

Factbook Education Systems: Kosovo

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List of Abbreviations

AVETAE	Agency for VET and Adult Education
CVETAE	Council for VET and Adult Education
CoC	Centre of Competence
CVC	Curriculum Value Chain
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
ETF	European Training Foundation
GCI	Global Competitiveness Index
GII	Global Innovation Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
KCF	Kosovo Curriculum Framework
KEEN	Kosovo Education and Employment Network
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021
KOF	Swiss Economic Institute
MED	Municipality Education Directorate
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
NDS	National Development Strategy 2016 - 2021
NQA	National Qualification Authority
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PET	Professional Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VPET	Vocational Professional Education and Training
WEF	World Economic Forum
YLMI	Youth Labour Market Index

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Foreword

The increasing competitiveness of the world economy as well as the high youth unemployment rates after the worldwide economic crises have put pressure on countries to upgrade the skills of their workforces. Consequently, vocational education and training (VET) has received growing attention in recent years, especially amongst policy-makers. For example, the European Commission defined common objectives and an action plan for the development of VET systems in European countries in the Bruges Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for 2011-2020 (European Commission, 2010). In addition, a growing number of US states and other industrialized, transition, and developing countries (for example Hong Kong, Singapore, Chile, Costa Rica, Benin and Nepal) are interested in either implementing VET systems or making their VET system more labour-market oriented.

The appealing outcome of the VET system is that it improves the transition of young people into the labour market by simultaneously providing work experience, remuneration and formal education degrees at the secondary education level. If the VET system is optimally designed, VET providers are in constant dialogue with the demand-side of the labour market, i.e. the companies. This close relationship guarantees that the learned skills are in demand on the labour market. Besides practical skills, VET systems also foster soft-skills such as emotional intelligence, reliability, accuracy, precision, and responsibility, which are important attributes for success in the labour market. Depending on the design and permeability of the education system, VET may also provide access to tertiary level education (according to the ISCED classification): either general education at the tertiary A level or professional education and training (PET) at the tertiary B level. PET provides occupation-specific qualifications that prepare students for highly technical and managerial positions. VET and PET systems are often referred to together as “vocational and professional education training (VPET)” systems.

Few countries have elaborate and efficient VPET systems. Among these is the Swiss VPET system, which is an example of an education system that successfully matches market supply and demand. The Swiss VPET system efficiently introduces adolescents to the labour market, as shown by Switzerland’s 2007-2017 average youth unemployment rate of 8.1 percent compared to 14.8 percent for the OECD average (OECD, 2017).

Though not many countries have VPET systems that are comparable to Switzerland’s in terms of quality, efficiency and permeability, many have education pathways that involve some kind of practical or school-based vocational education. The purpose of the CES Education System Factbook Series¹ is to provide information about the education systems of countries across the world, with a special focus on vocational and professional education and training.

In the CES Factbook Education Systems: Kosovo, we describe Kosovo’s vocational system and discuss the characteristics that are crucial to the functioning of the system. Essential components comprise the regulatory framework and the governance of the VPET system, the involved actors, and their competencies and duties. The Factbook also provides information regarding the financing of the system and describes the process of curriculum development and the involved actors.

The Factbook is structured as follows: First, we provide an overview of Kosovo’s economy, labour market, and political system. The second part is dedicated to the description of the formal education system.

¹ From 2013 to 2019, the Factbooks were produced within the framework of the Education Systems research division at the KOF Swiss Economic Institute. From 2020 they will be produced by the Chair of Education Systems (CES) group.

The third section explains Kosovo's vocational education system. The last section offers a perspective on Kosovo's recent education reforms and challenges to be faced in the future.

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The Factbook Education Systems series have to be regarded as work in progress. The authors do not claim completeness of the information, which has been collected carefully and in all conscience. Any suggestions for improvement are highly welcome!

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1. Kosovo's Economy and Political System

One of the main purposes of an education system is to provide the future workforce with the skills needed in the labour market. The particularities of a country's economy and labour market are important factors determining the current and future demand for skills. Therefore, these are briefly described in the first part of this Factbook. In addition, this part provides an overview of Kosovo's political system with emphasis on the description of the education policies.

1.1 Kosovo's Economy

Kosovo is a small, landlocked upper-middle income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$10,070 in 2018. As a comparison, Kosovo's neighbour Serbia has a higher GDP per capita of US\$16,049, while the OECD average is US\$ 40,537 (World Bank, 2020a). With roughly a quarter of the income of the OECD, Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe.

Directly following the Kosovo War, the country's economy briefly experienced high growth as it expanded by 27% in 2001. Thereafter, the economy grew strongly with 3.7% per annum on average between 2002 and 2018. Economic growth in Serbia and OECD members was 3.5%, and 1.8% on average, respectively, during the same period **Invalid source specified**.. According to the World Bank (2020c), the Kosovar economy has been consistently outgrowing other Western Balkan countries since the 2008 Financial Crisis, but it still remains one of the poorest countries in Europe. Consequently, Kosovo heavily relies on transfers from its diaspora community, and on international aid. These are important drivers of growth by increasing consumption and investment (World Bank, 2017a; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

The Kosovar economy faces major challenges, particularly a high unemployment rate and inactivity among the labour force. Economic growth in recent years has not been associated with robust job creation, resulting in a lack of employment opportunities (World Bank, 2017a). The unemployment rate was 29.6% in 2018. Among youths, the unemployment rate is a staggering 55.4% (Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019a). One key reason, for these high numbers is the inability of the education system to equip students with the skills necessary for the labour market, resulting in a skill mismatch between the education system and the demands of the labour market (World Bank, 2017a).

Table 1: Value added and employment by sector, 2018

Sector	Kosovo: value added (%)	EU-28: value added ² (%)	Kosovo: employment (%)	EU-28: employ- ment (%)
Primary sector	8.9	1.7	3.5	4.2
Agriculture, hunting and forestry, fishing	8.9	1.7	3.5	4.2
Secondary sector	32.6	24.6	26.2	21.7
Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, other industrial activities	21.8	19.1	14.3	15.3
Of which: manufacturing	14.0	16.0	10.3	13.8
Construction	10.8	5.5	11.9	6.4
Tertiary sector	58.5	73.8	70.3	74.1
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs; ho- tels and restaurants; transport; information and communication	24.9	24.2	30.6	27.8
Financial intermediation; real estate, renting & business activities	16.3	27.6	3.9	16.7
Public administration, defence, education, health, other service activities	17.3	22.0	35.8	29.6

Source: own table based on Eurostat (2018a; 2018b) and the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (2019a).

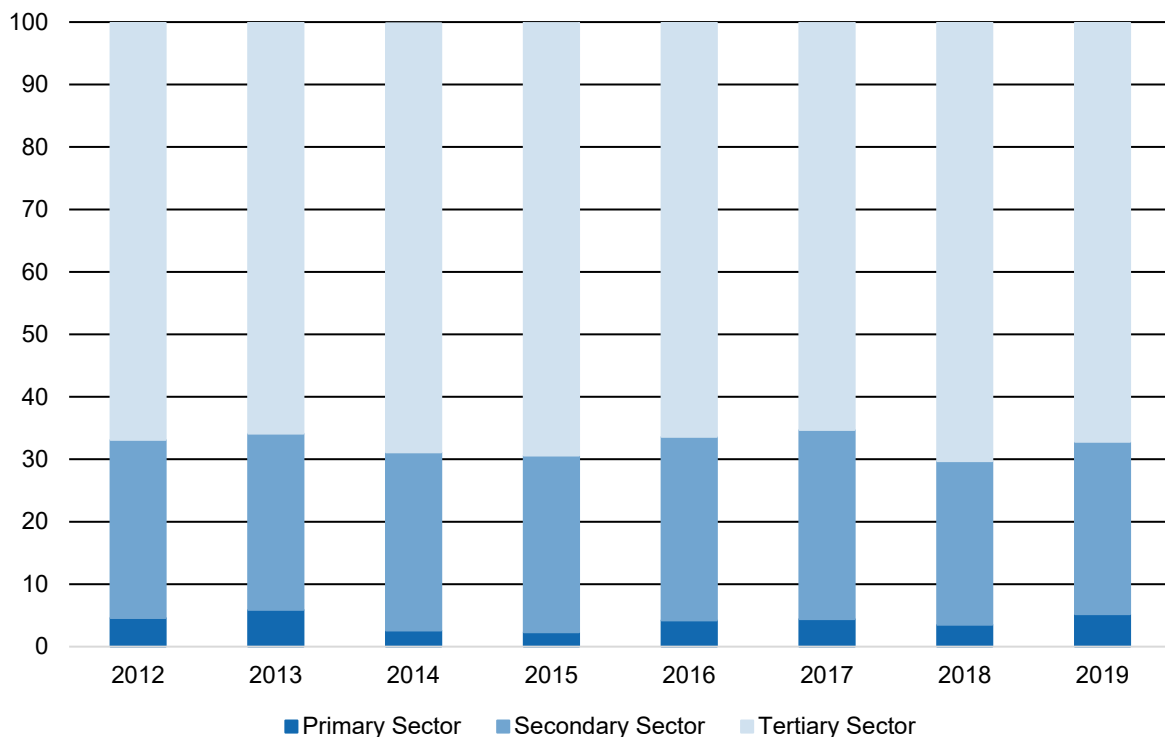
Table 1 displays the share of value added and employment by sector in % of total in 2018, both for Kosovo and the EU-28 countries. Kosovo's economy features a typical distribution among sectors observed in more advanced economies, with the tertiary sector having the highest contribution to value added and the highest level of employment, followed by the secondary and primary sector. Kosovo, similarly as the EU-28, is a service-based economy, as the vast majority of workers are employed in the tertiary sector. Kosovo's 70.3% employment in the tertiary sector is similar to the EU-28's 74.1%.

Nevertheless, there are substantial differences in relative productivity, measured as value added, of the tertiary sectors between the two economies. In the EU-28 countries, the tertiary sector is responsible for 73.8% of value added, while in Kosovo it only adds about 58.5% of value. This difference can be partially explained by allocation of labour within the tertiary sector. In Kosovo, a comparatively high level of employment in the tertiary sector is concentrated in relatively low productive industries, such as wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants and public administration. More productive industries, such as financial intermediation, only employ 3.9% of workers in Kosovo, while in the EU-28 this number is a much higher 16.7%.

With regard to the secondary and primary sectors, Kosovo is again relatively similar to the EU-28, with Kosovo lagging behind in terms of development. The secondary sector in Kosovo adds 32.6% of value with 26.2% of employment and is therefore relatively more important than in the EU-28, where it adds 24.2% of value added with 21.7% of employment. The primary sector of Kosovo is responsible of 8.9% of value added, while in the EU-28 it adds 1.7% of value. Interestingly, the level of employment of the primary sector is lower in Kosovo (3.5%) than in the EU-28 (4.2%).

² Due to rounding differences, the sum of all sectors falls below 100 percent.

Figure 1: Employment by sector (as % of total employment), 2012-2019



Source: own figure based on Kosovo Agency for Statistics (Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019a).

Figure 1 shows the evolution of employment by sector in Kosovo for the period 2012-2019. The relative distribution of employment between the three sectors fluctuates slightly over the years, but remains largely unchanged overall. As of writing, a longer period, stretching further back in the past, is not available for this time series.

1.2 The Labour Market

In the first part of this section, we will describe the general situation of Kosovo's labour market. In the second part, we will refer to the youth labour market in particular.

1.2.1 Overview of Kosovo's Labour Market

Kosovo's labour market indicators are among the worst in Europe. Challenges include a low rate of labour force participation, a high unemployment rate, high levels of inactivity, and a high degree of informality. Youths and women are particularly affected by these issues (World Bank, 2017a).

Contributing to the high unemployment rate is an insufficient creation of quality jobs by the economy and a mismatch between workers' skills and jobs requirements. According to the World Bank (2017a), most companies in Kosovo are micro companies with less than 10 employees. These companies rarely expand, as they face constraints such as inadequate regulatory and business environments and the aforementioned skill mismatch. Many companies report difficulties in finding and hiring qualified workers while on the other hand a lack of skills prevents inactive workers from transitioning to employment (World Bank, 2017a).

In recent years, Kosovo has made progress in reforming its labour market and business regulation. The country improved its score in the 2019 Doing Business report by the World Bank and is currently ranked

44th of 190 countries, in front of Belgium or its neighbours Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The report highlights Kosovo as an economy with ongoing, broad-based reform programs for its business environment (World Bank, 2019).

According to the Kosovo Human Rights Report by the U.S. Department of State (2019), the law in Kosovo provides workers with a variety of employment protections, including the right to collective bargaining, the right to form and join unions, the prohibition of child labour, a standard 40-hour workweek, and a minimum wage above the official poverty income line. However, the report also states that authorities do not effectively enforce the labour law and that many private-sector employers ignore labour laws.

A further measure of employment protection is the OECD Index of Employment Protection, which is a multidimensional index that quantifies the strictness of Employment Protection legislation (EPL) across countries. It ranges between zero to six, where zero refers to a low level of EPL, and six to a high level of protection. In 2014, Kosovo's indicator for the protection of permanent workers against individual dismissal was 1.67, the same as Serbia's, but lower than Albania's 2.24 (OECD, 2013).

Table 2: Labour force participation rate and unemployment rate by age in 2018

Age group	Labour force participation rate		Unemployment rate	
	Kosovo	OECD average	Kosovo	OECD average
Total (15–64 years)	40.9	72.4	29.6	5.5
Youth (15–24 years)	23.0	47.5	55.4	11.1
Adults (25–64 years)	46.8	78.1	22.1	4.7

Source: own table based on OECD (2017) and the Kosovo Agency of Statistic (2019a).

Table 2 summarises the labour force participation rate and unemployment rate by age for Kosovo and the OECD average in 2018. Kosovo has a low labour force participation rate and high rate of unemployment. Only 40.9% of the working-age population participates in the labour force, compared to the OECD average of 72.4%. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the labour force participation rate is especially low among women and youths (aged 15-24 years). The labour force participation of youths is 23.0%, while for women it is an even lower 18.5% (Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019a).

The high level of unemployment is a major challenge for Kosovo. 29.6% of workers were unemployed in 2018. This is much higher than the OECD average of 5.5% in the same year. The problem is even worse for youths, as more than half (55.4%) were unemployed. The unemployment rate for women was 33.4% (Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019a).

Table 3 displays labour force participation and unemployment by educational attainment for the year 2016. The indicators are worse the lower the level of education, both in Kosovo and the OECD. But in Kosovo, unemployment is much higher than in the OECD, even for graduates of tertiary education. The unemployment rate of workers with a tertiary degree is 18.0% in Kosovo, while it is only 4.6% in the OECD. On the upper secondary level, the unemployment rate is 28.4% in Kosovo and 7.0% in the OECD, while below it is 39.9% and 11.9%, respectively.

Table 3: Labour force participation rate and unemployment rate by educational attainment in 2017 (persons aged 25–64)

Education level	Labour force participation rate		Unemployment rate	
	Kosovo	OECD average	Kosovo	OECD average
Less than upper secondary education	17.8	64.0	39.9	11.9
Upper secondary education	37.9	80.2	28.4	7.0
Tertiary education	56.7	88.3	18.0	4.6

Source: own table based on OECD (2020a), Kosovo Agency for Statistics (2019a) and ILO (2020).

To illustrate the scale of the general challenge, note that the unemployment rate of 22.1% for Kosovar adult is higher than the unemployment rate of 11.1% for youths in the OECD. Similarly, the unemployment rate of workers with tertiary education in Kosovo is higher than the unemployment rate of workers with less than upper secondary education in the OECD. In the National Development Strategy 2016-2012 (NDS, 2016) the country's main plan of its current and future development policies, the low level of employment has been identified as a key constraint of Kosovo's economic growth. According to NDS, improving the low skill level of the country's labour force, which is the main cause of high unemployment, is the top priority of policy makers.

1.2.2 The Youth Labour Market

In this section, we will discuss Kosovo's youth labour market in more detail. The KOF Swiss Economic Institute has developed the KOF Youth Labour Market Index (KOF YLMI), a multi-dimensional index, that allows to capture the complexity of the youth labour market. Specifically, according to Renold et al. (2014), it does not suffice to use a single indicator, such as youth unemployment, to adequately describe the state of youth in a country or make comprehensive cross-country analysis. The KOF YLMI is normally used in factbooks to describe the youth labour market, but at the time of writing the index is not available for Kosovo. We will therefore focus on data that is available through the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (2019a). Table 4 reports the data below.

Table 4: Youth labour market indicators, 2018 or most recent*

	Kosovo	OECD average
Youth unemployment rate	55.4	11.1
Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET rate)	32.7*	13.0
Relative unemployment ratio	2.50	2.36

Source: own table based on Kosovo Agency for Statistics (2019a) and OECD (2020b).

As mentioned above, the youth unemployment rate in Kosovo is 55.4%, compared to 11.1% in the OECD. The rate of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET rate) is 32.7% in Kosovo, while the rate in the OECD is 13.0%. Finally, the relative unemployment ratio, which is defined as the ratio between youth and unemployment rate, is 2.5 in Kosovo, while 2.36 in the OECD.

1.3 Kosovo's Political System

Understanding the basics of a country's political system and getting to know the political goals with respect to its education system are crucial points for the understanding of the education system in a broader sense. In the first part, we explain Kosovo's political system in general. The politics and goals regarding the education system will be referred to in the second part.

1.3.1 Overview of the Kosovar Political System

The Republic of Kosovo is a parliamentary democracy and the youngest state in Europe. It unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008 and is recognized by the United States and most EU-members, including Germany (Be In Kosovo, 2020; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). However, Serbia considers the declaration illegal (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Other countries do not recognize Kosovo as well, most notably Russia, China, and some EU-members, e.g. Spain and Greece (EURACTIV, 2019). Kosovo held its first elections, which were considered to be fair and peaceful, in 2009 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

Kosovo has a unicameral parliament, called the Assembly, which consists of 120 seats and is directly elected by the voters. In turn, the Assembly elects a president who then appoints the prime minister. The official languages are Albanian and Serbian (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Municipalities form the basic territorial unit of local self-governance (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008).

Kosovo is a multi-ethnic state consisting of a Kosovo Albanian majority and a small Kosovo Serbian minority population that is concentrated in Northern Kosovo. The constitution and laws of Kosovo grant protection and self-government rights to the Serbian minority. However, many of Kosovo's Serbs reject the constitution and government. As a result, Kosovo Serbs, supported by Serbia, formed their own parallel administrative institutions that operate outside the Kosovo legal framework. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Numerous official publications mention the Kosovo Serbian communities' unwillingness to cooperate with the federal government (e.g. in the Education Statistics Report (2018) or in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021). Consequently, information and statistics reported in this factbook generally only apply to the Kosovo Albanian communities and population.

According to the U.S Department of State (2019), there is a significant number of reports of instances of corruption by senior government officials. The source further reports that the government took measures to prosecute some officials who committed offenses, but many continue to stay in office. In the Corruption Perceptions Index 2019, Kosovo scores in the lower half of the ranking, with a score of 36 out of a maximum of 100. However, the report praises Kosovo's new leading political party, which recently won a majority of seats in the Assembly, for its transparent disclosure of campaign finance and highlights that this offers an opportunity for change (Transparency International, 2019).

In the Worldwide Governance Indicators 2018, Kosovo ranks in the lower half of countries, compared to the OECD average in the top 20%. Kosovo's score for "Political Stability and Absence of Violence" is particularly low, as the country ranks among the bottom quarter of countries. Compared to the previous assessment in 2013, Kosovo improved its position in some indicators, such as "Control of Corruption", and "Rule of Law", but simultaneously lost ground in others, like "Regulatory Quality" and "Government Effectiveness" (World Bank, 2019).

Overall, Kosovo completed its state-building phase and is now at a key stage in development and European integration. The government and institutions of Kosovo recognize this situation in the National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS), which outlines the country's strategy for future development. The NDS is a key component of Kosovo's development policies, as it identifies the country's top priorities

for future development and how these will be addressed. The development of the education system, including the VET system, receives significant attention in the NDS.

1.3.2 Politics and Goals of the Education System

Public education in Kosovo is primarily a federal competence and overseen by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). It develops the educational curriculum and is responsible for the quality assurance of pre-university education (Aliu, 2019). Further responsibilities of the MEST include the development and improvement of the education system on all levels (Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008). The Kosovo education system has strong decentralised characteristics, as the law delegates a significant number of rights and responsibilities of pre-university education to the municipalities. These include the construction and maintenance of schools, provision of infrastructure and the employment of teachers (Article 5, Law on Education in the Municipalities). Other sources even define Kosovo's education system as decentralised, such as a report by UNICEF (2015).

Due to historical and political reasons, Kosovo's education system is ethnically segregated (Balkan Insights, 2019). Kosovar Serbs attend separate Serbian schools with Serbian curricula that are not overseen by the MEST, although there is a small number of multi-ethnic schools. The Serbian language schools operate outside of the Kosovo education system, despite the efforts of the Kosovar government to accommodate the needs of the Serbian minority (KESP, 2016). As the Serbian schools do not cooperate with the Kosovar government, data on these schools are not available (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018).

According to Aliu (2019), Kosovo's education sector remains one of the most criticized and sensitive social spheres in Kosovo. One of the major problems of the education system is its inability to sufficiently prepare students for the transition to the labour market (World Bank, 2017a; Aliu, 2019). Further issues include poor teacher performance, insufficient funding for teacher training, and a lack of infrastructure and teaching material (Aliu, 2019). Although the government has addressed some issues with higher spending on education – e.g. by increasing teachers' salaries – the budget allocation for investment in education remains too low (Aliu, 2019). To put it in context, Kosovo's spending per student are 16.1% of GDP per capita in pre-university education while the OECD average is 21% for primary school level and 26% for middle school level (Aliu, 2019).

The education system has been identified as a key area of development in Kosovo (NDS, 2016). A central component of the development of education is the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021 (KESP). The plan identifies the main challenges of education in Kosovo and defines the development direction for all education levels.

2. Formal System of Education

According to the KESP (2016) and the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF, 2011), the Kosovo education system is organised as follows:

- Pre-school education (children up to 6 years)
- Primary education (grades 1-5, children aged 6-10)
- Lower secondary education (grades 6-9, children aged 11-14)
- Upper secondary education, consisting of
 - Gymnasium (grades 10-12, children aged 15-18),
 - Vocational school (grades 10-12, children aged 15-18)
- Higher education (18+)

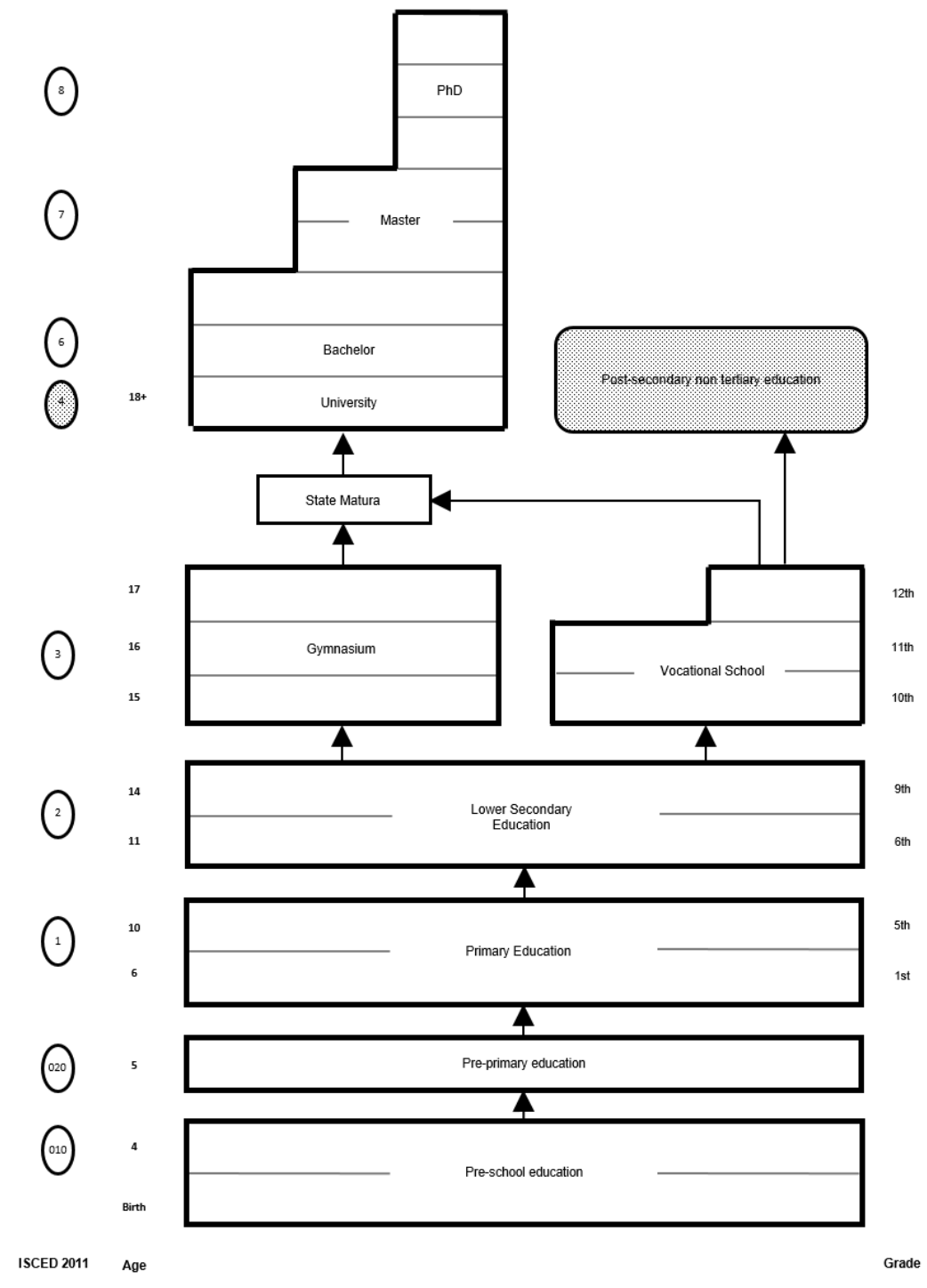
Figure 2 displays the education system in Kosovo and maps the different grades to corresponding ISCED 2011 level. Preschool Primary and lower secondary education (Grades 1-9) are mandatory, publicly funded and free of charge.

After grade 9, students enter the upper secondary level, which is divided into gymnasiums and vocational schools. Both types specialise in different profiles. Gymnasiums, which consist of 3 years of schooling, offer general education to improve students' academic skills with the goal to prepare them for university. There are five profiles offered: Social, general, natural sciences, mathematics-informatics, and languages. Vocational schools, on the other hand, prepare students for labour market entry. These schools are divided into two levels. The first level consists of two years of school (grades 10 and 11) and offers basic education, which allows students to enter the labour market as semi-qualified workers. Students can further opt for the second level (grade 12), which allows them to transition to employment as qualified workers. After completing upper secondary education, students may enter the State Matura exam, an external assessment that tests the skills and knowledge acquired in secondary education. The State Matura is open to students for both general and vocational schools and builds the basic qualification required to enter into tertiary education (KCF, 2011).

There exists a number of privately funded schools, both on the primary and secondary level, but the vast majority of students is enrolled in the public school system. The share of students in private institutions was 2.8% in the school year 2017/2018 (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018).

Higher education in Kosovo is offered both by public and private universities and is divided into levels as well. The first level is three to four years long and leads to a Bachelor's degree consisting of either 180 or 240 ECTS. Students can then obtain an additional one to two years of university education and earn a Master's degree (60 or 120 ECTS). Finally, it is possible to enrol into doctoral studies.

Figure 1 The Kosovan Education System



Source: own chart based on MEST (2016) and the Western Balkans Alliance for Work-Based Learning (2020)

The aims and general curriculum of the pre-university education system are defined by the MEST and outlined in the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF). The KCF is a key component of the Kosovo education system, because it defines the aims of pre-university education, including the competencies and skills that students should have acquired after completing upper secondary education. Schools are required to implement the KCF, but are explicitly granted flexibility with regard to their annual teaching plan.

The KCF structures pre-university education in six key stages that correspond to stages in children's development. As students progress through each stage, they acquire skills outlined in the KCF for each

stage. Table 5 displays the structure of the Kosovo education with the corresponding curriculum key stage and the corresponding ISCED mapping. For most education levels, key stages can be mapped to an ISCED level. At the end of a curriculum key stage, students need to pass a school internal assessment in order to continue to the next stage. If students do not pass, they need repeat the school year again (KCF, 2011).

Table 5: Curriculum key stages and NQF levels in the Kosovo education system

International Standard Classification of Education	Formal levels of the education system	Kosovo Curriculum Framework key stage	NQF Level
ISCED-8	Higher education – Doctoral level	Not applicable	8
ISCED-7	Higher education – Master level	Not applicable	7
ISCED-6	Higher education – Bachelor level	Not applicable	6
ISCED-5 ISCED-4	Bologna short cycle and/or post-secondary non-tertiary VET	Not applicable	5
ISCED-3	Upper secondary education Grade 12	Curriculum key stage 6: Consolidation and specialization	4
	Upper secondary education Grades 10-11	Curriculum key stage 5: General and professional development	3
ISCED-2	Lower secondary education Grades 8-9	Curriculum key stage 4: Reinforcement and orientation	2
	Lower secondary education Grades 6-7	Curriculum key stage 3: Further development and orientation	
ISCED-1	Primary education Grades 3-5	Curriculum key stage 2: Reinforcement and development	1
	Primary education Grades 1-2	Curriculum key stage 1: Basic acquisition	
ISCED-0	Pre-primary grade	Basic acquisition	NA
	Age 0-5	Foundation curriculum key stage: Early childhood education	

Source: own table based on Kosovo Curriculum Framework (2011) and the National Qualification Framework (2011).

A further important component of the education system is the National Qualification Framework (NQF, 2011). The NQF intends to improve the education system by building a set of qualifications that are based on international standards. It defines the exit qualifications acquired by students after completing certain levels of education and the types of certificates and diplomas that students receive upon achieving a qualification. The basic structure of the NQF consists of eight levels at which qualifications are placed. These levels have some overlap with the levels in ISCED or the key stages in KCF, but cannot be mapped one-to-one. The NQF levels are displayed in Table 5 as well.

Table 6: Net enrolment rate (NER) and gross enrolment ratio (GER), 2018

Educational level	ISCED 2011	Gross Enrolment Ratio
Early childhood educational development programmes	010	18.6%
Pre-primary education	020	91.7%
Primary education	1	96%
Secondary education	2 – 3	88.7%
<i>Lower secondary education</i>	2	88.8%
<i>Upper secondary education</i>	3	88.5%
<i>Percentage enrolled in vocational secondary education</i>	2-3	53%
Compulsory education age group	1-3	93%
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	4	NA
Tertiary education	5 – 8	NA
<i>Short-cycle tertiary education</i>	5	
<i>Bachelor or equivalent level</i>	6	
<i>Master or equivalent level</i>	7	
<i>Doctoral or equivalent level</i>	8	

Source: own table based on World Bank Group (2018d).

Table 6 shows the gross enrolment ratio (GER)³ by education level for the school year 2017/2018. The GER quantifies the number of students enrolled at a given education level—irrespective of their age—as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. For example, for the primary education level, the GER sets the actual number of students in primary education—irrespective of their age—in relation to those who are in the official age to attend primary education⁴. Currently, no data is available regarding the net enrolment ratios (NER) of any individual education level. The NER quantifies the total number of students in the theoretical age group for a given education level enrolled at that level expressed as a percentage of the total population of that age group.

2.1 Pre-Primary Education

According to the State Portal of Kosovo (2020), the pre-school education system of Kosovo is divided into three levels:

- Kindergarten I (for children of 1-2 years of age),

³ The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) **Invalid source specified**. defines the gross enrolment ratio as the “number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.”

⁴ A gross enrollment ratio of 100 corresponds to a situation where each child in a given country is enrolled in the corresponding education level. A value above 100 could occur due to students who are older than the typical enrolment age for primary education (e.g. have to repeat grade, adult learners). A value below 100 implies that not everyone who is in the typical age for primary education is actually enrolled.

- Kindergarten II (for children of 3-4 years of age) and
- Pre-Primary class (for children of 5 years of age).

Pre-school education is offered by public institutions, and a number of licensed private kindergartens, but can also be provided by families as well (Law on Preschool Education, Article 16). The MEST is responsible for the majority of aspects of pre-primary education, including the curriculum, licensing of private institutions (Article 26) and the supervision of compliance of the Law on Preschool Education. Pre-school education is generally carried out in Albanian. Following its principle of inclusion, the law postulates that in multi-ethnic communities, classes shall be conducted in minority languages as well.

The GER for the pre-school level (Kindergarten) was 18.6% in the school year 2017/2018, while the GER for pre-primary education was 91.7% in the same school year. Enrolment in both levels has increased considerably in recent years and is the successful of measures taken as part of the NDS (Aliu, 2019). Policy makers identified low enrolment rates in both pre-school and pre-primary education as major challenge for the Kosovo education system. To increase enrolment, the NDS (2016) increased the number of public kindergartens, increased the inclusion of private kindergartens, and reallocated teachers from higher levels (typically the primary level) to pre-primary education.

The cost of pre-school and pre-primary education is mostly financed by the Kosovo Budget (Article 18, 19). According to the Kosovo Law on Preschool Education, parents bear some of the costs in form of tariffs. The height of tariffs is determined by the municipalities and based on family relative income and wealth. Families on welfare are exempt from tariffs (Article 22) (Law on Preschool Education, 2006). The MEST financially supports licensed private pre-school institutions, with the aim to increase the access of pre-school education to more children (Article 27). Financial support is not conditional on requirements that would exclude certain communities (e.g., on the basis of ethnicity or religion). In contrary, the law specifically intends to increase inclusion by providing financial support. It favours institutions that serve rural areas and children with special needs.

2.2 Primary and Lower Secondary Education

Children who have reached the age of six enter primary education at the start of the next school year. Primary education consists of five grades, after which children enter lower secondary education consisting of four additional grades. The combined nine grades of primary and lower secondary education cover the age range 6-15, are compulsory, and free of charge (Government of Kosovo, 2020).

As this level of education is mandatory, enrolment is high. At the primary level, 96% of children were enrolled in the school year 2017/2018, while enrolment for the lower secondary level was 88% in the same school year. According to statistics provided by the Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN, 2018), enrolment in lower secondary education used to be as high as 93% in earlier years, but the source provides no explanation on why the enrolment rate dropped. The transition rate from primary to secondary level is high and comprised 100% in 2014 (UNICEF, 2015). As is the case with pre-primary education, the principle of inclusion is institutionalised in the system as well. The law explicitly grants the right to education to every child without discrimination on any basis, including ethnicity and religion (Article 3). Furthermore, classes are conducted in Albanian and Serbian, or in the community's main language that a school is serving, in case it is not one of the two official languages of Kosovo (Article 13). As mentioned above, the majority of Serbian children in Kosovo attend Serbian schools that are not administered by the MEST and therefore are not part of the Kosovo public education system (see for example KESP (2016)).

A lack of quality in teaching is one of the main challenges of primary and lower secondary education. This reflects in the country's low score in standardised tests, such as PISA. Kosovo participated in the

PISA assessment for the first time in 2015 and its performance was “worrisome” (World Bank, 2017b). The test revealed significant lags of Kosovo’s students compared to the OECD average and its regional peers. As pointed out by the World Bank, the weak performance of the country is indicative of the education system’s inability to equip its students with the skills required by the labour market. Nevertheless, the World Bank also stresses that the participation of Kosovo has to be lauded in and itself, as it shows that the authorities recognize to need of independent feedback in order to improve the quality of teaching (World Bank, 2017b). The country achieved slight improvements in the 2018 assessment, but the increase in performance was below expectations (Prishtina Insight, 2019).

The NDS (2016) has identified the low qualifications of Kosovo’s teachers as the main cause of low quality of its education system. According to the NDS, around half of the teachers fail the minimum qualifications to hold the office. The country aims to solve this challenge by strengthening the capacities of teachers and accountability mechanisms. By 2021, Kosovo intends to increase the number of teachers satisfying the minimum qualifications to 100% (NDS, 2016).

2.3 Upper Secondary Education

Upper secondary education is organised in general (academic) and professional (vocational) education (Government of Kosovo, 2020). This level of education is open to all students that completed lower secondary education and lasts for 2-3 years, depending on the chosen curriculum. In contrast to the mandatory primary and lower secondary levels, this level of education is voluntary. The enrolment rate was 88.5% in the school year 2017/2018. It is regulated by the Law on Pre-University Education, hence, generally, the same regulations apply to upper secondary education as it does to primary and lower secondary education. This includes the principle of inclusion, the responsibility of the MEST to design and plan the curriculum, and the responsibilities of the municipalities. Both general and vocational education are offered by public schools which are funded from public funds. The law does not, however, state whether public upper secondary education is completely free of charge, as is the case for compulsory education. Private institutions are free to charge their own fees (Government of Kosovo, 2020).

General secondary education is offered by gymnasiums with various profiles, consisting of grades 10-12 and covering the age range 15-17. Gymnasiums develop students’ academic skills and prepare them for further studies in higher education and the labour market. Vocational education, is offered by profiled vocational schools and trains students for the labour market (Government of Kosovo, 2020). The share of students in vocational schools was 53% in the school year 2017/2018 (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018).

Both general and vocational education end with a final exam, which is an internal evaluation of students’ knowledge and skills. Students who pass the final exam may enter the external State Matura exam, which is organised by the MEST and open to students from both general and vocational education. The State Matura is a standardized test that proves completion of secondary education and allows for further studies at the tertiary level. (Article 2, (Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam, 2008)). The content of the State Matura exam consists of general educational subjects (e.g. Albanian, English, and math) and special subjects depending on the profile of the school that candidates attended. For students from vocational schools, the content includes a practical part as well (Article 18, (Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam, 2008)). Candidates who pass the State Matura fulfil the general condition to continue tertiary studies (Article 19). Students from most gymnasium profiles perform well in the Matura exam, with passing percentages between 93% and 98%. This percentage drops for students from social gymnasiums (85%) and arts gymnasiums (67%). Performance from students from vocational schools is even worse, with passing percentages between 43% and 65% (KEEN, 2018).

As mentioned in previous chapters, a mismatch exists between the education system and the needs of labour market. The low quality of teaching at lower education levels contribute to this problem, but the major cause is an insufficient linkage between upper secondary education, particularly vocational education, and the labour market (NDS, 2016). For example, there exists no system for forecasting skill requirements in the labour market, public spending for vocational training is low, and at least half of vocational schools do not offer the opportunity for practical experience. (NDS, 2016).

2.4 Postsecondary and Higher Education

Higher Education in Kosovo is offered by public and private institutions and is organised in three levels (Western Balkans Alliance for Work-Based Learning, 2020). The first level consists of three to four years and after earning 180 or 240 ECTS, respectively, students receive a Bachelor's degree. In the second level, students can earn their Master's degree by earning 60 or 120 ECTS in one or two years. The third level allows for individual research at the doctoral level (Law on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo, 2011).

According to the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2016), the higher education system has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in the number of students, which almost tripled between 2004 and 2015, and the number of study programs. Kosovo has 6,669 students per 100,000 inhabitants, which is nearly double the European average. However, the KESP also points out, that the increase in teaching staff was low and hence not able to keep with the growth in students. As a result, the quality of the higher education system is low, as is the case with lower levels. Low activity of scientific research at higher education institutions exacerbate this problem (KESP, 2016).

The MEST funds public higher education institutions. The Law on Higher Education allows institutions to receive additional funding from external sources, such as tuition fees and contributions from private bodies. An online article about the costs of student life in Kosovo claims that the tuition fee at the University of Prishtina, the countries only public university, is 25 Euros per semester (Telegrafi, 2015).

As stated by the Law on Higher Education, all students passing the State Matura exam have the right to continue studies at higher education institutions. Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear whether successful completion of the State Matura is a sufficient or the sole criteria for admission to higher institutions, because laws are in apparent conflict with each other: The Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam states that admission of students to higher education shall be carried out based on the following criteria:

“20% during the secondary school and high school”, likely referring to grades achieved during secondary education;

“50% on Matura exam”;

“30% on internal evaluation of academic units”, likely referring to an admission test conducted by the institution providing higher education.

For some specific study areas, higher education institutions may require additional tests of some subjects to determine admission. Admission to the Master level is competitive and based on the results of the Bachelor level. (Law on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo, 2011).

2.5 Continuing Education (Adult Education)

Adult education in Kosovo has become an important part of education, according to the State Portal of Kosovo (2020). It addresses persons aged 15 and older and is funded by the MEST and contributions by students and companies. (Law on Adults Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo, 2012). The supervision of adult education is the responsibility of the MEST. The ministry establishes the public institutions that offer adult education, and drafts and adopts the programs in adult education and training (Government of Kosovo, 2020). According to KEEN (2019c), the term adult education implies all education and training provided to adults.

The KESP recognises the importance of adult education and highlights its role in the future development of Kosovo. However, according KESP, there is an almost total lack of structures and expertise in the field of adult education, conflicting with the above-mentioned source (KESP, 2016). There are no enrolment rates available for adult education. Total attendance in adult education was 1,912 in the school year 2018/2019, where 1,276 (67%) of students were men. These numbers are comparable to more recent years (KEEN, 2019c).

2.6 Teacher Education

Teacher education in Kosovo is comparatively new. The first institutionalized school which was purely dedicated to teacher education opened in Prishtina after the second World War (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 201). Before, most trained teachers in Kosovo attended teacher education in the Albanian city Elbasan (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 201). These two schools formed the backbone of Kosovar teacher education for quite some time. Back then, high school graduates could attend a one-year program in pedagogical study and training in order to qualify for teaching (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 201). Starting in the late 50's, higher pedagogical schools were established all over Kosovo as a measure to reduce teacher shortage. These schools offered 2-years-programmes for preschool, primary school and subject teachers (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 201).

In 2004, the higher pedagogical schools were put out of operation and replaced by the University of Prishtina, which started to offer a three-year bachelor programme (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 201). This bachelor programme was later extended to four years (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 205). The Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina was created as a collaboration between the University of Prishtina, MEST and the Kosovo Teacher Education Program (ETF, 2010, p. 39). The project was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (ETF, 2010, p. 39). With the establishment of the Faculty of Education, the main target was the professionalisation of teaching quality through the replacement of non-university teacher degrees with ones from universities (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 203). These reforms also aimed to pursue in-service training in order to keep teachers' proficiency up to date (Bicaj & Berisha, 2013, p. 203). The faculty operates training centres in four cities across Kosovo: in Gjakova, Gjiljan, Prishtina and Prizren (KEEN, 2019b, S. 16). Future teachers are not only able to attend programs for becoming ISCED-level 0-2 teachers, but they can also take subject-related courses at other faculties of the University of Prishtina like e.g. the Faculty of Philology, Faculty of Mathematics etc. This would allow them to teach on the general and vocational upper-secondary level (KEEN, 2019b, S. 15).

Article 33 in the Law on Pre-University Education requires that all programmes leading to a pre-school and primary teacher qualification shall be equivalent to at least 240 ECTS. Professional practice needs to make up no less than 25 ECTS of the total requirement (KEEN, 2019b, S. 14). Future subject teachers must complete at least 300 ECTS, which consist of 180 ECTS academic preparation and 120 ECTS

pedagogical and practical component (KEEN, 2019b, S. 14). The minimum requirement regarding ECTS from professional practice is set at 15 ECTS (KEEN, 2019b, S. 14).

Despite these regulations, the quality of teaching in Kosovo is low and one of the primary challenges tackled in the National Development Strategy (NDS, 2016).

3. The System of Vocational and Professional Education and Training

This section of the Factbook describes the vocational education and training (VET) system at the upper secondary level and the professional education and training system (PET) at the tertiary level in more detail. Thereby, the term vocational and professional education and training (VPET) refers to both, the VET and the PET system.

3.1 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The VET system in Kosovo is mainly school-based and has the aim to equip students with the necessary skills to be able to position themselves in the labour market. Students who completed the compulsory grades 1-9 may enrol in vocational schools on a voluntary basis (Government of Kosovo, 2020). Slightly more than half of upper secondary students (53% in the school year 2017/2018) choose to enrol in this pathway (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2018). Classes consists of theoretical and practical education (Government of Kosovo, 2020). As part of their education, students also visit companies to train their practical skills and gain their first work experience (KEEN, 2019a). The duration of the VET programme is 2-3 years (grades 10-12), corresponding to the final two key stages of the KCF. There is a consensus among policy makers and experts that Kosovo's VET system suffers from low quality and fails to achieve its goal of preparing students for the labour market, see e.g. NDS (2016), KESP (2016), and KEEN (2019a).

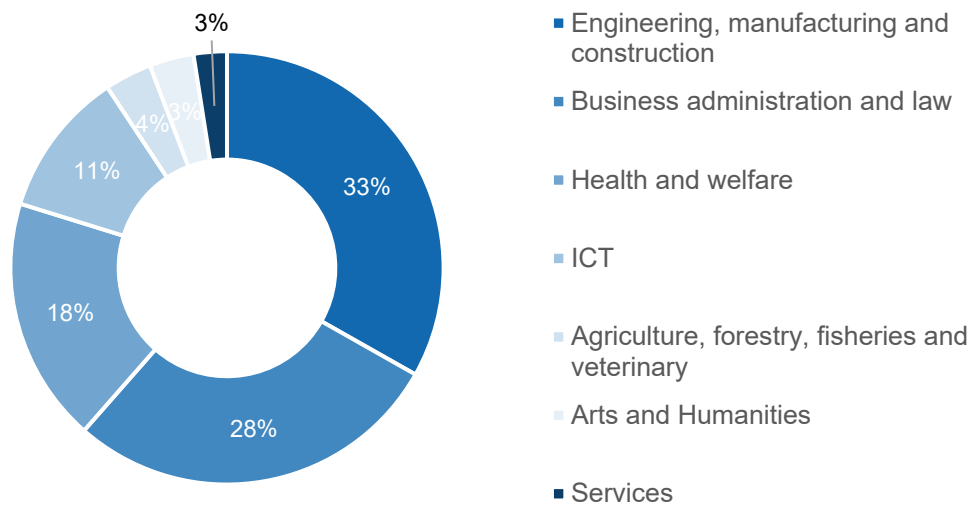
There are currently 68 vocational schools in Kosovo offering 122 profiles that prepare students for corresponding professions (KEEN, 2019a; KEEN, 2019c). The KCF (2011) states that there are six different types of VET schools:

- Agricultural school
- Technical school (electro-technology, engineering, civil construction, graphic design, communication)
- Medical school
- Economic and business administration school
- Chemistry-technology school
- Art school

KEEN (2019a) provides statistics on VET programme enrolment shares, but uses a slightly different qualification than the one described above. Figure 3 displays programme enrolment shares in the school

year 2018/2019. The most popular programmes are technical programmes, such engineering, manufacturing and construction, with 33% of VET students enrolled, followed by business administration and law programmes with 28%, and ICT programmes with 18%.

Figure 2: VET programme enrolment share in 2018/2019



Source: own representation based on KEEN (2019a).

Upper secondary education in Kosovo, including VET, is organised in the KCF key stages 5 & 6. Grades 10 and 11 correspond to the first stage. During this stage, students are exposed to specialised skills in preparation for further education or for entering the labour market (KCF, 2011). After completing this stage, students may continue to the next stage of VET, grade 12, or enter the labour market as semi-skilled workers (KEEN, 2019a). At the end of stage concluding grade 11, an internal final assessment takes place. As mentioned in section 2, only students passing the assessment are allowed to enter the next stage. Students who do not pass need to repeat grade 11 (KCF, 2011). There are no sources available about how many students pass the grade 11 internal assessment, but data from the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (2018) indicate that the transmission rate from grade 11 to grade 12 is very high (ca. 95%). This also indicates that most students choose to continue to grade 12 instead of entering the labour market directly.

Grade 12 makes up key stage 6. In this stage, students transition from adolescence to maturity and consolidate their entire education experience for a new phase of life and to enter the labour market as skilled workers. This stage concludes with an internal final assessment. The assessment includes the vocational final assessment, a semi-external examination that tests students' skills required for certain professions. Students who pass the vocational final assessment receive a diploma and qualify for a specific profession. Upon receiving the diploma, students have the opportunity of either entering the labour market, or continue their vocational education at the post-secondary non-tertiary level (KCF, 2011). Furthermore, Students who complete grade 12 of vocational education may also take the State Matura exam and continue to higher education (KEEN, 2019a).

Vocational schools offer a mix of general theoretical education (i.e. mathematics, languages, etc.) and professional practical education. Practical learning takes place in grades 10-12 and makes up roughly 50% of the VET curriculum. There are two main types of practical learning programmes: work-based learning in the VET school's own workshops and professional practice in companies (KEEN, 2019a). Schools place students in a company of their choice and they usually gain their first workplace experience at this stage. This allows students to gain practical skills for the type of profession they wish to practice in their future (KEEN, 2019a).

Nevertheless, numerous sources indicate that the practical education in VET is weak and does not work well in reality. As a result, students lack the skills necessary for the labour market. KEEN (2019a) lists two main problems from which the work-based learning system in Kosovo suffers. First, while companies are generally willing to accept students for professional practice, they do not have the capacity to accommodate a large number of students. Consequently, students can only spend a limited time of the school year at the company. Secondly, the professional practice at a company is rarely planned according to the requirements of the curriculum. There is no final evaluation of the skills learned by the student, making it more akin to a visit to the company than actual engagement with and training of the students. Similarly, Wanklin (2018) states that in many cases practical learning phases that are mandated by the curriculum are either company visits where VET students exclusively observe the work performed in the company, or are held in learning workshops taking place within the school. To summarise, there is a discrepancy between what is stipulated in official documents and curricula, and how these requirements are implemented in practice. EYE (2019) states that regardless what VET curricula documents specify, VET schools and partners currently do not implement the specifications systematically.

3.2 Professional Education and Training (PET; Post-Secondary Level)

Technical secondary education institutions, higher vocational schools, and universities offer post-secondary, non-tertiary education. Candidates who enrol in this type of education must have completed upper secondary education (both general and vocational) and are ideally at least 18 years old (KCF, 2011).

The diploma obtained at this level of education corresponds to level 5 of the National Qualification Framework. However, according to the NQF, this level is still in development and the titles of the qualifications are currently unknown. Students who complete this level of education should have the qualifications to work as specialists and managers in the labour market (NDS, 2016). According to KCF, successful students at this level are qualified to enrol at university level without fulfilling the minimum requirements in the Matura test.

The Kosovo education system is still in development and it appears that PET has not yet become a priority of policy makers, as lower levels of education, specifically the VET system, currently enjoy more attention. Additionally, sources for this level of education in Kosovo are sparsely available and there are no mentions of an institutionalised PET system. Sources describe adult education and training (see section 2.5), but this does not constitute part of the PET system. Consequently, the following sections mainly concentrate on the VET system.

3.3 Regulatory and Institutional Framework of the TVET System

3.3.1 Central Elements of TVET Legislation

This chapter is based on the Enhancing Youth Employment Project. Its “Skill Gap Analysis”- Report (2017) provides a good overview of the legislation of the VET system in Kosovo. The main laws and key documents regulating the VPET system in Kosovo are the following:

The **Law on Pre-University Education** regulates the general principles of education in Kosovo corresponding to the ISCED levels 0-4, which includes the VET system. It defines the competencies of MEST and the municipalities, and outlines the organisation of the pre-university education system. With regard to VET, the law defines that the ISCED Level 3, the VET level, corresponds to the Key Stages 5 and 6 of the KCF, and the ISCED Level 4, post-secondary education, corresponds to the specialisation stage in the KCF.

The **Law for Vocational Education and Training** regulates the VET system in more detail. It has the purpose of “regulating the national vocational education and training system in accordance with the needs of the economic and social development” of Kosovo. This law provides the basis for education institutions offering vocational education, institutionalises the cooperation between central education authorities with social partners (KEEN, 2019a), and establishes two important authorities within the VET system: First, the *Agency for Vocational Education and Training and for Adults* (AVETA) is responsible for administrating education institutions offering vocational (and adult) education. Second, the *Council for Vocational Education and Training and for Adults* (CVETA), an advisory board to the MEST, provides advices on policy development. Both authorities play a role in adult education as well.

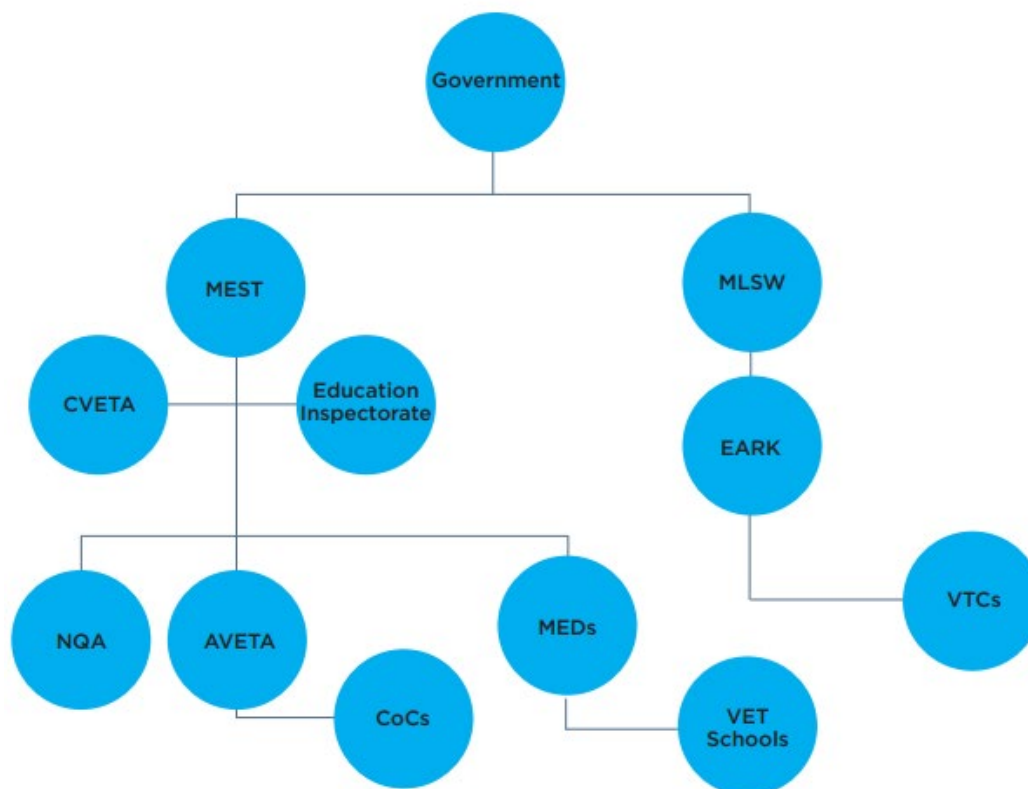
Additional relevant laws are the **Law on National Qualifications**, which establishes the National Qualification Framework, a very important component of the development of the education system in Kosovo, and the **Law on Adult Education and Training**, which regulates adult education, mainly with regard to the institutions offering adult education. Furthermore, the **Law on Education in Municipalities** plays an important role as well, as it regulates the distribution of responsibilities and competencies between the MEST and the municipalities. For example, the Municipalities have the responsibility of constructing educational institutions, including the institutions providing VET.

Finally, the **KCF** and the **National Qualification Framework** (NQF) are two key components that provide the curricular of the education system, including the VPET system. The MEST is responsible for both frameworks. The KCF defines the competencies that students shall achieve on all levels of education are defined. The NQF defines the qualifications that students receive after completing a level of education. It also relates the Kosovo education system to international systems, specifically the ISCED and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

3.3.2 Key Actors

The Kosovo Education and Employment Network (2019a) (KEEN) provides a comprehensive overview over the key actors in the Kosovo VET system. According to KEEN, the governance of the VET system is very complex, because there are various actors involved. Figure 4 provides an overview of the several institutions involved.

Figure 3: Management structure of the VET system in Kosovo



Source: Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN, 2019a).

Government

The VET system in Kosovo is managed by the government through ministries and agencies that operate under ministerial supervision (KEEN, 2019a). The MEST is the responsible ministry for overall policy-making, legislation, and curriculum planning in the Kosovo education system, including the VET system. In the provision of vocational education, the MEST collaborates with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW), the second ministry with responsibilities in the VET system. However, KEEN (2019a) reports that the structure of the MLSW is completely detached from the management of the VET system and that there is no functioning body to coordinate activities with regard to VET between MEST and MLSW. The Institute for Development Policy (INDEP, 2016) reports an insufficient coordination between MLSW and MEST as well.

Municipalities also play an important role in the VET system, as they operate the public education schools, including public VET schools, through Municipal Education Directorates (MED). The MEDs are responsible for the construction of schools, enrolment of students, employment of teaching staff, training, and supervision. MEDs play a key role in the implementation of the KESP as well, because the MEST does not have the resources to apply all measures without support from the local level (KESP, 2016). KEEN (2019a) states that the direction of teachers is often driven by political favouritism. Furthermore, the source reports that municipalities often design teaching plans in schools they operate considering the qualifications of the teachers employed and not considering the needs of the local labour market.

Representation and Advisory Bodies

Central education authorities and social partners cooperate in the Council for VET and for Adult Education (CVETA), which is established in the VET law. Members of MEST, MLSW, and various other organisations, including the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, and unions, make up the members of CVETA. CVETA advises the MEST on the general direction for vocational education policies. KEEN

(2019a) reports that the council is currently not operational, because its members are not compensated for their services.

A further actor in VET is the Agency for VET and for Adult Education (AVETAE). According to KEEN (2019a), its purpose is to ensure that the VET system is organised in a sufficient manner and that quality is maintained. Councils consisting of members belonging to relevant institutions, such as ministries, VET institutions, economic chambers, and unions lead the agency. The MEST employs the director and staff of AVETAE.

The Education Inspectorate performs administrative inspections of all levels of the education system. It inspects vocational schools on a regular basis and reports to the Municipality Education Directorates (MED) on the performance of VET schools in the respective municipality. There are no reports of collaboration of the inspectorate with other authorities within the VET system.

The National Qualifications Authority (NQA) is an independent public body established by the MEST that oversees and develops the National Qualifications Framework. In this context, it is responsible for the development and oversight of national qualifications of VET, and for defining occupational standards.

The responsible body for VET under MSLW is the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK). It is the public provider of services in the labour market, including the implementation of employment and vocational training policies.

The report by KEEN (2019a) further states that even though the structure described above was aimed to create a structural link between education and the labour market, in practice this link does not function effectively. Consequently, the VET system remains unaligned with the needs for the labour market. For example, no staff at the school has the responsibility to communicate with local employers or social partner organisations (KEEN, 2019a).

Education and Training Providers

VET institutions are funded, organised and managed by municipalities via the MEDs (see description of MEDs above). As part of recent reforms, the government with support from international donors introduced Centres of Competence (CoCs) which are a new type of VET schools with better links to the labour market (KESP, 2016). CoCs are managed by AVETAE (not by MEDs) (NQA, 2016).

3.4 Educational Finance of the VPET System

This section is mainly based on the Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN, 2018; KEEN, 2019a) and the European Training Foundation (ETF, 2017). The section provides information only about financing of the VET system, as information about financing of the PET system is unfortunately not available.

Education in Kosovo is mainly public and as such financed by public budget (KEEN, 2019a). The budget allocates funds to MEST, which develops education policies and the curriculum, and to MSLW, which develops policies and strategies for labour, employment and training (ETF, 2017). Public VET schools are financed by the public budget through specific grants for education and are granted some flexibility in handling funds. KEEN (2018) states that the sum of grants are determined using a formula that mainly considers the number of teachers and enrolment. With regard to VET schools, this poses a challenge because the formula does not account for the specific needs of the profiles that VET schools offer (KEEN, 2019a). According to ETF (2017), VET schools receive €23 per student per year. Both KEEN (2019a) and ETF (2017) state that the VET system is underfinanced and that additional decentralisation

measures are necessary to improve the system. Moreover, no sources report a systematic participation in financing by the private sector.

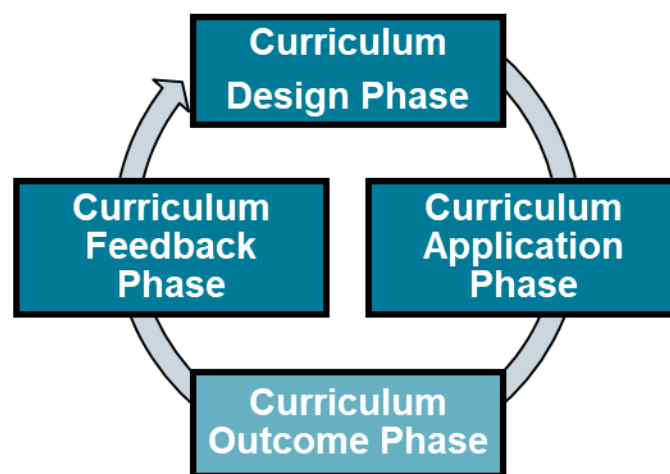
The Law on VET allows public schools, including VET schools, to acquire additional funding, such as private donations and gifts (Article 33). However, according to KEEN (2019a), the bureaucratic procedures to acquire external funding are currently too complex and need to be simplified. The report further states that VET schools should be encouraged in this regard, in order to increase funding.

According to data provided by the Kosovo Agency for Statistics, the government allocates about 15% of spending in the school year 2017/2018 to education. Generally, financing for education has increased in recent years, but the allocation of spending to the VET system is exceedingly low and has remained less than 10% of education spending. Furthermore, salaries make up 95% of VET spending (KEEN, 2019a).

3.5 Curriculum Development

The curriculum is a central element for the functioning of a TVET system because it defines the framework and the (quality) standards for the education system. The development of a curriculum can be decomposed into a three-step process with a curriculum design, a curriculum application, and a curriculum feedback phase. This theoretical concept is called the Curriculum Value Chain and is depicted in the picture below (CVC; for more details see Renold et al., 2015; Rageth & Renold, 2019).

Figure 4: Curriculum Value Chain



Source: Renold et al. (2015) and Rageth & Renold (2019).

In the curriculum design phase, the relevant actors decide upon VET curriculum content and qualification standards. Therefore, the discussion in the respective subchapter below focuses on the degree and the amount of stakeholder participation concerning curriculum design in Kosovo. The curriculum application phase revolves around the implementation of the curriculum. Because learning environments differ substantially across countries, especially with respect to the prevalence of workplace learning, the curriculum application phase subchapter in this Factbook focuses on those learning environments. Specifically, it addresses where learning takes place and whether the curriculum dictates both school and workplace learning or only one of the two. Finally, curriculum outcomes can be collected and analysed in the curriculum feedback phase. This evaluation process is important because it may render a more refined curriculum design than was possible in the first place.

3.5.1 Curriculum Design Phase

The design phase is crucial for the whole curriculum process. In order to ensure that the skills taught in the VPET programmes correspond to the needs of the labour market, experts from companies should be involved in defining the qualification standards and learning contents of the curricula.

In Kosovo, the MEST is the main authority responsible for designing the curriculum (KESP, 2016). The introduction of the national Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) by the MEST is one of the central education reforms in Kosovo and the KCF serves as the foundation of what students learn during pre-university education (KCF, 2011). As outlined in section 2, the KCF organises pre-university education in six key stages. It defines the contents and educational goals of every key stage on a high level, including a general teaching plan. The details, such as the specific learning outcomes and numbers of classes per subject for each stage are fleshed out in Core Curricula, which are based on the KCF and developed by the MEST as well. The contents of upper secondary education, which consists of the key stages 5 & 6 in the KCF, are defined in the Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education in Kosovo (2012). Little information is available about the design phase of the Core Curriculum, but the document lists the participants in the drafting process. The MEST had the main lead in drafting the Core Curriculum. Furthermore, experts from relevant fields, such as university professors, representatives from teacher unions, and subject teachers, were involved in designing the various curricular areas (e.g. languages, mathematics, natural sciences, etc.).

The Upper Secondary Core Curriculum applies to VET schools, although it only covers the general part of VET education. According to KESP (2016), currently no specific VET Core Curriculum exists. The development of a new VET Core Curriculum is part of the strategic objectives in the KESP (2016) and is expected to improve the linkage between VET education and the labour market. The Torino Process National Report (2016) states that the new VET Core Curriculum is already finalised and currently tested in a number of VET schools, but at the time of writing, no VET Core Curriculum has been published. KEEN (2019a) reports that the reason for the delay of the VET Core Curriculum is that relevant stakeholders are not satisfied with the first draft, as it does not fit the needs of various VET fields.

The Law for Vocational Education and Training institutionalises the design of the VET curriculum. According to the law, the VET curriculum consists of a general part (theoretical), a vocational part (theoretical) and practical learning and professional practice. The MEST is responsible for the design of all aspects of the curriculum, which has to be developed in harmony with labour market demands and with the involvement of social partners (Law for VET, Article 11). One of the main actors involved in the design of the curriculum is CVETAE, which advises MEST and recommends the content of curricula for VET study programmes (KESP, 2016). Furthermore, CVETAE promotes the participation of the private sector in the VET system, including in the process of curriculum design (Wanklin, 2018). However, as already mentioned above, CVETAE is currently inoperative (KEEN, 2019a; Wanklin, 2018).

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) is a further central component of the VET curriculum. It defines the qualifications and occupational standards achieved in the 122 profiles offered by vocational schools and is produced by the NQA, an independent authority established by the MEST (KEEN, 2019a; NQF, 2011). International experts and organisations supported the NQA in developing the NQF (NQF, 2011). Wanklin (2018) provides a detailed description of the role of the NQA in the Curriculum Development Phase. Specifically, NQA is working effectively and consults the private sector regularly when defining qualifications and occupational standards. Furthermore, there is some involvement of the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and VET schools in defining occupational standards, but according to Wanklin (2018) this process is unsatisfactory and not transparent. Therefore, it is difficult to assess how well the cooperation between NQA, private companies, and VET schools functions in practice.

Concerning the progress in the curriculum development phase, the Kosovo Education and Employment Network (KEEN, 2019c) reports that of the 122 profiles offered in VET, only 28 feature approved standards. The remaining 92 profiles, which make up about 80% of VET students, are not based on profession

standards. This source may be an indication that Kosovo has not yet concluded the curriculum development phase.

3.5.2 Curriculum Application Phase

The way in which a curriculum is implemented—especially with respect to learning environments—is important to achieve the intended learning outcome.

Vocational schools are required to implement the KCF and core curricula, but have significant autonomy in carrying out the implementation (KCF, 2011). For example, VET institutions may take into consideration the specific nature of its teaching staff and the school infrastructure available in order to create their own identity (KEEN, 2019a). VET schools are also flexible in designing their teaching plans. However, this has the drawback that schools often design the teaching plan considering the qualifications of employed teachers rather than considering the needs of the local labour market (KEEN, 2019a).

As described in section 3.1, VET programs in Kosovo have both a school- and a work-based component. The KCF determines the time allocation between theoretical and practical education. According to KEEN (2019a), professional education makes up roughly 50% of VET programs. Students engage in work-based learning in their schools own workshops, or directly on site at company of their choosing. Typically, this is the first time students experience professional work (KEEN, 2019a).

However, KEEN (2019a) reports that the practice of professional learning and training does not take place as efficiently as it should. While companies are generally willing to take in VET students, there are often not enough study places available. As a result, students have to share study places, thus reducing the time spent at training during a given school year. Moreover, KEEN (2019a) also reports that training sessions at companies are rarely sufficiently planned or based on the requirements of the curriculum. No final examination of the skills learned by students during their company visits takes place. Finally, professional practice sometimes only consists of a visit of the company with strict observation of professionals rather than actual engagement in practical work. Wanklin (2018) confirms this claim and further states that company visits are not formalised through any regulations, contracts or memoranda of understanding. Hence, the implementation of company-based VET phases in Kosovo is still in an early development state.

The application of work-based learning in the own workshops of VET schools is hindered by insufficient funding, resulting in a lack of teaching materials. Consequently, students are often unable to practice the theoretical part of their education in the school's workshops (KEEN, 2019a).

At the end of their vocational education, students have to pass the final examination of their specific occupation in order to receive their diploma (NQF, 2011). The Law for VET and Adult Education requires that the final exam is established by a commission consisting of one representative of employers and two vocational teachers (Article 21). However, Wanklin (2018) reports that this cooperation is rarely implemented.

3.5.3 Curriculum Feedback Phase

The curriculum feedback phase deals with the question, whether and how educational outcomes are analysed. Based on this, the curriculum could be re-worked and improved.

An important component in the CVC is the Kosovo Quality Assurance Strategy 2016-2020. The MEST introduced this strategy as quality assurance is one of the weakest points of pre-university education in Kosovo. Its objective is to improve the quality of education in Kosovo in general (Government of Kosovo, 2016) and contains some elements that are relevant for the curriculum feedback phase as well. For example, it includes measures to improve the usage of educational data from different sources and sets out to help municipalities in developing educational curricula. However, the main purpose of the Quality

Assurance Strategy is to improve the implementation of the existing KCF rather than updating the curriculum. The sources available indicate that Kosovo is in a very early stage of the CVC and the curriculum feedback phase has not yet become very relevant. This is especially true with regard to VET, as a VET Core Curriculum has not yet been published.

3.6 Supplying Personnel for the VPET System (Teacher Education)

The Law for Pre-University Education regulates the educational requirements for teachers in pre-university education, including the VPET system. According to Article 33, teachers require a tertiary degree that is equivalent to 300 ECTS in order to be licensed. Furthermore, the education programme has to consist of professional and academic training and practice. Teacher education in Kosovo is offered by tertiary institutions such as the University of Prishtina (Government of Kosovo, 2020). In the case of vocational teachers, KEEN (2019b) clarifies that the duration of studies that prepare teachers for vocational education consists of 180 ECTS of professional preparation and 120 ECTS pedagogical and practical preparation, of which at least 15 ECTS are gained during professional practice.

In relation to the development of the new VET Core Curriculum, the MEST has approved Master programmes (120 ECTS) for VET teachers at the Faculty of Education of the University of Prishtina in 2016. The goal is to improve the teaching methodology of VET teachers and equip new teachers with the skills to implement the new competency-based VET Core Curriculum (ETF, 2016).

According to ETF (2016), there are shortages of professional VET teachers in Kosovo. VET institutions can easily find teachers for general courses, but struggle with hiring good teachers for some professional courses. One main reason for this shortfall is the perceived low attractiveness of VET education and the low social status of teachers in general (ETF, 2016). On average, a high school teacher in Kosovo can expect to earn a base salary of €612, which is above the average salary in 2018 (KEEN, 2018; Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019b). KEEN (2018) does not clarify whether high school teacher refers to upper secondary teachers in general, or only gymnasium teachers.

Many VET teachers lack the practical skills to implement the competency-based curriculum and need to be supported by teacher professional development programmes (ETF, 2016). These programmes have become one of the top priorities of the Kosovo education system in recent years (KESP, 2016). Nevertheless, KEEN (2019c) reports that currently no training programmes for VET schools have taken place and that no specific training on curriculum implementation exists.

4. Major Reforms in the Past and Challenges for the Future

4.1 Major Reforms

An important reform in recent years was the introduction of Centres of Competence (CoC), which was supported by international donors. CoCs are a new concept of VET schools with improved links to the labour market, with the goal of facilitating a departure from content-based to competency-based curriculum. KESP (2016) describes them as institutions with “superb facilities” that provide “excellent preparation for the labour market”. These centres are supposed to serve as a model for all vocational schools in Kosovo.

The currently ongoing reform phase’s overarching aim is harmonising vocational education with labour market requirements, which is a strategic objective of the KESP (2016). KEEN (2019c) provides a mid-term evaluation of the progress made in this area. According to this source, an important reform project is the development of the new VET Core Curriculum, which is currently still ongoing despite being a main objective for many years. Generally, KEEN (2019c) paints a rather bleak picture of the progress in the VET system in recent years. Many projects have been initiated on paper, but the implementation in reality has often been unsatisfactory or even non-existent.

An additional strategic reform that affects the entire education system in Kosovo is the establishment of a systematic teacher professional development process. The KESP (2016) identified the introduction of such a system a strategic objective. The MEST drafted the first legislation in 2017, but it has not yet been completed (KEEN, 2019b).

4.2 Major Challenges

The VET system in Kosovo suffers from low teaching quality. Specifically, the system is unable to effectively train and prepare students for the labour market, producing a skill mismatch between education and the labour market and, in turn, high (youth) unemployment. This problem is well documented, especially for the VET sector (KESP, 2016; EYE, 2017; World Bank, 2017a; KEEN, 2019a). This section summarises the main underlying causes that result in a low-quality VET education system.

The main challenge of the VET system is its low linkage to the labour market, which has been identified and addressed by policy makers in the NDS (2016) and KESP (2016). These documents report three underlying causes. First, there is a lack of information from the labour market. For example, no system for forecasting future skill requirements exists. Second, career counselling and guidance from schools is lacking. This means that students may pursue vocational education that is not in line with their talents, interest, or potential employment opportunities. Third, the VET system lacks funding. Consequently, many VET schools are not able to provide adequate professional training.

Another key challenge of the VET system is the lack of a specific VET Core Curriculum, which is closely related and contributes to the misalignment between VET and the labour market (KESP, 2016). KEEN (2019a) explains that a discrepancy between existing VET curricula and the private sector is a key reason for the bad job perspectives of VET graduates. EYE (2017) adds that curricula and syllabi development within VET schools is often supply driven, i.e. schools often refuse to create new profiles requested by the labour market in order to avoid hiring new teachers. Schools base their decision to

introduce a new profile on the profiles of existing teachers and not on the demands from the labour market.

To address this issue, policy makers made the development of a new VET Core Curriculum one of the central measures of the KESP to improve the VET system. The new VET Core Curriculum is currently under development and KEEN (2019a) acknowledges that policy makers took serious measures to improve the link between the new curriculum and the private sector, such as drafting occupational standards as a link between the labour market and VET. However, KEEN (2019a) also mentions that the VET curriculum is still not updated in response to changes that are taking place in the labour market, suggesting that the current situation will continue in the future.

Moreover, students and parents consider vocational education a second-choice option for those who did not manage to enrol in gymnasiums (KESP, 2016; EYE, 2017). The prevalent mentality is that gymnasiums offer superior upper secondary education and lead to better white-collar jobs, even though the private sector reports a skill gap mainly in blue-collar jobs (EYE, 2017).

Finally, VET schools are critically underfunded, which exacerbates the low-quality practical education. For example, schools lack raw materials for practical learning in their workshops because they cannot afford to obtain them. Schools' insufficient budget also poses a challenge when professional practice or visits of students take place at companies with a considerable distance of the school. In this case, transportation costs for students is rarely covered (KEEN, 2019a).

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