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MAPPING POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CONTEXTS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

KOSOVO (under UNSCR 1244) COUNTRY REPORT

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With the assistance of

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FOREWORD

This report is the outcome of the ETF regional project promoting inclusive education and training policies and practices in contexts of social and cultural diversity in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In 2009, the European Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned a study resulting in 7 country reports[2] *"Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity"* with the overall aim to contribute to the promotion of inclusive education and training policies and practices in Western Balkan countries. The study has been set within a wider framework of other studies, research and policies already carried out by national and international organisations. Furthermore in the diverse social and cultural contexts of the Western Balkan countries the studies link the challenge of inclusive education to the broader challenges of social inclusion and social cohesion, which are high on the EU agenda.

The study was designed to explore various perspectives of the relevant actors, and relies on qualitative data collected through documents analysis, interviews and focus groups, as well as information collected in an on-line survey. It was conceptualised to be carried out in two phases. The first phase finalised by the end of December 2009, mapped policies and practices in teacher preparation in each of the countries under study. The primary focus of the study was teacher education in contexts of social and cultural diversity. While a number of studies have addressed on the one hand social inclusion in education and training where focus is placed on i) access, attainment and progression and ii) teacher preparation, still we can say that so far little research has been conducted in the region to look at teacher preparation for development of transversal competences for social inclusion. Therefore, the completed country reports bring additional value to the already existing research and data on policies and practices for teacher education in the countries under study. Moreover, much of the benefit of this research is through the process of carrying it out with local research teams, who through their research, have opened up the relevant issues in the countries as part of an on-going policy dialogue at all levels of the education system on the topic.

The first phase included the drafting of a common thematic outline used as a basis for country reports that provided relevant qualitative information as well as basic qualitative analyses. These country reports constitute the main preparatory work and stock-taking exercise for regional level analysis. In order to analyse the relevant aspects of the regional context and how to enhance and support the processes at country and regional level, a second phase of the research is agreed for the period 2010. This will lead to a cross country report which will analyse and synthesise the findings of the 7 country reports into a regional map of policies and practices. The cross country report aims to critically analyse and synthesise the policies and practices in teacher preparation for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity in Western Balkans.

A consortium company, SCIENTER and Centre for Education Policy (CEP) has been contracted to work with the ETF on the country and cross country reports. The ETF selected research team from SCIENTER/CEP have been working very closely with the ETF-supported Balkan Regional Policy Network during the research phase. The draft country reports have been reviewed by the ETF social inclusion team (Dagmar Ouzoun, Elena Pompilio, Evgenia Petkova, Henrik Faudel, Keith Holmes and Lida Kita) and been widely discussed and received feedback from the Western Balkans and Turkey key stakeholders during the 2009 ETF organised regional events.

We thank everybody involved for their contributions, support and commitment to cooperation in preparation of the country report.

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[2] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (defined by UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI	Administrative Instruction
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DG EMP	Directorate General for Employment
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EFA	Education for All
EPIP	Education Participation Improvement Project
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EURAC	European Academy Bozen/Bolzano
FSDEK	Finnish Support to Development of Education in Kosovo
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HPS	Higher Pedagogical Schools
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KEC	Kosovo Education Centre
KEDP	Kosovo Educator Development Programme
KFOS	Kosova Foundation for Open Society
LCI	Learner Centred Instruction
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RAE	Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian communities
REF	Roma Education Fund
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
RWCT	Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking
SCTL	State Council for Teacher Licensing
SEE	South East Europe
SEN	Special Educational Needs
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted within the European Training Foundation (ETF) regional project on social inclusion through education and training in South Eastern Europe. The present report maps policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in Kosovo, in order to analyse the initial training and in-service professional development available to teachers. The study is designed to explore various perspectives of the relevant actors and is built on qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups, the analysis of document and information collected from an on-line survey.

Article 3 of the Constitution of Kosovo defines Kosovo as a multi-ethnic society. The diverse composition of Kosovo society is viewed as a challenge, but also offers opportunities in terms of increased social inclusion and the cohesion of the society as a whole. In this context, education has a unique and important role to play in promoting cooperation between communities through multicultural and intercultural education, and by strengthening inclusive approaches.

Curriculum change is under way, and while good progress has been made since 2002, but this alone is not enough. Teachers and school principals are essential agents for curriculum implementation in the classroom. Their role represents a real challenge in the organisation of learning where the capacities of teachers and school leaders are critical. Schools must also be made explicitly responsible for preparing pupils for further learning as a core element in their mission.

In Kosovo there is still much work to be done on developing teacher competence, updating assessment methods and introducing new ways of organising learning. A major challenge is also posed in ensuring that all learners - including the disadvantaged, those in vocational education and training and adult learners - benefit from innovative methodologies.

The country has made considerable progress in promoting inclusive education and training with support from development partners in the last decade. Special emphasis has been placed on the policies and practices of teacher professional development. This study maps the numerous policies drafted and approved, and the new approaches and methodologies adopted in the teacher training practices. The number of programmes implemented in fields such as human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, social inclusion has increased over recent few years despite sustainability issues related to the lack of state funding.

In Kosovo, however, there are discrepancies between: policy and practice in teacher education and training; legal provisions and their implementation in teacher education institutions; and the content of teacher training programmes and their implementation in schools.

Current regulations on inclusion in teacher education and training in the country convey a narrow concept of inclusion mainly related to Special Educational Needs (SEN), participation in education and children's rights. Some other aspects of inclusion are also covered by national policies and practices, but they do not part of a systematic approach and are scattered across various policies, study and training programmes, and school initiatives.

Schools in Kosovo must be given the support they need to fully exploit the autonomy and responsibilities conferred on them by the new legal infrastructure if they are to play a more active role in providing more inclusive practices and social inclusion in their communities. The impressive efforts made in building the system from scratch have been inadequately implemented in classrooms. The implementation of new policies, knowledge and skills depends largely on the motivation of individual school principals and teachers. There

are still insufficient institutional mechanisms and support available to make the changes happen in the classroom.

The authorities must take a more pro-active approach towards minority communities living in Kosovo - such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities and the Serb community in particular - by building on the existing Independent Commission for Review of Learning Materials in Serbian Language[3], established in line with the provisions of the 'Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement.'[4]

An encouraging sign is that the Kosovo Government and its Ministry of Education have taken steps to develop a unified sector strategy (with support from the European Commission (EC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)) alongside a strategy for inclusion in education. This aims to offer a broader, more comprehensive and more systematic approach to inclusive education and training, where teacher training forms one of the main pillars.

Key stakeholders in the Kosovo education and training sector can enhance reform efforts using information on key European Union (EU) policy guidelines for education, including the EU Copenhagen process and the wider Education and Training 2020 agenda as a basis for national commitments and capacities, increasing institutional readiness for reform plans within this perspective. The authors propose a number of measures likely to accelerate reform in inclusive education and training policies on the basis of the evidence acquired during this study. In order to ensure the lasting impact and sustainability of this reform process, system-level decision makers must broaden the consultation process for developing teacher competence profiles while updating existing teacher training provision in line with new curriculum requirements.

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[3] Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Administrative Instruction 2009/37 on establishment of the Independent Commission for Review of Learning Materials in Serbian Language, 2009 (available in Albanian)

[4] On 14 November 2005 Mr Martti Ahtisaari was appointed the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for the status process for Kosovo. After two years of mediated negotiations, Mr Ahtisaari presented the 'Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement' which proposed a monitored independence for Kosovo. The Settlement further proposes extensive rights to ethnic communities, in particular the Serb community. The full text of the Settlement is available at www.unosek.org/unosek/en/statusproposal.html

Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity

COUNTRY REPORT FOR KOSOVO

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Objectives and Context

1.1.1 Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this study on *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity*, commissioned by the European Training Foundation, is to contribute to the promotion of inclusive education and training policies and practices in contexts of social and cultural diversity in the Western Balkans. The study is organised in two phases: a first phase which considers the national situation in each of the countries covered; and a second phase synthesising the reports into a regional map of policies and practices.

This report falls into the first research phase and the specific objectives are: (1) to analyse policies and practices on initial teacher training and in-service professional development schemes at the country level, and (2) to identify issues, challenges and good practices in the seven participant countries[5] with regard to the skills and competences needed for primary and secondary teachers to implement inclusive education practices.

The primary focus of the study is teacher preparation in the context of social and cultural diversity. A number of studies have already addressed social inclusion in education and training where the focus is placed on access, attainment and progression and others have approached the issue of teacher training, but thus far, there has been little research in the region to combine the two themes under the single issue of 'teacher training for development of competences for social inclusion.' Therefore, this study provides added value to existing research and data on social inclusion and teacher education in the countries under study. Moreover, great benefits have come from the local research process, opening up discussion of relevant issues in the countries as part of an on-going policy dialogue at all levels of the education system. This study has been set within a wider framework of studies, research and policies already carried out as described in Chapter 2 of the report. This report has been designed as mapping exercises to collect initial information on relevant issues in the Western Balkans and to evaluate that data against the most recent international research in the area.

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[5] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Furthermore, the studies link the challenge of inclusive education to the broader challenges of social inclusion and social cohesion in the diverse social and cultural contexts of the Western Balkan countries; an issue high on the European Union (EU) agenda. This report points to potential new fields for more in-depth research on teacher education and social inclusion.

1.1.2 Context of the Study

The ETF is an EU Agency[6] and promotes the values and objectives of the EU. The work of the ETF is particularly based on the premise that vocational education and training makes a fundamental contribution to competitiveness, employability and mobility in modern economies. The ETF mission is to help transition and developing countries harness the potential of their human capital through reforms in the education, training and labour market systems in line with EU external relations policy. The ETF provides advice and assistance to the European Commission (EC) and a number of partner countries[7] receiving support from EU external relations programmes for the modernisation of human capital development policies.

In 2007, the EU introduced new external assistance instruments that aimed to establish clearer relationships between the EU and partner countries (EC, 2004). Candidate and potential candidate countries can move progressively towards accession with support from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) (EC, 2006).

ETF efforts to prioritise human resources provide many benefits as they: help provide a better living for individuals and families; reduce illiteracy, poverty and crime in partner countries; and encourage more stable relations between the EU and its neighbours. The outcome is reduced pressure for migration, more opportunities for trade, safer jobs in Europe, and, in short: prosperity and stability for both EU Member States and their neighbours.

Work on human capital development offers a solid foundation for the improvement of living conditions, strengthening of democracy and active citizen participation, encouraging respect for human rights and cultural diversity.

In addition, the ETF emphasises the lifelong learning aspect of education and training, especially bearing in mind the economic and political transition processes in partner countries and the need to expand capacities for learning and facilitate recognition of non-formal learning.

The ETF recast regulation adopted in December 2008[8] stating that it will work through EU foreign policy to improve vocational education and training systems in order to develop human capital, in terms defined as work that contributes to the lifelong development of the skills and competences of individuals. In response to this new mandate, the ETF prepared a new Mid-Term Perspective (MTP) 2010-13 setting the key perspectives for the work programme. The ETF is particularly focused on cooperation for gender equality and equity, lifelong guidance, sustainable development and social inclusion with partner countries. Equitable, inclusive and sustainable systems and responses to human capital challenges provide positive indicators for human

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[6] The ETF was established by Council Regulation No. 1360 in 1990 (recast No. 1339 in 2008) to contribute to the development of the education and training systems of the EU partner countries.

[7] ETF works with the following partner countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

[8] Regulation (EC) No 1339/2008 of 16 December 2008

development and also have long-term benefits for society. They promote economic and social development and thus contribute to competitiveness and well-being.

The concept of wider European cooperation in education and training was launched at the 2002 Barcelona Council and the Commission Communication on an updated strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training(European Commission, 2008a) strengthened the process by focusing on four strategic challenges[9] for the 2010-20 period. The Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)[10] state that, 'European cooperation in education and training for the period up to 2020 should be established in the context of a strategic framework spanning education and training systems as a whole in a lifelong learning perspective.' In reaching the objectives set within the strategic framework, particular attention is given to ensuring high quality teaching through adequate initial teacher education and continuous professional development for teachers and trainers.

While fully respecting the responsibility of Member States for their own educational systems, the strategic framework recognised that open coordination should draw on 'evidence and data from all relevant European agencies'. The ETF role in supporting enhanced mutual learning, transfer of innovation and policy development in the field of education and training in third countries is also mentioned.

Thus, ETF work on human capital development is guided by a number of international standard-setting documents, including the *Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Also, in view of the ongoing European integration process of some of the partner countries and territories (the so-called IPA group[11]), it must be stressed that human rights principles, including respect for and protection of minorities, are an integral part of the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession. This means that the Western Balkan countries are also required to comply with the EU legislative *acquis[12]* in the field of anti-discrimination and equal opportunities.

The Western Balkan countries have already ratified the main international conventions on human and minority rights and are in the process of adopting the *acquis*. The education ministers of the South Eastern Europe region signed a joint statement making a commitment to the area of human capital development in South Eastern Europe as a long-term investment at the Informal Conference of European Ministers of Education in Oslo on 5-6 June 2008. This statement expresses a commitment to promote: quality, diversity and equitable access to education; innovatory capacity within education systems; and intercultural capacities of educational institutions as key prerequisites to the prosperity and sustainable development of the Western Balkan countries and their integration to the EU. The ministers stated their intention to promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation at local, regional, national and international levels to foster environments conducive to creativity and innovation, *inter alia* by encouraging cooperation between the areas of education, higher education and research (Minister of Education from Southern Europe, 2008).

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[9] Make lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality; improve the quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes; promote equity and active citizenship; enhance innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

[10] www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf (page accessed 17th December 2009)

[11] These are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

[12] The Community acquis is the body of common rights and obligations which bind all the Member States together within the European Union. It compriss the Community law as well as the common objectives laid down in EU Treaties. Applicant countries have to accept the Community *acquis* before they can join the Union.

However, appropriate legislation alone cannot overcome the obstacles to social inclusion and integration as structural and institutional barriers also need to be addressed. A number of specific poverty reduction strategies have been adopted with support from international donors and intergovernmental organisations in a number of Western Balkan countries and these have started a trend in the right direction. A number of countries have also adopted specific education reform strategies in acknowledgement of the role of education and training in ensuring sustainable growth and social inclusion. These focus on inclusion in education in terms of access, participation, retention, completion and quality of learning outcomes to varying extents.

1.1.3 Education Reforms and the Role of Teachers in Inclusive Education

System reform on inclusive education is moving from the system level downwards in the countries covered by this study. Legislation and strategies are in place in most of the countries and in many cases implementation mechanisms such as new curricula are being developed and adopted for pre-school, primary and secondary education. The focus of attention is gradually being shifted onto what actually happens in classroom interaction between pupils and teachers. This places the emphasis firmly upon the disposition, skills, knowledge and motivation of teachers in adopting new approaches to the education of children from various socio-economic, cultural and experiential backgrounds. It is their input that is paramount in ensuring any real changes in practice, and hence impacts on the outcomes of learning. In the Western Balkans, however, research into teacher acquisition of the competences required to deliver inclusive education is at an embryonic stage.

One study of teacher competences (Pantić, 2008) reported teachers in BiH, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia covered in the present research placed greatest importance on competences relating to equality, supporting the learning of all pupils and the promotion cultural diversity in the broadest sense. However, deeper understanding is needed of how the formulation of relevant competences actually translates into daily teaching practices and how present and future teachers can best be helped to develop those competences that best ensure and promote an inclusive society and education.

The ETF has therefore made a commitment to support the Western Balkan countries (2007-2011), placing emphasis on how education and training can reduce social exclusion in culturally heterogeneous societies and facilitating the development and implementation of long-term sustainable strategic policy approaches.

One of the first outcomes of this commitment was the *Social Inclusion of Ethnic Groups through Education and Training: Elements of Good Practices*, document commissioned by the ETF in 2007. Relevant areas for policy development were highlighted and several recommendations on designing and implementing inclusive education and training policies and measures in the Western Balkan countries were provided. The findings of the study were also discussed by national authorities and experts from Western Balkan countries, leading to the identification of challenges and to the drafting of related policy notes in some countries. Furthermore, an expert group was established for the Western Balkans, consisting of stakeholders from the region (a mixed profile of academics, policy makers and practitioners from public institutions or NGOs), representatives of international organisations active in the region and the EC Directorate General for Enlargement, Directorate General for Education and Culture and Directorate General for Employment). The work of this group is supported by the ETF.

Finally, in the concluding statements of the ETF conference in November 2008, participants from IPA countries and territories stressed the need for greater emphasis on intercultural or inclusive education and training in the broader sense, and especially on the role and competences of teachers in this context. This perspective was primarily prompted by the conclusion in both pre-service teacher training and in-service professional

development in the Western Balkan countries that schools are widely assumed to be mono-ethnic institutions with homogeneous class compositions. Teachers are generally ill prepared to work with children and parents from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. There is a need for increased teacher competence in recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity in the classroom and wider society and there must be enhanced teacher competence to overcome discrimination, exclusion and disadvantage in education.

Activities aimed at initial teacher training reform are additionally motivated and marked by the Bologna Process. This serves as an overarching framework for re-thinking the duration, content and organisation of teacher education study programmes for pre-primary, lower primary, upper primary and secondary education levels. In a number of countries, discussion of the university 3+2 or 4+1 dilemma[13] has inspired heated debate on the objectives and learning outcomes of particular teacher education programmes. Debate has also been provoked on the amount, type and delivery of didactic, methodological and pedagogical input for teachers, especially those training to teach specific subjects. However, there is currently no appropriate research evidence available to inform such change and provide insight on exactly how the new competences required by the teaching profession could best be developed in the current context.

Studies on existing teacher training in the region (Pantić, 2008; Rajković and Radunović, 2007; Zgaga 2006) invariably show present provision concentrates on theoretical and subject related knowledge and skills with little hands-on experience of teaching in real-life classrooms. In fact, some courses involve no classroom experience at all and provide no opportunities for the teacher to increase their capacity to deal with a number of out-of-school factors relevant to inclusive education such as parental and community involvement. This factor alone represents one of the major challenges to teacher preparation for inclusive education and training practices. One of the main objectives of this study is therefore how best to improve existing teacher training policies and practices in order to foster the development of teacher competences relevant to inclusive education and training practices.

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[13]   Within the Bologna Process the study programmes are to be restructured into a two-tier structure in which Bachelor and Master programmes are to be of either 3+2 or 4+1 years in length.

2.   WIDER CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The countries in the Western Balkans have undertaken initiatives to adapt their education and training systems to national employment, social inclusion and competitiveness goals. However, implementation often lags behind declared policy goals. Persistent challenges include: the widening of choice and improvement of quality in vocational education, training and adult learning; the active engagement of social partners; the furthering of key competences; and, in particular, encouragement of the human sense of innovation and entrepreneurship so central to social and economic success. There is room for a massive improvement in teacher competences on inclusive education and efforts must also be made to reduce early school-leaving in contexts of socially and culturally diverse societies.

The term 'disadvantaged' could be attributed to many groups in the countries of this study when referring to access to, progress in and completion of aspects of quality education and training. A variety of minority groups are involved including ethnic communities (the Roma in particular but not exclusively) and disadvantaged children. The latter includes: children with disabilities and special needs; children from remote and rural areas; children of refugees or internally displaced persons; children from families deported from foreign countries (mostly within the EU); and many other groups. Gender is an important element, particularly when combined with any other factor of a disadvantaged background, and poverty is an attendant salient feature in the lives of a great many families in these minority sectors. The widest possible understanding of inclusion in education and training is needed if we are to capture the full scope of related problems and accommodate the specific problems of diverse disadvantaged groups in the Western Balkan countries. This is reflected in the conceptual framework of this study which takes an approach that is balanced between the general pluralism and equal opportunities perspectives.

This research is situated in a set of contexts where each country has different (and sometimes divergent) legislative, policy and practice initiatives in place. These contexts can be roughly categorised from most generic to most specific as:

1.   general context of social inclusion developments and the promotion of ethnic and other diversity and tolerance and overall democratisation of society in a post-conflict area. These developments for the countries under study should be viewed in the light of the European perspective which has contributed to peace and stability and encouraged political and economic reform. Demonstrated fulfilment of the Copenhagen accession criteria of 1993 with specific reference to 'respect for and protection of minorities' is of paramount importance for the countries in this study in the EU accession process;[14]

2.   wider educational context, in which education and training is seen as the primary tool for social inclusion, the promotion of diversity and tolerance, and the building of a sustainable democracy based on active citizen participation. Within the description of the wider educational context, specific attention will be focused on understanding existing institutional, structural, political and other obstacles to social inclusion;

3.   specific educational context of reforms to pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development, in line with the move toward learning outcomes and study programmes built around the professional competences concept and in accordance with the key role of teachers in ensuring perceptible favourable outcomes from education and training reform initiatives. Analysis of this context

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[14]   http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhague_en.htm (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

will also cover the specific regional challenges facing teacher education on inclusive education; elements that are reflected in attitudes to social inclusion and social cohesion in wider society.

2.1 General context – Social Inclusion and Diversity in a Post-Conflict Area

All of the countries involved in the study were exposed to some form of conflict in the period between the early 1990s and the present. The conflict ranged from open war, through ethnic-related violence at the peak of ethnic tension and oppression, to clashes within a single ethnic group motivated primarily by political differences and enabled by a weak rule of law and insufficient democratic culture.

The countries of the region are currently in a state of relative equilibrium although the situation is still unstable. Regional cooperation is on the increase through various trade agreements (such as Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)) and bilateral or multilateral cooperation schemes. These developments are further supported by: the DG Enlargement Regional Programs and Multi-Beneficiary IPA Programming; the related Regional Cooperation Council,[15] and particularly the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital;[16] the recent establishment of the South Eastern Europe Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning;[17] and the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe[18] which applies to Bulgaria and Romania as well as the countries in this study.

Mobility of people is also steadily rising for commercial, educational and private reasons. Although some specific administrative and political obstacles remain[19] many of the Western Balkan countries[20] benefitted from the lifting of visa regimes in December 2009.

The EU has identified policy areas and priorities relevant to inclusive education and training in the Enlargement Strategy 2008-2009 (EC, 2008b). While the Western Balkan countries are at various stages in EU membership process[21] their progress can be tracked in their respective EC Progress Reports. Furthermore, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (EU DG EMPL) is also focussed on the issue of social inclusion within the *EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process,*[22] with particular attention on the situation in the Western Balkans (within the national reports) and that of disadvantaged groups like children and Roma. This entity commissioned a series of independent reports completed in August 2008 and synthesised in the January 2009 publication: *Social Protection and Social Inclusion in the Western Balkans: A Synthesis Report (EC, 2009)*. The report provides in-depth information, statistics and analysis on political, economic and demographic trends. This includes details of how the educational attainment analysed relates to labour market function; eligibility for, access to, and funding of social protection; general living conditions and groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion; access to pensions, healthcare and long-term care.

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[15]   http://www.erisee.org/node/12 (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

[16]   http://www.taskforcehumancapital.info/ (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

[17]   http://www.seecel.hr/naslovnica/ (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

[18]   www.erisee.org (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

[19]   This is particularly the case between Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) and Serbia, due to Serbia not recognising Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) as an independent state.

[20]   Visa regimes were lifted on the 19th December 2009,for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia while visa regimes remain in place for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

[21]   Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have the status of candidates, while the remaining countries (except for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) which has special status) have signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreements.

[22]   http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/index_en.htm (page accessed 24 August 2009)

These countries are all signatories to a number of international standard-setting documents, namely: the *Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CoE, 1995a)*, (ratified by all countries apart from Kosovo);[23] the revised *European Social Charter(CoE, 1995b); the European Convention on Human Rights (CoE, 1950); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989); the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960)*; and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006)*.

Furthermore, the countries are all participants in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, presided over by Serbia until 1 July 2009 when Slovakia took over the yearly mandate.

However, occasional outbursts of ethnically motivated unrest or even violence are testament to the fact that lasting peace and stability will only be achieved with the long-term, strong and holistic commitment of all social actors.

A particular issue of concern in this respect is the overwhelming poverty and significant differences in development within and across these countries. Low educational attainment in the population in general is one of the key factors of poverty. This is primarily viewed as a cause of poverty but is in fact also a consequence of a situation that is further exacerbated in certain ethnic groups and other minorities.

'POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS INDICATE THAT ETHNICITY IS ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS OF SHAPING POVERTY ... [THERE ARE] BIG DISCREPANCIES IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION' (ETF, 2007, PAGE 4)

These findings in essence reiterate those of other international or intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank (World Bank, 2007) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2004) that ethnicity is a factor in limiting access to education and one that is particularly difficult to counteract given the political context. Additionally, the reports underline an even more complex situation for Roma who form an ethnic minority that faces multifaceted disadvantage of long standing in each of the countries. It also is important to stress that the issue of poverty and social exclusion is a pan-European issue, a fact further supported by the EU decision to dub 2010 the *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion* including the countries of the Western Balkans in the list of participant nations.[24]

This brings us to the issue of obstacles in access to quality education. These obstacles may be of a financial, institutional or procedural, structural and socio-cultural, or political nature. The latter classification was developed for this study in order to adequately address the particular issues of the region.

Financial obstacles can include the lack of sufficient family or student resources for accessing specific levels of education (e.g. higher education where tuition fees are charged); the inability to access the necessary materials and resources for quality learning (from books and computers to sufficient space for independent learning); the lack of funds for maintenance while studying (which may force students to seek paid work or even to abandon their studies).

Institutional and procedural obstacles may include explicit tracking (i.e. explicit rules which prevent vertical and horizontal mobility between levels and types of institutions) but also implicit tracking due to specific elements of the transition procedures from one stage of education to the next.

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[23] Albania 1999, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000, Croatia 1997, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 1997, Montenegro 2001, Serbia 2001.

[24] Article 11 of the Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

Structural obstacles include problems with insufficient institutional networks (e.g. limited or non-existent possibilities in rural or underdeveloped areas), problems with transportation to schools, but also inappropriate or non-existent infrastructure for pupils and students with special needs (e.g. aids to learning adapted for pupils with visual or hearing impairments).

Socio-cultural and linguistic obstacles include specific procedures for enrolment, progress and completion which do not take into account individual differences in socio-economic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds. These may result in segregation as pre-school testing of children assumes working knowledge of the majority language and is therefore essentially discriminatory to minority children who may not have the necessary skills.

Political obstacles frequently arise from omissions of action rather than overtly discriminatory action. This apparent lack of overt action does not, however, reduce the exclusive impact of political inaction and lack of focus on constructive legislative and fiscal support for inclusive education in many of the countries in the study. The centrality and influence of this political neglect effectively condones exclusion at all levels throughout society and is particularly difficult to overcome as it would require a combination of democratic social pressure, collaboration between various public sectors (health, social welfare and education) and international pressure from the EU and beyond.

Given the various obstacles and their potential multiplicative impact, it is evident that a holistic approach to quality education is essential for groups faced with complex disadvantages such as: (1) refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose integration problems become increasingly 'invisible to the system' through the frequent changes in the administrative status of such persons (e.g. some become citizens of the host country), the concentration of refugees in 'collective centres' far from the eyes of the general public; and (2) Roma, who suffer enduring multifaceted deprivation, stigmatised by the deep-rooted prejudice of majority populations and essentially forming a minority wherever they live. Furthermore, the strong impact of the lack of education on poverty is further exacerbated through low employment opportunities for socio-economically vulnerable ethnic groups (Fetsi et al., 2007) and particularly for young people who could escape recurrent generational poverty given sufficient time and opportunities in the worlds of education and work. It should be noted that the potential public non-financial benefits of education (OECD, 2007) also include crime reduction, democratisation, improved public health, political stability and respect for human rights on top of poverty reduction. However, these potential benefits cannot be achieved unless there is assurance of an education system accessible to all and structured to promote inter-cultural dialogue and equity in learning outcomes. Finally, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that inclusive education and training is a necessary element of an inclusive society but is insufficient in itself. Additional measures in other public sectors such as social welfare and health are necessary to support education.

2.2 Educational context – Education as a Tool for Democratisation, Stabilisation, Inclusion and the Promotion of Tolerance and Intercultural Understanding

The countries under study all embarked on a 'root-and-branch' reform of their education systems as part of the overall political and economic transition and the EU membership process. In some cases, EU and international trends and processes - the Bologna process for higher education or the Copenhagen process for VET – also impacted on these reforms. Some are also affected by international attention and strong donor interest in a particular issue, as was the case with the Decade of Roma. The countries have also undergone policy and strategy development processes leading to changes in education legislation. In some cases, this has been followed by reforms to supportive policy instruments such as funding mechanisms. Local or national NGOs, regional networks of experts and policy think tanks were all strongly involved in these developments during the early stages or in providing parallel support.

In the past there was a significant lack of comparable and reliable data on education but the situation has somewhat improved in recent years with an extensive amount of literature produced in the form of regional or national studies and projects, assessments of international and intergovernmental organisations and national reports. A number of projects and activities touching upon the issue of social inclusion and education are ongoing in the region or have been completed recently. These include the Advancing Educational Inclusion and Quality in South East Europe[25] project of the South East European Educational Network. The Open Society Institute has provided support to civil society and has produced analytical reports including the ongoing Monitoring Education for Roma.[26] Meanwhile, the Roma Education Fund (REF)[27] has provided direct support in terms of scholarships for Roma students and has made sustained efforts toward building policy capacity in the region. The work of both these entities has contributed to the development of inclusive policy and inclusive societies. There have also been a number of recent projects focusing on teacher education, such as Enhancing the Professional Development of Education Practitioners and Teaching/Learning Practices in SEE Countries[28] and the Regional Tuning of Teacher Education Curricula in the Western Balkans (Pantić, 2008).

Such regional activities are reliant upon (or should at least take into account) the work of various international or intergovernmental organisations on the issue, such as:

▪ OECD, notably the analysis and recommendations offered in: *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning* (OECD, 2007); *No More Failures – Ten Steps to Equity in Education* (Field et al, 2007) (which recommends 10 steps related to structure, practice and resources in education); *Teachers' Matter – Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (McKensie et al., 2005), which underlines the importance of both pre-service and in-service training and also the need to make teacher education more flexible and responsive to the needs of schools and pupils; the *Teacher Education for Diversity* project 2008-2010[29] - an ongoing project focusing on common challenges and responses in the OECD countries in terms of teacher training for increasingly culturally diverse societies; and the OECD

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[25] http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/ (page accessed 7 August 2009)
[26] http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/publications/monitoring_20061218/monitoring_20061218.pdf (page accessed 7 August 2009)
[27] www.romaeducationfund.hu (page accessed 24th December 2009)
[28] http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/tesee.htm (page accessed 7 August 2009)
[29] http://www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_41651733_1_1_1_1,00.html (page accessed 7 August 2009)

Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS,[30] especially the latest report *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS (OECD, 2009)* focusing on: teacher professional development, beliefs, attitudes and practices, teacher appraisal and feedback, and school leadership. Over 70 000 teachers and school principals were surveyed in 23 countries as part of the project;

- ETF, notably the aforementioned *Social Inclusion of Ethnic Groups Through Education and Training: Elements of Good Practice* (ETF, 2007) and the work of EURAC for ETF on *Access to Education, Training and Employment of Ethnic Minorities in the Western Balkans* (2006),[31] that identifies three different models of approach to the education of minorities and the use of minority languages in education;[32]

- Council of Europe, through its focus on intercultural dialogue;[33] minority languages - in particular the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (CoE, 1992)*; education for democratic citizenship[34] (where a number of recommendations, studies and toolkits have been developed); education of Roma[35], with a variety of activities and recommendations including the Recommendation of the Council of Ministers to the Member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe (CoE, 2000); as well as *How All Teachers Can Support Citizenship and Human Rights Education: A Framework for the Development of Competences* (Brett et al., 2009) which focuses on approximately 15 core competences teachers need to put democratic citizenship and human rights into practice in the classroom, the school and the wider community;

- EURYDICE, the key source of data on education in Europe, which publishes thematic studies, such as: *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe: Measures to Foster Communication with Immigrant Families and Heritage Language Teaching for Immigrant Children* (Eurydice, 2009a), *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities* (Eurydice, 2009b), *Levels of Autonomy and Responsibilities of Teachers in Europe* (Eurydice, 2008) and *School Autonomy in Europe. Policies and Measures* (Eurydice, 2007);

- UNESCO, in particular its *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (UNESCO, 2009)* which provides an overview of developments in the area of inclusive education (including an extensive list of relevant international conventions and declarations), addresses the issues of inclusion and quality in education, development of an inclusive curriculum, the role of policy makers, and, most relevant for the current study, the role of teachers; and

- work within the peer learning cluster focussed on teachers and teacher education under the Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning.[36]

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[30] http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_38052160_1_1_1_1,00.html (page accessed 7 August 2009)

[31] http://www.eurac.edu/about/projects/2006/index.htm?year=2006&which=693 (page accessed 7 August 2009)

[32] (1) The entire curriculum is taught in the minority language, usually achieved by the establishment of separate schools or classes for teaching in the minority language, which essentially leads to segregation. (2) The entire 'regular' school curriculum is taught in the majority language, while minority pupils can take additional courses in their mother tongue, which increases their already high workload and openly segregates them. (3) The third model can be called 'bilingual education', in which mother tongue and the minority language are used in parallel, with divergent success and impact. This approach is rarely used in the countries under study.

[33] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/ (page accessed 7 August 2009)

[34] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_EN.asp (page accessed 7 August 2009)

[35] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/default_en.asp (page accessed 7 August 2009)

[36] http://www.kslll.net/peerlearningclusters/clusterdetails.cfm?id=14 (page accessed 7 August 2009)

This extensive list of international activities, analyses, policy developments and even legislative changes all support a strong focus on teacher competences. This perspective can be justified in several ways:

- Education system reform toward inclusive education is moving from the system level downwards in the countries under study. Legislation and strategies are now in place, many countries have well designed implementation mechanisms and new curricula are being developed and adopted for pre-school, primary and secondary education. The focus of reform is gradually shifting onto the interaction between pupils and teachers in the individual school and classroom. The change to more inclusive education will simply not happen if the key actors of the process, the teachers, are not equipped with the necessary attitudes, skills, knowledge and motivations within a supportive environment

- The global economic crisis, the economic situation of the countries in question and the intense competition for public funds between education and other public sectors (health, security, pensions) make it highly unlikely that additional resources will be allocated to the sector. The increased pressure for reform will not be reflected in significant budget increases for outstanding infrastructure improvements, in terms of: improved access to existing buildings and classrooms for all students; an extended network of schools in remote areas; and the development of teaching materials fitted to the learning styles and abilities of each student. This means the necessary education reforms are even more heavily reliant on those motivated and skilled teachers who are: responsive to the needs of the community and of the individual child; able to adopt new approaches to educating children from varied backgrounds; and willing and able to participate actively in the development of new curricula or new policy documents and instruments.

The strong EU and international focus on teacher education through the work of the EU, OECD and Council of Europe has led to significant advances, but the region is still lagging behind in terms of relevant analysis of the competences required for the effective, efficient and, most importantly, inclusive teacher. So far, just two projects have focussed on teacher education in the countries under study. The first of these: *Enhancing the Professional Development of Education Practitioners and Teaching/Learning Practices in SEE countries* highlighted the issue of insufficient practical teacher training. The document showed that while teachers in South Eastern Europe (SEE) receive theoretical training on subject knowledge and skills within their pre-service training programmes, they are given little practical experience of teaching in a real-life classroom. As a result, the key recommendation of the project was to ensure that teacher education study programmes focus on competences relevant to the actual practice of teaching in a given environment.

It was this recommendation that inspired the *Regional Tuning of Teacher Education Curricula*.[37] This project identified some of the gaps between existing teacher training and the teaching competences needed in practice. It was encouraging to find that teachers valued competences such as commitment to equality, support of learning of all pupils and promotion of tolerance as the most important elements of teacher training for inclusive education. However, detailed inspections of some existing initial teacher training programmes showed actual coverage of those competences to be rare and sometimes even completely lacking. These findings suggest that changes in teacher awareness of the 'new' topics in education and school practices are not necessarily reflected in adequate changes in teacher preparation programmes.

The Tuning project also showed that little value was placed on the importance of competences pertinent to teacher participation in development of the education system, their own institutions or cooperation with the

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[37] http://www.cep.edu.rs/eng/files/Tuning_Teacher_Education_Western_Balkans.pdf (page accessed 7 August 2009)

community. Teachers need to develop the competences required for inclusive classroom practices, and teacher education policies and programmes therefore need to include elements that increase teacher capacity to deal with inclusion-related factors that reach beyond the classroom and the school into areas such as parental and community involvement. This lack of a wider vision is one of the major challenges facing the promotion of inclusive school practices.

The low value given to teacher participation in system-wide debate on reform also implies a significant lack of a strong professional teacher voice of in terms of active teacher trade unions or other professional associations. While unions in the region tend to be quite vocal on issues of general employee rights, they are rather weak in terms of expertise on education reform, teacher education and inclusive education.

Furthermore, the lack of frameworks of standards for teacher training programmes, and the fragmented organisation of these programmes (pre-primary, class teachers and subject teachers[38]) form systemic obstacles to relevant and effective teacher education. The fragmentation diverts attention from the pedagogical and didactic education of teachers and hampers the development of a multidisciplinary focus on education in general and education research in particular. Finally, this region is facing a significant challenge to reinstate the good standing of the teaching profession[39] in terms of respect, remuneration and wider social status, a situation also common to many countries outside the region.

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[38]   In the regional context, 'class teachers' refers to teachers in the first few years of primary education (the first 4 of a total 8 years) who teach the full spectrum of subjects on the curriculum. They are trained at teacher education colleges or faculties. 'Subject teachers' are teachers of particular subjects (mathematics, biology, history etc) and they are usually trained at separate faculties (faculty of mathematics or natural sciences, faculty of history or social sciences) and generally have insufficient pedagogical and didactic training, in both teaching theory and practice. Pre-primary teachers are trained in separate institutions of a non-university type in most of the countries under study..

[39]   The 'teaching profession' includes teachers, head-teachers and those in higher management posts.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Key Concepts

For the purposes of this study *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity,* the research team adopted common definitions of various key concepts. The definitions are based on academic research in the field and have been selected to reflect the common understanding of the concepts reached between the ETF and the researchers conducting the study. This report does not propose these definitions as norms for the study of teacher education or inclusive education in general, but they are included here to help interpret the findings of the present research.

3.1.1 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a much researched topic that involves a number of challenges for policy-making and implementation processes. Conceptualisations of inclusive education vary from narrower views as 'the attempt to educate persons with intellectual disabilities by integrating them as closely as possible into the regular structures of the educational system', (Michailakis and Reich, 2009) to broader definitions as a 'guiding principle helping to accomplish quality Education for All (EFA) – education systems that benefit from diversity, aiming to build a more just, democratic society' (Acedo, 2008).

Inclusive education is broadly understood in this study to be the process by which schools attempt to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring curriculum organisation and provision, and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. This process enables schools to increase their capacity to accept all those pupils from the local community who wish to attend and in so doing reduce all forms of exclusion and degradation of students on the basis of disability, ethnicity, or anything that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Peček *et al*, 2006). Hence, inclusive education must become a mainstreamed general policy and practice in education and not a specific intervention addressing any one particular disadvantaged group. In this broader sense, inclusion is a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion, whereby participation means greater recognition, acceptance and respect along with inclusion in the learning process and social activities in a way that enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to society.

Teachers also have a wider professional role to play beyond their direct personal impact on an individual school operating within various levels of the education system, including the municipalities. Decentralisation of the education systems in the Western Balkan countries implies increased autonomy for schools, which may in turn lead to increased rights for professional decision-making by teachers informed by their wider evaluation of the socio-cultural ends of education and schooling. Liston and Zeichner (1990) argue that such reflection need not focus only on implicit social and cultural frameworks but also on the institutional features of schooling. Teaching professionals, they argue, must be able to analyse and change particular institutional arrangements and working conditions, especially those that might obstruct the implementation of their aims (Liston and Zeichner 1990:5).

3.1.2 Teacher Competences for Inclusion

A number of authors including Michailakis and Reich (2009) claim that there is a specific body of knowledge for working with 'special' children that needs to be adequately covered during teacher preparation. This may involve gaining an understanding of the socio-cultural factors that produce individual differences, or specialist knowledge about disability and children's learning needs, awareness of educational and social issues that can affect children's learning, and so on. Another distinct current stance, according to Florian and Rouse (2009), is that teacher competences for inclusive educational practices should include skills relevant to the improvement of teaching and learning for all including the capacity to reduce barriers to learning and participation as inclusion is not only about 'special' children. According to this view, teacher competence on inclusion should involve a multifaceted pedagogy that recognises how decisions informing teaching should take account of: children's individual characteristics; the learning that takes place outside school; and learners' previous knowledge, individual and cultural experiences and interests (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

This study adopts a broader view of competence as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Assumption 1 in Annex 4). Even the most comprehensive coverage of relevant themes is unlikely to anticipate every type of difficulty teachers might encounter in their professional lives. It is essential that teachers accept responsibility for improving the learning and participation of *all* children in their classes in order to develop teacher competences for inclusive education. For this, teachers need to develop competences that involve knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach equitably and to promote the learning of all pupils. Moreover, teachers need to be able to seek and use the support of other actors who can serve as valuable resources in inclusive education, such as support staff, parents, communities, school authorities and relevant others. Hence, pre-service and in-service teacher education and training should be aligned to inclusive education approaches in order to build the teacher capacities necessary to make diversity work.

3.1.3 Teacher Preparation

Teacher education in the Western Balkan countries (and elsewhere) has often assumed that schools are mono-ethnic institutions with homogeneous class compositions. It has been increasingly recognised that teachers need to be better prepared to recognise, value and deal with diversity, as well as to deal with issues of discrimination and disadvantage in education and training, and work with students and parents from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds. The present study explores to what extent such inclusive approaches are actually adopted in the existing policies and practices of pre-service and in-service teacher preparation in the countries under study.

Policies are understood in this study to refer to formal, governmental policies, regulations and legislation, as well as the actual implementation of these in existing practice by different relevant stakeholders in teacher preparation for inclusive education.

Pre-service teacher education refers to education that teacher candidates are expected to undergo in order to qualify for teaching. This involves both programmes specifically designed for future teachers, and programmes for a disciplinary area that equivalent to a school subject, which may or may not have a special track for teachers. Preparation of teachers based on competences for inclusion in real contexts of diversity is linked to higher education reform of in the Western Balkans, primarily within the framework of the Bologna Process.

In-service teacher training and development refers to education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers following their initial professional certification, intended mainly or exclusively

to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively in contexts of social and cultural diversity.

3.2 Research Questions and Study Design

The research design follows on from the key concepts described above and the assumptions adopted for the study based on an extensive literature review as presented in Annex 4. The following section describes the research questions and how they are explored in this study.

To reach the objectives set in the study, namely, (1) to analyse policies and practices regarding teacher pre-service training and in-service professional development schemes at the country level, and (2) to identify issues, challenges and good practice with regard to the skills and competences required for inclusive education practices by teachers from primary and secondary education; the following research questions are addressed by the study:

1. What teacher competences are needed for inclusive education in situations of social and cultural diversity?
2. What is the current situation regarding the inputs, processes and outcomes of a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education?
3. How can the situation regarding a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education be improved?

3.2.1 Research Question 1: Teacher Competences Relevant for Inclusive Education

Exploration of the first research question about teacher competences relevant for inclusive practices, is based on the concept of competence understood as a combination of knowledge, skills and dispositions (Assumption 1 in Annex 4) and a belief that teachers and other education professionals are themselves an important source of information on exactly what the competences relevant for inclusive practices in situations of social and cultural diversity mean to their work (Assumption 2 in Annex 4). Thus, this report examines the extent to which internationally recognised elements of competence for inclusion are exemplified in participant responses collected in focus groups and interviews with teachers working in environments of diversity, but also those of school principals, parents and community members, government representatives, teacher educators and relevant NGO and donor representatives.

A special instrument was developed to serve as a starting point for discussions with teachers in the focus groups. The table of competences for inclusion (Annex 3) was developed using the relevant items from a previously conducted project *Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans*, key European documents and international research. It thus combines the theoretical assumptions and formulation arrived at in the regional context. The table was used as an initial list in the focus groups to prompt discussion on how those formulations translate into daily teaching practices, the competences teachers need to develop, the best way to develop them, and so on.

It is important to note that the information collected in the focus groups was used critically to enrich understanding of how teachers perceive competence for inclusion compared to a theoretically based ideal and to provide context-relevant information. It was complemented by information collected from other relevant stakeholders such as teacher educators, school principals and support staff, community and parent representatives as already described above.

3.2.2 Research Question 2: Mapping of Policies and Practices for Teacher Preparation

Exploration of the second research question on the current situation of pre-service and in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education is approached from the perspectives of general pluralism and equal opportunities (Assumption 3 in Annex 4) and considers the importance of context for the development of inclusive dispositions (Assumption 4 in Annex 4). In the exploration of current teacher preparation, it is important to examine the extent to which all inputs, processes and outcomes include inclusion-relevant elements (e.g. individualised approaches to learning) while also attempting to identify any specific foci on issues relevant to dealing with students at risk of exclusion. The report thus concentrates on analysis of existing teacher preparation policies and practices and to what extent social inclusion related provisions are mainstreamed in policies relevant to inclusive education and teacher preparation in particular. There is further examination of whether the existing policies and practices contain implicit barriers to inclusive education, and whether they contain an affirmative focus on groups that have long been marginalised in the region.

Policy mapping involved the collection of information on the general context of teacher preparation for inclusion (e.g., policies on inclusion for potentially disadvantaged groups in education and training, general provisions for teacher preparation, etc.) and policies and regulations specifically referring to teacher preparation on inclusion (e.g., any provisions referring specifically to inclusion in the requirements for entry into teaching, teacher standards, induction, licensing and promotion).

The mapping of practices presented in this report includes an overview of both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation and development. This was accomplished through an online survey, by means of desk research, and in focus groups and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The approach was similar to that used in policy mapping; searching relevant data sources (catalogues of in-service programmes, existing secondary sources of relevant information on pre-service teacher preparation and in-service programmes implemented by various local and international NGOs, identification of other forms of continuing and sometimes informal professional development such as learning through networking, peer evaluation). These issues were listed in grids developed to guide data collection across the countries.

An online survey was developed to collect data on pre-service teacher preparation programmes. Research evidence on programme characteristics that help student teachers develop competences for inclusion (Assumptions 5 and 6 in Annex 4) were used to design online survey questions on course units, practical experiences, opportunities for interaction with families, critical reflection, discussion and dialogue, and beliefs about the nature of knowledge.

The data collected through desk research and the survey and the mapping of both policies and practices were complemented with qualitative data collected in individual and group interviews, and focus groups with information-rich policy-makers, course designers, teacher educators, teachers, school principals, community representatives and parents. These strategies provided opportunities for follow-up on issues identified in the desk research, granting comprehensive insight into various stakeholder perspectives on inclusive education practices and teacher roles.

3.2.3 Research Question 3: How Teacher Preparation could be Improved

The third research question asks how existing pre-service and in-service teacher education policies and practices could be improved to further help teachers develop competences for inclusion and considers the relevance of cross-national research for policy-making (Assumption 7 in Annex 4). This report discusses the information collected in mapping existing policies and practices with a view to identifying opportunities for

improvements bearing in mind desired competences for inclusive education identified in international research and the barriers identified in each country context.

On the basis of findings from both field work and desk research, the authors have compiled a number of recommendations for different stakeholders with the support of an editorial team of experts on inclusion and teacher training in the region. The recommendations primarily aim to indicate potential areas for improvement in pre-service and in-service teacher education. However, these recommendations and the report itself aim to serve as discussion material for wider policy debate on teacher competences in the context of social and cultural diversity.

The recommendations have been grouped according to their relevance for different stakeholders: policy-makers; teacher educators and course designers; and teachers. Also, examples of best practice on inclusion are highlighted and discussed in terms of their relevance and transferability across the region throughout the study.

3.3   Research Methodology

A predominantly qualitative research strategy was adopted. This allowed for a more effective mapping of policies and practices, and provided answers to certain important questions about the relevance, unintended effects and impacts of policies and practices. Qualitative approaches have the advantage of allowing for more diversity in responses whilst offering the capacity to adapt to new developments or issues during the research process itself. The approaches applied by this study show all the characteristics of qualitative research as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), namely:

- qualitative research uses the natural setting as a direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument

- qualitative research is descriptive

- qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes

- qualitative researchers tend to analyse their date inductively; they do not proceed with a priori questions or hypotheses to be tested

- 'meaning', in the sense of the subject's own perspectives, thoughts, assumptions and world views as expressed in their own words central to the approach

A predominantly qualitative research approach was best suited to assessing the extent of change in teacher behaviour and attitudes toward inclusion ten years after meaningful reforms and reconstruction began in Kosovo in 1999. This appeared to be the best way to provide in-depth information on the internationalisation of new study programmes and approaches by teacher educators in the higher education institutions. In the years immediately following the conflict, hundreds of in-service teacher training programmes were offered to schools. However, these programmes were based on the preferences of the numerous implementing NGOs rather than actual teacher skills requirements and demand. Quantitative research alone would have shown that ample training was provided to every teacher, but the qualitative research showed most of that training to have been irrelevant to the real needs of the teachers in quality instruction. As a result, the impact of those training programmes fell far short of desired outcomes. All the characteristics listed above can be seen in the data collection techniques and strategies used in the study, namely:

■ Desk Research - collection and analysis of relevant primary and secondary texts and documents

■ Use of semi-structured interviewing of purposefully selected data-rich informants in the course of field work

■ Focus groups of key stakeholders in the course of field work.

3.3.1 Desk Research Phase

Desk research provided the background for subsequent field research in the study. It presented a comprehensive overview of contemporary research in inclusive education, in particular in terms of: teacher roles and competences needed to support inclusion; EU policy and legislative documents; and national documents from a wide range of sources. The information gathered here was used to develop country missions and advise later field work in the research.

The desk research covers three thematic areas:

■ Context analysis

■ Policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation

■ Policies and practices for in-service teacher education and continuing professional development

The context analysis aims to explain the overall policy and legislative context in which teacher preparation and inclusive education are embedded. It focuses on the system of education, human and minority rights, inclusion and exclusion in education. There were many laws, administrative instructions, regulations, and other documents readily available on the Kosovo government web pages. These were then compared with similar international documents (in the region and beyond), various baseline studies, assessment reports, feasibility studies and roadmaps for progress in education in Kosovo from various local and international agencies. The team prioritised those documents focusing mainly or most closely on inclusion in teacher education and training.

The analysis of policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation aims to provide information on legislation and regulation in pre-service teacher education programmes. It focuses on the elements related to competences for inclusive education involved in: the process of obtaining a formal teaching degree; the organisation and management of pre-service programme; programme design and arrangements for mentoring of students during school practice; the recruitment process; professional standards; and the promotion process. This section was hampered by the degree of fragmentation in teacher education programmes in Kosovo and the fact that only the Faculty of Education observes MEST policies and standards of professional practice sufficiently, while the other teacher education programmes generally do not. It would thus have been difficult to assess the impact of these programmes on inclusion using MEST policies as the only point of reference, and the team was forced to rely more heavily on interviews and other ways of collecting information from teacher education institutions.

The research into policies and practices for in-service teacher education and continuing professional development covers the general standing of the teaching profession in Kosovo including: the recruitment process; professional standards and the promotion process; professional regulation; and access to in-service practical development programmes on teacher competences for inclusive education. The research focussed mainly on describing the practices and the proportion of programmes focusing on inclusive education, with additional information about providers, programme content and, where available, the profile and number of participants and the application procedure. The team also sought to identify any other forms of in-service

development used and incentives for teachers to develop competences through in-service training, particularly those programmes focused on inclusive education practices. There is no systematic data available on in-service teacher training provision in Kosovo. Between 1999 and 2001 any international NGO with a modest amount of funding was allowed free access to implement programmes in Kosovo schools, many of which were originally designed for other post-conflict countries. A number of these programmes were implemented in Kosovo with no forethought on the sustainability of the training efforts. Hence, there is practically no evidence of in-service teacher training programmes in Kosovo for this period. When the Kosovo Educator Development Programme (KEDP) was established as the lead agency for teacher training in 2002, there was a significantly more structured approach and the KEDP database provides more information on teacher training programmes and providers. KEDP data was used in this research together with working reports, evaluation reports and newsletters from other organisations running in-service teacher training programmes in Kosovo.

The desk research involved a review of various primary documents, although there was some critical use of secondary sources. The materials reviewed in the desk research include, but are not limited to:

- relevant legislative or sub-legal documents

- national and governmental strategies on social inclusion or education, with a particular focus on the role of teachers and on teacher education

- policies or regulations related to teachers, communities and inclusion

- catalogues or similar descriptions of in-service programmes

- any other relevant analysis carried out by other organisations or individuals (i.e. secondary sources)

Most of the printed materials were available in the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) library which also provided access to the KEDP materials. The desk research was undertaken by Kosovo team members between June and September 2009.

3.3.2 Field Research Phase

Field research is at the heart of the qualitative research used in this study and provided researchers with the opportunity to discuss current programmes and trends in pre-service and in-service teacher development for inclusive education with primary and secondary teachers, schools principals, NGO activists and teacher educators. It also allowed for dialogue on country-specific needs, and barriers to inclusive education and expectations from it, particularly from the perspective of teacher professional education. The country mission included a variety of target groups and appropriate tools to reach the intended outcomes.

The country mission concentrated on reaching three key target groups, namely:

- Teacher educators and trainers engaged in (1) pre-service and (2) in-service programmes

- Teachers

- Parents and community members

In addition, the team organised a focus group with 12 school students to obtain a view of inclusive practices from the student perspective and to see how relevant policies are reflected in the classrooms.

The field research was complemented by an e-survey which targeted over 120 teacher educators in teacher training programmes (preparation programmes for class teachers, subject teachers and in-service teacher trainers) and other experts and officials engaged in teacher development. The e-survey was distributed at the beginning of the academic year and this timing, combined with the relative lack of information technology (IT) and IT skills in public higher education institutions could account for the fact that there were only 18 responses.

The teacher educators and trainers survey asked about:

- whether competences for inclusive education occupy a specific area in teacher training programmes

- the degree of mainstreaming of inclusion issues throughout the programmes

- teachers perceptions of the effectiveness of existing teacher training programmes in developing inclusive education

- respondent perceptions of the competences necessary for inclusive education

Thus, information on pre-service and in-service programmes for teacher education and future development was collected from teacher educators, teachers and student teachers. Where necessary, information-rich individual teacher educators and trainers were interviewed to add in-depth information and to elaborate on issues relevant to teacher education and training. The field research included focus groups of experienced teachers in inclusive education in Kosovo. These focus groups covered a variety of settings and issues relevant to inclusive education and specifically addressed:

- respondent perceptions of the competences needed for inclusive education

- respondent perceptions of the effectiveness of preparation for inclusive practices in education (pre-service, in-service)

- respondent application and experience of inclusive practices (the kind of things an inclusive teacher does in and out of the classroom)

- respondent beliefs about school students, knowledge, learning and educability

These focus groups were organised on the premise that teachers with hands-on experience are in a position to evaluate pre-service and in-service training and the importance of teacher beliefs in shaping practice and performance. Teachers participating in the two focus groups came from urban and rural areas, public and private institutions, and had varied pre-service and in-service learning experiences (higher pedagogical schools, teaching faculties, academic faculties). During the focus group there was a tendency to convey an optimistic picture of school life. However, deeper analysis showed discrepancies between inclusive policies and school practices.

Other focus groups with parents and community members discussed the following issues:

- perceptions of teacher competences needed for inclusion

- the role of teachers in promoting inclusion

- the impact of teachers (and their inclusive practices) on students and society in general

- practices and issues involved in parent and community cooperation with schools (e. g. in connection with student well being, discipline, school achievement, particular educational needs)

- the extent to which they can influence decisions made at school level

The focus groups with parents and community members allowed these stakeholders to elaborate their views on the concept of inclusive education. The rationale for consulting them was that they may be able to provide support or pressure for or against inclusion (e.g. parents demanding that their child should not be educated with Roma children, or members of the community complaining that the stairs at their local school mean a local child with cerebral palsy is forced to attend a residential special school 150 km away).

The secondary target groups for the field research were:

- School principals and school support services (e.g. pedagogues, psychologists)

- Local government representatives

- System level policy makers

- Student teachers

- NGOs and representatives of donors (providing additional training opportunities in inclusive education and opportunities for teaching and experiential learning in pilot inclusive education programmes)

The student teachers were surveyed in an online e-survey, but the secondary target groups were mainly interviewed either face to face, on the telephone or by email. Information-rich individuals were carefully selected to provide information and views on the relevance of teacher competences in ensuring inclusive education practices. Additionally, they provided insights into how they see their own roles in: ensuring the development of teacher competences for inclusive education; support of teacher education in inclusive practices; and developing means of further enhancing teacher competences for inclusive education.

School principals and school support services were interviewed to discuss how they see their roles in supporting teachers in developing competences for inclusion and inclusive practices. Teacher education and inclusion in schools delivering the curriculum in minority languages was given particular in-depth treatment. Local government representatives were interviewed on the issues of relevance to inclusive education provided at the local level. They were also asked about any support they provide (or know they are unable to provide) for inclusive education or for the development of this sector, and the role they assign to teachers in implementing inclusive education in their local environment. Meanwhile, system level policy makers are key stakeholders in developing and ensuring national policies on inclusive education and in establishing the role of teachers and teacher competences within such policies. They were thus interviewed to discuss the policies in place, desired policies in the area and the means for implementing such policies. Most of the field research was completed in September and October, coinciding with the start of the school year (September 1st) and academic year (October 1st). Difficulties with pre-university institutions were overcome by postponing some interviews and focus groups to the second half of September and beginning of October, but this could not be done for the higher education institutions as they were engaged in a new system of three rounds of enrolment of new students (as required by MEST), the restructuring of faculty management and a session of exams in October. These substantial factors severely hampered interviews and contacts with teacher educators and the team was unable to gain a full input from teaching staff and officials at the Universities of Prishtina and Mitrovica North.

The students were e-surveyed to discuss their views, beliefs and dispositions on inclusive education and the need for inclusive education competences in their training as future teachers. NGOs and donors were interviewed on their views of current provision of teacher education for inclusive education in Kosovo and, more importantly, on the support they provide to help teachers develop inclusive competences and practices, both through formal courses and experiential learning on pilot programmes.

3.4. Participants

Respondents were selected through a purposive sampling approach that identified information-rich individuals in relevant stakeholder groups whilst ensuring a variety of perspectives. Two teacher focus groups were conducted, with ten and 12 teachers respectively, one focus group with ten parents and community representatives, one focus group with 12 students (aged 14-15 from different rural and urban, richer and poorer municipalities). The focus group participants were also from geographically and socially diverse settings.

Fifty interviews were held in September, October and November 2009. These involved eight education and community representatives of local authorities in Malisheva/o (rural, relatively poor community) and Prizren (urban, relatively richer community). Other interviews were conducted with eighteen school principals from Malisheva/o, Prizren, Prishtina, Rahovec/Orahovac, Sharr/Dragas, Gracanica and Strpce (nine Albanian, six Serb, one Croatian and two Bosniak communities). Finally, ten teacher educators (including some from the University of Mitrovica), five higher-level policy makers and nine inclusive education-related donor and NGO representatives were interviewed.

4. OVERALL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION

4.1 Context

BRIEF INTRODUCTION – POPULATION DATA

Kosovo is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, with several ethnic groups belonging to three major religions (Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic).

The total population of Kosovo is estimated at 2.5 million and the number of permanent residents is estimated at 1.9–2.1 million. The Kosovo population continues to grow faster than those of neighbouring countries. According a report from the Statistical Office of Kosovo (SOK); 92 % of the population are ethnic Albanians, 5.3 % ethnic Serbs, 0.4 % Turks, 1.1 % Roma and other ethnic groups 1.2 % (Bosniaks, Ashkali and Egyptians). More of the population lives in rural than urban areas, in a proportion of 63:37. The population is young, with an estimated 50 % of the population under the age of 25 and 40 % under the age of 18. In 2002, approximately 37 % of the population lived in poverty on EUR1.42 per day and 15.2 % of the population lived in extreme poverty on EUR0.93 per day (Kita, 2008:3-4). According to the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in the Office of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), there are a total of 443 912 students in pre-university education – 235 327 boys and 208 585 girls. They are taught by 27 623 teachers, of whom 16 844 are men and 10 779 women. They are spread across 1 123 school, including 40 pre-school institutions, 969 primary schools, 108 secondary and 6 special needs schools (which have been transformed into resource centres for special needs education since 2006).[40] These figures, however, do not include figures for schools with instruction in the Serbian language and the last available information on these schools was collected in 2003/2004.[41] A rough estimate, based on available data and projections for schools with instruction in Serbian, gives a total of around 470 000 students taught by approximately 30 000 teachers in pre-university education in Kosovo. The politically-motivated divisions in the education sector present further challenges to local authorities working to overcome these obstacles and progress toward social inclusion and cohesion.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE NEW CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK OF KOSOVO

Many documents were developed in the education sector after 1999, but the New Curricular Framework of Kosovo, developed by international and local experts with UNICEF support, stands out as the key educational document here. Even though never formally approved, this served as a point of reference for most of the reforms, policies and activities in pre-university education in Kosovo. It provided clear guidelines for all aspects of pre-university education in Kosovo, including: curricula; learning plans; institutions; the new structure of the education system; learning outcomes and student competences for levels of education; the education of students from minority communities; the role of parents and community members; the education of children with special needs; etc. The framework also addresses the need to train teachers in line with the new philosophy.

In a process supported by the World Bank, the document is currently being revised for formal approval by the Kosovo authorities later this year. The review process should address the issue of a broader understanding

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[40] MEST EMIS Office, Education Statistics in Kosovo, 2008-09, Prishtina, 2009; http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/Statistikat_e_Arsimit_ne_Kosove_2008-09.pdf

[41] These data were collected in December 2003 by Jovica Filipovic, MEST officer for communities. He provided figures of 23 178 students in all levels of pre-university education, taught by 1 960 teachers.

of inclusion in education promoting diversity and tolerance and increasing consideration of at risk groups, equal opportunities, global learning, stronger and more diverse community participation, gender equality, and expanding on the limited traditional perspective of special needs education.

SECTOR STRATEGIES

Two main sector strategies were developed and approved by the government or Kosovo Assembly outlining the main directions, objectives, measures and budget costs for the broader development of education in Kosovo., These covered higher education (2005) and pre-university education (2007) and addressed the issues of teaching, inclusion and participation in education. The pre-university strategy dedicates three of its seven strategic objectives to providing concrete policies, activities and financial support for improvement of inclusion, access to education,[42] integration into international trends in the sector, and teacher training and development. A process is currently underway to develop a unique and more inclusive sector strategy under the overarching framework of lifelong learning philosophy.[43]

Other strategic documents are in the pipeline for various sub-sectors and segments of education. A MEST official stated: "MEST is currently working on a strategic plan for inclusive education, which is expected to be finalised and approved by April 2010. It will also include an important objective on pre-service and in-service teacher training in the field of inclusive education." Once approved, the Plan will provide a reference point for activities and measures in inclusive education in Kosovo covering all institutions including pre- and in-service teacher training programmes.

The Strategy on Integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) communities 2007-2017 assesses their educational needs and provides measures and resources to improve the participation in education of these three communities, all of whom display the lowest indicators in access and quality of education received in Kosovo.[44] The working groups (consisting of community representatives and local and international experts) found there is no simple answer to the educational needs of these communities. The four strategic objectives of this document provide guidelines on: improvement of access and quality of education; a set of preventive measures against discrimination and segregation; cooperation and coordination between various agents in the field; and measures for increasing awareness amongst the RAE population of the benefits of education.

However, the research team found there is a long way to go before full implementation of the measures outlined will be achieved. This is particularly the case for the Strategy on RAE communities, especially the Roma community. The causes could lie in the intricate links between education and social and cultural aspects, including the fact that Roma children use different languages at home and in school where they are taught in either Albanian or Serbian.

The fact that Roma children are often not registered in the civil records further complicates any attempts at a systematic approach. A reliable baseline study across the political divisions would be very useful in this context and would provide the foundations for more informed decisions.

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[42] Strategy for Development of Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007-2017, Objective 3: Inclusion and equality; Obj. 4: Teacher training and professional development; Obj. 6: Education and Society, MEST, 2007, Prishtina

[43] This project (Capacity Building and Education Reform Programme - CBERP) is currently being implemented by the MEST and SIPU International – SIDA and a new sector strategy is expected to be finalised by mid 2010. See also The Roadmap to improved performance in the sector of education (http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/?id=1265&lng=Eng#id=1)

[44] Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, *Statistikat e Arsimit në Kosovë*, accessed in October 2009 at http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/?id=1265&lng=Eng#id=32, 2009, Prishtina

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, adopted by the Kosovo Assembly on June 15, 2008 states that: '(1) every person enjoys the right to free basic education. Mandatory education is regulated by law and funded by public funds and that (2) Public institutions shall ensure equal opportunities to education for everyone in accordance with their specific abilities and needs.' In accordance with the Constitution, the Kosovo Assembly soon approved the Law on Education in the Municipalities, which marked a meaningful devolution of competences in education from central to municipal authorities, including some responsibilities for the in-service training of teachers.

BASIC EDUCATION LAWS

However, the education sector and teacher education and inclusion are primarily regulated by two basic education laws one on primary and secondary education and the other on the higher education system. Article 12.5 of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Kosovo states that MEST is entitled to "regulate teacher training, registration and re-training in accordance with the applicable law including the establishment of a Teacher Training Review Board.

Article 32 of this law also provides for all teachers and other staff in Kosovo schools to undergo in-service re-qualification and professional development in accordance with MEST provisions. The Law on Higher Education, meanwhile, addresses the issue of the approval of study programmes stating that the Ministry is entitled "… to approve or withhold approval the curricula of courses leading to qualification as a teachers for employment in a publicly funded school."[45] After six years of implementation, both laws are undergoing review to better comply with the changed situation, the Comprehensive Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement and the ensuing decentralisation process.

4.2   Teacher competences for inclusive education

In several schools, the research team witnessed institutional efforts to remind teachers of the competences for inclusion in the form of (MEST) posters hanging on the walls. When asked about these competences, a teacher in a school visited in Prizren proved to be very familiar with them, saying: "we have been given training by the Finnish Support to Development of Education in Kosovo (FSDEK), the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC), and the school 'core team' of trainers and senior teachers." During their visits, the research team saw students in attractive 'attached classes', friendly teachers in classrooms, students free to communicate with and about their teachers, and very accessible school principals.

In the focus groups, the moderator asked participants - teachers and students from geographically and socially diverse settings (Prishtina, Ferizaj, Skenderaj and Peja) - not to give the name of their school or their home location when introducing themselves. These two focus groups included children and teachers from very remote villages, from other towns and also from an elite private school and the most prestigious public school in Prishtina.

After 90 minutes of discussion, the moderator was still unaware of student origins, but could guess the origin of about one third of the teachers correctly. This experience provided a positive picture of equality in education services in Kosovo in general, but more particularly of the good distribution of inclusive practices.

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[45]   Article 12.4 of the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo.

The randomly selected teachers of the focus group showed they have general awareness of what constitutes an inclusive approach in teaching and were able to talk about: individual learning plans; individualised teaching and learning; inventive ways of communication with parents; specific approaches to RAE students; and issues of drop-outs, gender sensitive approaches. However, they also said they encountered difficulties in translating these skills into practice. The main reasons they cited for this were the lack of teaching resources, large class sizes, a relative lack of community awareness on issues of inclusion, and, in some cases, a lack of understanding or inadequate training and qualifications amongst school principals. In our view though, the feedback from the focus group reflected individual teacher reactions to school situations rather than systematic and sustainable approaches or mechanisms in their schools.

Graduates of the Faculty of Education were repeatedly indicated as 'the experts' on inclusion and new approaches in teaching in focus groups, interviews with principals and school visits. A school principal in Prizren also mentioned the course on inclusive education offered to participants of the Faculty of Education In-service Teacher Training Programme (see Section 5.2 for more detail). This proved the importance of inclusive education content in pre-service teacher education programmes, but also stressed the need for more coordination between pre- and in-service education and training. The State Council on Teacher Licensing (SCTL) will have an important role to play in this regard.

4.3   Barriers to inclusion

Kosovo appears to have a relatively good inventory of teacher education and inclusion-related policies and regulations due in part to the support of local and international agents, including UNICEF, the Kosovo Educator Development Programme (KEDP), FSDEK, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Save the Children, etc. However, some of these programmes and development partners are no longer active in Kosovo (KEDP and FSDEK) or have significantly reduced their presence and activities (UNICEF, CRS and Save the Children). The gap left behind has not yet been fully covered by the activities of the Ministry of Education and other local or donor organizations. This has especially been the case with special needs education and teacher education, both crucially important elements in inclusive education.

Another issue related to the concept of inclusive education and training in Kosovo is its common identification with special needs education, or, in the best case, with reducing drop–out rates (most often amongst children from RAE communities). As a result, 'inclusive' measures are provided for a very limited target population (RAE and children with special needs) and cover only a small section of the educational aspects.

The Kosovo Institute of Pedagogy has undertaken relevant and extensive research into both these issues (student drop-out and SEN) only to prove that inclusive approaches cannot be sub-divided, resulting in calls for a more systematic approach. Most of the recommendations from these two studies call for active participation by all stakeholders and for complex action involving legal, social, cultural, health and educational measures. Other research and reports produced similar findings and recommendations.

> **Participation in Education**
> During 2009 the Ministry of Education prepared to address the issue of participation and inclusion in education. Two independent studies (one by the World Bank and one by GTZ) were implemented to assess the situation and present recommendations to improve the situation. In general, both analyses agreed that drop-outs are prevalent during 'transition grades' 1, 5, and 9 of primary and lower secondary education (with girls dropping out more than boys) and during upper secondary education in general (this time with boys dropping out more than girls). RAE communities appear more vulnerable to drop-out. The two studies have identified the following factors behind dropout: low family income, geographical location, cultural factors, social aspects, security in schools, discrimination, general mentality, and other factors.

Although enormous efforts are made to promote the rights of ethnic communities, there are still serious obstacles such as: people living in secure enclaves; big discrepancies in access to education, health and employment; parallel systems of services for different ethnic groups; and the unresolved status of refugees and internally displaced persons (Kita, 2008:17). One crucial problem affecting the entire education system in Kosovo, and the philosophy of inclusion in particular is the existence of parallel education structures in schools with instruction in Serbian. This situation has had negative consequences in some multi-ethnic areas which previously provided positive examples of cooperation. Numerous attempts to develop intercommunity cooperation in education by local and international institutions have failed almost as soon as they were initiated. A general openness to discussion of 'all issues' by school principals and teachers in schools with instruction in Serbian would evaporate as soon as the subject of concrete inter-community cooperation in education was brought up. The issues of learning official and local languages and curriculum development proved to be the most sensitive issues for both of the largest communities.

This essentially political problem causes numerous difficulties in the education sector. Intercommunity political divisions also impact on multicultural education which represents an important segment of the philosophy of inclusion and inclusive approaches in education. Nevertheless, this complex issue could begin to be addressed through learning 'about' rather than 'alongside' one another, encouraging inclusive thinking in this aspect of Kosovo education. More integrated communities, such as Bosniaks and Turks, could also operate as 'bridging' agents in this situation.

Another less complex but equally important issue is the slow pace of growth in awareness of inclusion in the teacher education institutions. As will be discussed later, there is still significant inertia in changing attitudes in many of these institutions, in spite of the clear MEST policies on inclusive approaches repeatedly provided to them. As a teacher educator from the Department of Pedagogy explains:

"FACULTIES PLAN ONLY AS MANY COURSES AS THEY HAVE PROFESSORS; AND THEREFORE THERE IS NO ROOM FOR NEW COURSES AND PHILOSOPHIES."

The fact that schools have been unable to keep up with the astonishing changes in information, communication, and instructional technologies also represents an obstacle that significantly affects inclusion in education even though it is not directly linked to inclusive philosophies. Schools are faced with the problem of simply not being attractive any more.

Teachers in the focus group complained they had the knowledge and skills required for inclusion, but were not able to apply them in their work due to the lack of teaching resources and instructional technologies (e.g. computers, photocopying machines, overhead projectors, paper, and markers). Meanwhile, a MEST officer told us: "the main obstacle to inclusiveness in Kosovo education is the lack of awareness and training among school principals and teachers." Later research supported this view of the important role of school principals for inclusion in Kosovo schools.

4.4   Policies relevant for teacher preparation and development

In line with the legal provisions outlined above, MEST has drafted and approved a series of administrative instructions further regulating the field of teacher education. In our study we look more closely at the following administrative instructions: standards for professional practice; standards for pre-service training programmes; teacher licensing; and the State Council for Teacher Licensing, as these provide a relatively clear picture of the requirements from the teaching staff of pre- and in-service teacher training institutions in Kosovo, if they are to meet the principles and standards of inclusion.

The Framework of Standards for Professional Practice for Teachers in Kosovo was developed in 2004 by local and international experts 'to set the criteria for teaching quality assurance in Kosovo.' This regulation classifies the teacher skills and competences for inclusion into sections such as: academic, professional, practical, social and planning. The philosophies of inclusion, equality, social context, tolerance and human rights are repeatedly encountered throughout the provisions of this document. Furthermore, Article 2.6 discusses the group of skills relating to class management and states that the teacher should 'be aware of the various roles and models of teachers, know the needs of the specific group of students, reflect critically about his/her attitude and adapt it to the students' needs, understand the psychology of children and offer diverse learning activities to meet the needs of all students, including those with special needs.' Then, in Article 2.10 the Framework also states that teachers should 'support and act on the basis of principles of tolerance and equality in the class and beyond, ensure equal rights and opportunities in education for all students regardless of gender, ethnicity and religious background, and ensure equal rights to education for children with special learning needs, including those with learning difficulties and talented children.'

As 'inclusive' as this policy may have been at the time, it is difficult to assess whether or not it has been implemented in Kosovo classrooms, for the simple reason that virtually nobody goes into classrooms to assess the implementation of this or any other policies. There is currently no mechanism to assist teachers with their teaching process. School principals could do this, but their busy schedules mean it would be unlikely for them to dedicate much of their time to this time-consuming task. When asked about these situations and issues, school principals reply with vague answers like, "we advise younger colleagues to learn from more experienced teachers," or "we observe classes when requested by parents or students." Two municipal directors of education saw the adequate implementation of this regulation as one of their priorities, and mentioned plans within the decentralisation process "to hire education experts to observe classes as we do not know what is really going on in our classrooms, we only have the results of external national exams."

In 2004, in line with the above Framework, MEST developed and approved the Standards for Pre-service Teacher Training Programmes that outline specific requirements for these programmes, such as: general education and knowledge of academic subjects; knowledge of teaching strategies based on practice and continual personal research and reflection; good writing skills; additional courses in psychology of learning and methodologies of various subjects; significant practical experience (at least 22 weeks during the four years of studies); work ethics and communication skills. The requirements for study programmes emphasise the

need to respond to a diverse environment, provide information about human rights and the rights of children, and ensure that the skills and knowledge necessary to identify and work with children with special needs are imparted. The team desk research found the description of principles and standards provided in these instructions were put into practice when the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina was established. They were included in numerous ensuing MEST policies; but were used less by academic faculties in the 2007-2008 study programme reforms in line with the Bologna Process. Implementation of this regulation is discussed in more detail in Section 5.1.

The administrative instruction on the licensing of teachers, administrators and other professionals approved by MEST in Article 1.1 of January 2009 serves to establish 'a coherent system of teacher licensing and promotion during their career based on their qualification, experience, professional development and performance and develop a respective salary structure suited to this system.' It also states conditions for the licensing of junior teachers and progression through the system from a provisional to a progressive range of full time licenses: career teacher, advanced teacher, mentor teacher and teacher emeritus. A given number of core and supplementary in-service training programmes must be completed for each level of progression. Higher qualifications and skills received through pre-service programmes are also reflected in the salary levels of individual teachers. The in-service requirements for promotion from one level of full-time license to a higher level (and salary) will be specified in a separate administrative instruction in the near future. Unfortunately, although a good start was made on initial licensing, improved teacher salaries and establishment of the SCTL (January 2009), the process rapidly ground to a halt. The whole teacher licensing issue appears to have stagnated and the promised regulation on in-service requirements for the promotion of teachers has not yet been drafted. These developments have provided no reassurance of promotion prospects for teachers, or for recognition of in-service training undertaken over the last decade. There have recently been indications from the SCTL that they may pick up where things left off in 2008.

5.   MAPPING TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INCLUSION

5.1 Pre-service

5.1.1 Teacher education faculties of the University of Prishtina

As expected, the provisions of the legal framework (laws and administrative instructions) are applied (or misapplied) in teacher education institutions of the higher education sector. It must be pointed out that all the higher education institutions licensed for pre-service teacher training in Kosovo form part of the only two public universities in Kosovo – the University of Prishtina and the University in Mitrovica North.[46] No teacher education programmes offered by private higher education institutions have been licensed or accredited in 2009. Kosovo inherited an extremely fragmented teacher education system in the wake of 1999, and pre-service teacher education was provided by the higher pedagogical schools (established during the 1960s), the Faculty of Teaching (established in 1994), the Department of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy, and the academic faculties[47] of the University of Prishtina, each pursuing their own goals and running curricula that were not part of a coherent system. Schools (vocational centres in particular) also employed graduates from non-teaching faculties with no provision or programme to cover their shortcomings in professional aspects. As a rule, non-university higher education institutions provided two-year programmes to train staff as class teachers for primary schools (from nursery to grade 8), whereas academic faculties provided four-year courses for general secondary teachers and staff for some vocational schools.[48] It almost goes without saying that they were not up to date on the new trends in teacher education.

5.1.2 Faculty of Education (University of Prishtina)

For this reason the Ministry of Education (with support from the KEDP) decided to replace higher pedagogical schools and the Faculty of Teaching with a new faculty: the Faculty of Education. This new Faculty was established jointly by MEST and the University of Prishtina in 2002 with support from the Canadian funded KEDP, FSDEK, Save the Children Denmark and other organisations. It offers the degree of Bachelor of Education in pre-school, primary (class teachers) and lower secondary education (subject teachers). Subject teachers mainly specialise in two related subjects (e.g. biology-chemistry, history-geography). A senior official at this Faculty pointed out that: "Given the importance of inclusion in education, all departments offer extremely up-to-date mandatory and optional courses on inclusive approaches, new teaching strategies and methodologies, children's rights, the psychology of learning and teaching, learning difficulties, and the school and community." Faculty officials also reported another aspect of inclusion: "the Faculty organises instruction in Bosniak (190 students) and Turkish (135 students) in two departments of the Faculty in Prizren." There are also guaranteed enrolment quotas for instruction in Albanian language mainly used by RAE students.

The main problem facing the Faculty is the inheritance of teaching staff from the former (non-university) higher pedagogical schools (HPS) who find it difficult to adapt to the new approaches, circumstances and modes of

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[46] The legal name applied by the international and Kosovo administration in the official documents and licenses awarded to this higher education institution in Kosovo will be applied throughout the report.

[47] In this report we will use the term 'academic faculties' to refer to faculties within the University of Prishtina, such as that of Philosophy, Philology, Physical Education, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, whose primary focus are academic studies, but who issue teaching degrees or provide graduates who are employed in the sector even though they do not formally hold a teaching degree.

[48] However, this arrangement is still in place, resulting in the paradox that the academic faculties (some providing three-year teacher training programmes) issue teaching degrees for teachers of upper secondary schools, whereas graduates from the four-year programmes of the Faculty of Education mainly work in elementary and lower secondary schools.

operation of the new institution. This has proven to be the main obstacle to the implementation of the modern curricula and study programmes of this Faculty, with the lack of physical space in its centres in Prishtina and Gjakova coming a close second.

Departments in this Faculty offer eight semesters of studies for 240 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, a total of 22 weeks of practical work, around 15 professional and methodology courses, with a ratio of around 60 to 40 % between mandatory and elective courses and academic and professional courses – all in line with MEST requirements regarding standards of pre-service teacher education programmes.

The Faculty of Education has appointed a coordinator for teaching practices and has also developed, approved and printed guidelines for practical teaching in a comprehensive document outlining and explaining all the phases of teaching practice (Mooney, 2006). However, as one teacher and official explained: "the faculty has difficulties with the implementation of inclusion in practice teaching, because not all the mentor teachers are trained in inclusive approaches in education." The institution, its approaches to teacher education and the Bachelor of Education degree it awards, are all relative novelties in the Kosovo schooling system and its first graduates only joined the system in 2008. These graduates initially encountered some difficulties in finding employment, but the school principals we interviewed stated shortly after that: "the best candidates in terms of inclusion come from teacher training faculties, and in particular from the Faculty of Education, whereas the least informed on inclusive approaches are graduates from professional streams [e.g. technical faculties, economy, and agriculture]."

Improvements in the inclusion perspective in teacher education programmes in Kosovo are best shown by the different responses received to the e-survey questions by current and future teachers. When answering questions about inclusive practices and teacher competences in their teacher education programmes, teachers who studied by the old programmes either gave mixed answers, or did not answer at all (8 out of 17). This meant that they did not have meaningful learning experiences on inclusion during their studies. On the other hand, students of current teacher education programmes all ticked the highest option of 'complete' understanding, implying that new programmes are a lot more 'inclusive' than the older ones.

However, some voices claim graduates from the Faculty of Education are good professionals but fall short in academic knowledge. This may prove true, especially in fields like foreign languages and the natural sciences where there are shortages of full time teaching staff. However, this would have to be verified by separate research. The desk research also revealed another weakness in the Faculty of Education where the ratios of 7:17 in full time to part time teaching staff present some concern. This is partly the outcome of the shortage of teaching staff for new inclusive courses and does not look promising for the sustainable development of this Faculty in the future, especially as many of the full time staff (mainly from the former HPSs) are already approaching the age of mandatory retirement and lack the experience and qualifications required for university teaching staff.

5.1.3 Academic faculties - potential for cooperation

The Faculty of Philosophy organises academic studies in the fields of history, sociology, philosophy, political sciences, pedagogy and ethnology. The graduates find work as teachers in their respective subjects mainly in upper secondary schools. However, the curricula here are purely academic, as is the bachelor's degree they award at the end of their six semesters of studies.

These departments offer one or two professional and teaching methodology courses but no teaching practice, while the Department of Pedagogy offers theoretical studies in the field of education. There is no cooperation between the academic and pedagogy departments in this faculty. The endurance of 'faculty based' organization in the Kosovo universities forms one of the key impediments to increased cooperation and coherence in study programmes between various departments of the University of Prishtina. This issue warrants more serious consideration by MEST or SCTL.

Meanwhile, a good example of cross-department cooperation can be found in the Department of Music of the Faculty of Arts. Their students are entitled to take three compulsory courses in education in the Faculty of Education.[49] If this type of initiative were taken up by other departments and groups in university leadership, this kind of cooperation could result in better quality teacher education and improved teaching in Kosovo schools. It would also be one way of offering inclusive education approaches to students of academic faculties. There is also potential for cooperation in organising joint master's degrees in education between Department of Pedagogy and the Faculty of Education.[50]

The Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and its departments organise study opportunities for future teachers of biology, geography, chemistry, mathematics and physics working in upper secondary schools in Kosovo. Unlike the Faculty of Philosophy they make a formal distinction between the teaching and non-teaching profiles of their departments. This distinction is also reflected in the curricula and study programmes. These are organised in four semesters where teaching methodology, professional teaching, and teaching practice courses are all offered. In principle, these programmes are in line with the MEST regulations, but they need significant review and improvement (practice teaching in particular) if they are to meet the requirements fully. There seems to be an even greater need for inclusive education as so few such courses are included in their curricula. One official of this faculty reported the "many efforts made in recent years by faculty leadership to update and reform study programmes in line with the Ministry regulations and the general trends of the Bologna Process in teacher education streams within their faculty." He sees the inertia in the face of new approaches as normal because "some people feel threatened by change," adding that "an on-going communication process" is one way of dealing with these issues.

There appears to be plenty of room for improvement in the study programmes of the Faculty of Philology that currently offers no courses on inclusive education or related approaches. The situation is almost the same the Faculty of Physical Education where there are one or two methodology courses, none of which deals with inclusion or provides opportunities for teaching practice (very important in physical education because of the potential for injuries).

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[49] Pasqyra e planeve mësimore dhe e personelit akademik për vitin 2007/08, (An outline of the learning plans and academic staff of the University of Prishtina 2007/08), University of Prishtina, 2008; http://web.uni-pr.edu/repository/docs/pasqyra_up_2008.pdf, Faculty of Arts, page 238

[50] The FSDEK organised a master's in inclusive education for one cohort of students at the Faculty of Education in 2006-2008 but this did not continue beyond the project period.

Other faculties, such as Medicine, Economy, Arts, Law and Agriculture, do not train teachers at all, but their graduates are very often employed in general and vocational upper secondary schools. These graduates are given no professional or methodological pre-service training whatsoever, and are left to resolve their shortcomings by learning from experience or through in-service training. The recent increase in salaries has made the teaching profession more attractive and it would probably be a good idea for the Department of Pedagogy and the Faculty of Education to design and offer a one-year programme for graduates from other non-teaching faculties of the University of Prishtina.

This would help increase the employability of University of Prishtina graduates and also implement the stated principle and commitment of the University of Prishtina to inter-departmental cooperation, and the lifelong learning and labour market orientation of its study programmes. In the following section, we provide a brief comparison of these institutions and their programmes from the perspective of inclusion, relations between theory and practical work (regulations providing at least 22 weeks of practical work), academic versus professional courses and required versus elective and optional courses (aiming in general at a ratio of 60 to 40).

A brief look into the study programmes and learning plans of the University[51] shows a clear division between the Faculty of Education and the academic faculties of the University of Prishtina, where the other faculties still have a long way to go before they fully meet MEST requirements in the field of teacher education. There are also significant differences within the group of academic faculties, where the Faculty of Philology only pays lip service to professional courses, practical work, inclusion, the psychology of learning and teaching methodology, whereas the Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences (FMNS) makes clear attempts to meet the needed criteria and standards. This by no way means that the FMNS has managed to meet these requirements, but a clear tendency and process can be discerned. Meanwhile, the Faculty of Philology makes only a lip-service distinction between teacher education and other study programmes in the English and French departments, and it does not distinguish at all in Albanian language and literature. According to learning plans published on the University of Prishtina web page, even the English Language Department offers training to future teachers over 6 semesters with only two hours teaching practice a week in the last two semesters.

Table 1 shows the results of the desk research. The content of the table is based on the learning plans and information on academic staff available online for the University of Prishtina.

Table 1. Comparison of study programmes of the Faculty of Education and academic faculties

No	Field of comparison	Faculty of Education	Academic Faculties
1	Theory vs. practice	18-22 weeks	Max. 6 weeks
2	Academic vs. professional	50/50	80/20
3	Required vs. elective/optional	~ 60/40	~ 60/40
4	Methodology and didactics/courses	Min. 12 courses	2-8
5	Inclusion/courses	Min 5*	0-2 (elective)

*A minimum of five courses of every programme in the Faculty of Education fall in the field of inclusion.

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[51] University of Prishtina, Pasqyra e planeve mesimore dhe e personelit akademik per vitin 2007/08, (An outline of the learning plans and academic staff of the University of Prishtina 2007/08); University of Prishtina 2008; http://web.uni-pr.edu/repository/docs/pasaqyra_up_2008_pdf , Faculty of Education, Prishtina, 2008.

This table shows that academic faculties fall short on practical, professional and methodological aspects. Despite their strong academic component it can be inferred that they need to work hard on these very important aspects if they want their degrees to be in line with modern trends in teacher education. The evident shortcomings of these faculties rule out the need to delve into deeper and more detailed analysis of the application of inclusive approaches in their programmes. Similarly, any pursuit of deeper student reflection and training regarding inclusion, equal opportunities, differentiated approaches, individual learning and community involvement would be pointless. It is clear that all the academic faculties seriously need to address these issues.

The curricula and syllabi of the University of Prishtina were reviewed and finalised very recently (2007/2008). It is felt that these are in line with trends and there is little need for change in the near future.

5.1.4 Teacher education programmes of the University of Mitrovica

The University of Mitrovica is the only public higher education institution in Kosovo offering teacher education programmes for schools with instruction in Serbian. This university maintains the same divide between 'academic' and 'professional' faculties, with the latter providing primarily for elementary schools and the academic faculties catering for secondary schools. There are clear attempts to reform teacher education programmes for pre-school and primary education in line with the Bologna Process but these efforts are seen less in academic faculties. Only three of the ten faculties of this University offer teaching streams, while the others offer purely academic studies and degrees.

The Faculty of Teaching offers degrees for teachers of pre-school and primary education, while the Faculty of Physical Education offers a degree for PE teachers and the Faculty of Philosophy organises studies for a teaching degree in Serbian language and literature. Study programmes in the Faculty of Teaching offer a four-year programme with a strong focus on pedagogy, significant provision in methods for the respective subject fields and sufficient practical work (ranging from eight to ten weeks of practice during the programme). These study programmes are slightly lacking in professional studies (inclusion, rights of children, psychology of learning, ethics of teaching, new approaches and teaching strategies), with only a few such courses offered to future teachers. It is worthwhile pointing out that the Faculty of Teaching offers one course on the Special Educational Needs of children with minor impairments, but offers little on promoting participation, inclusion, diversity and tolerance in education. A member of the Faculty of Education explained that they experienced, "difficulties with staff commuting to teach from other cities once or twice a week whereby they were not truly available to their students." Similar issues were also noticed in branches of the University of Prishtina Faculty of Education.

The Faculty of Physical Education degree for PE teachers has a strong academic component and offers a few courses in psychology, pedagogy and methodology, while there is just one teaching practice in the fourth year. The study programme for teachers of language and literature in the Faculty of Philosophy has even less focus on professional aspects and practice. The same structure and weighting of the academic, professional and practical elements are also found in academic study programmes that do not issue teaching degrees but provide graduates who are employed by schools to teach in the upper grades (5-8) of primary and secondary education. There generally appears to be ample room for adaptation of the programmes in order to offer future graduates more competences on inclusion.

To conclude this brief analysis of pre-service teacher education programmes, we need to explain that the SCTL has included support of and cooperation with higher education institutions involved in teacher education among its priorities for 2009 and 2010 in consideration of the fact that pre-service teacher education

programmes are key elements in the sustainable development of inclusion in the system. Field research supported the view that inclusion and good inclusive practices were associated equally with in-service training (FSDEK, KEC and UNICEF) and pre-service education (Faculty of Education and, to an extent, Faculty of Sciences).

5.1.5 Enrolment of students and the social status of teachers

According to the basic education laws and the Law on State Matura (Articles 19 and 20) all those who have completed their upper secondary education and passed the State Matura (matriculation) Exam are entitled to apply for enrolment in the Kosovo higher education institutions. Results from previous education and those of the Matura exam account for 70 % of the admission criteria and the remaining 30 % are decided by internal admission exams organised by the academic units, especially when the demand is higher than the number of places on offer. As a rule, there is a high interest in the teaching profession in Kosovo, in particular in foreign languages and pre-school education. In the first session of admissions for 2009-2010, there were four candidates for every advertised place at the Faculty of Education. Mathematics and sciences form an exception in this regard in all teacher education faculties where the admissions exam usually consists of general knowledge test and questions on the field of study.

Interest in enrolment at teacher education faculties has grown recently after salaries were increased by an average of around 30 – 40 % by the Ministry of Education. With average salaries of EUR 250, the teaching profession has become more attractive in comparison to employment in other sectors like public administration, health and culture, where jobs requiring similar levels of qualification are paid less on average. This salary increase was accompanied by the other benefits of education, such as the lower number of working hours each week, longer holidays and shorter working days.

Around 23 000 teachers employed in pre-university institutions in Kosovo are currently classed as part of the public administration sector. There are plans to move teachers from this sector into the 'professional staff' bracket alongside the police and health workers, while local and central public administration employees will remain classed as civil service employees. The draft law for this reclassification has recently been approved by the Kosovo government and sent to the Assembly for approval. If its current wording is approved, the Law will ensure further improvements in the material position of public sector teachers employed in Kosovo. This new status and concrete government assurances of further salary increases for teachers are likely to create greater interest in the teaching profession among students on other non-teaching university programmes.

All our interviews with deans, university professors and school principals included unanimous agreement that there must be a one-year pre-service practical teaching programme for graduates of non-teaching departments coupled with in-service professional development as an effort to improving the quality of teaching in both vocational and general schools. Interviews with staff from teaching departments in the University of Prishtina have also shown the increased interest in teaching and the Ministry policy for increased access to higher education has caused problems with class sizes of trainee teachers; where there were 30 students per class in the Faculty of Education in 2004 – 2006, there are now up to 60 and 70 students per class, posing serious challenges to quality assurance efforts.

5.2 In-service teacher training

In 2001, the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA) invested in this important aspect of education and the Department of Education and Science (DES) of the time assigned the Canadian project the role of Lead Agency in the sector. At this time, numerous other organisations, projects and programmes were offering diverse programmes in circumstances where there was serious lack of any systematic and coordinated approach. These smaller organisations mainly offered psycho-social programmes for traumatised children and courses in the field of human rights, tolerance, peace and democracy.

Most had little to do with improving the quality of teaching, but they did help bring children and youth back to school after a decade of learning in private classes and a difficult year of interrupted schooling as a result of the conflict. In 2002, the KEDP and DES (later MEST) embarked upon a mapping exercise to establish some order in the sub-sector, stating that any programme must to be approved by DES/KEDP before going into schools.

This situation did not last long however, as most of the smaller organizations left Kosovo, and UNICEF, KEDP, FSDEK, KEC and MEST were left as the main providers of in-service teacher training programmes.

The Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) was involved in training over 15 000 local teachers between 2000 and 2008 in various innovative, interactive and inclusive teaching methodologies, techniques and approaches with Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT), Step by Step, Social Justice, and Education for Children's Rights taking a central role both in terms of quantity (programmes of between 5 and 15 training days) and quality (usually the interest for these courses exceeded the offer). During this period, over 130 local trainers were trained in inclusive and related approaches. One participant of the teacher focus group, said: "[she] used skills and materials provided by the RWCT to develop materials best suited for the learning needs of a student with learning and social difficulties by developing an exercise to help students think about diversity and possible solutions to a concrete situation similar to the one in their classroom." When asked about inclusion and inclusive practices in their schools, most of the teachers and principals interviewed or participating in focus groups would immediately refer to KEC and FSDEK training programmes, even in cases when they had not attended these events personally. These programmes are characterised by their quality and sustainability since they are implemented through local-international partnerships based on local strategies and in close cooperation with local and central education authorities who take ownership of the initiatives. Another characteristic of these programmes is that they are offered in full 'packages' covering: training and certification of trainers; development of training materials and handbooks for use in classrooms; and follow-up monitoring for implementation of new practices and utilisation of the required skills.

In interviews and focus groups, several issues were identified regarding the sustainability of training events. Participants in the teacher focus group agreed: "there is some resistance in schools to new methods and strategies and when teachers gain skills in training programmes, but they continue with their old practices once back in school, partly as a result of the working conditions." Another closely related issue is that children familiar with new approaches in one school or at one school level, find it very difficult when new teachers or schools revert to older ways. According to several interviewees and focus group participants, this is especially the case with the Step by Step programme. They said: "Step by Step is a programme that ends with grade four, and students who get used to it, go through a very difficult phase adjusting to the traditional forms of instruction in grade five."

An interesting finding from the field research regarding new and inclusive approaches in teaching in Kosovo schools was the key role of the school principal. Thus, school principals who were trained in these approaches

were more active in training their staff, organising follow up activities in their schools and organising in-house peer learning. In the interviews they also proved more demanding regarding the training portfolios and approaches to inclusion when hiring new teachers. The school principal in Banja village of the rural municipality of Malisheva, for instance, had attended such training and then became involved in cooperation with 'Handikos,' an NGO catering for children with special needs, by organising 'open days' to raise awareness in the community of the special learning needs of some children. The same principal has developed a questionnaire for parents to be used in the individual learning needs portfolio of every student.

This approach has resulted in many cases of students joining or returning to school, and has also led to an improved inclusive atmosphere and culture within the organisation. Our interviewer witnessed an amazing case where one student unable to use his arms and hands because of a severe physical impairment was helped to use his toes for writing by his teacher. The teacher has also managed to create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere among the other students in the class. This case speaks volumes in favour of trained teachers and principals.

However, as one participant from a public school in the teacher focus group put it, "there is no systemic support for teachers who have students with special needs in their classes. We have to prepare extra materials with our own resources, or we have to organise our time so that the other students are not affected." Apart from attached classes (around 50 in Kosovo), which actually only provide a transition phase towards integrated education, there is little else offered in the way of resources for children with special needs in public schools. Professional services (mainly pedagogues), abolished by the international administration in 2001, have started to be reinstated in schools, but at a very slow pace due to financial limitations. In private schools (such as the Third Millennium school in Prishtina) a psychologist attends regularly and a teaching assistant is made available in every class with SEN students, one member of their staff in the teacher focus group reported: "[they] help the teacher in all phases, from the first interview when admitting students to the school, to assistance with class tasks and homework." The issue of teaching assistants was also discussed in the teacher focus group in Prizren, where teachers insisted that: "there should be a teaching assistant or a 'floating teacher' for each school or each group of classes, both because of the large number of students in classes and because not all teachers are trained in dealing with SEN or learning difficulties."

The KEDP, on the other hand, is involved in training teachers in Learner Centred Instruction (LCI) and Leadership Courses with over 10 000 teachers and education leaders attending their 12-day training programme. There were a further 54 local trainers qualified in LCI at the end of the project period in 2006, when the programme was taken over by the Ministry of Education (Anderson and Wenderoth, 2007). KEDP also provided the main support for establishing the Faculty of Education and other mechanisms in the field of teacher training (such as the Teacher Training Review Board). The key merit of the Canadian intervention was to turn the focus of the instruction process from the teacher to the learner.

In 2005 and 2006, the KEDP supported the establishment of the Kosovo In-Service Teacher Training Programme within the Faculty of Education. The programme was developed and owned jointly by the Ministry of Education and the University of Prishtina. The main purpose of the programme was to train and re-qualify teachers to meet the criteria set by MEST. This meant teachers who had completed two or three years of education to obtain their previous qualification or degree, would need to take an extra number of mainly professional courses to obtain a four-year bachelor's degree in Education. The programme is fully based on inclusive philosophy and interactive and individualised approaches to learning and also includes concrete courses on issues like inclusive education and child development. The Ministry is currently reviewing this programme in order to decide the best way to ensure that all teachers in the education system hold university

degrees. A school principal interviewed in Prizren was proud to say that several teachers in his school had recently graduated through this programme and that he was familiar with inclusive education, which formed part of the training programme.

FSDEK offered the most typical and systematic inclusive education programme in Kosovo focusing on children with special needs and learning difficulties. From 2002 to 2008 it helped the Kosovo education authorities to promote and implement inclusive approaches in instruction in 'special schools' (now resource centres), mainstream schools and in attached classes. It also played a special role in empowering the inclusive aspect in the Faculty of Education by introducing courses in the field of inclusive education, organising a master's programme implemented locally and by supporting two students to complete PhDs in inclusive education. Between 2004 and 2008, 140 educators completed the two-year in-service postgraduate programme in inclusive education known as the professional development programme. During the same period, over 3 600 mainstream teachers, special needs teachers, parents and school principals, attended two introductory three-day sessions on inclusive education and 70 of them attended the advanced Toward Effective School For All (TESFA) training. The 2006 summer institute courses on individualised learning, promoting healthy schools and the learning of mathematics (pre-skills and learning difficulties) were attended by over 1 000 participants.[52]

The Finnish Government provided support for a follow-up project supporting the mainstreaming of inclusive education and the transformation of special schools into resource centres for special needs education that will ensure the sustainability of previous efforts and fill in the gap created by the completion of FSDEK II.

Principals and teachers of the special schools (resource centres) interviewed in our research showed solid knowledge and practical implementation of inclusive practices in their work with students, but also in supporting other schools through a scheme of 'mobile resource experts for inclusion', who supported mainstream schools with attached classes to perform better in inclusive approaches. The transformation of former special schools into resource centres has been facilitated mainly by significant support from FSDEK in providing both material resources and relevant staff training. Principals of both the resource centres visited in Prizren stressed the need "to continue with more training of the kind provided in the one-year professional development courses given by FSDEK" and they expressed high hopes for the "new Finnish government follow-up project to support special needs education".

During our visit to the Mother Teresa Resource Centre for Deaf and Mute persons and the Hil Mosi Centre for children and young people with mental disabilities in Prizren, we found that staff who had completed professional development training are now involved in training peers in their Centre and also offer training programmes on inclusion for other schools that show interest. This centre also provides services and advice to mainstream schools through their mobile resource expert who covers schools in the Prizren region. Inclusion is highly regarded and observed in all instruction activities in these Centres. In one Centre, we saw many Ministry of Education posters asking and answering the question 'What competences do I need to be an inclusive teacher?' This Centre has also formed a Core Educators Team that is involved in peer training for inclusion and is highly regarded by all teaching staff in the Centre. However, both schools complained that their direct link to the Ministry of Education means they are sometimes forgotten by the municipal authorities and miss out on various training opportunities in their region. One of the principals said: "sometimes we feel excluded from mainstream schooling in the region," adding: "the next time KEC organises a training event in the Municipality of Prizren, they should send us special invitations to the event as the Municipality people tend

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[52] Phase II of the FSDEK, Completion Report, unpublished, Prishtina, 2007, document available with MEST unit for SEN.

to forget us" in reference to a successful training event in critical thinking organised by KEC the week before our visit.

Between 2002 and 2008, the World Bank supported MEST through an Education Participation Improvement Project (EPIP 1 and 2), where increased participation was a key component. School and municipality development plans (drafted with the help of KEC as part of the project) were used as a basis for distributing funding. Most of the funds went into improving infrastructure, purchasing IT equipment and books, and ensuring transport for students from remote areas, while a small part went toward improving the quality of instruction; namely teacher training. The project evaluation (Crisan, 2007) found EPIP had an impact in improved participation, moreover: "it had played an important role in bringing the community, schools and local education authorities closer together by working actively for improved participation." In fact the local community contributed more than 20 % percent of the total costs.

In 2008, the World Bank continued to support education in Kosovo with a wider programme built around the MEST Pre-university Strategy 2007-2017. The rationale behind the four components of this project was to strengthen the active cooperation of all stakeholders in improving the performance of the education system. Inclusion and teacher training were focal aspects of three of the four components. Thus, the school grant component focused entirely on improving the quality of teaching in Kosovo schools through the professional development of teachers with emphasis on inclusive approaches. The quality assurance component, on the other hand, focused on policy making and the building of institutional capacities at the central level through support for the SCTL. The component to improve the formula for municipal funding of education supports the devolution of decision-making to municipalities and schools, whilst ensuring active community involvement.

UNICEF involvement was mainly through the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) programme which included teacher training activities in 83 schools in Kosovo. The systematic approach and philosophy of the CFS programme come closest to the broader meaning of inclusion as this approach involved individuals (children, teachers and parents), the community, institutions and authorities and it included a variety of groups like ethnic communities, at risk groups, girls and parents. UNICEF also developed a literacy programme that was implemented in partnership with KEC and MEST, and later fully transferred to MEST control. This programme involved over 2 000 women in a training programme recognised by MEST (from an interview with a MEST officer for non-formal education).

While the focus may be on quality assurance, local authorities and development partners must not forget other equally important tasks within education (such as the promotion of gender equality) when considering inclusion and lifelong learning in the system and the broader approaches and philosophies across the system. Education is widely acknowledged to be a fundamental right for all that must be taken very seriously if every individual is to be provided access and opportunities for personal development. UNICEF has supported Kosovo in the long process of developing education indicators to measure whether Kosovo is meeting the global Millennium Development Goals and the performance standards achieved by other European countries.

UNICEF and MEST were involved in the implementation of recommendations and measures in response to the strategy for the educational integration of RAE communities in Kosovo (2007-2017). A systematic and participative approach evolved, including data gathering, policy making, activities at school and community level, awareness building campaigns, training activities, the development of teaching and learning resources and a wide range of other activities to address issues and problems identified in the strategic document. This inclusive approach involved expert groups, relevant stakeholders (municipalities, schools, Parent Teacher Associations, NGOs), educators and community members to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of

interventions. As a result, dozens of RAE children returned to Kosovo schools as a first step toward full integration.

Another outcome of these intensive efforts is seen in the increased awareness of diversity and inclusion among Kosovo teachers in terms of the education of RAE communities. The e-survey question about the need for the full integration of Roma students in regular classes was given a positive response by 16 (out of 18) respondents, whereas 2 supported partial inclusion, most probably because of language barriers. A higher response rate would have probably occurred if the question had included Ashkali and Egyptian children who are taught in Albanian. In concrete terms, in Selman Riza primary school in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje alone, 130 RAE children joined the school alongside children from other communities.[53]

The Kosovo government is working with the Council of Europe to address issues of interculturalism and the Bologna Process. The project aims to reinforce sustainable conditions for improved multicultural understanding among all communities in Kosovo on the basis of mutual respect and human rights. It provides support for reforms in primary, secondary and higher education in order to improve intercultural awareness and understanding and to promote Kosovo integration into the Bologna Process. This support consists of a number of teacher-trainer courses and conferences involving teachers, school managers, community representatives and leaders in the education sector. Topics typically include: reviewing and proposing changes to education legislation; promoting education for democratic citizenship and human rights education; teaching multiculturalism; promoting the teaching of RAE culture and language; teacher education and curriculum reforms with the focus on the social inclusion of ethnic groups. Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb educators participated with those from other communities in a joint training event in December to discuss civic education curricula.

UNICEF programmes included several training events for teachers, school administrators, education officers and community members to empower the role of the community in education and to promote children's right to education, intercultural understanding, respect of diversity and tolerance, and interactive teaching approaches and methods that encourage greater student participation in their learning.

Kosovo is in a rather special situation, as there is great enthusiasm for professional development amongst teachers. During the interview, the research team was told by a member of the MEST and University of Prishtina In Service Teacher Training Programme: "even though teachers have to pay EUR 30 per course or over 300 for the three to four semester programme (more than their monthly salary), there are hundreds of teachers on the waiting list for the next round of training and dozens ask about the programme every day." However, several participants in both teacher focus groups with mentioned the unequal distribution of training opportunities saying: "training is very important, but there are often 10 to 15 teachers in a school who go to all the training events, while the others are not even aware that these are going on."

UNICEF played a crucial role in promoting and implementing the inclusive approach in Kosovo by supporting development of the Kosovo Curricular Framework. This Framework has been guiding benchmark document for Kosovo authorities and education institutions in ensuring the inclusiveness of the education system. The national council for curricula, textbooks and assessment has been reviewing the curriculum framework with UNICEF and MEST cooperation and support and the new framework was expected to be finalised in late 2009.

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[53] From the interview with a UNICEF education specialist; this information was also confirmed by other NGOs, such as the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI).

Experts involved in the process state that the inclusive approach and integrated learning are the key principles and philosophy of this document. This document forms a keystone to education in the country and all new regulations, administrative instructions and guidelines are expected to pay due attention to inclusion and inclusiveness in Kosovo education.

From its establishment in 2002, MEST has continually organised courses for Kosovo teachers both alone and in cooperation with other organisations. These were mainly training events related to implementation of the reformed curricula, but they also offered the LCI and other programmes when they took over from partner organisations.[54]

More importantly, MEST has been very active in providing a legal and institutional framework for in-service teacher training in Kosovo. The SCTL was established by the Minister of Education in January 2009 with the mandate to develop the framework to facilitate implementation of the teacher licensing system in Kosovo.

A member of the Council told researchers that the main challenges within the in-service area for SCTL are:

(a) Establishing criteria for teacher professional development; first to determine a minimum number of credits each teacher must acquire in a set period of time (5 years) as a requirement of licensing. Present discussions indicate that teachers may be required to take up to 30 hours of accredited in-service courses each year.

(b) Accreditation of in-service providers and programmes: a system must be developed to recognise teacher qualifications acquired through participation in in-service training programmes over the last 10 years, bearing in mind that many in-service programmes are no longer offered and many providers no longer operate in Kosovo.

(c) Access to in-service training: MEST remains responsible for setting national teacher training standards but responsibility for teacher professional development rests with municipalities. The SCTL action plan for 2009 placed university qualification for practicing teachers high among its priorities. However, one member of the SCTL stated: "partly because the plan was a bit too ambitious, partly because of the lack of capacities and support, and also because of the higher priority placed on the review and development of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), the plan has not been implemented as planned, and may need to be reviewed."

Finally, changes in teacher education programmes and in-service training programmes mean awareness is slowly growing of the need for a broad inclusive approach in the education system in Kosovo. The answers to the e-survey[55] questions and focus group discussions with teachers show that there seems to be strong agreement (with 17 out of 18 agreeing strongly or agreeing) on the need for: diversity in education; interactive and learner-centred methods of teaching and learning; individualised learning; inclusion of ethnic communities and marginalised groups. However, some reluctance was expressed in the fairly equal distribution of 'for' and 'against' responses on the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classes.

There was a discrepancy between 'agreement in principle' with inclusion (17 out of 18 respondents) and the theoretical position that 'all children can learn' (also 17 out of 18) and statements on preferred levels of inclusion of particular groups of children with disabilities in regular classes (0 to 4 out of 18 for most groups, with half preferring attached classes and special schools). This gives the picture that there is some reluctance

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[54]   http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/?id=83&lng=Alb#id=32, Department of Pre-University Education.

[55]   The e-Survey was sent to over 150 students, teachers, and teacher educators; the low response on their part testifies to the insufficient use of information technology amongst recipients, but can also unfortunately be seen as an indicator of the importance they attach to inclusion in both theory and practice.

or resistance to the full integration of children with disabilities for various reasons. The survey outcome of 0 in favour of the inclusion of deaf and mute children in regular classes agreed with the preference of the association of deaf and mute persons in Kosovo to attend education in special institutions – instead of integrating in regular schools (from an interview with leaders of this organisation in June 2009). It would appear that more must be done to increase awareness amongst Kosovo educators, training them for the fuller inclusion and integration of children with disabilities.

In-service teacher training programmes offered in Kosovo over the last decade provided general approaches to teaching and learning including learner centeredness, children's rights, critical thinking and other related topics. This can be understood in view of the fact that ten years ago there was a desperate need for a shift away from the old teacher-centred didactic style towards more interactive and effective approaches built around the student. However, these general approaches now need to be integrated into other aspects of education, leaving room for more detailed training on teaching methods (experimenting in sciences, class management, teaching strategies and the like). Inclusive education should also be a cross-cutting aspect of the teaching and learning process and of the school life in general. As Kosovo is progressively moving towards global learning and more integrated approaches to teaching and learning, it is increasingly important for the cross-cutting thread of inclusion to be reflected in all programmes for professional development.

MAIN FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the field research, interviews and focus groups show that there is significant inconsistency in the way central policies translate into practices at the school level. This is often dependent on the training, qualifications and personality of the school principal. The team was pleasantly surprised to find some of the most advanced practices and synergies for inclusion taking place in the most underdeveloped municipalities of Kosovo, again, mainly as a consequence of efforts made by a school principal. There are also cases when the school principals and staff are more focused on the 'primary' functions of the school, such as quality of instruction and school attendance, leading them to overlook inclusive approaches and practices.

Yet the overwhelming impression obtained from this research is that teachers are mostly left on their own in Kosovo with very little or no supervision and support from the education institutions and authorities. There could be room for the new Kosovo Institute of Pedagogy (established in 2007 to play a leading role here, but this entity still appears to be finding its feet in the educational mosaic. The situation is further complicated with teachers engaged in vocational education. They are given no pre-service teacher training and they find themselves unsupported once they start work. It is high time that the authorities took up this issue, as these untrained teachers are responsible for providing marketable skills to over 60 % of the upper secondary education student population in Kosovo.

Most of the interviewees were seriously concerned that the authorities might not recognise training undertaken over the last decade in the new teacher licensing and career promotion process. They repeatedly stated that some of these training programmes were high quality and very useful, and that they had invested a significant amount of time into completing them. If the authorities do not take this issue seriously, it may diminish teacher readiness and interest in further training and professional development.

Other unresolved issues related to pre-service teacher education include: the implementation of MEST policies in pre-service teacher education standards; building of teacher educator capacities to teach the 'new' inclusive courses; the need to organise more inclusive courses throughout teacher education institutions. If not adequately addressed, these issues may affect the quality and sustainability of measures related to inclusion and inclusiveness in education.

Three aspects must be considered before any recommendations or measures are implemented:

i)   In policy development and implementation - it is important to (a) check there are capacities for policy development and (b) ensure there are mechanisms to guarantee implementation (this is the key problem with existing policies);

ii)   In funding - respective financial mechanisms must be developed to provide a flow of funds for 'inclusive' interventions and smooth functioning of the decentralisation/school autonomy process from the Ministry of Finance to municipalities;

iii)   The relative lack of democracy, accountability and awareness in schools and the community must be addressed prior to the implementation of inclusive policies and practices.

The particularities of the situation in Kosovo mean that multicultural education must be taken more seriously as a means to enhance social inclusion and the inclusive approach in education, but also to address issues of social cohesion and integration. In the long term, it will become more difficult to promote inclusion if the divisions are allowed to set. The issue of cooperation in education between the two biggest ethnic communities in Kosovo is still one of the key challenges for the Kosovo education system. Work must be undertaken on language learning, curriculum development and improved text books in proactive efforts to include the Serbian community in line with statements on multi-ethnicity in the legal framework and the Comprehensive Proposal for Status Settlement.

Overall, there seems to be a great need for a multidimensional, more coherent and systematic approach involving central authorities, municipalities and schools. This kind of united approach would be able to put inclusive policies and plans into practice in all schools and in all languages of instruction.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Policy makers

6.1.1 Central education authorities

As desk and field research has shown, MEST landmark achievements in the years have included: numerous new schools; improved and child friendly atmospheres in schools; more inclusive approaches on the part of teaching staff; universal secondary education (due for September 2010); free textbooks for all children in compulsory education. However, a more systematic and coherent approach is required to ensure greater relevance and sustainability in these measures and the inclusion of RAE children.

To finalise the process and ensure sustainability through a systematic and coherent approach to inclusive teacher education and training, the authorities would need to:

▪ draft and approve regulations and requirements for in-service training for the process of teacher licensing and career promotion;

▪ support teacher education institutions to meet pre-service standards as set in the relevant MEST administrative instructions and legal provisions (Article 12.4 of the Law on Higher Education);

▪ accredit and support programmes for training school principals in inclusive education;

▪ set up an official system for approving and accrediting in-service courses and produce a catalogue listing those that have been accepted.

Our desk research led us to conclude that MEST/SCTL should accredit a pre- and in-service training programme (including training in inclusive education and approaches) for graduates of law, medicine and other technical faculties who would like to teach in vocational education and training; existing regulations must be reviewed to better reflect the broader understanding of inclusion (not only of children with special needs and RAE children); and finally donor efforts should be guided to prioritise support for inclusive education in teacher training.

6.1.2 Policy makers - municipal education authorities

We decided to make separate recommendations for municipalities for the following reasons: (a) the team received a lot of feedback from educators interviewed during the field research in relation to the role of municipalities in improving inclusion and inclusive approaches in in-service training programmes; and (b) the new Law on Education in Municipalities has brought about significant changes in competences between central and local levels of government, especially in the field of teacher training.

Most of the competences and responsibilities are new to these authorities. The field research has shown that there is a need for municipal authorities to:

▪ support schools in building their capacities to become focal points for inclusiveness in the respective communities;

▪ prioritise the professional development of school principals in inclusive education;

▪ support inclusive education initiatives and prioritise participation in education;

■ increase support to schools to improve inclusion in education, and;

■ provide capacities and resources (transport, teaching resources, teaching assistants, physical infrastructure and professional support) for full implementation of the inclusive approach in education (from special schools, to attached classes in regular schools).

Our desk research pointed to the need for municipal authorities to (a) draft and approve the necessary inclusive policies, (b) develop and implement an annual work plan for in-service teacher training in their municipalities, and (c) focus on building their own capacities and restructuring internal organisation in order to fulfil responsibilities in line with the new law and the decentralisation process.

6.2   Higher education institutions and teacher educators:

The University of Prishtina and the University in Mitrovica North are the only institutions catering for teachers in Kosovo schools. Some of their study programmes are fully in line with the new requirements for inclusive education. However, there are numerous study programmes that have not undergone active reform in line with new trends for inclusion in teacher education. The nature of higher education means all the following measures must be implemented in the short to mid-term:

■ train faculty staff in curriculum development, modern teaching strategies and new inclusive approaches to teacher education;

■ develop and implement in-service training programmes in the field of inclusive education for Kosovo teachers, including mentor teachers;

■ develop capacity and support the staff to teach inclusiveness on their courses;

■ include inclusiveness as a cross-cutting aspect in professional courses at the teacher education institutions;

■ the Faculty of Education should engage in further development of the research and teaching skills of staff from the former higher pedagogical schools.

In our view, the teacher education programmes of higher education institutions are in a good position to provide competences for inclusion in a better, less expensive and more sustainable way than other forms of education. We believe they should also update their study programmes in line with new trends in inclusive education and encourage greater cooperation and coherence between teacher education departments (also involving joint study programmes and degrees).

6.3   Teachers and schools

For the first time in years, Kosovo teachers and schools are in a relatively comfortable situation with more space in school, better salaries and textbooks for all students. However, now the eyes of the public are on them, they are suddenly expected to provide quality services on a par with their peers in the region.

This process will be hampered by both the staggering technological changes and the changed behaviour of the student population. In the new situation, schools will need to focus on making themselves more attractive and updating approaches rather than reaching out to the community to combat drop-outs. Efforts for greater inclusion will call for better understanding of and contact with other communities, but also with the students

themselves. At the same time, like all teaching colleagues elsewhere in the world, they will need to keep abreast of the rapid academic and professional changes in this sector. In this regard, they may need to:

- Engage in continuous efforts to upgrade academic knowledge and professional and technological skills;

- Organise themselves into various professional associations to promote inclusive education, the exchange of experiences and networking;

- Include concrete costed initiatives in inclusive education in their school development plans;

- Engage more actively and more creatively in creating and improving the school environment to be child friendly, gender sensitive and ethnic community sensitive;

- Build partnerships for inclusive education with the community;

- Start developing, maintaining and updating individual learning plans for every student;

- Get involved in training programmes and awareness building events for the inclusion and integration of children with disabilities in mainstream classes;

- Assign two teachers from each school and build their training capacities to serve as multiplying agents for follow-up and monitoring programmes.

In our view, schools should take on more responsibility and play a more active role towards their students and communities in keeping with the increased autonomy they will be granted within the decentralisation process. They will need to move from their position of ensuring participation in education to become active forums for inclusion and multiculturalism by promoting diversity and maintaining open doors and open minds to the community.

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ANNEX 1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Additional support needs – the need of children and young people for extra support to benefit from school education at any time, for any reason (e. g. very able students; students whose education is disrupted by illness, or by being a refugee; students with a chaotic home life; bilingual learners, etc.)

In-service teacher training - education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers and heads, following their initial professional certification, and intended mainly or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate students more effectively.

Mentor teacher - a teacher who is qualified, promoted or assigned to monitor student teachers while they visit schools for practice.

Pre-school education - education in pre-school institutions or schools that precedes primary education and serves as preparation for it.

Pre-service teacher education - education that teacher candidates are requested to undergo in order to qualify for entry into teaching, including both programmes specifically designed for future teachers and those programmes in which students study a disciplinary area that is an equivalent of a school subject.

Primary education - education in primary schools including lower years in which classes are taught in all subject areas by a class teacher, and upper years of primary schooling in which different teachers teach different subject areas.

Probationer teacher - a recently qualified teacher who is qualified academically but does not yet have full practical 'license' to teach.

Secondary education - post-primary education in any secondary school, academic or vocational.

Special educational needs - include students who have physical, sensory or cognitive or other specific disabilities or any combination of these. It might also include students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Student teacher - a student studying at a pre-serves institution preparing primary class or subject teachers and secondary school teachers, both academic and vocational.

Teacher - overall term for those qualified to teach at any level of school, including pre-school teachers, primary class teachers or primary subject teachers and secondary school teachers.

Teacher educator - university professor or other college or higher education institution lecturer who teaches student teachers on pre-service education and who provide training for practicing teachers in primary and secondary schools.

ANNEX 2 - EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

Structure of education system and governance

Education authorities are organised on two levels in Kosovo. The central level - the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) - according to Article 3 (a-l) of the Law on Education in the Municipalities of Kosovo, is, inter alia, responsible for developing and promoting: a non-discriminatory system of education, non-formal and lifelong learning; inclusive policies for the integration of persons with disabilities in the education system; a comprehensive system of certification for all teachers in Kosovo; and parent and community participation in education activities and other forms of school-community partnerships at the local level.

According to the new Law on Education in the Municipalities, local education authorities are organised in Municipal Education Departments responsible for issues such as: the hiring of teachers and school principals; the payment of teacher and staff salaries; infrastructure and school maintenance; training of teaching and administrative staff; monitoring of schools at all pre-university levels.[56] On top of this, minority communities in municipalities are entitled to additional rights in education. These extend to issues such as the organisation of higher education institutions, including teacher education institutions (in municipalities like Mitrovica North).

In 2002, in line with the New Curricular Framework of Kosovo[57] (developed by the international administration in 2001), MEST decided to restructure the pre-university education system from the then 4-4-4 structure into the new 5-4-3(4)[58] system. Thus, from the 2001-2002 academic year children would attend a pre-primary class from the age of 5, start primary school (grades 1-5) at the age of 6, continue through lower secondary education (grades 6-9) and on to upper secondary education (grades 10-12/13) ending their education in either a final exam for VET or a state Matura for general education, before going on to further education or joining the labour market. Schools providing instruction in Serbian and observing Serbian state curricula have maintained the old 4-4-4 structure, which is also applied in the Republic of Serbia. The next section of this report will demonstrate how these structures also influence the structures and study programmes of teacher education institutes.

UNICEF and the Finnish government[59] have supported a sharp turn toward the inclusive philosophy in education in general, especially in the field of special needs education. MEST generally appears to have developed a relatively systematic approach to dealing with the issue of inclusiveness and inclusion in education through inclusive schools, resource centres and attached classes. Thus, former special schools have been involved in a process of transformation into resource centres, providing teaching and learning resources for mainstream schools and attached classes,[60] but also helping with contributions from a mobile expert on inclusion, who assists schools to deal better with various aspects of inclusive education.

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[56]   Law on Education in Municipalities, Article 5 a-m
[57]   'The New Curricular Framework of Kosovo – A white book for discussion', UNMIK Department of Education and Science (DES), Prishtina, 2001
[58]   See Annex 1.
[59]   Finnish Support to Development of Education in Kosovo (FSDEK), Phase 1 (2001-2004) Phase 2 (2004 – 2007). FSDEK was assigned the role of lead agency in the field of special needs education by the DES.
[60]   The concept and practice of attached classes was introduced to serve as an intermediate step before full inclusion of SEN children into regular schools. These smaller classes were established within regular schools and served to prepare children with special needs for integration in regular classes.

At the same time, students with more severe impairments are included in attached classes as a transition to regular classes and schools.

These decisions have mainly impacted positively on issues such as inclusion, participation and access to education, but they have also encountered significant implementation problems with educators finding it difficult to perform their new functions, alongside a lack of adequate infrastructure, school space, transport, female participation, and other issues.

There is a wide-ranging approach to issues of inclusion and participation in education in Kosovo. Recent MEST efforts to build new schools and encourage municipalities and upper secondary schools to enrol all ninth graders wishing to continue in education will have positive effects on the picture of inclusion in Kosovo. Mainstream schools are becoming 'inclusive schools' with teachers trained, aware of and applying good practices on inclusion. These schools are supported by resource centres in addressing the needs of children with special education and additional support needs; while more severe cases are dealt with in 'attached classes' that are rightly seen as a step in the transition toward the full integration of all children in mainstream education. Schools, educators and various NGOs are increasingly reaching out to the community and to young individuals who have dropped out including girls, RAE children and socially disadvantaged children.

ANNEX 3 | TABLE OF COMPETENCES FOR INCLUSION

	basic	advanced
Pesonalised approach to learning	Improves competencies of all students	Innovates teaching to help all children learn
	Tailors teaching strategies to each child's needs	
	Uses various forms of assessment to help children learn and improve instruction	Designs and implements individual learning plans
	Works effectively with support staff	
	Adapts curricula to particular pupils	Pro-actively addresses inequities in materials, policies and so on
	Guides and supports all learners	
	Attends to students' cognitive development, and to their social-emotional and moral growth	
	Connects with students and their families at an interpersonal level	
Understanding and respect of diversity (gender, socio-econonic groups, ability/disability, culture, language, religion, learning styles)	Recognises and respects cultural and individual differences	Uses students' backgrounds as scaffolding for teaching and learning
	Understands different values students and their families hold	
	Is aware of her own preconceptions and value stances	
	Recognises how her assumptions influence her teaching and relationships with different pupils	Learns languages
	Recognises that knowledge is value-laden, constructed by the learner and reciprocal	
	Is able to recognise pupils' special needs and provide for them or seek help	
	Is able to recognise gifted pupils' needs and provide appropriately for these	
	Encourages intercultural respect and understanding among pupils	
Commitment to values of social inclusion	Maintains high expectations regardless of students' background	Conducts research to advance understanding of educations' contribution to social inclusion
	Treats all children with respect, affirms their worth and dignity	
	Believes in educability of every child	
	Helps all children develop into fully participating members of society	
	Understands the factors that create cohesion and exclusion in society	
	Understands the social and cultural dimensions of education	
	Understands the contribution of education to developing cohesive societies	
	Is familiar with conventions of the right of child and anti-discrimination	

Table developed on the basis of Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans (Pantić, 2008) and European documents such as Common European Principles for Teachers' Competences and Qualifications (EC, 2005) and Improving Competences for the 21st Century (EC, 2008c).

ANNEX 4 | RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Design

The figure below reads horizontally to show how the theoretical assumptions adopted in the conceptual framework inform corresponding parts of the research design and methodologies.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND (THEORIES, BELIEFS)		RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS
Competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and dispositions (Assumption 1)		The table of competences for inclusion developed in Pantić (2008) and key European documents were used for focus groups with teachers working in diverse environments
Teaching professionals themselves should be the main source of information in the process of defining teacher competence (Assumption 2)		
Social inclusion should be mainstreamed in all policies for teachers (general pluralism) and balanced with a targeted approach for children from marginalised/vulnerable groups (Assumption 3) Dispositions are predominantly socio-culturally developed (Assumption 4)		The country team looked into: - policies and regulations - data from interviews with policy-makers, course designers, teacher educators, teachers, school principals, parents, community representatives and others
Programmes based on beliefs about knowledge being value-laden and constructed by the learner are more inclusion-friendly (Assumption 5)		Online survey of initial Teacher Education programmes including questions on course units, practical experiences, opportunities for reflection and dialogue, the beliefs of teacher educators
Teacher Education programme experiences building teacher competences for inclusion include: - focus on inclusion-relevant topics in courses - provision of practical experiences - opportunities for interaction with families - opportunities for critical reflection - opportunities for discussion and dialogue (Assumption 6)		Catalogues and other sources of information about in-service programmes
Cross-country similarities are important for policy making (similar heritage, prospective European integration and relevant policies and practices) (Assumption 7)		Collection of examples of best practices from the Western Balkans

Assumption 1: Competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and dispositions

The concept of competence is central to the three main questions addressed by this study:

- What teacher competences are needed for inclusive education in situations of social and cultural diversity?

- What is the current situation regarding the inputs, processes and outcomes of a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education?

- How can the situation regarding a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education be improved?

It is therefore necessary to outline the definition of competence as it is adopted in this study.

The concept of competence has gained popularity and credence in literature for teachers and teacher training on the international scale. Competence features in some key European documents for teachers (EC, 2005, 2008), some European projects on higher education curricula reform (Gonzales and Wagenaar, 2005) and recent studies in the Western Balkan region (Pantić, 2008; Rajović and Radulović, 2007; Zgaga, 2006).

Studies from the region invariably suggest that teacher training provides sound academic coverage of subjects and pedagogical knowledge on themes and issues, but that knowledge on how to identify and deal with problems in a real life setting is largely missing. Such expertise involves a combination of cognitive and practical knowledge and skills, but also values, motivation and attitudes - a combination widely referred to as 'competence' in the literature (Rajović and Radulović, 2007). It has been suggested that teacher education should be oriented toward the development of certain key competences that can help teachers perform effectively in their daily practice.

However, this competence-based model has been criticised for an overly narrow understanding of teacher expertise as the mere observable performance of daily teaching routines, downgrading the role of teacher to the simple technical implementation of policies and programmes. Critics argue that teaching is an ethical, normative profession that presupposes something of value is to be taught, whereupon they are bound to encounter problems that are not susceptible to resolution in value-neutral, technical terms (Carr, 1993). This is reflected in some of the most recent frameworks for competence (Tigelaar et al., 2004; Stoof et al., 2002) that adopt a view of competence that combines theoretical and practical knowledge and skills with attitudes and values.

This study adopts the broader view of competence as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A number of authors claim there is a specific body of knowledge necessary for working with 'special' children, and that these competences for inclusion need to be adequately covered during teacher preparation. Such training may involve developing an understanding of the socio-cultural factors that produce individual differences, or specialist knowledge on disability and children's learning needs, awareness of educational and social issues that can affect children's learning, and the like.

Another distinct stance operates on the basis that inclusion is not only about 'special' children, and that therefore teacher competence for inclusive educational practices should include skills relevant to improved teaching and learning for all, whilst reducing barriers to learning and participation.

This sort of approach could involve a multifaceted pedagogy recognising that: decisions taken to inform teaching should be based on children's individual characteristics; learning takes place outside school; learning must build on previous knowledge, individual and cultural experiences and interests (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

Teachers need to develop their dispositions alongside their knowledge and skills when considering competences for inclusion. Even the most comprehensive coverage of relevant themes is unlikely to anticipate every type of difficulty teachers might meet in their professional lives. Teachers undergoing preparation for inclusive education must be made to accept their responsibility to improve the learning and participation of all children, and be disposed to teach all learners equitably. Dispositions are tendencies for an individual to act in a particular manner under particular circumstances, based on their beliefs (Villegas, 2007). They involve teacher beliefs about the purposes of education, knowledge, learning and the educability of their students. The latter is of particular importance for inclusive education as this forms the basis of teacher expectations of their students. These expectations can lead them to treat students differently, resulting in positive or negative performance, aspirations and self-images dependent upon the original teacher assessments.

The definition of 'competence' as a combination of knowledge, skills and dispositions is reflected in the approach to both the definition of teacher competences and to the evaluation of existing policies and practices where all these aspects are featured.

Assumption 2: Changes in educational policies and practices fare better when they are congruent with teachers' beliefs about what is worthwhile in education

Growing research evidence states that the success of reforms introducing new practices such as inclusive education are critically dependent on their compatibility with teacher beliefs on the value of the change and transferability to daily teaching practices (Beijaard et al., 2000; Day, 2002; Day et al., 2007; Fives and Buehl, 2008; Wubbels 1995). Literature on change and innovation in education suggests that changes in education practices require careful consideration of the differences between the existing and desired models with a view to identifying consensual and/or competing forces in the change process. Changing systems are typically characterised by the coexistence of old and new 'states of affairs'. The emergent new state may have elements in common with the old one, and the wider apart the two states are initially, the more difficult the transition process will be (Anchan, Fullan and Polyzoi, 2003; Fullan 2007).

We must have a clear understanding of existing policies and practices of teacher preparation for inclusive education in the Western Balkan countries and of teachers' own perceptions of the competences they need and the help they require to develop these competences in order to identify the true extent of scope for improvement. An earlier study of teacher perceptions of competences conducted in the region (Pantić, 2008) reported that teachers attributed high importance to competences on equality and supporting the learning of all pupils. However, detailed study of examples of teacher preparation in the region showed current teacher preparation of does not adequately cater for those competences as it does not provide enough opportunities to connect theoretical knowledge with actual teaching experiences in real-life classrooms and does not address issues such as parental and community involvement that would build teacher capacity to deal with a number of out-of-school factors relevant for inclusion.

Hence, teaching professionals themselves are the best source of information on how inclusion-relevant competences translate into their daily practices and what kind of support they need to develop those competences. However, school principals, parents and communities, government representatives, teacher educators and course designers, and relevant NGO and donor representatives must also be consulted regarding teacher competences for inclusion as these stakeholders can provide important insights into the context in which teachers operate.

Assumption 3: A philosophy of pluralism prevails among inclusive and culturally aware teachers

Educational inclusion is a much researched topic involving a number of challenges encountered in the policy-making and implementation processes. Interpretations of the notion of inclusive education itself vary from narrower senses as 'the attempt to educate persons with intellectual disabilities by integrating them as closely as possible into the normal structures of the educational system' (Michailakis and Reich, 2009) to broader definitions as a 'guiding principle helping to accomplish quality Education for All (EFA) – education systems that benefit from diversity, aiming to build a more just, democratic society' (Acedo, 2008), or even as a process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity.

This process helps a school to expand its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces all form of exclusion and degradation of pupils on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, or any other issue that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Peček et al, 2006). In this broader sense, inclusion is a process to increase participation and decrease exclusion, where participation equates to recognition, acceptance and respect, inclusion in the learning process and social activities in a way that enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to a group.

Similarly, in the literature on intercultural education, a variety of approaches range from 'culturalism', which places an emphasis on cultural differences and a need to accommodate any differences seen as typical of entire groups, to approaches known as 'pluralism' (ethnic or general) in which the emphasis is placed on diversity within groups (with or without explicit reference to ethnic relations), involving working on good relations within and between groups and their educational opportunities. The latter comes close to the 'equal opportunities approach', built on a vision of intercultural education where the emphasis is on pupils from ethnic minority groups and their educational opportunities. Intercultural education is seen as a means of combating the educational disadvantages of pupils from an ethnic minority background (Leeman and Ledoux, 2005).

In this study, we adopt the broader view of inclusive education as a process to reduce exclusion and contribute to the opportunities and skills for participation in society of all pupils, whilst adopting a balance between general pluralism and an equal opportunities approach to intercultural education.

The rationale for this choice is grounded on the arguments that such approaches reduce the emphasis on 'different' or 'additional' needs and any 'us and them' kind of antithesis, and imply the extension of what is 'generally available' in order to improve the learning and social participation in of all children. Extending what is 'generally available' reduces the need to provide support for what is 'different from' or 'additional to'. This approach is comparable to the architectural concept of 'universal design' where solutions are

anticipated by improved access for everyone and the avoidance of physical and other environmental barriers in the first place (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

The next argument in favour of the pluralist approach, is that a philosophy of pluralism prevails amongst culturally aware teachers (Ford and Trotman, 2001). Culturally aware teachers attempt to understand the worldviews of diverse students and respect them as different and legitimate. Educational research, even where it traditionally focuses on effective instruction and academic success, as in the Netherlands or Finland, recognises that quality of education is partly determined by the individual pupils, the moment and the context, and recognises that the professionalisation of teachers should focus more on 'diversity' and reflection of how diversity occurs in teachers' educational practice and on their actions on the basis of this reflection (Leeman and Volman, 2000).

Finally, the selected approach has the advantage of exposing two of the issues common in educational exclusion in the Western Balkans. Firstly, it is very common for schools to use subtle and not so subtle forms of exclusion (from the lack of communication with families and lack of language and learning support to physical barriers) to emit strong messages that some students are not welcome (Roma, ethno-linguistic minorities, disabled children) to the point that these children and their parents will seek segregation or avoid school altogether rather than experience rejection, humiliation or 'failure' in their local school.

Secondly, a pernicious notion of the school 'need to exclude' is exposed in some cases. This is phrased in terms of systemic factors that appear to place inclusion beyond the apparent benevolent human capacity of school staff to be more inclusive. Such exclusion is often voiced in regretful statements, such as "We would love to have more Roma children here but they come to us so late and are so behind in everything that they cannot pass the tests to progress up the school."

These systemic factors very often cover deeply held prejudices or profound ignorance of what can actually be done to include more diverse children, and these negative views often prevail over what is intended to be pro-inclusion legislation.

Assumption 4: Dispositions are predominantly socio-culturally developed

Socio-cultural theory offers a productive way of thinking about the development of teacher dispositions for inclusive education (Huizen et al, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Korthagen, 2004; Wubbels, 1992). In the Vygotskian tradition, the functioning and development of human individuals is studied in the context of participation in socio-cultural practices, of which teacher education is but one example. Individuals also learn and change through contact with other people in various contexts where people participate in activities. Such participation pre-supposes the 'moving inward' of social functions to be appropriated as psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1988-1999). In order to do this, individuals (teachers in this case) need an environment modelling an ideal standard and supporting conditions for a successful approximation of this standard – the zone of proximal development. They also need opportunities to explore public and social meanings behind the standard in relation to what makes participation personally meaningful to them.

Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian theories on teacher preparation are important in consideration of the opportunities for the development of inclusive dispositions provided by existing policies and practices in pre-service and in-service teacher preparation. Teacher preparation needs to help teachers orientate themselves

towards the values and goals provided in the cultural and political setting of the schooling in which they engage. Other influential theories, such as Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Kolb and Fry, 1975) and Schön's notion of the reflective practitioner (1983) suggest that the learning processes of the professional are associated with making sense of concrete experiences. Professionals do not just apply theories. They learn by doing and engaging in on-the-spot problem-framing and experimentation followed by reflection. Student teachers need opportunities to exercise their judgment in practice.

Moreover, some of the most influential authors in the literature on teaching professionals argue that the role of the professional extends beyond reflection on their own practice into the wider societal context in which they find themselves (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). This will be taken into account when considering the context and mechanisms for supporting and motivating teachers to adopt inclusive dispositions, both during pre-service preparation and in-service practices.

Assumption 5: Programmes based on beliefs about knowledge being value-laden and constructed by the learner are more inclusion-friendly

A comparative study of teacher education programmes (Tatto,1999) identified two types of approaches underlying the design of teacher preparation programmes characterised as 'constructivist' and 'conventional'.

Constructivist approaches seem to:

- look at teaching as a vehicle towards a more equal and just society

- encourage student-teachers to see themselves and their pupils as makers of meaning

- provide opportunities for learning through discussion, reflection on and challenges to traditional conceptions of the teacher role, learner role, subject matter and pedagogy

- allow learning to teach to occur in context.

On the other hand, conventional approaches seem to:

- be driven by technical views of teaching and learning to teach

- show a tendency to see pupils as fixed entities or uncritical recipients of knowledge

- aim at helping teachers to fit into pre-existing school structures

- divorce teaching knowledge about subject matter and pedagogy from practice.

The study showed that in constructivist programmes, where teachers were seen as professional individuals capable of making informed instructional choices, teachers had more opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to adjust instruction to the diverse needs of learners.

This finding is relevant in the consideration of existing programmes of pre-service preparation of teachers. The above characteristics of programmes were included in the items of a survey designed to explore the

provision of, and assumptions underlying, teacher education programme designs and teacher educator beliefs about the nature of knowledge.

Assumption 6: The programme experiences that help student teachers develop culturally responsive dispositions include five dimensions

A qualitative study (Kidd et al, 2008) of student teacher accounts of the experiences within teacher education programmes that helped them develop competences for inclusion, showed the importance of the following teacher education components:

- focus on issues of culture, linguistic diversity, poverty and social justice in special course units

- provision of practical experiences in diverse classrooms

- interactions with diverse families

- opportunities for critical reflection

- opportunities for discussion and dialogue

The survey within this study on behalf of ETF explored the presence of the above elements in existing pre-service teacher preparation. In the future, the survey findings will be used to consider how these key components can be enhanced to support teachers in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively increase the learning of all pupils, and to provide experiences that enable student teachers to examine issues relevant to social inclusion and understand how their own values, beliefs and teaching practices are shaped by their cultural backgrounds and prior experiences.

Assumption 7: Comparison of historically, culturally and politically similar countries can generate a knowledge base for evidence-based policy making

The knowledge base for policy making should be sought through cross-national studies with the aim of establishing meta-national commonalities in teacher competences for inclusive education in this region. Comparative research in education advocates cross-national research as valuable and even indispensable in establishing the generality of findings and the validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies (Broadfoot, 1990; Kohn, 1989). Where similarities in cross-national studies are found, 'structural constants' or 'identities in social structures' should be identified that enable generalisation at the policy level. Given the similarity of issues addressed in this study across the countries involved, the findings can inform efforts to improve pre-service and in-service teacher education policies and practices in the Western Balkan region.

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