

TORINO PROCESS

2014

KOSOVO



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¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence – hereinafter “Kosovo”.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the European Training Foundation (ETF) launched the third round of the Torino Process, in which Kosovo participated. The Torino Process is a participatory review of progress in vocational education and training (VET) policy carried out every two years by all ETF partner countries with the support of the ETF. It is carried out in order to build consensus on the possible ways forward in VET policy and system development. The added value of the Torino Process lies in the fact that it embeds VET within the socio-economic context, and ensures that the analysis is informed by relevant evidence and takes place through structured dialogue with key stakeholders in the country. In this respect, the ETF helps countries to gather information from different sources of evidence and fosters policy dialogue.

The 2014 Torino Process exercise in Kosovo followed a self-assessment modality of implementation and was coordinated by the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute. Valuable inputs were provided by different Kosovo institutions and stakeholders and representatives of the development partners active in the VET sector. The main findings were presented in a self-assessment paper drafted by the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute.

This 2014 Torino Process summary report for Kosovo seeks to present in brief the key developments in VET policy and system reforms in Kosovo. The report was compiled by Simona Rinaldi, ETF country desk for Kosovo, drawing on the self-assessment paper of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute, as well as on the advice and feedback of the Vocational Education Division in the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

This summary report builds on a review of existing data, and information from different research reports and other evidence available from the most recent reviews. The research was based on a number of focus groups, meetings and consultation workshops with relevant stakeholders. The review therefore seeks to report and interpret the challenges and gaps in finding data and accurate information for assessing the VET system and the impacts that certain new programmes and reforms have had on it. Recommendations for future steps also account for a very important element of this short report, which has also benefited from the FRAME Skills 2020 initiative and results.

1. VISION FOR THE NATIONAL VET SYSTEM

1.1 Vision for the VET system

The VET system in Kosovo has been undergoing significant change in recent years as a result of the many initiatives – among them the Torino Process – that aim at improving the policy design and implementation process of the skills system through regular reviews and policy learning processes. These policy development processes highlight a number of challenges which continue to influence the VET system and relate mainly to legal, policy, infrastructure and capacity constraints.

Kosovo's vision for VET system development is determined by its political and socio-economic situation. The role of VET in contributing to the country's socio-economic development and in meeting wider policy aims is deemed crucial. The introduction of the sector-wide approach in the education sector and the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 (KESP) is therefore considered a significant step forward on the part of the government, and specifically the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), in supporting systemic reform. Overall, the government's vision is for an inclusive education system, based on lifelong learning principles and offering quality education to all. KESP links education policy to national development priorities, recognising the need for the education and training system to be more responsive to labour market needs (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011 – KESP 2011-2016).

The Joint Annual Review reports on efforts to increase the quality of preschool, primary and secondary education. The last review, in March 2014, focused on the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's harmonisation of primary education policies in accordance with available resources, i.e. the national budget, private investment and donors, etc. The 2014 Joint Annual Review brought together stakeholders to assess the progress made implementing KESP 2011-2016 and to recommend priorities for further development in 2015 in four subsectors:

- pre-university education, preschool education and teaching technology;
- vocational education, non-formal education and adult education;
- curriculum, teacher training and external assessment;
- higher education and science and technology.

The education sector in 2013 and 2014 was characterised by efforts to consolidate pre-university education quality (through further implementation of curriculum reform and teacher professional development) and to increase access to higher education through the establishment of new institutions of higher education and consolidation of the existing ones.

Other important milestones are listed below.

- Indicators and a performance assessment framework were developed as part of the implementation of KESP 2011-2016. A strategic technical group (task force), responsible for implementing KESP 2011-2016 was formed as an internal body in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- In 2013, the Law on Vocational Education and Training was passed and nine administrative instructions were drafted in accordance with the law. 2013 also saw the approval of a strategy to develop extensive vocational practice; the finalisation of the syllabus for 21 new profiles based on

labour market demand for centres of competence; and the revision of existing syllabi for all VET schools.

- In March 2014, the new Agency of Vocational Education Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) was established as envisaged by the revised law on VET. The agency currently governs six schools, including four centres of competence (Skenderaj, Malishevë, Prizren and Ferizaj) and two technical schools in Prishtina and Prizren. The project run by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH supports the agency's work, which includes capacity building of the agency's staff and management of staff and teachers at the above-mentioned pilot schools. The agency is being piloted in 2014 and 2015 and is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. However, responsibility and authority for finance, infrastructure and personnel at the six schools under its governance have been transferred directly to the AVETAE. Depending on the results of the pilot stage, a decision will be made (by May 2016) on whether to transfer governance of all VET schools in Kosovo to the agency.
- A strategy for establishing comprehensive professional practice and finalising a career guidance strategy for vocational education has been approved. This creates opportunities for enhancing the quality of vocational education at all levels in line with European and global trends. A strategy for career guidance and vocational education is awaiting approval.

1.2 Capacity and drivers of innovation and change

Kosovo was part of the FRAME initiative, which aims to develop coherent policy approaches for human resource development (HRD) in line with the EU 2020 and South East Europe (SEE) 2020 strategies. During the exercise, Kosovo worked closely with the ETF to develop a vision, roadmap and capacity development plan for the country's skills system up to 2020. This plan takes into account drivers of innovation and change and emerging challenges. The main finding was that overall there is a comprehensive framework of government strategies in place in Kosovo that provide a sound basis for understanding the national vision for education and the economy. The need to match labour market needs is highlighted in the strategies, emphasising the value of strong links between education and the economy. There is a greater emphasis on efforts to build a dialogue between education and the economy in vocational education and training, particularly with reference to the centres of competence that are now operational. Similarly, there are suggestions that higher education needs to meet the needs of the economy and labour market, but these are not developed further. The importance of lifelong learning is also recognised and emphasised in various strategies through the provision of training initiatives. However, the priorities remain sporadic and isolated in some of the strategies, thus not leading to a systematic approach to meeting education and employment challenges through skills development. In relation to skills, there is hardly any mention of the presence of public and private sector players in the area of education. The sustainability of skills generation at national level as foreseen in the strategies remains a challenge.

The main priorities identified in the roadmap are:

- promoting competence-based learning and improving the responsiveness of the education and training system to labour market demands. The education and training system needs to be more responsive to labour market needs in order to tackle unemployment and social exclusion and reduce the skills mismatch in the labour market. This requires investments in labour market analysis and improvements in the quality of the training system, apprenticeships and traineeships, teacher competences and career guidance.
- fostering and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. High unemployment levels in the country co-exist with increased difficulties in filling vacancies. There is a need to invest in the entrepreneurial mindset, the innovation system, business start-up training and entrepreneurship.

- reforming and modernising employment services to meet the needs of the labour market. Assisting unemployed people to find suitable employment is one of the areas that needs most attention.
- enhancing capacities for coordinated sector policy development and implementation. There is a need to improve inter-ministerial cooperation to address skills, including the coordination of government initiatives, and to strengthen social dialogue at all levels.

The Capacity Development Plan identifies a number of policy making challenges related to empowering the different institutions, agencies and centres in the HRD sector and to promoting a wider and better involvement of the social partners. Another major challenge is the need to improve policy accountability and delivery, which could also include the financial autonomy of providers in the HRD sector. The proposed actions are listed below.

- Strengthen interministerial structures and increase awareness of the importance of stakeholder engagement (government, schools, social partners such as trade unions and chambers of commerce, business community, public and private sector) in policy design. This entails developing stakeholder capacities in policy development, implementation and assessment.
- Ensure proper functionality of AVETAE by supporting its sustainability and performance and its wider coordinating role among all ministries and stakeholders.
- Ensure full implementation of donor coordination legislation and enhance related capacities.
- Strengthen the cross-disciplinary approach in policy making in HRD, particularly in relation to skills development. Improve capacities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and mechanisms for skills anticipation as a basis for policy making in HRD.
- Increase overall funding for HRD, especially employment and VET-related funding. Introduce a HRD sector-wide approach and performance budgeting, capacity development and training for staff involved in HRD budgeting, including those at municipal level.

1.3 Action and assessment of progress since 2012

In the 2012 Torino Process report, the following overall objectives for VET were identified:

- Improve access to and the quality and relevance of VET provision for all.
- Improve VET relevance to the labour market, strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the VET system and establish a sound financial basis for long-term sustainability.
- Increase opportunities for the training of early school leavers, upper secondary school students and school leavers and adults, in order to enhance employment, especially for women, and enhance prospects of self-employment.

The 2014 Torino Process report highlights the fact that a number of important actions have been taken into account to improve the VET system in terms of new strategies and legislation, institutional setup, policy monitoring and evaluation. School infrastructure and capacity building have also been improved. The latter has been addressed by setting up a donor-pooled fund through a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of European Integration, the Swedish International Development Agency and the Austrian Development Agency, which is attracting donor funding. Another step forward is in the area of human rights. The Human Rights Unit makes a valuable contribution by performing its role in each process of the work done by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Work on developing school infrastructure continues with the construction of six new schools and 20 other buildings. Efforts have

also progressed in the drive to develop 'stable' ties between VET and socio-economic development. These efforts include reviewing the curricula of vocational schools and developing professional profiles to meet labour market needs.

The FRAME project roadmap and capacity development plan provide a more in-depth view of shortfalls in the policy design and delivery mechanisms as well as the HRD-related budgeting which need to be addressed. This includes efforts to improve the development of a more coherent, joined-up and forward-looking policy for skills development through appropriate capacity building measures.

In a nutshell, the measures recommended include developing policy design, implementation and assessment capacities of key stakeholders and improving capacities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting and mechanisms for skills anticipation as a basis for HRD policy making.

VET is not an easy form of education to organise and many challenges remain in Kosovo. These include: developing quality assurance for VET; following up and implementing the recent VET legislation; monitoring vocational schools; and increasing cooperation between schools and businesses in order to implement professional practice. Finally, the implementation of work-based learning remains one of the main VET challenges in Kosovo, as businesses remain unwilling – or unable – to cooperate and offer work placements for students or teachers.

2. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

2.1 Economic and labour market factors that shape demand for skills

The Republic of Kosovo is a lower-middle-income country that has seen solid economic growth since the end of the war in 1999. It is one of only four countries in Europe that recorded positive growth rates (averaging 3.5%) in every year of the 2008-2012 crisis period. This showed: (i) limited international integration into the global economy; (ii) the success of its diaspora in the labour markets of Central Europe, especially German-speaking countries, providing a steady flow of remittances; (iii) a generally pro-growth composition of the budget, with approximately 40% of public expenditure used for investments; and (iv) a steady inflow of donor support.

An important contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) growth was the increase in consumption fuelled by remittances. It is estimated that one in five Kosovars has at least one relative abroad sending them funding. Remittances from the diaspora are estimated to account for about 14% of GDP, whereas activities by donors and aid account for another 7.5% of GDP.

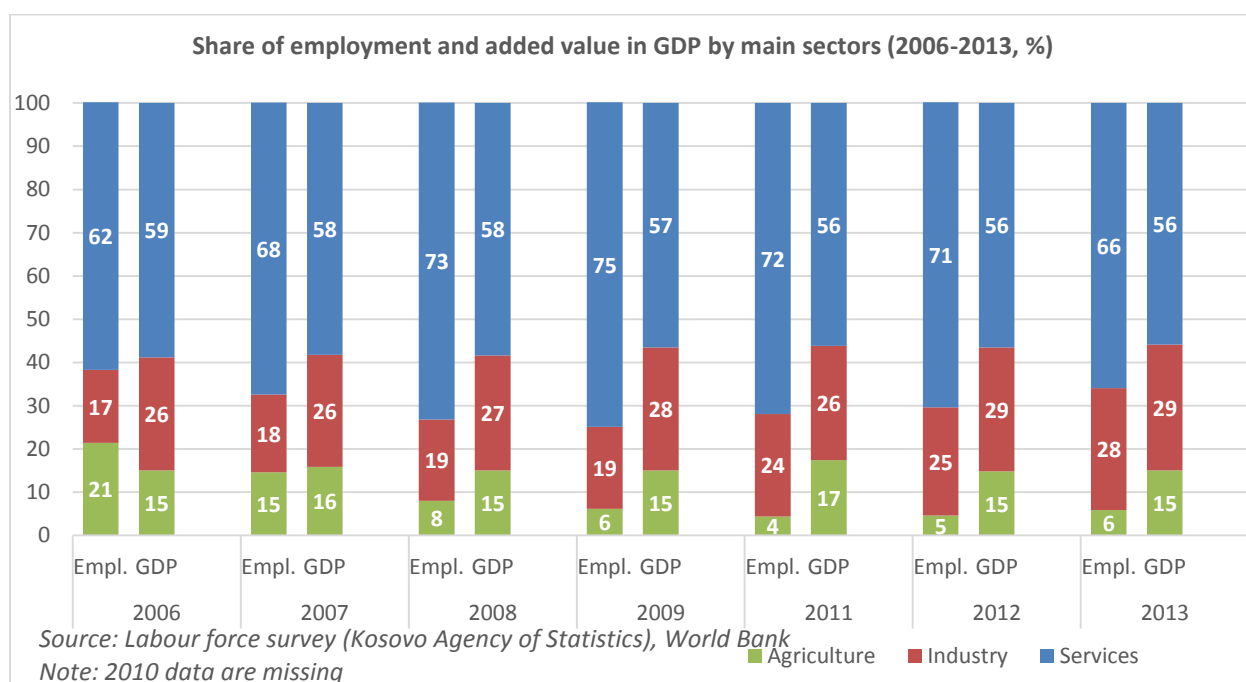
Despite its efforts, Kosovo still lags its neighbours and other European countries in most aspects of development. Kosovo had a GDP per capita of EUR 2 794 in 2013, equal to 11% of the EU-27 average. It also has the highest rate of poverty in South East Europe, with 29.7% of the population living below the poverty line in 2011. It also suffers from the highest rate of unemployment in the 15 to 64 age group in the region: the unemployment rate was estimated at 30.0% in 2013. Worse, 59.5% of its population is economically inactive (World Bank, 2014).

The business climate in Kosovo is hindered by limited access to finance, an unreliable energy supply, unfair competition and corruption. Kosovo's enterprise sector is dominated by small and micro-enterprises; retail trade continues to be the dominant sector. At 33.9%, the trade deficit is large, and the ratio of imports to exports is approximately 9:1. Kosovo's main trading partners are the European Union (EU), Albania, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Currently, about 90% of exports consist of raw materials. Moreover, economic statistics (central accounts in particular) are extremely weak, making a comprehensive assessment of the economic situation difficult (European Commission, 2014a).

Over the period 2008 to 2013, the contribution to GDP made by the main economic sectors shows (Fig. 1):

- an increasing trend in the industrial sector (from 26% in 2008 to 29% in 2013)
- a decreasing trend in the service sector (from 58% in 2008 to 56% in 2013)
- a relatively constant trend in the agriculture sector (15% in 2008 and 2013)

Figure 1 Share of employment and added value in GDP by main sectors, %



The share of employment by sector shows different trends and provides information on developments such as technological change and increased productivity. The share of employment in the agriculture sector fell from 8% in 2008 to 6% in 2013 with a relatively stagnant share of sector's contribution to GDP, showing an increase in productivity. An opposite trend was recorded by the industrial sector with an increased share of employment (from 19% in 2008 to 28% in 2013) and a small increase in the added value to GDP (Fig. 1). The service sector registered a higher decrease in employment (from 73% in 2008 to 66% in 2013) relative to the added value to GDP (from 58% in 2008 to 56% in 2013).

Information about labour market trends in Kosovo continues to be provided on an irregular basis. Recent developments (the 2011 census and the 2012 and 2013 labour force surveys) still question the consistency in methodology and comparability of data. In general, low labour market participation, especially among young people and females, is a feature of the economy in Kosovo. The country has the highest unemployment rate in the Western Balkans: around one-third of the working-age active population is without a job. The youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) was 55.9% in 2013 (Table 1). Compared with the 2009 youth unemployment rate (73%), it seems that the continued economic growth, as well as emigration, could have helped to reduce unemployment in recent years, but the lack of comparable data prior to 2012 makes it difficult to assess this effect.

Table 1 Main labour market indicators (figures shown are percentages)

		2009	2012	2013
Participation rate (15-64 age group)	Total	47.7	36.9	40.5
	Female	28.7	17.8	21.1
Employment rate (15-64 age group)	Total	26.4	25.5	28.4
	Female	11.1	10.7	12.9
Unemployment rate (15-64 age group)	Total	45.4	30.9	30.0
	Female	56.4	40.0	38.8
Youth unemployment rate (15-24 age group)	Total	73.0	55.3	55.9
	Female	81.7	63.8	68.4

Sources: Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), LFS 2009, 2012, 2013

According to the 2013 labour force survey, 30.8% of employed people were in vulnerable employment. This percentage was down slightly on the 2009 figure of 31.8%. This means that they are either employed in their own business (own-account workers) or contributing to a family business (paid or unpaid). Only 31.2% of those employed had a permanent contract for their main job while 68.8% had temporary contracts (with 90.5% of them reporting that temporary was the only available contract for them).

Across age groups in 2013, the employment rate was highest among people aged between 45 and 54 and lowest among young people (aged between 15 and 24).

2.2 Mechanisms for identifying demand for skills and matching skills supply

Kosovo has an extremely young population: almost half its citizens are under the age of 25.

Every year, approximately 30 000 new jobseekers enter the labour market, while current economic growth generates around 15 000 new jobs per year. Over a third of young Kosovars are neither in education nor in employment risking a 'lost generation'. According to the 2013 labour force survey, 35.3% of young people aged 15 to 24 were not in education or employment (NEETs). Even prospects for those with higher education appear to be worsening, with some evidence suggesting that increasing numbers of those with university degrees are unemployed. In 2012, 15.6% of degree-holders were unemployed, possibly reflecting a mismatch between education and the demand for skills in the labour market .2

Another problem that has not yet been discussed in detail is underemployment. Empirical evidence shows that many young professionals end up in jobs below their education and qualifications – many holders of university diplomas work as waiters in bars and restaurants owing to a lack of alternative opportunities.

Administrative data are provided on a regular basis by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and indicate a small increase (of 3.4% in 2014) in the number of registered unemployed people. This does not offset the huge decrease registered in 2012 when the number of registered jobseekers fell by more than 20%. This may have been for various reasons, among them a lack of available vacancies

2 See: Kosovo Public Finance Review- Fiscal Policies for a Young Nation, WB 2014

or quality employment promotion services. In 2013, a total of 6 980 job vacancies were registered, 26% fewer than in 2012. Two-thirds of jobs (70%) were offered by the service sector.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has been working for some years to improve its labour market information system, aware that the use of labour market information could be an early warning and prevent skills mismatch. To date, not much progress has been reported and both the labour market and the VET system are affected.

Ad hoc, project-based studies, developed mainly with donor support, describe a skills matching situation within a specific sector at a specific moment (e.g. the 2012 Torino Process made extensive references to construction and agriculture reports). Some studies are run by think tanks, which usually incorporate questionnaires on skills shortages as an impediment to doing business. These include the Riinvest survey conducted among companies in 2014 on the business climate³ and the Kosovo information and communications technology (ICT) market analyses supported by the Kosovo Association of Information and Communications Technology (STIKK). The latter included a description of the employment structure in the sector, the demand for employment for the following year and the potential for the sector's growth⁴. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report* focused on the private sector⁵ and stimulated discussions on skills and education as a barrier to business development and the educational level of employees.

These studies showed the lack of relevance of skills provision to sector needs under the current VET system. However, this on the spot approaches cannot provide the required information on the skills needed to promote economic development and skills matching. Moreover, there is no system in place to identify the skills needed or to communicate labour market needs to the skills supply side.

One functional mechanism that may provide information on the relevance of skills for jobs or occupations is related to the development of occupational standards. The legal framework and the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) in Kosovo support this approach with the elaboration of occupational standards as tools for the development of new qualifications in the system. If the correct approach is taken for developing occupational standards (involving labour market actors), then the information on the skills needed could be relevant in adapting the educational offer to labour market needs. Standards have been developed for a number of occupations. This is usually done by donors, e.g. GIZ or Swiss Contact, or by the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the relevant sectors. In Kosovo, VET Council is responsible for adopting standards, and to date 20 occupational standards have been approved. Of these, 12 have been verified by the NQA (including standards for welding, plumbing and administrative assistant).

Under the Foresight component of the FRAME initiative, the priorities discussed and to be considered by Kosovo in the area of HRD were more at national and general level rather than sector-specific levels.

2.3 Potential of the VET system to influence economic and labour market needs

Entrepreneurial education is one of the strategic dimensions in which VET could influence economic and labour market developments in the country. This means not only supporting entrepreneurship and

³ See <http://www.riinvestinstitute.org/index.php?giuha=al&action=category&cid=3>: *Business climate in Kosovo*.

⁴ See <http://www.stikk-ks.org/en/publications/publications/2014/>

⁵ See http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/human_development/kosovo-human-development-report-2012/

skills for entrepreneurs, but also boosting the entrepreneurial behaviour of future employees who should be able to manage working life and a career.

The new curriculum framework, which is being developed in Kosovo, builds on competence-based education, follows the learning outcomes descriptors and is based on three key groups of competences. Entrepreneurship is included under the core competences part of this new curriculum framework. Twenty-one new curricula were developed under this new framework.

A number of innovative practices are helping to improve VET learners' entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. Some initiatives promote and boost cooperation between schools and businesses. In other initiatives, schools are supported in building entrepreneurial attitudes by centres of competence and training firms. Three new training firms have been added, covering (to date) all vocational schools in economics in Kosovo.

Notwithstanding the recent developments, the major issues still remain: a lack of cooperation between the education system and the private sector and a lack of understanding of the importance of information and evidence in policy making.

2.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2012

In accordance with the information provided above, Kosovo's economy and labour market have experienced generally positive trends, although the business environment continues to face difficulties concerning the skills of the available labour force.

The economic, labour market and education stakeholders are not working effectively together, and are missing out on the benefits that they may have enjoyed. As the main entity responsible for investment in the VET sector, the government should understand that its efforts cannot develop (in isolation) a system which is relevant to the economy and the labour market. More actions should be taken to involve society as a whole in actions to increase the relevance and quality of VET.

In order to do this and better harness VET's contribution to external economic efficiency, some priorities must be considered:

- Increase transparency and participation in VET policy making.
- Increase activation, stimulation, involvement and empowerment of economic and labour market actors to support educational reform.
- Improve the information system, including the monitoring of education results.

3. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION DEMAND

3.1 Demographic and social factors that shape demand for VET

According to statistical data, the population of Kosovo was 1 811 372 in July 2013; 50.2% of the population was male. Based on the 2011 census data, Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe with an average age of 29.5 years (in 2010, the average age in the EU was 40.9 years). The population of Kosovo is considered to be growing (at a rate of between 0.6% and 0.8% according to World Bank estimates) but due to difficulties with the census methodology and implementation there is a lack of comparable data which makes such estimates difficult.

The age structure of the population shows that almost half the population (45.6% in 2013) are aged between 0 and 24 (Table 2). If the data are correct (calculated using the same methodologies), they show changes in demographic trends (e.g. a decrease in population in 2013 from the figure of 1 815 606 in 2012) and in the share of age groups (e.g. 0 to 14 age group showed a decreasing trend from 28.0% in 2011 to 26.4% in 2013, while the working age group (25 to 64) and the older population showed increasing shares in the same two consecutive years). The latter may be a very early sign of a change in the demographic pattern. These figures (from 2011 and 2013) cannot be used to conclude that there is a demographic evolution but the issue should be properly monitored in the years to come. These socio-demographic facts are important when shaping the systems for providing skills through initial VET (IVET) or continuing vocational training (CVT).

Table 2 Age structure of the Kosovo population (%)

Age groups	0-14	15-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Torino Process report 2012 (2011 data)	28.0	19.3	39.2	6.8	6.7
Torino Process report 2014 (2013 data)	26.4	19.2	39.8	7.3	7.3
Change between two reports (%)	-5.6	-0.3	1.4	6.8	8.9

Source: 2011 - ETF calculation on data received from Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ETF, 2012a); 2012 - data received from Kosovo Agency of Statistics

The data above may show the process of intensified emigration since Kosovo is a country of economic emigration but the information concerning migration is inconsistent and the process is difficult to evaluate. In 2014, the Kosovo *Human Development Report* took a close look at how labour migration and interaction with the diaspora affect human development in Kosovo. Even if the lower estimate of emigrants is considered, the Kosovo diaspora is deemed to be large by any reasonable standard, with approximately one emigrant for every five Kosovo residents. Recent studies suggest that the rate of migration has risen of late. According to the Kosovo Remittance Survey of 2012, 43% of Kosovo citizens have family members who live abroad. This is an increase from 2011 when 37% of families interviewed for the survey reported that they had family members outside the country. In 2012, 22.4% of Kosovo families reported that they received remittances from family members.⁶

⁶ Kosovo Human Development Report 2014-Migration as a force for development, UNDP 2014

Albanians constitute the vast majority of the population (around 92%), followed by Serbs, Bosnians, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community (RAE), Gorani and 'others'.

Poverty remains widespread in Kosovo, compounded by the fact that social protection and other government services fail to reach many of the poor. In 2011, 29.7% of the population lived in poverty and 10.2% lived in extreme poverty. With just one-third of households in the bottom quintile receiving social assistance, improvements in the last-resort social assistance scheme could help to reduce extreme poverty. Reducing poverty remains one of the main challenges to overcome.

There is a negative association between poverty and level of education. In 2011, more than one-third of individuals who did not complete primary education were poor compared with 12% of individuals with university degrees. Almost two-thirds of poor people have less than secondary education. Enhancing education in terms of coverage and quality will be a key factor in reducing poverty. Evidence suggests that early childhood education is especially effective in helping individuals break out of the poverty trap. In addition, health care utilisation rates by the poor are low, suggesting that they may be underserved (World Bank, 2014).

Poverty and the related risks of social exclusion are widespread among unemployed people, especially young people (15-24 years) who experience high rates of unemployment. At the same time, the labour market in Kosovo is characterised by persistent levels of high economic inactivity. For example, in 2013, 59.5% of the working age population were not economically active, meaning that they were not employed or had not been actively searching for employment over the previous four weeks and/or were not ready to start work within two weeks. Most of them were no longer looking for work due to the situation in the labour market where there were no jobs available or salaries paid for any available jobs were low (precarious work).

3.2 Delivering to the individual demands and aspirations of learners: access, participation, progression

The Human Development Index increased marginally from 0.678 in 2007 to 0.700 in 2010, and to 0.714 in 2012. However, it is still the lowest in the region and in Europe.

Information and career guidance activities can play an important role in helping to fulfil individual needs or aspirations. An action plan was developed in this area with actions designed to suit various age groups: (i) in lower secondary education (years 6 to 9), a number of actions supplemented learning themes in the education and career guidance module (based on outcomes in the core curriculum; teaching material was completed up to the level of lower secondary education; and school teachers in pilot schools were trained); (ii) in upper secondary education (years 10 to 12), a number of actions supplemented learning themes in the career education module (based on outcomes in the core curriculum for *gymansiums* and vocational schools; *gymnasium* material was completed; and teachers in pilot schools were trained).

To date, the curriculum has been supplemented with a career education module for vocational schools. A guide and a handbook for vocational schools were published and distributed to pilot schools.

The adult vocational training sector reported an increase of 3.7% in 2013. A total of 3 350 jobseekers participated in vocational training with the assistance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The total number of graduates among the registered trainees was 2 093 in 2013, resulting in a graduation rate of about 62% (2012: 65%).

Some progress was made in adapting curricula for adult training with the support of DVV International. This related mainly to the andragogic manual for educators which was translated into Albanian and

published. In cooperation with the University of Prishtina, model lessons for multicultural education were drafted and published on the web. A three-day seminar on modern education methodology for adults was organised.

A Romani language curriculum with elements of Roma culture and history in three languages (Albanian, Roma and Serbian) was implemented for Roma students in five schools in Prizren. Textbooks for students in the Bosnian community (270 copies) were provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Handbooks in 'civic and intercultural education' in Bosnian and Turkish (2,000 copies in each language) were delivered to students in the sixth grade. These were compiled and published in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Roundtables have been organised in collaboration with the Roma Education Fund (REF) from Budapest on school dropout rates among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities. Native language textbooks were provided for the Bosnian community in Switzerland.

Learning is organised in around five resource centres for students with disabilities (blind, impaired speech or hearing). Student enrolment in these centres has grown by about 12% compared to the previous year and encouraging results have been observed in grade 10 of the vocational education system, with an enrolment rate of 42% among this group.

A large number of blind people fail to gain a proper education in their specific school (for blind people) for various reasons. In the absence of adequate information technology, acoustic programmes and Braille alphabet displays (mainly due to a lack of funds) access to information has been very limited for blind people and constitutes the major obstacle to their independence.

3.3 Delivering to socio-economic and inclusion demand

Kosovo's young population presents a number of opportunities, challenges and risks. As the country with the youngest population in Europe, Kosovo does not face the fiscal and economic pressures resulting from an ageing population, a problem faced by many other Eastern European countries.

Kosovo can only benefit from the demographic dividend that comes with a youthful population if it makes education a priority. Using this window of opportunity to invest in proper education and training will help workers to find employment, increase their tax contributions and give firms access to the skills they need. It will also boost the productivity of the workforce and help Kosovo to move into the modern economic sectors that will increase growth.

A well-trained labour force could be a comparative advantage and a key resource for economic growth but this requires a policy focus to ensure that public spending is in line with the needs of a youthful population and with the needs of firms operating in Kosovo.

As previously mentioned, no information or methodologies are available for tracking the professional careers of graduates. Some active labour market programmes (ALMPs) were implemented with the support of the UNDP and through cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, the number of ALMPs is small compared to the real needs of the country.

3.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2012

Poverty is still one of Kosovo's difficult problems although the situation is reported to be improving. Evidence shows that education is one way of fighting poverty although in reality education alone cannot solve the problem if the social and economic context does not change.

Some issues relating to poverty cannot be detected due to the critical situation regarding statistics and administrative data. If the country is not monitoring investments (in education, active or social policies) there is no way of finding the right solutions to counter the risks associated with poverty and exclusion.

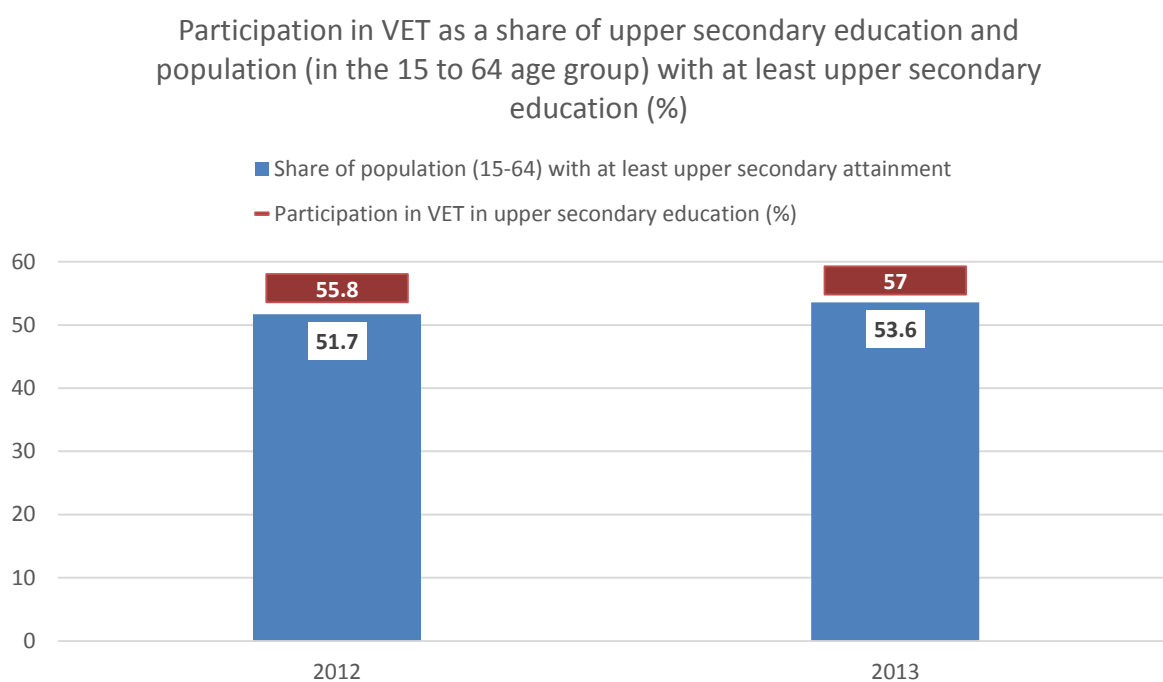
Decisions regarding the professional careers of individuals are difficult since career guidance and counselling is still poorly organised, particularly in terms of information about trades and professions and their situation in the labour market. This makes difficult for individuals to make decisions about vocational training as they have no information on prospects or potential outcomes.

Challenges therefore still remain. To meet them, VET reforms need to consider (i) facilitating access to information and counselling sessions concerning education and labour market prospects; (ii) promoting the lifelong learning perspective for individual development; (iii) targeting at-risk groups more effectively and tailoring measures to address needs.

4. INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF THE VET SYSTEM

Most of the stakeholders who participate in the consultation for the Torino Process have determined that the preparation of students for the labour market is a goal of the VET system. Thus, the degree to which the VET system achieves this goal can be said to be a key measure of its quality. The internal efficiency of the VET system remains a key challenge as VET is associated with an image of low status and is not very attractive to young people. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology recognises that many VET students enrol in a VET school because they have failed to obtain a place in a *gymnasium*.

Figure 2 Participation in VET as a share of upper secondary education and population (in the 15 to 64 age group) with at least upper secondary education (%)



Source: Labour force survey (Kosovo Agency of Statistics), ETF calculations on Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's education statistics

4.1 Quality assurance and qualifications

A key instrument in improving the quality of the national VET system is the country's national qualifications framework, managed by an autonomous agency, the National Qualifications Authority (NQA). Kosovo's NQF, inspired by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), is an 8-level framework. It is based on learning outcomes, covers all types of qualifications and includes a credit system. It is already implemented and is now being consolidated with the reinforcement or revision of elements such as recognition of prior learning and the redefinition of qualifications types. Indeed, Kosovo's NQF is one of the more advanced in the region.

NQA promotes quality in the VET system via both regulatory and support functions. It sets criteria for the development of occupational standards and qualifications and for the accreditation of providers; verifies occupational standards as the basis for qualifications development; and ensures that those who develop qualifications and schools adhere to these criteria. The NQA also supports VET schools

in self-assessment and provides guidance and training to schools and those who develop standards and qualifications on how they can meet its quality criteria.

To date, the NQA has validated 10 qualifications in areas such as welding, administration, IT, plumbing and heating installation. These are now included in the NQF; 44 occupational standards have been verified and 13 providers have been accredited. In addition, seven language schools have been accredited to offer English language courses, while two are accredited to offer both English and German language programmes. The NQA itself does not develop the standards or qualifications. Most occupational standards are developed by donors or are coordinated by the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce. No sector skills councils as such exist in Kosovo; schools develop the qualifications. However, standards and qualifications are now being made available nationally.

Conditions for accrediting the English language courses have been successfully reviewed. This process began last year and was supported by the United Kingdom and the British Council in Kosovo. The NQA has registered the qualifications validated in the Kosovo Curriculum Framework for the administrative assistant, welder and ICT profiles in a workshop. The aim was to review the approved qualifications and to revise the knowledge, skills and competences for levels 3 and 4 of the administrative assistant and welder qualification. In the case of the ICT qualification, levels 2, 3 and 4 of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework were to be reviewed. The workshop included accredited developers and providers that offer these qualifications approved in the Kosovo Curriculum Framework. The NQA has developed administrative instructions for the recognition of prior learning. It has conducted workshops to develop a legal framework and specific infrastructure for the accreditation of VET providers, national standards and monitoring systems and to review the implementation of the recognition of prior learning in accordance with EU guidelines.

In 2014, revised or new secondary legislation was passed in a number of areas: the recognition of prior learning; criteria for the development of occupational standards and qualifications; and quality assurance procedures within schools. In 2013 and 2014, Kosovo also undertook an exercise to compare its NQF with the EQF; it has asked to present its resulting report to the EQF Advisory Group, which oversees implementation of the EQF.

However, the NQA can only go so far. While the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) transitions from curriculum-based training and learning to learning outcomes approaches (what a learner should know and be able to do after a course of learning), the development of outcomes for VET is only slowly improving.

The number of qualifications available to learners will remain limited, while only a few, mainly private, VET schools and the seven vocational training centres run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare are accredited to develop qualifications. Most VET schools run by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology are not up to the standard required to develop new qualifications which meet the criteria set by the NQA.

4.2 Policies for VET trainers and directors

KESP 2011-2016 is aimed at enhancing the quality and efficiency of the VET system. This in turn calls for an improvement in the quality and relevance of VET providers; the development of the VET system in the labour market; the strengthening of management and institutional capacity; and the provision of sustainable financing to support the VET system.

Professional standards are the starting point for improving results and these are based on curricula and VET qualifications. In Kosovo, VET qualifications, which must be submitted by providers (or other developers of qualifications) for inclusion in the NQF, must meet several criteria. Such criteria usually include criteria based on professional standards. Standards in Kosovo have been developed for a

number of VET profiles by donors such as GIZ and Swiss Contact (these two donors have been more active in this area) or the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the relevant sectors. To date, 20 professional standards have been approved. Twelve of these have been verified by the NQA and include standards for welding, plumbing, administrative assistant and the car mechanic occupational standard developed by HWK Dortmund.

The AVETAE and the VET Council should accelerate the number of standards developed and make them available nationally. As part of the drive to validate the approval of qualifications and accreditation of institutions offering qualifications in Kosovo, the NQA trained 11 teams in the verification process and professional standards for 11 occupational standards in 2013. These standards were developed with the support of LuxDev (a Luxembourg development cooperation agency), while the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce is developing the fire protection technician profile. During the verification process of professional standards, each panel of experts consisted of two external experts in the field and an expert from the NQA who coordinated and guided the process. It is important to note that each panel of experts for each standard conducted at least four meetings as required by the verification rules and professional standards defined by the NQA. In 2014 standards sector, NQA has drafted an administrative instruction on the criteria and procedures for verification of standard of profession. This instruction drafted in cooperation between NQA and relevant stakeholders was signed by MEST in August 2014⁷. Entry into force of this Administrative Instruction is an important step and facilitator for NQA, as the criteria and procedures are clear and easily implementable.

In the same year, the NQA has developed a standard verification process of the profession for 7 standards of the profession in the economic sector and that of public safety. During the year, the NQA has organized 3 rounds of validation process, qualifications and accreditation of institutions for qualifications developed according to verified national standards, or international. During this period, the project MEST/ Danida has developed 6 professional standards IN Agrobussines field which were verified from the NQA.

4.3 Teaching and learning

Most VET teachers have no teaching qualification and only some have a recognised teacher training qualification. Many stakeholders believe that while the majority of teachers in VET lack formal pedagogical training, this is to some extent compensated by their high level of expertise in some subjects. Stakeholders have identified the lack of a training budget at municipal level as a major problem. The teacher training division in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology covers all aspects of teacher training, including the training of VET teachers. The ministry and a number of donors provide the budget for this training.

During the period under review, the new Kosovo Curriculum Framework and the Core Curriculum in VET were piloted. Implementation began in two schools in the 2013/2014 school year: the A.Gllavica vocational school in Lipjan and the 28 Nëntori vocational school in Prishtina. The network of vocational schools piloting the framework and curriculum expanded in the 2014/2015 school year to include Gjilan, Ferizaj, Prishtina, Pejë, Mitrovicë, Prizren, Gjakovë. This training programme for teachers of pre-university education in Kosovo is designed to support teachers in developing their knowledge and skills so that they can implement the new Kosovo curriculum. The training programme is scheduled to be conducted in three workshops:

- Workshop 1: Kosovo Curriculum Framework and Core Curriculum - implementation in practice

⁷ Administrative Instruction no. 28/2014 dated 18 August 2014 on the criteria and procedures for verifying professional standards

- Workshop 2: Methodological and practical aspects of planning and implementation of new curricula
- Workshop 3: Methodology of teaching, learning materials and assessment of student achievement

The programme addresses all the new curricula and teacher requirements and provides professional support for implementing the new curriculum. The training programme for teachers is offered by area of curriculum:

- Languages and communication
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Natural sciences
- Society and the environment
- Health and welfare
- Life and labour

A practical guide for implementing the curriculum is designed for each curriculum area. This covers the methodological and practical aspects of planning and implementing new curricula and assessing student achievement. Moreover, the implementation of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework will bring teachers up to speed and facilitate faster reform to achieve professional standards and competences. The role of the teacher is not to transfer information, but to provide a suitable environment where all students learn to master tasks and engage in learning activities. The new Kosovo Curriculum Framework has been tested in 92 schools; 259 teachers have been trained on the new curricula and 350 head teachers have been trained to improve school management.

In 2013, thanks to funds from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and donors, many certified trainers, facilitators and teachers were trained in accredited programmes. The ministry has developed a long-term plan focused on standardising pre-service teacher training and in-service training. Its aim is to improve teaching and learning in schools and to prepare the schools for the implementation of new curricula. In 2013, 16 training programmes and four local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were accredited by the State Council for Teacher Licensing in the training programme accreditation process for teachers and other management staff. Despite the fact that the pedagogic competences of teachers have been covered in some training programmes in the past, the pedagogic training of vocational education teachers still remains a challenge because of the lack of a comprehensive training programme for this category of professionals. Moreover, a real concern regarding professional staff in VET schools is the sometimes contradictory information stated in parts of the teacher licensing legislation. According to this legislation, the instructors of professional practices do not necessarily need a university degree. However, many vocational schools require their instructors to have a university degree. On the other hand, there is no separate regulation for the work of instructors (which is a very specific position compared to all other teaching positions).

The implementation of new curricula presents a great challenge for teachers as they must develop methods and content to support student learning as envisaged by the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and the Core Curriculum. Despite the support received from development partners, the provision of a sustainable budget to fund the professional development teachers remains a challenge, as does the establishment of financial mechanisms for effective utilization of such a budget.

Finally, with regard to entrepreneurial learning, this review period marks 10 years since the establishment of the first training firms; 135 firms are registered in the Kosovo Practice Firms Centre. The centre is an official body within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and is responsible for these training firms, which have the entrepreneurial spirit themselves. They teach and encourage students to become successful entrepreneurs and show them how to establish their businesses from beginning to end.

4.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2012

Considerable progress has been achieved since the last review with key milestones in the area of quality assurance and qualifications, professional development and teacher training. The main priorities for improving quality and improving internal efficiency in VET vis-à-vis goals and objectives set out in KESP 2011-2016, are the following:

- Distinguish between VET graduation and general graduation
 - Build the capacity of teachers to prepare textbooks and other learning materials for VET (theory and practice)
 - Develop VET curricula and teaching materials and provide better training to meet the criteria identified in KESP
 - Train VET teachers to implement curriculum reform in the classroom and provide regular opportunities for continuing professional development for them
 - Develop mechanisms for cooperation between VET and enterprises, and develop incentives for companies that offer VET students professional practice
 - Strengthen the links between VET and the labour market; conduct an analysis of market needs and identify the profiles in demand
- Several challenges regarding teachers and trainers remain. These include the need to establish a common standard for teachers in terms of their professional, academic and pedagogical preparation; the monitoring of in-service training programmes at school level; the assessment of teacher performance; and the financing of the professional development of teachers. There is also a need for more functional coordination in organising training with donors and other local and international NGOs, and ensuring a sustainable budget for the training and development of teachers. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should develop a comprehensive strategic framework to address the professional development of teachers and trainers, and to support the goal of ensuring that the performance assessment of all teachers is in place by 2017

5. GOVERNANCE AND POLICY PRACTICES IN THE VET SYSTEM

5.1 Effectiveness and efficiency of the VET system

A key factor in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the VET system is the decentralisation of Kosovo's education and training system, which focuses on three key elements: management, decision making and budget. However, the 2012 and 2014 Torino Process highlighted that no new progress has been registered, despite the investment made by the World Bank and other donors in training and capacity building. Even if progress has been made during this period in some VET schools with regard to management, decision making and budget, no progress has been made with regard to evaluation and monitoring.

VET funding remains one of the biggest challenges in the system. However, despite high awareness among all relevant stakeholders and ambitious goals, there is no specific budget for this subsector, either at central or municipal level (Ministry of Finance, 2012; Ministry of Finance, 2013; Ministry of Finance 2014b). A VET funding model was developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with the support of GIZ, but has not yet been implemented. This financing instrument for VET was developed based on just four schools including two centres of competence in Skenderaj and Malishevo. Outstanding issues arise from the need to create VET school funding based on profiles. KESP 2011-2016 had set 2014 as the target year for vocational schools to achieve full financial and operational autonomy. However, this objective and some of its related activities have been postponed to 2015.

Kosovo has 61 VET schools that are under the authority of the municipalities but are funded mostly by a grant from the Kosovo budget on a per capita basis. The funding allocation per student in VET is EUR 23 per year, which is not even sufficient to cover basic needs. This is one of the reasons why investments in schools' infrastructure, equipment and workshops for specific skills are restricted.

The involvement of the social partners in the areas of legislation and the design, planning, financing, monitoring and assessment of VET strategies and the drafting and assessment of VET qualifications and skills remain a major challenge in Kosovo. There is also a need to tackle the reluctance of companies to cooperate with schools in terms of professional practice. Only 63% of VET schools offer practice opportunities in enterprises while less than 20% do not provide practice opportunities either within the school or outside it. However, one positive example is the Agency of Vocational Education Training and Adult Education (AVETAE). In cooperation with GIZ, it works closely with the social partners, particularly on the profiles of car mechanics and on construction, health, sales and marketing profiles.

On the other hand, the Council for Vocational Education and Training formalises the participation of institutional stakeholders, labour market participants and social partners in policy making related to vocational education and strategic prioritisation within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Once the above mechanisms are fully operational, this is expected to impact positively on the creation of a more coherent approach in vocational education. It should bring together all relevant stakeholders, researchers and providers of vocational education with the common goal of linking the vocational education offering with labour market demand.

The AVETAE will also play a key role in the area of VET in terms of shaping a workforce with the right skills for national and international markets. The challenge here is to make AVETAE operational at the end of the pilot phase (May 2016) with a sufficient number of staff and a clear strategic action plan with joint activities involving the future Employment Agency. The cooperation between the two agencies will be instrumental in the preparation of a new generation for the labour market, yet also to define a new way of interministerial collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

5.2 Assessment of progress since 2012

As highlighted in the FRAME project's Review of Institutional Arrangements (RIA) report for Kosovo in 2014, the design of HRD and VET policies have generally not yet reached a satisfactory level in terms of interministerial coordination and the wider engagement of stakeholders at policy level. Overall, institutional capacities have not formed part of substantial analyses. The assessment of the extent of expertise to develop interministerial coordination and the engagement of stakeholders addressed in various reports is that there is 'a lack of tradition' in Kosovo for engaging stakeholders and the fact that Kosovo has relatively young institutions.

Policy development in Kosovo is mainly a top-down and centralised process. It is run by a small group of experts and consultants, rather than the institutional staff, and is often run with the support of donors. As such, it fails in most cases to involve a wider range of regional, municipal and local capacities as well as beneficiaries, thereby hampering wider inclusion within a sector. Even at central level, the effective involvement of institutional staff from respective departments is limited. Institutional capacities are limited in terms of professionalism but there is compliance with planned and actual capacities (there are institutional staff but not in sufficient numbers).

The evidence thus indicates that limited progress has been made since 2012 on key factors relating to efficiency and effectiveness, namely earmarking funding specifically for VET, decentralisation and the engagement of the social partners. However, the capacity building efforts to improve quality assurance at regional level continues on an annual basis, indicating it is building a level of momentum which needs to be further encouraged. This needs to be extended to training for the social partners so they can engage more effectively in the policy design process.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active Labour Market Programmes
AVETAE	Agency of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
CVT	Continuing vocational training
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (German International Cooperation)
HRD	Human resource development
ICT	Information and communications technology
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession to European Union
IVET	Initial VET
JAR	Joint Annual Review
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
KOSVET	Kosovo Vocational Education and Training Project (EU)
NEET	Not in education or employment
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
REF	Roma Education Fund
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
STIKK	Kosovo Association of Information and Communications Technology
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational education and training

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