



# Integrating the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Education System in Kosovo



## A monitoring report

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# INTRODUCTION

Community rights, equality and multiculturalism are key elements of the functioning of the Kosovo society. Among these, the rights of marginalized communities, namely Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have been determined as important dimensions of advancing those societal elements. The process of integrating Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the education sector has been addressed through a comprehensive set of laws and two strategies. The Strategy for the Inclusion of the Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovar Society 2017-2021 was approved in 2017 by the Government of Kosovo foresees education as one of the four pillars of integration. In the area of education, there are a number of activities that have been foreseen to be addressed in the upcoming years. The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017-2021 foresees concrete measures on the increase of participation and quality of education for the marginalized communities with a focus on children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

Through the support of EU funded KEEN project and KOSINT Project, a framework for monitoring the strategy implementation (referring to KESP 2017-2021) was developed. This framework has the purpose to facilitate the monitoring process and it has also served the design of this research and the drafting of this monitoring report. In view of the principles of the monitoring framework, this present report has been focused on the implementation of the measures (activities) rather than the achievement of the objectives. The achievement of the objectives of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovar Society 2017-2021 and KESP 2017-2021 will need to be done at a later stage when there is more data available and also room for more qualitative data deriving from the experience of the final beneficiaries as well as stakeholders including actors in implementing strategy objectives. Though, one may say that after almost two years of implementation there can be traces of objectives achievement and eventual impact, however this has not been considered appropriate for this year and the reasons will be understood in the findings sections which mainly relates to the availability and depth of data.

It has to be noted that the KESP 2017-2021 speaks about the integration of the three communities (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians) whereas the Strategy for the Integration of Roma and Ashkali 2017-2021 does not include the Egyptian community. Hence the usage in this report has been aligned to how they have been used in the respective strategy document.

## 1. Purpose of this report

This report is produced as an attempt to follow up the implementation of the Strategy of the Integration of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovar society (2017-2021), with a clear focus on the dimension of education. In addition, the monitoring report includes also the measures and activities of the KESP 2017-2021 sections on the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities for the period 2017-2021. Though the activities of the two strategies overlap there are specifics that differ, thus the monitoring report provides explanations that help make the distinction between the two as needed.

*Table 1. Activities and indicators in strategic documents*

Strategy	Activities	Expected outcomes
<b>Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali in Kosovo 2017-2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentivizing attendance in pre-school education.</li> <li>• Drafting action plans for the prevention of drop-out and non-enrollment in all municipalities.</li> <li>• Stimulating measures to facilitate the enrolment of Roma and Ashkali children in secondary and higher level of education.</li> <li>• Drafting individualized education plans for repatriated learners.</li> <li>• Development of specific positive measures and preparatory programs for enrolment and retention of students of Roma and Ashkali communities in HEI.</li> <li>• Support to adult education programs</li> <li>• Defining gender sensitive indicators for EMIS for Roma and Ashkali community members.</li> <li>• Elimination of segregation and discrimination against Roma and Ashkali community children.</li> <li>• Support to community-based learning centers</li> <li>• Provision of supplemental learning for learners facing difficulties in learning.</li> <li>• Promotion of Roma language learning</li> <li>• Development of awareness raising programs for parents regarding early childhood.</li> <li>• Organizing awareness raising activities of Roma and Ashkali communities regarding the importance of timely enrolment and school attendance, particularly focus on girls.</li> <li>• Awareness raising of general population regarding the education of Roma and Ashkali communities.</li> </ul>	<p>Improved participation in education of the members of the Roma and Ashkali communities.</p> <p>Improved performance of students of the Roma and Ashkali communities.</p> <p>Increase awareness among stakeholders to support education of the members of Roma and Ashkali communities.</p>

- Harmonizing programs of learning centers  
Developing regulations at municipal level to facilitate the enrollment of students from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities at pre-school and secondary level
- Granting scholarships for students attending secondary schools from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community
- Monitoring of implementation of facilitation measures by MEST
- Training teachers to teach Roma language
- Organizing activities for awareness raising of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities on enrollment and attending school, especially girls
- Developing and implementing annual plans for the repatriated students in specific areas
- Publishing revised materials for the repatriated students

It is important to note that the report is written in the spirit of reporting the realities in the ground and the progress of implementing activities and achieving targets foreseen in strategic documents rather than a research that brings the perceptions of people considered as beneficiaries of those strategy interventions. There is a significant difference between the two approaches and it is important to note this difference since at some point such research should be conducted to see the impact of strategy intervention in the lives and experiences of the people being supported.

The table below presents a summary of the activities and measures that can be considered as indicators of what was planned to be achieved in the two strategic documents that address the improvement of inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. There is significant overlap between the two strategic documents in terms of what was planned to be achieved.

This monitoring report takes a practical approach of taking strategy activities and turning those into indicators for data collection. The instruments used for data collection were thus closely linked to those indicators and this is how this report should be presented and used.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology used for this assessment of progress made in the implementation of activities for the integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the Kosovo society, with a focus on education, is combined by drawing on data from the reports and statistics available at national and municipal level in one hand and the data collected from the municipalities and MEST for the purposes of this specific assessment on the other hand. The reports that were analyzed to collect data for this assessment included:

- MEST Statistical reports for 2016, 2017 and 2018 (deriving from EMIS division);
- The KOSINT report on Learning Centers produced in 2018;
- Internal reports from the Division for Communities on activities performed;

Whereas, the data from the municipalities and MEST have been collected through a survey that was drafted in consultation with a focus group organized by KOSINT project by bringing a group of stakeholders together to determine the methodology for this assessment. The survey consisted of mixed items including an option of Yes/No and a follow-up option of narrative explanations of whatever answer was indicated to the Yes/No option.

A number of field experts were involved in the data collection from the field as partners of the KOSINT project. These partner organizations operate in the field and work with the integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and are closer to the field realities and thus also municipal education departments. The process started with a formal notification of the process and at the same time the respective municipal officer was provided a copy of the survey so that they prepare the necessary data. At a time that the expert and the respective officer in MED agreed, there was a follow up meeting in a form of interview to go through the survey and elaborate, cross check and clarify eventual issues that needed clarification in the survey or responses. The surveys were then processed altogether and analyzed to be reported in more aggregated form. The data from the MEST have been collected through meetings with the officers in charge of the communities' education and additional data and reports were provided in electronic form.

The strategic documents foresee activities for the period of five years and it may be that some activities foreseen for 2019 have not started yet, but in general this assessment attempted to identify also issues of potential planning and thinking in regards to the implementation of such activities. In cases where it was clear that nothing was done in 2018 for a specific activity, this was indicated in the report as such.

The data were reported in a form that constructs and concepts were grouped into themes that represent the dimensions of functioning of school system. The elaboration of data was done in relation to the specific activities foreseen in the strategy documentation.

## CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The data on general population and those of ethnic communities come from the latest census conducted in 2011 (Data from Kosovo Statistics Agency). Table 2 below provides an outline of the population of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in respective municipalities as well as the overall population of the respective municipality. A total of 8,824 or 0.5% of the overall population are Roma, 15,436 (which equals 0.9% of the overall population) are Ashkali and 11,524 (0.7% of the overall population) are Egyptians.

*Table 2: Overall number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in municipalities*

Municipality	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian	Totali	Overall population of the municipality
Deçan	33	42	393	468	40019
Gjakova	738	613	5,117	6,468	94556
Glllogoc	0	0	2	2	58531
Gjilan	361	15	1	377	90178
Dragash	3	4	3	10	33997
Istog	39	111	1,544	1,694	39289
Kaçanik	5	1	0	6	33409
Klinë	78	85	934	1,097	38496
Fushë Kosovë	436	3,230	282	3,948	34827
Kamenicë	240	0	0	240	36085
Mitrovicë	528	647	6	1,181	71909
Lipjan	342	1,812	4	2,158	57605
Novobërdë	63	3	0	66	6729
Obiliq	661	578	27	1,266	21549
Rahovec	84	404	299	787	56208

Pejë	993	143	2,700	3,836	96450
Podujevë	74	680	2	756	88499
Prishtinë	56	557	8	621	198897
Prizren	2,899	1,350	168	4,417	177781
Skenderaj	0	10	1	11	50858
Shtime	23	750	0	773	27324
Shtërpcë	24	1	0	25	6949
Suharekë	41	493	5	539	59722
Ferizaj	204	3,629	24	3,857	108610
Viti	12	14	0	26	46987
Vushtrri	68	143	1	212	69870
Malishevë	26	5	0	31	54613
Mamushë	39	12	0	51	5507
Graçanicë	745	104	3	852	10675
Klllokot	9	0	0	9	2556
Hani i Elezit	0	0	0	0	9403
Partesh	0	0	0	0	1787
Ranillug	0	0	0	0	3866
Junik	0	0	0	0	6084
<b>Total</b>	<b>8824</b>	<b>15436</b>	<b>11524</b>	<b>35784</b>	<b>1739825</b>

While these communities are spread in the entire country, they are more focussed in a number of municipalities such as Gjalova, Istog, Klina, Fushe Kosova, Prizren, Peja, Lipjan, Mitrovica, Ferizaj.

In general, the legal basis for the development of education system is considered to be quite advance and compatible with the international best practice reference points. The area of integration of minority communities in the Kosovar society, including education is also well covered and advanced. The fact that the issue of integration is addressed through an umbrella strategy at national level (The Strategy for Integration of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovar society 2017-2021) and with a sector strategy in education (KESP 2017-2021) is a clear indication of this. Furthermore, the entire work is grounded on a solid legal framework that supports the enhancement of the life and education of the respective communities. In addition to the fact that the basic rights are granted by constitution of the country and the rights to education are grounded in the law on pre-university education as umbrella legislation in education, there are also a number of laws that directly or indirectly promote the human rights protection and promotion:

The law on the protection and promotion of the communities rights in Kosovo (03/L-047);

Law on the education in the municipalities which foreseen a greater responsibility of local level decision making (03/L-068);

The law against discrimination (2004/3);

The law on the usage of languages (02/L37);

The law on cultural heritage (02/L-88);

Hence, in general Kosovo can be considered a country that has placed a high focus on the promotion of the diversity and human rights for all its people regardless of the race, ethnicity or religion.

The ambition of the Kosovar society to advance the integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the society in general and in education in particular can be also seen in the targeted indicators in the KESP 2017-2021 (see Table below) which foresees a considerable increase of participation of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the all levels of education.

**Table 3. The indicators for measuring the MEST objective for participation**

The indicators for the achievement of the participation	Basis	Target
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in pre-school	53.9%	70%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in primary education	85.3%	95%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in lower secondary education	65%	85%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in upper secondary education	30.3%	50%
The level of transition to upper secondary education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students	69.9%	80%

*Source: Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021*

However, for the time being it is very difficult to assess the achievement of these targets. The baseline has been determined based on the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey conducted by the Kosovo Statistical Agency conducted in 2014 and there has not been any such follow-up research afterwards. So, such indicators can only be determined with reliable data on population data and projections, which at present do not exist. However, these targets serve as a good reference points to track the progress of participation at a stage when a follow-up survey has been conducted.

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC MEASURES

### 1. Participation in education

Regarding participation of students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in various levels of education, it has to be noted that the figures need to be considered in light of the lack of data for population projections. In light of the general trend of decreasing student population in Kosovo overall, the participation of students from these communities (particularly Ashkali and Egyptians) seems to be a very promising trend. While the Albanian student population has decreased from year 2017/2018 to 2018/2019 the number of students from these communities increased. The number of students in Ashkali and Egyptian communities has seen an increase in all the levels of education. Whereas, the number of students from Roma community has also seen an increase in all levels with the exception of grades 1-9 (see table below).

*Table 4. Students based on ethnic background and school level for 2018/19-2017/18*

Level	Albanian		Ashkali		Roma		Egyptian	
	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18
Pre-school education (mosha 0-<5)	8197	6505	1	0	20	10	4	0
Pre-primary education(mosha 5-6)	22783	22999	247	256	112	103	77	55
Primary/lower secondary	228591	233239	3439	3218	1509	1733	847	742
Upper secondary education	81892	87530	262	255	161	156	160	142
Total	341463	350273	3949	3729	1802	2002	1088	939

Ethnic community	Number		%	
	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18
Albanian	341463	350273	95,84	95,96
Serb	482	500	0,14	0,14
Turkish	2760	2756	0,77	0,76
Bosnjak	3797	3965	1,07	1,09
Gorani	465	557	0,13	0,15
Ashkali	3949	3729	1,11	1,02
Rom	1802	2002	0,51	0,55
Egyptian	1088	939	0,31	0,26
Croatian	23	26	0,01	0,01
Other	441	282	0,12	0,08
Total	356270	365029	100,00	100,00

**Table 5. Students based on ethnic background and school level for 2018/19- 2017/208**

The attendance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in higher education is another area that has been addressed by MEST. In 2016, MEST approved the Administrative Instruction No.09/2016 for Application of Affirmative Measures and Quotas for Registration of Students of Non-Majority Communities in the Public Institutions of Higher Education. This instruction foresees application of affirmative measures for registration of members of communities in public universities and determines the quota of 12% reserved seats in all public universities of Kosovo by introducing the form of ethnical self-identification through verification by municipal offices for communities and returns.

University	Bosnjak	Turkish	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian	Gorani
University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina"	55	23	5	9	6	4
University of Peja "HaxhiZeka"	49	1	1		9	
University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini"	1	4				
University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti"	229	192	3	4	7	
University of Apply Sience Ferizaj				18		
University of Gjakova "Fehmi Agani"	6		2	3	5	
Total BA	340	220	11	34	27	4
Total MA	9	7	1	2	1	2
Student Center	22	2	10	1	1	

**Table 6. Student enrollment in public higher education institutions**

education institutions in Kosovo in the academic year 2017/2018. Data from academic year 2018/2019 are not available yet but it is known that public higher education providers have respected the provisions for reserved quotas also in this year.

## 2. Getting students to school and learning progress

Within the theme of participation in school and motivating students to continue throughout the education, there were three indicators against which data were collected. First, the MEDs and MEST were asked about the work that is done in terms of raising the awareness of students, but more importantly families, on participation and continuing education. The second dimension that has been foreseen in the strategic documents has been the issue of addressing the dropout cases and the integration of repatriated students. On the awareness raising activities, this research has had difficulties in collecting quantified data on the activities that have been organized. Two types of responses were received. One type of response was related to the equal treatment indicating that children from these communities were treated equally as every other child in Kosovo and there has been no obstacles with getting people to obligatory schooling if there was an interest. The other type of answers, especially in municipalities where there was a bigger number of children from these communities, was a bit more elaborative stating that the school teams with the support of donor projects were active in the neighborhoods where these communities are focused trying to appeal to parents on the need to bring and keep children in school. Such responses have come from the municipalities of FusheKosova, Lipjan, Suhareka.

In more sporadic form, municipalities and MEST report on the brochures and leaflets that they produce on the need for including as many children as possible from these communities to school. These do not seem to be systematically planned (nor does reliable statistics and data exist) but still selected MEDs seem to pay attention to such things within the possibilities they have. The MEDs credit the NGOs and donor projects to have provided them with the support to reachout to these communities.

Secondly, in relation to the dropout prevention, all MEDs did not consider important that there should be specific dropout prevention for the specific communities and they operate with the overall general dropout prevention plans within municipalities and schools. They recognize the need that within the implementation of the municipal dropout prevention plans they would address cases that are referred to by the school and in most cases they say that children from these communities are the ones that get to their attention. However, there has been no indication on the need to develop more concrete measures on how to prevent dropout cases by identifying the at risk category and avoid addressing cases when they are already considered cases that are not able to be addressed by the school. The tables below provide a summary of the student drop out cases (as reported by the MEST EMIS) for the last two years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018). The data on 2018/2019 have not yet been provided. However the trend from the last two years seems

to be a positive trend. The number of dropouts reported has decreased for all three communities. From total 119 dropout students in 2016/2017 the number reduced to 88 in 2017/2018.

The process of monitoring student dropout is associated with a defect in data management and interpretation at MEST. The system does not track in details the movements of students from one municipality to the other in cases when families move.

Level	Ashkali			Roma			Egyptian			total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Primary and lower secondary (1 – 9)	26	28	54	12	2	14	3	3	6	41	33	74
Upper secondary (10 – 12)	0	0	0	2	1	3	11	0	11	13	1	14
Total	26	28	54	14	3	17	14	3	17	54	34	88

**Table 7. Dropout students based on ethnic background and gender in year 2017/18**

Level	Ashkalinj			Romë			Egjiptianë			Gjithsej		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Primary and lower secondary (1 – 9)	40	21	61	4	3	7	19	13	32	63	37	100
Upper secondary (10 – 12)	0	0	0	8	11	19	0	0	0	8	11	19
Total	40	21	61	12	14	26	19	13	32	71	48	119

**Table 8. Dropout students based on ethnic background and gender in 2016/2017**

Lastly, the KESP foresees that regulations are drafted that facilitate the enrollment of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in preprimary and upper secondary education. The data collected show that no municipality has done any concrete measure in developing such regulations. The MEDs consulted say that there is no need for such regulations as in general people have access and those that want continue to upper secondary school would be provided that opportunity. However, this issue of providing opportunity seems to be based more on good will rather than any process and mechanism. The important point here, in relation to continuing to upper secondary school, becomes the matter of orienting students in the right profile of upper secondary schooling. MEST reported that in school year 2018/2019 Minister of Education has issued a decision to ensure quotas for students from these communities in the vocational schools (5 students in each profile).

In relation to the support for motivating people to take their children to school and continue through to the end, the KESP 2017-2021 has foreseen a measure of providing students who go to upper secondary schools with scholarships. The data from MEST indicate that a total of 600 scholarships (each 300 Euros) have been provided to the students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who continue to upper secondary education. In the previous year (2017), MEST has provided 507 scholarships. So there is growing trend and this seems to be decided by the availability of donor funding to this scholarships fund.

On the matter of repatriation of students returning from Europe, the MEST has reported on the materials that have been developed such as manuals. At municipal level, the issue of supporting repatriated students is addressed in ad hoc basis as needed. In general, the reports from municipalities were that the MED works with the office of communities (in some municipalities called office for communities and return) in order to support the repatriated families. The meetings and reports indicated more the support in terms of the accommodation and other basic rights such as attending school but there has not been any cases reported when individual students were provided with detailed individual plan of support and integration.

### 3. Quality of student learning

The quality of student learning in this report has been used to indicate the learning support students get through various mechanisms and specifically through the activities of the Learning Centers (LC). The strategic documents foresee that a total of 15 LCs will need to be established in next 5 years to increase the support to the regions and communities in need. The municipalities involved in this research reported that a total of 16 learning centers have been established in years 2017 and 2018. This has reached the target foreseen for the 2019 in the KESP 2017-2021. The work of the donor community has influenced that this target is easily reached owing to the generous support both financial and technical assistance in the establishment and functioning of the learning centers throughout the country. The table below represents a summary of the municipalities where the learning centers have been established.

Municipality	2017	2018
Suhareka	3	
Gjakova	2	2
Istog	3	2
Peja	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>

*Table 9. The new Learning Centers opened in 2017 and 2018*

During the interviews, the MED representatives have shown a high interest in the work of the learning centers and they allspoke very highly of the input and quality of the work these centres have been providing to those in need of additional support. The MEDs have expressed interest to open new centres where the need exists and also find ways to incorporate the functioning of these centres within the municipal funding scheme so that the work is advanced and sustainability is ensured in long term. When asked what is the concrete support the MEDs provide to the work of the Learning Centres, all the MEDs responded that the only support they could provide is give space to the learning centres that have been operating within the school premises. There was no other evidence of additional support provided to date and for this MEDs speak about the financial restrictions they have.

The strategy foresees a concrete measure on MED providing learning support to the students who have learning difficulties. The MED and MEST indicated that the more formalized support that children can get is the activity provided by the Learning Centres operating in specific municipalities. There does not seem to be a need that there should be any other additional activity and support.

In relation to the work of the Learning Centres, MEST has reviewed the Administrative Instruction on Learning Centres(new Instruction was published at the end of 2018) to advance the work of the centers. The Instruction provides room for the functioning of the centers in the community and in the school and provides standards and processes for the operation of the center, the staffing and programming. The centers will not only serve for the specific communities but for all students needing support regardless of the background and the operation within school and in the community provides for a flexible model to respond to the needs of specific localities and communities living in those.

## 4. Developing teacher practice

Under this dimension of teaching and learning, several indicators are grouped. This dimension includes the elements of: (i) teacher professional development for teaching Roma language, (ii) teacher professional development for Albanian as a second language, (iii) having a policy on teaching diversity and human rights for all communities in school, and (iv) creating learning materials that can help student learning from communities. These strategic activities have been the ones that seem to be considered secondary to the increase of school attendance based on the data provided by municipalities and MEST and data deriving from the meetings held. Out of all these planned activities, MEST reported that there was one training organized, and out of five expected participants, only two have attended.

One important fact is to emphasize the level of awareness and thinking that has been noticed on at the municipal level on some of the strategy activities. Though not everything was expected to happen in the first two years, it is still important that the necessary pre-planning and understanding of the needs exist. Thus, there has been no indication that work will be done on creation of learning materials as well as the need for teacher professional development that has been foreseen under the strategic documents. The activity on developing a policy on teaching diversity and human rights in school has also been among the ones that raised issues around how much the activities in the strategic plans are understood and 'owned' by those to implement. In meetings, the MEDs indicated that diversity and human rights are concepts that are addressed from the everyday practice and curriculum implementation.

The issues such as these that indicate more than a need to just write a policy, it is necessary that work is done on the side to determine the meaning and process that one activity requires. For example, the issue of policy on teaching diversity and human rights in school is a complex issue and needs to be devolved in greater depth at the municipal level and for this to happen technical assistance is needed. More than writing a brief regulation on diversity and human rights, it is a curriculum concept as well as an element of teacher professional identity and practice. Hence, the issue needs to be addressed from the perspective of complexity it has in order to avoid having a regulation that advocates certain principles and ideas without any practical relevance. While this development has been projected for 2020 still there is no evidence of planning and thinking currently and this is not an activity that can be easily implemented only within one year.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this monitoring report was to track the progress in the implementation of strategic in two strategic documents (Strategy for the Integration of Roma and Ashkali in Kosovo Society 2017-2021; Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021) in view of progress in meeting the objectives for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the education sector in Kosovo. This report collected data from the municipalities and MEST as well as has made use of review of all the data and statistics available that help to make the judgment on the progress made.

The report has identified the progress made and also measures pointed out to challenges that still need to be addressed. The report concludes that participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students is very promising and a positive trend can be observed. In addition to statistics, the meetings and interviews with the municipal authorities have indicated that the situation is improving also in relation to the interest of families for education of their children. These trends cannot be judged in terms of how the participation in education is increasing in light of the demographic trends due to the lack of timely and reliable data. In meetings with the municipal authorities, it has not been able to identify the efforts put at municipal level to enhance the level of student participation nor were any data reported in monitoring the individual dropouts of non-attendance cases.

In parallel to the participation, Kosovo has made progress in extending learning support for students through the work of learning centres. A large number of learning centres has been established and their operation has been formalized and operationalized through by-laws from MEST. Donor community has fortunately continued to support these learning centers and in the meantime municipalities need to find ways to sustain the work of these centres, at least the ones within school. To date, there is no evidence at municipal level on the important issue of student learning. Once participation is ensured, student learning becomes critical in light of the varying backgrounds of students and learning support provided. Future work needs to be oriented towards the dimension of student learning in order to be able to track student progress in addition to participation. This can include the education in school and in learning centers. Such data can to some extent be also collected within the implementation of these strategic documents with the view of deciding the extent at which the objectives of integration and quality learning have been achieved. The municipalities do not seem to be closely connected to the activity of the learning centers and this becomes critical in terms of ensuring that all students benefit from learning support.

So far, the elements of developing teacher practice have not been addressed to the level of supporting schools to address diversity, mainstreaming of different background students in regular schools and in terms of teaching about diversity. These are the issues that are more professional and they need to be given more attention in the upcoming years through more systematic projects that address the issue more substantially and sustainably so that students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian benefit from supportive learning environments in schools.

During the process of collecting data for this study, it became evident that at municipal level there is no processes of using the central strategic inputs into municipal actions. The activities at municipal level are predominantly supported by development partners while the municipal authorities are more focused on the participation dimension, which is an important indicator in itself but there is a need to go beyond. This speaks to a serious challenges at the dimension of capacities at municipal level to properly resource development initiatives for the purpose of providing quality education to the children from these communities. It has to be recognized that participation does not equal inclusion whereas inclusion cannot be measured by physical presence in the right environment but through the positive experiences of students in those environments. This remains a target of these strategic documents whereas all actors in the ground need to work together to ensure the progress is achieved by closely working with schools and learning centers to ensure students learning is at the core of the actions of all stakeholders involved.







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