

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

**STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN  
KOSOVA**

**(2005-2015)**

**(abstract, first draft)**

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## **Acknowledgements**

## **Foreword**

Despite a 45 year tradition of higher education in Kosova, the last decade of the XX century has left deep scars in the development of this segment of the education system. Isolation and political developments of this period have resulted in hindered development, which is still evident in spite of the presence of certain positive developments in this area. In accordance with the Law on Higher Education, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) is responsible for planning of the development of higher education in Kosova. In meeting its responsibilities, the MEST has undertaken drafting of a long term strategy for the development of higher education in Kosova with ten year projection of developments, and with active involvement of relevant stakeholders. The overall goal of this strategy is to contribute to building of a up-to-date system of higher education in Kosova, as a promoter of integrated efforts for the development of the country.

Higher education is one of the most important areas in a modern society. It creates a milieu in which individuals can accomplish their intellectual and creative potentials. Through high level training in various disciplines, it endows people with necessary knowledge, aptitude, and values to cover for a wide range of social functions and to become effective citizens. Through knowledge and research, higher education provides a society with capability for innovation, adjustment and progress.

In fact, the capability of higher education to accomplish these functions in meeting societal needs, in developing needed aptitudes and in creating and transmitting useful knowledge is the key indicator of the vitality and economic, social and cultural wellbeing of a society. Generally, there is a high correlation between the higher education and national development and wellbeing. The key challenge to higher education in Kosova is to provide for a sustainable cultural, social, and economic development of the country and for integration in the European area.

The document of the strategy for the development of higher education represents a further step in the process of public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the higher education. The starting point of new transformations and developments in the higher education is the new political, social and economic reality in Kosova. The system of higher education needs reform, transformation and remodeling in order to serve for the new social order, to meet the national needs and to respond to the new realities and opportunities. The strategy document makes it clear that the higher education system needs to reform, transform, and extend in order to become more efficient. This is a challenging task that requires strenuous efforts from all either directly engaged in higher education or interested in its development.

Aiming to carry out reforms in higher education, the ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has issued an Administrative Instruction for the establishment of the Board of Experts for Higher Education. One of the key tasks of this Board is drafting of a development strategy for higher education for years 2005 – 2015.

The Kosova Education Center (KEC) has extended financial and professional support to the process of drafting of the higher education strategy and has helped in identifying other means of financial and professional support.

The process of strategy development has involved a number of renown figures in the area of higher education, research and economy, students, MEST officials, education specialists and international experts. The process has received direct guidance and support from Mr. Rexhep Osmani, Minister of Education, Science, and Technology. A special contribution to the overall drafting process of the strategy has been given by Prof. Rexhep Gjergji as the team Leader, Prof. Dukagjin Pupovci as moderator, and Prof. Nikoleta Mita as consultant.

## Chapter 1: Realities, needs and challenges

*This chapter presents the context that necessitates the need for new developments. It brings forward the need for reform, transformation and enhanced development of higher education in a milieu of new realities and challenges in Kosova. The status of Kosova, global development trends and a series of problems call for restructuring, solutions and innovations in the higher education. The chapter consists of three sections:*

### 1.1. New realities and policies for the higher education in Kosova

- Describes the new reality in the post-war (1999) Kosova: the political, social, economic, education and cultural reality.
- Brings forward the need for new education policies as a result to new realities

### 1.2. Challenges of transition and globalization

- Presents the national transition and the overall influence of globalization
- Globalization and the national education policy

### 1.3. Problems of the education system

*As a result of the circumstances in which the higher education system operated in Kosova in the nineties onto which the war of 1999 was added, the unclear status of Kosova, the inadequate treatment of higher education by the government, and lack of public and other funds dedicated to the HE have all brought about a series of problems which are listed below divided in several groups.*

#### **In the area of policy and legislation**

- Deficient policies and incomplete legislation for the higher education in Kosova
- Lack of incentives for faculty and students
- Lack of standards for scientific and academic promotion
- The structure of higher education is not compatible with the development needs of Kosova
- Lack of funds
- Lack of funds for scientific research
- Lack of priorities set for research
- Disproportion in the student/teacher ratio in some HE institutions
- Discrepancy between offer and demand for study placements in the HE
- Inadequate selection of student candidates
- Lack of concrete engagement to utilize the scientific potentials outside Kosova
- Lack of international study programmes
- Young faculty and experts leaving Kosova
- Low inclusion of population in the higher education
- Low inclusion of girls and women in HE
- Lack of specific programs for minorities
- Low inclusion of minorities in the HE
- Lack of support for the private higher education institutions
- UP is identified with the system of higher education

**In the area of management and coordination**

- Lack of a genuine system for the management of higher education institutions does not allow for a clear definition of authority, responsibility, or any meaningful control of good or bad performance at work.
- Lack of clear and consistent objectives.
- Lack of straightforward indicators that would facilitate quality assurance and increase of performance within managerial processes in the higher education.
- Lack of control mechanisms and accountability in every level. This adds to lack of transparency towards the employers, clients and third parties.
- Practice of more than one job at the same time, often due to lack of qualified staff, affect the quality of performance at work.
- Lack of staff, especially ones qualified in conformity with modern systems. This relates to the lack of human resource development policies.
- Lack of dialogue between institutions and higher education groups (Ministry – University, Rector’s office – Faculties, teachers - students). This has resulted in opposing approaches and goals (objectives) that does not allow for development of efficiency and quality of management.
- Lack of financial funds dedicated to management and administration that effectuates low motivation and engagement of the staff.
- So far, lack of competition between HE institutions.
- Lack of quality private institutions that would compete with public institutions.
- Lack of staff mobility, which does not allow for swifter transfer of experience from countries with a developed system of higher education.
- Neglectful approach to student and teaching staff demands, needs, and initiatives.
- Lack of support for initiatives for positive changes coming from students and teaching/research staff.

**In the area of quality assurance**

- Low quality of higher education
- Lack of criteria in faculty recruitment
- Lack of links between the higher education and community
- Non-functioning of practical work
- Curricula are not in compliance with the requirements of time
- Lack of an integrated approach in administrating the higher education as a whole
- Lack of qualified staff
- Low motivation among the teaching staff
- Lack of a quality assurance system
- Limited capacity for scientific work
- Students are not well prepared for the labour market
- Non-recognition of academic titles abroad
- Low motivation of students
- Limited opportunities for further professional
- Shortage of diversity in economic development
- Lack of mobility and students and faculty exchange

**In the area of scientific research**

- Scientific research does not serve for solving societal problems
- Lack of innovation and their evaluation
- Lack of international cooperation in research
- Lack of interdisciplinary approaches in the scientific research work
- Up-to-date information on current scientific results is not available to faculty

- Post-graduate studies are not coordinated with research priorities
- Lack of standards for research work
- Limited research experience and lack of needs assessment in this area
- Lack of institutional infrastructure for research work
- Lack of incentives for faculty involved in scientific research
- Low capacity for research work
- Lack of public funds and other resources dedicated to scientific research
- Lack of scientific projects supported by public funds and other resources
- Lack of mechanisms for protection of industrial rights

### **In the area of financing**

- Low level of financial support for higher education
- Low appreciation of education and disregard of research
- Lack of indicators on HE efficiency
- Lack of policies and mechanisms for non-budgetary (alternative) funds for financing of HE
- Lack of funds dedicated to scientific research and transfer of knowledge
- Lack of criteria for financing
- Lack of student and teacher mobility
- Difficult material position of HE institutions
- Lack of indicators to measure cost efficiency of activities
- Lack of policies and mechanisms for non-budgetary financial resources
- Lack of funds for scientific research
- Low appreciation of the role of higher education and scientific research
- Lack of incentives for student motivation and positive discrimination of groups at risk

### **Infrastructure**

- Insufficient and non-functional infrastructure for higher education
- Lack of partnership among higher education institutions and the labour market
- Shortage of financial resources
- Lack of needs assessment
- Small number of organizations and clubs involved in cultural and sports activities
- Lack of academic communication
- Lack of up to date publications
- Lack of capacity for scientific research and curriculum development
- Low inclusion of youth in higher education
- Inexistence of technologic infrastructure for evaluation of university performance by students
- Curricula do not meet the current requirements
- Lack of distance learning
- Lack of links between various forms of education

### **Low credibility of higher education institutions**

- Lack of respect for normative acts
- Insufficient level of transparency
- Tendency to politicize higher education
- Nepotism
- Plagiarism
- Lack of quality control
- Corruption

- Substandard human relations / incompetent attitude towards work
- Damaged reputation of scientific degrees
- Violation of the rights of the main actors within higher education
- Lack of recognition of diplomas and degrees attained in Kosovo

### **The insignificant role and position of students in higher education developments**

- Lack of treating students as partners/clients in HE
- Lack of information for the rights and responsibilities of students within the student life
- Lack of creativity amongst students
- Inadequate willingness of students to participate in initiatives for change
- Lack of concern for genuine learning
- Lack of respect for student rights
- Lack of active participation of students in the decision making process
- Insufficient efforts of students to organize their cultural and sports life
- Lack of student stimulation
- Lack of opportunities for students to express their opinions

It is apparent that HE is facing numerous problems which influence per se the wide-ranging **reduced development of HE**, **the reduced credibility at home and abroad**, impossibility to **synchronize** HE with **the Bologna Declaration**, ageing staff and infrastructure and lack of constant in-service training.

## **Chapter 2: Vision, principles, mission, strategic objectives**

*This chapter envisages the vision for higher education development in the coming 10 year period, formulates the mission for implementing this vision and specifies principles and strategic objectives functioning as the onset of concrete actions.*

*The strategy document is a proposal for the reform, transformation and development of higher education according to a more efficient model, planning, administration, and management.*

### **2.1. Vision**

*The vision of MEST for the higher education development during the forthcoming ten-year phase is:*

**KOSOVA – A democratic society, integrated in the European Higher Education Area, where knowledge and scientific research are of particular role and importance for the enduring and long-term cultural, social and economic development.**

*MEST believes that the vision and the program for the implementation of this vision should be based on clear principles and goals. Principles serve as initial standards for the evaluation of the system and the institutions. Objectives are guidelines and*

*orientation for the direction of the system and institution development. They serve as a tool of reforming and transforming the system and institutions in accordance with the already determined principles.*

## **2.2. Principles**

*MEST considers that the following principles are crucial as points of reference for the reform process and transformation of the higher education : impartiality, democratization, development, quality, efficiency and effectiveness, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, public accountability.*

### **2.2.1. Impartiality**

Impartiality implies the equilibrium for the misbalanced elements. The higher education system has many misbalanced elements, inequality, injustice, parallelisms. The relevance of the principle of impartiality and equilibrium involves on one hand the critical analysis of misbalances, and on the other hand, the preparation of program of transformation which would establish appropriate relations. The expected transformation does not only include forms of differentiation, but also conditions for equal opportunities of development for individuals, groups and institutions.

### **2.2.2. Democratization**

The principle of democratization means that the higher education system is democratic, representative, and inclusive. Structures and procedures should guarantee that everyone has the possibility to express his/her opinion during the decision making process directly or through their representatives. This principle requires a transparent decision- making process and accountability for those who make and implement decisions, regarding the fulfillment of duties and the resource management. The management and leadership of higher education institutions should be restructured according to these requests.

### **2.2.3. Development**

The principle of development implies the appropriate context for the development of the potentials of the system and individuals. Considering the exceptional role of higher education for the cultural, social and economic development of the country, the aim is set to achieve a steady development of material and human resources.

### **2.2.4. Quality**

The principle of quality implies the implementation of academic and research standards from the perspective of needs and expectations to be fulfilled in order to reach the goal of perfection. The determination of these expectancies and ideals will change from a context to another, depending on the decided goals. The realization of the quality principle involves the evaluation and comparison with the standards aiming the improvement, change and progress.

### **2.2.5. Effectiveness and efficiency**

These principles are of particular importance. An effective institution functions in such manner that leads towards the fulfillment of the required results or objectives. This principle is based on activities performed according to a pre-planned scheme. A system or institution is called efficient when it functions and works well, without overlapping and scarcity, being self-sufficient. It performs correctly and makes optimal usage of all resources.

### **2.2.6. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy**

The principle of academic freedom and institutional autonomy are both interrelated and independent. The academic freedom implies lack of external imposed requests, lack of censorship and obstacles for academic activities. It is considered as a precondition for the critical, experimental, and creative thinking and also for the advancement of knowledge and intellectual research. The institutional autonomy refers to the level of self-regulation and administrative independence for the fulfillment of academic and education objectives.

### **2.2.7. Public accountability**

The principle of public accountability derives from the way in which decisions are made and funds spent. This principle provides that individuals or/and institutions ought to exercise accountability in their actions towards the public. Secondly, it calls for individuals or/and institutions spending public funds ought to report on the ways those funds have been spent.

*MEST supports these principles and will be guided by them in the course of reform implementation and when evaluating the progress.*

## **2.3. Mission**

*Principles presented above are a roadmap to transformation. The following mission and objectives are key outcomes expected after the implementation of the reform.*

*MASHT determines this mission for the accomplishment of its vision:*

**The development of an efficient system of higher education that will contribute to increase the wellbeing of the Kosovar society by offering high quality teaching and research, with equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the values of freedom, democracy and diversity.**

## 2.3. Strategic objectives

*The main objectives determined for the fulfillment of this mission are:*

- a. Elaborating of an all-inclusive policy and finalizing the higher education legislation;
- b. Advancing of management and coordination in higher education;
- c. Developing of the management system of the higher education quality;
- d. Advancing of the capacity for research and scientific work;
- e. Establishing mechanisms for providing and efficient managing of financial resources for the higher education development;
- f. Development of a complete and functional infrastructure of the higher education;
- g. Strengthening of the student role and position in the higher education development;
- h. Increased credibility of the higher education institutions;

## Chapter 3: Aspects of the higher education development

*This chapter* specifies the main characteristics of higher education required for the achievement of the vision and the mission and for facing the challenges mentioned above. Seven main aspects have been set for transformation. It is expected that the foreseen transformations of these aspects will result in a higher quality and more effective system, which will be comparable with the European standards.

### 3.1. Politics and legislation

The overall activities in this aspect have for their final aim drafting and providing an inclusive legislation on higher education modeled according to international standards. This legislation will provide for overall activities in the higher education, including teaching, scientific - research activities, agents, their tasks and rights, the procedures for their selection etc.

Another goal of this activity is drafting of inclusive policies on higher education, which will provide for public and private funds for HE, for respective programs in HE, involving of stakeholders, number and structure of target groups of HE programs, etc.

### Measures

An inclusive policy and a complete legislation in the higher education can be accomplished through these measures:

- Approval of legal enactments for coordination of scientific research work;
- Involvement of all administrative structures and other organisms in higher education (HE),
- Simulating governmental plan for higher education and establishment of other bodies of higher education;
- Adaptation of higher education legislation to the labor market;
- Facilitate inclusion of population in HE;

**Indicators to be achieved**

- Proper legislation modulated according to modern international standards for HE, number of scientific-research projects is increased to facilitate economic development of Kosova;
- Decrease the number of violations of higher education provisions.
- The number of professional well trained teachers and the number of carriers of HE is increased;
- The number of employees in Kosova economy among the graduates in HE is increased;
- The overall number of students in HE is increased and the number of students with special needs and vulnerable groups;
- The number of scientific-research projects that support development of Kosova is increased.

**3. 2. Management and coordination**

More investments in physical and academic infrastructure done by international donors and financial means in the postwar period resulted mainly the enrichment of offers for academic programs in the quantity aspect, but not in increasing the quality of higher education institutions. It is considered that such a disagreement between the investment and achieved results is created mainly because of the evident weaknesses in managing the higher education institutions and of higher education system itself.

In current functioning of a changing environment and with increased requirements, under the competitive conditions in the national and regional level, it is necessary for higher education to have a market oriented approach. Management and coordination of higher education should move from the mentality of maintaining traditional values towards the mentality of taking responsibilities for new approaches.

For this reason, advancement of management and coordination of higher education comes as a strategic objective requiring hard work and permanent commitment in order to be accomplished. The development of a higher education system serving for increasing welfare of the society can not be imagined without efficient management and coordination.

**Measures**

In the field of management and coordination the following measures should be taken:

- Defining the competences, responsibilities and system controlling
- Ensuring the transparency in higher education
- Developing capacity for a qualitative administration in higher education
- Developing a solid informative and telecommunication infrastructure
- Ensuring positive stimulations for a successful management
- Establishing an association for coordination of higher education

**Indicators that should be achieved**

- Increasing teachers and students mobility;
- Functioning the accountability (meaning a higher level of transparency and responsibility for actions that has been taken);
- Permanent regenerating the personnel in higher education section;
- Harmonization of Higher Education with the objectives of Bologna Process;
- Efficiency of non-education staff in higher education institutions;
- Functioning of the dialogue among bodies responsible for higher education;
- Completion of policy and regulations in the field of management system.

Some of these indicators can become more precise on time and in different stages of implementation strategy, depending on different tasks linked with the dynamics of changes.

### **3.3. Quality assurance**

The period of ten year isolation of Kosova higher education had big influence in the quality and compatibility of results of higher education with other countries of the region. How attractive are studies in Kosova comparing with other countries in the region can be seen from the fact that from 12,125 students that study in the University of Prishtina in the academic year 2003/04, only 385 are from other countries. This is only one of the indicators for dissatisfactory quality of higher education in Kosova.

*The development of a system for quality managing in higher education* occurs as a strategic objective which should address the problem of lower quality in higher education in Kosova,

#### **Measures**

In the field of quality assurance the following measures are foreseen:

- Establishing offices for quality assurance in higher education institutions
- Harmonization of complete programs for studies in all levels with the objectives of Bologna Process
- The implementation of European credit transfer system (ECTS)
- Creation of conditions to realize professional practice
- Active participation in international cooperation projects
- Positive stimulation for students and teachers
- Developing the section for mechanisms to be accepted in public institutions of higher education
- Offering the possibility for permanent development of teaching abilities.

#### **The indicators that should be achieved**

- Transferring ECTS credits inside and outside the country
- Decreasing the level of studies dropout
- Shortening the time of finishing studies
- Increasing the mobility of local and international teachers and students
- The level of staff involvement in professional development activities
- The employment norm of graduates
- Quality assurance structures exist

### **3.4. Scientific researching**

#### **Measures**

Increasing the overall capacity of science-searching in higher education could be achieved by undertaking the following measures:

- Increasing the number of scientific-researching which contribute in solving social problems
- Increasing the number of international edited publications
- Raising special funds for science-searching work
- The number of projects realized through international cooperation is increased
- Establishing institutional infrastructure for scientific work

#### **Indicators that should be achieved**

- Satisfactory number of scientific researching which contribute in solving problems of the society
- Considerable number of international edited publications;
- Special fund for scientific-researching work;
- Institutional infrastructure for scientific-researching is increased;

### **3.5. Financial support**

#### **Measures**

- Creating mechanisms to assure effective management of resources and financial means for higher education development
- Increasing the material position of higher education institutions . Policy and mechanisms for resources out of the budget (as alternatives) for higher education financing
- Decentralized financing of higher education
- Increasing involvement of young people in higher education
- Increasing teachers and students mobility
- Determining financial criteria
- Increasing the staff motivation and the interest for working in higher education institutions
- Students' stimulation and giving advantage to vulnerable groups

#### **Indicators that should be achieved**

- Budget for higher education is increased
- The value of contracts higher education institutions services is increased
- Donations for higher education are increased
- Participation of non-budgetary resources
- Expenses for the students comparing other countries
- Using on time and according to the plan of financial means in higher education
- There are funds for student and teacher mobility

### 3.6. Infrastructure

#### Measures

- Curriculum should be in accordance with time needs, labor market requirements
- To insure international literature
- Increased capacity for scientific-researching and curriculum development
- Establishing academic communication network
- Developing technological infrastructure for assessing the university work by student
- Developing long-distance education
- Increasing the space of collective accommodation
- Higher advancement of students through students' organizations in organizing cultural, entertainment and sport life
- Adequate information of students for their rights and obligations in students' life

#### Indicators that should be achieved

- The network for academic communication exists
- The network for long distance learning exists
- Using of modern technology and laboratory equipments is increased
- A functional system for students' service exists
- The space for students to study is increased
- The space for students' accommodation is increased
- The number of libraries with modern literature is increased
- The system for information management of higher education exists

### 3.7. Kredibiliteti i institucioneve të arsimit të lartë

The whole activity is directed towards increasing quality of higher education as well as the elimination or minimization of all negative phenomenon which actually are present in this activity, aiming the increase of believability of the institutions competent for taking responsibilities in higher education.

The believability on higher education should be increased both from local subjects and international once in economic, cultural, political, scientific and other aspects.

#### Measures

- Creating conditions for foreign students admission
- Fighting corruption
- Respecting criteria for scientific and academic advancements
- The partnership of higher education institutions with other institutions

#### Indicators that should be achieved

- Increasing the number of students in higher education in Kosova
- Decreasing the number of activities in higher education that are against the law

- Decreasing the number of scientific and academic advancements that are in contradiction with law dispositions
- Increasing the number of Memorandums of Understanding with other social partners

#### **Chapter 4: Strategy implementation**

This chapter will present the way of managing strategy implementation, operational plan with specified stages and deadlines; it will present concrete activities taken within stages and also human and financial resources needed for realization of the strategy.

##### **4.1. Managing and implementation of the strategy**

(still being drafted)

##### **4.2. Plan of strategy implementation**

(still being drafted)

##### **4.3. Budget for implementation of strategy**

(will be prepared)