

EU EDUCATION SWAP TECHNICAL TEAM RESPONSE TO THE KOSOVO CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (KCF) 28 JUNE 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a number of general and specific challenges for teachers implementing the new KCF, including the following:

- ✓ **Competence-based teaching**
 - ✓ **Learner-centred teaching with large classes of students and a range of abilities**
 - ✓ **New style of assessment to measure competences**
 - ✓ **New types of teaching and learning materials**
 - ✓ **Introduction of pre-primary Grade 0 as part of compulsory education: with significant implications for teachers, training, resources and facilities (including classroom accommodation)**
 - ✓ **Introduction of English from Grade 1: with significant implications for teachers, training resources and facilities**
 - ✓ **Integrated teaching, specifically in science and humanities in Grades 6-9 and generally between all subjects**
- **The Project Team strongly believes that it is extremely unlikely that the KCF will be successfully implemented as currently scheduled because of the lack of capacity to support the implementation process. The major obstacle is inadequate teacher and teacher training capacity.** The major potential provider is the University of Pristina/Faculty of Education but they are not yet fully engaged in the process, in terms of either pre-service or in-service provision, and would need a substantial staff development programme to meet the needs of the KCF.
 - The Project Team has developed an alternative implementation plan, in consultation with MEST Technical Team members (Annex 1), which retains some of the initial stages of the Task Force implementation plan, but which envisages a major capacity building phase to strengthen the capacity, not only of the Faculty of Education and other potential training providers, but also of MEST technical staff involved in assessment, examinations and inspection. In addition, the capacity of Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) and school directors will also need increasing to enable them to manage the implementation of the KCF successfully.
 - The KCF (Section 8) envisages a preparatory phase from 2010/11, a two-year pilot implementation Phase 1 from 2011-13 and nationwide implementation in Phase 2 in 2013/14. **The Project Team recommends that the first year of nationwide KCF implementation should be delayed by 2 years to 2015/16 to allow adequate time for an institutional and human capacity building programme delivered by a team of external consultants.** The main focus will be on teacher training, but it will also include the capacity building of training providers, MEST assessment and examinations, quality assurance, curriculum, teacher training and inspectorate staff, as well as MEDs and school directors.

- The cost of providing adequate capacity, infrastructure, resources and facilities for the effective implementation of the KCF, the expansion of the school system to 13 years, and the target of a two-shift system by 2015, will be considerable and will require great political commitment. **If such funds are not available, or uncertain, a longer implementation period should be considered for the KCF and/or a reduction or delay in the number of school subjects/initiatives which would be implemented (for example English at Grade 1, integrated teaching of science and humanities).**
- In order to provide a secure foundation for the nationwide implementation of the KCF, the Task Force plan to involve a number of lead schools should be followed, but extended to include average and weaker schools, so that the KCF is fully tested before national implementation.
- The needs of the many students in vocational education (VET) schools have not yet been fully integrated into the KCF and specific links made to the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- The full implications of implementing the KCF should be fully reflected in the MEST Strategic Development Plan for the sector, not least in terms of ensuring both equal access and full participation by all disadvantaged groups.
- The syllabus development process requires clear leadership by MEST through **one nominated contact person**, supported by the extended Technical Team and by the EU Education SWAp Project, with effective coordination of inputs by other donors/implementers. **The MEST's curriculum and teacher development staff should be fully involved in the implementation process and their capacity built as a part of the process.**

1 CONTEXT

The Project ToR of April 2009 (Specific Activities 2.2 and 2.3) anticipated greater involvement of the Project in the curriculum framework development process, which has instead been supported by UNICEF/UNESCO. The Inception Report approved by ECLO and MEST (Section 4.1 Component 2 Activities 2.2-2.4) focuses instead on providing support to MEST and UNICEF during the consultation and dissemination process; to supporting effective and phased implementation of the new curriculum framework and to developing guidance for the design and implementation of new subject curricula. In addition, the project is committed to promoting equal opportunities and gender equality and the inclusion of minority communities and persons with disabilities (ToR Section 8.2 Special requirements)

2 KCF DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES

The present KCF development process began in early 2009 as a result of concerns that the previous Framework had not had any significant impact on schools because (a) it had never been officially adopted; and (b) it had never been followed up with subject curricula and teaching and learning materials which were sufficiently well linked to the framework. The subject curricula and the teaching and learning materials are the two main ways in which teachers receive the curriculum and which might influence them to change the way they actually teach.

The original intention, following the November 2009 international workshop on the first draft of the KCF, was to begin the process of syllabus development based on that draft and without waiting for the outcomes of public discussions. In the event MEST decided to embark on a further substantial revision of the KCF, which was not completed until the end of February 2010 and finalised for public discussion in April 2010.

The KCF leaflet summarise the changes as follows:

A. Structural changes

- 13 years of compulsory education from Grade 0-Grade 12
- Removal of Grade 13 in both general and vocational education
- School year extended to 40 weeks
- Non-university tertiary education included in the education system, mainly offering higher-level vocational education and training [*not part of compulsory education*].

B. Content changes

- Learning outcomes are defined in terms of key competencies
- Competencies: learners' capacities to use their knowledge, skills and attitudes in a personal, effective and responsible way in the context of problem solving and daily life situations
- Learning content defined through broad learning areas to provide a balance of knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Teaching and learning are learner-centred and interactive
- Schools become learning organisations/focal points of communities
- Schools decide how to use the optional part of the curriculum
- Innovative assessment methods that favour a whole-child approach
- Examination system to measure mastery of key competencies.

3 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Project team members attended five public discussion sessions on the new KCF. In general participants had had insufficient time to digest the KCF itself or the short version provided in the leaflet. Discussion focused therefore more on existing teaching and learning conditions than on KCF innovations. However, major concerns were expressed, as indicated in the executive summary above about some of the specific proposed innovations, such as integrated teaching of science and humanities subjects, the introduction of English at Grade 1 but also about weak infrastructure, the shortage of qualified teachers, poor quality textbooks and the difficulty of teaching large classes of students with a wide range of abilities.

4 WHAT IS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE KCF SUCCESSFULLY?

MEST's own leaflet, developed for public discussion, lists the following 10 activities to each of which the Team has added a brief commentary:

- 1) **Development of new subject curricula/syllabuses based on the six key competencies.**
The KCF assumes the preparation of learning outcomes for each education stage and (six) key stages, followed by subject curricula. This means ensuring progression and continuity between key stages, and managing coherence between the learning areas, as well as ensuring quality across the board.

The April 2001 British Council report on *Starting English Early Planning for English Language Teaching from Grade 1 in Kosovo* strongly recommends moving towards establishing English language teaching as an integrated part of a generalist class teacher's role in the longer term. This recommendation is in line with current trends across Europe. The model proposed would enable teachers to provide stronger cross-curricular links between English and other areas of the curriculum.

2) Development of a range of learning resources (i.e. textbooks; teacher's guides; activity books; educational software). *New teaching and learning materials which meet the requirements of the KCF will be provide essential support for the implementation of the new curriculum. The existing textbook standards and the commissioning and evaluation system needs to be reviewed and adequate support provided for the MEST Textbook Unit to ensure an effective and transparent supply of new materials (the new law makes governing boards responsible for approving materials for the KCF) .*

3) Development of pre- and in-service teacher training programmes

4) Revision of teacher education programmes of the Faculty of Education and other faculties at the University of Pristina and other teacher education providers. *Teachers will require considerable and specific training before they can, for example, teach English from Grade 1 and integrated science and humanities, life skills and the 'optional curriculum'; in addition to upgrading of general teaching skills needed to deliver the competence-based approach required by the KCF .*

Donors may be able to train small numbers of trainers in specific areas such as English, history, civics, mathematics and science and Information and Communications Technology¹. However, there are more than 25,000 teachers, all of whom need some training to enable them to successfully teach the new curriculum. No one donor is able to provide this volume of training, nor any existing private or Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). The University of Pristina Faculty of Education does not currently have the specific skills or lecturers required. An extensive and targeted programme of staff development is needed in which the staff of accredited private and NGO training providers should also be included.

This extensive programme of teacher training would also provide the backbone of the Teacher Licensing system.

5) Revision of standards of teachers and school directors' performance. *The World Bank Project IDEP has developed procedures and instruments for the assessment of teacher performance (but not school directors). The Project will support this and assist with its piloting. Directors will need to be trained in its implementation as well as in implementing, managing, monitoring and evaluating the KCF. This may be more fully developed under the IPA 2009 project following the EU SWAp Project.*

6) Balancing teacher and external assessment that take into account the whole child and competency development. *In order to test students' mastery of the new curriculum in a manner that truly covers its content and educational philosophy it will be necessary to compose question papers that test higher-level analytical skills via a varied mix of question types including open-ended questions requiring more extended responses. A programme of staff training, system development and equipment purchase will be needed to enable the MEST Assessment Unit to provide the required support for assessment associated with the introduction of the new curriculum.*

¹ British Council; Council of Europe; GTZ (to Grade 9 only); IPA EU IT Pilot Education Project

7) Development of training programmes for classroom and school management. *The Inspection system, in close association with MEDs and schools, is also a vital driver for the successful implementation of the new curriculum. The Inspection system has until very recent times only been concerned with administrative matters and has not acted as a body for professional supervision and support to teachers and principals. Some useful training has been provided by the French government in recent months but much more is needed if the Inspectorate is to be able to provide adequate support for the introduction of the new curriculum and for its successful development in schools and classrooms. Inspectors will also need a substantial period after formal training in order to improve their practical skills in the field and in order to build up professional trust between themselves, teachers, schools directors and the MEDs. Formal training should begin as soon as possible over a period of say 3 years, followed by a 2 year period of professional development in the field, ready for national roll out of the new curriculum in 2015.*

8) Development and revision of norms for school infrastructure. *Schools currently lack the management structure which would enable them to better manage curriculum reforms, for example, subject department/learning area heads or someone responsible for methodology, mentoring etc.*

9) Setting up an effective national monitoring and evaluation system. *This is linked to 7 above.*

10) Curriculum development and implementation which involves all education stakeholders and partners. *The final challenge is to maintain the confidence of teachers and ensure that they commit themselves to the entire change process. International experience indicates that unless teachers buy in to a change process, it simply cannot succeed.*