

Incentives4Reform: Increasing opportunities for VET students and graduates in the labour market



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Incentives4Reform: Increasing opportunities for VET students and graduates in the labour market

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Contents

Executive Summary 5

1. Introduction 7

2. Background analysis on VET 11

2.1. Historical background 11

2.2. VET System and the institutional set-up 14

2.3. Governmental strategic goals for VET 16

3. Research - methodology of the research and instruments utilized 25

3.1. Data Sheet 28

4. Legal Framework 35

5. Portability of VET 42

A non-diversified higher education 43

VET Image 44

Matura exam and its relevance to the VET graduates 46

Quality assurance 48

Teachers' professional development 48

6. The Labour Market 52

Pertinent data on the labour market in relation to VET 54

Skills (mis)match 55

Preparing Labour for the Foreign Market 57

Labour market requirements and conditions versus opportunities in the VET system – issues at stake 63

Means and types of cooperation between VET and the labour market 65

7. Old and future jobs 68

8. Recommendations 72

Governance 72

Link between VET and the labour market	73
Preparing labour force for foreign market	73
Cooperation with diaspora in advancing VET	74
Monitoring and evaluation of VET - link with research from the University level	75
Employers and graduates feedback on each other's demands and expectations	77
Synchronisation with higher education developments	77
Quality assurance	78
Revisiting the funding formula	78
Improvement of secondary legislation	79
Continuous Professional Development of teachers	82
Annex 1: Questions of the Omnibus	83
Annex 2: Eight NQF levels of qualifications with indicative qualifications and levels of occupation	84
Annex 3: The Structure of Vocational Education and Training in light of the entire education system in Kosovo	85
List of references	86

Executive Summary

This research based paper analyzes the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Kosovo with a highlighted focus on the upper-secondary VET system that operates under the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) and under the Agency for Vocational Education and Training, and Adult Education. Additionally, the possibilities for cooperation and synergies with the Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) – that fall under the responsibility of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) – in filling the gaps of one another are elaborated as well.

Provided that the VET system as such is rather complex, the paper at hand presents, analyses and elaborates main issues at stake in the system and the surrounding by looking at the key aspects that shape the world of vocationally trained in their pursuit for further training, education and labour market opportunities.

Following a methodology based on literature review, desk research, site evaluations and field research, the paper elaborates more specifically on the legal framework, strategic documents, available data and studies as well as opinions of the stakeholders from the grass-root level and main beneficiaries. It sheds light into the educational and professional practice processes, the role and professional development of teachers and instructors (often referred to as practice coordinators) and the role of other relevant institutions and stakeholders involved, the interface between and among other levels of education and the labour market developments inside and outside of the country, and different reforms implemented so far. Subsequently - in light of the main objectives set for the system by the government towards linking VET with the world of work - the paper identifies and reveals the international

developments concerning the old and future jobs that will be emerging with possible implications to Kosovo's market and workforce.

Elaboration of all these key building blocks of the link between VET and labour market brings along a number of recommendations and suggestions for contributing to a more incentivized system of VET towards employable VET students and graduates.

1. Introduction

The education system in Kosovo has been subject to continuous change during the transition that emerged in the aftermath of the war in 1999. In recent years it has become increasingly evident that although it's young population, the youngest in Europe, is indeed a great asset to the country, it simultaneously places an extremely heavy burden on both the education system and the labour market in Kosovo.

After years of donor support in this sub-sector, the system has not yet managed to find its feet. A system where neither employers nor the private sector as a whole feel involved presents a high potential for economic decline rather than growth, affecting any further development and improvement goals. Any prior criteria for recruitment or employment, mainly possession of a diploma or degree, vanished even before the breakup of Yugoslavia. However, businesses aspiring to enter the international market, or even compete domestically, urgently need sufficiently competent and knowledgeable staff in order to acquire customers, expand their business further and compete effectively. A government such as Kosovo's, which aspires to achieve recognition of independence, accession into the EU through fulfilment of political and economic criteria, and an ability to compete economically on the world stage, cannot accomplish any of this without strong local economic development, transparent governance, quality education and training provision and cooperation with the private sector.

Despite strong economic growth unparalleled across the bulk of Europe since the 2008 financial crisis, experts consider this growth to be unsustainable in the long run. One way that Kosovo can potentially challenge this prediction is by harnessing the power of its young and capable population; sadly, however, Kosovo also currently

boasts the highest rates of youth unemployment across the continent, at around 61% (KAS, 2015, see Table no.). Numbers of young people not in employment, education and/or training (NEET), despite long policy initiatives targeted at improvement, remain very high—currently at 30.2% (KAS, 2015). Annual influxes of new entrants into the employment market are vast, with more than 30,000 every year, and limited opportunities from upper-secondary to post-secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) increase the possibility of overwhelming either the labour market or the higher education system. Constraints and barriers in transition periods from education into further training or the labour market, and a lack of quality in study, training or the work environment trigger a chain reaction in the system. Given these challenges, the Government of Kosovo and its key institutions responsible for education and training have been actively engaged in policy and system reforms. However, the extent to which these reforms are being implemented adequately, on time or in a fit-for-purpose fashion remains questionable. Before attributing any successes or failures to the involved actors or institutions, it should be explained that, as international literature on the topic demonstrates, the national institutions are not the only bearers of this responsibility, particularly when it comes to expenditure. Rather, it is a shared task, with responsibility also lying with enterprises and the employers of VET trainees (Billett, 1998 in Hoeckel, 2008).

Based on literature review, desk research, site evaluations and field research, the study at hand seeks to shed light on the key features, challenges, disincentives and future potential of VET and the surrounding systems against the comprehensive policy reforms and, subsequently, to come up with tangible recommendations and suggestions that could contribute to a more incentivized system of VET.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents a historical background on developments and challenges since Yugoslavian times in the Vocation Oriented Education (VOE) of the time. The common challenges shared between the past and the present are provided within the context of the current education reforms set forth by the Government of Kosovo in what is today perceived as the track with highest promise and potential for economic growth – the Vocational Education and Training Department. The same section provides a closer look at the system composition and institutional setup in light of the governmental agenda, while also shedding light into the governance and funding of the system. It also seeks to identify the bottlenecks in relevant bodies and actors participating in the system, as well as those excluded from the policy-making processes, governance and implementation of VET. Generally, the paper makes reference to the public formal VET provision that falls under the general responsibility of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and Agency for Vocational Education and Training, and Adult Education (AVETAE) (see more about the expansion of independent agencies like AVETAE under the Governance of VET), but the possibilities for cooperation and synergies with eight Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) - that fall under the responsibility of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) - in filling the gaps of one another are explored as well. Section 3 presents the methodology and methods employed for conducting the study and overview of the current situation as well as the trends throughout different years in figures and numbers provided by official primary data generators and studies available from other official sources. The figures in the “Datasheet” under section 3 will serve as a statistical presentation of the situation and as an interpretation of evolving trends through analyses of relevant available reports as well as results yielded from the survey and qualitative instruments of this study. Section 4

elaborates the legal framework of VET through a table analysis that demonstrates the key issues at stake regarding the secondary legislation that regulates some of the building blocks of VET in an attempt to respond to the key research questions and offer concrete recommendations for improvements. Section 5 presents the opportunities, challenges and bottlenecks of the upper-secondary VET in offering portability to its beneficiaries. This part focuses more specifically on the linkage with other education systems with specific reference to higher education, teachers' professional development, VET image and quality assurance. Section 6 provides a detailed context and analysis of the labour market with a focus on VET-related trends of the labour force in comparison to other levels and tracks. Section 7 makes reference to the dearth of analysis on the international developments concerning the old or those set of skills that are not required in the labour market due to diverse changes that came along with technology, internationalization, globalization, etc. and future set of skills that will be emerging accordingly with possible implications in Kosovo's market and workforce. Finally, Section 8 draws some possible interventions for improvements needed and recommendations in issues that require further attention towards making VET more accountable and an asset for economic development.

2. Background analysis on VET

2.1. *Historical background*

A closer look at the development of education policies and, more specifically, the VET sub-sector in former Yugoslavia indicates stagnating or even deteriorating results in terms of quality improvement and the production of skilled workers to respond to the needs of the labour market. Inefficiency was evident in a number of areas, from a lack of adequate human resources in terms of “profession, knowledge and skills, to the high percentage of dropout, repetition and extension of the learning periods” (Djurisic, 1973:35, in Bacevic, 2014:35). The mismatch between what was perceived education input and output at that time emerged from the lack of guidance of youngsters towards the then “polytechnics” based system. These were times when: because of the industrial unwavering production, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was seen as the system that guaranteed the “entrance ticket” to the labour market and production.

Nevertheless, in light of rapid changes in production, science and technology, the acquisition of competences such as “integration in life, practice, self-management and productive labour” (Djurisic, 1973:35, in Bacevic, 2014:35), began to fade away. As early as the 1966-1970 period, amid the staggering economy and increasing unemployment rates, a need for reforming the education system emerged.

The economic situation was perceived to bring about more reasons for social exclusion, whereby the unemployed were perceived to have a “second social status.” Additionally, the “social strata” and classes were based on education status and paths. VET (then referred to as VOE (Vocation Oriented Education)) was perceived as education for the working strata, and Gymnasias, which included higher education, was

perceived as the “intelligentsia.” The socialists of the time observed these with a critical eye and made the first attempts to abolish social inequalities. Therefore, both social and economic rationales triggered the very first reforms in the education sector. (Bacevic, 2014).

The reforms that began in some parts in the 1975-1976 academic year and in 1979-1980 in the rest of Yugoslavia comprised the *vocationalization* of education in a wider scope, or beyond what was then perceived as the “technical shift” – the shift of focus to technical and practical rather than theoretical competences. The essential idea comprised the introduction of new perceptions on the value of professions, hence the evolution of a new responsibility of educational institutions in providing sufficient information about the variety of different vocations and career paths available, no matter what students’ and graduates’ future prospects were. This reform was highly criticized for its failure to tackle the economic challenges of the day, due to the ill-preparedness of the system to respond to the practicalities involved in hosting the high number of “visitors”/students required for teaching practical skills. Therefore, the link between the VOE (the then the VET system) and industry was not as easy a target to achieve as was first assumed upon the introduction of reforms.

Notwithstanding the continuing reforms occurring in the education systems, today, in the aftermath of Yugoslavia’s breakup and numerous conflicts since, this aspect remains one of the most difficult-to-achieve and crucial goals of the education system, particularly for the VET sub-sector in Kosovo. Additionally, the political and socio-economic environment is far worse today than it was: for example, a lack of industries led to a lack of production and therefore an underdeveloped economy with low capacity to create new jobs (AKB, 2012). Additionally, a lack of foreign investment and high barriers to freedom of movement, to name a few,

have made it far more difficult to secure funds or create jobs or incentives for businesses to employ new graduates.

However, it should be remembered that the level of financial support for mobility in the ensuing years and even now compared to the periods mentioned above is incomparably higher, despite the visa regime – the lack of free movement to EU countries or more specifically to the Schengen zone. The internet and technology boom, greater possibilities to learn new foreign languages and a number of new reforms introduced in education systems worldwide (including the internationalization and globalization phenomena, hence financial support for mobility programs) have played a key role in the transfer of knowledge and skills, the mobility of students, teachers and the labour force, foreign investments, and international collaboration between the public and private sector, to name a few. That said, neither the Kosovo education system in the role of the provider of skilled labour, nor the market itself, can or will respond to the current bulge in demand for education and training, which explains the astronomically high unemployment rates in Kosovo. Therefore, the system should and must be able to prepare an employable workforce for a market beyond the Kosovo borders (ETF, 2012, 2014). Under the auspices of donor organizations, support for the reforms in VET in Kosovo began more than a decade ago. There were a series of different models used in introducing the career guidance, such as either a service or a module within the curricula, teacher training with the focus on pedagogical and methodical aspects, financial support to companies to host VET students in forms of active labour market programs, monitoring and evaluation models in VET policies and practices, donor coordination structures, the establishment of the national qualification system, and the establishment of the “regional” Centers of Competence, to name a few. Today, VET still faces major challenges in one of its most vigorous building blocks - linking VET with the labour

market to produce a skilled workforce that can contribute to economic growth.

2.2. VET System and the institutional set-up

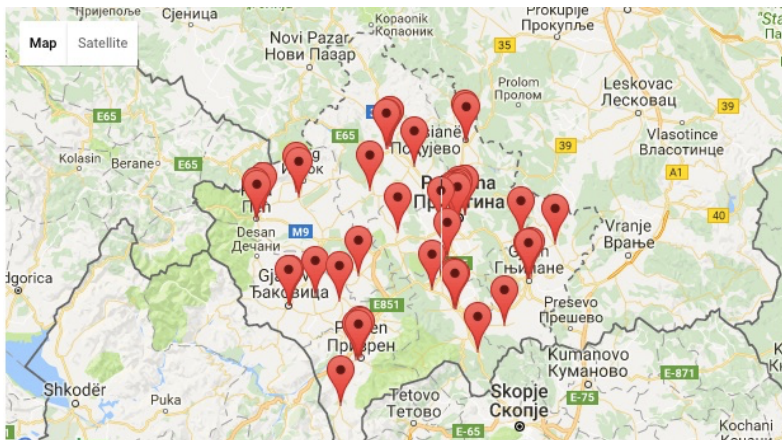
The public formal education system in Kosovo is composed of 42 pre-school institutions, 989 primary and lower secondary schools, 116 upper secondary schools that provide level 3 and 4 and 6 universities or providers of the levels 6, 7 and 8 of qualifications. (MEST, 2016; USAID, 2015:11). Yet, level 5 or the post-secondary vocational track is not offered in the public sector of education (See Annex 6 The Structure of VET System). The private sector is the only provider of this level. Five post-secondary private vocational institutions have been established in the last decade increasing training provision in health occupations, costume design, applied technical sciences and Information and Communications Technology ICT. (See the list with private post- secondary institutions under Annex 5). All of these have main branches in the capital city, and some of them have recently opened sub-branches in other towns. All private vocational institutions function autonomously but are prone to licensing by MEST and accreditation by the National Qualifications Authority (see more under Governance).

In 2016 the vocational track comprised 50.8% of the all upper-secondary levels with 67 schools scattered around the entire country. All post-secondary schools offered qualifications in levels 2, 3 and 4 (see Annex 2 - National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels of qualifications in line with European Qualifications Framework EQF). Despite the high rates recorded in 2011, 2012 and 2013-around 60% of upper-secondary education was enrolled in VET-official data show a rapid decline in enrolments into VET and an almost balanced participation between the VET and Gymnasia (49% vs. 51%VET) (see details in the Datasheet –

Table 1).

To visually demonstrate a bigger picture of schools' countrywide distribution, below is a map with all vocational schools and their locations in different municipalities.

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of vocational schools in Kosovo



Source: VET Wiki Platform, VET Schools Portal, 2016.

A study demonstrates mismatches between the profiles offered and the municipal and local labour market needs, meaning that the profiles offered in a certain municipality do not correspond with the sectors of vacancies announced within that municipality (MEST, 2015, see Datasheet, Chart 5).

Towards the end of 2008, aiming to provide multi-services (including short-courses and the 5th level of qualifications), work-based learning, a closer link between VET and the labour market, and flexible pedagogical organization (Torino Process, 2012) two Centres of Competence (CoC)¹

¹ Centers of Competence were initially thought of as vocational schools that would stand out from other schools through provision of the 5th level, short courses,

were subsequently added to Kosovo's VET public sub-sector, to continue in 2013 with the establishment of two more CoCs in Ferizaj and Prizren (see list of occupations under Table 2). Initially, twenty-one profiles have been opened from the onset of the establishment of these centres. Altogether four CoCs are functional in the following main areas: economy, construction, trade and travel, tourism and accommodation, and health. Throughout years, some of the CoCs have added new profiles; for example, Nutrition and social care in the CoC Ferizaj have formed public-private partnerships with local or international enterprises.

Nevertheless, the VET system is not limited to the formal full-time and initial provision², but it extends to the providers managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), which includes the eight Vocational Training Centers (VTCs)³ that serve the needs of the registered unemployed and others interested in forms of further and/or complementary training modules for 3-6 month-period (MLSW, 2016).

2.3. Governmental strategic goals for VET

The current Government is principally set to focus on economic development and employment. The recently approved National Development Strategy 2016-2021, ranks education, including VET, among the thirty-four priorities

capacity to cover regional requirements, and the professional practice would be of heightened importance reflected through curricula.

2 Initial provision: "General or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life" (Cedefop, Terminology of European Education and Training policy, 2008).

3 VTCs are "...structural organisations, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and its Department on Labour and Employment (MPMS, 2009) and serve the needs of unemployed, job-seekers and others interested for short courses in vocational training. Additionally, the Employment Centers are mandated to inform the job-seekers on the vocational training opportunities including qualifications and professional profiles provide in there."

set forth under the chapter on Human Capital as key factor for sustainable development. The same chapter recognizes the dire need for improvement, hence investments in education sector towards “...turning Kosovo’s labor force into an engine for development.” The Plan recognizes the need for major improvement in terms of the quality of VET education, the link with the labour market demands, the improvement of curricula, and improvements of the investments and infrastructure for VET education (Plan, 2016).

The institutions in charge of the VET system, both public vocational schools under MEST and Vocational training centers under MLSW, have developed and endorsed a number of strategic documents that aim at promoting, planning, reviewing and regularly monitoring all different sub-sectors of the education system. Kosovo Government’s aims for educational and human resource development reforms, which are set out in the overarching national policy document, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 (KESP). Promotion and support towards a skilled labour force in line with labour market demands is the fundamental goal of this document, particularly for the VET sub-sector. This document sets eight key VET objectives that are monitored and reviewed against a set of indicators on an annual basis in the framework of a Joint Annual Review for the entire education sector. Organization of learners’ professional practice in close cooperation with the enterprises, financial and operational autonomy, integrated centres of competence in the national school-based VET, labour market-driven profiles analysed by VET institutions, functional Quality Assurance System in place, labour market-driven curricula, increased mobility options for students and employees outside Kosovo and a functional National Qualifications Network (MEST, 2010).

Setting sustainable strategic development priorities was

considered central already in the 2011-2014 Governmental Program. This program highlighted the role of private investment and entrepreneurship development as principal generators of growth. In line with this goal, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) developed the Strategy for Private Sector Development 2013-2017. In this vein six key industrial sectors were identified: Metal Processing; IT and Business Outsourcing; Textile; Wood processing; Agro-food; and Tourism (GoK, 2015: 17). Study shows that agriculture, which because of its capacity and size (the share of agricultural population is 60%) and high employment potential in the rural sector (based on estimations), especially of women's employment should play a major role in the policy agenda (Alled, 2015).

Kosovo's role models are prevailingly EU countries in general. Its educational role models specifically include the USA and UK. There are a number of reasons why the country follows some western European models. First, Kosovo is continually attempting to cooperate with the EU and benefit from its programs and financial instruments that promote skills development, employability, social inclusion and economic development (EU, 2015:117).

The second most important aspect of VET is its ever-increasing role in the preparation of the labour force for initial qualifications that could pave the way to further training or employment in some of the most frequented destinations of Kosovars such as Germany, Switzerland or Austria in technical and other vocational areas. Recent data show that some 80% of applicants (out of 33,135) have been issued a work permit only within half a year (ZAV, 2016) and the majority of the work places are found in the field of construction and tourism/gastronomy.

Notwithstanding these important steps undertaken towards improvement, according to the very recent EC Progress Report (EC, 2016), the country did not improve the quality

of education. “Education, research and development are hampered by insufficient public spending, poor cooperation between vocational schools and enterprises, and delays in the implementation of policies to bridge the skills gap.” (EC, Progress report, 2016). When the statements of the same report are compared with policy documents and existing coordinating structures, it turns out that it is actually a myth that Kosovo’s legal framework and available strategic documents match its actual needs. As recently reported, “Vocational education and training programmes are poorly coordinated, lack appropriate strategies and priorities, and do not reinforce Kosovo's economic development strategies.” EC, 2016:40).

Funding

Notwithstanding the priorities set, the implementation of the policies, goals and targets set out by the Government are largely dependent on the allocated budget in the pertinent sub-sectors, authorities that carry the separate activities and levels of education. Kosovo’s public expenditure in education has increased from 3.3% of GDP in 2007 to 4.4 % in 2014 (see Table 4), but this total decreased to 3.9% in 2015. Despite this increase, Kosovo lags behind European and Central Asian averages as well as some countries in the region (USAID, 2015). Additionally, the IMF doubts that this situation will improve, considering the strong “political pressure to spend in non-urgent areas” and shift the focus to the needs of pensioners, veterans, former political prisoners, and civil servants. Such a shift is expected to pose a “risk in squeezing out investments in health, education and other capital projects” (IMF, 2016:17).

To date the only explicit budget indicator for VET is the financing formula per student according to which vocational schools receive 27 Euros per student for a school year. There is only a 3 Euros difference between the VET track and

Gymnasias regardless of the profile-specific requirements. VET remains underfinanced, although it is considered the most expensive track, especially compared to general education with its specific feature of practice and work-based learning (Hoeckel, 2008). This formula is valid for all profiles regardless of the specific needs of the purely technical profiles such as construction and engineering, to name a few. It is worth highlighting that the funding formula is lump sum estimation regardless of the needs in the diversity of profiles offered by different schools. Officially, this is the funding rule.

The responsibilities and the budget relevant for VET are spread across various structures such as AVETAE, the Department of pre-university education and the division of VET. Without a clear overview of the budget for VET in a given year, the process of defining strategic priorities and designing efficient policies is greatly hindered (EYE, 2016:21).

In 2015, total public spending on education declined to 3.9 % of GDP, from 4.1 % of GDP in 2014 (see Table 5), which is broadly in line with middle-income countries with similar age profiles. However, considering the large number of students per total population and because of the low GDP base, Kosovo's Government spends considerably less than some neighbouring countries (24.5%) per student in primary and secondary education (MEST, 2015, UNICEF, 2015). Furthermore, 75% of overall spending on education is for salaries and increases in education spending are used almost entirely for salary increases rather than education quality improvement (only 0.2 % of education spending was appropriated for training of teachers) (EC, 2016: 40). Therefore, the budget constraints cause enduring reasons for VET schools' poor infrastructure and equipment and workshops for specific skills are restricted (ETF, 2014) despite the high awareness of other stakeholders outside the

circles of the policy decision makers and calls for improvement of infrastructure (ETF, 2014; UNDP, 2016).

Governance of VET

The VET sector, like the entire education system, is principally governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). However, upon the introduction of decentralization agenda, the Municipal Education Directorates took over the operative management of the schools at the local level. In general, the responsibilities and tasks for managing the education system in Kosovo are distributed as follows: MEST is in charge of the macro approach of management, including infrastructure, financial disbursement to the MEDs (the latter transfers it to municipal schools), the drafting and implementation of legislation, policy development, and the establishment and management of general system of certification for all teachers, the promotion of policies on lifelong learning, research and inclusive education, and undertaking education inspection of MEDs. MEDs are in charge of the meso-level, and as laid forth in the Law on Education in the Municipalities (No. 03/L-068). They are mandated for the following key areas covering the public educational institutions and the provision of public education at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education levels in the municipalities of Kosovo: construction of educational facilities, registration and admission of students, employment of teachers and other school personnel, selection of the directors and deputy directors of educational institutions (upon the criteria established by MEST and with the representation of a MEST member in the recruiting commission), payment of the managerial staff and other employed personnel, training of educators and other professional staff, supervision and inspection of the education process, monitoring and reporting on students' educational and social progress, and

other responsibilities⁴. Finally, educational institutions are in charge of the micro level, such as the identification of staff training needs, budget planning, school development plans, internal assessment of students and labour market analysis (to align the school needs – opening of new profiles – with those of the labour market). The responsibility of labour market analysis is however ambiguously regulated by the second relevant legislations (see the Legislation framework Table Analysis). The MEST had responsibility of the teachers’ professional development until 2008, but it has been handed over to the MEDs with the decentralization agenda. Notwithstanding a series of capacity-building measures for the MEDs and its staff, the capacities remain limited for managing the entire bulk of work that invaded them both in quality and quantity (KCSF, 2009; Gowing and Saqipi, 2010). Moreover, it is MEST that assessed that the decentralization and the shift of responsibilities alongside caused the mismatch between the professional background of MEDs staff and the new responsibilities taken over (MEST - JAR, 2012).

The policy-making process lies within the “territory” of MEST for vocational schools and MLSW for the VTCs. Upon the recent establishment (2015) of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training, and Adult Education (AVETAE) which is still being piloted in 6 schools, the governance of these piloting schools has been shifted to this emerging institution in a rather centralized fashion that includes finances, personnel and infrastructure.

The current results from the pilot phase show a number of bottlenecks and limitations in the capacities of this agency, but its centralization has been considered as an important step given that the VET schools (both those under the pilot

⁴ For length purposes the other responsibilities of the MEDs have not been stated here considering that they are not directly related to VET.

project and others not part of the piloting) face major difficulties in making use of the generated income due to complex budget procedures (see more under funding). The piloting phase of AVETAE has not been evaluated, yet and remains subject to consideration whether it will expand its governance further to other VET schools (as the plan initially was) or not.

Apart from the management line, there are some other professional institutions in charge of VET matters. Specifically the Council of VET (CVET) is the state body that is responsible for adopting standards, “formalising the participation of institutional stakeholders, labour market participants and social partners in policy making related to vocational education and strategic prioritisation within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology“ (ETF, 2014). The CVET has been re-functionalized for the third time in its seven-year history of existence. Re-functionalization processes were followed by different settings and arrangements in operating procedures and its mandate. The recent purpose for CVET is to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination with the main goal of linking VET and the labour market (GoK -NERP, 2015).

The National Qualifications Authority on the other hand is responsible for validation of occupational standards, accreditation of VET programs and oversight of national qualifications along with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Other important stakeholders in VET but currently with only limited participation in governance with higher involvement rather in policymaking are the Chambers of Commerce and Crafts. Kosovo Chamber of Commerce made of some 30 Associations through its more than 15,000 registered members/businesses, represents the majority of the business community in the country, and its role to the VET system is provided through a VET Department

integrated within the chamber. Other chambers such as American, British, Italian, Kosovar-Turkish, Dutch, German-Kosovar to name a few more associations are hardly ever present at the VET matters – either in the policy making or practicing of VET – with an exception of German-Kosovar Chamber which is showing higher interest and active involvement in the past three to four years.

Despite the new structures introduced in the system, their roles and mandates are often confusing to the stakeholders of this system including the major players of an aspired “ideal VET”—the private sector (Focus group, September, 2016). “A lot seems to be going on in the policy level of the VET system, but today I realize that the reforms are superseding each other without ever reaching out to employers” (Ibrahimi, A., 2015). This indicates a typical isolation of policy reforms from the “end-users” of the system’s “products” – the labour market.

3. Research - methodology of the research and instruments utilized

The research project at hand has been triggered by the need to analyse the governance and incentive-structures of vocational education training in Kosovo and offers policy recommendations on how to make it more responsive to the current and future needs of the labour market.

This research project seeks to explore the provision of responsive VET to the needs of the world of work, policy-making in line with these needs and most essential possibilities for bringing the enterprises closer to the policy making and co-financing/co-training.

As indicated in the initial proposal of this study, the primary target groups at the institutional level are the MEST, NQA, AVETAE, CVET, CoCs, STIKK, KCC, MLSW, think- tanks and NGOs, academic community, media, students and parents and the Office for Strategic Planning, within the Office of the Prime-minister. Indirect beneficiaries who will benefit from a different policy are young, unemployed Kosovars and the private sector, which will benefit from improved skills.

The research methodology for this project consists of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Instruments

The research findings are based primarily on quantitative and qualitative data, specifically on an Omnibus survey type, focus groups and salon-style discussion dedicated specifically to the topic of the this paper as well as others relevant to the topic such as “Contribution of the labour force mobility to human and economic development.”

Sampling

Qualitative research: Given the instruments that were utilized for gathering data from teachers, students/trainees and parents are qualitative in nature the sampling of the respondents will be done on *non-probable purposive* basis (as one and the only sampling method for qualitative research). Schools' representatives such as directors and deputy directors, students as well as parents of student respondents will be selected based on the locations of the employers/companies respondents. The profiles/vocations were not a sampling criterion at this stage of the research.

Quantitative research: Based on an Omnibus wave where two main questions have been asked to the respondents (see Annex 1 – Questions of Omnibus).

The Omnibus is conducted in all 38 municipalities of Kosovo by selecting the respondents through a *stratified sampling* (in three stages). 1065 respondents above 18 years old are surveyed including all ethnicities in Kosovo (each of them are shared equally on common characteristics with each other as based on official statistics of population inferred by KAS).

Research questions vs. instruments and methods used

- a. To what extent does VET in Kosovo, in its current format, offer portability within an institutionalized qualification framework? Focus group with students and graduates, school directors and parents, analysis of other connecting systems such as post-secondary and higher education and analysis of the National Qualifications Framework and the upcoming plans to review it.
- b. Does it have the tendency of turning VET students into cheap labour force with limited capabilities (this is where the school component, i.e. cooperation between

schools and enterprises comes to the forefront)? The answer to this question has been drawn upon the literature review and the analysis of secondary data.

- c. What are the links between the rest of the upper-secondary education system and VET, especially in relation to the combination of school-based education with in-company training? What is the key issues at stake that (dis)favour VET system's position? Answers and suggestions generated from the literature review with a main focus on conditions and measure in place such as Matura exam and its content in relation to the VET graduates.
- d. What is the current state of VET monitoring and what are the major strengths and weaknesses that could provide for recommendations of adequate and implementable methods and instruments? Presentation of the state of affair and analysis of the data available, resources for generation of statistics and knowledge about the VET system and stakeholders, existing departments and structures within the pertinent institutions (MEST, MLSW, University, etc.).

As indicated in the initial proposal of the project, the main outcome of the project comprised production of a paper, which (a) presents key evidence, (b) contributes to the ongoing debate and (c) instigates well-defined changes deemed necessary in secondary legislation.

The initial desk research based on literature review has taken place prior to the conceptualization of methodological aspects. Literature consulted for this papers is based on some 60 documents such as: VET assessments reports, baseline studies, inception reports of different donor interventions/missions, legal acts, strategic documents and other academic papers produced by academia/Universities, NGOs, individual experts and policy papers and reports

from the international scope that served as reference or for comparative purposes. Literature review undertaken to date has demonstrated an extended number of secondary legislation relevant to VET.

Documentation and mapping of existing laws, administrative instructions and strategies comprise a very important aspect of the methodology of the study at hand on guiding the research to how existing policies and practices should proceed in order to meet the objectives set at the policy level.

The datasheet with relevant VET and Employment indicators and statistical data is compiled based on the existing primary and secondary sources such as the Agency of Kosovo Statistics, Education Management and Information System Department within the MEST, World Bank Factbook, EUROSTAT, administrative data generated and processed by the Employment and Labour Department within the MSLW and yearly surveys of multilateral organisations.

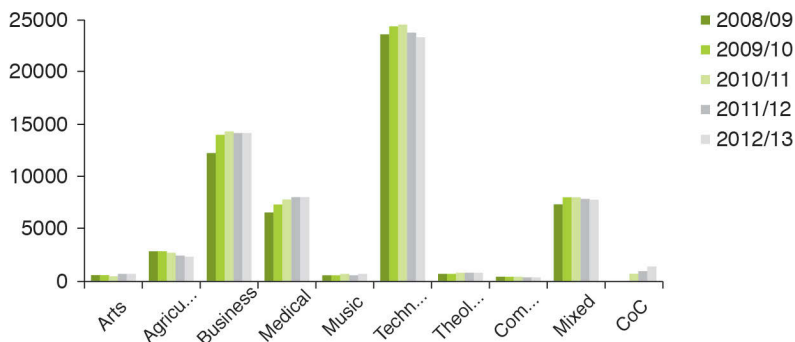
3.1. Data Sheet

Table 1: Students in vocational programmes as % of total upper secondary students by sex

	2010	2011	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change (%)
Total	55.4	55.3	56.7	55.6	50.1	50.8	-8.3
Male	61.8	61.3	63.3	57.8	58	58.8	-4.9
Female	47.7	48.2	49	52.5	41.1	41.9	-12.2

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics. ETF estimations

Chart 2: Aggregation of enrolments based on programs throughout the years.



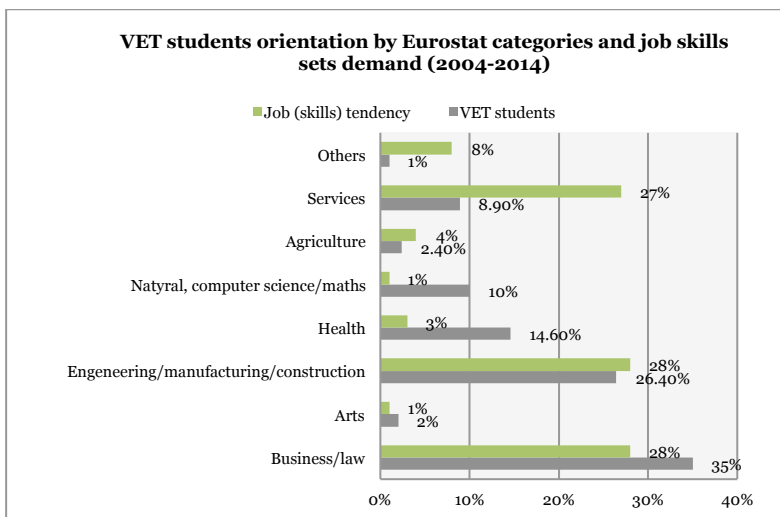
Source: USAID, 2015 (Estimation by authors of the study)

Table 2: Schools/programs newly opened since 2009

New profiles opened (CoC – based)			
Malisheva	Prishtina	Ferizaj	Skenderaj
Public Administration	Health laboratory technician	Hearing acoustic	Interior design
Banking	Physiotherapy	Optics	High construction
Insurances	Auto-mechanics / Mechatronics	Methanical orthopedics	Concrete worker
Sales and Marketing		Dental technician	Mason
Hotel Management		Nutrition	Tile paver
Tourism		Social Care	Metal worker
Logistik			Dry construction
IT			Pipeline and sewage constructor
			Energy, environment protection and air-conditioning
			Electro installer
			Civil engineering
			Woodworker
			Air-Conditioning and ventilation

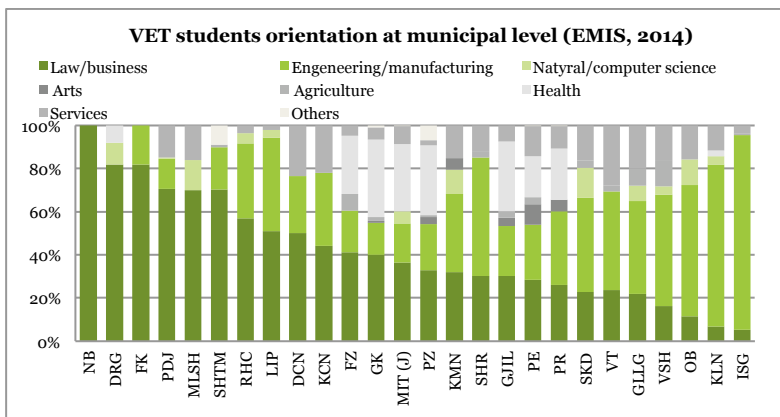
Source: Data required from MEST – VET Division officer (compiled by the author)

Chart 4: Profiles with highest enrolment rates in VET versus job (skills) tendency



Source: MEST, 2015 – Evaluation report of KESP 2011-2016

Chart 5: VET students' orientation in profiles at municipal level 2014



Source: MEST, 2015 – Evaluation report of KESP 2011-2016

Table 3: Main labour market indicators (%)

Main labour market indicators (%)	2012	2013	2014	2015
Participation rate (15-64 age group)	36.9	40.5	41.6	37.6
Employment rate (15 - 64 age group)	25.5	28.4	26.9	25.2
Unemployment rate (15-64 age group)	30.9	30	35.3	32.9
Youth unemployment rate (15 - 24 age group)	55.3	55.9	61	57.7
Youth NEET	35.1	35.3	30.2	31.4

Source: LFS2012, 2013, 2014, 2015

Table 4: Labour market indicators (%) aggregated by level/track of education

Labour market indicators	Level/track of education	2013	2014	2015
Unemployment rate	No school	1.6	1.1	0.7
	I-IX classes	30.2	27.8	26.7
	Secondary vocational	37.8	39.8	41.3
	Secondary gymnasium	19.8	20.1	18.2
	Tertiary	10.6	11.1	13.1
Employment rate	No school	0.5	0.3	0.1
	I-IX classes	19.0	17.9	15.0
	Secondary vocational	42.5	40.0	36.2
	Secondary gymnasium	13.3	15.7	21.2
	Tertiary	24.7	26.1	27.5
Private sector employer	No school	0.3	0.1	0.1
	I-IX classes	19.4	18.8	15.7
	Secondary vocational	49.8	47.5	42.2
	Secondary gymnasium	16.3	17.1	24.6
	Tertiary	14.2	16.5	17.4

Table 5: Public expenditure on education (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change (%)
(% of GDP)	3.8	4.1	4		4.4	15.8
(% of total public expenditure)		15.5	16	15.7	16.5	6.5

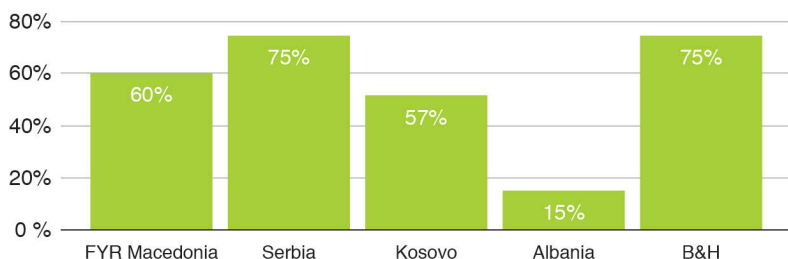
Source: Eurostat, Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ETF estimations)

Table 6: Skill gaps (%)

	2009	2013	Change (%)
Total	10.3	23.5	128.2

Source: World Bank Enterprise Survey

Chart 6: Number of VET students as a proportion of the total number of pupils and students by level in upper-secondary VET, aggregated by country in the region



Source: KAS, 2015/Eurostat, data for 2013/2014 (demonstrated by the author of the study).

Table 6 Profiles provided in the post-secondary VET (Level 5 and 6 of NQF)

Nr	Name of Faculty	Sector	Profiles provided	Levels offered (NQF)	Location
1	Tempulli	Technical Sciences	Traffic engineering, Road transport, Postal and Telecommunications engineering, Logistics, Railway Transport, Management at Airports	5.6	Pristina
2	Design factory	Arts, design	Costume design	5.6	Pristina
3	Evolucion Academy	Arts, design	Costume design, communication design, video production & journalism, interior design	5.6	Pristina
4	QEAP Heimerer	Health	Nursery, Radiology, Speech Therapy, Ergotherapy	5.6	Pristina
5	Cactus Education	ICT	Mobile Applications development, Network and computers system administration	5	Pristina

Source: Data collected by the author of the paper directly from institutions or from their websites, 2016

4. Legal Framework

The development of legislation and the policy-making of the initial formal VET are the responsibility MEST. The same ministry facilitates the implementation of VET sector policies and strategies. However, the MLSW carries out responsibilities regarding policies and strategies, the legislation for vocational training, and therefore the re-training provided to the unemployed and other individuals. The tasks between these two ministries are clear-cut, and so far this inter-ministerial cooperation, particularly in addressing skills needs, has been relatively low (ETF, 2015). VET is regulated through laws, by-laws/administrative orders, and policies expressed in strategic documents and frameworks. Specifically, the following are the key documents that organize VET in the country: The Kosovo Curriculum Framework for pre-university education (KCF), the Law on Pre-University Education, the Law on Vocational Education and Training, the Law on National Qualifications and the Law on Adult Education and Training (MEST, 2015:30).

For the purpose of this study, all bylaws (administrative instructions) pertinent to the VET sector have been scanned in light of the actual developments and reality. General findings from the review of these bylaws indicate that what is set forth in legislation is only to a small extent reflected in the circumstances and structure of the actual system; hence the implementation is hardly possible. It rather looks as if the laws have been drafted without considering the actual capacities in the system, in the institutions' infrastructure, human resources, individuals and, last but not least, the budget. The following table presents some of the issues reported as mismatch/dissonance in the way they are regulated by laws versus the issues at stake that hinder their

implementation. Recommendations on potential improvement are also listed on the side.

Table analysis of issues at stake and recommendations for improvements to the Administrative Instructions—the bylaws that derive from the more general laws—that regulate specific VET issues.

Title of the Administrative Instruction (AI) ⁵	Article handled	Sub-article handled	Issue at stake/mismatch with reality	Recommendation
01/2014 on Organization and planning of the educational process in vocational education and training	Article 2 Organization and planning	- VET Institution researches and analyses the needs of labour market	The question here is whether schools have the capacities to undertake labour market analyses? The researching task of vocational schools is often assigned “by default”. Vocational schools’ key role cannot and should not exceed its ‘challenging enough’ responsibility in preparing a employable workforce. However, this does not allude that vocational schools should not have the information from the market. On the contrary, every teacher, instructor, school director and deputy director (in specific those in charge of cooperation with businesses) must be in position to obtain information from the labour market at least about the profiles that each of them teaches/instructs. Another hindrance that causes confusion and dilemma in their career choices among students and later graduates, regardless some career information provided to them, is the existence of labour market information from the previous years only rather than expectations	The role of the Universities has never been direr. Universities should play a steering role in knowledge generation on the labour market. Advanced research and analysis with some projections on future skills should lie within the responsibility of Universities (Serhati, 2012). The latter is recommended to award research funding relevant to the areas of “strategic importance or market needs” (Nikaj & Malazogu, 2016:42). In addition, it falls under the MLSW’s mandate to undertake labour market analysis. The latter does conduct some research for internal use but does not share them, though.

⁵ All the Titles of Articles and Sub-articles follow the original translation in English as provided in the actual final versions of the AIs consulted for the study at hand.

			and forecasts for the years ahead.	
02/2014 Number of students with VET modules and qualifications, resources, infrastructure, education, student safety	Article 3 VET modules	3. IVET could compile specific professional [vocational] modules of the 5 th level according to the labour market request	To date no school has provided the 5 th level given that neither the teachers are adequately trained for offering such a level (which comprises more of practice-based modalities of teaching and learning) nor is the system ready due to the scarcity of cooperation with business.	Business and private sector could pave a smoother way in accelerating the provision of the 5 th level. Upon businesses request, schools could provide the 5 th level only in profiles that highly requested by the labour market/businesses. Therefore, the schools alone are not to be mandated such a difficult role. Public upper-secondary provision should find opportunities to cooperation and partner with private institutions providing the 5 th level in teachers' preparation (Through Develop Partnerships).
	Article 4 School infrastructure	1.All Competence Centres, vocational schools and training centres should (must as according to the Albanian version of the AI) have the necessary training centre for all qualifications and short modules that they provide 2.Sufficient infrastructure of a CC, vocational school and training centre, means the sufficient space per student according to determined standards from MEST, equipped workshops with all necessary means for realization of professional practice, relevant laboratories, greenhouse, kitchens, stables, fruitful field, training firms. 3.If Competence Centre, vocational school, training centre do not have adequate and sufficient infrastructure for qualifications that provides, they must first have cooperation agreements with relevant enterprises, CCs, other schools and with training centres for	1. Many schools do not fulfil these requirements. The students end up spending time outside of school with the main excuse that the school does not provide them with what they are ought to provide: infrastructure to fulfil the essential needs of education and training. 3. This particular part leaves space for different (miss) interpretations. The schools in principal are encouraged to cooperate with the training centres in case they don't fulfil the needs to their students. However, such cooperation is not in place, but the only encounter where the VET students make use of the VTCs is after their graduation for re-training purposes. 4. Irrespective the lack of such infrastructure, no school has stopped offering a certain profile or qualification. The qualifications are continuously issued with or without the	1. The VTCs managed by the VT department of MLSW have very well equipped training workshops which are often reported as unused and unvisited by the beneficiaries that these centres are dedicated to. If there were synergies between MEST and MLSW in place, the VET schools could make use of them, without additional costs (provided that the VTCs are on free of charge disposal to all and not only to the job-seekers as the perception has it). (MLSW, 2012:12). 3. There is no single practice found when schools of MEST engage in cooperation with VTCs of MLSW during the schooling. A measure proposed by a study is to set the provision of training at the VTC for the 12 th school graders of vocational schools as mandatory (INDEP,2016). However, the extent to which these two Ministries would be willing to engage in synergies between each other s services remains

		<p>appropriate implementation of teaching.</p> <p>4.If CC, vocational schools and training centres do not have adequate infrastructure or preliminary agreement with enterprises, CC, schools and other training centres cannot provide relevant qualifications</p>	<p>possession of such infrastructure. The key message conveyed through such inconsistency between the legal framework and actual situation is that regardless the practical skills acquired students from both – schools that do have the necessary infrastructure and those that don't have – are going to be eligible and compete with the same qualifications – in principle- for the same labour market, but will face different realities and sometime rather frustration.</p> <p>In addition, it has been reported that schools "fear" closing of some old and out-dated profiles that might not be highly required from the labour market. Closing profiles means termination of some of the teachers 'contracts. In order to avoid the inconveniences through modification of staff composition, the schools claim they do not "dare" to even think of opening new profiles, regardless the demand.</p>	<p>an issue to be discussed.</p>
<p>12/2012 Criteria for the selection of assistants and instructors for inclusive education and their obligations</p>	<p>Article 3 Education level for instructors (required education level for instructors of professional practice)</p>	<p>1.Bachelor level for respective occupation with trainings in certain occupation or 3 years experience in respective occupation</p> <p>2. Respective or equivalent secondary vocational school with trainings in respective occupation.</p>	<p>General remark: Alone the title of the AI is very misleading and highlights the role of assistant for inclusive education regardless its content!</p> <p>According to this AI the Instructors are not necessarily required a Bachelor's degree. However, it has been reported that many vocational school do require their instructor to have a university degree (ETF, 2015). The instructors do not find place even in statistics!</p> <p>More favourable qualification requirements for the instructors should not be prone to misuses and misinterpretations.</p>	<p>There is need for involving instructors' communities or professional associations that represent their rights in the policy discussions. This way can the pertinent legislation be fully implemented/in force.</p> <p>Study participants highlighted that it is rather the instructors of both learning environments – school-based and company-based – that are lacking in the system; that neither companies nor schools are having the capacities in providing a fully pledged instruction-based and/or supervisory service to the learners (Focus group, 2016).</p>

			Schools report some deviations in the recruitment of other teachers of non-professional subjects, more specifically of those candidates not in possession of necessary qualifications (Master's or equivalent). Candidates in this case are recruited in the position of instructors although they are ought to serve as teachers of non-professional subjects. Important is that a way out is found for recruiting on the basis of family, friends or other ties.	The proposal to invite school instructors to companies or vice-versa should not be underestimated and could accelerate the potential in filling the gaps of one-another and towards building stronger ties between schools and companies – potential employers for the graduates of VET.
	Article 5 Obligations for instructors	Takes care of students' safety during practice work in laboratories, workshops, and other work premises.	The main issue here comprises the ambitious responsibility of safety at work mandated by law to the instructor. Such case should be regulated through other measures and its possible effects should fall beyond the scope of an instructor.	More specifically this should be regulated through a number of guidelines on safety measures and a specific AI on students/pupils insurance against any possible incident, maltreatment or similar misconduct within the professional practice (in the school) or at the company/enterprise. Such a policy initiative has been undertaken by many countries in the region and recently Albania's line ministries have endorsed a policy document that encompasses the period of 2016 – 2020 on occupational/work health and safety that covers VET as well (MMSR & MSH, 2016).
07/2014 Advancement, Autonomy and Functioning of VET Institutions	The school opens new profiles upon the analysis of labour market demands		School directors that participated in the study at hand reported no initiative in opening new profiles. Such an undertaking could become an additional burden on school's already constrained budget and time according to them.	
05 /2015 Normative for teachers of vocational education (requirements for teachers in	Article 20 on Professional Practices	1. „For modules of professional practice, of technical fields (machinery, electro-technics, construction, chemistry-technology), textile, catering-tourism,	The requirement on the years of working experience is in disharmony with the requirement in the AI on Criteria for the selection of	See recommendation above for instructors' community involvement in the policy discussions and planning of the professional practice.

VET)		forestry, horticulture, agriculture and health, the candidates with bachelor, professional instructors with post-secondary preparation/qualification, upper secondary education, technical education etc.), with at least 5 years working experience in enterprise, business and other relevant institutions, have the priority"	assistants and instructors for inclusive education and their obligations. It is clear that the role, importance and the conditions of instructors engagement in the VET schools is highly misunderstood starting from the legislation let alone in the implementation level	
		9. Teachers holding a (three year) bachelor degree and are in employment relationship with VETI of the respective profile and who have more than three year experience in education and have teacher license, shall continue to work [for another]3 (three) school years in order that they can reach during this period the level of qualification foreseen with this AI General requirements for teachers of VET: either a master's degree or Bachelor (according to the old system of 4 years of first University level)	<p>This article suggests that teachers should hold a license therefore a master degree from the University. This means that they have to bear the study costs, meaning "travel costs and other expenditures" that come along (Likaj & Stanley, 2015:22)</p> <p>In times when technology is ruling the labour market, hence, skills and occupations, a VET system built around the mind-set of academic qualifications as a key requirement for the teachers engagement, and more specifically from a system that does not offer much in the practical learning could rather jeopardize the system which in turn does not differ from that of Gymnasia. The VET track is distinguished from the Gymnasia - the theory based track - and should be treated as such.</p> <p>The main challenge remains the support of teachers from the industrial sectors. Study pointed out „[teachers] initial education does not link closely to industry. Therefore, there still remains a lot to be done towards the engagement of business in CPD". (Likaj & Stanley, 2015:23).</p>	Involvement of companies/corporates in policy making processes, particularly in the curricula development could boost the cooperation between VET system in general and schools in particular and the labour market. Such initiatives are not built around a signing of a MoU for professional practice placement but should rather go beyond that. Good practices found in individual schools (for e.g. in CoC Malishevo) where the coordinator for business cooperation comes from a business background and maintains regular contacts with those that are in close cooperation with the schools as well as other possible „newcomers" in promoting and maintaining schools external affairs. Such practice is to be saluted and check possibilities for multiplication.

A prevalent issue overlooked in the legal framework of VET is the safety and insurance in case of accidents. This remains one of the most challenging issues that jeopardizes and therefore from the onset hinders VET students' engagement in professional practice in profiles that carry higher risk for potential injuries such as construction, agriculture, and metal work, to name a few. The parents, who play a very important role in guiding and sometimes even making decisions about their children's careers in Kosovo, also consider this aspect to be crucial in this process and often avoid their children's enrolment in some of the highly "unsafe" profiles. The Strategy for Professional Practice, which serves as a strategic official document for improvement of the professional practice in Kosovo, does not deal with the regulation of this issue either, but rather raises it as a big concern: "Insurance issues are a concern for both the VET school and the employer in a professional practice situation. Insurance concerns generally arise over injuries to student participants at work sites or in transit, injuries to others, and damage to the employer's property or business." (MEST, 2013:17).

5. Portability of VET

The policy discourse on VET in the international realm, specifically in the EU, puts strong emphasis on the synergies between the VET and further levels of vocational education and training or more specifically the post-secondary level, whereby the vocational orientation of this level is often referred to as technical vocational education, applied sciences, etc. and higher education (HE) as more academic-oriented. Nevertheless, the last decade has been characterized with the so-called “academic drift,” or specifically, with the tendency of non-university institutions in shaping study and training programs with some academic “touch.” In Germany, where this tendency is relatively high, this entire process is labelled as “Akademisierung” or *Academisation* of the vocational education and training. The establishment (2008) of the European Qualifications Framework aims at linking “the distinct worlds of education and training and higher education” (Calleja 2008:157). This link is considered as fundamental for the transferability and portability in the system and beyond (Calleja, 2008). The consequences of worldwide cooperation and partnerships of the markets for goods and services pose direct challenges and call for re-structuring and continuous reforms of national VET systems. In this vein, the internationalization of vocational education and training as well as higher education, and the preparation of the labour force for local and foreign markets are the ultimate goals and objectives of both systems (BIBB, 2016). In an attempt to respond to these emerging roles of education systems, countries invest in the integration of international, intercultural and entrepreneurship competencies in the initial and continuing training. In an attempt to embrace the European developments as a reference point in the building blocks of the education system, the national agenda of Kosovo’s government focuses strategically and policy-wise on the

same measures (GoK – KKIE, Kosovo 2020). Nevertheless, the implementation level is far from the wishful lists laid forth in the strategic documents. Regardless of the comprehensive and holistic planning and monitoring of the education system through the KESP, the policy cycle of VET remains isolated from that of HE. Following scenarios are presented in order to reflect more specifically this linkage.

A non-diversified higher education

Today, one of the key challenges in Kosovo's education system is the shortage in the provision of practical skills, be it in the upper-secondary VET or tertiary education.

Upon graduation from the upper-secondary level of VET, Kosovo youth are found in a crossroads. These youth have no other option but to either follow the path of the rest of 30,000 job market hunters - though lacking in skills and highly unaware of this (see Section 5 Omnibus findings) - or march blindly into the "market" of the public if they are lucky enough or more likely private universities (some 80% of the university seekers of a CoC have been enrolled in private higher education institutions, GIZ, 2015). This result confirms the doubt hanging around many researchers, policy makers and practitioners – VET provides a "smoother path" to the university level regardless the quality it provides.

As a result of massification of higher education, the number of students in universities has rapidly increased. In the University of Prishtina, the number of students has almost doubled, from 28,832 in 2014 to 52,665 in 2015, a trend that places Kosovo at the top of European countries (3.987), with 6.669 students for 100,000 inhabitants (Pupovci & Gashi, 2015).

In light of global massifications in higher education that occurred mainly in the 60s and 70s, economically developed

countries experienced an increase of 20% of HE enrolment of the age group 18-24 (the standard age group for the enrolment in the first level of HE), whereas USA and Japan experienced growth of 50% (Trow, 1974 in Shin & Teichler, 2014). The HE characterized with an increase of more than 50% is known in the international literature as universal higher education rather than massification (Trow, 1974). The main rationales behind the massifications worldwide are mainly linked with the rapid economic growth and hence, increased demand from the labour market for graduates' skills, competences and knowledge. Nevertheless, the massifications were followed by deep system reforms in the majority of cases. It was clear that the increase of student enrolment as such would not satisfy the needs of the labour market by growing the then-existing elitist system (Maarja Beerkens-Soo Hans Vossensteyn, 2009:4), but the need for holistic and fundamental system and institutional changes alike, was crucial. In addition, countries engaged in such reforms accompanied the massification with diversification of the programmes within the existing institutions as key to responding to the ever-growing number of students with wide variety of motives, talents and future perspectives (Trow, 1974 in Shin and Teichler, 2014). Provision of different tracks, both academic and vocational/technical, within the HE level was perceived as of highest potential to respond to the different needs and motives of the massified system. Kosovo undertook none of the above mentioned diversification initiatives along with the expansion of HE. On the contrary, the inherited traditional faculties of applied sciences have been upgraded into the academic track of the public universities, a very similar phenomenon to the UK, when the British did the same with their polytechnics (cf. Kogan 1993; Fulton 1996).

VET Image

VET suffers from a poor image. The low performers from

the lower secondary schools and those that fail to enrol in Gymnasias go into the VET system. The latter is often said to serve as a trampoline to the University level after obtaining a VET diploma. On the other hand, the registration and enrolment into vocational schools, regardless of the admission criteria⁶, ends up being subject to low or high enrolment interest. The admissions criteria threshold is then eased for those profiles where the interest from prospective students is lower (i.e. Agriculture and Veterinary, Hotel and Tourism) than for some other profiles (i.e. Economy and Business, Health occupations and ICT). Another aspect disavouring the image of VET is the “competition” with the universities offering same profiles in an “academic” track but that could instead be more vocationally taught and bring added value through the practical component (Focus group, 2016). The expansion of higher education has intensified this competition. Such a “systems” related issue has been already raised in the international arena, specifically within the OECD countries. As one report argues: “In some countries the rapid expansion of tertiary education had undermined school-based VET” (OECD, 2011:7). More specifically the following situation is found among the sectors offered in the school-based VET versus university level: based on the enrolment data from the school year 2014/2015 some 1,010 students have enrolled as administrative assistant, 2,568 as judicial assistants, 3,069 as bank assistants, 2,999 as accounting assistants, 1,309 in supply and logistics, 3,322 in

6 The admission criteria is based on the calculation of the average of the subjects in grade 6-9 and the results achieved from the entry test/exam, which is formulated based on the profile-specific subjects – meaning the most important subjects of a sector covering a number of profiles are evaluated against a set of questions/tasks. More specifically, for e.g. An entry test/exam of the vocational schools of Agriculture and Veterinary would consist of the following subjects ordered based on priorities: 1. Natural sciences; 2. Native tongue (Albanian) and English language; 3. Mathematics and Informatics; and Social sciences. The maximum points are as well given to each subject based on their priorities.

informatics, 1,511 in telecommunications and 2,318 in nursery.

These are all profiles the foundations of which are laid mainly on practical part and the graduates of which end up doing the same job no matter whether they have been taught in the university level or in the upper-secondary level of the VET. A study mapping two sides of the Skill Sector Business and Administration featuring occupations and qualifications at various levels has clearly demonstrated that occupations such as business service agents and trade brokers are occupations that in principle require a level 4 of qualification (NQF based) (Alled, 2015).

However, the employers of some of these job positions seek university graduates only because of the vertical relevance – meaning the higher the level the better the chances to get a certain job.

Regardless of the major role the NQF plays in regulating such a barrier through occupational standards and transferable qualifications, this remains subject to initiatives for interface between and among education systems and levels.

Matura exam and its relevance to the VET graduates

After the 12th grade, students of vocational schools are subject to the final profile specific exam. Based on the Law on National Qualifications (LAW NO.03/L-060), VET graduates exit the upper-secondary level – or level 4 as according to NQF - with a certificate that enables them the entry in the world of work as qualified workers (NQF, 2010). Those aspiring university enrolments have to undergo the Matura exam. The latter poses the biggest disadvantage to VET graduates because of its very “gymnasium-specific” content.

The revision of the Law on State Matura Exam (No.05/L-18)

has undergone very minor changes in favour of VET graduates. The issue at stake involves the overrated value (expressed in percentage) of Matura results that lead to the automatic enrolment into the University. According to the current law, Matura exam makes 40% of the criteria for direct enrolment at the university (Article 16 of the VET Law). On the other hand, the time, volume and quality of preparation for the Matura exam is not equally shared between the VET schools and Gymnasiums, meaning the failure or success of graduates in either track is not of mutual effort and therefore lays a direct path to inequality from the onset. Passing rates of the Matura exam among the VET graduates of all three VET schools types are lower than those of the Gymnasiums, and this situation has persisted for more than a decade (Mehmeti, 2014). Data show that the approximate average of the Matura achievement results of all three categories of VET profiles is around 35%. When University perspective is at stake, the system as such penalizes the VET learners from the onset. Regardless of many attempts to reform the Law on Matura, the essential indicators related to VET graduates opportunities have remained unchanged. The so-called “academic-style” exams are highly questionable in the international arena. The main doubt involves whether the “academic-style exam.... is really the most appropriate way to measure non-academic skills, knowledge and competencies” and specifically the practice-based competences (Wingfield, 2014).

Based on the Curricula Framework of the Pre-University Education of Kosovo, the graduates of vocational schools should acquire and qualify in competences foreseen for a certain occupation; therefore towards the end of the 12th grade or level IV of the NQF they are tested against the final occupational exam – half external administered by schools and authorities of municipal education. Upon the results of this exam, graduates are qualified for an occupation and may continue in the labour market or proceed in the post-

secondary non-university level (MEST, 2011a). However, the second option seems rather difficult, given the non-presence of the public post-secondary provision and scarcity of the private provision.

Quality assurance

The internal quality assurance measures in the VET are built around the self-evaluation reports and their delivery to the MEST and accreditation of profiles. However, regardless of the initial plan, the accreditation process in public schools did not kick-off, yet and it appears to be a rather more complex and costly process than initially expected. The self-evaluation reports delivered by schools to the MEST are written against a number of criteria and set of documents and standardized forms. A thorough analysis of these documents undertaken for the study at hand demonstrates that the employability and the employment rate of the graduates does not play any important role in institutional evaluation (Desk analysis of the forms for VET schools' self-evaluation and confirmed by the Focus Group 1 participants). This suggests that, regardless of the high rates of employment (around 70-75%) found in a number of schools, this successful achievement is not addressed as an element that could serve as a form of performance-based assessment or quality measure. It is clear that, so far, there are no incentives foreseen for the "high performers" or further support to the "low performers" within the system.

Teachers' professional development

Teachers' professional development is characterized by the introduction of a variety of programs in the forms of continuous professional development, pre-service and in-service training that aim at preparing teachers with necessary skills for implementing the new curricula framework amongst others. To date, this remains a big

obstacle given the specific nature of teaching of the unique nature of vocationally oriented profiles. To respond to the needs of teachers a quality measure introduced in the system comprises the licensing of teachers.. The licensing is achieved through a graduate study program at the University of Prishtina. However, one study shows that teachers do not understand or are not in favour of the licensing and its intention to incentivize the CPD (Likaj & Stanley, 2015:22). Obtaining a master's degree carries additional costs that the teachers find unaffordable.

Additionally, the introduction of another Master's degree in Pedagogics has been proposed recently (Focus Group, 2016). Private sector representatives and teachers themselves claim that the establishment of another Master's Degree in Pedagogy for the VET Teachers within the public University of Prishtina undermines the achievement of the intended purpose. Lack of a structure that enables short courses for specific purposes, including the pedagogics for the VET teachers is considered the biggest deterrent for teachers as well as the private sector for any potential cooperation with teachers' community. The introduction of "fancy programs in the higher education level without having anything to do with the labour market" is just another lost opportunity to respond to the actual needs of teachers' development (Focus Group, September and Saloon, October, 2016). Subsequently, one study shows that most of the VET teachers are in dire need of continuous professional development in three key areas of training, namely: 1 pedagogical services (pre-service and in-service), 2. subject-specific practical training for VET and 3. training for the implementation of the National Framework (Strategy and Development Consulting, 2016:17), specifically to address the competency-based modular curricula according to professional standards (MEST, 2016).

Many reforms have taken place in the VET sub-sector

throughout the last decade, and the curricula framework is continuously being reformed to fit the purpose of VET. Recent developments are focused on the core curricula reforms that specifically address the VET profiles and subjects for the 16 main categories under which the VET profiles fall. However, as one study pointed out, the “curricula based on learning outcomes are not automatically learner-centred, nor guaranteed to benefit learners” but it is rather the learning environment that plays the major role (Cedefop, 2016:2).

Developing and establishing a master’s programme for each of these three training areas could pose very high and ambitious financial impacts to the system of both higher education as well as upper-secondary VET. As such, the overall spending in VET would be put in danger, as it is already very constrained.

Amidst the continuous reforms of teachers’ development, the current year is characterized by a very important policy initiative for a wide covering performance-based assessment of teachers through a “performance test,” which would be subject to the teachers of the entire pre-university level of education. The aim of the introduction of this test is the quality improvement of the entire education system. The initiative did not foresee punitive measures, but rather testing for needs assessment purposes as a means to identify the teacher training demands and decide on the modalities to address them in line with lifelong learning philosophy of teachers’ professional development (Bajrami, September 3, 2016). However, shortly after the issue to light, it had to be taken off the table due to very strong negative reactions and resistance from the teachers’ community and representatives of the independent education Union (SBASHK). The Union reacted by calling this initiative “denigration of the personality and non-recognition of teachers’ knowledge” (Telegrafi.com, 2016) . Regardless of

the development and piloting of partial teachers' performance assessment system, it lacks wide coverage, and therefore teachers are not held accountable to the beneficiaries they serve.

When comparing these two initiatives, one message is clear: introduction of a Master's degree in pedagogy for the VET teachers on the one hand and the disapproval of the initiative for teachers' assessment that could bring evidence on teachers' professional needs and challenges in capacities, on the other hand, demonstrates 'operation in the dark'.

Subsequently, another study shows that training programs did not come as real reflection of the teachers' training needs (Likaj & Stanley, 2015).

A vicious circle of ill-preparedness of teachers that would later teach vocational subjects is encountered already in the university level - theory-oriented institutions are the only generators of teachers. The lack of practice-oriented modules, and teaching and learning environment in the university level does not promise improvement of the situation.

6. The Labour Market

Despite of a slight economic growth of 4.1% in recent years, the economy remains donor-dependent and relies largely (97%) on local business activities classified under micro-enterprises (fewer than 10 employees) with the highest business activity focused on services regardless the decrease from 2008 (at 73%) to 2013 (at 66%) (KAS, 2014). The unemployment levels remain high (at 35%). The youngest population in Europe (55.9% of citizens are under the age of 25) is not perceived to strengthen Kosovo's economic development. Instead, the young population is perceived as a burden to the government. Every year the labour market is invaded by approximately 30,000 new jobseekers, while the current economic growth generates around 15,000 new vacancies per year. In addition, the number of young people aged 15 to 24 that are neither employed nor in education or training is relatively high (NEET). (KAS, 2014). (see Table 1 under the *Datasheet* for detailed data for the time period between 2009 - 2013). Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)(KAS, 2015) emphasise that the situation is slightly better for the VET graduates (the rate of unemployment for secondary VET is 30%, against 34% of the secondary average). However, in the long run the labour market situation does not bode well for the secondary VET candidates; the employment rate of secondary VET candidates sank from 42.5% in 2013 to 36.2% in 2015 (see Table no. 4).

One milestone of the VET reform is the involvement of the private sector - which is mostly comprised of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (at 99,78%) as the largest employer in the country (around 74% of the workforce). One study shows that about 76 % of enterprises in Kosovo reported that the lack of skills and education of workforce pose challenges to business operation (World Bank, 2013). Other

sector-specific analyses highlight the lack of vocationally-trained people as such, and for employees already trained in the upper-secondary VET, insufficiency in meeting the labour market demands (Rizvanolli, 2014:24; Ahmetaj et al., 2016). In the past 5 years, the skills gap has increased from 10.3% in 2009 to 23.5% in 2013 (World Bank, 2014).

Additionally, data indicate a falling trend of vocationally educated individuals employed in the private sector. While gymnasium-track individuals are slowly acquiring more jobs in the private sector (see Table no. 4), known as the biggest employer in general, secondary VET candidates are acquiring less jobs (a drop of some 7% from 2013 to 2015). These trends could be because of either employers' bitter experiences with VET-trained employees or because of the better preparation gymnasias graduates received in mathematics and some other key competences (see section on Matura exam).

Despite the employers' views, the perceptions of the youth's own preparation for the labour market are not equally shared. The data from an Omnibus survey demonstrate that a relatively high number of respondents found their skills and knowledge to be adequate to the demands of the labour market. 16.2% of respondents agreed fully and another 38.6% agreed almost fully with the following statement: "The level of knowledge and skills that I have match the requirements of the labour market." Another more recent Omnibus survey asked respondents about the need for further vocational training, and the results show that average response yielded no need for such training (2.19 nearly equivalent to the value "do not agree") (Statement: "I need an additional vocational training, but not of the University level").

Such a dissonance between the employers' versus employees' or youth's views on skills and knowledge provides for a lack of synergy in expectations between what

employers actually look for on the one hand, and what prospective employees perceive they are eager and willing to offer to the labour market on the other hand. When aggregated by level of education, a relatively high proportion of respondents with upper-secondary education (43%) reported the need at the 2.49 rate for further non-university-level vocational training. However, the data is not categorized by tracks (vocational school or gymnasia); therefore, the distribution of the rate between these two tracks is unknown. This result, like many other findings, demonstrates that the situation is based on general public perceptions and calls for more detailed and involved tracer studies.

Pertinent data on the labour market in relation to VET

The employment rate of VET graduates is around 36.2% making it the highest employment rate, followed by the graduates of the tertiary education at 27.5% and graduates of gymnasia at 21.2% (KAS, 2016). At first, this data may create the misleading perception that the upper-secondary VET graduates are doing better than tertiary education graduates in finding jobs. However, when looking at unemployment rates this picture certainly changes, because upper-secondary VET graduates are found to be in more vulnerable positions, with the highest unemployment rate of 41.3%. The higher employment rate of the VET graduates as compared to the tertiary education graduates (7.9%) can be explained by the fact that the latter have greater opportunities in proceeding to the next education level in academia, whereas the VET upper-secondary graduates upon the graduation have very limited opportunities for further vocational education or training at a post-secondary level, or level 5 of the NQF.

On the other hand, the road to university level for the VET graduates seems to be more challenging as opposed to their

gymnasia counterparts. This is well evidenced through the Matura exam results, which continues to be very important in adding up to the total points for university admission. The Matura exam results for the VET students mark the lowest percentages at around 50% for both exam time slots (June and August, 2016). Math remains a key subject and skill in determining the admission to the University (Matura Exam Official Website, 2016), a criterion that makes the VET graduates even more vulnerable for both University enrolment in the country or further vocational training through private institutions.

Skills (mis)match

A general picture for some of the profiles offered in the VET upper-secondary level can be drawn in an attempt to align them with the labour market demands (KESP, 2015).

It has been recently noted that there is indeed a mismatch between the supply and demand. Specifically, profiles such as welding and plumbing are highly demanded in the labour market, but there is a very low interest for enrolment in these profiles offered by the few VET schools in the country. On the contrary, new entrants perceive Law and business, engineering and manufacturing and health, as the most preferred profiles, with an increasing interest in computer sciences/IT as the most attractive profile; these are the profiles that gain the attention of the majority of new entrants in the system (See Chart 1). Most of these profiles are offered at the University level, which creates a big surplus despite the fact that the business graduates of the upper-secondary level, for example, with perhaps some additional practical experience could do the work of the University graduates in the majority of job positions identified in the country. Yet both levels open enrolment quotas blindly without following the actual requirements from the working world. They rather follow a mentality

inherited over many generations that the higher the vertical level of education the more employable the candidates are. Such system inadequacies are often seen as unfairly competitive (Focus group, September, 2016).

Data show that the enrolments in the Agriculture sector are relatively low – at 2,4% - (see Chart 4) and according to these data the demand is not as high either (some 4%). However, study looking into the impact of skills sector in economic sectors it is suggested that because of the size that agriculture population represents in the country and the large proportion in net job creation, specifically in food processing industry and crop production, this sector should be considered as of high potential for employment generation, specifically for women (which as it is claimed are already active but reported as inactive because of the low level of productivity due to possible underemployment – Alled, 2015). The VET taught occupations play a high importance in growing these economic sectors.

Regardless of the legislation in place that favours this relationship, the implementation level is lagging behind in a number of features of VET main blocks such as personnel professional development; capacity building, particularly of the school staff to ensure quality acquisition of competences required by the labour market, capacities of the central management and middle-management staff for ensuring the cooperation between schools and enterprises, capacities of instructors who would deal with the interns (though less in numbers) engaged in enterprises (MEST, 2015); and finally a very low national budget for VET on one hand and lack of co-financing from the companies on the other hand.

The good news is that a number of companies are currently training employees at their own expense (GIZ & Undesignate, 2016), a sign that indicates some interest in improving the VET system in a holistic fashion. The finance and banking sector carries the flagship in on-the-job-

training initiatives. Therefore, this provides for some developments in the country aspirations to link VET with the labour market and could be used as a momentum to further promote and support similar endeavours.

Literature review found a number of success stories in the school-based level. However, the majority of them are functioning on pilot-basis and have not been embedded into the system. There is little initiative or tendency to maintain these good examples or ingrain them in the system. For example, there is a project supported by the Dortmund Chamber of Crafts and implemented in partnership with the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC) in the field of auto-mechanics in forms of Teacher Training and Tutorship. However, upon the end of this project, it is not known if the national institutions are going to have the necessary (financial) resources to sustain such a project within the school, let alone to multiply it (in case of successful implementation) across other vocational schools or training centres. Other similar stories can be found in other donor cooperation projects, the sustainability of which remains questionable. The schools and the training centres alike are aware of these issues (GIZ & *Undesignate*, 2016), and therefore have started looking for support from the national institutions and private sector. For example, the recently established, donor-supported Centres of Competences are already facing problems in supplying their “high-tech” building with the basic needs like goods and services, maintenance of charges, and content-based development.

Preparing Labour for the Foreign Market

With around 30,000 new entrants in the labour market and only around 15,000 jobs available every year, Kosovo remains a locked door for new job-seekers, especially for those experiencing precarious long-term unemployment whose chances for losing skills increase.

Most of the vacancies advertised through public employment services in 2014 were in the service sector (63%), followed by the manufacturing sector (22%) and the agricultural sector (15%) (PES, 2015).

The low production in the private sector and resulting lack of industry makes it clear that Kosovo's labour market does not have the capacity to absorb all the "heavy burden" awaiting it, or rather this burden is becoming heavier. Therefore, preparation of the workforce for the foreign markets is of crucial importance. Relevant governmental institutions such as Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare attribute the success of their work to the engagement in bilateral agreements. These agreements comprise activities that send youth, specifically those seeking jobs and training, to developed partner countries. These partner countries are mainly western countries like Germany, Austria, Switzerland (certainly because of the historical ties with diaspora in these countries), and youth can engage in forms of seasonal work, vocational trainings, further training and/or specialization in the case of medical students and/or graduate, to name a few. The national agenda embraces the idea of the "brain circulation" as a key rationale behind such agreements. The "avant-garde" of the skilled migrants may one day, eventually return to Kosovo for short or long periods to contribute their knowledge, experience, investments and other means of support to their homeland. (Minister of MLSW Abrashi, November, 2016).

Subsequently, it is clear that the preparation for the foreign markets has become an important part of the national agenda. At the policy level, this initiative is reflected in the introduction of National Qualifications Framework's in line with the European Qualifications Framework. Evidence shows that the fifth level of VET graduates and below makes the largest number of workforce required in the EU countries (D4D Salon - Danuza, 2016). Talks about the

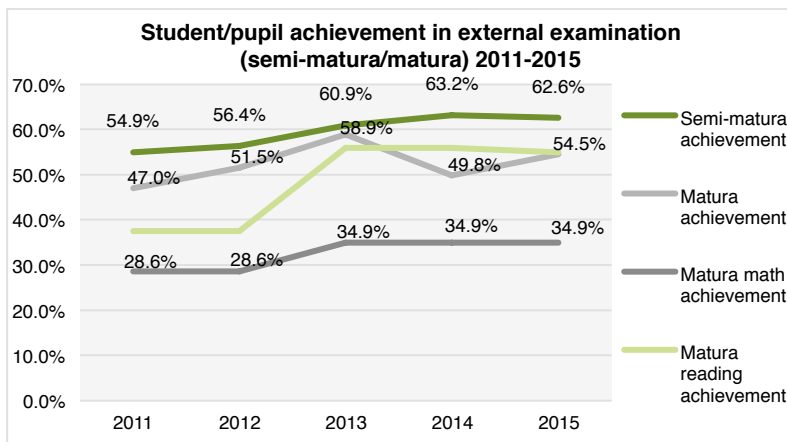
preparation of Kosovo's workforce for the foreign labour market start with learning foreign languages to provision of initial VET qualifications in profiles that match the needs and demands of host countries. To prevent "brain drain," a new national measure focuses on the alignment between Kosovo and EU market demands with main explanation lying on the idea that only when it has been demonstrated that there are no pertinent open vacancies in-house can the Kosovar job-seekers become eligible for the labour migration platform (Sauer, October 2016).

Today, Kosovo hosts a number of organisations that provide mediation programs with the main task of sending interested Kosovars to Germany and sometimes Switzerland for dual system vocational training, the so-called Ausbildung (a specific form of Apprenticeship). Germany alone has hosted around 400-500 youngsters through different official programs in the last 3 years alone (GIZ, HWK Dortmund and OEK, Diakonie Kosova, QEAP Heimerer). This tendency is rapidly growing whereby candidates interested in the occupations in construction and health make the largest outflow rate. It is mainly the development partners, governmental organisations, the private vocational institutions and the companies themselves financing such programs. The Ministry of labour and social welfare is in principle supporting this donor-driven initiative; however the modality of co-financing such an initiative is not in place, yet.

Notwithstanding the key role of the upper-secondary VET system in preparing the future workforce for the foreign labour market, the key bottleneck is found in the deeper roots of educational formation. The results from a number of in-depth interviews have provided interesting messages for the Kosovo education and training institutions in regards to the provision of skills (GIZ, Undesignate, 2016). Highlighted difficulty is reported in maths skills, a barrier

also confirmed by students' levels of achievement in external examinations, concretely in the Matura math achievement (see Fig.2) and more recently through the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. To some extent, the integration into the work culture is already part the VET schools' curriculum; for example, students learn maintenance of tools, machines and other equipment; the ability to work with others; conflict management and communication, etc. It is clear that what is sown in the primary and lower secondary level will be reaped in further levels and in the labour market later on. PISA assessment took place last year for the first time in Kosovo. The recently-published final report revealed not-so-promising results regarding Kosovo's educational system. Out of 72 participating countries, Kosovo ranks as the third least-performing country and the lowest in the Balkans. This was the first effort of its kind in the country and shed light into something that was to some extent already known but this time based on very measurable evidences. In this vein, the concerns about the quality of education spurred more vigorously. International development partners and supranational organizations are calling for the Government's rapid and emergent interventions in deep reforms claiming that the PISA results should serve as "a stepping stone for Kosovo's education system" (EUSR et al., 2016). Many local experts' expected that PISA results only confirmed the conventional wisdom of the education quality in the country and they claim that the responsibility for causing this state of affair is equally shared among all stakeholders involved (Thaçi, 2016).

Figure 2 Student achievements in the national Matura exam



Source: MEST, 2015, Evaluation report of KESP, 2011-2016. (Estimation by the assessment team)

In addition, the recognition of qualifications in other countries does not promise a smooth path to access in the foreign market or further education and training opportunities, with exceptions in the dual system programs - Ausbildung⁷. To complete the picture, as pointed out above, companies that accept Kosovar youngsters for vocational training in the dual system/‘Ausbildung’ complain about the youth’s math skills. The majority of these young workers have to undergo extra-curricular math lessons provided by the companies in order to catch up with their peers from Germany and other countries in the EU.

Provided that the NQF serves as a reference point only for the level of qualifications in terms of compatibility, transferability or synchronization with other countries, the international recognition of qualifications—regardless of the

⁷ A dual vocational education and training system in Germany is partly attended at a school and partly at a real company. The time spent at the company is increased gradually throughout years (in total maximum 3.5 years).

introduction of a number of occupational standards in Kosovo—remains subject to the host countries’ very detailed and strict procedures. For instance, an individual who seeks a job in Germany as a welder is subject to the recognition of the qualification process which comprises a number of country-specific steps (that go beyond the EU level legal acts) that carry relatively high costs (ZAV, 2016).

Evidence provided above (Chart 4: Profiles with highest enrolment rates in VET versus job (skills) tendency) shows important trends between the enrolment rates versus employability in Kosovo. Specifically, data from the IT and health sectors demonstrate a typical example of mismatch between the local and foreign labour market requirements. While IT is listed as number one on the priority list of occupations/jobs required in the majority of the western markets, Kosovo does not provide a steady market development of this sector (STIKK, 2013). Data show that the enrolments in the IT profiles of VET are 10%, whereas the job tendency is slowly developing at 1%. The same is true for health occupations of the VET upper-secondary level, which is as well ranked in the list of top ten most required occupations in western European countries (ZAV; BASK, BI,ELÄ, 2016). The very first discussions on cooperation with the diaspora in the ICT sector have commenced recently in an attempt to identify the joint powers and capacities of the local individuals and companies in Kosovo and their homolog in diaspora. There are similar initiatives going on in the construction sector, but not much is in place in regards to VET, regardless of the general perception that there is large number of diaspora’s third generation (those mainly born after 1985) enrolled or graduated from the dual vocational training programmes in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Data are scant in this aspect as well; therefore it is difficult to initiate concrete measures without figures on the diaspora capacity in VET and their potential for cooperation with their home country’s system.

Labour market requirements and conditions versus opportunities in the VET system – issues at stake

The available education, labour market and labour force data providers (Agency for Statistics) and the relevant Ministries in the country report only the information and trends based on the preceding years. Data providers are highly centralized, which makes for strong and manageable cooperation between the key stakeholders involved. Still, there is limited interaction and communication, and data remains scattered and is derived from disharmonized methodologies and tools. Subsequently, analyses for forecasting skills demand are not there yet (Strategy and Development Consulting, 2016) notwithstanding the policy initiative in place, specifically for the sectors covered by VET provision (GoK, 2015, NERP).

Based on the information and evidence available, the following issues are at stake in relation to the link between VET and the labour market: i. Often the labour market analyses are blindly undertaken by screening the vacancies announced. Such an analysis is incomplete since recruitment is mainly done through family and social ties (family, friends, relatives, trade unions, etc.) (LFS, 2014, UNDP, 2016). ii. It remains difficult to gain a better picture of the skills required versus those acquired given that the employers do not have a clear picture of their employees' required profiles. Therefore, quantitative studies indicate more need for 'soft skills,' (USAID, 2015) whereas qualitative studies (including individual talks and interviews with companies) show more need for technical and pure vocational skills. The methodologies applied for analysing the labour market are often called into question given these contradictory claims; therefore information and feedback from employers remains scant. iii. A top priority, and yet the biggest challenge, is the proper reporting of the appropriateness or relevance of the skills acquired versus

those required. Pursuing a decent job or merely existing in the labour market does not mean one possesses or offers the skills the labour market requires. Over-qualification or under-qualification is therefore reported as a mismatch between the competencies required versus those acquired. This mismatch is often attributed to the quality of a certain sub-sector of education and training and not to labour market placement opportunities. iv. Another observation relates to the rationale behind job creation or businesses in general. It is suggested that “the majority of Kosovo businesses are created out of necessity” (USAID, 2014:29), meaning that there are no other alternatives in the working world, and therefore businesses and business activities are commenced out of necessity and not out of the opportunity and potential for economic development (USAID, 2014). v. Finally, the feature making the relationship between the labour market and the VET system less favourable and more challenging is the lack of opportunities for training in a further post-secondary vocational system. Despite the attempts to offer this level in the public institutions, specifically in the Centres of Competence, this has not yet been the case. Consequently, employers report higher preparedness among those with higher education, meaning university graduates rather than VET graduates. According to a survey of the labour market demand (AKB, 2014), “38% stated that vocational school graduates were completely unprepared for jobs in their field of study, while only 6.1% stated the same about university graduates” (USAID, 2014: 30). Similar structural problems existing within the public system prompt youth to rely on the private institutions - although few in number - offering the vocational post-secondary level, a consequence that bears high costs as well. In another setting, where the emergence of the private institutions is regulated, this would be organized through a non-profit arrangement, where the profit gained would primarily go to the circular investment within the institution

and improvement of quality.

Means and types of cooperation between VET and the labour market

Notwithstanding the wide variety of agreements between vocational schools and companies/potential employers, they remain individual-based and do not cover the entire system. The MEST has recently undertaken initiatives to sign MoUs with companies of different sectors for cooperating with the VET schools through accepting students for professional practice purposes. This has been foreseen within the framework of the Strategy for improvement of professional practice in Kosovo 2013-2020 (2013). Whether a MoU could fulfil the pleas and terms of conditions remains to be seen, subject to companies' "goodwill." It is often reported that incentives for companies that offer practice and/or internships for the VET learners or jobs for the graduates are not in place. The vast majority of the stakeholders refer mainly to the tax exemption or reduction as the key incentive. However, such a measure is a point not commonly understood and approached between the private sector and the schools. The latter refers to the students' output and the results delivered in form of an added value. This should serve as the key motivation for the companies to accept VET learners and graduates without the need to invest in capacity building, provided that they acquire key competences during the professional practice (Focus group, 2016).

There are good practices found among the individual schools. The study at hand as well as other sources encountered very important steps that schools have undertaken - with or without the support of donor organizations or development partners - towards bringing the employers and the private sector closer to the schools and vice versa. However, these initiatives are built around

limited modalities towards collaboration between VET and the labour market, namely: initiatives undertaken by schools with the aim to find places for students'/trainees' placement for the mandatory in-company practice which might result in employment; initiatives undertaken by students through family ties, friends and/or direct approach to companies; and other forms emerging recently mainly with the support of donors, comprise participation of companies in the professional teacher trainings in the school premises, whereby trainings are offered by international experts (a school in Prizren - "11 Marsi" and one in Pristina - "Shtjefen Gjecovi" 2016 in cooperation with donor organization/GIZ, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and Dortmund Chamber of Crafts). Private institutions mainly of the post-secondary VET are on the other hand emerging on demand-driven basis and are either aligned with the local or the international (rather western) labour market. The new vocational training programs in ICT, health, textile and costume design shows evidence for the increase in provision of some of the profiles highly required in either of the markets.

Certainly cooperation between VET and the labour market is not limited to students and/or graduates. On the contrary, cooperation entails the sharing of work premises between schoolteachers and instructors, and company instructors/supervisors. In vein with international trends and attempts in bringing VET institutions closer to industry, "interchange" is a highly recommended measure for the actors of both training environments – teachers and trainers - to work together with companies by spending more time in each other's premises: "...so that vocational teachers and trainers [could] update their knowledge, and vocational trainers in firms [could] enhance their pedagogical skills" (OECD, 2011:5). This could fill the gaps that the contracted teachers do not have the capacity to cover. Countries like Austria have gone further with this arrangement by

cooperating with the industry in enabling teachers a part-time working shift in the premises where production or practical work takes place. Such experience is mandatory, indeed (OECD, 2010).

7. Old and future jobs

The demographic development trends and estimations for the future provide evidence for a rapid growth of the working age population in the next decade. Large number of new entrants in the labour market is however not going to match the number of people entering the age of retirement (Recura Financials, 2014). That said, it is expected that in the coming five years, 110,000 youth will enter but only around 60,000 will leave the labour market (Kosovo Sectorial Strategy, 2009).

Despite some short-term forecasting on the sectors with potential, there are no projections of specific groups of skills that will be required in the longer run in Kosovo. The country is short on the updated, reliable data and first and foremost-harmonized systems and methodologies in data gathering – all factors that are “hampering sound analysis of the labour market” (EU, 2016).

Recent sector analysis point out the “hidden” role of agricultural products which on the contrary are reported as of high potential for export (Recura Financials, 2014). Moreover, the metal and wood sectors are also gaining their momentum. It has been found that wood collects the largest revenues from the domestic market, and around 15% of the wood sector businesses export their products. Youth occupies 40% of total employment in this sector (Strategy and Development Consulting, 2016: 8-9). It is the vocationally-trained workforces that are perceived as the most attractive potential employees for the employers of this sectors (UNDP, 2013). (Reference: UNDP, 2013, Kosovo Human Development Report 2012: Private Sector and Employment, Prishtina.)

Lately ICT has brought much attention to the policy makers as well as donor organisations for its high potential both for local and international growth. There are limited areas

where ICT businesses expect local growth and a large number of sectors that remain highly underserved by the ICT services, hence by the ICT sector. Nonetheless, scanned against a number of indicators, ICT pioneers in the majority of them, including the high percentage of businesses that export as compared to other sectors (STIKK, 2013:7). Though low in number, it is found that the IT sector in Kosovo "...is practically the only segment actually having exports" (STIKK, 2013:17).

Notwithstanding the conventional wisdom on the influence of technology development and its indispensable role in changing the way we work and live, the policies and practices are not aligned accordingly. Utilization of highly technology-dependent machinery, equipment and tools remains rather dependant on external expertise. The machinery on the other hand is purely imported from the western countries already engaged in the rapid wave of technological changes, countries whose workforce are already but slowly being replaced by technology. According to a study, the developing countries are at risk of "premature deindustrialisation," whereby low-skill jobs disappear before low-income countries get rich (Schiller, 2016).

In the post-internet booming times and times when "technology is transforming the way we work" it is said the skills demanded by the labour market are changing and education systems are yet highly challenged by the rapid changes and struggling to play along. While many developed countries are already fearing automation with China marking the highest degree at 77% (35% jobs in UK, 47% in the US, OECD countries as a whole with an average of 57%), education stakeholders still resist the idea of automation *per se* let alone the risks it can pose to the entire labour market and among the labour force. (Business Insider, October 22, 2016). Countries like Australia are conducting advanced projections on occupations against a set of skill dimensions.

These skills include interactive, cognitive and motor skills. In sum, one study found that “the demand for interactive and cognitive skills is projected to grow, whereas the demand for motor skills is likely to fall” (NCVER, 2008). Changes in demands for these three sets of skills are explained by the technological change, suggesting that the later complements motor skills and that the only skills “immune” to automation are those involving creative and interpersonal characteristics. Nevertheless, the occupations pertaining more to the vocational track i.e. construction, persist in maintaining the motor skills as yet, of high demand.(Pappas, 1998 in NCVER, 2008:24).

Another study found that the least educated people in the world perceive the jobs automation as less threatening.

In light of international discourse on the skills future developments Kosovo’s context is laid as following: priorities identified in projective strategic documents in Kosovo focus on the extension of entrepreneurial skills development (Skills 2020, 2015). Basic development of skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, research, teamwork and digital media remain the biggest challenges in all education levels. (Skills 2020, 2015:21).

Entrepreneurial education is one of the strategic dimensions in which VET could influence economic and labour market developments in the country. This means not only supporting entrepreneurship and skills for entrepreneurs, but also boosting the entrepreneurial behaviour of future employees who should be able to manage working life and a career.

The new curriculum framework, which is being developed in Kosovo, builds on competence-based education, follows the learning outcomes descriptors and is based on six key areas of competences and entrepreneurship as an activity is aspired through the subject “Life and Work”. Twenty-one

new curricula were developed under the new framework at hand.

One of the major challenges in bringing the VET system closer to the labour market and vice versa is the perception that companies are not highly aware and informed on the skills they should require from the potential employees, and they feature no projections or assessments for their long-term requirements but rather the current ones. Studies with employers found that soft skills are the most required ones, more specifically communication, language and managerial skills (USAID, 2015). On the contrary, one international analysis suggests that the soft or generic skills are often overrated. The same study goes further by claiming that skills such as “interactive skills, teamwork and emotional intelligence [employers] seek are not a matter of *skill*, but rather of *will*.” (NCVER, 2015:18).

In Kosovo, the skills demand is continuously guided by the EU. The changes, and therefore risks, posed in jobs automation in the EU area are not going to be an exclusion for Kosovo, a country aspiring for EU integration and the production of labour force for foreign markets.

Kosovo is majorly import-dependent economy, where alone the enterprises that use material inputs and/or supplies of foreign origin are highest in Kosovo (at 85%) compared to ECA countries and low-income countries (World Bank, 2015). This poses another potential for the risk of jobs automation, because the machineries needed will be imported from other countries and the need to master in the utilization of such machineries is an inseparable part of the skills process. When technological development does not meet the individuals at the time and under the circumstances they are best prepared for, the “technological unemployment” (Dvorsky, 2014) might not escape its wave in Kosovo, either.

8. Recommendations

Recommendations build on the more burning issues presented in the course of this policy paper and specifically seek to address the following building blocks of VET.

Governance

Key ministerial institutions, independent agencies and bodies, and relevant municipalities lead the VET system. There is, however, peculiarity caused by the emergence of new institutions and the waves that followed with handover of tasks on the one hand and lack of capacities and preparation on the other hand. There is a dire need for clarification of the roles, responsibilities and tasks and most and foremost the mandate/and boundaries of each institution and stakeholder of VET. MEST as the key carrier of the policy-making responsibility should draft a clear organogram of the system in cooperation with the CVET, AVETAE and the NQA, in order to speak more coherently with students/trainees and the labour market. The mismatches in secondary legislation demonstrated through the table analysis may serve as a reference for highlighting the emergence need for capacity building in drafting laws pertinent to VET, the expertise of which should stand out from other education tracks given that a bylaw regulating VET issues should mostly address two facets: education and economy, therefore the labour market. The governance of VET should be in a position to undertake more advanced and regular monitoring of legislation. It is high time for the governance of VET to push for the performance assessment system within MEST, MEDs and educational institutions. Additionally, the law on municipalities which is regulated based on the decentralization agenda, should be re-considered specifically when it comes to the VET. Decentralization of VET is perceived as the major bottleneck hindering quality governance.

Link between VET and the labour market

One should keep in mind that the initial VET system in Kosovo is mainly a school-based system that cannot be replaced by a company or work-based system. Rather, opportunities should be explored for internalizing elements of a dual system or similar systems oriented around labour market demands. Technology development grants neither the education system nor the labour market the “luxury” of behaving in a traditional fashion, regardless of some tendencies for resistance. It is clear that there is great mismatch between labour market demands and the supply provided by the public VET system. On the other hand, VET graduates encounter dead-ends in their further vocational career aspirations due to the non-existence of a public post-secondary provision. The existence or even licensing and accreditation of private post-secondary provision functioning should be conditioned with opportunities for cooperation with the public vocational upper-secondary institutions (when and where possible). VET schools are entitled to offer the 5th level, but current financial issues and human capacities hinder such an undertaking. Examples from the public-private partnerships have not yet been applied nationally, but piloting should be considered. Evidence shows that there are functional public-private development partnerships. The development partners’ support should meet the specific obstacles of the system but must be proactively involved in setting the development of long-term objectives.

Preparing labour force for foreign market

Kosovo’s market cannot meet the requirements of the large and therefore discrepant number of labour market entrants. It is and should remain on the national agenda to prepare for the foreign labour market.

Clear evidence in preparation of labour force for the foreign

market can be drawn from the IT sector, yet it is in its early development stage. Evidence shows vast potential but very low "professional approach" for recognition of this sector. On the one hand, this sector is the only one actually exporting services. However, the existing measures for export are neither favourable for the companies providing services nor for the employers. International customers use the local labour force legislation as a basis for their investments. Therefore wages in cases of alliances, consortia and other types of cooperation are subject to the local regulations. As a result, incentives for working in the local market of the IT sector are very few.

The mismatch between enrolments in some VET occupations and labour market demands in Kosovo are not necessarily an issue for concern. Provided that the foreign market, specifically western markets, is decades ahead in economic development, Kosovo should not isolate itself from these globalized tendencies. As EU integration is aspired, the "physical" opportunity for crossing borders will have to change eventually. However, until this is achieved, the labour force development, hence, the human capacity must be developed at a faster pace in order to survive foreseen automation of skills and sectors.

Cooperation with diaspora in advancing VET

Qualitative information demonstrates the vast potential for diaspora cooperation projects that would cover knowledge and expertise transfer as well as investments in the VET system. There is, however, need to build contacts with vocationally trained, graduates, and professionals in the diaspora already in the work force. A map of Albanian diaspora professional organisations (both from Kosovo and Albania) has identified some 200 associations, organisations, foundations and other types of networking organisations. Both countries should make use of such

structures for potential collaborations in VET, specifically in identifying the synergies, the experts, graduates and other that could contribute to system advancement. The first steps of such collaborations should initially focus on identifying individuals vocationally trained, graduated and/or already employed in sectors with high potential for economic growth. Considering the cross-sectorial nature of such an initiative, it is important that this responsibility lay beyond what MEST could cover. This would more specifically call for the support of the Ministry of Diaspora, the Ministry of External Affairs through its Embassies in countries where the majority of Kosovar diaspora is located, the Ministry of Economy and last but not least the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The chambers of commerce and/or the chamber of crafts should play a mediating role, and professional organizations, individual experts and chambers should take responsibility for different modalities.

Monitoring and evaluation of VET - link with research from the University level

The country's aim is to foster evidence-based policies therefore reforms in education.

It was noted that neither governmental institutions nor independent agencies specializing in statistics keep track of profiles closed and/or newly opened throughout years. Such basic information that is crucial evidence for leading the agenda and the key objective of VET to link supply with demand is not in place. MEST—the VET Division through the MEST Statistics Office, namely the Education Management Information System (EMIS) - should get involved in such a practice. Moreover, it should become an inseparable element of quality assurance within the school management. This is only one tangible example of monitoring needs in the system. Other demands would encompass issues such as performance based assessment of

schools, monitoring of the pre-service and in-service teachers' professional development, to name a few. The largest public university in Kosovo does have some research structures within the institution built in the faculty level of organization. Such institutes should play an important role in promoting both the institutional expertise as well as the evidence-based monitoring and evaluation, hence policy making. Kosovo's local think tanks are rising in number as well as production of research, which spurs knowledge generation in the areas of donor interest. Provided that VET is becoming one of the biggest absorbers of donor investment, this opportunity should not be missed.

Additionally, cooperation with universities would contribute to research on VET-related issues. No consistent information on the career path of VET graduates (whether initial or continuing) is available. Feedback from graduate/alumni studies should become important in VET planning. Despite the high ambitions set in strategic documents, the capacities of VET providers to generate information on skills needs is limited. The role of Universities has never been more essential in tackling such demands. Mandated to generate knowledge, universities should play a steering role in providing advanced labour market analysis with projections on future skills. The latter is recommended to award research funding relevant to the areas of "strategic importance or market needs" (Nikaj & Malazogu, 2016:42). The areas of strategic importance for improvement of quality in education and economic development stated in the National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NDS)(GoK, 2016) are in place and this should be vitalized. Policy makers need to make greater efforts to ensure that their education and training provision reflects the specific needs of businesses (ETF, 2016) and specifically that of the private sector since it is the largest employer in the country.

Employers and graduates feedback on each other's demands and expectations

There is high discrepancy between what employers expect from graduates and how they judge their performance on the one hand, and graduates perception on their capacities and competences on the other hand. General data gathered through an Omnibus survey and other sector-specific studies illustrate the disharmony between the actual state of affair of these two stakeholders of VET. The question whether of VET graduates can switch from one company to another does not prompt a positive answer given very low employers' satisfaction. Since employers show a higher interest now than ever in exploring the possibilities for cooperation with VET, it is high time to start considering the piloting of tracer studies in a number of highly-demanded sectors. Tracer studies lack the power to wipe away the gap between employers and graduates perception on abilities, knowledge and capacities, but they could still initiate feedback from different perspectives (that of the graduate) and time sequences.

Synchronisation with higher education developments

A portable VET system that aims to respond to the needs of various requests and interests “should offer different progress routes at various levels, avoiding dead-ends and linking VET to general tertiary education” (OECD, 2010). The education system should bear an “interconnected” responsibility and aim for holistic reforms. Given the high interest in the VET system in the country, it is high time for planning to focus on synchronising objectives and targets of VET and HE-related to study programs and courses relevant to VET teachers, graduates and possibly managers as well. The future planning of teachers' professional development should be subject to joint planning between the upper-secondary and higher education working groups of KESP in

the framework of MEST's Joint Annual Review (JAR)⁸. The joint planning should not be limited but rather expand in other matters of common importance in these two education levels such as professional practice, since both levels aspire for a closer link with the labour market.

Quality assurance

The employment of graduates should become key to quality assurance measures at the grass-root level. The employment and employability⁹ of VET learners is already set in the national agenda reflected both in pertinent strategic documents as well as legal framework. This should have a clear reflection in the implementation level as well. As such it remains just a written objective. Therefore, VET schools should be held accountable for the employment as well as other career paths of the graduates, but should also be rewarded for the quality of work, which contributes to the improvement of the quality of education.

Revisiting the funding formula

Neither high performers nor low performers receive any feedback about rewards (for the former) or more support for improvement (for the latter) (Focus Group, September, 2016). Revision of the funding formula would entail profile-based funding and performance-based funding to promote quality. A cost analysis for each profile is needed in order to determine the funding formula. Opportunities for a performance-based funding that includes a set of criteria based on the employment rate as well as employability and

8 JAR is an annual review of the entire education system organized by MEST where all relevant partners are invited, including other line ministries. The assessment is conducted against the objectives and targets set in the KESP.

9 Employability should not be confused with employment. Employability goes beyond what employment refers to. Employability highlights rather “the value of competences immediately useful on the job and the subordination of the objectives of [education] to the employers’ expectations” (Teichler, 2009:303).

further training opportunities (including portability) should be scrutinized.

Improvement of secondary legislation

Cooperation with business and the private sector based on their demands in provision of the 5th level: Public upper-secondary provision should find opportunities for cooperation and partner with private institutions providing the 5th level in teachers' preparation (through development partnerships). Development partners' interest in supporting VET reforms is growing and so should the national institutional ownership, by setting clear objectives and requests for support. Such requests cannot be reached without evidence-based needs; therefore an evidence-based policy cycle with the support of other stakeholders is essential. Such an issue should exceed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and it cannot be regulated by a law issued by the MEST only. It is the other line ministries such as MTI,

Cooperation between MLSW and MEST in filling the gaps in infrastructure of the vocational schools, therefore provision of practice within the VTCs. If there were synergies between MEST and MLSW in place, the VET schools could make use of them, without additional costs (provided that the VTCs are open to public and not only to the job-seekers as the perception has it). There is information available that does confirm that VET graduates do undertake some additional courses at the provision of VTCs but this occurs only after they have graduated, given that the VTCs serve the categories registered as "unemployed" and "job-seekers" (under which the students are not eligible for either category due to their "student" status). Therefore, external agreement should be reached between the two ministries in order for both of them to benefit and fulfill gaps both in provision for

students/trainees as well as teachers and trainers.

The role of instructors of VET, which ideally is perceived crucial, is rather undermined and often misinterpreted in Kosovo. There is a need for involving instructors' communities or professional associations that represent their rights in the policy discussions. This way the pertinent legislation could be fully implemented/in force. Relevant stakeholders claim that there is scarcity in capacities of instructors in both learning and training environments -schools and companies alike. The proposal to invite school instructors to companies or vice-versa should not be underestimated at least for the beginning of a revised relationship between the two. The system should approach the secondary legislation on instructors in a new fashion in order to bring them closer to the school and company. The role of instructors is very specific and should be treated separate from teachers as well as "assistants" (as it is the case with the current AI).

A much-underestimated issue in the VET track is the **safety and insurance in case of incidents**. Specifically this should be regulated through an official guide that would include a number of guidelines on safety measures and a specific AI on students' insurance against any possible incident, maltreatment or similar misconduct within the professional practice (in the school) or at the company/enterprise. This is not a responsibility of the MEST only, it rather goes beyond to the MLSW, MTI, and other line ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, to name a few). Such a policy initiative has been undertaken by many countries in the region. For example, recently Albania's line ministries have endorsed a policy document that addressed occupational/work health and safety that covers VET as well (MMSR & MSH, 2016). A strict monitoring instrument should back up the legislation.

The main bottleneck is the **involvement of companies**

in the implementation of VET, particularly in the curricula. This matter needs to be addressed beyond the signing of a MoU for professional practice placement. Good practices found in individual schools (e.g. in CoC Malishevo) where the coordinator for business cooperation comes from a business background and maintains regular contacts in order to keep them closer to the school are to be saluted and possibilities for multiplication should be explored. The teachers or management staff undertaking such initiatives should be rewarded for the added value they bring to the institutions and such forms of assessment should be integrated in the system – the performance based one.

The current State Matura Exam does not coincide with the preparation of VET students. In the framework of official discussions on the revision of **Law on State Matura** exam among which donor community and local experts were involved, the following remedies have been proposed: VET students should become subject to a vocational-based examination which would assess learners both practical and theoretical skills and knowledge. Upon successful completion of the exam (with a 50% passing threshold), VET students would receive a VET Diploma. Those who fail the exam would be issued a school-leaving certificate. However, VET learners who aspire for University enrolment would benefit from the bridging courses while in the VET schooling or after the completion of the VET Diploma (Preceding from the Review of Law on Matura, 2015). Should such approach be instilled in the system, the VET system cannot remain a stepping stone to the University level, but rather a skills provider to pave the way to a more flexible and portable coming path for its graduates, be it in the labour market or further to the post-secondary VET and/or higher education.

Continuous Professional Development of teachers

Continuous professional development of teachers is not based on the needs assessment. Introduction of licensing and the recent requirement to complete a Master's degree in pedagogics as an incentive for teachers aspiring for career in vocational schools did not have the intended effect. However, introduction of teachers' performance-based assessment encountered strong resistance.

Instead of engaging in a one to two-year fulltime program in the University level, a course on the acquisition of a specific competence is reported because it has a greater potential to serve the purpose in a more pragmatic way. Enhancement of the system capacities in providing such courses cannot be reached without leveraging the capacities of the private sector. It is time to consider tailored and short professional program for teacher training through the support of the private providers as well as development partners. Introduction of short courses would as well address more adequately the needs of teachers of vocational and technical subjects. The latter are reported as highly required (Stanley and Likaj, 2015).

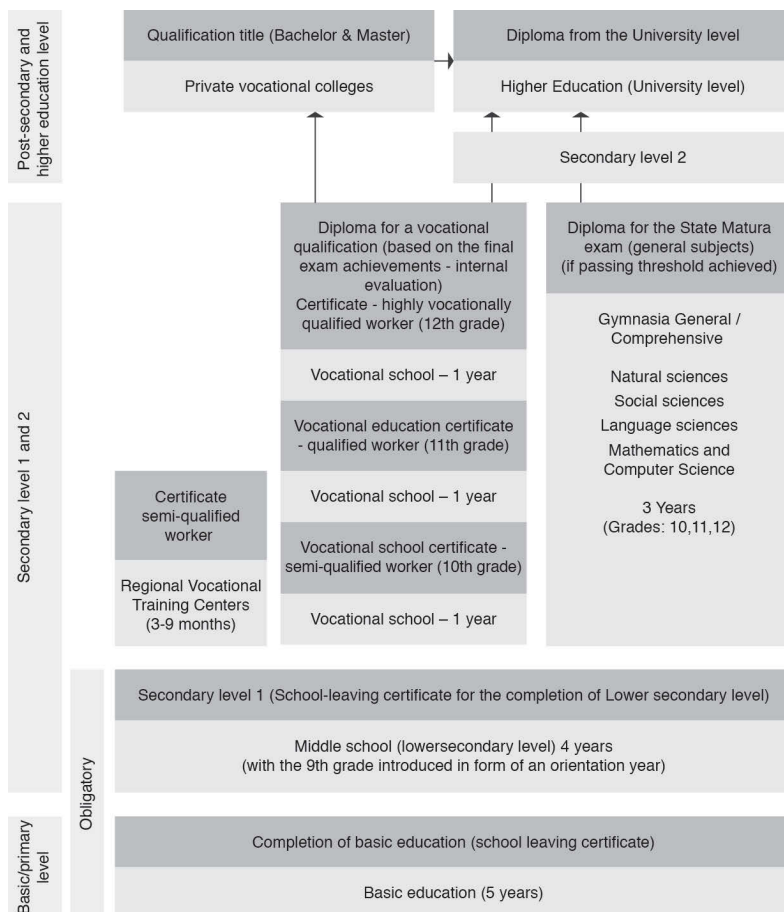
Annex 1: Questions of the Omnibus

1. Please, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: My employer contributes to my professional/& vocational training
2. Please, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: I need further vocational training but in the university level.

Annex 2: Eight NQF levels of qualifications with indicative qualifications and levels of occupation

National Qualifications Framework				
NQF Level	Contains qualifications associated with			EQF ref. level
	Education programmes	Currently available qualifications (Type)	Potential work roles/occupational requirements	
8	Higher education - Bologna 3rd cycle (Doctorate)	Doctorate (A)	Entry to, or continuing professional development within, senior levels of management or higher level professional occupations	8
7	Higher education - Bologna 2nd cycle (Master)	Master degree (A)		7
6	Higher education - Bologna 1st cycle (Bachelor)	Bachelor degree (A)		6
5	Bologna short cycle and /or post-secondary VET	Title of qualifications still unknown (A), (C) Certificates of non-formal providers (D or E)	Specialist/Trainer/Manager	5
4	Preparation for progression into higher education and/or labour market entry	Matura diploma in general or vocational subjects (B), (C), Vocational education diploma (C)	Qualified Worker/Supervisor	4
3	Preparation for labour market entry (young people and adults)	Vocational education certificate (C) Certificates of non-formal VET providers (D or E)	Semi-skilled Worker	3
2	Progression from lower to upper secondary education (young people), preparation for labour market (adults)	No existing qualifications of formal education system identified Certificates of non-formal providers (D or E)	Low-skilled Worker	2
1	Basic education	No existing qualifications of formal education system identified Certificates of non-formal providers (E)	Minimum level of basic skills, inc. literacy/numeracy, required for entry to lowest level of employment	1

Annex 3: The Structure of Vocational Education and Training in light of the entire education system in Kosovo



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