

TORINO PROCESS SYSTEM MONITORING REPORT: KOSOVO* (2023)



* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence – hereinafter 'Kosovo'.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Torino Process monitoring was carried out in partnership with national authorities, experts, and stakeholders in Kosovo under the coordination of Ms Majlinda Rizvanolli, External Advisor for Vocational Education and Training VET, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) of Kosovo, who is also the national coordinator for Kosovo for the current round of the Torino Process.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) wishes to thank the national authorities of Kosovo, Ms Majlinda Rizvanolli, and all national stakeholders for their invaluable contribution and the provision of the accurate and extensive information in support of this monitoring exercise.

This monitoring report was prepared by a team led by Mihaylo Milovanovitch, Senior Human Capital Development Expert and Coordinator for System Change and Lifelong Learning at the ETF. The report follows a proprietary monitoring methodology developed by the same team and is based on evidence collected, processed, analysed, and verified by the ETF and by national stakeholders in Kosovo under the overall coordination of Ms Majlinda Rizvanolli as the national Torino Process coordinator for Kosovo and with contributions by Mr. Kushtrim Bajrami as national Torino Process expert for Kosovo.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Scope of system performance monitoring:** The Torino Process monitoring covers three major areas of commitment to lifelong learners: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). These areas are divided into eight monitoring dimensions: access and participation in Area A; quality, relevance, excellence, and innovation in Area B; and system management/administration and resources in Area C.
- **Access and attractiveness:** In Kosovo, initial VET programmes are relatively popular, attracting 53% of upper secondary students in 2022/23. However, vocational schools often serve as a fallback option for those failing to enrol in gymnasiums. Due to the limited variety of formal and non-formal opportunities within CVET, participation remains low. Similar accessibility issues are evident in other opportunities for learning beyond VET. The VET system exhibits high progression and graduation rates, although actual graduate trajectories remain unclear due to insufficient data. The transition between parallel educational tracks needs better flexibility and clarity. Lack of secondary VET student graduation data and the presence of dropouts from initial VET studies underscore the need for improved evaluation of student retention and graduation pathways.
- **Quality and relevance:** The delivery of basic skills and key competencies within formal education in Kosovo reveals serious challenges. Kosovo's underperformance in the PISA reveals students' low proficiency in problem-solving, reading, and mathematics. There's a pronounced performance gap between vocational and general education students, equating to nearly a year of schooling. Adult learners also face barriers in acquiring key skills. Surveys show a significant portion of respondents failing core literacy tests and showing limited proficiency in numeracy and problem-solving. In terms of relevance, VET in Kosovo prioritises environmental sustainability but struggles with digitalisation. The system has by and large not been adapted to labour market needs, yet, except for some pilot VET programmes in selected VET institutions. However, new measures aim to align vocational profiles with industry demands, suggesting potential for future improvements.
- **Excellence and innovation:** Kosovo's VET system has room for improvement in all domains of excellence, from pedagogy and professional development to governance and social inclusion. Innovation in lifelong learning access has shown progress, with increased participation rates. There's significant commitment towards boosting participation and graduation, and systemic innovation in learning and training quality is notably improving. However, innovation in aligning learning and training with labour market needs still presents opportunities for strategic enhancements. These insights suggest potential for substantial growth in both excellence and innovation.
- **System management and organisation:** Kosovo's VET system faces obstacles in gathering, applying, and integrating data, hindering policy optimisation and resource allocation. The involvement of private entities in the planning and delivery of learning opportunities is limited, indicating room for improved participatory governance. The system shows strength in quality assurance mechanisms, outperforming others in these domains. However, there's a deficit in the professional capacity of VET leadership. The system has an above-average level of international exposure. While there is robust financial investment, the current funding formula doesn't account for individual student needs, and the transformation of financial resources into necessary infrastructure remains a challenge. Hence, the system struggles to enhance the quality and effectiveness of VET and requires a strategic approach to address these issues.
- **Quality and reliability of monitoring evidence:** The monitoring results of Kosovo are somewhat less internationally comparable than those of other countries in the Torino Process, on average. They are also much more susceptible to bias in international comparison – a bias which manifests itself in a pronounced tendency to be self-critical in self-assessing the performance of national VET policy and system, which may mask areas of achievement and prevent the identification of good practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus and scope of monitoring

This report summarises the results of monitoring VET system performance in Kosovo, initiated in the context of the Torino Process in 2022 and completed in 2023.² “Performance” describes the extent to which the vocational education and training (VET) system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL). “VET system”³ refers to the network of institutions, people, policies, practices, resources, and methodologies in a country and the way in which they are organised to provide individuals of any age with the practical skills, knowledge, and competencies needed for specific occupations, trades, or professions.

The focus of monitoring is on the contribution of initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) to the learning activities of youth and adults in any learning setting (formal and non-formal), undertaken to improve their knowledge, skills, competences, and qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. The purpose of the Torino Process monitoring exercise is to provide decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders with a reliable basis for informed decisions about policy improvement, resource allocation, strategy design, and follow-up analysis in support of lifelong learning.

The monitoring framework which underpins this report covers three major areas of commitment to lifelong learners: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). These areas are divided into eight monitoring dimensions: access and participation in Area A; quality, relevance, excellence, and innovation in Area B; and system management/administration and resources in Area C. Within these areas and their dimensions, the Torino Process tracks a total of 30 system deliverables (outcomes)⁴ - the extent to which they are being delivered and how equitably they are distributed to thirteen groups of learners according to age, gender, socio-economic background, labour market and migration status, and typical learning setting.

The monitoring provides information in the form of a system performance index (SPI) for each of these outcomes and learner groups they serve to a total of 82 indices per country.⁵ The SPIs can range from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates maximum or best performance. The indices describe VET system performance in formal and non-formal learning settings for youth and adults, females and males, disadvantaged learners, long-term unemployed jobseekers, economically inactive populations, and first-generation migrants.

This report showcases a selection of key monitoring results based on those indices, as follows: overall performance by broad monitoring dimension (Section 2.1), performance by specific area and system deliverable (Section 2.2 and subsections), and performance in support of specific groups of

² The Torino Process is a multiannual review of vocational education and training (VET) in countries in East and South-East Europe (including Turkey), Central Asia, and the South and East Mediterranean region, which the ETF is carrying out in partnership with countries in these regions on a regular basis since 2010. For more information see <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/torino-process-policy-analysis-and-progress-monitoring>

³ This report may use “VET”, “VET system”, and “system” interchangeably.

⁴ Further in the report “outcomes” and “deliverables” are used interchangeably.

⁵ In rare cases where evidence is missing, the number of SPIs for a country can be lower.

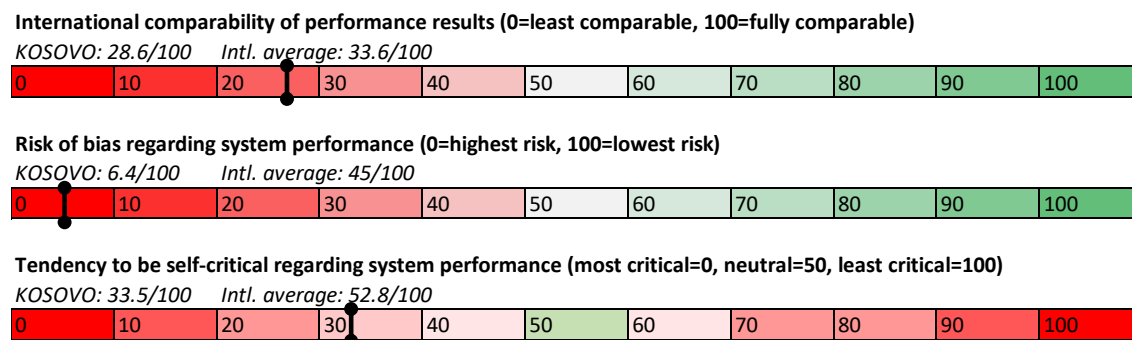
learners (Section 2.3). The report also provides an international average score⁶ for these results for reference purposes, and, where relevant, it showcases some of the disaggregated data used to calculate the system performance indices. Links to the full dataset for Kosovo and the Torino Process monitoring framework and methodology can be found in this document's third and final section.

1.2 Comparability and reliability of monitoring data

The evidence for this monitoring report was collected and analysed in several steps from September 2022 until April 2023. After an initial round of collecting internationally comparable indicators for each of the system outcomes and learner groups covered by the monitoring framework, the ETF compiled a supplementary questionnaire for national authorities and stakeholders in Kosovo to gather information about outcomes and groups of learners for which such indicators were missing. The responses to the questionnaire were quantified and integrated with the rest of the monitoring data into a repository of mixed evidence, which was then used to calculate the system performance indices presented in this report.

In addition to messages about system performance, the monitoring delivers information also about the international comparability of results of each country, the extent to which these results may be susceptible to bias, and how self-critical a country is when it reports about its policy and system performance for external monitoring purposes. This is possible because the monitoring methodology foresees keeping accurate records about the availability, origin and type of evidence used to calculate the 82 performance indices and corresponding results for each country, including Kosovo.

**FIGURE 1. COMPARABILITY AND CONSISTENCY OF MONITORING RESULTS:
KOSOVO (2023)**



The monitoring results of Kosovo are somewhat less internationally comparable than those of other countries in the Torino Process, on average. They are also much more susceptible to bias in international comparison – a bias which manifests itself in a pronounced tendency to be self-critical in self-assessing the performance of national VET policy and system, which may mask areas of achievement and prevent the identification of, and learning from, good policies and practices.

⁶ “International average” refers to the average for countries participating in the Torino Process. At the time of preparation of this monitoring report, the evidence collection for some countries was still ongoing. As additional countries complete the monitoring exercise, the international averages shown in this report may change.

2. MONITORING RESULTS: KOSOVO

2.1 Policy and system performance in 2023: overall results

The Torino Process monitoring draws on multiple, often disparate, information sources and data. To facilitate a quick, efficient, and focused communication of key messages despite the diversity of information collected, the reporting of monitoring results aggregates the evidence in ways which facilitate a quick overview of system performance without sacrificing too much detail.

The eight monitoring dimensions mentioned in the previous section are the top layer of reporting in this respect. They capture VET system performance in various domains, the selection of which is aligned with national and international country commitments and reform and development priorities concerning learning. These eight dimensions are described as follows:

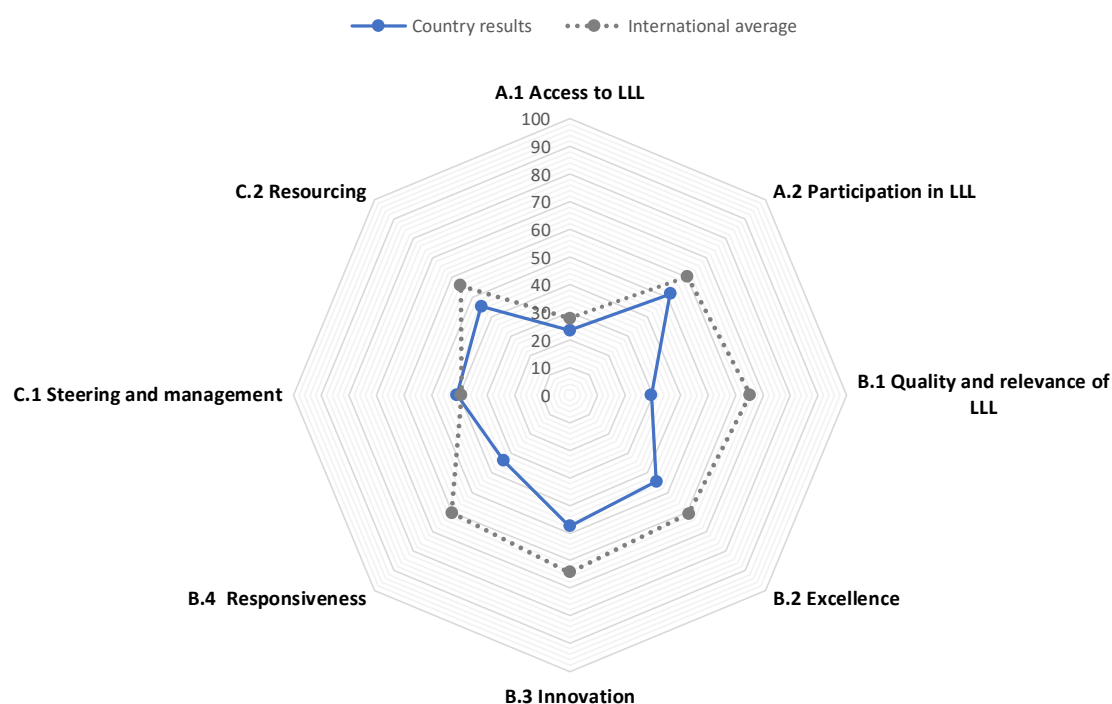
TABLE 1. DIMENSIONS OF POLICY AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MONITORING THROUGH THE TORINO PROCESS

No.	Dimension	Description
1	Access to learning	This dimension captures the degree to which initial VET (IVET), continuing VET (CVET), and other adult learning opportunities to which VET could contribute, are accessible and attractive for learners irrespective of who they are and why they wish to engage in learning.
2	Participation in learning	This dimension captures the likelihood of VET learners to survive and thrive in the education and training system by looking at its vertical and horizontal permeability, that is whether learners can switch between general and vocational pathways and between formal and non-formal learning, as well as whether they complete their learning.
3	Quality and relevance	This dimension captures the extent to which learners in IVET and CVET are provided with basic skills and key competences, whether their learning has exposure to, and is relevant for, employment, and also whether they are provided with adequate career guidance.
4	Excellence	This dimension captures the presence of system-wide policies and measures to promote highest quality practices and results in teaching and training, content design and provision, governance and VET provider management, and equity and social inclusion.
5	Innovation	This dimension captures the presence of innovative practices and priorities on system level in the areas of access to learning, support for successful completion of learning, and quality of learning and training outcomes.
6	VET system responsiveness	This dimension captures the extent to which curricula for youth and adults consider themes of significance for sustainability, climate change awareness, and digitalisation, as well as whether the IVET and CVET systems are responsive to labour market needs, demographic changes, and socio-economic developments.
7	Steering and management	This dimension captures the availability of evidence for informed decision-making, the degree to which governance of VET is participatory, the presence and transparency of quality assurance arrangements, the quality and capacity of staff in leadership positions, and the degree of internationalisation of IVET and CVET.
8	Resourcing	This dimension captures the adequacy and efficiency of human and financial resources in IVET and CVET, and the extent to which the material base for learning and training is adequate, that is – conducive to effective teaching, training, and learning.

This chapter of the report focuses on examining the performance of VET in Kosovo across these eight dimensions of monitoring. VET performance in these dimensions displays both successful practices and areas where enhancement and further development are required.

The first dimension in focus is access to learning (Dimension A.1). The data suggests that Kosovo falls somewhat short of the international average in attracting participants to the lifelong learning opportunities it offers. This finding signifies that although such learning opportunities are present in the initial VET, the VET system must strive towards making these more accessible and attractive for potential learners, regardless of their backgrounds and motivations for learning. On the other hand, in the continuing VET system, the situation is quite the opposite. Many young people express interest in pursuing training, leading to long waiting lists. However, the main issue lies in the scarcity of available offers, particularly those of high quality.

FIGURE 2. INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE BY MONITORING DIMENSION, KOSOVO AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical⁷ index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

To complement access, the Torino Process looks into the degree to which learners have a chance to participate successfully in their learning (Dimension A.2). Although still below the international average, here the VET system of Kosovo exhibits a more robust performance, indicating that learners who enter the VET system have a good chance to navigate and successfully complete their education

⁷ The Torino Process makes a distinction between theoretical index range and index range used for reporting purposes. For reporting purposes, rare instances of extreme values on the low end (SPI < 10) and on the high end (SPI > 90) of the index scale are truncated at the upper (10) and lower (90) decile end. This means that the reporting does not discriminate SPI values below 10 and above 90.

and training journey. However, the contrast between accessibility and participation suggests potential entry-level barriers that could be examined further to widen the access to VET.

Exploring the quality and relevance of learning (Dimension B.1), the monitoring results show that the performance of VET in Kosovo is considerably lower than the international average. While strive to be equipped with basic skills and key competences, efforts are required to ensure their learning is more aligned with employment requirements and labour market needs.

In terms of fostering excellence (Dimension B.2), Kosovo attains a higher score than in most other dimensions of monitoring, demonstrating a commitment to high-quality practices in various areas of VET policy and practice, albeit to a lesser degree than other countries on average. There is also room for encouraging more innovation in VET (Dimension B.3), just like there is room for boosting the responsiveness of VET to external developments (Dimension B.4).

Responsiveness and flexibility are essential domains of performance as they reflect the ability of VET to adapt to external demands, such as changes in the labour market, demographic shifts, and socio-economic developments. While Kosovo exhibits some capacity in this respect, the VET system could and should be more agile and responsive.

Kosovo performs somewhat better than other countries with the steering and management of its VET system (SPI of 41 for Kosovo versus SPI of 39 for other countries in Dimension C.1), but the monitoring evidence reveals an opportunity to refine decision-making processes, enhance governance participation, and increase transparency in quality assurance. VET governance is indeed an area where Kosovo is undertaking efforts at improvement, with the help of the donor community. Similarly, the resourcing aspect of VET (Dimension C.2), indicates a need for more efficient utilization of human and financial resources for further strengthening the VET system's foundation.

2.2 Policy and system performance in specific areas of monitoring and against specific outcomes

VET performance in Kosovo in the eight monitoring dimensions presented above is driven by 30 policy and system outcomes. It is through these outcomes that the IVET and CVET subsystems work to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders, particularly of youth and adult learners. This section of the monitoring report presents findings about system performance on the level of these deliverables.

To facilitate reading and the navigation of content, the section groups the presentation of the 30 outcomes by the three major areas of commitment to learners, which were introduced in the first section of this report: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). Reporting in Area B, the largest by the number of outcomes, is divided into B (1) and B (2).

2.2.1 Area A. Opportunities for lifelong learning: access and participation

In Area A (Access and participation in opportunities for LLL), the Torino Process tracks the first two of the monitoring dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – access/attractiveness and participation, with a total of six system outcomes. These outcomes include access to IVET, CVET, and other opportunities for lifelong learning, the vertical and horizontal permeability of the VET system, as well as the prospects of learners in IVET and CVET to graduate and - where relevant – progress to subsequent levels of education and training. The outcomes included under Area A are defined in Table 2.

Initial VET in Kosovo (Outcome A.1.1) emerges as a more accessible and attractive pathway in comparison to continuing VET (Outcome A.1.2). Recent years have witnessed a growing interest among young people in initial VET programmes, with 53% of students in upper secondary education attending vocational education and training schools in 2022/23.⁸ This level of orientation in vocational high schools is placing Kosovo in a comparable position to other developed EU countries. Despite this increase in enrolment, however, vocational schools often remain a secondary choice, particularly for students unable to enrol in gymnasiums. There are no specific admission criteria to enrol into VET at secondary level and many VET students see it as the “easier” track into higher education.

**TABLE 2. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING
AREA A: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION**

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
A.1.1	Access and attractiveness: initial VET	This outcome captures the degree to which initial VET is an attractive educational choice in comparison with other learning alternatives, and whether that choice is accessible to various target groups of learners.
A.1.2	Access and attractiveness: continuing VET	This outcome captures the degree to which continuing VET is an attractive choice in comparison with other skills development alternatives, as well as whether that choice is accessible to various target groups
A.1.3	Access to other opportunities for LLL	This outcome captures access to other opportunities for lifelong learning not covered by outcomes A.1.1 and A.1.2 and VET, such as active labour market policies (ALMPs)
A.2.1	Flexible pathways: vertical permeability	This outcome strives to capture the vertical permeability of the education and training system vis-à-vis initial and continuing VET, understood as possibility for transition between consecutive tracks of education and training (general and vocational).
A.2.2	Flexible pathways: horizontal permeability	This outcome strives to capture the horizontal permeability of the education and training system vis-à-vis initial and continuing VET, understood as the possibility for transition between parallel tracks of education and training (general and vocational), and between formal and non-formal learning settings
A.2.3	Progression and graduation of learners	This outcome refers to the degree of success (graduation, progression) of learners in VET, for instance in comparison with other education and training alternatives

Accessibility remains a key issue with respect to learning beyond initial education and training. The VET system in Kosovo consists of both formal and non-formal opportunities, with the former provided by licensed educational institutions using curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. The non-formal VET opportunities, mainly defined as continuing VET, include vocational training, adult compensatory education courses, and other adult learning opportunities. Due to the limited offer, only a small percentage (3.4%) of registered jobseekers (total number: 80 775 in 2022) attended programmes provided by Vocational Training Centres (VTCs).⁹ This indicates a lack of accessibility and available opportunities.

The monitoring findings also indicate that issues of accessibility aren't limited to VET but also extend to other lifelong learning opportunities (Outcome A.1.3). Active labour market measures, provided by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), face similar challenges with access. Only 2.5% of the total registered job seekers in 2022 benefited from such measures,¹⁰ suggesting a broader challenge affecting various learning opportunities available to individuals in Kosovo.

Permeability within the education system in terms of transitions between consecutive tracks of education and training, is possible in Kosovo (Outcome A.2.1), though there's considerable room for improvement to make these transitions more intuitive and seamless. Currently, completing compulsory

⁸ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

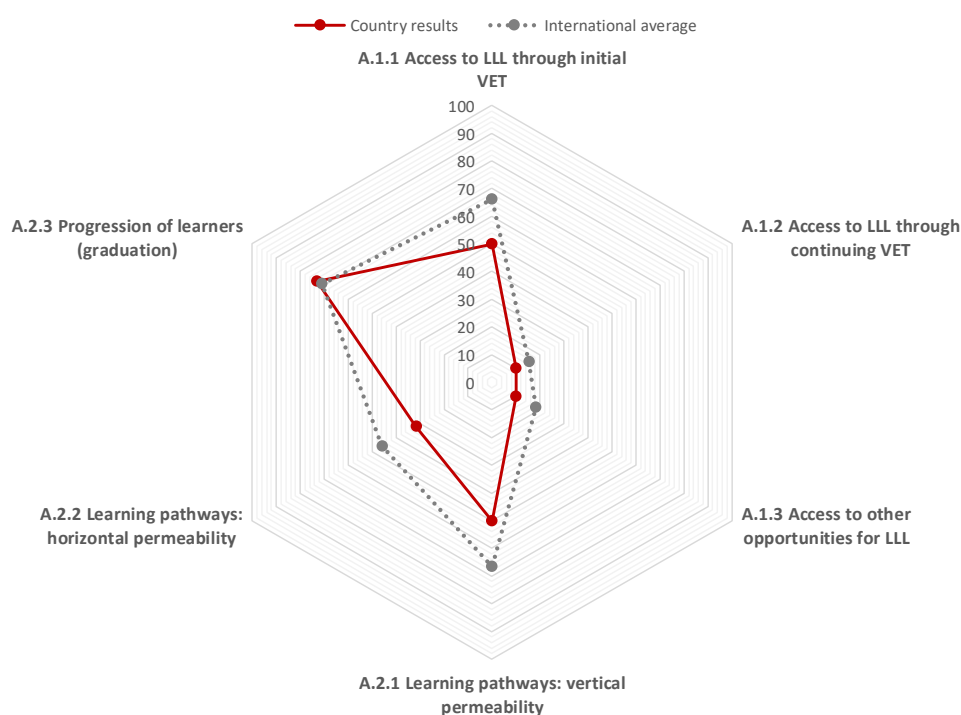
⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

education (the national qualifications framework of Kosovo – KQF/NQF 2) is the general requirement for admission into initial vocational programmes (NQF 4). Upon successful completion of the final exam, a vocational diploma is awarded. This serves as an entry requirement for tertiary vocational programmes (NQF 5). Level 4b programmes typically last 1-2 years and culminate in the award of a tertiary vocational diploma.¹¹ Level 5 programmes and higher last longer.

Notably, graduates of vocational schools can pursue these tertiary vocational programmes after passing the state Matura exam, a requirement for university admission after General Secondary Education. However, while many VET graduates continue their education at a higher level, the absence of tracer studies makes it challenging to estimate the number of VET graduates who utilize the various progression routes within the education system of Kosovo.

FIGURE 3. PROMOTING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, KOSOVO AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In terms of transitioning between parallel tracks of education and training or between formal and non-formal learning settings, the system must develop more flexibility (Outcome A.2.2). The transition between VET and general education pathways in Kosovo is currently underdeveloped, with no clear guidelines or procedures in place. Consequently, students often face difficulties when attempting to

¹¹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

transfer from one pathway to the other, emphasizing a need for greater coordination between the two systems and the development of clear pathways for students who wish to switch between them.¹²

The relatively high progression and graduation of learners, on the other hand, may be seen as a positive achievement in Kosovo's VET system (A.2.3). However, it is worth noting that data regarding the graduation of secondary VET students in Kosovo is currently unavailable, making it challenging to determine the number of VET graduates who have utilized the different progression routes available within the Kosovo education system. Moreover, during the academic year 2021/22, 1,294 (3.3% of all VET students) students dropped their initial VET studies, raising concerns about retention of learner following a VET pathway.¹³

2.2.2 Area B (1). Lifelong learning outcomes: quality and relevance

In the first part of Area B (Quality and relevance of LLL outcomes), the Torino Process follows another two of the dimensions presented in Section 2.1, namely quality/relevance and responsiveness of VET, with a total of eight policy and system outcomes. These outcomes cover the quality of learning of youth and adults in VET in terms of key skills and competences, the exposure of learners in VET to the world of work, the employability of graduates from IVET and CVET, the availability of career guidance for them, as well as the relevance of learning and training content in VET.

TABLE 3. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA B (1): QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
B.1.1	Key competences for LLL, quality of learning outcomes	This outcome captures the extent to which the education and training system succeeds in the provision of basic skills and key competences for learners in formal education (including IVET), as defined in regular international surveys and international assessments
B.1.2	Adult skills and competences	This outcome captures the extent to which adults in working age dispose of basic skills and key competences, as captured by regular international surveys.
B.1.3	Links between learning and the world of work	This outcome reflects the pragmatic relevance of IVET and CVET programmes through the lens of participation in work-based learning (WBL) and the share of programmes with outcomes/objectives that include a WBL component
B.1.4	Employability of learners	This outcome refers to the labour market relevance of opportunities for LLL as captured through evidence of labour market outcomes of graduates from IVET, CVET, and other forms of LLL with a VET component
B.1.5	Opportunities for career guidance	This outcome strives to capture the timely availability of up-to-date information about professions and education programmes, which information allows prospective and current students in VET to take informed decisions concerning their education and employment paths
B.4.1	Relevance of learning content: green transition	This outcome captures the extent to which curricula for youth and adults consider themes of significance for sustainability and climate change awareness, including "green skills" for sustainable economies
B.4.2	Relevance of learning content: digital transition	This outcome tracks the extent to which curricula for youth and adults incorporate themes concerning digitalisation, and the extent to which learners are provided with basic digital skills as a result
B.4.3	Responsiveness of programme offering	This outcome captures the degree and speed of responsiveness of initial and continuing VET systems to the needs of the labour market and to other changes concerning demography and socio-economic developments

Under relevance, the monitoring records the responsiveness of the VET programme offering to demographic, labour market, and socio-economic developments, as well as the inclusion in VET

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

curricula of themes pertaining to the green and digital transition. The outcomes included under Area B (1) are shown in Table 3.

The delivery of basic skills and key competencies for learners, particularly in formal education (Outcome B.1.1), presents a considerable challenge in Kosovo. This is evidenced by the performance of Kosovo in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to PISA, less than a quarter of students, including those enrolled in vocational programmes, attain the minimum level of proficiency in problem-solving, reading, and mathematics at which they can be considered functionally literate.¹⁴ Furthermore, secondary analysis of PISA data has shown that the gap in performance between students in vocational education and those in general education is notably wider in Kosovo compared to OECD countries, a disparity equivalent to roughly a year of schooling.¹⁵

Additionally, adults in the working age bracket face significant limitations in acquiring key skills and competencies (Outcome B.1.2). World Bank STEP Employer and Household Surveys indicate that nearly one in seven respondents (14%) failed the core literacy test, while only 32% demonstrated proficiency in numeracy, and a mere 12% showed proficiency in problem-solving.¹⁶ With a System Performance Indicator (SPI) score of only 15, VET performance against this outcome is subpar.

The overall employability of young and adult learners leaves room for improvement as well (Outcome B.1.4). Various reports highlight that there exists a skills mismatch between the qualifications of VET graduates and the needs of the labour market. This imbalance is due to the fact that a significant percentage of vocational schools offer programmes for which there is little market demand,¹⁷ reflecting insufficient links to the labour market (Outcome B.1.3). While efforts are being made to enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of VET programmes and work-based learning opportunities, with only 7% of VET students engaged in company internships,¹⁸ progress needs to be more rapid.

On a brighter note, with an SPI score of 88 the availability of career guidance opportunities in the country ranks high (Outcome B.1.5). This reflects the relative strength and relevance of such services. Furthermore, initiatives are ongoing aimed at promoting work-based learning, and the provision of scholarships for socio-economically disadvantaged students.¹⁹ Although these programmes largely rely on donor funding, they may in the medium to long term strengthen the connection between VET and the world of work, better preparing Kosovo's workforce for the demands of the modern economy.

The Torino Process monitoring framework, assessing the relevance of learning content from a long-term perspective, evaluates the incorporation of forward-looking themes like the digital and green transitions into curricula. Here, the VET system in Kosovo presents a mixed picture.

The government has prioritized greening (Outcome B.4.1), for instance through the introduction of environmental sustainability in VET curricula and teaching. Progress has also been made by introducing environmental education in primary and secondary schools and promoting the integration of environmental topics in VET programmes. This progress is evident in a relatively promising SPI score

¹⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

¹⁵ Ibid. and OECD PISA 2018 database.

¹⁶ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

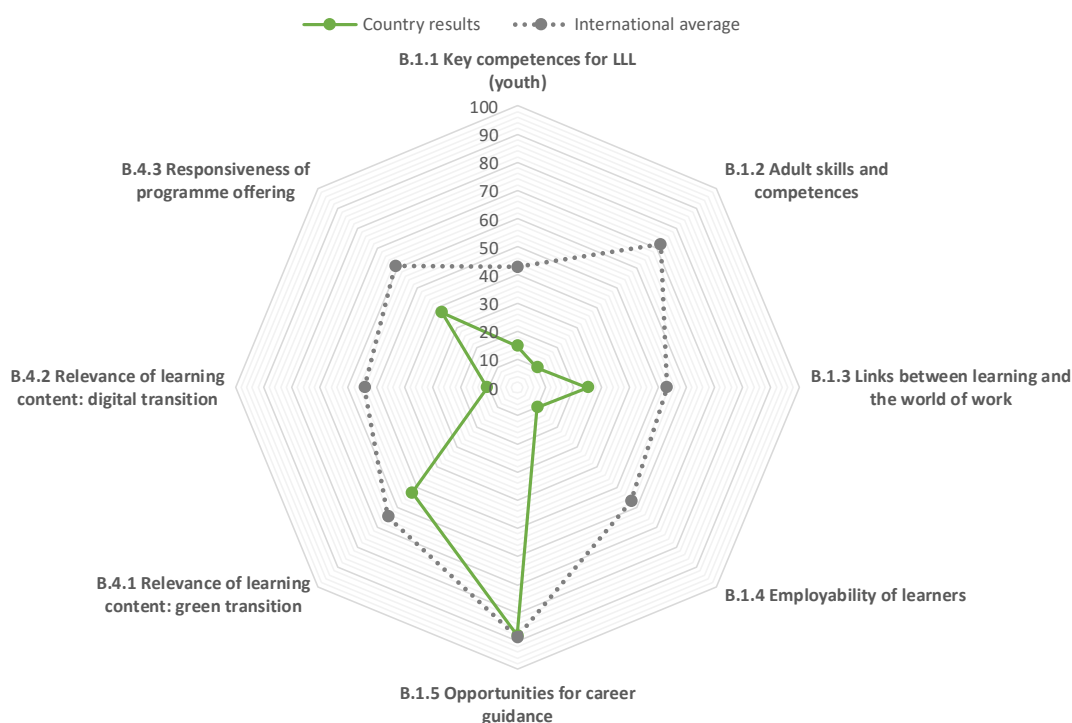
¹⁹ Ibid.

of 53 for this Outcome B.4.1. Still, more can be done to bring VET system performance closer or above the international average with respect to topics related to climate change awareness or the acquisition of green skills.

The integration of digitalisation into the curriculum is still work in progress. The low SPI score of 11 for Outcome B.4.2, highlights the urgent need for further strategic improvements in this domain. Insufficient development of digitally enhanced teaching materials that align with state curricula, outdated ICT curricula focusing on only basic applied concepts, and the persistence of teaching technologies and programmes that fail to engage students²⁰ signal notable areas of concern.

Adaptability of VET system in Kosovo to more immediate demands like those stemming from the labour market, is limited (Outcome B.4.3). National authorities report of shortfalls in equipping students with skills that match the dynamic requirements of the labour market, and deficiencies like the inability to adapt curricula to the evolving needs of various industries, as vocational schools do not offer profiles that align with labour market demands.²¹

FIGURE 4. SUPPORTING QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, KOSOVO AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

²⁰ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

²¹ Ibid.

Additional challenges within the VET system in Kosovo include many vocational profiles lacking occupational standards and an outdated general subject curriculum. Furthermore, decisions to introduce certain profiles into the system have been made without rigorous labour market analysis. This lack of comprehensive consideration results in a gap between the supply of skills and the demands of the labour market, further exacerbating the issue of adaptability.²²

Steps are being taken to address these challenges. The approval and implementation of new curricula are underway, focusing on finalizing and approving the Core Curriculum for VET, drafting occupational standards, and unifying the approach and structure of all curricula. There is a clear emphasis on aligning the curricula with labour market needs, which is a crucial step towards enhanced adaptability.

These diverse and in part below-average scores should not be interpreted as signs of stagnation, but rather as a snapshot of a system in flux, actively working to address its shortcomings. MESTI has recently engaged in efforts aimed at increasing the VET system's alignment with labour market needs. These initiatives include finalizing the VET Curriculum Framework, unifying the structure of VET curricula, and introducing pilot dual profiles that respond to business demands, among other things.²³ Although the efforts are ongoing, they highlight a proactive approach to improving the system's adaptability and responsiveness, which may in turn lead to a more favourable SPI score in the future.

2.2.3 Area B (2). Lifelong learning outcomes: excellence and innovation

In the second part of Area B (Excellence and innovation in support of lifelong learning), the Torino Process monitors two performance dimensions – excellence and innovation, which accommodate a total of eight system outcomes. These outcomes include excellence in pedagogy, learning content, governance, and inclusion into learning, as well as systemic innovation supporting access, participation, quality, and relevance of learning and training. The outcomes included under Area B (2) are defined in Table 4.

The concept of excellence, as defined within the Torino Process, signifies the existence of system-wide policies and measures that advance the highest quality practices and results in a selection of critical domains of policy and system delivery in VET. These domains encompass excellence in pedagogy and professional development, excellence in programme content and implementation, excellence in governance and provider management, and excellence in social inclusion and equity.

The VET system of Kosovo shows below average performance in all domains pertaining to excellence. For instance, the performance regarding excellence in pedagogy and professional development (Outcome B.2.1) is moderate. This suggests that there is room for improvement in implementing policies for improving teaching and training in the VET sector to ensure their impact extends across a larger proportion of teachers, trainers, and providers within the system.

In relation to recognizing and promoting instances of excellence in VET programme implementation (Outcome B.2.2), the trend in Kosovo aligns with the general tendency observed in other countries to pay insufficient attention to this crucial domain. This outcome includes critical elements such as curriculum design, assessments, and the coordination of these aspects with key stakeholders.

²² Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

²³ Ibid.

**TABLE 4. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA
B (2): EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
B.2.1	Excellence in pedagogy and professional development	This outcome captures the extent to which excellence in teaching and training is an acknowledged policy priority, as well as the extent to which its implementation is bearing fruit across the education and training system, including in the domain of professional development of teachers
B.2.2	Excellence in programme content and implementation	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the content and implementation of VET programmes, with a specific focus on bringing them closer to the world of work (i.e. through work-based learning), on prioritising greening in curricula and teaching, as well as on promoting excellence in learning.
B.2.3	Excellence in governance and provider management	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the domains of financing, leadership, and governance, as well as the extent to which these examples are systemic or not
B.2.4	Excellence in social inclusion and equity	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the domain of equity and social inclusion in education and training, as well as the extent to which these examples are systemic or not
B.3.1	Systemic innovation: access to opportunities for LLL	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions in the domain of access to opportunities for lifelong learning.
B.3.2	Systemic innovation: participation and graduation	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions in the provision of support for participation in (and graduation from) opportunities for lifelong learning, and the extent to which they are systemic (or not)
B.3.3	Systemic innovation: quality of learning and training outcomes	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions for raising the quality of learning and training in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by learners
B.3.4	Systemic innovation: relevance of learning and training	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions for raising the labour market relevance of knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by learners

The promotion of excellence in the content and implementation of IVET and CVET programmes has become a policy priority in Kosovo. Authorities report about concrete efforts being taken in notable domains: work-based learning and the elevation of learning standards. For instance, work-based learning is a key policy priority in Kosovo, with initiatives such as the SDC-funded "Enhancing Youth Employment" (EYE) project, the earlier GIZ "Youth Employment and Skills" (YES) project and the ongoing GIZ "Fit for Jobs" project, which introduced this practice for VET students. These initiatives aim to enhance the practical relevance of VET programmes and to better align them with the needs of the labour market. Furthermore, GIZ has developed a programme to train company trainers and, thus, improve in-company training.

The commitment to promoting excellence in learning is also evident in the country's efforts to develop a national qualifications framework that defines learning outcomes and competencies for different levels and types of qualifications.

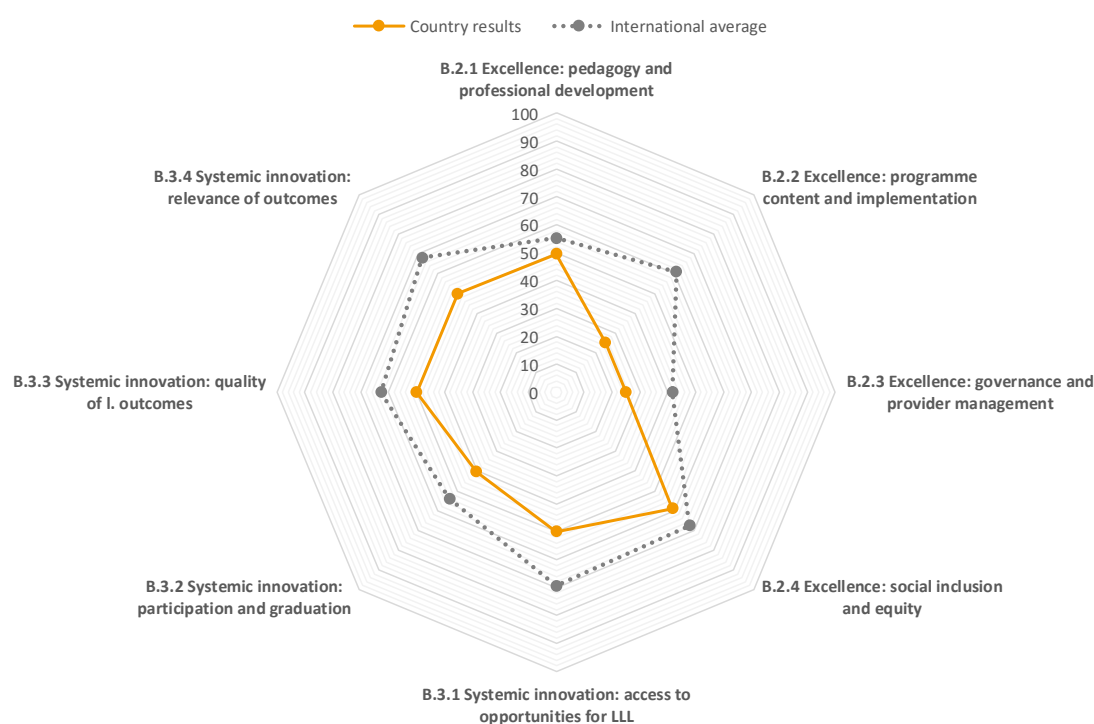
In terms of governance and provider management (Outcome B.2.3), the VET system in Kosovo shows a stronger performance, indicating substantial progress in designing and implementing policies aimed at improving leadership, financing, and governance.

Similarly, the commitment to high-quality solutions regarding social inclusion and equity throughout the VET system is significant, although the SPI score for promoting excellence in social inclusion and equity (Outcome B.2.4) is still below the average of other countries participating in the Torino Process. This suggests the need to continue the efforts to identify and promote best practices in that support the involvement and fair treatment of all individuals, regardless of their social or economic background, in the VET system. In comparison, VET in Kosovo presents a stronger performance in fostering high-quality practices in governance and provider management (Outcome B.2.3), possibly indicating substantial progress in designing and implementing policies aimed at improving leadership, financing, and governance in the VET system.

In the context of Torino Process monitoring, excellence and innovation represent different but interlinked domains. While excellence refers to the pursuit of the highest quality practices and outcomes in mainstream vocational education and training policy and delivery, innovation reflects pioneering practices and policy solutions within these and related domains. Innovation in the monitoring context signifies adaptability, creativity, and a forward-thinking approach in the VET system to cater to the evolving needs of learners and labour markets.

The Torino Process gauges systemic innovation regarding access to lifelong learning opportunities (Outcome B.3.1), participation and graduation (Outcome B.3.2), quality of learning and training outcomes (Outcome B.3.3), and relevance of learning and training (Outcome B.3.4). The emphasis placed on innovation in the VET system of Kosovo varies significantly against these different outcomes.

FIGURE 5. EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION FOR BETTER LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, KOSOVO AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In supporting access to lifelong learning opportunities (Outcome B.3.1), Kosovo has implemented various policies and initiatives such as the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2016-2020, the Education Strategy 2022-2026, and the Kosovo Qualifications Framework (KQF), all aimed at promoting access and participation in learning opportunities.²⁴ These initiatives reflect the positive

²⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

increase in lifelong learning participation from 2.9% in 2011 to 5.6% in 2020,²⁵ even though the SPI score reflects a performance that is still below average compared to other countries.

Regarding innovation in supporting participation and graduation (Outcome B.3.2), national authorities point to the dual training pilots as examples of Kosovo's commitment to increasing participation and completion rates in VET courses²⁶, although typically these do not last longer than 2 months.

Fostering systemic innovation in the quality of learning and training (Outcome B.3.3) shows somewhat better performance than the innovation efforts in the other domains in focus of monitoring. The design, with support from donors, of new teacher training programmes, and quality assurance mechanisms are reported as critical strides in ensuring quality learning outcomes, reflecting the system's adaptability and commitment to high standards.²⁷

Lastly, the average-level SPI for systemic innovation in the relevance of learning and training outcomes (Outcome B.3.4) indicates that there exists an opportunity to introduce innovative solutions that could further enhance the labour market relevance of learning outcomes. It is likely that with strategic and continual enhancements, Kosovo's VET system will unfold its potential for substantial progress in the domains of excellence and innovation. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the Education Strategy 2022-2026, partnerships between VET providers and the private sector, and the implementation of work-based learning programmes exemplify the efforts behind this result and their focus towards aligning learning and training outcomes with labour market needs.

2.2.4 Area C. System organisation

In Area C (System organisation), the monitoring framework accommodates the last two dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – steering/management and resourcing, in which the Torino Process tracks a total of eight system outcomes. These outcomes include the availability and use of data for informed decision-making, the involvement of stakeholders in VET policy, provider management, and resourcing, quality assurance and accountability, the internationalisation of VET providers, as well as the availability and use of human and financial resources in VET. The outcomes included under Area C are defined in Table 5.

Kosovo, like many other countries participating in the Torino Process, faces obstacles in gathering and applying administrative and large-scale data for monitoring VET (Outcome C.1.1) which, in turn, could hinder the optimisation of policies and effective allocation of resources. According to official information, these challenges are being actively addressed with international partners, focusing on enriching Education Management Information System with quality-related data from VET institutions, such as on teachers' skills, facilities, equipment and WBL schemes, with a view to inform the planning and management of the VET system.²⁸

In addition, efforts are being made to gather more comprehensive, timely, and comparable education data. Furthermore, Kosovo's continuous engagement in large-scale international surveys is crucial.²⁹

²⁵ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

This will facilitate mapping and defining indicators and harmonise data collection across public agencies, preventing redundant government operations.

**TABLE 5. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING
AREA C: SYSTEM ORGANISATION**

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
C.1.1	Data availability and use	This outcome refers to the availability of administrative and big data as covered by Level 1 of the monitoring framework, participation in large scale international assessments, as well as technical capacity to generate/manage evidence to support monitoring and improvement
C.1.2	Participatory governance	This outcome captures the degree of involvement of the private sector and other external stakeholders in consultations and decisions concerning opportunities for LLL through initial and continuing VET
C.1.3	Public accountability and reliable quality assurance	This outcome tracks the extent to which reliable and trustworthy quality assurance (QA) mechanisms and accountability arrangements are in place which cover learners, teachers, and providers, as well as the extent to which the QA results are publicly available
C.1.4	Professional capacity of staff in leadership positions	This outcome monitors the availability and professional capacity of qualified staff in leadership roles and in other key administrative roles on provider level
C.1.5	Internationalisation	This outcome monitors the degree of internationalisation in IVET and CVET, such as internationalisation of QA arrangements, curricular content, qualifications (i.e. recognition of international credentials, awarding bodies being active beyond their country of origin, etc.)
C.2.1	Adequate financial resource allocations and use	This outcome captures the adequacy of financial resources invested in IVET and CVET in terms of level of investment and allocation, as well as the degree of diversification of funding between public and private sources
C.2.2	Adequate human resource allocation and use	This outcome captures the efficiency of human resource management in terms of availability of teachers and trainers, and the adequacy of their deployment and career management
C.2.3	Adequate material base	This outcome captures the extent to which the material base for learning and training is adequate, including learning and training materials which are supportive of and promote effective teaching, training, and learning

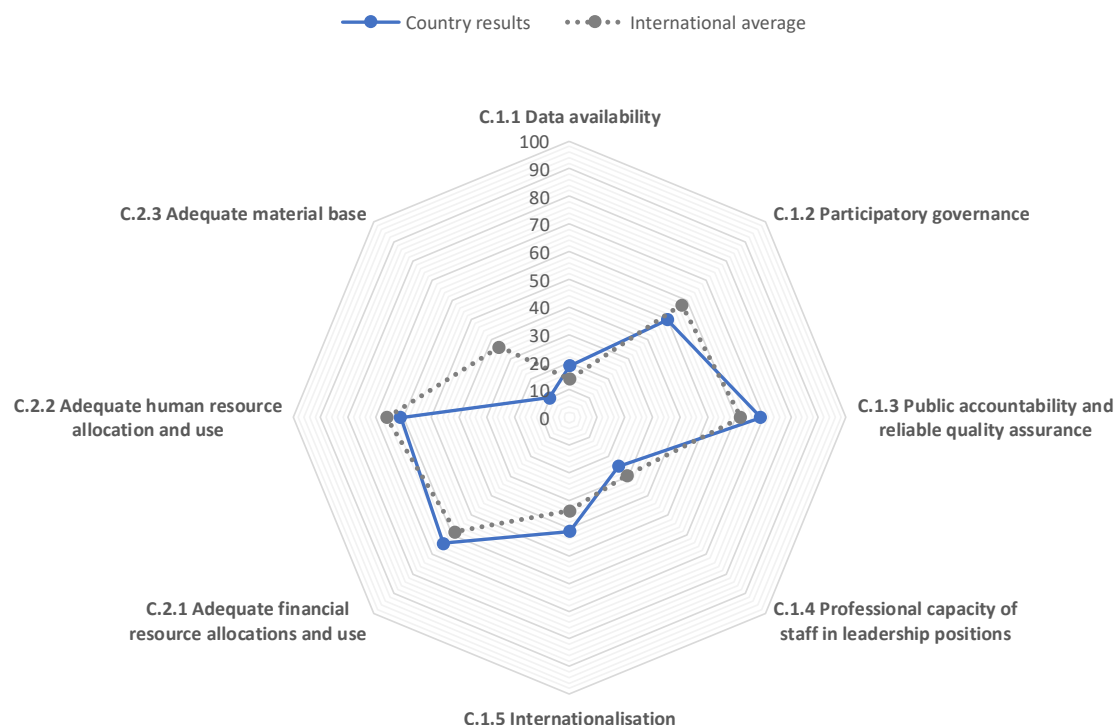
Simultaneously, Kosovo's Employment Agency (EARK) offers an advanced IT-based Labour Market Barometer (LMB) that presents extensive data on various labour market parameters. However, the presentation and usability of this data, as well as its completeness, especially regarding long-term unemployment and regional labour markets, still present challenges.³⁰ Thus, Kosovo, similar to other countries, struggles with optimising policies and effective allocation of resources due to data-related issues.

VET in Kosovo also encounters challenges in participatory governance (Outcome C.1.2). VET is jointly administered by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) and the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT) and the governance and management of VET involve a multitude of actors, such as the (currently not functioning) Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (CVETAE), the National Qualifications Authority (NQA), the Education Inspectorate, and EARK. However, the limited involvement of private sector entities and other external entities, particularly in the planning and delivery of learning opportunities—both initial and ongoing—presents a persistent challenge.³¹ There is room for improvement in cooperation with businesses as primary partners in organising work-based learning for VET students.

³⁰ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

³¹ Ibid.

FIGURE 6. GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND RESOURCES - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, KOSOVO AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In contrast to other findings within Area C, VET in Kosovo demonstrates a strong performance in the domain of public accountability and has established quality assurance mechanisms within the VET system (Outcome C.1.3). In fact, Kosovo outperforms the average of other countries participating in the Torino Process in this regard. The presence of dependable quality assurance mechanisms and accountability structures indicates a system that is well-positioned to promote trust in its results and deliverables. For instance, the NQA, supervised by the MESTI, is responsible for strategic development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and quality assurance for the VET portion of the NQF. This responsibility includes verifying occupational standards and approving and registering qualifications, accrediting and monitoring providers. Furthermore, NQA also works on improving and enhancing quality assurance processes among accredited VET providers.³²

A notable challenge that Kosovo faces is in the area of professional capacity of staff in leadership positions in VET (Outcome C.1.4). With an SPI of only 25, Kosovo trails slightly behind other countries in this domain of monitoring. The school management model is characterised by a lack of independence and limited responsibilities for school directors and teachers. Directors have little control over finances,

³² Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

student enrolment, and disciplinary measures, and are often politically appointed.³³ This entire area is critical for improvement, as the abilities of leaders and administrators in VET have a direct influence on the overall effectiveness of the VET system. Even so, it's worth noting that many other countries also grapple with similar challenges in this domain.

Despite these challenges, VET in Kosovo has a somewhat greater international exposure than the VET systems of other countries, on average (Outcome C.1.5). Even though Kosovo's participation in international exchange programmes is limited due to insufficient networking capabilities on an international level,³⁴ this is a promising result. Nevertheless, there remains room for boosting cooperation with peers from other countries and learning from international experience, specifically in the areas of quality assurance arrangements, curriculum content, and recognition of qualifications.

The allocation and use of financial resources in and for VET (Outcome C.2.1) is an area of above-average performance in Kosovo. While the overall education budget hasn't seen significant increases in recent years, with most expenses allocated to teacher salaries,³⁵ Kosovo maintains a reasonable level of investment in VET, which totalled around €26.5 million for the 2022/23 school year, is primarily sourced from the central government but also includes potential additional funding from municipal revenues.³⁶ In contrast, private investments in VET have so far remained highly limited.

Nevertheless, the information provided by national authorities notes that the present generalized funding formula fails to account for the specific needs of each student profile, suggesting that the current funding levels for education might be insufficient to meet the necessary improvements in education quality.³⁷ A proposed needs-based funding formula could help address this issue.

Even with adequate funding, VET reveals areas that need attention. Specifically, the efficient management and utilization of human resources (Outcome C.2.2) require attention. As the data from the Ministry of Education (MESTI) show, there are about 3,154 teachers in VET schools, many of whom lack practical experience and methodological training.³⁸ This suggests a pressing need to enhance the availability of properly prepared teachers and trainers, as well as improvements in their deployment and career progression, to ensure that human resources align with the needs of the VET system.

More notably, the monitoring evidence suggests that the VET system in Kosovo struggles with shortcomings related to the material base required for effective learning (Outcome C.2.3). There are challenges in converting these resources into necessary infrastructure, including learning and training facilities, equipment, and educational materials. The vast majority of vocational schools in Kosovo, despite substantial investments from donors, lack adequate equipment for practical training: schools struggle with outdated equipment, obtaining necessary raw materials and consumables for their workshops, and lack of teaching materials.³⁹

In the same vein, approximately 50% of teachers have reported inadequate access to reliable computer hardware, software, and internet to use digital technology in their subjects.⁴⁰ These issues

³³ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. and OECD PISA 2018 database.

suggest potential inefficiencies in procurement processes or challenges in planning and implementing infrastructure projects. Therefore, while financial resources seem to be on solid ground, these resources still need to be translated into tangible assets that can directly enhance the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training in the country.

2.3 How did policies and systems benefit specific groups of learners?

In this round, the Torino Process monitoring looks not only into the deliverables of national VET policies and systems in general but also into the degree to which they address the needs and expectations of present and prospective lifelong learners. The monitoring framework traces how well and equitably system outcomes are distributed to these learners depending on their age and gender, and by features which can be influenced by policy, such as socio-economic disadvantage, labour market status, migration status and learning setting/pathway.

The next sections provide an overview of how the IVET and CVET subsystems in Kosovo perform in a number of monitoring dimensions for the following key selection of learner groups: female learners (Section 2.3.1), disadvantaged learners (Section 2.3.2), populations who are long term unemployed, economically inactive, and have a low level of educational attainment (Section 2.3.3), as well as by their country of origin (Section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 Female learners

This section describes findings about VET system performance regarding access, participation, quality and relevance, and innovation to the benefit of female youth and adult learners in VET in Kosovo.

The experience of female learners in the VET system of Kosovo diverges significantly based on age, with a distinct trend of adult females enjoying better access to learning opportunities than their younger counterparts (Dimension A.1 - Access). In fact, the VET system's performance in supporting adult females surpasses the average score for this dimension, indicating that initial and continuing VET, as well as other adult learning opportunities, are more accessible and appealing for this demographic. Approximately 45.3% of students enrolled in vocational education are girls, while young female adults comprise 35.4% of students at Vocational Training Centres (VTCs).⁴¹

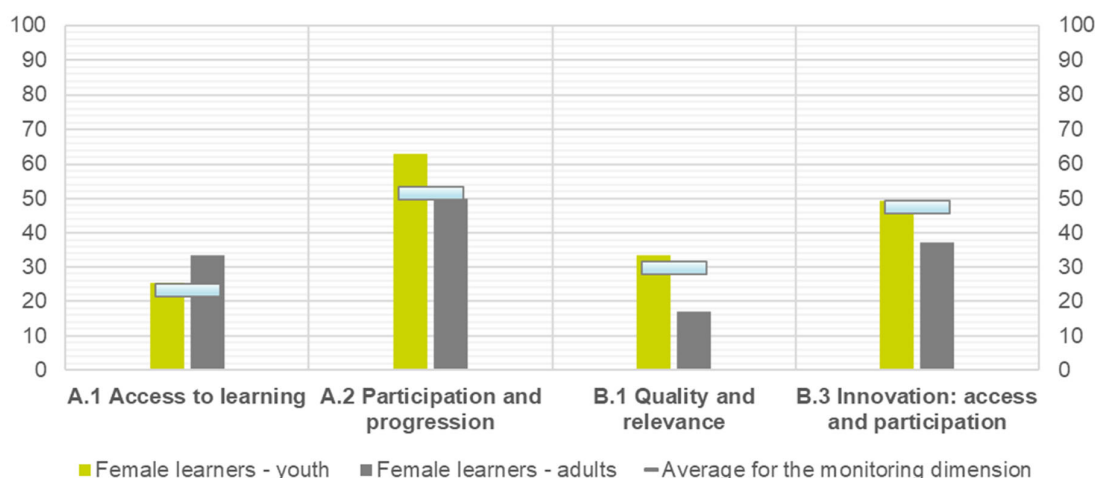
There is a marked contrast in the degree to which young and adult females can participate successfully in the VET system (Dimension A.2 - Participation). Young females demonstrate stronger participation and progression than young males, showing resilience towards success. In contrast, participation of adult females dips slightly below the average, suggesting that they may encounter more difficulties in fully engaging with the learning programme and completing their learning. These divergences underscore a disparity in age-related access and completion rates, suggesting a need to improve support mechanisms for adult females.

In the domain of quality and relevance of learning (Dimension B.1), both young and adult females face difficulties. VET delivers slightly above the average to the learning needs of young females, which could imply a relative adequacy in their acquisition of basic skills and competences, and the relevance of their learning for employment. This is part of a larger trend reflected in the PISA scores for Kosovo,

⁴¹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

which show that girls outperform boys in the acquisition of fundamental skills, such as reading.⁴² However, adult females score significantly lower, raising concerns about the ability of the VET system to equip this demographic with necessary skills and competences and ensure the relevance of their learning to their employment needs. According to the World Bank's STEP Employer and Household Surveys, women in Kosovo generally have lower levels of literacy and numeracy than men,⁴³ which could affect their ability to participate successfully in society and the economy.

FIGURE 7. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FEMALE LEARNERS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, KOSOVO (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The final dimension being monitored, "Innovation in Access and Participation" (Dimension B.3), provides promising outcomes, particularly for young females. The performance of VET in advancing innovation that benefits this group exceeds the average. This indicates that innovative practices and priorities at the system level are generally more targeted towards young female learners than adult ones. Such a strategic focus improves their access opportunities and promotes the likelihood of successful learning completion.

Kosovo reported about having enacted several policies and systemic innovations, including the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024 and the Gender Equality Law, to promote equal access to education and training for girls and women. The monitoring results suggest that these initiatives have a positive impact, particularly on the enrolment of females in non-traditional fields such as STEM.⁴⁴ However, adult females score slightly below the average, which indicates that while they do benefit from innovative measures, the level of advantage they gain is somewhat less than their younger counterparts.

⁴² Source: PISA 2018 database.

⁴³ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

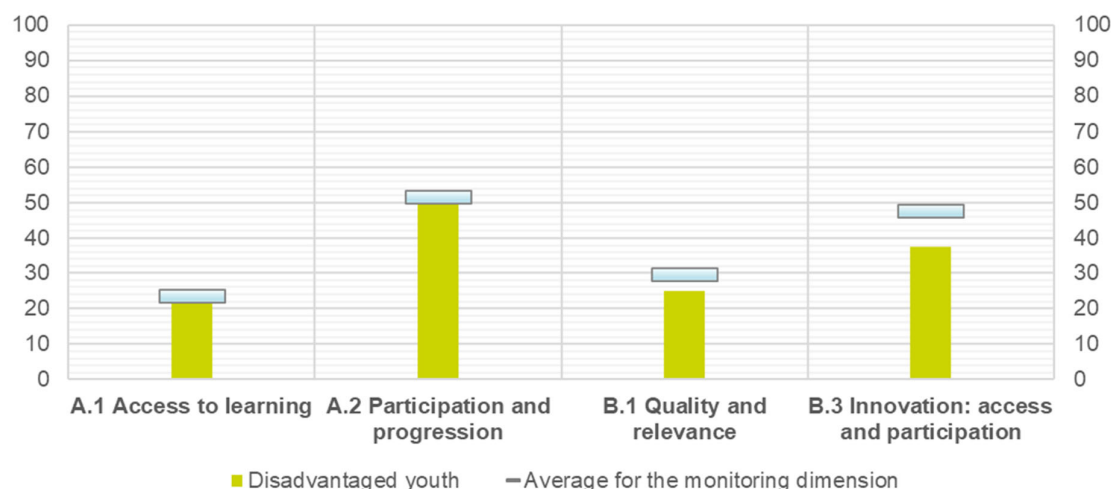
⁴⁴ Ibid.

2.3.2 Disadvantaged learners

This section describes how well the VET system caters for the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth when it comes to access, participation, and quality/relevance of opportunities for lifelong learning through VET. The section also examines whether efforts to promote innovation in VET access and participation benefit this specific group of learners in Kosovo.

The VET system in Kosovo is marked by its focus on inclusivity, particularly on accessibility for disadvantaged youth (Dimension A.1). The system provides opportunities for education and training to these learners, allowing them to transcend socio-economic barriers and gain the skills and knowledge required for employment. Nevertheless, according to the information provided by authorities, disadvantaged youth such as those from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian backgrounds, encounter significant challenges. Economic constraints force many families to forego the income that their children could generate during this phase of their lives, impeding their access to education.⁴⁵

FIGURE 8. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, KOSOVO (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Indeed, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, more broadly, are somewhat less likely to enrol in VET programmes compared to their advantaged peers, largely due to information gaps about VET pathways and financial hurdles. The perceptions of VET programmes as pathways to low-paying jobs also limit their attractiveness.⁴⁶ This state of affairs highlights the importance of VET as a lifeline for these learners and the need to redress these barriers.

When one considers the progression of these learners within the system (Dimension A.2), further challenges become apparent. Disadvantaged youth face obstacles in moving forward in their education

⁴⁵ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment report for Kosovo.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

and training, indicating that their journey within the VET system is a more difficult one. Therefore, while initial access to learning is promising, there is a clear need to address the issues affecting the persistence and advancement of these learners within the VET system. To tackle this, the government and other organizations, with the support of development partners, continuously provide various scholarships and financial aid schemes to aid the education of students in initial VET programmes.⁴⁷

The quality and relevance of the education received by this group of learners (Dimension B.1) is another domain with potential for improvement. Students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds often face limited access to quality education and resources, resulting in lower levels of education achievement and proficiency in basic skills. This disparity necessitates targeted efforts to enhance the educational experience for these individuals, and Kosovo is addressing this through strategies such as the Education Strategy 2022-2026 and the Support to Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform in Kosovo.⁴⁸

On a promising note, the VET system is committed to innovation designed to enhance access and participation for disadvantaged learners (Dimension B.3). For instance, authorities report that the earlier Youth Employment and Skills (YES) project and ongoing Fit for Jobs project, implemented by GIZ, aimed to bolster the quality and relevance of VET programmes and offer targeted support to disadvantaged youth. The Government also provides financial incentives to companies hiring disadvantaged youth, including VET graduates. These measures, coupled with scholarships for socio-economically disadvantaged students, and the Roma and Ashkali Decade Strategy aimed at promoting social inclusion, reflect a drive to create a more inclusive learning environment for disadvantaged youth.⁴⁹

In turn, these initiatives have yielded some progress, with the percentage of students enrolled in VET programmes from the lowest income quintile increasing from 20.4% in 2017/2018 to 23.1% in 2020/2021.⁵⁰ However, with about 79% of 15-year-old Kosovar students performing below the level of functional literacy according to PISA 2018, there remains a clear need to address issues affecting the persistence and advancement of these learners within the VET system and beyond. This is also reflected in the lower-than-average system performance scores in this domain of monitoring.

2.3.3 Populations who are long-term unemployed, economically inactive, and have low educational attainment

Section 2.3.3 presents findings about VET system performance in Kosovo from the perspective of three strategically important groups of adults: the long-term unemployed, the economically inactive adults, and those with low or no educational attainment.

The monitoring findings indicate that while VET in Kosovo does not marginalize any specific groups, it also falls short of fully accommodating the distinct needs of these groups as opposed to the average learner. The situation is particularly challenging in terms of access to learning (Dimension A.1). The labour force survey data from 2021 illustrates this issue, as there were 101,161 (20.7%) people aged 15-64, who were unemployed in Kosovo, 66,154 (19%) of whom were men and 34,007 (25%) women. The long-term unemployment rate for the same age bracket was 70.8%. Interestingly, the likelihood of

⁴⁷ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment report for Kosovo.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

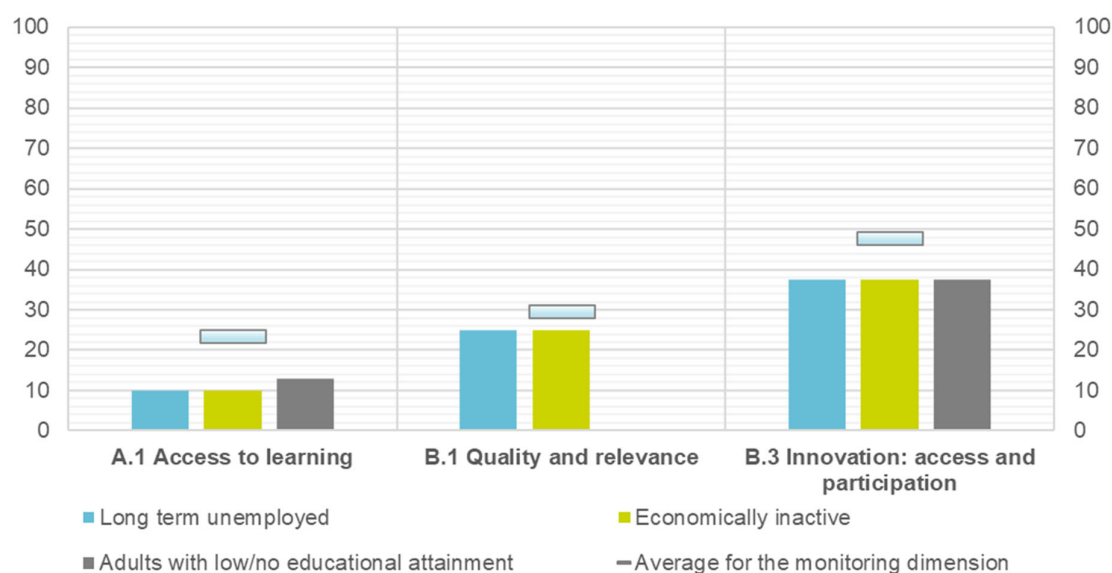
⁵⁰ Ibid.

being unemployed for over a year escalates with age. Youth long-term unemployment (population 15-19) stood at 51.2% and 61.6% of young unemployed had been looking for work for over one year.⁵¹

Among these unemployed groups, only a fraction manage to access VET programmes, thus resulting in a significantly lower likelihood of accessing VET programmes compared to the average learner, which carries the risk of further alienation from the job market and detachment from employment opportunities. This disparity is especially noticeable in terms of the long-term unemployed, where out of 71,508 individuals, merely 2797 have enrolled in CVET programmes.⁵² This perpetuates their current employment status, whether long-term unemployed or economically inactive, setting off a cycle of unemployment that stifles economic progression.

The quality of skills and competences delivered by VET to individuals who participate in learning as a remedy for their status as long-term unemployed or economically inactive (Dimension B.1), is below average. The lack of relevant skills may present additional barriers to their employability. Furthermore, it is important to note that there is a lack of data on the proficiency of these individuals in fundamental skills such as maths, reading, and problem-solving. This knowledge gap could further complicate their prospects of finding a job.⁵³

FIGURE 9. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF ADULTS WHO ARE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED, ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE, OR HAVE LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, KOSOVO (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

⁵¹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Kosovo.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

On a more positive note, the VET system of Kosovo shows a commitment to innovative practices in enhancing access and participation (Dimension B.3) to the benefit of all three groups in focus of this section. While the scores in this dimension are below the average for other learners, even modest exposure to innovative practices could improve the benefits of participation in VET for these groups.

Interestingly, the long-term unemployed and the economically inactive groups are the focus of several policies and initiatives. These include Active Labour Market Programmes. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is somewhat dampened by the limited number of offers and low participation rates, especially amongst those with low educational attainment or without any education at all.⁵⁴ This clearly indicates a need to increase the number and variety of relevant offers and boost participation rates in vocational training.

2.3.4 Learners by country of origin

The final section with monitoring findings discusses performance in the domains of access, participation, quality and relevance, and innovation in Kosovo for learners who are first-generation migrants.

The monitoring results suggest that VET in Kosovo does not substantially disadvantage first-generation migrants in comparison to the average learner, notwithstanding the fact that Kosovo mainly serves as a transit country for refugees and has a very low number of immigrants. It's important to recognize that these learners remain a relatively small cohort within the VET system, likely due to the country's status and the fact that the number of young people who immigrate to Kosovo and engage with initial VET programmes or continue their education is thought to be quite minimal. These circumstances can limit the acquisition of detailed and comprehensive data about this group, and it renders the results less indicative of the overall capacity of the VET system to cater for the needs of specific groups of learners.

With these limitations in mind, performance of VET in providing access to learning is surprisingly strong for first-generation migrants (Dimension A.1). With an SPI of 75, it is far higher than the average score of 23 for other learners. This suggests that the initial steps into VET are largely accessible and attractive to this small group, which could potentially be due to the various supports available, such as language courses and adult learning laws, alongside efforts from institutions like EARK that collaborates with international development partners to offer professional training opportunities.⁵⁵

Participation in the VET system (Dimension A.2), which encompasses the capacity of learners to navigate and complete their learning pathways, appears supportive of migrants too. This suggests that once engaged in learning, first-generation migrants, though few in numbers, can expect to navigate VET quite successfully and complete their chosen pathways. It's important to stress, however, that there's no tangible evidence suggesting that the immigrant background of students in IVET and CVET affects their chances of completing their learning successfully.

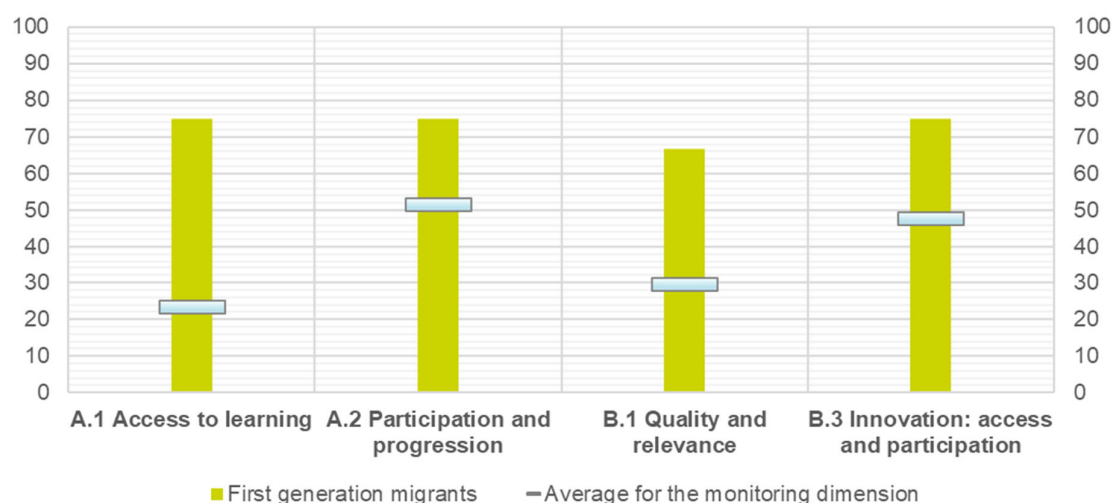
In evaluating the quality and relevance of learning (Dimension B.1), which gauges the extent to which the VET system provides learners with key competencies and skills relevant to employment, the system appears to be quite supportive of first-generation migrants. With an SPI score of 67, the system is significantly more effective in this dimension for first-generation migrants compared to the average

⁵⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment report for Kosovo

⁵⁵ Ibid.

score of 30 for all learners. However, due to the low immigrant population in Kosovo, the impact of the immigrant background on the proficiency of learners might be less significant compared to countries with larger immigrant populations. Hence caution is advised in interpreting this result.

FIGURE 10. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FIRST-GENERATION MIGRANTS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, KOSOVO (2023)



Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Finally, innovation in support of access and participation (Dimension B.3) reveals that the system's capacity for innovation in supporting first-generation migrants' access to and successful completion of learning is relatively robust. This includes various initiatives such as issuing guidelines to encompass returnees in training programmes, conducting annual self-employment workshops, and providing financial aids for setting up businesses, exclusive benefits available to repatriates.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the country's status and the low number of first-generation migrants make it hard to draw concrete conclusions about the efficacy of these measures.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES AND INFORMATION

3.1 Links to background information and data

The system performance indices presented in this report were calculated based on a selection of international quantitative indicators for Kosovo and the qualitative responses of stakeholders where such indicators were missing.

⁵⁶ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment report for Kosovo.

The full collection of quantitative indicators collected for Kosovo for this 2023 round of monitoring can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QtCJcXVuZOGqvwXBVAC1nUnH9LJyYum/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true>

The full collection of qualitative responses to the country-specific questionnaire for Kosovo can be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qv5AKFdrd2GJkZy2bT4_7E-Uuu_8EveU/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

A full description of the monitoring framework which guided the monitoring process can be found [here](#).

General information for the Torino Process as well as the reports and data of other participating countries, can be found here: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/torino-process-policy-analysis-and-progress-monitoring>.⁵⁷

3.2 Definitions, terminological clarifications, methodological limitations

3.2.1 Definitions and terminological clarifications

This section provides an overview and definition of key terms in the Torino Process monitoring framework.

- **Youth:** Population in the official age of entrance and participation in initial VET programmes.
- **Adults:** Population of working age (15+ years of age) not enrolled in initial VET programmes.
- **Disadvantaged youth:** This refers to socio-economic disadvantage and describes youth with access to below-average levels of financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources.
- **Long-term unemployed:** Long-term unemployment refers to the number of people who are out of work and have been actively seeking employment for at least one year.
- **Inactive populations:** Adults of working age who are outside of the labour force, meaning that they are neither employed nor registered as unemployed (that is, seeking employment)
- **Lifelong learning:** any learning activity undertaken throughout life, to improve knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
- **System performance:** describes the extent to which the VET system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL).
- **Initial VET:** Vocational education and training carried out in the formal system of initial education (usually upper or post-secondary) before entering working life.
- **Continuing VET:** Formal or non-formal vocational education and training carried out after initial VET and usually after the beginning of working life.
- **Adult education:** Adult education or learning may refer to any formal, non-formal, or informal learning activity, both general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training.

⁵⁷ The Torino Process monitoring reports and data will be released gradually in the period March-May 2023 in the order in which countries submit their evidence and the reports are being finalised with them.

3.2.2 Methodological limitations

The system performance indices developed in the framework of the Torino Process, are based on a rich methodological framework. This framework relies on various principles and theoretical underpinnings to ensure that the design, implementation, and evaluation of the indices is plausible in terms of theoretical foundations, technical reproducibility, and statistical fitness. The primary aim of these indices is to offer insights that can guide the monitoring of countries and inform their policy planning, not to promote their comparative ranking.

While various options were available during the different phases of the construction of the indices, the final choices represent a series of decisions which were deemed adequate and appropriate to promote reliability and avoid bias, in full awareness that by their very nature, indices like those require constant refinement. Therefore, the construction and calculation of the performance indices will remain an ongoing process to address the following limitations:

1. Refinement of aggregations and analysis: the current version of the indices represents a sub-set of the national systems under analysis. While these are sufficient for the formulation of initial findings, future cross-country analysis will include a larger number of countries with possible alternative (dis)aggregations i.e., at regional or development level, which may also affect the formulas using in the calculation of the indices as well as their values. The methodological framework of the Torino Process monitoring allows for such extensions and refinement without jeopardizing the validity of results which have been released already.

2. Choice of evidence: while the goal of this exercise is to monitor equally the different areas of interest, their dimensions and related outcomes, different countries may rely on a different, country-specific mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators from a predefined list for all countries. This also applies to the last available (reference) year for the quantitative indicators, which may vary between indicators and countries within a five-year limit.