of active labour market measures for unemployed job-seekers.

At local level, the **Municipal Education Departments (MED)** are responsible for managing VET schools, including staff recruitment, administration of educational facilities, administration of the school budget, payment of salaries, and capacity-building of teachers, instructors and administrators.

The state **Education Inspectorate** is responsible for pedagogical and administrative inspections of public and private VET providers. Its function is however hindered by the limited number of inspectors throughout the country.

The **National Qualifications Authority** is an independent agency under the supervision of the MEST. It is responsible for the overall strategic development of the NQF, including developing policies regarding the types of qualification, the credit system, and recognition of prior learning. Furthermore, it manages the quality assurance of the VET part of the NQF, which entails verification of occupational standards, validation, approval and registration qualifications, and accreditation and monitoring of providers to deliver, assess and certify the abovementioned qualifications. In the same way, with respect to RPL, besides the development of the overall policy for

the NQF, it encompasses the quality assurance of RPL in VET, specifically the accreditation and monitoring of providers to implement RPL in VET qualifications.

The **Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education** is responsible for the administration and leadership of public Institutions of Vocational Education Training and for Adults (IVETA) regarding financial and human sources as well as facilities and infrastructure according to the legislation. AVETAE currently supervises six Centres of Competence, but no VET schools. In addition, coordination of studies concerning VET and AE, and engagement of social partners in VET and AE, are within its remit. So far, however, significant outputs have been lacking.

The **Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education** is an advisory tripartite body consisting of representatives of relevant Ministries, VET providers and social partners. A main function of the CVETAE is to provide advice to the Minister of Education on VET and AE policies. In addition, it approves occupational standards at national level, following the process of verification by the NQA.

The **Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo** provides vocational training for registered job-seekers as part of its active labour market measures. The training is provided in seven vocational training centres throughout the country. Regional VTCs offer training in different professional profiles, varying in duration from 20 days to six months. This training is offered free of charge. RPL is offered in their centres as well.

Social partners were fully involved in the design of national policies and legal provisions. They are part of governing bodies related to VET and AE such as: NQA, AVETAE, CVETAE and schools. Furthermore, they are responsible for the development of the occupational standards: Occupational standards are starting points for the definition of qualifications, and consequently for the implementation of validation in VET. Outputs however remain poor when it comes to the implementation of the policies and their direct involvement in the provision of education.

Laws

As has been indicated in Chapter I, adult education in Kosovo is closely associated with vocational education and training. VET and adult education in Kosovo are currently governed by a sound legal infrastructure which comprises the following laws:

- Law No. 04/L-032 – 2011 on Pre-University Education
- Law No. 04/L-138 – 2013 on Vocational Education and Training
- Law No. 04/L-143 – 2013 on Adult Education and Training
- Law No. 03/L-068 – 2008 on Education in the Municipalities
- Law No. 03/L-060 – 2008 on National Qualifications
- Law No. 03/L-018 – 2008 on the Final Exam and the State “Matura” Exam

The **Law on Pre-University Education**⁸⁴ outlines the main purposes and principles of the provision of pre-university education in Kosovo, as

⁸⁴ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2011). [Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-university Education in the Republic of Kosovo](#). Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/No. 17/16 September 2011, Pristina

well as the responsibilities at central, municipal and school level in the areas of planning, delivering and monitoring public education provision. The purpose of this Law is to “regulate pre-university education and training from ISCED levels 0 to 4, including education and training for children and adults taking qualifications at these levels”. Adult education regulated by this Law is supposed to be located at ISCED levels 3 to 4. It envisages vocational and adult education provided for adults and young people over the age of fifteen who meet the requirements to attend adult education curricula. Provisions for adult education and training, such as its purpose, provision, curricula and funding, are defined in Article 12. The article provides that the aim of adult education and training is to provide adults with the necessary knowledge, skills and competence in the lifelong learning framework. It stipulates the need for a bylaw in order to further define the curricula and assessment, as well as the duration of the education, the admission criteria and fees, specific criteria for licensing and financing AE providers, and qualification of teaching staff.

The **Law on Vocational Education and Training**⁸⁵ defines the main principles for the VET sector in Kosovo. They include establishing links with the labour market, as well as inclusiveness, access to and development of vocational education and training as an integrated part of lifelong learning. Furthermore, with the establishment of CVETAE and the AVETAE at national level, and tripartite governing boards at provider level, it supports social dialogue between VET and social partners at both national and provider level. The evaluation of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan

(2011-2016)⁸⁶ concluded that there is a need for better regulation of the curriculum framework for VET, financial autonomy of schools, apprenticeships and teacher training.

The **Law on Adult Education and Training** encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education of persons above the age of 15. The law outlines responsibilities, scope, provision (including providers, candidates, registration of candidates, assessment, certification and programmes/qualifications), quality assurance, validation of informal and non-formal learning, governance, and financing of adult education provision in Kosovo. Accordingly, adult education and training can be organised and provided by public, private, public-private institutions, societies, enterprises, non-governmental organisations, and physical persons. There is a clear distinction between the provision of formal and non-formal or informal AE when it comes to quality assurance: all formal AE providers need to be registered and licensed by MEST. However, non-formal providers that offer programmes leading towards qualification in the NQF need to become accredited by the NQA prior to being licensed by the MEST. When it comes to financing, compensatory adult education for ISCED levels 1 and 2 is free of charge (see Chapter V for more information about financing adult education in Kosovo).

The **Law on Education in the Municipalities** grants responsibilities to municipalities when it comes to pre-university education, including VET. It lays out the competences that the municipalities have regarding administration, finances and staff recruitment and capacity development within schools.

⁸⁵ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2013a)

⁸⁶ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2015). [Evaluation Report – Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016](#)

The **Law on National Qualifications** lays out the objectives and structure of the NQF. Furthermore, it defines the governing structure as a multi-stakeholder body responsible for the strategic development of the NQF. NQF implementation is divided among a number of institutions depending on the education sector, e.g. general, higher and vocational education and training. The NQA is responsible for assuring the quality of the VET and AE parts of the NQF with the following functions: validation and approval of qualification, institutional accreditation of VET providers, and the quality assurance of certification and assessment of the candidates. The objectives of the Law are to improve the recognition of qualifications at all levels of formal and non-formal education and training, to ensure that qualifications meet the needs of the labour market, regulate qualifications, assessment and certification, based on quality and standards, improve access to assessment, including the recognition of prior learning, and make the qualifications system flexible and transparent, as well as improving opportunities for improvement and transfer for all.

The **Law on the State “Matura” Exam**⁸⁷ regulates the aim, content, criteria and administration of the final state Matura exam for students finishing general secondary education, and students coming from VET schools. Article 5 grants candidates from adult education the right to take the exam. The passing threshold for the Matura exam is 40%. Passing the exam allows students to continue their educational path at higher education institutions.

⁸⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2015). [Law No. 05/L-018 on the State “Matura” Exam](#). Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/No. 2/8 January 2016, Pristina

⁸⁸ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2016). [National Development Strategy 2016-2021 \(NDS\)](#)

⁸⁹ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2016)

The **Law on the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo** establishes the Employment Agency, which acts under the framework of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. It defines its role and function vis-à-vis the implementation of employment, labour market and training policies developed by the MLSW.

Strategies and policies

There are a number of strategies and policies that shape the provision of AE in Kosovo. The **National Development Strategy 2016-2021**⁸⁸ presents Kosovo’s vision for economic growth and sustainable development, and outlines the government policies and measures to achieve this vision. The “Human Capital” chapter stipulates the need to improve the links between education provision and labour market demands by developing a National Skills Forecast System and learning outcome qualifications based on occupational standards. The main aim is to develop a skilled, competent, flexible labour force which is able to compete at national, regional and global labour markets. Lifelong learning services and institutions are mentioned as key actors next to VET schools and employment services.

The Government of Kosovo adopted the second **Kosovo Education Strategic Plan** in 2016⁸⁹. The KESP is the key roadmap for the development of the education sector for the period 2017-2021. It defines the main priorities of the education system, which include improving the education governance model, inclusive quality education, quality assurance based on EU standards, teacher and management training, aligning

vocational education and training with labour market needs, and enhancing the quality and competitiveness of higher education. In terms of VET and adult education, the focus is on improving the relevance of school programmes to labour market needs, and developing capacities for the management of adult education provision.

The **National Employment Sectoral Strategy 2018-2022** is based on the programme of the National Development Strategy and the Human Capital chapter, as well as on objectives set by the MLSW. It clearly supports measures to enhance employment through active labour market measures (ALMMs). A variety of objectives and measures aim to improve inclusive access to work by offering quality vocational training for young people and adults, fostering self-employment through effective labour market policies, and promoting social inclusion and cohesion. A respective action plan, as well as monitoring and evaluation tools, have been developed and approved⁹⁰.

The **National Strategy for Youth 2019-2023**⁹¹ aims to develop and coordinate cross-sectoral youth policies in education, employment, health, culture and the enhancement of youth participation in social life and decision-making processes. One of the main strategic objectives is youth employment promotion through the development of non-formal education and informal learning. This includes supporting youth organisations that offer non-formal education activities and awareness-raising activities for the promotion of non-formal education.

The **Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment 2018-2021**⁹² is a three-year inter-sectoral plan to enhance employment and improve young people's employability. It aims to increase their access to the labour market by providing quality employment services (career guidance and counselling services), through active employment measures, and entrepreneurship development. VET is intended to be harmonised more closely in line with labour market requirements, the aim being to improve the quality of practical learning at school and professional practice outside school.

The government has developed the **Strategy and Action Plan for the inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo Society 2017-2021** in order to enhance the social inclusion of marginalised communities in society⁹³. It outlines key policy objectives and measures in education, employment, social welfare, health and housing. Improving access to vocational training and employment, and increasing the levels of participation in education for Roma and Ashkali communities, are among the measures outlined in the strategy.

National Qualifications Framework

The National Qualifications Framework⁹⁴ is the main reform tool when it comes to the entire education system in Kosovo, as it links the provision of education with the needs of the labour market. It was adopted in 2011 by the governing board of the NQA, and it has been fully operational since then. The NQF comprises an eight-level frame-

⁹⁰ Qehaja, L. (2019). [Implementation of MLSW Sectorial Strategy in 2018 and 2019 – Mid-term Assessment Report](#). Pristina: KEEN

⁹¹ Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (2019). [Strategy for Youth 2019-2023](#)

⁹² Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (2017). [Action Plan: Increasing Youth Employment 2018-2020](#)

⁹³ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2017). [Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021](#)

⁹⁴ National Qualification Authority (2020)

work based on learning outcomes intended to include qualifications and modules (parts of qualification) acquired in all types of learning context, formal, non-formal and informal. It encompasses lifelong learning as the main guiding principle by enabling individuals to progress horizontally and vertically along the NQF levels. Furthermore, the NQF facilitates the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes by attaching a credit system to qualifications.

The NQF approves and registers 5 types of qualification as follows:

1. Higher Education Qualifications: designed on the basis of the principles of the Bologna Framework
2. General Education Qualifications: designed according to the Kosovo Curriculum Framework
3. National Combined Qualifications: combined modules based on National Occupational Standards with outcomes related to the Kosovo Curriculum Framework
4. National Vocational Qualifications: designed on the basis of the National Occupational Standards
5. Qualifications based on International Standards: designed on the basis of internationally-recognised standards which have not (yet) been adopted as national standards in Kosovo
6. Tailored Qualifications: designed according to the operational needs of a particular organisation, agency or enterprise

National Vocational Qualifications, Qualifications based on International Standards, and Tailored Qualifications are targeted at adults who are eager to acquire professional knowledge, skills and competences associated with a specific occu-

pation or work role. They have a range of credit values in European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) according to the modules which make up the qualification. A range of different accredited providers can deliver, assess and certify candidates in order to award the abovementioned qualifications.

The NQF was linked to the European Qualifications Framework in 2016 by drafting and presenting a referencing report to the Advisory Group of the EQF. This enabled transparency, and facilitated comparability of qualifications registered in the NQF with different qualification systems and contexts in EU countries.

Quality assurance of qualifications

Before a qualification can be approved and registered in the NQF, it has to undergo a process of validation and registration through a respective regulatory body, depending on the type of qualification. HE qualifications are accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency of Higher Education, while VET-type qualifications (National Vocational Qualifications, Qualifications based on International Standards, and Tailored Qualifications) are validated, approved and registered by the NQA. Likewise, institutions or providers who intend to offer any type of NQF qualification have to meet certain quality criteria. All providers (public and private) have to be accredited, HE institutions by the KAA, and VET providers by the NQA. In a second step, private providers also have to apply for a licence from the MEST division for private education and training. An exception to quality assurance is made for general education qualifications, as they are not subject to accreditation.

All institutions and providers which wish to request validation and approval of qualifications and accreditation of their programmes have to respect the procedures specified in Administrative Instruction (AI) No. 35/2014. The following criteria have to be met in order to apply for the process of validation of VET qualifications and accreditation: The format of the qualification (study programme) needs to be offered in a modular content form; learning outcomes have to be aligned with a credit system, and need to be based on the needs of the labour market (occupational standard). Internal quality assurance procedures need to be in place, as do the appropriate resources (human, financial, technological equipment), plus a strategic vision and leadership.

The accreditation process as regulated by the AI can last up to six months following the date of approval from the Governing Board of the NQA which started the accreditation process. The date of submission of the application to the NQA executive is not considered as the beginning of the process.

Recognition of prior learning

A central prerequisite for the formation of a true learning society is the establishment of a system that allows individuals to document what they have learned outside the formal education system (which is commonly officially documented) in order to be able to use it to advance their careers and for further education and training⁹⁵. This must include documentation of learning acquired in non-formal and informal ways.

Recognition of prior learning in Kosovo is regulated by Administrative Instruction No. 31/2014 on RPL, and takes place in alignment to and in compliance with the European Council Recommendation on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)⁹⁶. It supports the implementation of the European Council's Upskilling Pathways Recommendation by enabling access to further education for: low-skilled adults, adults who would like to return to learning, job-seekers requiring recognition of skills acquired at work or in their community, candidates aiming to improve their qualifications, candidates looking to requalify, as well as candidates holding certificates that are not recognised nationally and who are aiming to obtain a qualification in the NQF.

Guiding policies and legal frameworks have been developed for the recognition of prior learning from higher education and VET, including both initial VET (IVET) and continuous VET (CVET), but not for general education. When it comes to implementation, however, the VET sector, and specifically CVET (adult training), has been prioritised in order to support individuals' entry to, or progress on, the labour market. Several necessary bylaws were developed and signed by the MEST in 2019 in order to enable the implementation of RPL specifically for National Vocational Qualifications.

RPL is aligned to the NQF, and prior learning can therefore only be validated within the framework of qualifications approved and registered in the NQF. Learning outcomes are the reference

⁹⁵ CEDEFOP [Validation of non-formal and informal learning project](#) website

⁹⁶ National Qualification Authority (2017). [Policy and Procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) in the Republic of Kosovo](#), p. 11

points for RPL, and they enable the acquisition of partial or full qualifications. The RPL process consists of four stages: identification, documentation, assessment and certification of learning outcomes, supported by guidance and counselling of RPL practitioners such as coordinators, mentors and internal and external assessors. RPL can only be implemented by institutions accredited by the National Qualifications Authority. In order to become accredited to implement RPL, institutions need to meet specific criteria such as designated validation practitioners and internal quality assurance mechanisms. No provider has yet been accredited to implement RPL, but several providers have applied for accreditation.

Kosovo became the 11th country to present its one-off report on validation to the EQF Advisory Group in February 2020⁹⁷. The report was evaluated by the “discussants” as clear and providing a good structure.

The overview of laws, policies and governing structures in adult education shows that the development of human capital is a priority area for the Government of Kosovo. Much effort has been put into developing the NQF, as well as the RPL and quality assurance procedures which make learning outcomes transparent and allow learners to advance across various NQF levels (even discontinuously). Despite the existing policies and legal arrangements in place, however, the overall governance structure and the close inter-linkage between adult education and VET seem to hinder the development of adult education as a stand-alone education sector. Anchoring adult education in VET bears the risk of associating adult education one-sidedly with formal, initial VET and professional development. The added value of additional non-formal education and learning activities for personal, societal and also economic development from the perspective of lifelong learning has not yet been fully recognised and exploited.

⁹⁷ The Member States had the possibility to present a one-off voluntary report on their implementation of validation arrangements based on the 2012 Recommendation (Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01)) to the EQF Advisory Group by 2018. The reports are peer-reviewed by two other Member State representatives, known as “discussants”.

V. Financing

Adult education in Kosovo is financed from a number of sources, such as the public budget, private sector investment, the civil-society sector, donor funds, and adult learners themselves. Compensatory, basic adult education (at NQF levels 1 and 2) is free of charge for adult learners, and expenses are covered by the public budget, as stated in Article 19 of the Law on Adult Education and Training. Job-seeker training at VTCs is free of charge. Further education and training at VET institutions has to be covered by adult learners themselves, or the training is co-funded by the employer. Non-formal education activities also have to be paid for by the learners themselves. If providers receive financial support from international donors, programmes can be offered at a lower cost, or free of charge.

Public education funding

When it comes to public financing of adult education, expenses are not listed in a separate budget line, and adult education programmes are usually planned and budgeted as part of the provision of other education and training sectors. Adult education is generally financed as part of general education and VET. Gathering data in terms of exact figures spent in the adult education sector is challenging. This section consequently focuses on describing financial sources within the responsible governmental bodies.

Pre-university education is largely publicly funded in Kosovo. The educational grant is planned by the MEST, and is based on the number of students in basic and secondary education. The public budget

is transferred to municipalities based on the number of students per school, and municipalities allocate the budget to schools. Education budget execution, including procurements and payments, is located at municipal level⁹⁸. The allocated budget however frequently does not reach the schools due to inefficient financial management in municipalities. Although municipalities have specific budget lines for education, including general and VET, it is very common for the budget to be re-allocated to other budget lines of goods and services. The budget therefore ends up being used for other municipal necessities such as infrastructure, instead of being used for the needs of schools.

Compared with other EU countries, and on the basis of the large share of young people in the population, government spending on education remains at a rather low level in Kosovo. Public spending on education amounted to 4.22% of GDP, and 13.7% of general government spending, in 2018. This reflects a slight decrease compared with the previous years. The Government spent an average of EUR 684 per student in pre-university education in the school year 2017/2018. The largest share of public expenditure was dedicated to teachers' salaries (around 90%). According to the KESP Mid-term Review, there is no difference in the amounts spent on grammar schools and vocational schools, despite the need for additional spending on practical learning at the latter. Moreover, no budget is officially projected for special development projects such as curriculum development and teacher development⁹⁹.

The budget for VET has increased slightly in recent years. Expenditure on VET as a percentage of spending on education increased from 8.5%

⁹⁸ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2019). [Torino Process 2018-2020 Kosovo National Report](#), p. 71

⁹⁹ Mehmeti, S. et al. (2019), pp. 55-56

in 2014 to 9.6% in 2017. Expenditure on VET as a percentage of government spending remained stable at 1.4%. Similar to general education, additional spending in the VET sector was virtually entirely attributed to teachers' salaries. Wages and salaries as a percentage of VET spending increased from 89.3% in 2014 to 95.7% in 2017. This implies that only a small margin of the budget is left for municipalities to cover basic school expenses¹⁰⁰. The KESP 2017-2021 allocates 3.8% (EUR 6,772,946) of the overall budget to the priority area "Vocational and Adult Education"¹⁰¹.

Schools can generate their own revenues by charging school fees to adult learners in VET, and these can amount to EUR 5,000 to 6,000 per year (based on AI No. 11/2011). This enables schools to finance parts of their salary, material and services expenditure themselves¹⁰². That having been said, the funds generated flow into the municipal budget line, and schools need approval from the MEDs to make use of them. Schools are not financially autonomous.

The costs of attending and completing an adult education programme in a VET school are as follows¹⁰³:

- EUR 100 to 130 for one school year
- EUR 50 for practical training
- EUR 10 for a differential exam
- EUR 30 for final exams and certificates

Municipalities are obliged to provide funds for infrastructure maintenance "where there is devel-

oped and organised education for adults" (Article 19 Law on Adult Education and Training).

Funding channels of the NQA

The National Qualifications Authority is the regulatory body for the provision of adult education in Kosovo, and as such is entitled to public funding as the main budget resource. The budget for the NQA is allocated to expenses regarding the verification of occupational standards, for the validation of qualifications to obtain NQF approval, and for the accreditation of providers. The abovementioned processes envisage the engagement of 2-3 external field experts on a short-term basis, with a maximum of 5 working days each per process of verification of OS¹⁰⁴, and usually 3 working days for the validation of qualifications and the accreditation of VET providers¹⁰⁵. The expert per diem is EUR 100. The cost per OS verification averages EUR 1,000-2,000, while the process of validation and accreditation of VET providers costs between EUR 600-1,200, depending on the size of the panel (e.g. the number of experts) and types of expert (national or regional).

Accredited providers of AE

All providers of adult education (both public and private) need to pay a fee to the NQA for the process of validation of qualifications in the NQF and their own accreditation in order to offer, assess and certify these qualifications. The costs of the accreditation process are calculated by the NQA executive, based on the size of the expert panel (3 or more experts) and type of experts (national,

¹⁰⁰ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2019), p. 73

¹⁰¹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2019), p. 73

¹⁰² Mehmeti, S. et al. (2019), p. 148

¹⁰³ MEST [Administrative Instruction 11/2011](#) On the participation of attendees of education and training for adults

¹⁰⁴ MEST [Administrative Instruction 28/2014](#) On criteria and procedures for verification of the profession standard

¹⁰⁵ MEST [Administrative Instruction 23/2014](#) On criteria and procedures for validation and approval of national qualifications and accreditation of institutions providing qualifications in Kosovo

regional or international). The costs for the process of validation of qualifications and accreditation of the providers are as follows:¹⁰⁶

- EUR 50 for validation
- EUR 2 per credit for the validation of modules/qualifications, and EUR 1.20 for the validation of modules/qualifications based on the national standards
- EUR 600 for initial accreditation of the institution that implements RPL (EUR 300 for reaccreditation)
- EUR 100 per working day for local experts (This means that the minimum fee for a panel with three experts working for three days each would be EUR 900, and the maximum would be EUR 1,200 for four experts working for three days each.)
- EUR 200 for regional experts per working day (This means that the minimum fee for a panel with three experts working for three days each would be EUR 1,800, and the maximum would be EUR 2,400 for four experts working for three days each.)

The total costs can thus range from EUR 1,500 to 5,000 for one accreditation, depending on the factors mentioned above. In general, the NQA initially seeks local experts to organise and coordinate the accreditation process. It is only when there is a lack of local expertise that the NQA engages regional expertise in the required field.

Comparing the costs of providers with the spending of the NQA shows that the NQA generates revenue. The income generated however flows back into the broader government budget, and

the NQA is not able to use incomes generated for the abovementioned process.

Employment Agency and VTCs

Adult education for registered job-seekers provided by Vocational Training Centres of the Employment Agency is covered by public funds, or in some cases by donor funds. The provision of adult education at VTCs is not however accounted for with a separate budget line. Instead, the funds dedicated to the provision of AE are budgeted as part of the budget line for goods and services.

The general budget for EARK is determined by the Ministry of Finance. According to a report assessing the implementation of the MLSW Employment Sector Strategy, the EARK budget amounts to 0.13% of GDP (EUR 7.9 billion), which is low compared with the OECD average of 0.56%¹⁰⁷.

The budget is centralised in the sense that it is planned by the VTCs themselves, but spending has to be approved by the Employment Agency. The lack of a separate budget line and centralisation deprives VTCs of their budgetary discretion and decision-making power, and thus hinders their efficient functioning. It also challenges cooperation with different donors, as they hesitate to allocate funds to a budget line that is not specifically dedicated to adult education provision. The budget spent by VTCs on course delivery depends on the professional profile, but it can vary from EUR 100 (administration) to EUR 300 (construction) per candidate¹⁰⁸. Adult learners attend the courses free of charge.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Qehaja, L. (2019), p. 25

¹⁰⁸ Interview with a VTC representative

Private providers and the civil society sector

Adult learners participating in education or training programmes offered by private providers cover the expenses themselves. The revenues generated constitute the largest share of private providers' budgets. Learners have to invest a tuition fee of around EUR 2,800 per year to attend a level 5 training programme, in ICT for example, at a private training institution. Costs are calculated on the basis of expenses for equipment, software licences, maintenance and trainers¹⁰⁹.

Civil society actors and non-governmental organisations are usually non-profit orientated, and aim to provide education offers at the lowest possible rate, or ideally free of charge, for their learners. Topics including democratisation, human rights and the integration of vulnerable target groups such as minorities are mostly donor funded. In some cases, there are government funds allocated through the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. Lack of dependable funding is a major problem for NGOs and civil society organisations. Many NGOs have not yet developed capacities to apply for funding from the government or international donors, or to generate their own revenues. This makes their offers fragile and unsustainable¹¹⁰. Greater financial independence (through international funding or own revenue generation) might not only secure continuity for education offers, but also raise incentives to invest in the continuous professional development of teachers and trainers, and in turn foster the quality of education.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with a private training provider

¹¹⁰ Interview with an NGO representative

¹¹¹ Interview with a VTC representative

Donor projects

Due to budgetary restrictions, many VET schools and centres as well as NGOs depend on donor support for the development of their adult education programmes. DVV International is a leader and a major player when it comes to the directed support of adult education (see Chapter VI for a more detailed description of DVVI's adult education activities in Kosovo). It supports adult education providers such as VTCs in the technical development of curricula for specific training programmes (tailoring or bakery for example), and through the remuneration of professional trainers. Financial donors are for example helping local providers to upgrade their outdated ICT hardware¹¹¹. Other international organisations cover AE, but often only within a larger VET or basic education programme. A number of different internationally-funded projects are implementing activities that involve adult education such as: ALLED II, GIZ or EYE (see Chapter X for a more comprehensive overview of international donor engagement in the adult education sector in Kosovo).

The information gathered in this chapter underlines the fragility of the Kosovan adult education system when it comes to financial foundations. Due to budgetary restrictions and scarce public resources, public AE providers are limited in their capacities to improve human resources and knowledge, increase professionalisation, or develop adult education curricula. NGOs hold their offers up with short-term, insecure funding from international donors. The system seems hardly self-sustaining at present, and is largely closed to development and innovation.

VI. Institutions and providers

Adult education in Kosovo is closely aligned with the vocational education and training system. The VET system is envisaged to be accessible to all citizens, offering training for early school leavers, upper secondary school students, and early leavers as well as adults. According to the Law on VET, VET activities are supposed to concentrate on 1. the development of competences and training for employment of individuals”, 2. the “creation of a general and professional culture in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning”, and 3. the “recognition of individual competences based on the occupational standards of the relevant level”.

VET providers in Kosovo can operate in the formal education system, as well as in the non-formal system. Adult learners who have completed a formal education programme may enter the labour market, or take up post-secondary education or higher education at university, depending on the programme’s qualification level. Formal VET qualifications can be acquired within the education system with upper secondary education at vocational schools (Grades 10-12), and with post-secondary vocational education and training at colleges (this is for students who have completed upper secondary education). Graduates of non-formal VET or of other adult education programmes can instead only proceed to the labour market¹¹².

Non-formal VET consists of

- **vocational training**, usually job-related or as a job creation measure, offered in public or private vocational training centres, or at the workplace
- **adult compensatory education**, directed at early school leavers; the learning content is derived from formal education programmes, usually offered by schools
- **adult learning of various types**, such as language training, ICT, handicrafts, arts, music or culture; courses are offered by private providers or NGOs.

The group of VET and adult education providers is diverse, ranging from upper secondary public providers to private institutions, NGOs and professional associations.

- **Vocational Education Schools** may be public or private, and offer formal education and training
- **Post-secondary VET colleges**, only provided by private institutions
- **Centres of Competence**, public, offer initial and continuous VET for young people and adults
- **Vocational Training Centres**, public, run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, offer continuous VET for job-seekers
- **Public or private training providers, NGOs**, offer non-formal education and training

Providers of formal adult education

Formal qualifications at **VET schools and colleges** range from NQF levels 3 to 5. Level 3 is completed on accomplishing Grades 10 and 11. From here, students can enter the labour market or continue VET education. Level 4 is reached on completion of Grade 12. Once Grade 12 is completed, students are eligible to take the “Matura” exam, and then start with higher education. Alter-

¹¹² Danuza, T., Mehmeti, F. & Saqipi, B. (2016). [EQF Referencing Report of the Kosovo National Qualifications Framework](#), p. 16

natively, students enter the labour market or continue at post-secondary VET level. Level 5 qualifications can be achieved with one- or two-year programmes at **post-secondary VET colleges**, which equip students with senior expertise, and with an entitlement to continue with higher education. There are 68 vocational education schools in Kosovo offering level 3 and 4 NQF education programmes in the arts and humanities, business and the law, administration, ICT, engineering, manufacturing and construction, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary, health and welfare, and services. VET schools are licenced educational institutions which educate their students along curricula that have been approved by the MEST. Public VET schools are operated by MEDs. There are currently nine providers which deliver, assess and certify post-secondary or level-5 qualifications accredited by the NQA¹¹³. VET colleges offer training, for example in health occupations, costume design, applied technical sciences and ICT. Two examples of post-secondary VET colleges are the European College of Kosovo and the Universum College.

The **European College of Kosovo**¹¹⁴ is a private higher education institution. It operates a centre for career development and employment, and a training and testing centre. The target groups are students of all levels and employees from public or private sector institutions, or non-governmental organisations.

The **Universum College**¹¹⁵ (Kolegji Universum) is a private college for higher education offering study programmes from vocational to Master's level. Developing the college as a centre for life-long learning forms part of its mission.

As mentioned earlier, the quality of education at VET schools and colleges today is still considered by many citizens to be inferior to higher university education. According to the most recent ETF Torino Process assessment report, this is due to the fact that learning profiles at VET schools are not matched with labour market needs and do not correspond with vacancies. Furthermore, education content remains highly theoretical, even though the focus should be placed on practical and work-based learning. Schools and teachers have a hard time when it comes to organising practical training due to a lack of equipment and pedagogical skills in teaching practice. School directors are often overwhelmed with management and school maintenance¹¹⁶.

Centres of Competence are post-secondary non-tertiary public VET schools that provide specialised training in a professional field, and qualifications from NQF levels 4 to 5. CoCs offer regular three-year programmes as well as short courses¹¹⁷.

There are currently six CoCs operating:

- VUSS “Shtjefën Gjeçovi” in Pristina, with ICT profile¹¹⁸

¹¹³ National Qualification Authority, [Accredited Institutions for qualifications in the NQF](#) overview

¹¹⁴ [European College of Kosovo](#) website

¹¹⁵ [Universum College](#) website

¹¹⁶ Viertel, E. (2019)

¹¹⁷ Zymberi, F. et al. (2018). [Analysis and research on level 5 education qualifications at VET schools in the Republic of Kosovo](#)

¹¹⁸ LuxDev [“KOSOVO - Upgrade of Gjin Gazulli Technical School to a new Centre of Competence \(CoC\) in ICT in Pristina”](#) news report

- VUSS “11 Marsi” in Prizren
- CoC in Skenderaj
- CoC Malisheva, with economic profile
- CoC Ferizaj with health and medical profiles, recently adopted a level-5 programme for assistants for children with special needs
- CoC Prizren, with profiles of economics, trade, travel and tourism, since 2017 with a level-5 programme for career counsellors

The CoCs are managed by AVETAE. The curriculum at the CoCs is designed to be more competence based than content based. One of their main characteristics is their close relationship with the business sector, which allows them to provide hands-on and work-related training. The establishment of CoCs has been largely funded by international donors. This is why, in contrast to VET schools, CoCs commonly have “well-equipped workshops, well-trained teachers and instructors”, “superb facilities, good links with the labour market, and are intended to serve as a model for vocational schools in Kosovo”¹¹⁹. Two CoCs have established official public-private partnerships (CoC Ferizaj, CoC Pristina). The coming years will show whether the CoCs can be sustained without extensive international investment. The KESP 2017-2021 foresees regulations to enable the creation of own revenue funding at CoCs, and continuous professional development for CoC managers and teaching staff.

Providers of non-formal adult education

Next to VET schools, colleges and CoCs which largely represent the formal and initial VET sector, there is the non-formal public VET sector,

predominantly represented by eight **Vocational Training Centres** managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare through the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo¹²⁰. VTCs offer training and retraining for registered job-seekers, the unemployed, and beneficiaries of career guidance services. Moreover, VTCs are responsible for recognising prior learning, monitoring other training providers, preparing individual training plans, as well as certification. The eight VTCs are located in seven regions: Pristina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica). The VTCs offer a total of 69 workshops on 30 different professions focusing on practical training (training consists of 30% theory and 70% practice). Learners can choose between two programmes: institutional or combined training. Institutional training takes place at VTCs; it combines professional development with practical skills. The goal of this training is to increase personal employment perspectives or maintain employment. VTCs have established training partnerships with businesses for the combined training. Theoretical content is conveyed at VTCs, and the practical content is conveyed within enterprises (students are provided with theoretical material from VTCs for this part). All training takes place within a flexible, modular system with modules stretching over 3-6 months, and a final certificate is issued based on testing after each module, as well as on a final test.

Despite central organisation, cooperation and collaboration among VTCs, and between VTCs and VET schools, is rather rare, and mainly takes place in terms of exchanging experience and decision-making within the regional school board. Facilities, equipment and other resources are not

¹¹⁹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2019)

¹²⁰ Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, [Training centres](#) website

shared. One interviewee reports that a VTC has established cooperation with the neighbouring country Albania to allow residents to attend training at the VTC, and vice versa¹²¹.

A prominent non-governmental, institutional advocate of lifelong learning and non-formal adult education in Kosovo is **DVV International** with its local office in Pristina¹²². Actively engaged in Kosovo since 2005, DVVI Kosovo strives to improve and expand adult education offers, to improve political and legal frameworks for adult education (most importantly through the law on adult education, the law on vocational education and training and the Kosovo Education Strategic Plans), and to integrate adult education efforts with the fight against poverty. In addition to the general public, DVVI Kosovo offers targeted activities for women (especially from rural areas), people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. The work of DVVI Kosovo encompasses several focal points:

- a) Adult education and train-the-trainer programmes for individuals and NGOs in skills development and democratic citizenship. Two recent activities included training for trainers on human rights and democratic citizenship (together with the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC)), and skills development for female entrepreneurs in order to develop and maintain their business activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. People with disabilities participated in training on ICT in January.
- b) Training of teachers and trainers in methods and didactics of adult education in accordance with the Curriculum GlobALE (see

Chapter IX). Five Curriculum GlobALE modules on adult education in Kosovo have recently been published.

- c) Improvement of curricula and programmes for adult education. In response to the shortcomings with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and digitalisation, DVVI Kosovo supported two Centres of Competence with the provision of online learning platforms for IT and marketing skills. DVVI Kosovo also contributes with the development of occupational standards and modular courses for Youth Centres, VET schools, CoCs or VTCs.
- d) Better cooperation between Ministries, NGOs and private training establishments, through conferences and networking activities such as the Lifelong Learning Week, which gives various stakeholders from the political arena, educational institutions, and civil society, the opportunity to discuss the importance of adult education as part of lifelong learning, discover innovative developments, and react to current challenges.
- e) Qualification of decision-makers to advance financing of AE through the public budget, to increase the quality of ALE, and ensure non-discriminatory participation. DVVI Kosovo organised a capacity-building seminar for practitioners in RPL, together with the NQA, in October 2020. Together with the NQA, it has developed the “Guidelines and Programme for Recognition of Prior Learning Coordinators, Mentors and Assessors”¹²³.
- f) Linkage to regional and international approaches (such as the Andragogical Regional Academy (ARA), the International Confer-

¹²¹ Interview with VTC representative

¹²² [DVV International in Kosovo](#) website

¹²³ National Qualification Authority (2018). [Guidelines and Programme for Recognition of Prior Learning Coordinators, Mentors and Assessors](#)

ences on Adult Education, and requirements emerging from EU accession procedure). With the implementation of the Adult Education Survey in Kosovo, DVVI contributes to the understanding of the state of adult education and international comparability (see Chapter VIII).

After years of engagement, DVVI Kosovo is well connected with the main political stakeholders (MEST, MLSW, MCYS, AVETAE, EARK, NQA), educational institutions (Faculty of Education of the University of Pristina and the Pedagogical Institute Kosovo), as well as civil society and international donor organisations.

A number of larger and smaller, public and private institutions and organisations are active providers of adult education in Kosovo in addition to DVV International Kosovo, and a selection of them is presented below:

Private providers

Cactus Education is a good example of successful commercial private adult education providers. Cactus has specialised in the area of providing ICT skills. It operates two business lines: a) professional training for government institutions, larger companies or the banking sector, b) private VET schools. It offers a two-year ICT study programme, and was the first institution to be officially accredited by the MEST and NQA in the new NFQ. Meanwhile, the 7th generation of students is being trained at Cactus.

There are a number of **language schools** in Kosovo which are accredited to offer language train-

ing for people of all ages. Among the language schools accredited by the NQA are the New Age School, Smart Centre, Oxford Studio, ECO-Education Oxford, Britannica-ELT, The Cambridge School, and the English Language School.

Employers, firms or companies can be important stakeholders for the development of labour-market orientated skills development. Some companies operate their own training centres with training courses accredited by the NQA, such as Telecom of Kosovo with its Training and Development Centre, and the Kosovo Energy Corporation also has a Training Centre – KEK. In general, however, Kosovan employers are not well connected with the education system. According to findings from the World Bank STEP survey, only one employer in five on average is in regular contact with the education system. Exchange is more frequent in branches with greater hiring potential such as state- or foreign-owned companies, and larger firms. The purpose of interaction mainly relates to the provision of internships and training of workers. Strategic exchange, for example on curriculum development, is less frequent. Most firms do not offer their employees opportunities for professional development. Foreign- or state-owned firms are most likely to provide training (on the job, internal or external)¹²⁴.

Public providers

American Corner Pristina¹²⁵ is a section within the National Library of Kosovo, co-funded by the U.S. Embassy in Pristina. American Corner Pristina constitutes an attempt to establish a cultural link between Kosovo and the United States

¹²⁴ World Bank (2019). [Kosovo Country Report: Findings from the Skills towards Employment and Productivity Survey](#). Washington, DC: World Bank.

¹²⁵ [American Corner Pristina](#) website

through offering access to literature, English language training, and lectures.

The **Kosovo Chamber of Commerce** operates the online platform www.aap-oeq.org in order to facilitate an exchange between young people seeking employment and companies.

Employment Promotion Agency Kosovo (AP-PK)¹²⁶ targets the socio-economic reintegration of various target groups through counselling, training, certification, job-mediation and entrepreneurship training.

Non-profit providers

Balkan Sunflowers (BSFK)¹²⁷ operates five learning centres for children in four municipalities. Its programmes aim to increase the inclusion and participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian people in education and in civic life in Kosovo. BSFK offers training and professional development for staff, volunteers and activists on the ground.

The **Diakonie Training Centre**¹²⁸ provides low-cost training for young people and adults from vulnerable groups to prepare them for the labour market. Some of its courses are accredited by the NQA.

The **Getting Competent Association**¹²⁹ brings together trainers, educators, skills training organisations, representatives from firms or businesses and other individuals interested in VET in order

to foster mutual learning, communication and exchange. Getting Competent operates a Skills Academy¹³⁰ where participants can improve their personal and professional skills for the labour market.

The **Kosova Education Centre**¹³¹ is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation established in 2000 by the Soros Foundation. To advance the quality of education, KEC engages in teacher training (methodologies and leadership), education research and consultancy in education. It implements training of trainers for adult education and civic education courses, and is a cooperation partner for several international organisations.

The Kosovo **Women's Network** (KWN) comprises 158 member organisations and partners, and engages in improving access to education for minority ethnic groups, fighting gender stereotypes and providing education about feminism and female health topics.

The **Peer Educators Network** (PEN)¹³² is a non-governmental youth organisation which aims through workshops and training to empower young women and men to be agents of social change.

“Qendra Rinore” – youth centres – are spread across the Kosovan territory (Ardhmeria-Kline, Gjilan, Lipjan). Activities address young people, and range from informal education and awareness raising, through non-formal civil society capacity-building to the implementation of training

¹²⁶ [Employment Promotion Agency Kosovo](#) website

¹²⁷ [Balkan Sunflowers](#) website

¹²⁸ [Diakonie Kosovar](#) website

¹²⁹ [Getting Competent](#) website

¹³⁰ [Getting Competent Skills Academy](#) website

¹³¹ [Kosovo Education Centre](#) website

¹³² [Peer Educators Network](#) website

courses (computer, language, maths, life skills), conferences and exchanges.

Women for Women Kosova¹³³ is a network which supports female entrepreneurs with training and consultancy (vocational training, production of handicrafts, business training). Other women are trained in advocacy and as change agents.

Much attention has been paid in recent years to developing the system of formal VET provision, particularly initial VET. The review above shows that further engagement is needed, as the system still faces major challenges. Other public and private providers of adult education in formal or non-formal VET mainly target job-seekers. Some offers also include possibilities for continuous professional development, which however is not yet widely recognised. There are scattered

providers of fee-based training and courses, mainly in ICT, the beauty sector, construction, digital skills and business administration.

The most prominent advocate and provider of non-formal education in Kosovo is DVVI, promoting a holistic approach to establishing adult education which targets various levels of administration and groups in society. In addition, there is a small number of non-profit non-formal education providers. In terms of content, their offers range across various topics for professional and personal development, as well as democracy and citizenship education. The biggest challenge for NGOs is the lack of sustainable funding (as explained in Chapter V). There is no sector-wide network of AE providers on the ground which could coordinate AE and create synergies. The rare offers are therefore not yet readily accessible to the broader public.

¹³³ [Women for Women Kosovo](#) website

VII. Programmes

Adult education and learning programmes in Kosovo can be divided into three distinct categories:

- Basic compensatory education
- Vocational training programmes leading to and enhancing professional qualifications
- Other programmes independent of qualification but liberal in their subject matter such as community participation, civic education and cultural programmes

Basic compensatory education is regulated in the AI 12/2014 (entitled “Exceptions in age on the occasion of enrolment in education and training for adults”)¹³⁴. It is targeted at adults who dropped out of the regular education system early. Programmes are offered by the public schools under the supervision of the MEST. Compensatory education is offered for Grades 1-9 of primary and lower secondary schools, and Grades 10-13 of upper secondary, including VET schools. Two years of regular education can be completed within one compensatory school year. Enrolled students must attend 18 weeks of education and training. If the group of enrolled attendees is smaller than 12, schools are obliged to organise at least consultative learning where adult learners attend only 10% of the contact hours originally envisaged. The schools develop annual working plans that entail the organisation and implementation of compensatory adult education, including registration criteria. Following the candidates’ registration, the schools must

prepare and publish an annual calendar with the following information for the candidates: teaching schedule, teaching curricula, the list of teachers engaged, the assessment panel, exam schedule, professional practice plan, and other relevant activities related to the AE. Certificates and diplomas received through AE are the same as those obtained through a certification via the regular learning route.

Adults who are interested in acquiring a qualification or re-qualification, or engaging in further professional development, can participate in vocational training programmes which result in the acquisition of a qualification in accordance with the NQF. Vocational training in Kosovo is the largest category of active labour market measures¹³⁵. There are three types of qualification in the NQF that can be acquired in a non-formal setting¹³⁶: National Vocational Qualifications, Qualifications based on International Standards, and Tailored Qualifications. These qualifications are offered by public and private training providers, companies, enterprises and VET schools, all of which must meet the accreditation criteria to offer, assess and certify qualifications defined by the National Qualifications Authority.

National Vocational Qualifications (NQV) are learning outcome qualifications that are developed on the basis of the national occupational standards (OS). The latter are “statements of work performance reflecting the ability to successfully

¹³⁴ MEST [Administrative Instruction 12/2014](#) On exceptions in age on the occasion of enrolment in education and training for adults

¹³⁵ World Bank (2019)

¹³⁶ Higher education qualifications, general education qualifications and national combined VET/general qualifications are awarded in the formal education setting.

complete the functions required in an occupation, as well as the application of knowledge, skills and understanding in an occupation”¹³⁷. OS are usually initiated and developed by the MEST, MLSW, AVETAE or social partners. Due to public budget restrictions, the process of OS development is largely donor funded. Occupational standards are developed through in-depth occupational analysis. The process includes direct observations of the workers and workshops together with the occupational experts and workers coming from the area. OS are therefore considered the direct link between the provision of education and the needs of the labour market. Following the development process, the OS undergo a quality assurance and verification process steered by the NQA. This is to ensure that OS are aligned with the needs of the sector. After approval by the NQA, the OS are then endorsed as National Occupational Standards by the Council for VET. Once authorised, they can be used by providers to develop NVQs. NVQs are attached to the ECVET, which means that candidates can accumulate and transfer the acquired learning outcomes in the shape of credits: 1 ECVET equals 20 notional working hours, one module needs to have at least one credit in order to be validated, approved and registered in the NQF. Credits can be placed at levels 2 to 5 of the NQF. In order to provide, assess and certify NVQs, qualification developers have to meet criteria and standards defined in the NQF and by the NQA. In addition, all providers have to be accredited as a certifying centre by the NQA in order to be able to offer the validated and approved NVQ. The certificates issued to adult learners for the national qualifications are endorsed by the NQA. They can be

awarded for the successful completion of the entire qualification, known as a ‘national certificate’, or for the partial qualification/module referred to as a ‘certificate of achievements’.

116 OS (Occupational Standards) have been verified by the NQA (National Qualifications Authority to date and approved by CVETAE (Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education) as National OS. More than 40 NVQ’s (National Vocational Qualifications) have been validated and approved in the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) in services (beauty, administration, tailoring, finance), construction, food processing and transport and communication¹³⁸. The NQA has accredited 56 public and private providers so far to offer, assess and certify these NVQ¹³⁹.

Qualification based on International Standards is a qualification programme based on occupational standards approved in countries other than Kosovo. These OS can be used to develop a qualification only if they are not developed, quality assured, or approved at national level. They need to be quality assured and approved by an international awarding body. These OS usually cover sectors that Kosovo is not able to follow for developmental reasons, such as ICT. In order to use these OS to develop qualifications and register

¹³⁷ National Qualification Authority (2011). [Developing and Verifying Occupational Standards](#)

¹³⁸ National Qualification Authority, [Accredited Institutions for qualifications in the NQF](#) overview

¹³⁹ Ibid.

them in the NQF, qualification developers need official written approval by the original developers or competent bodies. In principle, these qualifications may be situated at levels 2 to 5 of the NQF, and have a credit system equivalent to ECVET attached. Similar to NVQ, the qualification designed by international OS needs to be validated and approved in the NQF, and providers must meet accreditation criteria and standards to offer, certify and assess these qualifications. The certificates issued to adult learners for qualifications based on international standards are endorsed by the NQA.

There are currently thirteen Qualifications based on International Standards in ICT and accounting and auditing which have been validated and approved in the NQF, while there are seven private providers accredited to offer, assess and certify these qualifications¹⁴⁰.

Tailored qualifications are designed in accordance with the operational needs of a particular organisation, agency or enterprise. They serve to achieve general or professional knowledge, skills and competences. The outcomes of tailored qualifications are knowledge, skills and competences based on standards identified by the organisation, agency or enterprise which requires the qualification. In principle, these qualifications may be placed at levels 2 to 5 of the NQF, and have a credit system equivalent to ECVET. Similar to other types of qualification in the NQF, tailored qualifications are subject to a validation and approval process, and providers who wish to offer, assess and certify these qualifications must undergo an accreditation process. The certificates issued to adult learners for the tailored qualifications are endorsed by the NQA.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

There are four Tailored qualifications which have been validated and approved in the NQF in Public Safety. Two public providers are accredited to offer, assess and certify these qualifications¹⁴¹.

Despite the abovementioned ALE programmes that relate to the NQF, there is a large number of programmes that do lead to qualifications but are not validated and registered in the NQF. Likewise, providers of such programmes do not undergo external quality assurance by the NQA, nor are they licenced by the MEST. Since these programmes and providers operate outside the official formal and non-formal education system, they are not part of public management information systems, and thus no official data is available with respect to the extent and scope of the provision.

An exception are programmes of some public providers such as the VTCs managed by the Employment Agency under the MLSW. Education programmes at VTCs are placed at NQF level 3. As explained in Chapter VI, VTCs target job-seekers, and offer a wide range of programmes that lead to qualifications. However, only a small number of these programmes are validated and placed in the NQF (such as administrative assistant, welding, and makeup artist). Moreover, a regular system of labour market needs assessment is currently missing that could aid in the implementation of training policies. Even though many programmes are designed to match the needs of the labour market (most appropriately in the construction and service sectors), VTCs are often unable to meet the required NQA criteria and standards in terms of human resources and equipment. The following professional profiles are usually on offer at VTCs:

construction, services, chef, waiter, auto-mechanic/auto-electrician, hydraulic and pneumatic, welding, business administration, industrial electronics, servicing of white goods, IT, tailoring, hairdresser, make up and baking.

A large part of adult education provision is made up of non-formal programmes that are targeted at adults but do not aim to provide official and formal qualifications. Examples are training on education for democracy, human rights and tolerance, courses about EU integration, health protection, entrepreneurship (start-up skills), environmental protection, as well as cultural and intercultural development. In addition, there are other specific occupational training activities aimed at further professional development. Participants are usu-

ally awarded a symbolic certificate of attendance upon completion of these programmes. These forms of adult education are organised for example in training sessions, conferences, workshops, seminars, debates or study visits. Since they do not lead to qualifications, the programmes and providers are not subject to quality assurance by the NQA. Non-formal ALE programmes are offered by a wide range of providers such as national and international non-governmental organisations, companies, enterprises, public and private training providers, institutes, libraries and chambers (see Chapter VI). All in all, non-formal programmes are highly decentralised, and there are no state-wide programmes promoting the participation of adults apart from employment and labour market topics.

VIII. Participation and non-participation

Detailed analysis of participation and non-participation in adult education in the Kosovan context is difficult due to the lack of a comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation system. The gap in statistical data hampers the evidence-based development of national policies, as well as the target group-orientated alignment of adult education offers.

Public information that exists regarding people who participate in adult education programmes is somewhat fragmented at present. Data is frequently reduced to participation numbers, and occasionally age groups.

The Mid-term evaluation report for the KESP 2017-2021 acknowledges that data collection on participation in adult education still remains a challenge¹⁴². It nonetheless reports that the education management information system (EMIS) has started to collect data on adult education. Accordingly, 1,912 adults were involved in vocational secondary education during the school year 2018/19, 636 of whom were women. Participation numbers have remained stable since the school year 2015/16. There is no information about the age of learners. EMIS only covers participation by adults in formal programmes; it does not provide data on the inclusion of adults in non-formal education. No data is available on the number of hours in adult education programmes (although 200,000 hours per year has been defined as the KESP target), nor can the report provide the per-

centage of adults participating in lifelong learning programmes.

A 2017 research report that was drafted on behalf of MLSW, the Employment Agency and DVVI assessed practices in implementing adult education programmes at national VTCs¹⁴³. The authors found out that participation was quite balanced with respect to age groups. 37% of learners were under the age of 25, 32% were between 26 and 35 years old, and 30% were older than 35. Most learners already had previous qualifications; 42% had prior VET education, and 32% had a higher education certificate.

A report on the implementation of the MLSW Employment Sector Strategy gives an insight to the group of beneficiaries of employment services and ALMMs¹⁴⁴. Accordingly, 5.8% of unemployed people or job-seekers were trained in VTCs in 2018. 2.3% of them were beneficiaries of combined VTC and company training. 3.8% of all job-seekers participated in ALMMs. The largest group of ALMM beneficiaries (56%) was 25 to 29 years old, followed by the group of 15 to 24 year-olds (31%).

Some considerable work remains to be done for state and other important national stakeholders in order to improve data collection. The KESP mid-term evaluation report can provide progress data on only one out of three defined targets on adult education. The informative value of data is often

¹⁴² Mehmeti, S. et al. (2019), p. 150

¹⁴³ Mehmetaj & Likaj (2017). [Research Report. Assessment of Practices in Implementing Adult Education Programmes at Vocational Training Centres.](#)

¹⁴⁴ Qehaja, L. (2019)

impaired through missing reference data, e.g. illustrating the ratio of participating adults (age 25 to 64) to young people below the age of 25. In order to be able to develop evidence-based policies and programmes, data collection needs to be extended beyond participation numbers pure and simple, and include information about the socio-economic background, especially age, and motivation to participate.

Adult Education Survey Kosovo

With the finalisation of the first Kosovan Adult Education Survey in 2021, initiated by DVVI and DIE and implemented by the Riinvest Institute for Development Research, more precise information is now available about adult learners, their motivation to participate or not participate in adult education, and their preferences¹⁴⁵. The survey was administered in line with the established methodology of the European Adult Education Survey¹⁴⁶.

The survey addressed the group of working-age people aged from 18 to 64, and asked about participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning in the twelve months prior to the survey. 2,394 people in Kosovo participated in the survey between October and December 2020. The data is representative of the Kosovan population.

The survey results show that, in general, only small numbers of people (33%) are looking for information about further learning opportunities. Young people aged 18 to 24 are most active in

searching (45%). They are more active than older age groups (23% among the those aged 25 to 44, and 4% among those aged 45 to 64). People found the desired information mostly through Internet research, colleagues and social media in the majority of cases (51%). Employers, civil society organisations and local authorities are seldom contacted for information about adult education opportunities.

Table 2 below gives an indication of the status of adult education participation in Kosovo. It shows that only a small share of the survey participants above the age of 18 attended some form of formal education (14%). This is higher than the EU-27 average, and is plausible as the EU sample does not include 18 to 24 year-olds, who are more likely to still participate in initial formal education. More than 50% of participants in formal education indicated that they were not working at the time of the training. Only around 20% of the respondents indicated that the formal training took place mostly or only during paid working hours.

The minor significance of continuous education among adults in Kosovo becomes evident in the non-formal education participation rate. Only 13% of the respondents has participated in some form of non-formal education within the past twelve months prior to the survey. This is considerably lower than the EU-27 average¹⁴⁷. On the other hand, over three-quarters of all respondents indicated that they had engaged in some form of informal learning, which is above average for the EU Member States¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁵ Riinvest (2021), Adult Education Survey in Kosovo (Draft April 2021).

¹⁴⁶ Eurostat, [Adult Education Survey Reference Metadata](#)

¹⁴⁷ It cannot be determined at this point whether the low participation rate is partially due to COVID-19 restrictions.

¹⁴⁸ The substantial difference between informal learning participation rates in Kosovo and the EU-27 might be attributed to differences in the formulation of the survey questions.

TABLE 2 Adult education participation rates in Kosovo compared with EU-27 averages

	Kosovo (2020, age 18-64)	EU-27 (2016 ¹⁴⁹ , age 25-64; UK not included)
Formal education	14%	5.0%
Non-formal education	13%	41.4%
Informal learning	78%	59.5%

Source: Own presentation based on Riinvest (2021).

It tends to be the group of young adults which makes use of adult education offers. The survey results show that participation rates in all three forms of adult education are highest for young adults aged 18-34, and that participation decreases with age.

Moreover, the survey results show that participation in AE is closely related to household income. Participation in adult education increases with increasing monthly household income. The highest participation rate in formal education was determined amongst respondents with a household income of more than EUR 2,000. Participation in non-formal education programmes is most likely in households with a medium income of EUR 800 to 1,200, whereas participation rates in informal education and learning activities are distributed rather evenly across household incomes.

In general, the differences between male and female participation rates are small. There is a slight

¹⁴⁹ The next European wide AES will be conducted in 2022.

trend towards men tending to participate in adult education more often than women with increasing age. In the 45 to 54 age group, for example, the share of participating men is 58%, compared with 42% of women. Women in the younger age groups are more likely to participate (more than 50% of all participants in formal and non-formal education until the 35-44 age group are female). This gender difference is more pronounced in informal education and learning, where the share of female participants only exceeds that of male participants in the 18-24 age group.

Gender differences become more visible in the selection of formal training fields. In line with traditional patterns of employment selection, women are more interested in generic programmes and in qualification, health and welfare, social sciences, journalism, law and education, whereas men are more likely to participate in formal education programmes on ICT, engineering and agriculture.

In non-formal education, the data shows that the larger share of all non-formal education activities is job related (51%). Correspondingly, motivation to participate in non-formal education activities is largely job related. People attend non-formal education in order to improve their career prospects, improve their job-related skills, or prepare for a job change, in almost 60% of cases. 28% of all respondents state that they are taking part out of a personal motivation (“to obtain knowledge useful in my everyday life”, “to increase my knowledge of a subject that interests me”, “to meet new people/for fun” or “to do my voluntary work better”).

That having been said, the learning activity is only financed by the employer in 25% of all cases, and

training takes place during paid working hours in 37% of cases. 18.7% of all non-formal education activities consists of guided on-the-job training. The majority are courses (57%) and workshops (18%). Only 6% of the activities take place in the shape of private lessons.

With respect to informal learning, respondents most frequently report learning using computers, online or offline (28%), and learning using printed material such as books or professional magazines (27%) (see Table 3). Respondents are least likely to learn from family members, friends or colleagues, which might be partially due to the social distancing regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic that have been applicable in the last 12 months prior to the survey.

TABLE 3 Participation in informal learning by learning form

Learning form	Participation rate
Learning using a computer (online or offline)	28%
Learning using printed material	27%
Learning through television/ radio/video	23%
Learning by visiting learning centres (including libraries)	9%
Learning through guided tours in museums and historical or natural or industrial sites	8%
Learning from a family member, friend or colleague	5%

Source: Own presentation based on Riinvest (2021)

As noted above, participation in informal learning decreases with increasing age. The data shows that learning with computers is still less common among people aged between 55 and 64, with 20% of people in this age group stating that they are learning using a computer, compared with 29% among the 25-34 age group. Similarly, older people frequent learning centres or libraries much less often (3.9%) than young people (16.4%). In turn, older people are more likely than younger people to learn using printed material or through TV or radio.

The respondents justify non-participation in formal and non-formal education activities with similar reasons. People primarily do not participate because their family or professional obligations do not leave time for further training or education (a reason selected by 22% of the respondents). No personal or job-related need of further education is a further reason for non-participation. Around 7% indicate that the training and education opportunities are too expensive.

In summary, the results from the AES Kosovo suggest that overall participation of adults in education and learning is low, especially in non-formal education, where Kosovo is far behind the participation rates in the EU. Most survey respondents are not interested in continuing education and learning, as only 33% look for information regarding further learning opportunities. The AES data shows that participation in all forms of education and learning is related to socio-economic indicators such as age and household income in the expected direction. Gender guides the selection of formal education fields, and the data suggests that men are more likely to engage in further training with increasing age. In general, family and professional obligations keep

people from participating in adult education programmes. What drives the participation of adults in NFE is the work context (improving job-related knowledge and career prospects). At the same time, interested individuals seldom receive support from their employers (be it financial or in terms of time).

The adult population still largely associates education with formal education, job-related training, re-training and certification. Participants are usually highly motivated if the goal of further training is getting a job or rising up on the career ladder. The data from the AES thus largely reflects impressions that were also conveyed in

the interviews. Given the close interconnection of AE with VET in Kosovo, finding or remaining in employment is the prime motivation to participate in further education courses, especially for young people¹⁵⁰. Not many people are currently participating in adult education with the sole motivation of personal self-development.

With greater flexibility required by the changing job market, young people are starting to realise that continuous education and permanent learning are becoming more and more necessary in order to survive on the labour market. AE and lifelong learning will play a much bigger role for them in the future.

¹⁵⁰ This was also suggested by interviewees from the private sector.

IX. Teaching personnel and professionalisation

The andragogic qualification of adult educators is an essential element for the thorough development of a lifelong learning infrastructure in any educational system. The EU's Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning states that "improving the quality of adult education staff, for instance by defining competence profiles, establishing effective systems for initial training and professional development, and facilitating the mobility of teachers, trainers and other adult education staff", is necessary to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training.¹⁵¹ This implies that it is not suitable to assign teachers to adult education programmes who have been trained to teach children. Compared with children, adult learners already possess knowledge and skills, and can fall back on their experience. More so than teachers at primary and secondary level, adult educators therefore have to take on roles as group leaders, facilitators and trainers, a demand which places different requirements on the educators' personal and social as well as methodological and didactical competences.

The workspaces of today's adult educators include a wide range of didactical and non-didactical activities. Didactical activities include learning as well as educational counselling and planning, teaching, learning guidance, as well as developing learning and education material, and evaluation. In addition, adult educators might also engage in management and marketing tasks, public relations work, as well as educational policy committee work. The diversity of activities and focal areas of each single adult educator makes the establish-

ment of an overarching definition of professionalisation and qualification standards in AE both difficult to achieve and crucial at the same time.

Adult educators' individual professional qualifications are generally based on formal scientific education, as well as on formal and informal further training in didactics and methods. The systematic acquisition of theory-based knowledge and practical skills is usually transmitted through the education system (which ideally offers university education for teachers on certain subjects as well as theoretical and practical training in didactics and methodology to work with adults). Formal academic education may be further expanded and consolidated individually through informal self-learning, for example from professional-scholarly learning content from websites, journals, magazines and conferences.

A professional lifelong learning environment is furthermore characterised by the existence of policy committees and professional associations which regulate and guide the process of licencing and continuing professional development (CPD). The development of the sector may be guided by common, precise professional standards and socially-mediated descriptions of expected behaviour within the domain (in the sense of desired competencies and ethics).

In combination, professional development, common (ethical) standards and societal orientation have the potential to increase public recognition of the value of adult education for society and

¹⁵¹ European Commission (2011)

contribute to the general professionalisation of this area within education¹⁵².

In terms of the abovementioned characteristics of a professional adult education environment (guided by laws, continuing education, ethics and exchange), the level of professionalisation and professional development of AE in Kosovo remains rather low despite existing policies and regulations that address the issue. The problem of insufficient professional development does not exist in adult education in exclusion, but concerns all areas of education. More than half of the teachers in secondary education were unqualified in 2016, and most VET teachers had no teaching qualification¹⁵³. Moreover, the fact that many VET teachers lack pedagogical training seemed to be generally accepted.

The currently-applicable Law No. 04/L-143 on Adult Education and Training lacks a specific provision which would require AE trainers to pass a minimum of AE-specific training. Law No. 04/L-138 on Vocational Education and Training is more concrete. Article 24 is dedicated to teaching staff, and states that “teaching staff [...] should possess adequate professional qualifications, [which] shall be regulated through the normative act that the MEST compiles”.

There has been some development regarding the policy and institutional landscape around CPD. 25 continuous professional development cen-

tres were established in 22 municipalities by the Kosovo Education Centre in 2013, and schools were encouraged to prepare teacher development plans and put together professional teams in schools. With reference to the AI 09/2014, every teacher under the age of 51 is obliged to participate in in-service CPD (100 hours in 5 years)¹⁵⁴. 96% of all teachers were officially licensed between 2012 and 2017¹⁵⁵.

In the current Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the need for professional development of adult trainers is reflected in Strategic Objective 6: Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education. The KESP acknowledges that the lack of an efficient, high-quality education system is a major challenge for Kosovo. Developing human capacities for the management of adult education are therefore to be a goal until 2021. Providing training opportunities for management staff at central, municipal and school levels, and training school staff for the implementation of adult education (involving school management, coordinators, teachers, monitors), are presented as possible activities.

The MEST proposed a legal package in 2017 which largely defines the teacher development process. It adopted the Teacher Professional Development Framework, and published the second edition of the training programmes catalogue. There were 314 teacher training programmes available in 2018 (many supported by interna-

¹⁵² Lattke, S. & Strauch, A. (2019). [Competency framework for adult educators in teaching GCED](#). UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding

¹⁵³ Likaj, R. (2016). [Continuing Professional Development for Vocational Teachers and Trainers in Kosovo](#). European Training Foundation, p. 8

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Likaj, R. (2019). [Continuing Professional Development for Vocational Teachers and Principals in Kosovo 2018](#). European Training Foundation

tional partners). Most of them however targeted basic education teachers¹⁵⁶.

Teaching staff at VET schools is composed of teachers and instructors. While teachers tend to be responsible for theoretical education in a certain subject, instructors provide assistance in practical training. Teachers in VET are usually qualified with a three- or four-year Bachelor's degree, or with a Master's degree (following the Bachelor's). Instructors require a post-secondary degree and 5 years' work experience in the respective area. Teachers at VET schools are not civil servants, but are hired directly by the municipalities. Teachers at VTCs are referred to as trainers. In contrast to VET teachers, VTC trainers are civil servants employed by EARK. Most trainers hold University degrees. Civil-service employment is conditional on holding a University degree. However, as explained by one of the interviewees, the higher education requirement for trainers at VTCs can pose practical challenges for hiring, as teachers with a craftsmanship background do not usually possess University degrees¹⁵⁷. The special need for andragogical qualifications among trainers or teachers of adults, as opposed to pedagogical qualifications, has not been explicitly incorporated into the strategic framework for teachers' professional development in Kosovo.

The report entitled "Continuing Professional Development for Vocational Teachers and Principals in Kosovo 2018", published by the European Training Foundation (ETF), notes that "26.6% of VET teachers received at least 30 hours of CPD"

during the first year of KESP in 2017-2021. The report furthermore recalls that "these rates are not sufficient to meet the targets set out in KESP", and that "there has been little progress with respect to initial education for VET teachers"¹⁵⁸. A similar impression is conveyed by the EU 2020 Report on Kosovo, which finds that "teachers in VET centres have the necessary formal qualifications, but are not provided with adequate professional development opportunities"¹⁵⁹. Besides their basic qualification, teachers lack practical and methodological skills. According to the KESP Mid-term report, no activities have taken place regarding the provision of training opportunities for management staff at central, municipal and school level and training of school staff for the implementation of adult education.

The ETF 2018 report on CPD for VET teachers in Kosovo identifies numerous barriers that might explain the weakness of teacher development in VET and adult education:

- No coordination between key actors at state level
- Lack of effective resource management; no funds for CPD in VET from the Government
- Lack of comprehensive teacher performance assessment and appraisal
- Inefficient management of VET schools (management by inexperienced old men, strong political influence, limited decision-making powers)
- Teacher training curriculum development does not involve employer organisations
- Training needs are not identified
- Limited number of training providers

¹⁵⁶ Mehmeti, S. et al. (2019), p. 95

¹⁵⁷ Interview with MLSW representative

¹⁵⁸ Likaj, R. (2019)

¹⁵⁹ European Commission (2020), p. 85

With international donor support, the MEST developed an occupational standard at ISCED level 7 for vocational teachers which is still to be approved¹⁶⁰.

The main pre-service teacher training provider is the University of Prishtina with the Faculty of Education. The Faculty of Education currently offers a Master's degree for VET teachers entitled "Master of Pedagogy for Vocational Schools". The study programme is limited to 40 open spots per year. The Faculty implemented comprehensive training for primary and kindergarten teachers in 2018 as part of the "Professional development of teachers in the implementation of inclusive education" project, and in cooperation with the MEST, UNICEF and KAPIE¹⁶¹. According to a report about "Teachers' Professional Development in Kosovo", the Faculty of Education has been authorised by MEST to lead in-service professional development for teachers, information on which there has so far been no written public agreement¹⁶².

When it comes to in-service teacher training, KEC and the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute (PIK)¹⁶³ offer training of trainers for adult learning. The PIK is an independent public institution that deals with research, training, evaluation, experimentation and innovation in education. Amongst other objectives, it aims to increase the sensitivity of Kosovar society for the importance of lifelong learning. It provides professional advice to the MEST and educational institutions in curriculum

development, educational standards, textbooks, assessment, training of teachers and leaders of educational institutions.

A major impetus for professionalising teaching staff in Kosovo, in both financial and technical terms, comes from non-governmental and international organisations (see Chapter X). Most projects however address teachers in basic and secondary education.

Particular input in adult education is provided by a range of project activities implemented by DVVI¹⁶⁴. Training of teachers in the methodology and didactics of adult education is among the focal points of the work done by DVVI in Kosovo. The approach is to equip teachers with a basic pedagogic qualification, and administrative staff with knowledge of the principles of adult education that can be applied in non-formal education and at vocational training centres.

DVVI Kosovo promotes the implementation of the Curriculum GlobALE (CG), a "cross-cultural core curriculum for the training of adult educators worldwide" developed by the DIE and DVVI. The Curriculum GlobALE defines the skills needed to educate adults successfully, and contains instructions and tips for trainers on didactics, methods and assessment. The curriculum has been translated into Albanian, and was distributed to adult education providers in Kosovo. DVVI recently published five modules on Adult Education in Kosovo¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶⁰ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2019), p. 55

¹⁶¹ University of Prishtina, [Yearbook 2019](#)

¹⁶² Mehmeti, S., Rraci, E. & Bajrami, K. (2019). [Teacher professional development in Kosovo](#). Prishtina: KEEN, p. 32

¹⁶³ [Kosovo Pedagogical Institute](#) website

¹⁶⁴ Alija, R. (2018). [Adult learning in the Republic of Kosovo](#)

¹⁶⁵ DVV International, ["Publication of five modules of Curriculum GlobALE"](#) website article

DVVI Kosovo regularly organises training on modules of the CG for trainers from VTCs and CoCs in cooperation with the EARK. It also cooperates with the Faculty of Education of the University of Pristina for the provision of training. Faculty professors regularly serve as trainers on DVVI training courses. DVVI Kosovo has provided training for 57 trainers from VTCs in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and the University of Pristina¹⁶⁶.

Given the current state of professionalisation among Kosovan teaching staff, it is reasonable to concentrate state efforts on regulating CPD in basic and secondary education. CPD has also

received increasing attention in vocational education, albeit with room for improvement, and this can be considered an important first step. What is missing so far is a common understanding of professional and ethical standards, as well as societal orientation among adult educators in the formal and non-formal AE system, an understanding that highlights the special requirements of the adult education profession. Promoted by the Ministry for Education, and by influential stakeholders such as DVVI, a common understanding could contribute to the professionalisation of this education area, and increase public recognition of the value of adult education for society.

X. International context

At international level, the most significant efforts to enhance adult education and learning are advanced by the United Nations institutions. Prominent examples are the Sustainable Development Goals, which target adult education and learning as part of SGD 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning as well as its International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA). Since Kosovo is currently not a member of the UN, it cannot participate in its ALE programmes.

Kosovar institutions are nevertheless committed to the SDGs, and strive to accomplish them as part of their European integration efforts¹⁶⁷. Kosovo participated in the Andragogical Regional Academy (ARA), a network of adult education institutions which until 2015 organised five international exchange and training meetings with representatives from the Southeast European region. The network was created as a follow-up to CONFINTEA VI. Moreover, the United Nations Kosovo Team (UNKT) supported the government in setting up management structures that allow the SDGs to be integrated into national strategic planning frameworks. A National Council for Sustainable Development, which is to coordinate SDG activities, was established in 2018. All in all, however, concrete plans and actions to implement the SDGs remain limited. Considerable need to catch up is underlined in the report entitled “Kosovo and 2030 Agenda: From Political Rhetoric to Concrete Actions” compiled by the

Kosovar Institute for Development Policy (INDEP)¹⁶⁸. It is noted that “despite some efforts to kindle the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Kosovo institutions have continued to ignore the importance of the 2030 Agenda”.

Kosovo is still a net recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2020. Insight into the activities of international donors in Kosovo is provided in the OECD Aid at a Glance Statistics¹⁶⁹. Official development assistance to Kosovo amounted to 5.4% of its GNI in 2017. The total amount has fallen recently, but Kosovo is still among those countries with the highest per capita ODA ratio. With USD 157 million gross ODA, the European Union institutions were the largest contributors. The most important bilateral partners were the United States, Germany and Switzerland, followed by Sweden, Turkey, Austria and Luxembourg. Another important international partner is the OSCE. Around 9% of all bilateral ODA was dedicated to education in 2017.

The most targeted international contribution to the advancement of ALE in Kosovo is certainly provided by DVVI, whose strategy and programmes are described in detail in Chapter VI. Other international partners active in the education sector usually deal with adult education as a side issue. Although targeting adults with their education projects, international organisations do not for the most part mention adult education as an explicit topic in their project reviews.

¹⁶⁷ European Environment Agency, website briefing [“Kosovo country profile – SDGs and the environment”](#)

¹⁶⁸ Kalldura, H. & Ejupi, B. (2019). [Kosovo and 2023 Agenda: From Political Rhetoric to Concrete Actions](#). Institute for Development Policy (INDEP)

¹⁶⁹ OECD (2020). [OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Austria 2020 – Field visit to Kosovo](#)

The European Union manages financial assistance for Kosovo under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II). EUR 41.5 million were allocated to the sector “Education, employment and social policies” between 2018 and 2020.

Probably the most prominent EU instrument to foster informal education and learning, international mobility and exchange among young people in Europe is the Erasmus+ programme, which is supervised by the European Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

The Erasmus+ Project Results Platform shows that there are currently 25 projects based in Kosovo. 2,800 students and staff have participated in Erasmus+ exchanges since 2015. Erasmus+ projects are supported by the Erasmus+ Office in Pristina and its branch office in North Mitrovica.

The website KOSOVOPROJECTS.EU¹⁷⁰ provides an insight into EU-funded projects implemented in Kosovo. The only current EU project addressing informal ALE in the broadest sense is the “Culture for Change” project, implemented by Qendra Multimedia in cooperation with the German Goethe Institut. Within the project, staff members from cultural organisations benefit from capacity-building, and citizens benefit from being exposed to cultural activities¹⁷¹.

The project entitled “Kosovo Education for Employment Network” (KEEN)¹⁷² was concluded

only recently. Together with the Kosova Education Centre as the national implementing agency, the EU supported national CSOs to sustainably monitor key national and local policies on education, training and employment, and to improve and establish links between education and training programmes and the labour market. The project ran from 2015-2019. Amongst other things, KEEN has published the mid-term evaluation of the KESP 2017-2021, and a report on the MLSW sectoral strategy.

USAID¹⁷³ looks back on 19 years of assistance in Kosovo, and even though it has a clear focus on young people, it currently implements several projects which also meet the aims of adult education in the broadest sense. From 2017 to 2022, for example, USAID has been implementing the “AfterSchool Support for Teens” project, in cooperation with the KEC. Besides offering direct counselling support for school-leavers, the project offers professional development training and mentoring for teachers. The project “Engagement for Equity” (2015-2020), realised in collaboration with the Advocacy Training and Resource Centre (ATRC), empowers marginalised groups, and has engaged “over 1.5 million people in civic education on women’s property rights, women in governance and the economy, the prevention of violent extremism, improving the situation of vulnerable populations, and the rights of PWD”. Furthermore, USAID supports informal learning of young people with projects such as “Kosovo Youth Dialogue” and “Up to Youth”.

¹⁷⁰ KosovoProjects website

¹⁷¹ Culture for Change project website

¹⁷² KEEN website

¹⁷³ USAID Kosovo Fact Sheets website

Similar to USAID, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) is a long-standing partner for Kosovo. The project “Support for competence centres in the context of vocational education and training reforms in Kosovo” provided advice between 2014 and 2016 on the creation of the AVE-TAE, which today is responsible for overseeing the adult education system in Kosovo. The project “Youth, Employment and Skills in Kosovo” (YES) (2017-2020)¹⁷⁴ aims to improve the quality of VET. Amongst other project measures, it promotes the development of a Kosovar standard for in-company trainers, following a master trainer and an in-company trainer development pilot programme. Moreover, the project established the online “YES Learning Platform”. GIZ is implementing the “Capacity development in the basic education sector in Kosovo” (CBDE) project from 2019 to 2021¹⁷⁵. The project aims to tackle deficiencies in the education sector through teacher training. The approach is to integrate successful models of professional development for teachers and school directors into the regular university curriculum.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) aims to ensure better access to educational opportunities for ethnic minority groups through the establishment of non-formal Learning Centres with the project “Social Justice for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians” (SORAE) (2020-2022). The project “EYE – Enhancing Youth Employment”¹⁷⁶ aims to enhance the employability of

young people through a more market-orientated training system. The EYE project collaborates with non-formal training providers and formal education institutions.

The Austrian Development Agency¹⁷⁷ dedicates 69% of the total amount for project funding in Kosovo to education. The priority area for Austrian intervention is higher education, other projects such as “Aligning Education and Training with Labour Market Needs” (ALLED), and “Employability of youth through enhanced skills in the “Meister” training centre”, focussing on vocational education and training, and matching education with labour market needs.

The Luxembourg Development Cooperation (LuxDev)¹⁷⁸ supports Kosovo with two major projects in the sector of “Education – Vocational Training & Access to Employment”. The “Support to Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform in Kosovo” project (2018-2022) supports the AVETAE and MEDs to improve the process of financial planning for VET schools. As part of the project, LuxDev provided financial support and technical assistance to develop the career guidance, information and learning platform Busulla.COM¹⁷⁹ (GIZ and USAID were involved as well). The portal was awarded “The best public service of the year in Kosovo” in 2019¹⁸⁰. The portal will soon also provide information about further training offers at VTCs. Moreover, the project supported the development of the ICT

¹⁷⁴ [YES project](#) website

¹⁷⁵ GIZ [CBDE project](#) website

¹⁷⁶ SDC [EYE project](#) website

¹⁷⁷ Austrian Development Agency [Kosovo projects](#) website

¹⁷⁸ LuxDev [Kosovo projects](#) website

¹⁷⁹ Platform website <https://busulla.com>

¹⁸⁰ ETF Live&Learn 44/2019 article [“Career guidance goes online in Kosovo”](#), p. 23

CoC in Pristina to go beyond the provision of formal education pure and simple, and towards offering income-generating services (such as short courses, adult education, and on-the-job training).

In cooperation with the MEST, LuxDev implements the “European Union Support to Vocational Education and Training (VET), Professional Qualification and Occupation (ESVET PRO)” project (2020-2022) financed by the European Commission. The partners want to improve the quality and labour market relevance of education and training programmes, and develop the provision of recognition of prior learning.

The European Training Foundation (active in Kosovo since 1999) cooperates with and complements the work of the European Commission and the European External Action Service in Kosovo¹⁸¹. The ETF supported the Employment and Skills Observatory Kosova (ESOK) in the early 2000s in composing an Adult Learning Strategy for Kosovo which had a ten-year perspective (2005-2015)¹⁸². Many quite serious considerations delineated? in the paper seem however to have come to nothing in the end. The ETF focused in 2020 on developing the role and capacity of national actors in policy advice in order to improve the employability of women and vulnerable groups. Support was also provided to improve VET system governance, and activities were continued on the professional development

of VET teachers and trainers and towards establishing a platform of Centres of Excellence in Vocational Education and Training. Kosovo participates in the ETF Torino Process, “a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training [...] policies in a country”.

Guided by its interest in EU accession, Kosovo has already participated in the OECD-led PISA and Trends In International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). So far, it has not yet taken part in the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (see Chapter VIII).

Although Kosovo is not a member of the UN, it is eager to keep up with international developments with respect to delivering quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, including adult education and VET. National efforts are reflected in the relevant laws, policies and strategies. The development of the formal VET sector in Kosovo has made significant progress, with substantial international assistance. International support for the adult education sector has been less targeted. DVVI is the only international organisation operating in Kosovo which dedicates its entire programme to fostering adult education. Other donors tackle AE partly through their engagement in VET teacher professional development, curriculum development, and matching education content with labour market needs.

¹⁸¹ ETF [Kosovo projects](#) website

¹⁸² Employment and Skills Observatory of Kosovar (2004). [Mainstreaming with Europe: an adult learning strategy for Kosovo \(2005-2015\)](#)

XI. Challenges and future developments

The main challenge for the future development and provision of quality adult education is related to the policy level. Despite the fact that respective laws and bylaws are in place, they actually only regulate the formal part of AE or basic compensatory education. Even though lifelong learning as a term is stipulated in the legislation, adult education is envisaged only as a part of VET, and does not encompass other non-formal adult learning activities. Given the overall economic situation in Kosovo, it is reasonable that human capital development is the priority for many policy-makers. Nonetheless, the added value of non-formal adult education for societal development should not be neglected. A fundamental prerequisite for the acknowledgement of adult education among all the stakeholders involved is the recognition of adult education as a separate, stand-alone sub-system of education, most importantly in strategic documents such as the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan.

When it comes to non-formal education, the terminology outlined in the existing legislation is not coherently aligned with EU terminology. Many Kosovan AE programmes are termed non-formal, while according to EU terminology they should be considered formal, as they are provided by educational institutions and recognised in the NQF. In order to avoid conceptual confusion amongst policy-makers, partners from the business and civil society sectors as well as participating authorities should make efforts to further specify the adult education terminology for the Kosovan context in future.

Adult education governance is currently shared among a number of stakeholders such as the Min-

istry of Education and Science, the Employment Agency, and the NQA. The role of the civil-society sector however remains undervalued. More active involvement on the part of civil society could help to loosen the narrow economic interpretation of adult education towards integrating the individual, societal and citizenship perspective as well. There is therefore a need for reform in AE, starting from policy and legislation. Functional settings and the roles of stakeholders need to be examined and assessed, and mechanisms developed, in order to implement quality AE policies with a holistic lifelong learning perspective.

Adult education policies do impact the funding of AE, but not in an enabling manner. They rather seem to restrict possibilities at present. When it comes to public funding, there is no separate budget line for AE, whilst funds in public VET schools are distributed as part of the general VET budget. According to statutory provisions, VET schools may generate income through charging tuition fees for their adult courses. However, the legislation in place is followed by rigid administrative procedures that hamper the use of self-generated income. VTCs also face challenges due to their lack of financial autonomy, and because they have no separate budget line for the provision of AE. NGOs face scarce, volatile, unsustainable funding, and many have insufficient capacity to apply for international funding. All in all, the sector's ability to plan and implement AE is hindered by financial constraints, and is dependent on continuous donor funding.

Monitoring and data management at national level with respect to AE is currently incomplete. In order to allow evidence-based planning and

systematic development in future, a comprehensive adult education monitoring and evaluation system is needed that covers all types of AE provision, including non-formal programmes by the civil-society sector.

Teachers' professional development remains a challenge for the whole education sector, but especially in adult education, where the existing regulation is inconsistent. On the one hand, teachers delivering compensatory education as a part of VET are theoretically required to hold a university-level degree, and instructors must present a secondary-school leaving qualification, with a relevant specialisation, and have gathered work experience in the field. In addition, they must attend in-service training, including pedagogical and didactical training. The higher education requirement for trainers at VTCs can pose practical challenges for hiring, as teachers with a craftsmanship background do not usually hold university degrees. On the other hand, outside the formal setting of VET schools and VTCs, adult education is mainly provided by field area experts without any training in didactics and methodology of working with adults. The challenge is a lack of a common understanding about adult educators' professional prerequisites, qualities, development requirements and ethics. Possibilities for professional development should be generally warranted for all adult teachers and trainers, as they are a prerequisite for high-quality AE provision.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an extra burden on the already fragile adult education system. AE providers were not able to provide face-to-face training between May and December 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions. Wherever possible, and depending on the specifics of the occupational profile, training was migrated to online learning. Starting from September 2020, classroom education has resumed in three stages, depending on the region and number of infections. Providers were able to resume face-to-face activities, but with a limited number of learners per class, and in compliance with other mandatory preventive measures imposed by the Government. Some providers resumed in blended-learning mode (one week attending face-to-face classes and other week attending online classes). If infection numbers rise, they are obliged to switch to online activities only. The pandemic has posed a number of challenges for smaller AE providers in particular. On the one hand, many providers lack the necessary infrastructure (such as PCs or laptops) to continue providing online AE courses. Most education material is printed, and is not available online. On the other hand, the teaching staff lacks respective ICT skills and didactical and pedagogical skills to manage online classrooms. Private providers of AE as a part of VET are worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the lack of financial support from the government.

XII. Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis of laws, policies and governing structures in AE in Kosovo shows that the development of human capital is a priority area for the government. Much effort has been expended to develop structures that facilitate comprehension and comparability of qualifications, such as the NQF and the RPL system. These quality assurance procedures make learning outcomes transparent, and allow learners to advance across various NQF levels, even discontinuously, which is important for adult learners. But the close interlinkage of AE with the VET sector bears the risk of associating AE one-sidedly with formal VET and initial professional development. It is therefore highly recommended to develop possibilities for a stand-alone system of adult education which realises the concept of lifelong learning and does not limit further training to initial or compensatory education and training. A first step is the specification of the AE terminology in laws and underlying documents. A second step could be to include AE as a separate chapter in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan, or to develop a specific AE strategy. The results of the Adult Education Study, and of the census survey of 2021, should be consulted and analysed in order to make sure that future legislative revisions and policy decisions are based on evidence.

- Define a common, clearly-distinguishable understanding of AE
- Promote the inclusion of AE as a separate chapter in the KESP, and assess the possibility of developing a specific adult education strategy
- Ensure evidence-based policy-making by consulting and incorporating results from the most recent population surveys and best practice projects

From a historical point of view, the political aim of AE has always been to reduce high unemployment levels. While Kosovo has made progress in installing a comprehensive legislative framework, the national interpretation of the LLL and AE concepts has not significantly evolved towards crossing age boundaries and promoting non-commercial education and learning. Only small numbers of non-profit NFE providers currently offer courses for professional and personal development as well as democracy and citizenship education. All stakeholders should make efforts over the next decade to build a sound non-formal and informal AE infrastructure. Steps should be taken to extend the scope of NFE programmes besides employment and labour market measures, with more general skills in financial and digital literacy, political and citizenship education, and personal development.

Cooperation and networking between new and established players in the field can furthermore contribute towards capacity-building. Enabling providers to engage in an exchange about best practice, funding opportunities and relevant learning content will strengthen their profiles and enhance the quality of their AE offers. A register of formal and non-formal AE providers should be set up and made available to citizens in order to create a transparent, competitive market for AE offers in Kosovo.

- Activate and recognise the work of providers of non-formal and informal ALE activities through targeted awareness-raising campaigns
- Promote closer cooperation between stakeholders and the formation of networks
- Strengthen providers' profiles in adult education and set up a register of AE providers

With regard to funding, the providers landscape in Kosovo would profit from fewer limitations and greater transparency of information. To make the AE sector in Kosovo independent and sustainable in the long term, more financial independence should be granted to VET schools and VTCs in generating and managing their own revenues. NFE programmes and their respective providers need reliable funding sources in order to be more easily accessible to the broader public. It is recommended to inform AE providers proactively about opportunities for national and international funding which can increase their own financial security. Better cooperation and exchange of resources is needed amongst the different Ministries involved in AE financing. Countrywide, it is necessary to assign more budgetary funds from public sources to AE providers (for example in the shape of a voucher-based system or stipends for disadvantaged learners). The national government could recognise and honour outstanding commitment to AE provision through tax incentive schemes.

- Allow VET schools and VTCs greater financial independence in generating and managing their own revenues
- Approach AE providers proactively with information about international funding opportunities
- Monitor and coordinate public and private AE spending across Ministries
- Reduce social inequality and make adult education accessible and affordable for everyone, for example through learning vouchers or stipends for individuals and tax incentives for employers and providers

This study reveals that adult education in Kosovo is still largely concentrated on formal learning activities which relate to the work environment. It is recommended to give more space to the de-

velopment of non-formal, informal and self-driven learning processes, when AE measures are set-up and implemented. Adults need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal development throughout their lifetimes. In order to promote inclusiveness and diversity in AE in Kosovo, access for and active involvement by middle-aged and older participants, as well as women and vulnerable groups, needs to be increased. Systematic monitoring of involvement and motivation to participate in all forms of AE would help to set up programmes which are responsive to the needs of the target group, and could help trigger demand for lifelong learning and education, in particular with regard to non-vocational learning content. Regular data collection on participation and non-participation needs to be extended beyond mere attendance numbers, and include information about the socio-economic background (especially age) and personal motivation.

- Raise awareness among citizens about the advantages of continuous non-formal AE for personal, social and economic development
- Increase access for and active involvement by middle-aged and older participants, women and vulnerable groups in AE
- Establish regular, systematic monitoring of participation and motivation in all forms of AE, especially non-formal education

In order to professionalise teaching in AE in future, greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of teaching quality and the special characteristics and needs of adult learners. Teacher training frequently does not encompass an andragogic perspective which considers special requirements for teaching adults. AE providers and political stakeholders should develop a common understanding of professional and ethical stand-

ards in adult teaching which is still sufficiently flexible to encompass the diversity of AE and resulting demands for AE teachers and trainers (e.g. the preconditions for employment at VTCs). A shared understanding of andragogy which is actively promoted by public stakeholders could help professionalise this educational sector, and increase public recognition of the value of teaching adults.

- Develop a common understanding of andragogy and the desired competencies and qualities of AE teachers
- Expand the availability and provision of adult educator training programmes, for example at universities or through work-based training

Compared with foreign contributions to initial VET development, international support for the adult education sector is less targeted. International donors could contribute to a more unified approach to AE by aligning their interventions to national strategic goals, and explicitly registering and labelling activities which are relevant to AE as programmes for adults.

- Align international projects with national development goals
- Register, label and visualise AE activities funded by international donors, especially if AE is only a sub-activity within a larger project

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