

# NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM REVIEW – KOSOVO\*

May 2022

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## PREFACE

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The report was coordinated, supervised, and finalized by Florian Kadletz, the ETF Human Capital Development Expert.

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# 1 CONTEXT AND SYSTEM OVERVIEW

## Background

Education, training, and labour market systems are increasingly challenged by global developments such as digital transformation, globalization, demographic change, climate change and global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. All these have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and on society. The development of technology, especially information and communication technology (ICT), has boosted economic globalization and opened new opportunities for people, also new risks.

Amidst these developments with uncertain outcomes, some things are certain: firstly, a fast-evolving world and a changing labour market require individuals to become real lifelong learners, to acquire new competences to cope with change and to adapt and further develop existing competences. And, secondly, there is a growing demand for valid information on the changing labour markets and future prospects. In addition, there is a growing need to support people to manage their more frequent and complex transitions within and between education and work. In this context, there is a greater than ever need for career development support. At the same time, career development support – that is lifelong career guidance, and in particular career education, and career development support for workers – itself faces challenges in adapting to the new circumstances.

Against this background, the ETF engaged in reviewing the state of national/state-wide career development support systems in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The objective of the reviews is to describe existing capacities and development potentials of career development support systems, not just services or policies, to inform policy and practice enhancement in a system approach, to support the selection of country priorities for further system development and future planning, and to inform on-going and future EU and ETF activities, such as the Youth Guarantee and IPA. For more information about the conceptual approach to the reviews, please refer to the ETF-ILO publication “Developing National Career Development Systems”.<sup>1</sup>

The review process was led by local experts under the coordination of ETF and included (a) desk research and individual consultation interviews, (b) a national consultation meeting that involved all relevant stakeholders to clarify open questions from desk research, to add details and triangulate desk research findings by listening to different points of views from Ministries of education, labour and youth, social partner representatives, youth organizations, practitioners, employer organizations, sector representatives, researchers, (c) finalization of the review report, translation and distribution, (d) discussion of the findings with national authorities to identify priority areas for further system development, (e) a broad-ranging validation event to discuss the review findings and how to move forward in priority areas identified, and (f) lastly, revision of the report that is being published in both English and the national language.

## 1.1 THE CONTEXT OF KOSOVO

Kosovo is a country in south-eastern Europe with a territory of 10 877 km<sup>2</sup> organized in 38 administrative units or municipalities and with a population of around 1.8 million inhabitants. Kosovo's population is composed of Kosovo Albanians (92%), Kosovo Serbs 4%, and other minorities such as Bosnians, Gorani, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (4%). Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish, and other languages are spoken. The main religions are Islam, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic.

According to the digital Kosovo portal 2021, 50% of the population lives in urban centers, and 50% lives in rural areas, and the overall internet penetration in Kosovo stood at 91.0% in January 2021. The statistics from the last censuses held in 2011 showed that 38 % were urban population and 62 % rural population in Kosovo. The reason for the migration of the population from rural settlements to

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<sup>1</sup> ETF-ILO (2021): <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/developing-national-career-development-support-systems>

urban ones is mainly for medical issues, family conflicts, socio-economic difficulties and seeking for a better life<sup>2</sup>.

Kosovo has the youngest population in geographical Europe with about 70 % of the population being under 35 years old. However, Kosovo has seen a steady decline in its birth rate – from 2.7 in 2000 to 1.66 in 2019. The reasons include the emigration of young people of a working age, including during the peak migration wave that occurred in 2014-2015 (Balkan News, July 2021). Declining school-age populations at various levels will have repercussions for financial, human resource and infrastructural planning in education and will reduce the workforce availability.

Kosovo is categorized as a lower middle-income country and one of the poorest countries in Europe<sup>3</sup>. Kosovo's economy is currently driven by remittances, consumption, and imports instead of investments, trade and exports, which hampers economic diversification and decreases employment incentives. The largest general economic sector in Kosovo is services, which have a 54% share of the GDP, followed by industry (16.8%), and agriculture (11%)<sup>4</sup>.

The country's economic growth has been constantly increasing and, according to the World Bank reports, Kosovo's GDP has had an increasing trend over the years. For example, in 2015 the GDP was USD 6.29 billion, and it has increased to USD 7.14 billion in 2020<sup>5</sup>. The highest level of GDP growth for Kosovo was marked in 2019 with USD 7.54 billion. Despite the progress in previous years, currently Kosovo's per capita GDP remains the lowest in the region. It stood at about 26% of the EU average in 2020. COVID-19 had a negative impact on employment, wages and poverty. Inequalities remain widespread due to a large informal sector and high inactivity rates, especially among women<sup>6</sup>.

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020, there are a total of 347,100 employed people in Kosovo. Among them, roughly 85,000 people work for the public sector (25%) and the remaining 262,100 people work for the private sector. Average public sector wages are 40-50% higher than average private-sector wages, and this has a disruptive effect on the labour market and the overall competitiveness of Kosovo's economy<sup>7</sup>.

The rate of employment in the Labour Force Survey in 2020 is 28.4%. The highest employment rate is among males 42.8%, while the employment rate for females is 14.1%. Females are employed mainly in the sectors of education, trade and health care, by 52.7%, while males are mainly employed in the sectors of trade, construction and manufacturing by 44.1%.

The informal economy is quite large in Kosovo, with between 30 and 40% of employees working without contracts or social security. Nearly 20% of registered businesses do not pay taxes. The size of the informal economy may hinder economic recovery efforts by excluding businesses and individuals from assistance schemes and straining already tight public funds (OECD, 2020, p. 7).

Insufficient investment, a lack of quality jobs and mismatches between the education levels and labour market needs have resulted in a high rate of unemployment and high inactivity particularly among the female population. There are multiple barriers to women's participation in the labour market, including: family responsibilities in combination with limited access to quality and affordable child and elderly care, conservative social norms and discrimination, lower levels of education and work experience among women, barriers in the labour law (e.g., high cost of maternity leave for employers), and women's limited access to assets and productive inputs<sup>8</sup>.

Very high rates of inactivity (61.7 %), in particular for women (79.2%), and an alarming rate of youth unemployment (49.1% in the 15-24 age group) persist, which points to structural problems such as undeclared work and misalignment between education outcomes and labour market needs. The share of young people not in employment, education or training - NEET aged 15-24, increased somewhat to 33.6% in 2020. Unemployment is even higher (over 90%) in the Roma and Ashkali communities.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_6\\_No\\_9\\_1\\_September\\_2015/10.pdf](https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_6_No_9_1_September_2015/10.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/501051589122470465/Kosovo-Snapshot-Apr2020.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/overview#3>

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD?locations=XK>

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/kosovo-report-2021\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/kosovo-report-2021_en)

<sup>7</sup> <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/6259/labour-force-2020.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/promoting-women-employment-in-kosovo>

Members of these communities usually work in the informal sector, and hold insecure, low-skilled and low-status jobs and a few of them are registered as unemployed. Active labour market policies, pre-qualification schemes and vocational training programmes are inadequate to respond to the labour market needs<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the VET professions' huge potential for boosting economic development in Kosovo, and despite the sector's ever-increasing demand for employees, there is still a lack of qualified workers. Together with the very high rate of unemployment in Kosovo, especially among youth, an adequately skilled VET labour force is absent. Significant numbers of students in VET are there because of the lack of real opportunities to enrol in upper secondary schools (gymnasia). In 2020, 52.9% of upper secondary school students were enrolled in VET programmes, which represent a slight increase from 51.2% in 2019.

University graduates have better chances in the labour market, although many of them may end up in jobs requiring lower skills. This leads to a further deterioration of the labour market opportunities of people with medium or low qualifications and reinforces the trend of young people wishing to enrol in higher education. Almost one in four employed persons in Kosovo work in precarious employment conditions, which implies an inefficient use of human capital<sup>10</sup>.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is playing a major role in the economic growth of Kosovo since it has become a destination for regional and international companies seeking outsourcing services. Being a strategic sector in the country, governmental institutions and international institutions operating in Kosovo have provided their support for the growth of the ICT sector by ensuring the empowerment of the sector's main actors<sup>11</sup>.

## 1.2 SYSTEM OVERVIEW

### Establishment of career guidance services in Kosovo

Career education and guidance services in Kosovo have been established since 2002, mainly through the support of the EU/KosVET I project (2002-2004), and the support of the ILO and the ETF. The initial focus was on the provision of training for employment advisors and vocational training coordinators to help place job seekers and the unemployed. Moreover, discussions were held on a school-based guidance system and an "orientation year for grade 9" was introduced in September 2002. Initial staff training has been delivered by ILO experts on vocational guidance and counselling.

The Career Education and Guidance started by EU/KosVET II Project (2004-2006): the first year of the project in 2005 focused on developing a 10-year strategy for career education and guidance (CEG). The strategy was launched at a seminar in December 2005, with a public signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Ministers of Labour, of Education and of Youth which provided a collaborative basis for implementation. The MOU involved setting up a National Career Guidance Resource Center (NCGRC), with office accommodation provided by the MLSW and staffed jointly by personnel from the three ministries. The project also developed a web page <http://www.karriera-ks.org/> dedicated to career guidance (Careers-Kosovo), which was maintained by the Center and provided a large quantity of documentary resources, supplemented with links to the EU's network of Euroguidance centers in Member States. This Center was dissolved subsequently, and the web page was not updated after the project was finished because the three ministries involved did not further designate any budget for the center.

Within the framework of EU/KosVET II Project, career guidance training has been provided to municipal youth center staff, counsellors from employment offices and teachers – from lower secondary as well as upper secondary schools. In addition, the project continued to support the development of CEG curricula and provide training for career guidance teachers and trainers. From the beginning of the project CEG activities were piloted in a small number of elementary schools in the Pristina and Prizren regions, which led to some notable success stories, such as an exemplary career guidance resource room at "Hasan Prishtina" school in Pristina. In the second year, the project was able to join forces with the ILO, which was targeting CEG in the context of its support to development

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p.58

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-03/04\\_trp\\_etf\\_assessment\\_2019\\_kosovo\\_160320.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-03/04_trp_etf_assessment_2019_kosovo_160320.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://stikk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/IT-Barometri-2020.pdf>

of a youth employment strategy, and joint training was provided for career guidance teachers and trainers, which enabled the piloting to be extended. Support was also provided by the UNICEF project for an initiative of MEST to include some CEG within the piloting of “life skills” as an 8<sup>th</sup> grade subject in about 30 schools. However, after the project ended the schools did not continue to implement it.

The Support on Career Education and Guidance continued by EU/KosVET III (2006-2008) project continued developing career education materials for teachers, with the aim of supporting career guidance teachers in piloting and further implementing a Career education curriculum for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, a career education workbook for students, a Framework for Career education curriculum for grades 6-13, **and a Career education curriculum for 9th grade**, etc. The Career education was piloted in the second semester of 2007/08 in 34 schools.

There are still a number of schools that continue with career education and guidance as an elective subject but on ad-hoc basis, since the pilot project started by EU/KosVET III, but there is no exact data on the number of schools implementing it.

Another example is the regional initiative of GTZ / GIZ (the project for the Western Balkans), 2009, 2010 and 2011 which has been piloted in career education in lower secondary schools in Kosovo.

### **The Career Counselling Center in Municipality of Pristina**

This Center was established in 2015 with donor support (HELVETAS/EYE project), (20013-2016) to help eight vocational education and training schools in Pristina to connect with businesses to support students’ practical learning. The Center had three full time staff who provided job searching skills for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of VET schools and cooperated with businesses to help schools find work-based learning/internship opportunities for students. The Center has been dissolved, but there is discussion going on between government/municipality about ways of activating it again.

DANIDA (2008-2012) had a programme “Improving youth employment” to establish student service centers in four agriculture VET schools<sup>12</sup>. These centers for student support services provide students with information about career opportunities and help them to take decisions about their career. As a result of these activities, the enrolment in VET schools has increased significantly. However, the functionality or reliability issue of these centers, when the DANIDA’s support ended had been raised and only one school managed to keep a center functional after the project ended.

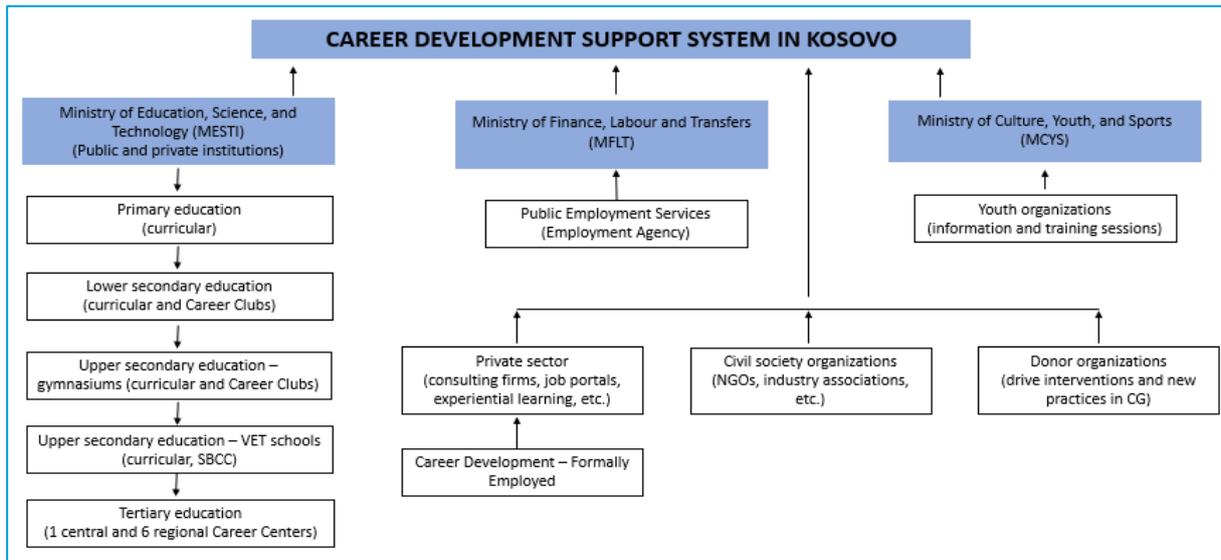
### **Career Development System in Kosovo**

The career development support system in Kosovo is mainly donor driven with only a small number of home-grown initiatives. The key actors in the career development support system in Kosovo include the Kosovo Government, specifically the Ministry of Education, Science Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfer (MFLST) together with the Kosovo Employment Agency-EARK and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) with a broad involvement of public institutions (such as various level schools, employment offices, the University of Prishtina, 6 regional universities), Kosovo Chamber of Commerce-KCC, private sector (including private colleges of higher education, private schools, job portals, enterprises offering practical learning for students, big companies offer career development services for formally employed people), NGOs (such as youth and organizations, business associations, mentoring association, Kosovo Career Development Foundation-KCDF etc.), and donor organizations which are the main drivers and are involved in supporting citizens at all phases of their lives, to successfully manage their careers and take appropriate and informed choices on education, training and employment.

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<sup>12</sup> Schools are: “Zenel Hajdini”- Ferizaj, “Arbëria” - Gjilan, “Bahri Haxha” - Vushtrri and “Ali Hadri” - Peja.

The diagram below provides an overview of the Kosovo career development support system:



## 2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The definition of the guidance and counselling in VET Law No. 04/L-138 is below:

**Information, advice and guidance** - a range of activities designed to help individuals take educational, vocational or personal decisions and implement them before and after they enter the labour market. Guidance and counselling can be provided at schools, training centers, job centers, the workplace, the community or in other settings.

**Curriculum Framework 2011 (Core Curriculum)** regulates the entire pre-university education system in the Republic of Kosovo. This curriculum is based on competencies and expected outcomes. In the new Kosovo Curriculum, there are 7 curricular fields whereby: curricular field "life and work" is about developing life, work and environment competencies and the final outcome is the formation of a productive, contributing person. One of the concepts of the "life and work" field is career education and guidance. (Introduction to Basic Concepts, Employment and Occupation). The concept of career education and guidance is mandatory along with other concepts within the scope of the "Life and Work" field and it is foreseen to be developed at all levels of pre-university education.

### Legislation in pre-university education

Law No. 04/L-032 on pre-university education in the Republic of Kosovo covers pre-primary, primary, lower secondary education and upper secondary education (gymnasias) but does not include directly offering career education and guidance services for students. However, it promotes attendance in order to reduce drop-outs and provides that municipalities shall arrange safe and efficient transport for pupils in compulsory education to attend school.

Vocational education and training (VET) is regulated by specific legislation, i.e., the Law No. 04/L-138 on VET, which explicitly refers to CEG. Under the Law on VET, career guidance and counselling is mandatory for VET institutions. Article 6, paragraph 3.3 of the Law on VET provides that career guidance and counselling should be an integral part of all programs provided by institutions of vocational education and training. Whereas the "Administrative Instruction (MEST) No. 01/2014", which is now applicable to the organization and planning of the educational process in VET, obliges VET institutions to send pupils on internships, organize "open door" days for pupils in the ninth grade (age 15), and organize the "Girls Day", whereby, for one day girls get to experience an occupation which is considered to be a man's occupation through a "trial day".

The MESTI has approved AI 137/2020 on Learning in the Workplace in vocational education and training institutions, which regulates the way of organizing, implementing and evaluating students during workplace learning. Also, Regulation 135/2020 on the protection and preservation of students' health during practical training at school and in the workplace has also been approved.

### 2.1 Legislation on higher education

The Law on Higher education does not refer to career guidance particularly; however, the law refers to promoting life-long learning, entrepreneurship and creating a connection between higher education institutions and businesses. On the other hand, the guide on the Agency for Accreditation of higher education institutions requires institutions to be assessed for services provided for students, including the career services and alumni. If an institution is accredited, it can be considered that it has met these needs.

### 2.2 Legislation on public employment services and adult learning

There is a clear legal basis for the development and provision of career guidance services within public employment services. Article 7 of the Law No. 04/L-205 on the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), assigns employment offices with the tasks and responsibilities of providing career guidance services and opportunities for life-long learning, based on an assessment of their needs. In addition, Regulation No. 1/2012 of the Ministry of Labour, on Active labour market programmes provides more details in Article 4 and defines and provides a broader description for guidance in lifelong learning and requires that these services be provided to all unemployed registered as jobseekers. Law no. 04 / L-143 Article 1.9, on Adult Education and training includes the recognition of prior learning which can be validated and certified within the framework of the prior learning scheme. This scheme is under the development of the European Union Support to Vocational

## 2.3 Legislation on NGOs and the private sector

Currently, the provision of career guidance in Kosovo is regulated by numerous laws and bylaws related to different fields such as employment, education and youth. The law on the empowerment and participation of youth regulates the functioning of the youth sector, determines the responsibilities of institutions both at local and central level with regard to youth organizations, and provides a legal framework for voluntary work and non-formal education. At local level, Article 7 of the Law on empowerment and participation of youth provides the basis for the functioning of youth centers in the municipalities of Kosovo. This article states that municipal authorities should provide human and financial resources for the implementation of youth programmes and should provide premises for youth to be able to plan, lead and develop their activities and non-formal education initiatives. The municipalities should support non-formal education projects for youth. The laws and institutional support for non-formal education activities provide sufficient scope for the integration of career guidance programmes in youth activities.

## 2.4 Strategies

Currently, the financing of career guidance services is part of the total state funding and there is no specific strategy on career guidance. Despite that, career guidance is part of several strategic plans developed at the national level.

The **National Development Strategy-NDS, 2016-2021** identifies “Better linkage between education system and labour market” as one of the priorities. The results of the impact assessment of NDS has identified limited measures by taking into consideration the unstable political environment with frequent changes of governments in the period 2016-2020, the lack of coordination of government policies with the measures defined in the NDS, and the lack of systematic progress assessment of measures under the NDS. The most significant obstacles relate to key indicators, such as low economic growth and the failure to create opportunities for increased employment<sup>13</sup>.

The **Kosovo Education Strategic Plan-KESP (2017-2021)**<sup>14</sup> among others focuses on providing career guidance and counselling for students in lower and upper secondary schools and ensuring the further development of the Centers of Competence for vocational education and training and providing.

According to the evaluation of implementation of KESP 2017-2021, career guidance remains a challenge and the services provided are still limited in some municipalities<sup>15</sup>. In some municipalities there are career guidance centers or career guidance offices located within VET and general schools. These were made possible mainly by various project initiatives, and not as a result of a comprehensive plan.

The **Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment 2018-2020** is aimed at increasing the access of young people to the labour market, through the provision of quality employment services (counselling, career guidance, internship programmes, employment mediation, etc.) and active employment measures as well as the harmonization of vocational education and training with the demands of the labour market and provision of career guidance and a counselling service.

The **Sector Strategy on Employment and Social Welfare 2018-2022** proposes measures for improving the public employment services, including career guidance and counselling.

According to Implementation of (former MLSW) now MFLT Sectorial Strategy in 2018 and 2019 – Mid-term Assessment by Qehaja, the mismatch between the labour market needs and the knowledge acquired in higher education and VET has been identified as one of the main obstacles to job growth and economic development in the country. Two of the main issues related to the lack of skills is low

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.institutigap.org/documents/6239\\_National%20development%20strategy.pdf](https://www.institutigap.org/documents/6239_National%20development%20strategy.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, July 2016

<sup>15</sup> Evaluation of the implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, funded by EU, implemented by KEC (November 2019)

cooperation between educational institutions and the business community, and the lack of career counselling and guidance services by education institutions.

**The Strategy for Youth 2019-2023** is aimed at improving the situation of youngsters aged between 15 to 24, including all parties of interest from the governmental and non-governmental sectors. One of the measures of this strategy is to promote and raise youth awareness of career orientation and the job market and this is planned as a continuous activity for the relevant institutions, and it should be extended to all levels of governance in Kosovo.

**The Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality 2020-2024** promotes gender equality through quality education and health, inclusiveness and human capacity utilization as factors for contributing to sustainable human development and the elimination of gender inequalities and stereotypes. This should be achieved through the following actions: organizing awareness-raising activities and public policies to contribute to preventing drop-outs; creating opportunities and access to care services for children and the elderly.

## 3 COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

### 3.1 Promoting coordination, cooperation, and good governance

Coordination between different organizations is required as career guidance is a cross-cutting issue, and includes the MESTI, EARK, MFLT, MCYS, NGOs and the private sector. Currently there is no coordination mechanism to address policy and systemic (common) issues in relation to career guidance, quality assurance, or a monitoring/follow up process. Establishing coordination structures is important for ensuring access to career guidance services for all citizens.

In Kosovo, career guidance services within the education, employment, civil society and private sectors are fragmented and they are rarely well-coordinated, often unplanned and not well integrated. In 2005, the National Center for Career Guidance (NCCG) was established as part of the strategy on career counselling (2004-2010). The Center was established and run by three-line ministries, respectively the MEST, MLSW and MCYS. The concept of the Center and its ambitious functions were not in line with the available capacities and it was not possible to keep it operational. In addition, an inter-ministerial committee for policies was established which set up the National Forum for career guidance and a technical committee to address policy coordination and implementation issues which met at specified intervals. This was supported by donor-funded projects EU/KosVET II, EU/KosVET III (mention above in section 3.2), but it did not continue to be operational after the project finished.

Recently, there have been initiatives taken on the coordination of donors operating in the field of VET supporting career guidance activities, to share their activities in order not to duplicate activities.

**The municipality career guidance council in the municipality of Peja** (a city in west Kosovo) was established in 2019 and meets regularly on a quarterly basis. The council brings together all actors involved in career guidance including lower-secondary schools, upper-secondary schools, municipality education directorate-MED, the private sector, and parent councils, etc. The idea is to bring together all actors to discuss aligning municipality education with the labour market demand. This council prepares a strategic plan of career guidance activities in the beginning of the New Year and it coordinates their implementation in lower and upper secondary school level.

### 3.2 Key civil society stakeholders

The role of civil society in advocating and promoting career guidance is very strong. There are a variety of non-government organizations that specialize in education, career guidance services, and youth organizations which either directly or indirectly support employment and youth up-skilling for employment. See below the civil society organizations involved in career guidance activities.

Kosovo Civil Society Organization (KCSF): supports the development of civil society and initiatives that respond to socio-economic needs of the country. The KCSF provides funding, grants, and professional development opportunities for other civil society organizations. Although not directly focused on career education, the KCSF supports initiatives that enhance employment<sup>16</sup>.

Kosova Education Center (KEC): is focused on the provision of in-service teacher training programs, as well as quality of education, human rights, networking and participation in policy making, and education research. KEC has a wide range of local and international partners that consist of non-governmental organizations, consulting companies, development agencies and state institutions. The KEC implements different development programs, among which the USAID-After School Support for Teens (ASSET) Program. Its career guidance activities are listed in section 4.1.2<sup>17</sup>.

Kosovo Career Development Foundation (KCDF): promotes career guidance, entrepreneurship and alignment between the education system and labour market. The KCDF has developed several platforms including Busulla.COM for public lower and upper secondary schools, that are related to the field of education and entrepreneurship. These platforms help users with the career guidance process, enable them to create tests online, and share learning materials (e-learning)<sup>18</sup>.

Kosovo Youth Council (KYC): is a civic society association which is involved in supporting youth organization, engaging young men and women in change-making process, strengthening their capacities, representing the youth's voice, promoting self-organized education and supporting the

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.kcsfoundation.org/en/home-2/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.kec-ks.org/?lang=en>

<sup>18</sup> <https://koscdf.org/en/home-page/>

development of youth policies. It has established an upper secondary school student representative structure called the Students' Council of Kosovo (SCK) which consists of 100 representatives from 100 upper secondary schools in 30 municipalities. For the last 20 years, the KYC has managed to build good relationships with all educational institutions in the country and engage directly and holistically with youth assisting them with the necessary resources and to build their academic and professional goals. The KYC is involved in also in the field of skills development training as well as collaboration with institutions.

TOKA is a civil-society organization with a special focus on youth from disadvantaged communities, who struggle to reach their full potential due to their gender, or socio-economic or ethnic circumstances. TOKA, in partnership with its stakeholders has different activities including researching the situation and trends regarding youth, education, and the workforce context in Kosovo and the region, as well as best practices worldwide. It also develops and implements programmes that help improve the skills, employability and the active citizenship of youth, and it advocates for better policies and practices in education and youth development<sup>19</sup>.

Mentoring our Future is a non-government organization which supports Kosovar students through mentorship programmes related to professional development goals, career aspirations, and networking needs. The main aim of this programme is to facilitate the transfer of professional knowledge and experience between established professionals and Kosovar students who are interested in developing their career in a respective field. The programme aims at connecting Kosovo's successful professionals working in different institutions worldwide with their homeland. Volunteering mentors act as coaches and role models to support students with their personal and professional growth in Kosovo<sup>20</sup>.

Industry associations: There are numerous sector / industry representative organizations which provide services to their individual members and businesses. The aim of such associations is to provide feedback to education institutions on the skills and number of qualified workers needed in their respective sectors. This is achieved through meetings, roundtable discussions, and publishing reports with recommendations for the skills needed in the sector. Also, some of them have established partnerships with VET institutions to support organizing practical training for students by linking them with companies, working with them on updating and upgrading curriculum. Industry associations are also involved and include STIKK (the ICT sector), AWPK (wood processing sector), MIRECK (metal and renewable energy sector), etc.

Kosovo Association for Information and Communication Technology (STIKK) promotes the converging interests of businesses and individuals in the field of ICT. As a catalyst to the dynamic technology industry, STIKK accelerates growth and progress for the fast-paced economy, and it shapes the industry at large. STIKK provides a platform that unites technology leaders to connect and collaborate, and it avidly supports members who push the boundaries to propel technology forward.

The Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo (AWPK) promotes the interests of wood-processing companies in Kosovo. The AWPK supports these companies to expand their networking with local and international businesses, improve products and quality, upgrade technologies, and increase productivity, with the ultimate focus on increasing exports.

Despite their important role in the sector, neither STIKK nor AWPK have managed to create organizational operating procedures to provide skills development or business consulting services for their clients.

Metal Industry and Renewable Energy Cluster of Kosovo (MIRECK) supports strengthening the business community in the development and promotion of products and services in the metal industry and renewable energy sectors in cooperation with the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, the Ministry of Industry & Trade and other institutions to provide an environment that promotes innovation, research and development of skills by creating strong relationships between local and international investors. It also supports creating standards, and education opportunities by advocating with the Government to ensure the attractiveness of the sector in terms of both new business and investment. MIRECK is very valuable to its members as it provides skills development support for candidates who are usually recruited by business members of the association after finishing training.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.toka-ks.org/En/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://mofkosovo.com/>

However, a common challenge across all the above-mentioned civil society stakeholders is their medium- and long-term financial sustainability. Unfortunately, Kosovo has yet to see serious attempts by NGOs to provide services which would ensure stable revenue for them. Instead, the main focus of these organizations is restricted to identifying and pursuing funding opportunities mainly from the donor community as well as from the public sector.

## 4 MAIN SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

### 4.1 Education, training, and work-based learning for youth

#### 4.1.1 Career Education and Guidance services in Schools

Career education and guidance is provided in all pre-university education schools, in accordance with the competencies of students and new curriculum and supports students in their transition to further education and training or to the labour market. Career Guidance and Counselling, along with information and communication technologies (ICT) and entrepreneurial education, is one of the key concepts of the curriculum area "Life and Work". Career Education has started to be implemented in pre-university education but there are no data about the implementation challenges because not all teachers have been trained to deliver it. The module on career education is implemented as an elective module in grade eight and a compulsory module in grade nine in lower secondary schools. The reason for being a compulsory module in grade nine is because students make a career decision about further schooling or entering the labour market.

With the support of donor organizations, the MESTI has developed a teacher's handbook on career education.<sup>21</sup> This was an initiative of the MESTI in 2014 to enhance teachers' skills in raising awareness among students about taking informed career decisions. For this, the MESTI has allotted a significant number of teaching hours for career education through the introduction of the Life and Work curriculum area. This began as a pilot project, and Career Education was assigned as a module in this curricular field in approximately 320 public lower and upper secondary schools. The ICT teachers in these schools use 1/3 of their time on delivering ICT, 1/3 of their time on Entrepreneurship, and a 1/3 of their time on Career Education. The aim of the MESTI is to gradually expand this pilot project across all public schools, depending on the outcomes of the pilot phase.

The GIZ financed project "Career Development in Basic Education-CDBE" (2019-2021) programme established Career Clubs at 20 lower secondary schools for 300 students (grades VII, VIII, and IX, (age 13-15), with at least 20 school management personnel, and at least 20 teachers acting as mentors of the club, through the project activity "Integrated School Development Approach." Career Clubs are an inter- and extra-curricular activity aimed at helping students make the right career choice for their career path, resulting in a more successful and productive career. It also helps parents to become aware of their critical role and become involved in the process, encouraging them to work closely with their children in defining their career path. (Career Clubs are described later in this section).

To support the provision of career guidance across pre-university education, the MESTI is using the online platform Busulla.com. This platform serves as a tool for teachers to achieve the objectives of the curriculum area 'Life and Work'. Teachers of this subject have been trained in using Busulla. The learning process encompasses five phases, including self-recognition, exploration of the labour market, identification of education institutions / training providers, and identification of job and internship opportunities.

The MESTI has authorized the Municipal Education Directorates-MED to evaluate whether they should authorize and invest in utilizing Busulla for their schools. Busulla has been endorsed in a memorandum of understanding with most municipalities, but the financial sustainability has not been secured, because the municipalities have not shown any consistency in fulfilling this arrangement regulated by the memorandum.

Although the MESTI has been piloting Career Education as a module integrated in the Life and Work curricular field, the outcomes of the pilot have not met its expectations. Discussions with teachers have shown that they lack the support and proper planning, and the teaching and learning materials are limited for implementing the Career Education module.

The MESTI has mandated a GIZ funded project "Fit for Jobs" (2021-2024) to propose a national model for career orientation for lower secondary schools. The career orientation/guidance model consists of identifying innovative career guidance concepts, developing a career guidance model (at school level, municipal level, etc.) based on international experiences (regional or European countries) and providing different approaches to creating a career guidance model that could be adopted by schools

<sup>21</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2021/02/doracaku-i-mesimdhenesve-alb-2.pdf>

or municipalities. Currently, the CG model is in the process of being drafted and will offer recommendations on where changes in legal framework are needed for effective implementation of the developed concept for career guidance.

#### 4.1.2 School based career Centers in VET

As described above in section 3.2. the programme "Improving Employability of Youth", financed by DANIDA had been piloted in 4 agriculture VET schools SBCC and one school managed to continue offering CG services after the project ended. Later, this model of SBCC centers started to be replicated by other donors such as the Enhancing Youth Employment-EYE project phase 2 (2017-2020), financed by Swiss Development Cooperation-SDC and implemented by Helvetas.

SBCCs play an increasingly important role in assisting youth in the school-to-work transition, preparing students to successfully navigate their career, and equipping them with the skills demanded in the labour market. They strengthen the cooperation between education and business, foster the employment rate of graduates and bring various benefits to the society.

Moreover, these centers were focused on creating links with the labour market at the same time as creating job opportunities and practical guidance for students on employment and self-employment opportunities. One of the main tasks of SBCCs is to attract prospective students for the VET schools. Activities of the centers include practical work programs (internships), information sessions for grade 9, career day, information sessions during the enrolment period, visits to businesses and daily information sessions for students during their school hours. Career centers organize open-door events, visits for lower secondary schools, and participation in career fairs, etc. Another role of the Career center is to establish and maintain contacts with community members (local authorities, employment and VET agencies, employer organizations, youth centers, NGOs, parents, teachers, media).

Nine school-based career centers-SBCCs have been established with the support of the EYE project in partnership with municipalities and with the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education-AVETAE, which serve the students of 10 VET schools.<sup>22</sup>

Schools which have 500 to 1500 students have staff working in SBCCs who are already employed by school such as: the manager of the center who is not teaching and is either a school deputy director or quality coordinator, one coordinator responsible for labour market cooperation, and one coordinator responsible for cooperation with students and community. Coordinators are teachers who work part-time teaching, and part-time in the Career center, or in some cases teachers work full-time in a Career center. For schools with less than 500 students, a career center has the same organizational structure, i.e. one manager and two coordinators who could serve more than one school.

AVETAE in cooperation with the EYE project has established three SBCCs in centers of competencies (VET schools), which AVETAE manages and operate in the same way as the other SBCCs described above. From a total of 12 established SBCCs, 6 of them belong to Centers of Competencies (VET schools) managed by AVETAE and 6 SBCCs to VET schools managed by the MED directly.

Another 3 SBCCs in VET schools were established by the donor, Swedish International Development Agency-SIDA, and implemented by the local NGO, "Syri i Vizionit", in the municipalities of Peja, Prizren, and Gjakova. The staff working in these career centers are not teachers from the school but are externally employed by the project.

AVETAE, the MED and donors support the establishment of school-based career centers which is a successful model for Kosovo to develop the career management skills of VET students, to prevent early school leaving, and to bridge the VET education system to the labour market.

The MESTI started to institutionalize the SBCC model for VET schools, and currently the technical working group has been established, initially to standardize the model and then regulate it through secondary legislation.

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<sup>22</sup> [https://helvetas-ks.org/eye/file/repository/Impact\\_Report.pdf](https://helvetas-ks.org/eye/file/repository/Impact_Report.pdf)

### **Future plans for establishing SBCCs and qualifications for career guidance practitioners**

It is planned within the EYE project phase 3 (2021-2024) to establish another 10 SBCCs. The Competence Center in Prizren (VET school), supported by the EYE project, has applied to the National Qualification Authority (NQA) for the validation of a career counsellor qualification level 4 program, based on developed occupational standards. According to the interviewed NQA officials, the qualification has been developed initially with the aim of training teachers who will be appointed to work for school-based career centers. However, the institutional criteria and content of the qualification leave it open in the future to also cover candidates from employment offices, youth centers, etc.

### **Industry Liaison Offices and Career Guidance Centers**

LuxDev financed the VET project KSV/015(2009-2018) under which the Business Model concept called "Industrial Liaison Office and Career Guidance" was developed. This has already been implemented in 13 projects' partner VET schools. The role of the Industry Liaison Offices and Career Guidance Centers is to assist in the development of training needs analysis, research, coordinate and promotion of relations and communication networks with the private sector, a public institution (EARK), and social partners.

The tasks of the Centers are to provide career guidance for students from institutions of vocational education and registered candidates, marketing of the institution of VET offer and revenue generation activities (promote visibility), planning, arranging and formalizing agreements with businesses and job institutions, gathering information on the professional skills required for certain professions, and gathering information about attitudes and aspirations of VET students

### **Career Clubs in Gymnasiums**

The After School Support for Teens (ASSET) programme is in its final year of a 5-year (2018-2022) USAID funded programme managed by the Kosova Education Centre (KEC) in partnership with FHI-360<sup>23</sup> and Crimson Capital Corp<sup>24</sup>. The main aim of ASSET is to develop employability, entrepreneurial skills, and a positive attitude among Kosovo's youth. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and schools, ASSET has assisted with the implementation of career and entrepreneurial education curriculum for Grades 10-12. Main activities of the ASSET Programme include teacher training on Career Guidance and Counselling and establishment and support of the Career Clubs. The Programme has provided training for teachers of the subject of life and work learning from the 16 partner schools as well as established career clubs.

The ASSET Programme established 16 Career Clubs to function as career hubs in schools to support students with career guidance and counselling activities. These activities should raise the awareness of students to enable them to make more informed decisions about their future careers. The Programme appointed one teacher to act as mentor of the club and around 12 volunteer students to implement Club's annual work plan. The Programme also gave funding to set up a club 'office' in the school.

The Career Club mentors report on a monthly basis to the Programme and school management. Some of the Career Club activities include setting up partnerships with local businesses, short internships, job shadowing, visits to companies, information meetings by different professionals, etc. Additional activities of the club for students include training in writing a CV and motivational letters, finding reliable information sources regarding further education, and sharing information about scholarships with their peers, etc. Each career club has its own social media to promote its activities and to better address their peers' interests.

As reported by the Programme team interviewed, the feedback from the students, teachers and school directors was very positive regarding students' gains from the activities of the career clubs. The Programme team is in discussion with the MESTI officials to ensure that these interventions are supported further by the Ministry to ensure sustainability. The Programme will end in June 2022.

### **Type and frequency of parent/caretaker involvement**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MESTI) in 2017 with donor support drafted a school-parent communication strategy for career guidance for lower secondary school students, respectively, i.e. 9th grade students who transition to upper secondary education and have to choose an occupation. The strategy aims to establish a regular two-way communication between school-

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.fhi360.org/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.crimsoncapital.org/home.asp>

parents through sustainable mechanisms in order to strengthen the role of parents in guiding their children towards informed career choices.

There were focus group discussions with teachers, and interviews with parents to better understand the relevant factors for effective school-parent communication in relation to career guidance for 9th grade students, based on information on the trends and demands of the labour market.

The MESTI held information sessions with parents in several regions to inform about the importance of parents supporting their children during the process of making career decision, and it also informed them about trends in the labour market. According to interviewees during the field visit in relation to this activity, these information sessions have ceased due to a lack of funds.

#### **Visits of professionals or entrepreneurs to schools**

This activity is organized on an ad-hoc basis, it depends on the teachers' willingness to do it. Some teachers invite parents to speak in the classroom in front of the students about their professions. Such an activity is foreseen in the curriculum, but it is not formalized yet.

### **4.1.3 Career Centers in Higher Education**

Career guidance services in higher education (public and non-public) have mainly "central" level characteristics. In the public sector, in UP, the first model was established by the OSCE and the USAID in 2007. The Career Center at the University of Prishtina-UP has been operating with two officials since 2008. It hires up to 6 interns each year who are appointed as assistant trainer, public relations assistant, assistant in the maintenance of the e-Career Platform and designer of promotional material.

The main activity of the Center is to inform students and graduates about personal and professional development opportunities, provide individual counselling, (face to face and online) on career development steps, provide training for job applications, information on internships, support student networking with employers through specific activities, and facilitate the provision of internship for companies and student access to companies. The Career Center prepares brochures, newsletters and video animations to promote its activities. One of the activities of the Center is to connect human resource managers from private companies with graduate students and to provide concrete examples of how to develop job searching skills. The e-career platform is a digital innovation of the career services for UP students, and all students have access to it ([ekarriera.uni-pr.edu](http://ekarriera.uni-pr.edu)).

#### **University Career Centers at regional level**

The GIZ-DIMAK project provides necessary support to effectively design various targeted interventions such as capacity building initiatives, infrastructure, etc. The objective of the support is to analyse and identify the strengths and weaknesses/gaps, opportunities and threats in technical and institutional capacity in order to effectively design their intervention measures (career guidance) to ensure their effective and proactive involvement in preparing students for the labour market.

#### **University Career Centers in private sector**

In the non-public sector, the first model was established by the American University of Kosova-AUK, which has a web-site <https://www.rit.edu/kosovo/careers-rit-kosovo>. It has a web-site on which all procedures for internship are listed, and there is access to some portals and links which aim to test and orient.

The Private College AAB has established a Career Center to support and encourage graduate students to prepare for the continued development of their careers, help them to develop the skills, abilities, potential, and personal values in order to shape them into the best version of themselves. The college website is: <https://aab-edu.net/en/career-center>

Universum Private College has a website <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/careercenter/universum> with information on career assessment tests, career exploration, webinars, career fairs and events, and organizing online mock job interview for students, etc.

The majority of higher private institutions provide only descriptive information and contact details for relevant officials.

#### 4.1.4 National Employment Agency

The National Employment Agency established in 2016 is currently organized into a Central Office, 35 local employment offices and 8 Vocational Training Centers. The National Employment Agency currently operates under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and under Regulation 02/2021 “On the areas of administrative responsibility of the office of the Prime Minister and Ministers” it is due to merge with the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers. This restructuring is still on-going, but it is not planned to have a dedicated department for the management of career guidance.

The main responsibilities regarding the career orientation within the Central Office are held by the Labour Market Department and the Employment Services Division. The Labour Market Department manages, monitors, and coordinates the work of Department’s divisions; approves annual work plan for the implementation of employment policies related to matching services, *career guidance and counselling services* as well as active labour market measures; monitors and *coordinates annual work plan* implementation by the Employment Offices related to matching services, migration services, *career guidance and counselling services* as well as active labour market measures. The Employment Services Division proposes and develops an annual work plan related to matching and *career guidance and counselling services*, and develops new practices on matching and career guidance service provision; it develops new practices in employers’ service provision and assesses the needs for training packages and provides training for existing and new counsellors and managers for the *provision of matching and career guidance services* as well as the provision of services to employers. The concrete tasks of local employment offices are the registration of unemployed and jobseekers, and career counselling mediation in employment within and outside Kosovo.

Under the EARK’s functions, the online registration of jobseekers on the EARK platform started. Jobseekers who register in employment offices are now registered in the Employment Management Information System (EMIS) and they are profiled into one of the three sub-groups: low (low risk of becoming long-term unemployed), medium (medium risk of becoming long-term unemployed) and high (high risk of becoming long-term unemployed). Career counselling is provided by taking account of the personal characteristics, experience or interests of jobseekers both for finding a profession and on their individual’s skills.

Since 2012, employment officials are not profiled and they offer all the services to the jobseekers, including career guidance. The MFLT confirms that there has been no assessment of the efficiency of the restructuring, although this is necessary.

There is no existing relationship between schools and employment offices to organize visits for providing career information, such as providing detailed explanations to students about the importance of choosing a career, its relation to the selection of educational institutions and the sources from which career information can be obtained.

#### **Organization of job fairs**

Career fairs were organized before the COVID-19 pandemic by VET schools (public and private) and public and private universities to serve as a meeting point for companies and students to discuss various opportunities so that these companies might make job offers to students.

Since 2016, the GIZ Office in Kosovo in cooperation with the Employment Agency organizes annual national job and career fairs where recruiters can create an online virtual space in which jobseekers (local population and returnees in Kosovo) can interact with recruiters and/or network with other candidates.

The Public University Career Center in Prishtina in the last two years organized two fairs, such as the Virtual Career Fair (in collaboration with GIZ) and the French Universities fair (in collaboration with the Alliance Française). Since 2019, the career offices in regional public universities supported by GIZ have also organized annual career fairs in cooperation with private sector regional companies.

#### **Organization of apprenticeships/work-based learning and internships**

In recent years it has been noticed that there is an improvement in student participation in learning in the workplace with the employer and that there is an improvement in school-employer relations, but there are still many challenges in this regard. As a result of not conducting any learning in the workplace, students fail to prepare for the job market and develop practical job skills.

The teacher of professional practice in vocational schools is responsible for initiating agreements with employers and for finding opportunities for learning in the workplace of students. However, in most cases, students find their own internship opportunities, based on the recommendations of family or friends<sup>25</sup>.

Solidar Suisse is implementing the ProSkills project (20121-2024), supports 4 VET schools and 200 students per year in Peja (city in west) in work-based learning in companies, which allows students three months to immerse themselves in a particular field and interact with professionals who have worked in it for years. This type of experience is helping students decide their long-term career goals. Additionally, teachers are participating together with students in companies to find out if the curriculum is up to date with employers' needs. As a result of this activity, teachers have updated about 20 % of the curriculum to make it more compatible with labour market demands.

The GIZ-YES project (2017-2021) is supporting 10 VET schools to expand their networks with companies to further develop cooperation with VET institutions and build the capacity of VET schools to implement work-based learning (WBL) and adopt a WBL planning/practice training guide for interns. The project is supporting intermediary organizations (chamber or business/sectorial associations) to facilitate cooperation between companies and VET schools, and supporting the implementation of career guidance services in vocational schools to prepare vocational school students (grades 10 to 12) by providing training about career choices.

The Regional Challenge Fund-RCF and Kosovo Challenge Fund-KCF of the German-funded Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) project (2021-2025) has the aim of increasing the employability of VET graduates by working with both VET-institutes and private companies to increase the labour market relevance of VET providers by funding partnerships between schools and private partners.

The RCF and KCF is a unique financing mechanism that aims to increase the employability of vocational education students and train students using **a cooperative training approach** in the economies of the Western Balkans 6: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The commissioned funds amount to EUR 24.5M in grants which are to be used for investments in schools (infrastructure, equipment) and are to be disbursed by 2025 through region-wide competition among consortia led by vocational training providers. Recently, the winners of the first round of grants were awarded, for both RCF and KCF, and there will be several more rounds.

## 4.2 Unemployed support and support to NEETs

In Kosovo, different communities are fully integrated in the education system, except for students who attend school in Serbian language. However, despite considerable efforts on the part of MESTI, the EU Progress Reports for Kosovo continue to highlight the difficulties faced by children of marginalized groups, as well as different ethnic groups, and low levels of attendance, particularly among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students. This remains a concern.

During the past two years, the migration, and subsequent return, of a large number of Kosovar citizens has led to an issue with the integration of returnee children in the education system.

### Number of students dropping out from school in primary and lower secondary schools

Year	No. of students' dropouts	Male	Female
2017/18	228 (0.09%)	132 (57.9%)	96 (42.1%)
2018/19	159 (0.07%)	101 (63.5%)	58 (36.5%)
2019/20	122 (0.05%)	72 (59.0%)	50 (41.0%)

<sup>25</sup> ibid

## Number of students dropping out from school in primary and upper secondary schools

Year	No. of students' dropouts	Male	Female
2017/18	1642 (1.83%)	1288 (78.4%)	354 (21.6%)
2018/19	1544 (1.83%)	1215 (78.7%)	329 (21.3%)
2019/20	967 (1.24%)	763 (1.92%)	204 (0.53%)

The NEET youth group refers to young people who are not in employed, not in school, and not trained, i.e. they are completely detached from the labour market and do not participate either in the education system. High rates of this group in the population of young people raise concerns about their employment potential in the future as this indicates detachment from the labour market. In addition, a large number of disconnected young people in a country with an already high rate of unemployment among young people, such as Kosovo, could potentially contribute on social problems. In the LFS 2020, 112,936 of young people (aged 15 to 24) in Kosovo do not attend school, were not employed or in training, and account for 33.6% of the young population. The NEET group is composed of females (33.2%) compared with 34.0% of males.

Such a large number of young people who are detached from the education system and the labour market is concerning, since they may eventually become unemployable, and are likely to remain unemployed on a long-term basis since they have not acquired the necessary skills to ensure sustainable integration into the labour market. Moreover, unregistered NEETs often feel helpless and lack the soft and social skills to attend interviews and training programs.

### Active Labour Market Measures-ALMP

Public Employment Services in Kosovo are provided by EARK, which is comprised of the Labour Market Department, responsible for employment policies and implementation of **Active Labour Market Measures-ALMP**, and Vocational Training Department, responsible for the work plan of vocational training and management of Vocational Training Centers-VTC.

EARK implements the following ALMPs: vocational training (through Vocational Training Centers – VTCs), training at work/on-the-job training (OJT), wage subsidies (WS), practice at work/internship scheme (self-employment and entrepreneurship (SE) and public works.

ALMPs are also provided/supported by other Government institutions. Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) has supported internships, soft skills trainings, and a self-employment program specifically targeted to youth aged 18-24 (in cooperation with EARK or private providers).

The Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA) also supports an internship scheme for higher education graduates aged under 30.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs supports a wage subsidy and self-employment program for repatriated persons, the implementation of which has been recently delegated to EARK.

Given the limited government support, the provision of ALMPs has been financially supported by several organizations, the main ones being GIZ, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.

Public works implemented by EARK, as temporary employment through labour intensive projects, have also been supported by different ministries (mainly the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development) and municipalities.

As described above, there are different institutions supporting ALMPs but there is no database to register the beneficiaries of the ALMPs.

According to EARK's report on Employment and Vocational training in 2020, the ALMP participants (see the table below) in terms of age shows a high participation of persons in the age group (25-39) and those in the age group (15-24) who together constitute about 92% of all beneficiaries. Whereas participants in the age group 40-45 and 55+ make up only about 7% of beneficiaries.

## Active Labour Market Measures according to age

Age	ALMP	%	Difference in 2019
15 – 24	2273	40.4%	78.6%
25 – 39	2924	51.9%	9.4%
40 – 54	347	6.2%	-38.0%
55+	87	1.5%	-17.1%
Total	5631	100%	22.1%

### Reaching vulnerable youth

**Up to Youth activity** is a USAID finance project (2019-2024) which empowers youth for positive change in their communities and builds youth resilience to risky behaviours. The project activities address youth who are vulnerable to social exclusion by mobilizing and engaging them in meaningful ways to affect positive change in nine municipalities. Over 2,900 youth and parents participated in Up to Youth’s community outreach activities. This mobilized over 630 youth in nine partner municipalities in activities to improve their capacities and skills to contribute to and benefit from better communities and livelihoods. The USAID aim is to achieve this through mobilizing youth, building youth skills and fostering an environment for positive change.

## 4.3 Workers / Employed

### Adult Education

Adult education and training provision is still very limited in Kosovo. The VET and Adult Education and Training Laws allow public secondary schools to offer fee-based extension programs for adults, and some of the vocational schools offer adult programs, which in most cases are “compensatory” provisions, allowing those with uncompleted secondary education to return and obtain the certificates which they did not get in school.

**The Kosovo Employment Agency-EARK** is responsible for the institutional management of the adult vocational training process in Kosovo which is made up of 8 VTCs and 6 Mobile Training Units. Capacities for adult training of jobseekers in non-formal short courses at the vocational training centers (VTCs) across Kosovo are restricted. Participant numbers are small, and courses are short and often at basic levels.

Vocational Training Centers offer free modular competency-based short-term courses of up to 6 months (non-formal education) for jobseekers registered in an employment office. Vocational training centers do not provide career guidance services to their trainees after completion of the training course, trainees rarely go back to employment office for help with job mediation.

Adult education programs at VET schools leading to National Qualification Framework (NQF) offer fee-based level 4 qualifications classified as non-formal education programmes. None of the public VET providers offers tailor-made programs for the private sector or industry.

Private VET schools offer fee based non-formal training programs of up to one year and these programs include level 4 and 5 qualifications.

**The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce-KCC** created a platform for professional practice that aims to help young people find a place to do professional work-practice to enhance their professional careers. It is also involved in developing a Labour Market and Skills Barometer (see section 8.1.). The KCC offers training for the staff of their private sector members to develop skills in human resources, career management and strategy for planning human resources.

### Meridian Cooperation-Retail Company (more than 500 employees)

The Company has established a human resource development department which trains newly hired employees to prepare them for a new job; all new employees spend a few days in the relevant departments to understand the functioning and procedures of the work.

Also, every year after the completion of the performance evaluation, the training calendar is prepared according to the requirements and needs of the staff for better work performance; accordingly adequate training is delivered to employees for further professional development and work efficiency.

The Company also has hired international consultants for all areas business in the company to train the potential staff to be promoted. It also created an international academy called "Certified Manager Program". Managers from the company are appointed to follow different training courses for a period of three months (management, finance, sales, marketing, etc.) and after a period of training, the Company sets a certain business objective for them to achieve. Those who are successful in achieving the business objectives set by company are certified and promoted to higher positions and benefit from further professional development in the Company.

In addition, the Company has funded a scholarship program for the country's most promising students at the American University of Kosovo and has provided support to the Kosovo American Education Fund to send high achievers to study in the U.S.

Similar training activities for their staff are offered also by banks in Kosovo such as Raiffeisen Bank, Procredit Bank, Banka për Biznes, Bau Academy, etc.

## 5 FUNDING

Provision of career guidance services in Kosovo is supported by all sectors, the public and private sectors as well as the donor community. As indicated in the previous chapters of this report, although it is a relatively new field in the country, career guidance has received special focus in recent years.

### 5.1 Funding by the public sector

#### 5.1.1 The role of the MESTI and the MED

The MESTI has supported the establishment of the CGIS, Busulla.COM; however, it has put a financial burden on the MED's shoulders. The MED has supported Busulla.COM for their schools, through a memorandum of understanding, and has provided financial support for the first year of the system's operation. Nevertheless, with the passing of more years and changes in the public administration, the financial support for Busulla.COM has significantly declined, making it barely sustainable. The MED has shown its willingness to provide funding for the professional development of teachers in the field of career guidance and education, although these financing opportunities are not systematic but rather ad-hoc and dependent upon available funding.

From the total of 12 SBCCs, 2 have been supported by the MED through the EYE Project and 6 of the VET schools are managed by the MED directly. Financing for the SBCC entails direct costs related to setting up the office, staff training, and the MED's commitment to covering the salaries of SBCC staff who are usually three people.

#### 5.1.2 The role of the MCYS and the MFLT

The MCYS plays an important role in promoting and supporting youth initiatives regarding skills enhancement, active citizenship, practical learning, membership in civil society organizations, etc.<sup>26</sup>. The MCYS provides regular funding opportunities for the Youth Center, in the form of soliciting grant opportunities, and grants are awarded on a merit-based process. These grant opportunities cover different areas, including (i) training for youth on job searching skills, (ii) training on skills most demanded in the labour market, (iii) support to underserved communities in the society, (iv) experiential learning opportunities, and (v) training for Youth Center staff to help them manage the organizations. For example, on the approved draft budget of the Republic of Kosovo for 2022, the MCYS has budgeted a total of EUR 1.2 million on grants targeted at supporting youth development (roughly 3% of the ministry's total budget)<sup>27</sup>. The budget set forth by the Government of Kosovo in 2022 for EARK is EUR 31.3 million.

#### 5.1.3 The role of AVETAE

AVETAE has financed the establishment of three SBCCs in Centers of Competencies (VET schools). Out of the 12 SBCCs, 6 Centers of Competencies (VET schools) are directly managed by AVETAE. The financing involved the infrastructure, equipment, furniture, staff training and covered the salaries of the SBCC staff.

### 5.2 Funding by Private Sector

Although there are no official statistics on the amount of funding provided by the private sector, a general increased awareness among businesses to invest in the professional development of their workforce can be noticed. As mentioned above, the private sector players such as Raiffeisen Bank, Meridian Corporation, Meister Training Center, and Bau Academy are typical examples of private-sector led initiatives on workforce development. In many cases these training centers serve the internal needs of their companies.

### 5.3 The role of donor organizations

There is a large donor community presence in Kosovo in relation to career guidance and workforce development programmes. Many career guidance interventions and projects that are now part of the education system have been introduced and supported by the donor community. Examples of such

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.mkr-ks.org/?page=1,71>

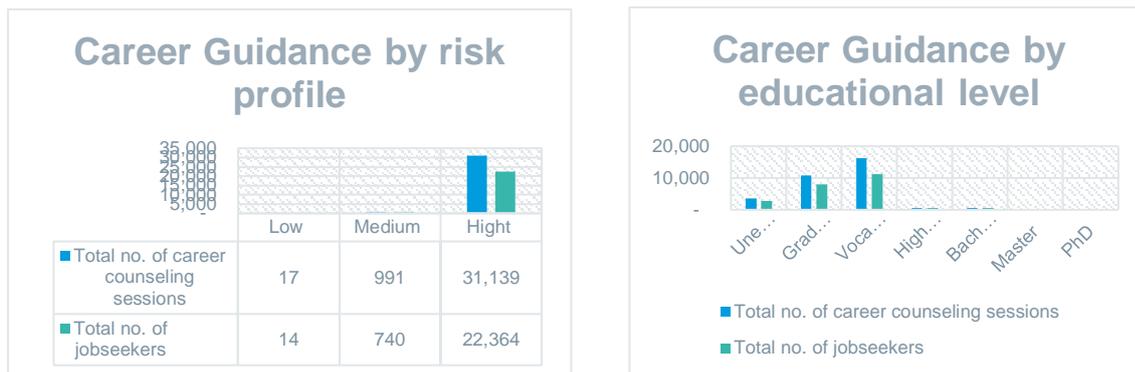
<sup>27</sup> <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/1F77FA35-E121-43D3-9683-791B0ADE3337.pdf>

projects being implemented in Kosovo in both lower secondary and upper-secondary education and workforce development include: supporting the private sector to enhance export opportunities, international scholarship programs for youth, skills development for youth, alignment of education to private sector needs, and career guidance services, etc. The following are donor organizations that play an important role in Kosovo's education and career guidance context: European Union (EU), USAID Kosovo, GIZ Kosovo, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Solidar Suisse, Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and the Luxembourg Development Agency (LuxDEV), etc.

## 6 ACCESS

Currently, public employment offices are providing career counselling in a bundled manner as part of the registration interview, during which the jobseeker is asked about their education and work experience. There is a lack of pre-defined rules, methodology and monitoring indicators on the delivery of career counselling. The internal Employment Management Information System calculates as career counselling sessions for jobseekers all the meetings with the counsellor, starting from the registration.

During 2020, the internal Information System recorded a total of 32,147 career counselling sessions for 23,118 jobseekers (a ratio of around 1.5 sessions per person). The chart below shows the career guidance delivery by age group, education attainment and risk profile.



Source: Employment Management Information System, Employment Agency, Kosovo.

**The Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship (C4EE)** project (2017-2020) has been implemented by Swisscontact in collaboration with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK). One of the project intervention areas was: the implementation of coaching cycles based on the C4EE methodology that started in January 2018 in 14 employment offices, with groups of about 10 to 15 young and **jobseekers from vulnerable groups**. The methodology equips employability coaches (employed by project partners) with the knowledge, practical tools and attitudes to stage coaching cycles for groups of 15 to 20 so that they may identify, analyse, decide, and make their own way through their respective path into employment or self-employment. Three coaching cycle batches were implemented, with a duration of 10 months each, by trained counsellors of the EARK during 2018-2020. In total, 366 persons (of which 251 were female) completed the coaching cycles successfully and improved their personal, social, methodological, and professional competencies. About 40 % of them found employment and increased their income after the coaching cycle.

As of January 2021, Swisscontact launched its new four-year "Boost Employment" project, which is a follow up project to the "Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship C4EE" project and aspires to increase the access of the unemployed to employment services.

### Returnees

The GIZ financed project, German Information Centre for Migration, Vocational Training and Career-DIMAK, is supporting returnees coming back from western countries through the implementation of existing education, training, and employment schemes for returnees – Job placement training, Job fairs, CV and letter of motivation training, job search and interview techniques, etc. It supports accompanying the returnees to the state and civil society organizations/projects to obtain reintegration measures, such as grants, subsidies, loans, and social schemes, etc. The project also supports the development of career guidance and mobility support and has co-organized road shows, job fairs, and info sessions.

### Persons with disability

The poverty rate is higher for persons with disabilities, and about a third of this group lives in poverty. This is directly related to the limited opportunities of this group for education and employment. The lack of a proper infrastructure in state, private and education institutions, together with social prejudice and discrimination in education and employment are the main factors that reduce the developmental opportunities for this group. During 2020/21, the GIZ (YES&DIMAK projects) trained about 45 counsellors, advisors, social workers, psychologists and staff from NGOs which support

students/people with disabilities. The training was focused on providing job searching skills training for such groups.

## 7 USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Kosovo's education system and public employment services are supported by technology which serves as work tools for teachers, career counsellors, and other career guidance practitioners.

### 7.1 Platform Busulla.COM

Busulla.COM is offered both as a web and mobile app interface and facilitates five modules / phases of the career guidance process: (i) self-recognition, (ii) exploration of occupations, (iii) exploration of education institutions and training providers, (iv) identification of vacancies, and (v) online advisor. The use of such technology enables a combination of classroom learning with follow-up homework and activities for pupils and students.

However, the lack of a technical infrastructure at public schools together with the lack of teachers' digital skills to use the system remain challenges that continue to impede the success of Life and Work as a curricular subject and the career orientation process for Kosovo's youth. Another challenge remains the difficulty to access up-to-date labour market information due to the widespread level of informality and lack of reporting mechanisms which could feed the information systems and databases.

The SBCCs' staff has been trained separately to use Busulla.COM as part of their center-based and virtual services. Also other institutions are organizing training sessions on an ad-hoc basis on using the technology.

### 7.2 Employment Management Information System (EMIS)

EMIS is a tool used by Employment Offices within the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK) and serves to manage the data of jobseekers, employers and training providers. SIMP has been designed and customized for career counsellors who offer public employment services on a daily basis. EMIS allows for employers to register and to register their job vacancies. This is a very good matching tool which has been used by career counsellors across all Employment Offices for matching jobseekers with job vacancies advertised by employers.

### 7.3 Kosovo Labour Market Barometer

The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce in close corporation with project ALLED2 (2019-2023) funded by the European Union in Kosovo (IPA 2018), co-financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation, and implemented by the Austrian Development Agency recently introduced the **Kosovo Labour Market Barometer**. The barometer is of special importance, because it connects information among different institutions as follows: the Employment Agency; Education Management Information System; Higher Education Management Information System; Tax Administration of Kosovo; Business Registration Agency in Kosovo; Kosovo Civil Registration Agency; Kosovo Pension Registration Agency; National Qualifications Agency in Kosovo; National Agency for Quality Assurance of Kosovo; Statistical Agency of Kosovo. It presents real-time data based on the interoperability of 12 different national databases.

### 7.4 The Skills Barometer

The above-mentioned project ALLED 2 established in 2021 and the Kosovo Skills Barometer 1.0. to serve the needs of employers and policy makers by supporting the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce-KCC for the systematic development of Training Needs Assessment. The Skills Barometer is a tool for VET planning and future skills and competencies needed in labour market.

The Skills Barometer in Kosovo will strongly support evidence-based policymaking, planning and reform, as well as future career planners in relation to the specific skills and job requirements required for the labour market.

## 7.5 Kosovo Job Portal

The web-based “Kosovo Job Portal” (KJP) <https://aprk.rks-gov.net> is available through the Kosovo Employment Agency and will be linked in the Employment Management Information System (EMIS) in order to provide all employment services online by Kosovo Employment Agency. The KJP platform is developed and designed to provide services consisting of advertisements of job vacancies and matching jobseekers registered in the EMIS with employers.

## 7.6 Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP)

Available in the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers / Department of Social Policy and Families and Kosovo Employment Agency. It is a module that enables two-way communication and links data between the Employment Management Information System (EMIS) at the Kosovo Employment Agency and the Social Assistance System (SAS) at the Department of Social Policy and Families. This makes it possible to synchronize data with other public registers that are important for the processes of active inclusion in the labour market, and for adapting the Social Assistance Scheme to the labour demand.

## 7.7 Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Education management information systems (EMIS) facilitate the decision-making, resource planning, strategy building, monitoring and evaluation of the educational systems through a rich set of analytical and statistical tools. The system efficiently tracks and helps the development of the educational process for every pre-university education institution, including kindergarten, pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary schools which enables the real-time monitoring of both pupils’ and teachers’ performance. This information provides also statistical data on student drop-out levels.

## 7.8 Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS)

The Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS 2017) integrates public and private higher education institutions, produces various statistical reports on the number of students and the programmes of higher education institutions.

## 8 Quality of the provision of career development support services within a culture of continuous improvements

Currently, there are no quality standards nor any quality assurance framework on career guidance service in Kosovo, which includes a (i) definition of standards for career quality services, and a (ii) quality assurance framework, which covers systematic service measurement, comparison and service provision by standards, self-assessment or external monitoring of standards implementation, and the provision of feedback on the provided services. It also needs strategic coordination between the various stakeholders to identify what would be a successful mechanism to ensure the quality of services provided in relation to career guidance.

### 8.1 Standards

Donors supporting the establishment of SBCCs are planning to introduce standards for quality services in future for VET and school-based career centers.

In 2017, the Professional Standard for Career Advisor was developed, verified and approved by the NQA. Based on professional standards, LuxDev has supported the Level 5 curriculum development for Career Counselling qualifications. The program has been delivered for 24 career counsellors, but this program is currently not active for unexplained reasons.

There are no quality standards or quality assurance framework which includes: a definition of standards for career quality services, service measurement, self-assessment or external monitoring of standards implementation.

### 8.2 Staffing

Public career counselling and employment services for the unemployed, jobseekers, and employers are offered by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK) which is part of the MFLT. While the MFLT is responsible for drafting policies related to employment and professional development, EARK coordinates and organizes annual activities at the national level. This agency is organized throughout three departments: (i) Labour market, (ii) Finances and Services, (iii) Professional development. EARK has 35 Employment Offices (EOs) and 8 Vocational Training Centers (VTCs). The role of EOs is to provide career counselling services to the unemployed, to help them identify professional development opportunities (through VTC programs or private training providers), and to place jobseekers on the job.

The number of employees set for the National Employment Agency by Regulation No. 15/2015 is 288, while the law “On budget allocations and budget in the Republic of Kosovo for 2021”, provided financial support for the employment of a maximum of 260 staff members. Currently, the Employment Agency works with a total number of 230 official staff, 28 officials allocated at the Central Office, 132 working on the local employment offices and 70 in the Vocational Training Centers.

The total number of the employees working directly with clients is 100 (Information Employee and Employment Counsellors) and 75 of them (Employment Counsellors) are responsible among other tasks to provide career counselling services.

**The Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship (C4EE)** Swisscontact project (see full project description in section 8) intervention area was **Capacity building (training of coaches)** with 14 counsellors (5 Females) from EARK was implemented in cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Lucerne, Switzerland. 28 training days, divided into 9 blocks, were conducted during the period September 2017-November 2018. 14 counsellors were certified on implementing the “Coaching for Employment” approach. Five counsellors were certified by the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences with a “Certificate of Advanced Studies” on the “Coaching for Employment” approach.

### Limitations to career counselling entitlements in public employment services

The *lack of human resources* which is highlighted in the Employment Policy for the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo 2019 – 2021, remains a major concern. Since the Employment Agency employees have civil servant status, *recruitments have been suspended until further notice* and the Agency is only allocated budget for the current number of employees. In the beginning of 2020, around 10 percent of the staff was entitled to retirement and under the current legislation their replacement is impossible. The Employment agency has limited staff to deal with clients (75 staff working in 35 PES) among other tasks provide also career counseling<sup>28</sup>.

In 2020, public employment services had 94 employment counsellors who had to offer services to 168,980 people registered as unemployed which means caseload for a counsellor was 1,798 for 1 counsellor (1798:1).

The Law on Employment Agency and bylaws for the Public Employment Agency-EARK are more restrictive in nature for contracting services. It includes provisions for contracting training but not for employment services and/or for complementary services. This limits the contracting opportunities by the public employment agency-EARK to only non-public providers that provide accredited training. This leaves out the opportunity to contract non-public employment service providers for certain types of services which is also encouraged and requested by the 2019-2022 Policy Document for the EARK<sup>29</sup>.

School teachers in lower secondary education delivering career education module as part of curriculum field Life and Work are trained only how to use online platform Busulla.COM. Teachers are not clear about career guidance concepts because teachers lack further continuous capacity building training and exchange experiences (lack of networking system) and a DOTS model has not been introduced to help students make career decisions and develop career management skills.

Most of the teachers working as career counsellors in SBCCs also have part-time teaching jobs which work against delivering quality services in a career center. They are trained by donor projects on an ad-hoc basis and training is done by semi-professional trainers. These centers are mostly focused on attracting new students and organizing practical learning but not on preparing students for transition from school to work through offering job search skills training.

A small number of officials working in university career centers are not certified but have had opportunities to receive ad-hoc training and they conduct study visits through various projects.

Staff working in youth organizations delivering job searching skills training are not always trained to do this work.

## 8.3 Quality of data and information

Busulla.COM provides occupational information with videos which were developed by different projects.

Information about vacancies is advertised on government web sites or private job portals (Kosova Jobs, Portal Pune, etc.).

Kosova Job is the largest employment network in Kosovo certified by Bureau Veritas with ISO. This platform provides for the possibility of designing CVs; and calculating salaries and promoting job vacancies. The job vacancies publication fees are paid by the employer based on fees in the link attached: <https://kosovajob.com/publiko>. Akademi Pune and [www.rroga.com](http://www.rroga.com) are recent platforms build in addition to the “KosovaJob”. Those platforms are aimed at informing, raising awareness and educating the public on the labour market.

There is no tracer study system in place to track the school to work transition of graduates, although certain VET school-based career centers have started independently to implement tracer studies.

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> [https://helvetas-ks.org/eye/file/repository/COOPERATION\\_BETWEEN\\_THE\\_MINISTRY.pdf](https://helvetas-ks.org/eye/file/repository/COOPERATION_BETWEEN_THE_MINISTRY.pdf)

The 2018 ETF piloted tracer study survey indicates that most of the students have continued their education to university studies, 30.6% have found a regular job, and the rest are either not employed (11.1%), or are continuing with further vocational training<sup>30</sup>.

The European Union support for vocational education and training, professional requalification and occupation project, KSV/801 (2020-2022), is in the process of establishing a tracer studies implementation support model, preparing a training program involving relevant staff members of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, the Employment agency of the Republic of Kosovo and the Agency for vocational education and training and adult education to support the effective utilization and monitoring of tracer studies implementation<sup>31</sup>.

Some donors do surveys of students to check the impact of their career services (Career Clubs), but this is on an ad-hoc basis and just for the needs of their projects.

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<sup>30</sup> ETF (2019), *Tracer Study of Vocational Education and Training of graduates in Kosovo*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

## 9 CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

### Summary of the key findings and recommendations

There are strategies and laws which provide for the delivery of career guidance services for all users (students, jobseekers, youth, etc.), however there are challenges in implementing these laws, strategies that lack institutional support, and changes to the government and its priorities. There is a need to develop secondary legislation to ensure the sustainability of school-based career centers and improve career counselling in the public employment service.

There is no inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination working group at the national level (Education, Employment, Youth, etc.) in the field of career development support although three ministries have already made plans for cooperation in the field. A local career guidance counsel has been set up in Peja municipality but it still needs more work to ensure its sustainability as it has been established and supported by donor. Moreover, donor coordination meetings started in the field of VET before the pandemic but these meetings are held rarely now. EARK is planning to cooperate with VET schools to support student transition from school to work.

The Career Education module as a part of curriculum field “Life and Work” was piloted for students in lower and secondary education but there were challenges to implementing it and for this reason the MESTI is in the process of evaluating the piloting of it and a national model needs to be developed to deliver career education in pre-university education. School-based career centers offer career services for students, the number of such centres established across the country is still small but the MESTI plans to establish other centers. Career information and counselling services are delivered at university level for a limited number of students. Jobseekers registered in public employment service have counselling sessions with employment advisers but this service is limited. Young people benefit from training offered by youth organizations in job-searching skills but this training offer is limited only to a small group of young people. The MCYS plans additional support for the youth organizations which play important role in outreaching youth from disadvantaged groups. Career development services for formally employed people are offered only for employees working in big companies.

Funding commitments are present across public, private, and civil society organizations, although one of the challenges with public funding is its lack of consistency. The MESTI, MCYS, and MFLT have allocated funding to career guidance in different ways, through teacher payment, subsidizing training programmes, and providing public employment services. Private sector funding is also available, but the donor community has made the largest contribution by introducing and financing new interventions and practices.

The number of people using ICT for career guidance services is still small considering the high rate of home-based internet access in the country. There are no specialized services within public employment offices for providing access to career guidance services for people with a disability, or for other vulnerable groups. However, EARK is planning to work in future in this area.

A variety of digital tools and platforms are available to different public institutions for career guidance. However, a common challenge among all of them is the lack of sustainability both for their maintenance as well as usability. Many public servants need additional capacity enhancement to be able to use these advanced technologies. In the absence of the required skillsets, these systems in many cases remain unused.

There is a level 5 qualification developed for career counsellors and 24 counsellors were trained but the MESTI is planning to develop a new qualification which is compatible with other countries for training career guidance practitioners, and could be used for training career guidance practitioners across education, employment and youth. There is a small number of employment advisers because of staff retiring and the restrictions on recruiting new staff because of the civil servant status. EARK plans training for current employment advisers in career counselling to deal with unemployed young people from disadvantaged groups.

Most of the teachers working as career counsellors in SBCCs also have part time teaching jobs which is not optimal for delivering quality services in career centers. The MESTI is in the process of standardizing the SBCCs to make necessary improvements to enhance the operations of such career centers before replicating it to other schools. Staff working in career centers and youth centers has not always attended certified training. Busulla.COM has occupational information with videos which were

developed by different projects. Information about vacancies is advertised on government web sites or private job portals (Kosova Jobs, Portal Pune, etc.).

### **Three priority policy areas of recommendations for Kosovo**

The recommendations do not represent the final solutions but are aimed at guiding policy and practice discussions. They follow the key pillars of this report and cover the system, provider, and practitioner levels:

#### **Coordination and cooperation**

- Establish an inter-ministerial working group for cooperation and coordination at the national level with a secretariat (including Education, Employment, Youth, etc.) in the field of career guidance, additionally integrating career guidance as a topic into existing inter-ministerial working groups would be welcomed.

#### **Services**

- Creating a unified model of career education (as a preventive measure) and advice at all levels and types of school, including mandatory career education, students' practice periods in companies and other events, the further expansion of school-based career centers in VET schools, the training of teachers/ career center staff, the stable funding of busulla.com, etc.

#### **Quality, professionalization and continuous improvement**

- Enhancing career counselling for jobseekers and inactive people by focusing primarily on the recruitment of new PES counsellors, their training, the revision of ALMPs, helping NEETs including inactive and disconnected young people to engage and find gainful economic activity (reactivate).

#### **Detailed recommendations**

##### **Policy framework**

##### **Short-term**

- Develop a long-term vision for system development (theory of change) as a basis for donor involvement in the medium to long term.

##### Medium term to long-term

- Ensure a legal basis for career education and career guidance in pre-university education and higher education.
- Ensure a concrete legal basis for career education and career guidance in youth policy, building on Article 7 of the Law on empowerment and participation of youth that provides the basis for the functioning of youth centers in the municipalities of Kosovo.
- Regulate the services of the career centers by law, ensuring that they are standardized and supported on a national level with resources for the implementation of activities in a quality and sustainable manner.

#### **Coordination and Cooperation**

##### **Short-term**

- Establish an inter-ministerial working group for cooperation and coordination at the national level with a secretariat (including Education, Employment, Youth, etc.) in the field of career guidance, additionally integrating career guidance as a topic into existing inter-ministerial working groups would be welcomed.
  - Based on the reviews of existing activities for training career guidance practitioners, for career education and career guidance (see recommendations under "quality" below), bring all donors working on career education and guidance together to act as a single unit in future standardized activities across education, employment and youth.
- Develop models for cooperation on career guidance at local levels between education providers, employers, donors and NGOs, learning from good practice such as from the municipality career guidance counsel in the municipality of Peja; ensure the involvement of employment offices.

### **Medium term to long-term**

- Establish local career guidance counsels in all municipalities.
- Develop a Strategic Framework and communication plan for Career Advocacy to promote the employment services to students of VET institutions. The Career Advocacy Plan should include students, parents, private sector businesses, employment and training institutions to inform them about trends in the labour market.

### **Services**

#### **Short-term**

- Create a unified model for career education (as a preventive measure) and guidance at all levels and in all types of school, including mandatory career education, student practice periods in companies and other events, the further expansion of school-based career centers in VET schools, the training of teachers/ career center staff, the stable funding of busulla.com, etc.
- Mainstream career education as a mandatory part of the general curriculum in all pre-university education, taking into consideration career guidance approaches developed under donor initiatives such as EU/KosVET II Project, GIZ.
  - Involve parents' organizations in the provision of information about working life, occupations, and situations on the labour market, etc.
  - Offer work-based learning opportunities in education institutions and in areas under municipality control, such as in the case of the Career Center at the University of Prishtina-UP that hires up to 6 interns each year.
- Base career education and career guidance on solid LMI to help young people develop and move into areas with real opportunities; integrate a Skills Barometer in career education.
- Develop specific services and approaches such as outreach strategies for inactive groups, especially women, in close cooperation with strategic partners such as social workers, youth workers, NGOs, organizations supporting (social) entrepreneurship, religious community leaders, etc.
- Develop specific services and outreach strategies for workers in the informal sector to reintegrate them into further learning and incrementally into the formal sector.
- Develop special services for NEETs including for Roma and Ashkali.
- Ensure that public employment service has a dedicated staff, and adequate methodologies to work with youth in general and NEETs in particular.

### **Medium term to long-term**

- Develop particular services for workers and workers in non-standard forms of employment, particularly for the large amount of workers on temporary contracts.
- Extend the target group of the public employment service from all registered jobseekers to all citizens, while ensuring resources (staff, diversified methodologies based on the needs of client groups, funding, ICT, etc.); use ICT to increase efficiency.

### **Funding**

#### **Short-term**

- Ensure sustainable funding by having donors commit to long term investment in the development of a career development support system based on a long-term vision for system development (theory of change).
- Identify innovative funding opportunities for career guidance in educational institutions involving also employers and employer organizations (e.g. private sector in relation to relevant VET schools) as beneficiaries of positive career guidance outcomes.

### **Medium to long-term**

- Ensure funding from municipalities for the online platform Busulla.com as a key instrument for career education.

- Establish a national training fund for supporting career guidance services with the contribution of all government stakeholders and donors.

## **Access**

### **Short-term**

- Use the high rate of home-based internet access in the country to offer services through the use of ICT.

### **Medium term to long-term**

- Ensure access to material that is available for specific groups (handbooks, manuals, flyers, booklets), and ensure career information and counselling for people with a disability and other vulnerable groups.

## **Use of technology**

### **Short-term**

- Review the existing use of technology in career guidance to see how they can be usefully integrated into traditional services.
- Assess to what extent the Kosovo Job Portal can be a possible one stop entry point for bringing together all services across education, employment, and youth.
- Establish a database for sharing information at government level with all the ministries and donors involved in supporting Active Labour Market Programmes.

### **Medium term to long-term**

- Integrate the various ICT instruments.

## **Quality, professionalization and continuous improvement:**

### **Short term**

- Enhance career counselling for jobseekers and inactive groups by focusing primarily on the recruitment of new PES counsellors, their training, the revision of ALMPs, helping NEETs including encouraging inactive & disconnected young people into active education and gainful economic activity (reactivate).
- Review existing career education curricula/programs in education institutions (including from donor initiatives such as EU/KosVET II Project or GIZ or USAID ASSET) and analyse what is currently in use, and how they can be built upon to ensure standardized learning activities.
- Review existing “career office” approaches and examine how to build on existing resources; learn from private school practices, from VET career centers for all education institutions, and from career clubs in upper secondary schools.
  - Evaluate, externally and independently the piloting of all school-based career centers supported by different donors in order to decide whether to disseminate, freeze or even withdraw, if necessary, in order to save resources and ensure sustainability
- Analyse how many careers teachers and trainers are actually active in educational institutions and see what they do; learn from private school practices.
- Provide further capacity development for the SBCC staff to enable them to perform technically and administratively.
- Integrate career management skills in the TVET curriculum to develop skills to enable them to make a smooth transition from school to work.
- Use qualification level 5 for career counsellors that already exist and adapt it for training for the staff in employment offices, youth organizations, etc.

### **Medium term to long-term**

- Ensure that Vocational Training Centers have a counsellor available for trainees experiencing difficulties in their program and to help them in developing job searching skills and finding an internship at the end of the training program.

- Establish a postgraduate course on career guidance for Career Guidance Practitioners in close cooperation with other countries in the region (Western Balkans).
- Develop a skills-based qualification for career guidance practitioners (Trainer-of-Trainers on CG), with the support of the international agencies, to offer qualifications in CG to people working in community centers (NGO, Youth Centers, etc.).
- Train school psychologists to extend their role to dealing with career counselling issues for students with learning difficulties.
- Identify and train people to be qualified in providing individual services (accredited professional cadres in the area of career guidance and counselling) that are working in career guidance, and establish networks for them.
- Develop a tracer study for university career centers to track the number of students who are employed after doing an internship, etc.

## ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AIIP	Active Inclusion Integration Platform
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programme
ASSET	After School Support for Teens
AUK	American University of Kosovo
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
AWPK	Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo
CDBE	Career Development in Basic Education
CEG / CG	Career Education and Guidance / Career Guidance
C4EE	Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship
CGIS	Career Guidance Information System
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DIMAK	German Information Centre for Migration, Vocational Training and Career
DOTS	Decision, Opportunity, Transition, Self
DVV	Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association
EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
EMIS (EDU)	Education Management Information System
EMIS (EMP)	Employment Management Information System
EO	Employment Office
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EYE	Enhancing Youth Employment
FHI-360	A non-profit human development organization based in the United States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ / GTZ	German Development Agency
HELVETAS	An independent Swiss development organization
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IVET / VET	Initial Vocational Education and Training / Vocational Education and Training
KCC	Kosovo Chamber of Commerce
KCDF	Kosovo Career Development Foundation
KCF	Kosovo Challenge Fund

KCSF	Kosovo Civil Society Foundation
KEC	Kosovo Education Center
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
KIESA	Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency
MIRECK	Metal Industry and Renewable Energy Cluster of Kosovo
KJP	Kosovo Job Portal
LuxDev	The aid and development agency of the government of Luxembourg
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports
MED	Municipal Education Directorate
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCGRC	National Career Guidance Resource Center
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEET	Neither in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQA	National Qualification Authority
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJT	On-Job Training
OSCE	The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PES	Public Employment Services
SAS	Social Assistance System
SBCC	School Based Career Center
SDC	Swiss Development Corporation
SE	Self Employed
SIDA	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
STIKK	Kosovo Association for Information and Communication Technology
TOKA	Non-governmental organization that supports education and skills development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
U.S.	United States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programm
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP	University of Prishtina
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dolar

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VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WS	Wage Subsidies
YES	Youth Employment Service

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