EU EDUCATION SWAp Project

Report on
Capacity Building Needs Assessment
of the
Municipal Education Directorates
Kosovo

Elizabeth Gowing and Blerim Saqipi

June – November 2010
Prishtina/ Pristina

Contents

4. Findings about professional learning
a. Very little structured professional development to date
b. Openness to learning from colleagues
c. Openness to working with other municipalities
d. Appetite for computer skills training
e. Absence of budget for professional development
f. Lack of relevance to work of MEDs in training that has taken place
g. Importance of using official languages
h. A gender perspective on professional learning

5. Findings on the impact of the Kosovo political context on MEDs

V Recommendations
1. Professional learning
a. *Briefing on new responsibilities of municipalities for all Municipal Education Directors*
b. Leadership and management programme, including training on strategic planning
c. A programme of induction for new appointments in MEDs.
d. Buddying (MED exchange of experience) system
e. Advisers to support change
f. Women's stated priorities for professional learning
g. Build connections between the MEDs and other parts of the municipality
h. Review training and support available for the processes associated with the decentralisation of finances, once the IDEP has run its course
i. IT (information technology) training
j. The MED Collegium
k. A transfer of the budget for teacher professional development
l. Training offered with translation into all Kosovo's official languages
m. Language training

2. Systems
a. Inspection
b. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) website
c. Part-time staff
d. Review of MED structure and internal organisation
e. Co-ordination of training and capacity building initiatives

Appendix A: questionnaire responses judging the usefulness of training topics
Appendix B: questionnaire
Appendix C: list of municipalities where questionnaires were distributed
Appendix D: interview protocol

Appendix E: response to question about what has contributed to you being better at your job than you were a year ago (unprompted responses)
Appendix F: examples of inter-municipal collaboration given in interviews

I. Executive Summary

1. Purpose

This report focuses on the question of how MEDs can best exercise their powers in order to ensure the implementation of the MEST Education Sector Strategy Plan 2011-2016, and development priorities at the national level, as well as performing to the highest possible standards, so that education in their territory is of high quality. Arising from this is the question of what resources and capacity are needed at the MED level for the above to happen.

The report was compiled in order to steer the work of the European Commission-funded Education Sector-Wide Approach Project, supporting the development of capacity in the Kosovo education system at ministry, and particularly municipality level.

2. Context

The approach taken to building capacity draws on research into best practice in professional development, including the need for approaches to professional learning to:

- have direct relevance to the daily work of the learner;
- take place, at least in part, on-the-job, contextualised by the real-life factors which affect success;
- build lasting relationships for ongoing peer support and the transfer of good practice;
- build coaching and mentoring behaviours, recognising that coaches and mentors learn from their coaching/ mentoring activity as much as those they are supporting;
- build on and develop reflective practice;
- support the development of the individual, the development of the team and the development of the organisation.

3. Methodology

The report considered evidence including:

- a desk review of relevant legislation, policy documents and the work of development partners;
- interviews with Municipal Education Directorate staff in a representative sample of municipalities;
- questionnaires to a wider sample of Municipal Education Department staff
- a focus group held with representatives of other MEDs.

A total of 27 municipalities were included in the study in various ways.

4. Findings

- A range of MED structures and sizes (average size of those for whom data was collected was 7, but the range was from 2 to 22). Given new municipal responsibilities it was a matter of concern that some MEDs were so small and that roles were so unspecialised;
- Of the 9 Municipal Education Directors interviewed who gave details of their time in post, only one had been in post more than a year. The reason for this is the political nature of the posts of Municipal Education Director, which were therefore widely affected by the recent local elections;
- Restrictions on increasing the number of staff in an MED, though there are no specific restrictions on increasing the staffing costs within the existing budget. Some municipalities have worked creatively within these constraints by, for example, contracting out the cleaning and adding new school or MED staff to the payroll to take the place of the cleaning staff;
- The overwhelming impression from interviews with MED staff is of a transactional view of the Directorate's work; working in the MED was considered to imply a primarily administrative responsibility rather than a responsibility for teaching and learning, for shaping the economic future of individuals and of society, or for establishing values for a community;
- The new responsibilities of Municipal Education Directorates are not yet being reflected in the work or planning of the MEDs. When asked to identify their new responsibilities, MED staff seemed unaware of many of the important roles that have now devolved to them;
- Confusion about the inspection function. The current arrangements for school inspection allow for internal inspection by school directors and external inspection by the representatives of MEST, from Regional Education Offices. There is no requirement for MEDs to do inspections, and where they are doing this they are duplicating work that is being, or should be, done by others;
- Lack of vision about the mission of the MED. This included the fact that reference to pupils was conspicuously absent in most of the discussion of MED work. The failure to make this connection between the work being done (however far removed) and the impact on pupils and their learning, is worrying;
- Lack of strategic planning;
- No use or analysis of test data to guide planning/ provision;
- Communication difficulties – particularly between MEST and the MEDs;
- Very little structured professional development to date;
- Openness to learning from colleagues and with other municipalities;
- Appetite for computer skills training;
- Absence of budget for professional development;
- A significant difference in gender-related questions, or in the responses by gender to questions about professional learning.

5. Recommendations

- **Briefing on new responsibilities of municipalities** for all Municipal Education Directors;
- **Leadership and management programme**, including training on strategic planning, encouraging Municipal Education Directors to build, share and achieve a vision for their community;
- An **induction** programme for newly appointed MED staff;
- Establishment of a **buddying system** (an MED exchange of experience initiative);
- Provide advisers to support change in MEDs to support the directorates to come to their own view of the extent to which current structures and skill-sets match the human resource needs of the municipalities' new responsibilities;
- Taking account of **women's stated priorities for training and preferred forms of professional learning** in the design of training;
- Work on building **connections between the MEDs and other parts of the municipality system;**
- **Review training and support available for the processes associated with the decentralisation of finances, once the IDEP has run its course;**
- **IT training;**
- The **Collegium** of Municipal Education Directorates should be developed to have a sub-forum established for finance officers;
- A **transfer of the budget for teacher professional development** from MEST to MEDs;
- Training offered with **translation into all Kosovo's official languages;**
- MEST to clarify roles and procedures for sharing data from **inspections;**
- Communication to ensure coherence and **synergy between the main support projects** that relate to the scope of this report.

II. Introduction

1.The Project context

The Sector Wide Approach to Education project funded by the European Commission was launched in autumn 2009, with an inception report developed and endorsed by February 2010, marking the beginning of project implementation.

The Project is composed of three components. The first component aims at strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) as well as Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) in managing the education system, including the planning, development and monitoring tasks that this involves.

The second component of the project is the revision of the National Curriculum Framework; the third component is the development of a framework, standards and policies for teacher professional development related to teacher licensing.

The three components are interlinked, aiming at the implementation of the Sector Wide Approach to Education, and as such the Capacity Building Component (Component 1) is anticipated to contribute to the implementation of aspects of Components 2 and 3.

2. 'Capacity building' – definition of the terms

We take '**capacity**' to include all the factors that impact on an organisation's ability to carry out their role. Thus the capacity of MEDs includes the:

- legal and policy framework in which they work;
- communication systems in place;
- human resources at their disposal, meaning the people in post, and the skills, knowledge and experience of those people;
- financial resources at their disposal and the ways they are used;
- equipment, hardware, software etc.;
- information available to them;
- relationships between the elements above.

In order to build capacity, support needs to be offered to these components, with care taken to identify the areas where such support can have most impact.

The approaches to capacity **building** we have considered draw on international best practice. In particular, we reflect the most effective approaches to professional learning to support the development of human resources. We have taken as principles that the most effective approaches to professional learning:

- have direct relevance to the daily work of the learner;

- take place, at least in part, on-the-job, contextualised by the real-life factors which affect success;
- build lasting relationships for ongoing peer support and the transfer of good practice;
- build coaching and mentoring behaviours, recognising that coaches and mentors learn from their coaching/ mentoring activity as much as those they are supporting;
- build on and develop reflective practice;
- support the development of the individual, the development of the team and the development of the organisation.

3. The Kosovo education context

Kosovo's education system has undergone continuous changes over the last decade. Changes have taken place in the structure and organisation of the education system too. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was established in 2002 with its Regional Education Offices in the seven biggest regions in Kosovo (Prishtina/Pristina, Prizren, Peja/Pec, Gjakova/Djakovica, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Mitrovica) while Municipal Education Directorates operated in every municipality, in many cases with unclear division between their responsibilities and those of the Regional Education Offices, or confusion at the practical level as to what each of those structures does or is expected to do.

The establishment of the MEST Department of Inspection marked the beginning of the transformation of the Regional Education Offices into MEST regional inspection offices. In 2007, Regional Education Offices were incorporated within the MEST Department of Inspection still operating in seven regions with the same staffing. Their role is inspection to ensure all laws and by-laws are being respected, leaving MEDs to perform the daily tasks facilitating and supporting the provision of education from pre-school to upper secondary education. The draft law on pre-university education currently awaiting approval anticipates Regional Education Offices taking a role in school evaluation and quality assurance of the system in general.

A major change, particularly for the work of the MEDs was the process of decentralisation of education under the provisions of the Kosovo Status Settlement Process leading to the Ahtisaari package which the Kosovo Assembly adopted, and the legislation deriving from it. The law on education in the municipalities of Kosovo was approved in 2008. The decentralisation process also resulted in the creation of new municipalities, partly with the aim of ensuring that Kosovo minority communities were the majority in those new municipalities. The process brought about a number of changes in the scope of MED work and changed the division of responsibilities between central and local government.

An EU Project starting in January 2011 will be working on assisting capacity building in the Municipalities, supporting planning and other generic processes relating to those functions for which municipalities have a legal duty to produce a plan.

Directors of Municipal Education Directorates are political appointees elected after local elections, which have been organised every 2 years up till now, and will be every 4 years from the November 2009 elections onwards.

The Kosovo Government introduced a new Curriculum Framework in 2001, and this was followed by curricular development and a phased implementation. In 2009, the Government launched a new curriculum review process aiming for a radical shift to competence-based rather than content-based outcomes of schooling.

However, educational attainment in Kosovo is still considered unsatisfactory. Rote learning is to a large extent a predominant feature of schooling. In most of the country schools operate on two shifts, reducing the amount of time pupils are in school, and in some urban areas there are still four shifts operating. Class sizes remain high.

It is important to note another dimension to the education context in Kosovo, which is the situation of the country's minorities, and in particular Kosovo's Serbs. Most of these students learn in parallel institutions with a curriculum dictated by Belgrade.

4. Municipalities' education responsibilities

The following are the responsibilities of the municipalities in the field of education, including powers granted by the new legislation (law on education in the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, No. 03/L-068) enacted in May 2008:

1. Registration and licensing of educational institutions (completely new responsibility);
2. Recruitment/employment and payment of salaries of teaching and administrative staff in schools (recruitment of school directors a new responsibility);
3. Training of teaching and administrative staff in schools (new responsibility even though MEDs could have done this in the past if they had wanted and if budget allowed);
4. Construction of educational facilities (in the past this was a shared responsibility with MEST), including:
   -determination of building location;
   -preparation of an implementation plan;
   -design of the facility

-issuance of the construction permit;
-procurement of construction services and materials;
-necessary monitoring;

5. Registration and admission of students;
6. Monitoring of education process based on MEST guidelines (legally this is a new responsibility although some MEDs were doing some form of monitoring in the past);
7. Development of Rules of Procedure for Schools and Code of Conduct for school staff and students;

This law states that 'municipalities shall have the full and exclusive powers, in so far as they concern local interest while respecting the standards set forth in applicable legislation with respect to the provision of public pre-primary, primary and secondary education including the registration and licensing of educational institutions, recruitment and payment of salaries and training of educational staff and administrators.'

This implies that MED powers are significant and offers scope for these powers to be exercised. MEDs are and should be expected to be undertaking activities that also pertain to the development of the education system and not only registering students, recruiting teachers and providing the basic resources for students and teachers to do their work.

Other duties and responsibilities of Municipal Education Directorates derive from other applicable legislation in the field of pre-university education. The MEST Administrative Instruction (AI) on Determining the School Budget (No. 2/2010) and the proposed draft law on pre-university education determine practices that influence the work of the Municipal Education Directorates. A major change in the work of the MEDs in this context is in the field of financial planning and execution. Schools are entitled to a bank sub-account, and 13 municipalities have already implemented this separate sub-account policy for schools and others are expected to do so next year or shortly afterwards. This means that schools need to plan their budget independently based on the national formula set by central level authorities. Monitoring financial management at the school level is thus an additional responsibility for the MEDs.

Additional work and responsibilities for the MEDs are imposed by national-level initiatives. For example, within the teacher licensing system, MEST has projected a requirement for teacher performance assessment and the Municipalities as employers are granted the responsibility for determining teachers' performance levels, based on a MEST designed national system and regulations, which will have consequences for licensing as well as salaries.

MEST has now embarked on a 'sector-wide approach' (SWAp) that includes the development of a Strategic Plan for the years 2011-2016. This will determine the key initiatives and activities to be pursued over the plan period, together with the financial envelope required to deliver the plan. It is expected that this process will lead to the drafting and use of annual work plans and budgets, which will also be reviewed on an annual basis. Such an approach will place additional requirements on MEDs for accurate and timely data and contributions to the overall planning process itself by the MEDs.

5. Users of the study

This Study is meant to serve a number of users. Firstly, the Study will serve the EC Education SWAp Project in planning its capacity building programmes within the life-span of the project. Secondly, the Study will provide important information to the MEDs in particular, Municipalities in general and central government including MEST on the capacity building requirements which should be incorporated into the strategic plan and subsequent annual plans and, more importantly, in routine activities and projects. Thirdly, it should also serve the various development partners involved in education to plan their assistance towards developing the necessary capacities at the Municipal level to ensure quality education and training in line with the applicable legislation and best international practice.

6. Focus of the study

The major research question for this study is how MEDs can best exercise their powers in order to ensure the implementation of the MEST Education Sector Strategy Plan 2011-2016, and development priorities at the national level, as well as performing to the highest possible standards, so that education in their territory is of high quality. Arising from this is the question of what resources and capacity are needed at the MED level for the above to happen.

III. Research methodology

1. Data collection tools

The study was conducted using a number of tools and instruments for data gathering.

a. Desk review. The first part of the research consisted mainly of a desk review of relevant legislation, policies and other MEST and development partners' documents in order to identify the existing responsibilities, powers, practices and challenges of the work of MEDs.

The following documents were reviewed and analysed:
- Law on Education in Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo;
- Law on Primary and Secondary Education
- Draft Law on Pre-University Education (May draft)
- The MEST Administrative Instruction on Determining the School Budget (No. 2/2010)
- MEST Administrative Instruction on Teacher Licensing
- MEST Administrative Instruction on the selection/appointment of school directors
- MEST policy on the criteria and procedures for teacher performance assessment;
- MEST Draft Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016;
- SIDA (Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency)-sponsored CBERP (Capacity Building and Education Reform Programme) Capacity Building Analysis for MEST
- Draft Kosovo Curriculum Framework
- National Action Plan for School Dropout
- Strategic Plan for Inclusion in Pre-University Education 2010-2015
- Law on gender equality in Kosovo, etc.

In addition, meetings were held with various stakeholders such as meetings with representatives from IDEP (Institutional Development for Education Project), the International Civilian Office, and GTZ (German agency for technical co-operation).

b. Survey of MEDs

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) for MED staff was administered in order to identify the training priorities and development needs of the various individuals/positions within MED. The questionnaire was available in Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian/Bosnian so that MED employees of various communities could contribute to this process. Questionnaires were sent to 18 municipalities, (see list at Appendix C) including all municipalities that were visited as part of the field visit. Follow-up phone calls were made to encourage MED staff to complete the questionnaire and European Union (EU) Education SWAp Project staff collected the reports in person. 45 questionnaires, representing roughly 20% of all MED staff in Kosovo, and about 35% of the questionnaires distributed, were returned completed. The questionnaire return rate is considered satisfactory given the time of the year when it was administered. The data derived from the questionnaires were processed and analysed through the use of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Programme and the open-ended questions were categorised in order to determine patterns in the answers.

c. Semi-structured interviews with sample of MEDs – Visits were paid to 14 MEDs in order to conduct a semi-structured interview with the Director and/or the selected staff of the Directorate. The interviews were carried out based on the interview protocol in Appendix D. Interviews were carried out in the mother tongue of the interviewees (except in one case where the interviewee said he was happy to speak English) with the help of interpreters in the respective language as necessary (in 8 out of 22 cases).

A number of characteristics were taken into account when deciding the sample MEDs to be involved in this study, including:
- Position in Kosovo
- Size
- Rural versus urban context
- Development status
- Remoteness from the centre
- Decentralisation of finances
- Level of involvement in other projects
- Communities represented .

As well as

- the priority municipalities identified by the EU Education SWAp Project to receive support from this project.

Municipalities visited were:
Deçani/Dečani
Dragash/ Dragaš
Gjakova/ Djakovica
Hani i Elezit/ Djeneral Jankovic
Istog/Istok
Junik
Lipjan/ Lipljan
Mamushe/ Mamusa
Mitrovica
Obiliq/c
Peja/ Pec
Prishtina/ Pristina
Shterpce/ Strpce
Skenderaj/ Srbica

d. Focus Group with MEDs – A focus group was organised for the representatives of the MEDs that were not visited as part of the field visits to conduct interviews. The

MEDs represented were: Fushe Kosova/ Kosovo Polje, Kacanik, Kamenica, Podujeva/o, Prizren, Rahovec/ Orahovac and Shtime/ Stimlje. Questions chosen for discussion at the focus group followed up areas where there seemed to be confusion or conflicting data between the interviews and the questionnaires or where we wanted to probe deeper. Questions included a focus on co-operation with other MEDs, and staff training needs. The group opened with general discussion of the challenges faced by MEDs in their work.

IV. Findings

1. MED context
a. MED structure
The structure of MEDs varied enormously. In the 19 municipalities for which data was obtained the average staff size was 7, including the Director, but the range was from 2 to 22. Some MEDs were directorates solely for education whereas others combined with Culture, Youth and Sport or with Health. There was very little middle management (in only four MEDs were there more than one person carrying out any given function. Elsewhere each of the functions was carried out by one person. Most MEDs had at least one finance officer, but even this basic function was not universal, and two MEDs did not have a finance officer. Most MEDs had education officers with responsibility for a specific phase of education (sometimes split into primary and secondary, but sometimes with further specialisation including pre-school [4 MEDs], upper and lower high school [3 MEDs]). Three MEDs had a specific role for a lawyer and three had a specific role for a statistician; the largest two MEDs had an engineer. In the smaller MEDs there was understandably no scope for this kind of specialisation.

Larger MEDs do have some sort of middle management structures. The Head of Personnel, Chief of Finance, and Head of Education exist in Prishtina/ Pristina while Head of Education and Head of Administration exist in Gjakova/ Djakovica. However, it is evident that not even the seven biggest municipalities could adopt true middle management structures. For example, Mitrovica as one of the seven biggest municipalities in Kosovo has only 6 staff members; Peja/ Pec has 14 staff members.

b. Age of the workforce
Answers to the questionnaire regarding the age of respondents combined with personal observations and comments by those interviewed during visits to MEDs to suggest that the workforce of Kosovo's Municipal Education Directorates is unrepresentative of Kosovo's population. In contrast to a country where 50% of the population are under the age of 25, only 13% of questionnaire respondents were under 30, and 41% were aged 51 or over (10% aged 51-55; 20% aged 56-60; and 12% aged 61-65%; figures rounded to nearest percentage point).

This may represent a challenge for introducing new ways of working in the short term, but also means the workforce will refresh itself naturally in the medium-term, offering opportunities for bringing in new approaches at the same time as new members of the workforce.

c. High percentage of Municipal Education Directors who are new to the job
Of the 9 Municipal Education Directors interviewed who gave details of their time in post, only one had been in post more than a year. The reason for this is the political nature of the posts of Municipal Education Director, which were therefore widely affected by the recent local elections, including municipalities where no change of political control had taken place. This lack of experience across the system inevitably lends some fragility, but also offers a chance for new approaches to the role of the MED to be taken up swiftly.

d. Restrictions on alterations to the number of staff
It was confirmed in all interviews that there are restrictions on increasing the number of staff in an MED, though there are no specific restrictions on increasing the staffing costs within the existing budget. Some municipalities have worked creatively within these constraints by, for example, contracting out the cleaning and adding new school or MED staff to the payroll to take the place of the cleaning staff.

Even though it seems that there is the possibility of hiring extra part-time staff to meet specific needs, as was acknowledged by some interviewees, no Municipality was taking advantage of this possibility.

2. Roles and responsibilities

a. Procedures, job descriptions and staff skills do not match MED roles

'Do your job descriptions match the work you do?' 'No, for example I will do Shkendije's work and I'm proud I do that. We work like this in harmony'

The overwhelming impression from interviews with MED staff is of a transactional view of the Directorate's work; working in the MED was considered to imply a primarily administrative responsibility rather than a responsibility for teaching and learning, for shaping the economic future of individuals and of society, or for establishing values for a community. There is limited to no awareness of the expectation and need for MEDs to be involved in education development and ensuring the improvement of quality of teaching and learning in schools. The staff interviewed clearly took pride in faithfully following the sometime elaborate systems that were set up. In one municipality, for example, the process of five signatures required for sanctioning expenditure for, say, a printer, in a school, was elaborated for us; in another municipality our interview with the Director about the strengths of his directorate included him happily showing us the large ledger where all communication in and out of the MED is recorded.

This understanding of the work was also reflected in the questionnaire evidence, where, for example, in answer to the question 'what is the best thing about your work', one respondent said 'filling in the six forms and converting them to electronic forms' and another said 'noting invoices'. In some cases there seems to be an awareness that the MED is not putting its energies into the most important areas – in the questionnaire, two of the respondents to the question 'if you could change one thing to make the MED more effective, what would it be' noted 'reducing the procedures for completing MED and school requests' and 'I would change the bureaucratic procedures for payments for goods and services, because every officer has to sign any request'. Of course, many of these systems have been put in place with huge effort to stop corruption and increase accountability, but the atmosphere created by elaborate administrative procedures leaving little time, staff or creativity for strategic planning is not likely to bring about positive changes in the leadership of education in Kosovo.

It often seemed from the responses at interview that many MED staff prided themselves on *not* being specialist – on all being able to do one another's jobs ('Do your job descriptions match the work you do?' 'No, for example I will do Shkendije's work and I'm proud I do that. We work like this in harmony'). This is a great indicator of collegiality, though a culture that embraces such a way of working represents a challenge for introducing more specialised roles, such as are required for meeting the new responsibilities of municipalities.

There were other instances of MED staff being aware that their work required specialist skills and that they don't have such skills. One response to the questionnaire lamented 'in the organogram and in my job description, the duties are those of a legal expert, but in the absence of a legal expert, I'm doing the work and that really isn't easy.'

b. Lack of awareness of new responsibilities

The new responsibilities of Municipal Education Directorates (registration and licensing of educational institutions, recruitment of school directors, training of teaching and administrative staff in schools, sole responsibility for construction of educational facilities, monitoring of education process based on MEST guidelines) are not yet being reflected in the work or planning of the MEDs. When asked to identify their new responsibilities, MED staff seemed unaware of many of the important roles that have now devolved to them. In particular, not a single interviewee mentioned the new responsibilities of registration and licensing of education institutions (though a member of the focus group mentioned it there). Similarly, only one interviewee mentioned the responsibility for training teachers and there was no mention in the interviews and focus group of the new role of the MED in assessment of teacher performance. A similarly worrying lack of awareness of the new responsibilities was apparent in the questionnaires: only 11% of respondents have had training in laws and policies in education.

c. Devolution of finances

The decentralisation of finances from the Ministry to municipal level, and thence to schools was frequently mentioned as part of the context in which MEDs were working. No specific question was asked about this process, but it came up spontaneously in 11 of the 19 interviews held. In all but three cases, the references to it were positive, with a note that MED work has become easier and directors are more careful about wastage, now that payment is made from their budget. The dissenting voices said that it was problematic 'because school directors are not economists so it causes extra work in the MED' or that 'school directors are not prepared for the devolution of finances. We still need to support them' and that 'the new formula funding is overloading school directors, taking their attention away from education'. The execution of the school budget needs to go through necessary MED approval. The decentralisation process has certainly decreased the workload of the MED in the planning and execution of school budgets because these are tasks now undertaken by schools but a simple example of buying fuel for heating through one request for all municipal schools (as it was in the previous system) does not compare, in terms of financial monitoring, with having to deal with individual requests of all schools in the municipality buying wood. The World Bank-financed

IDEP training was mentioned in a number of cases, and there was appetite for more training in financial management (this was identified spontaneously in 4 of the 19 interviews, as well as at the focus group. It was the third most frequently mentioned area of need for training).

It is worth noting that at present there is no accountability mechanism in place to ensure value for money or that the devolution of financial responsibility is contributing to improved teaching and learning in schools

d. Confusion about the inspection function
Another significant area where MEDs were unclear about their role was in inspection and monitoring. It was mentioned spontaneously as an issue in 7 out of the 19 interviews held, and also came up in responses to questionnaires.

The current arrangements for school inspection allow for internal inspection by school directors and external inspection by the representatives of MEST, from Regional Education Offices. There is no requirement for MEDs to do inspections, and where they are doing this they are duplicating work that is being, or should be done by others.

There does not seem to be any clarity about the requirements for communicating the outcomes of any inspection, and thus for any accountability for improvements in areas identified as needing work. As MEDs are responsible under the new legislation for training staff, there needs to be a mechanism for alerting MEDs to the training needs of staff. These needs will inevitably be identified through inspection (both internal and external) – as required in article 8, section 4.1 of the draft law on pre-university education ('The purposes of inspection of the operation of educational and training institutions … are to check …and record… the numbers, qualifications and arrangements for professional development of staff').

Similarly, there needs to be a mechanism, using the planned central teacher performance assessment system for the data from teacher assessment to be co-ordinated by the municipality to inform the professional development offered.

3. Management issues

a. Lack of vision about the mission of the MED
Reference to pupils was conspicuously absent in most of the discussion of MED work. The failure to make this connection between the work being done (however far removed) and the impact on pupils and their learning, is worrying.

b. Lack of strategic planning

'What are the current plans for developing the MED?'

*'*progress and scientific achievement through laboratory work' (Finance Officer A)
'I don't know what else – I'm just thinking about the budget' (Finance Officer B)

'I have a workplan, which I created, I would not be able to function without one.'
(Municipal Education Director)

The diversity of answers to the question about the plans for developing the Directorate highlights the limited understanding of the process of planning. There were some examples of good practice, including one municipality where a plan had been drafted by all the members of the MED and each had a copy. However, in other instances, a 3-year plan was referred to as a 'short-term plan' (a 10-year plan being the accompanying long-term plan), and in general staff and Directors alike were unable to identify the specific future plans of their Directorate. Staff reported being assigned tasks on a weekly and sometimes ad-hoc basis, so it is perhaps understandable that they do not have an overview of the bigger picture in which their work fits.

c. No use or analysis of test data to guide planning/ provision
Data on the student population is limited but there is some information universally available – most relevant being national test data in years 5, 9 and 12. Currently, results for national test are being produced at the level of individual students in years 9 and 12, and at year 5 a sample-based assessment generates national-level data.

However, the year 5 assessment in 2010 was conducted with the purpose of reporting results at municipal level according to gender and ethnicity, using background data for individual schools and the municipality as well as individual students participating in the study.

However, we encountered no examples of this data being used to guide planning or provision. No municipality had analysis of the performance of different groups (for example boys compared to girls, rural compared to urban populations, the pupils at different schools, pupils from different ethnic groups). The lack of such analysis at the local level hampered efforts for inclusion, for higher educational standards and for fair and effective allocation of resources.

It allowed complacency – 'There is not a big gender equality issue... The Roma are integrated... We have no problems,' as one MED officer responded to the question

in interview as to what the MED does to support excluded groups. It seems likely that if data were available on achievement by gender, of the Roma, this MED would be aware of 'problems' and could then start to address them.

Considering the responses to the questionnaire, it was interesting that when respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of training that could be offered on different topics, the topic which was rated 'extremely useful' most frequently - by 72% of respondents – was advanced IT training including data analysis programmes (see appendix A for the full breakdown).

d. Communication is not always effective

'Electronic communication with schools is difficult because they are not all on the internet – it would be better if they were, so as not to waste energy. We can spend almost a day driving to one of our remote schools just to get one piece of information from them.' – Municipal Education Director

Communication within the MED was almost always reported to be oral, and this system, primarily organised through daily and/ or weekly meetings, was judged by respondents to be effective (though they didn't comment on whether it was efficient). Communication beyond the MED was considered less satisfactory, and issues were identified in communication from MED to schools, from MED to MEST and from other ministries.

It was acknowledged (e.g. in the focus group) that this was also in part a feature of there not being a culture of written communication.

Communication between MEDs and relevant ministries was said to be difficult because of the fast-changing environment where new laws and Administrative Instructions (which were claimed occasionally to contradict one another) were issued and MEDs found it difficult to keep up. Briefing on these changes was frequently done in person, when MED representatives were called to Pristina/ Prishtina for a session at the Ministry. The cost and opportunity cost of this form of communication, as well as the inequity for MEDs at different distances from the capital, was noted. It was also noted that not all communication from the ministry was in all official languages, leading to difficulties for some speakers of languages other than Albanian ('Administrative Instructions are in Albanian which I don't understand. We need courses but also the AIs should be in Turkish', commented one Turkish-speaking official).

The lack of electronic communication is connected to the issues noted elsewhere about the use of data. We heard of one innovative project by an MED (which

represented an admirable filling of the current gap in education information managements systems, while the central MEST database is under development) which held all student data with a unique code, meaning that student grades could not be tampered with (a frequently noted phenomenon, linked to petty corruption), and parents could have direct access to their children's data. However, the lack of universal internet access in schools was hindering this project.

The impact of a lack of IT skills and infrastructure was noted both in interviews and the focus group – 'many documents have to be sent and cost us in transport because there is no connection to the internet', said one MED representative at the focus group. There was general acceptance that communication beyond the MED could be improved if there was widespread use of information technologies, including email and internet. However, there is a lack of IT confidence (see below, section 4d), as well as a lack of internet access in all schools. This need was identified in the Kosovo Education Center June 2010 report on 'Monitoring of Municipal Education Financial Management in Five Kosovan Municipalities', which recommended internet being set up in all schools. Likewise, the CBERP report found an urgent need for IT literacy in MEST, and a need for a MEST strategy for information services development.

e. Management skills

> 'I need to keep away from people in schools so I don't lose my shine' – Municipal Education Director

The need for these to be developed was mentioned in a number of interviews and could be seen in perspectives from the questionnaire responses. 30% of respondents to the question about feedback about your work from your boss said that they had had this at most a few times. 30% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have all the information they need from their boss to be able to do their job well.

In interviews leadership training was the second most commonly mentioned area of training requested (after computer skills) – it was spontaneously suggested in 5 of the 19 interviews, as well as at the focus group. Questionnaire data supports this – this was the topic for training which was second most frequently (by 69% of respondents) rated 'extremely useful'.

4. Findings about professional learning

a. Very little structured professional development to date

To date there has been no single capacity-building project aimed at strengthening the capacities of MEDs in Kosovo, and respondents' answers to questionnaires reflected this lack of recent structured professional development. 15% of respondents had never been on a one-day training course, 40% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the training provided so far to them in their job has been sufficient; 30% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that 'satisfactory opportunities for attending training exist here'.   Significantly, 16% of respondents 'strongly disagreed' with the statement that 'I believe further training is useful for all professionals and professions', suggesting that not only has there been little training, but that there is an alarming proportion of MED staff who don't see the value of training (a fact perhaps linked to the experiences they have had of training themselves – see below).

However, the questionnaires showed an understanding of the power of informal approaches to professional development – one question asked in what ways respondents felt they were now better at their job in comparison to a year ago, and the next question asked what it was that had brought about such improvement. 15 different forms of professional development were cited, unprompted, in response to this question. Equally frequent were mention of training and working with others in the MED. Next most frequent was working with others in the municipality (beyond the MED) and working with colleagues in other municipalities (see Appendix E).

b. Openness to learning from colleagues
Although there was evidence of an understanding of the benefits of learning from colleagues, the experience of such opportunities for learning was lower than expected. The lack of co-ordination between MED finance officers and municipal finance departments was cited as an example of poor synergy. Similarly, in the questionnaires, 23% of respondents said they had never had visits to or meetings with other departments in their own municipality. This must be set against 63% of respondents who say they had such visits/ meetings at least monthly, but for a quarter of MED staff not to have had exposure to the benefits of collegial working beyond their immediate directorate is a missed opportunity for learning and synergy, particularly in regards to generic competencies for the job.

Nevertheless, learning with colleagues in the municipality was the second most highly preferred form of professional development for female respondents to the questionnaire.

c. Openness to working with other municipalities

> *'It's better to bring, for example, all the finance officers together because they'll learn from training but also from sharing practice'* – MED representative at focus group

In 12 out of the 19 interviews held interviewees were able to give concrete examples of inter-municipal collaboration. These ranged from informal support from one officer to another ('we can take models from one another – the problems are the same and we ask 'how have you solved this?''), to a structured programme of exchange visits:

> "We thought we'd visit municipalities with similar issues. Gjilan/ Gnjilane has children from minorities so we set a day for exchange of experiences. We did the same with Ferizaj/ Urosevac where an Administrative Instruction required school directors to be there all working hours, not shared between deputy and head. We went to Suhareka/ Suva Reka and Gjakova/ Djakovica too and it was interesting to see the ways they have allocated their responsibilities within the MED. We got an idea for how to take statistics. We've been to Pristhina/ Pristina and Peja/ Pec too. In Prishtina/ Pristina we saw that they had a way of dealing with teachers they couldn't afford to pay – they used a company for their cleaning staff and used the payroll places for teachers. We've taken this idea and we're continuing with it. We've done a report on each visit and passed it to the mayor so he knows what we're doing".
> (focus group member)

Other examples include systemic collaboration such as one municipality reserving places at a specialist high school for pupils from a neighbouring municipality. A table showing the full range of collaboration can be seen at Appendix F.

Interviewees also made reference to the Collegium of MEDs where Directors gather together on an ad hoc basis to share information on various activities and challenges.

A similar picture is gained from the questionnaires where more than two thirds of those answering the question said they had had a visit to another municipality or meetings with people doing the same job in another municipality as part of their professional development. For a quarter of respondents this was at least monthly. The interest in this was confirmed by discussion with representatives from IDEP, which organised an away day for its pilot municipalities specifically to learn from one another and share practice, with honest assessment of strengths they could share and areas they needed help with. In discussion, the IDEP representative also noted other initiatives for developing inter-municipal agreements (United Nations Development Programme and European Commission Liaison Office projects) which offer a helpful context for buddying initiatives (see V 1d below).

d. Appetite for computer skills training

This was a clear finding from both the interviews and the questionnaires.   It was identified in 6 of the 19 interviews as an area for training – the most commonly mentioned area of need. There is no doubt that there is a serious lack of these skills, but current MED working practices also require very little computer skills – though they should. It should be borne in mind that computer skills (and in particular the European Computer Driving Licence, ECDL) contribute significantly to the future employability of individuals, so the appetite for such training might not be entirely focused on improving performance in current positions.

In the questionnaires, the training which the highest proportion of respondents identified as 'extremely useful' was IT training (see Appendix A for full results of the responses to this question).   72% of respondents rated 'advanced information technology training (Microsoft Professional, Data analysis programmes)' as 'extremely useful' and 69% rated 'training on information technology skills: Microsoft Office' as 'extremely useful'.

e. Absence of budget for professional development
In no municipality visited was there any budget allocated for professional development. This is clearly one of the important reasons for the lack of any training organised at municipal level, and has serious implications for capacity building and the sustainability of development in the MEDs.

f. Lack of relevance to work of MEDs in training that has taken place

> 'We haven't seen the impact of training' – Municipal Education Director at focus group

A few instances were mentioned of training attended by MED staff. This included IDEP training to support the decentralisation of finances, and ECDL training in a few cases, and some isolated instances of training from NGOs on issues such as cultural awareness or inclusion. However, the majority of training that interviewees reported having taken part in was focused on teaching. Training on reading and writing for critical thinking may have been of high quality for the school staff for whom it was intended, but can have been of only tangential relevance to an MED finance officer. It is easy to understand the inclusive principle informing the invitation to these training sessions extended to MED staff, but it highlights the flawed relationship between skills needed and training offered which has characterised professional learning in MEDs to date.

Some MED staff are aware of this problem, as was made clear by MED representatives at the focus group. One MED representative said 'training has been more to prepare them [MED staff] for other jobs. Training has suited them for monitoring but that's not their job'.

g. Importance of using official languages
Where training has been offered (even though, in some cases, it has not been relevant to MED staff), it has usually been exclusively in Albanian. This represents a barrier for MED staff whose mother-tongue is one of Kosovo's other official languages (Serbian or Turkish). In some cases the MED staff from minority ethnic communities speak Albanian at an operational level, but there are instances where this is not the case, and the lack of translation into the country's official languages is not only a sign of exclusion of these communities, but a practical problem for building the skills necessary for the effective functioning of the education system.

h. A gender perspective on professional learning
In the responses to questionnaires a significant difference was found in gender-related questions, or in the responses by gender to questions about professional learning.

12% of men say they have never been to a conference whereas almost four times as many (46%) of women said they had not. However, only 13% of women thought that going to conferences was 'extremely useful', compared with 40% of men – so this might be to do with the format of professional development offered rather than

the willingness to release female staff in preference to male staff to attend such events.

Nevertheless, similar discrepancies are apparent in answer to other questions about professional development - 21% men have never had a visit to another municipality or meeting with people doing the same job while twice as many (44% of) women say they have never had access to this form of professional development.

16% of men have never had meetings with other departments in their municipality while more than twice as many (36% of) women have not had access to this form of professional development.

52% of men 'strongly agree' with the statement 'I think my boss believes that further training is useful but less than one third of that (only 16%) of women have the same 'strong agreement' on their boss' commitment to professional development.

27% of men 'strongly agree' that 'training provided so far to me in this job has been sufficient', compared to less than half that proportion (11%) of women.

The following table also shows an awareness of the different experience of men and women working in Municipal Education Directorates.

	This is a good place to work if you are a man		This is a good place to work if you are a woman	
Strongly agree	34%		15%	
Agree	2%		10%	
Agree to some extent	24%		29%	
Don't agree	12%	39%	15%	47%
Strongly disagree	27%		32%	

Interestingly, when the breakdown of responses by gender is considered, there is seen to be similar perceptions among men and women – both consider that the Directorate is a better place for a man to work than for a woman.

5. Findings on the impact of the Kosovo political context on MEDs

The continued education of most of Kosovo's ethnically Serbian students in parallel institutions with a curriculum and working arrangements dictated by Belgrade is relevant both to MEDs' budgets and the opportunities for intermunicipal co-operation.

During our interviews the MEST budgetary regulations were said to be pertinent to the existence of the parallel structure schools - in one municipality we were told that if Serbian parallel institutions worked with MEST staffing regulations it would mean making staff redundant, elsewhere we were told, 'The problem is financial, not political – teachers in the parallel system have more money, pension, health insurance'.

Belgrade's control of the parallel institutions was also identified in interviews as a factor inhibiting inter-municipal co-operation; one Director from a minority municipality told us they 'used to have more co-operation with other MEDs in the past but are now very cautious because of pressure they feel from 'emissaries of Serbia' or their government'. In one municipality the director said 'as much as the [Serbian] school directors would like to work with the MED, they are limited as to how much they can cooperate because of pressure from elsewhere. Serbian schools are more difficult to penetrate, a fact we need to acknowledge and overcome. We need to persevere'.

It may be seen as significant that there was one municipality where we were unable to fully scope capacity development needs because we were unable to arrange to meet with MED staff there. This municipality is Serb-majority.

V. Recommendations

1. Professional learning

a. **Systematic Briefings on new responsibilities of municipalities for all Municipal Education Directors,** to be held at MEST making available to all MED staff materials in all Kosovo's official languages giving information on new MED responsibilities (reference findings 2b, 2d).

b. **Leadership and management programme, including training on strategic planning** for MED staff, encouraging Municipal Education Directors to build, share and achieve a vision for their community. This should involve a series of seminars accompanied by specified practical tasks back in the Municipality, which are a required part of the training. Reflection on these 'gap tasks' carried out in between seminars should form a part of subsequent seminars, so that the cycle of plan-do-review is incorporated into the training. It should be a condition of appointment of training providers that they require participants in training to set their intentions for the training and how they see it impacting on their daily work. This should be recorded and followed up in subsequent training.

The training on planning should also support the development of Municipal Education plans that reflect the national plans for education.

The need for such training to take place over a longer period (as opposed to one day training courses) is reflected in the response to the questionnaire asking MED staff to identify their preferred form of professional learning. The form of professional learning third most likely to be rated as 'extremely useful' (after 'feedback from stakeholders' and 'reading and personal research') is 'longer courses' (42% of respondents said this was 'extremely useful').

It might be an efficient way to manage this training, as well as building stronger communication channels between MEST and the municipalities, if the training could be held jointly with relevant MEST officials. It has been identified that MEST officials could benefit from such training (see CBERP report on capacity building at the Ministry). Cost-saving and relationship-building would be served if such training was organised across municipalities (reference findings 1d, 2a, 3a, 3b, 3d, 3e).

c. A programme of induction for new appointments in MEDs.

> When I was new to my job I met with my equivalent in Suhareka/ Suva Reka and we are now frequently on the phone to each other. When I hear what she has done I don't need to ask the Ministry. New people should go and see work in practice in other MEDs – MED officer

This programme should be appropriate for Municipal Education Directors but also for other roles within the system (finance officers, statisticians, engineers, legal experts). Drawing up such a programme in advance would offer an efficient way to orientate new appointments. It would also be beneficial to produce accompanying material comprising an induction handbook, preferably not only in hard copy but also in electronic form so that it can be updated as changes occur. This could include all relevant laws and by-laws as well as national policies, regulations and strategies. If induction sessions were run, for example, three times a year, then new arrivals to any municipality could join the next occurring induction session and meet their peers from other municipalities. This would build the relationships that enable later professional development and support from beyond the municipality and enable the transfer of good practice.

It would be appropriate for MEST to run these induction sessions; as well as the lateral connections that would be built there, this kind of training offered early on in the career of staff from MEDs would encourage communication channels between the Ministry and the municipalities.

Such induction sessions would also offer an opportunity to inspire in all new entrants to the MED workforce some common values and aspirations for Kosovo's education system. Some components should therefore be common to all entrants, at whatever level and with whatever role, while other aspects of the induction training should focus on the specific needs of particular roles (reference findings 1c, 4a, 4b, 4c).

d. Buddy System (MED exchange of experience and mutual support system)

> The chance to say 'how do you work?', 'do you have any ideas about…?' – MED Administrative Officer

The readiness to learn from peers should be capitalised on through the establishment of a system of buddying – an exchange of MED experience with mutual support. This might well go in partnership with the proposed management and leadership training as it will be most effective when MEDs are able to make accurate assessments of their own strengths and areas where they would welcome support. Following such self-assessment, a simple system can match needs in one

MED with areas of strength in another. The matching could be done by EU Education SWAp project staff initially, but the powerful overview of Kosovo's education system and its strengths and needs that will result from such a process means that it lends itself to MEST management.

The resulting pairings of MEDS would be encouraged to meet and share specifics of their working practices. Using a common template, recording these meetings, the ideas shared and the changes planned as a result, will give status and rigour to the pairing and sharing process. The buddied pairs can then be encouraged to arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss what they did as a result of previous meetings and exchanges.

It would also be possible to design the buddy pairs to include one of the 10 municipalities with whom the SWAp project is working more intensively, along with one of the 12 with whom SWAp is working less intensively. This model represents an effective multiplier of SWAp investment (Reference findings 4b, 4c).

e. **Provide advisers to support change** to work with MEDs to support the directorates to come to their own view of the extent to which current structures and skill-sets match the human resource needs of the municipalities' new responsibilities. The checklist may be useful for this purpose and the advisers can then work with the directorates to move towards a more effective staff deployment. Experience shows that large-scale organisational change will not happen if mandated from outside, and that changes of this kind will need to be explored with support from someone with experience of working alongside key actors in the organisation on a day-to-day basis. It might therefore be appropriate for an adviser to be deployed in an MED part-time for a fixed period, to understand the working culture and processes from within the organisation. Such an adviser could work with staff to reflect on current competences and resources in the light of the MED's new legal obligations, and could support them to move to new models which offer the capability needed for their expanded role. (Reference findings 1a, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2d).

f. Taking account of **women's stated priorities for training and preferred forms of professional learning** in the design of training. Top of the subjects for training identified by female respondents as 'extremely useful' is gender equality training (77% of female respondents identified this as 'extremely useful'. Interestingly, this is the area of training about which there was the greatest discrepancy – 21 percentage points - between male and female respondents on its usefulness), followed by Microsoft Office and then advanced IT training.

The forms of professional learning preferred by women are topped by 'feedback on your work from schools, teachers, parents, pupils, partners or other stakeholders' (67% of female respondents – as opposed to only 35% of male respondents – identified this as 'extremely useful'). For women (and their male counterparts) to be offered the kind of feedback they say they find most useful, training will probably be needed for those in management positions, as we did not see evidence of a culture of encouraging or gathering feedback from schools, teachers, parents, pupils, or other stakeholders in our interviews/ focus group with MEDs. Such feedback is, of course, useful not only to support the professional development of individuals but also the development of the system, and it will be helpful for the leadership training identified above to include training on establishing and communicating the findings of such feedback loops. (Reference finding 4h).

g. **Work on building connections between the MEDs and other parts of the municipality.** One suggestion for this would be to hold conferences at regional level, bringing together directors of different departments in different municipalities. Some of the activity could be focused on activity by directorate (i.e. all MEDs in the region working together) and some on activity by municipality (i.e. all directorates from a particular municipality working together). Such conferences would go beyond the remit of the SWAp project but if they were combined with other initiatives (such as management training or other support planned through the Ministry of Local Government Administration) then this could be a cost-effective way of supporting learning and efficient working (Reference finding 4b).

h. **Review training and support available associated with the process of decentralisation of finance, once the IDEP support has run its course.** The Institutional Development for Education Project has set up some training and helpdesks to support pilot MEDs through the decentralisation of finances, and we heard that such training and the helpdesk model were greatly needed and have been appreciated (though exact data on their use is not being collected). It will be important to review these support arrangements and ensure that support continues to be available to all MEDs on these complex issues, as necessary. At the moment it is too early to say whether additional training of MED staff on skills and processes needed for effective financial decentralisation would be appropriate, and, if necessary, what form it should take. However, our other recommendations regarding the format for quality professional development and the advantages of cross-municipal training will be relevant in supporting this decision. (Reference finding 2c)

i. IT training. This is provided for in the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) EU IT EDUCATION project. It will be important for such training to be constructed in a way that makes clear connections with current work and requires immediate implementation. This approach would have the advantage of putting theoretical knowledge acquired by MED staff into practice in their daily work, and thus offer greater likelihood of skills being retained. It would also ensure that training focused on skills that will bring immediate return to the MED rather than a longer-term benefit to the individual, perhaps beyond the timespan of their work with the MED. Cost-saving and relationship-building would be served if this IT training was organised across municipalities.

Linked to this need for general training in computer skills, there is a need for specific training to accompany any initiatives equipping MEDs with hardware. As well as training of users, there is a need for an IT technician function, which could be shared in the context of smaller MEDs. Alternatively, the telephone helpdesk approach which has apparently been successfully implemented to support the IDEP to pilot the decentralisation of finances might offer a cost-effective way to ensure that donated hardware is used effectively and not left idle as a result of a lack of knowledge of how to exploit it. Data on the quantity and nature of calls should be collected if such a help system is set up, in order to evaluate the impact and use.

Confidence in using IT would enable MED staff to access information on web pages. If this became an established and trusted method of communication it could offer a way for information (e.g. on relevant laws and Administrative Instructions) to be made available for reference when needed by MEDs on a 'pull' rather than only 'push' basis (i.e. as and when the person wanting the information feels the need to acquire it, rather than when the person who has the information feels the need to disseminate it). This would require in turn a review of the use of the MEST website (see below) (Reference finding 4d).

j. **The Collegium of Municipal Education Directors**

'The Municipal Education Directors from this region meet every month in a different location within the region. They then tell us what they talked about' – MED Administrative Officer

The Collegium of Municipal Education Directors should be further developed to have a sub-forum established for finance officers; other sub-fora might offer ways for other MED officials to share successes and problem-solve together to solve common challenges. This initiative should not be costly as it will involve only the travel costs of the relevant officers to the meeting place. It would be enhanced by the participation of relevant MEST representatives, depending on the purpose and topic of the meeting (Reference finding 2c, 4c).

k. A **transfer of the budget for teacher professional development** from MEST to MEDs. With the transfer of responsibility for professional development must come the transfer of the budget to enable MEDs to carry out this responsibility effectively. It is only with budget additional to that currently devolved that MEDs will be able to move from their administrative role to leading improvement in the education of the children and young people for whom they have responsibility (Reference finding 4e).

l. Training offered with **translation into all Kosovo's official languages** – Turkish, Serbian and Albanian (Reference findings 3d, 4g, 5).

m. **Language training** available for staff in mixed municipalities so that staff can communicate with one another and with the schools, pupils, and families they serve. This recommendation was made by the Director of an ethnically mixed municipality. Cost-saving and relationship-building would be served if such training was organised across municipalities (reference findings 3d, 5).

2. Systems

a. MEST to clarify procedures for sharing data from **inspections**, and brief MEDs and regional inspection teams (preferably together so that they are hearing the same messages) on how these should be carried out, including the obligation for regional inspection teams to share their reports with MEDs, and obligation for MEDs to act on issues identified where they have relevance for training or other of the responsibilities of the municipality (Reference findings 2d, 3d).

b. **MEST use of its website** to share information with MEDs. This would ensure equality of access, so that information was available to all (if necessary with password-protection if there is data considered too sensitive for the public domain) rather than MEDs located nearer to the capital having the advantage of easy access to MEST briefings, and those located at distance having to pay the cost in time and transport to access this information from the centre. This public (or semi-public) availability of information might also reduce the opportunity for apparent or actual conflict in the information supplied by different ministries to MEDs (as is reported sometimes to be the case). This work fits well with the work included in the plans of the EU IT EDUCATION Pilot Project for an 'EDUNet' Educational Network and Internet Gateway, intended to operate as a decentralised communication tool (intranet) for education institutions and stakeholders. (Reference findings 2b, 2d, 3d).

c. Municipalities should be supported to explore hiring **part-time staff**, where necessary sharing these costs beyond the municipality. This model might offer a way for municipalities to meet their obligations for teacher performance assessment or other elements of the new responsibilities and will ensure capacity for education development (Reference findings 1d, 2a).

d. **Structuring and internal organisation** of MEDs should be addressed so that the structures and organisation match the tasks MEDs are expected to perform and new realities in the education sector – devolving competencies at the municipal level. The size of municipalities differs widely therefore each MED should consider restructuring and reorganisation based on the new reality, and resources available. Below is a suggested list of skills that MEDs should have access to in order to perform specific tasks and duties. The restructuring of MEDs should be properly supported by providing the necessary guidance and technical assistance. In this context, possibilities for utilising the human resources within the Municipality should be explored by each MED, particularly in the field of Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Infrastructure and IT.

e. **Co-ordination of training and capacity building initiatives**. There is a growing number of projects working on training and capacity building, and there is a need for an overarching structure to co-ordinate these efforts and identify opportunities for synergy. The Education SWAp expects to assist with planning, including the use of planning tools, and monitoring and evaluation training, as well as the issues arising directly from our needs analysis.

Checklist to be used by MEDs to assess the appropriateness of their skillset and structures to meet their new responsibilities

☐ A shared vision for the MED and the impact it should be having in the lives of young people in the municipality

☐ Effective administration of appropriate Professional Development for teaching and administrative staff in schools

☐ Effective role in teacher performance assessment

☐ Improving quality of teaching and learning based on the policies and regulations of Kosovo.

☐ Financial monitoring

☐ Licensing of educational institutions

☐ Part-time specialised staff, employed where necessary - maybe even across municipal boundaries

☐ Procedures and skills in place for fair recruitment of staff in open competition

☐ Access to personnel with engineering and technical skills and appropriate experience to support the specification and monitoring of infrastructure programmes

☐ Systems for responding to the outcomes of inspection

☐ Skills to co-ordinate the production and monitor the implementation of a Municipal Education development plan

☐ Counselling services in schools for pupils (i.e. availability of the 'pedagog') according to applicable legislation

e. Communication to ensure coherence and **synergy between the main support projects** that relate to the scope of this report.

Appendix A: Questionnaire responses judging the usefulness of training topics

	'Extremely useful' (% of respondents)	'Useful'	'Useful' or 'extremely useful'
Advanced Information Technology training (Microsoft Professional, Data analysis programmes)	72	25	97
Leadership training (developing vision, mission, strategy, motivating people, developing teamwork, etc)	69	28	97
Training on the information technology skills: Microsoft Office (Excel, Access, Power Point	69	20	89
Problem solving and conflict resolution	67	17	84
Intercultural learning	65	16	81
Gender equality	63	31	94
Training on project management cycle (project development, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation)	62	27	89
Basic management training (time management, staff development, interviewing, performance appraisal)	62	24	86
Monitoring and evaluation	59	24	83
Implementing Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016 (implications for the municipal and school level)	57	34	91
Financial planning and management	52	36	88
Meeting the education for all targets including the inclusive education concept	50	32	82
Laws, by-laws and policies in education	49	26	75
Implementing educational change	40	46	86
Curriculum development, implementation and Evaluation	39	42	81

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for the Municipal Education Directorate Staff

Professional Development Needs Analysis Survey with the Municipal Education Directorates

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Commission funded project Sector Wide Approach to Education (EC SWaP Project) is launching its activities in three fields: Capacity Building for Central and Municipal Education Authorities; Curriculum Review; and Teacher Training Development.

Among other activities, the project anticipates activities to support the Municipal Education Authorities with various capacity building programmes and other technical assistance.

In order to ensure that the assistance to be provided is tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries, we are administering this questionnaire with the staff of Municipal Education Directorates throughout Kosovo.

Therefore, your opinion is very valuable in identifying needs for professional development and other technical assistance to be provided to the Municipal Education Directorates and their staff either through the ECSWaP Project or other development partners.

We are kindly asking you to fill in the questionnaire below assuring you of the confidentiality of the opinions you provide.

Thank you for the cooperation!

I ABOUT YOU

1. Municipality: _____

2. Position:_____

3. Year when employed: _____   **4. Sex: M/F**

5. Age: _____   **6. Your qualification (please tick):**

☐ Upper Secondary Education

☐ Higher Pedagogical School

☐ University studies (first cycle/Bachelor level)

☐ Master degree

☐ PhD degree

Any other qualification _____

7. Please specify the profile of your qualification (e.g. Economy, Law, History, etc): _____

II PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPAL EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

1. What elements of your job are you better at now than you were a year ago?

2. What enabled you to improve?

3. Think about the professional development opportunities you have had in the last year. Tick the column which best shows tells us about how often you have had them

	never	Once or a few times	About 12 times (roughly monthly)	About 50 times (roughly weekly	More frequently
1 day training course					
Longer training course					
e-learning or distance learning or other training using the internet					
Mentoring or coaching from a colleague					
Reading or personal research					

	1	2	3	4	5
Attending a conference					
Visit to other municipality or meetings with people doing the same job in another municipality					
Visits to or meetings with other departments in your municipality					
Feedback on your work from your boss					
Working in a team of people who you can learn from					
Feedback on your work from schools, teachers, parents, pupils, partners or other stakeholders					
Other (please specify)					

III OPINIONS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Please tick *V* the option that best represents your opinion

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = agree to some extent
4 = don't' agree
5 = strongly disagree

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I believe further training is useful for all professionals and professions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	I think my boss believes that further training is useful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	I think my colleagues believe that further training is useful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Training provided so far to me in this job has been sufficient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	My colleagues feel that the training they have had in their job has been sufficient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6..	I feel I have all the necessary skills for the job I am doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	I think my colleagues have all the necessary skills for the jobs they are doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	Satisfactory opportunities for attending training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	exist here	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	I have all the resources needed for doing my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	I am clear about the expectations for my work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	My job description is written down	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	My job description matches the work I am currently doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.	The support we get from other Municipal Departments is satisfactory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.	The demands on my job are increasing constantly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.	The demands on my job have increased significantly over the last year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.	This is a good place to work if you are a man	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.	This is a good place to work if you are a woman	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.	This is a good place to work if you are young	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19.	This is a good place to work if you are older	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20.	I have all the information I need from my boss to be able to do my job well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21.	I have all the information I need from my colleagues to be able to do my job well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22.	Women and men both have the same opportunities for professional development in the Directorate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23.	There are the same opportunities for professional development for young people and for older people in the MED	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Use this space to add any information you would like to explain your answers

IV TRAINING YOU HAVE HAD OR WOULD LIKE TO HAVE

Please rank the following training fields according to whether you think it would be useful for you and your job and show whether you have had any such training

1 = not useful at all
2 = not useful
3= somewhat useful
4= useful
5= Extremely useful

		1	2	3	4	5	Tick (*V*) here if you have had training on this in the last year
1.	Training on the information technology skills: Microsoft Office (Excel, Access, Power Point	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	Advanced Information Technology training (Microsoft Professional, Data analysis programmes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	Training on Project Management Cycle (Project Development, Project Implementation, Project Monitoring and Evaluation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	Basic management training (time management, staff development, interviewing, performance appraisal)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	Leadership training (developing vision, mission, strategy, motivating people, developing teamwork, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	Problem solving and conflict resolution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	Intercultural learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8.	Implementing educational change	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	Laws, by-laws and policies in education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	Implementing Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016 (implications for the municipal and school level)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	Financial planning and management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	Monitoring and evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.	Meeting the education for all targets including the inclusive education concept	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.	Curriculum development, implementation and evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.	Gender equality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.	Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.	Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.	Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

From the fields that you identified as (3) somewhat useful, (4) useful or (5) extremely useful, write the top 5 choices in order of importance

Most important (a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

V YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT THE FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What is your preferred format of Professional Development:

1 = not useful at all
2 = not useful
3= somewhat useful
4= useful
5= Extremely useful

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Mentoring or coaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	Going to a workshop or training in the municipality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	Going to a workshop or training in the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	Going to a workshop or training centrally in Prishtina/ Pristina	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	Reading or personal research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	Attending a conference	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	On-line learning courses/sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	1 day training course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	Longer training course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	Visit to other municipality or meetings with people doing the same job in another municipality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	Visits to or meetings with other departments in your municipality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	Feedback on your work from your boss	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.	Opportunities to learn from the people that you work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.	Feedback on your work from schools, teachers, parents, pupils, partners or other stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Use this space to add any information you would like to explain your answers about the formats you prefer for professional development

VI YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT YOUR WORK

1. What is the best thing about your job?

_____

2. What is the hardest thing about your job?

_____

3. If you could change one thing about the Municipal Education Department to make it more effective, what would that be?

_____

4. In your opinion, how could the efficiency of the work of the Municipal Education Directorate be improved?

_____

Please provide any other comment and suggestions that can be valuable for the purpose of this study:

_____

Appendix C: list of municipalities where questionnaires were distributed

Deçani
Dragash/ Dragas
Drenas/ Glogovac
Gjakova/Djakovica
Hani I Elezit/Djeneral Jankovic
Istog/k
Junik
Lipjan/ Liplljan
Malisheva/ Malisevo
Mamushe/ Mamusa
Mitrovica
Obiliq/Obilic
Peja/Pec
Prishtina/Pristina
Shtime/ Stimlje
Shterpce/ Strpce
Skenderaj/Srbica
Vushtrri/Vucitrn.

Appendix D: Interview protocol

Interview with the Municipal Education Director and other Directorate staff

Structure for discussions

Contextual information	
Name of interviewee	
1. Role	
2. Municipality	
3. Gender	M/ F
4. Name of interviewer	EW/ BS/ EG
5. Was there an interpreter?	YES/ NO
Date of interview	
Start time	
Where did interview take place?	
Others present during interview?	YES/ NO
Roles of others present?	
Introductions	
Introduction of the consultants Introduction of the EU SWAp Project Introduction of the purpose of the study and visit	
6. Questionnaire arrangements	
Basic facts about the MEDirectorate	
7. number of staff	
8. organisation	
9. operational context	new municipality? big municipality? municipality with the school finances decentralised?

10. how long have you (the interviewee) been in post?	
11. How long have you (the interviewee) been in the MED?	
Opinion of the Directorate	
12. What are the strengths of the Directorate	
13. What are the most significant challenges faced in the work	
14. What changes have there been in the work following decentralisation of education	
15. What are the (new) responsibilities that the MED is required to deliver?	
16. What are the current plans for developing the Directorate	
17. How much freedom is there to create additional or new posts?	
18. How much scope is there to cooperate with other MEDs to share scarce resources, e.g. specialist staff?	

19. What are the possibilities and past experiences in hiring part time expertise for various activities?	
20. What does the MEDirectorate do to support excluded groups – girls, rural populations, children with special educational needs, children and young people from ethnic minorities?	
21. What is communication like in the Directorate? How could it be improved?	
22. Do you have anything else you want to add about this?	
Staff capacity and development issues	
23. What is your impression of staff capacity	
24. Do all staff have job descriptions?	YES/ NO
25. Do the job descriptions match the work they do?	
26. What are the staff's training needs?	
27. Does everyone in the Directorate have a fair chance to attend training or have access to other professional	

development opportunities?	
28. List the professional development opportunities and ask which they think is most effective.	
29. Which is most common?	
30. Which of these forms of professional development never happens	
31. What technical assistance is the MED receiving from development partners or donors?	
32. Do you have anything else you would like to add?	
End time	
33. Length of interview	

Appendix E: response to question about what has contributed to you being better at your job than you were a year ago (unprompted responses)

Working with others in the MED	6
Training (unspecified)	6
Working with others in the municipality, beyond the MED	3
Contact with other municipalities	3
Reading	2
Improved working conditions	2
Computer training	1
Working with MEST	1
Working with regional inspectorate	1
Working with the computer	1
Working with other organisations	1
Working with schools	1
Working with others	1
Verbal feedback from inspectors	1
Training organised by MEST	1

Appendix F: examples of inter-municipal collaboration given in interviews

- Klina – using their formula for distributing janitorial supplies; Peja/Pec - places kept for Istog/Istok pupils at high school for medicine
- When I was new to my job I met with my equivalent in Suhareka/ Suva Reka and we are now frequently on the phone to each other. 'When I hear what she has done I don't need to ask the Ministry'. New people should go and see work in practice in other MEDs
- job descriptions photocopied from Prizren
- With Gjakova/Djakovica, Peja/Pec, Klina, Kacanik and Ferizaj/Urosevac we can take models from one another – the problems are the same and we ask 'how have you solved this?'
- I meet with Podujevo/ Podujeva, Obilic/q and Fushe Kosova/Kosovo Polje to discuss things
- through the association of municipalities collegium for education
- teachers exchange with those from Peja/ Pec and Gjilan/ Gnjilane to supervise year 9 and 12 exams
- 7 teachers come from Prizren and PZ pays them. PZ also pays for 5 places for medicine. An Administrative Instruction says that if you have 1500 students you should have a pedagogue. It would also be possible to share one, e.g. for 500 Mamushe/ Mamusa students and 1000 from Prizren
- With Vushtrri/Vucitrn and Mitrovica and Drenas/Glogovac and Lipjan/ Lipljan, but not very well. We have joint competitions in Albanian and maths, where Mitrovica, Vushtrri/ Vucitrn and Skenderaj/Srbica take turns hosting it. We're invited to their official events. There are psycho-social centres in Drenas/Glogovac that were provided by the Slovenian government, where they run training for teachers for identification of children with special needs which are joint training sessions.
- The chance to say 'how do you work?', 'do you have any ideas about…?', meetings and phone calls. The MEDirectors from this region meet every month in a different location within the region. They then tell us what they talked about
- Co-operation with PZ, Suhareka/Suva Reka, others in the PZ region. They exchange information. PZ invites us to things
- We thought we'd visit municipalities with similar issues. Gjilan/Gnjilane has children from minorities so we set a day for exchange of experiences. We did the same with Ferizaj/Urosevac where an Administrative Instruction required school directors to be there all working hours, not shared between deputy and head. We went to Suhareka/Suva Reka and Gjakova/Djakovica too and it was interesting to see the ways they have allocated their responsibilities within the MED. We got an idea for how to take statistics. We've been to Prishtina/ Pristina and Peja/Pec too. In Prishtina/Pristina we saw that they

had a way of dealing with teachers they couldn't afford to pay – they used a company for their cleaning staff and used the payroll places for teachers. We've taken this idea and we're continuing with it.   We've done a report on each visit and passed it to the mayor so he knows what we're doing.