



National Democracy Education Action Plan

for the

Republic of Kosovo

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COMMUNITY
OF DEMOCRACIES

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Foreword

The following National Democracy Education Action Plan (NDEAP) for Kosovo is the result of a robust collaboration between civil society and government. The two workshops which resulted in this important document took place on April 14, 2014, and November 6, 2014, and were made possible with the generous support of the CD-UNITED fund of the Community of Democracies, with support for the initial workshop by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

The NDEAP is intended to provide a roadmap for deepening and expanding democracy education in Kosovo and can be used by civil society leaders, the Ministry of Education, and other key stakeholders. The NDEAP is in keeping with the priorities established by the Community of Democracies, through its Democracy Education Working Group, and two United Nations resolutions: UNGA Resolution A/67/L.25 on “Education for Democracy,” adopted by consensus in November 2012; and UNESCO Resolution 37 C/4/DR.6, both of which call on member states and UN agencies to provide greater support for democracy education.

The document is the product of two workshops of stakeholders from civil society and government. A list of the participants can be seen on page 16. The NDEAP has been produced in the spirit of cooperation and the understanding that democracy education is crucial for instilling in Kosovo’s citizens the important values of active democratic participation.

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1. Introduction

The year 2015 marks the ten-year anniversary of the 2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education. Kosovo intends to use this opportunity to join continent-wide efforts to instill democracy at all ages. The main entry point for the promotion of citizenship is education - both formal and informal - which can prepare children and youth for their role as future citizens. The quality of citizenship education in schools has to play a decisive role in the development of a sustainable civil society. Numerous stakeholders have already showed commitment to invest in democracy education in Kosovo, including the promotion of civic education. Democracy for Development (D4D) and the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) have joined efforts with numerous stakeholders to draft and approve a National Democracy Education Action Plan (NDEAP), a tool that engages the authorities and civil society on democracy education. This working document puts forward a number of policy recommendations to delineate a long-term approach and to help build momentum. In the future, they can further translate into specific interventions in the curriculum in a more detailed action plan.

The NDEAP is a result of two collaborative workshops, on 14 April 2014 and on 6 November 2014 (both held in Prishina), generously supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and the Community of Democracies (CD). Leaders of NGOs, officials of Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (MEST), teachers, legal professionals, and others participated actively in the workshops, ensuring that the insights of all stakeholders and segments of society were heard. With CCD's support, D4D summarised the discussions in the form of this Action Plan. The NDEAP should be used by the authorities and civil society as a roadmap to deepen democratic values starting at a very early age. The Ministry of Education is at the lead of all processes and should be supported by other stakeholders to intensify further efforts to teach democracy effectively. Civil society should vigorously monitor, contribute and take part in implementing parts of the Action Plan. The full list of signatories is provided in Annex I, which will continue to gather additional endorsements.

2. Workshop Discussions

The workshop in April 2014 aimed to examine the state of education for democracy in Kosovo – most frequent references were made to “inert activism” and “apathy”. This workshop identified the need for a roadmap and listed recommendations which have served as guidelines to foster the process of initiating the NDEAP. The draft Action Plan put forward in November reflects the contribution of all the participants in both workshops (the list can be found at the end of the document). This document has integrated all the written feedback received so far, and is now open for additional endorsements.

Participants from both the Ministry and civil society agree that there is a real problem with both education and democracy, both of which can be integrated for the purposes of this action plan. Education is of high priority for the development of a prosperous civil society, although further research is required both on the functioning of the system as well as how to adapt international best practices to our benefit. The main problem is that democratic values are not promoted sufficiently, and this should become a priority in order to develop a western-style liberal democratic society. NDEAP can equip this mission with well-defined expectations and measurable results. The action

plan was presented to participants as including the following elements:

- ✓ Roadmap to deepening democracy education in formal schools and civil society;
- ✓ Guide to be used by civil society to advocate for an expansion of democracy;
- ✓ Reference for the Ministry as they revise the curriculum and as a reliable framework for cooperation between the civil society and the authorities;
- ✓ Credible framework on how the Ministry and civil society should work together;
- ✓ Serve for reporting purposes to the UN Secretary General in accordance with the UNGA resolution on education for democracy of November 2012;
- ✓ Action Plan to cover: elementary, secondary and informal education.

3. Kosovo's Context

The short history of Kosovo's democracy implies that significant improvements must be made as we trudge along, still in a stage of discovery. Kosovo's experience with democracy is recent – its first democratic elections occurred in the 1990s when Kosovars voted in a parallel system of self-administration, in the fringes of a repressive system. Kosovo was liberated in 1999, only to be administered by the United Nations. The first elected municipal assemblies were introduced in 2000, while Kosovo's Assembly was elected in 2001 (still subservient to the non-elected UN trusteeship). Kosovo declared itself a sovereign nation in 2008, albeit its self-administration was supervised and had numerous limitations for several years. A winner-takes-all political culture and system of patronage have led to extreme political polarisation, which has caused frequent institutional deadlock.

In addition to its lack of experience with democracy, Kosovo has had a long history of conflict, which partly continues to this day. The long period of transition (around 25 years), the change of governance, as well as war, have made Kosovars doubt the rewards of democracy, associating the term with chaos, corruption and unregulated market. Frequent accusations of treason and questionable criteria of meritocracy have prevented the establishment of values that ought to serve as the foundation of a new state.

There is a prevalent patriarchal culture marked by strong gender and age-bias across its pores (e.g. inadequate textbooks, low rate of activity of women in the labour force), which hobbles democratisation and development. Kosovo inherits an apathetic citizenry, and the lack of participation often leads to disillusionment with the political class. The rationale to design a program for democracy education is to cultivate the participatory skills of citizens, inspiring them to exercise their rights and assuring that their voices are heard in decision-making processes at all levels. Teaching methods and books are outdated, schools are politicized and authoritarian teaching models are still prevalent. To illustrate the severity of the problem, a recent survey conducted by the Kosovo Education Centre and the University of Zurich have observed worrisome trends about the youngsters' perception of societal roles. For example, a whopping 23% of youngsters believed that women ought not to be involved in politics (15.5% of female respondents thought the same). This is not surprising

for many textbooks are misogynistic, discredit women and promote men – difficult to address with a policy which gives books away for free. Bullying remains rife in schools, as does a culture of violence among adults. Democracy education challenges such mindset by encouraging critical thinking at an early age when values form. Decentralization is an example of an effort to change the tide - although followed with numerous challenges, the recent decentralisation provides for a powerful municipal government, where participation can be exercised by Kosovars across the country. Such individuals are also likely to promote participation which will lead to a more vigorous democracy. Overall, Kosovo has yet to build widespread citizen habits that imbue democracy with meaning.

4. Objectives

Compared to many countries, Kosovo has an auspicious political environment and no genuine opponents to democracy education. Kosovo’s public and political elite exhibit a strong pro-Western orientation and see democratization as a strategic alignment with Western nations. It is essential that we build on this attitude to seek a well-informed and engaged citizenry as a precondition for a democracy to evolve.

Democracy ought to be discovered by children at an early age, so they can acquire the skills, knowledge and attitude to exercise civic rights and participate effectively. An active, engaged citizenry is essential to fostering a healthy, participatory democracy which is crucial for government accountability, good governance, and reducing corruption and mismanagement of resources. To accomplish this objective, democracy education should:

- ✓ further promote inclusion of diversity of opinion;
- ✓ regularly assess how democracy and its institutions work;
- ✓ understand of the rule of law and human rights as reflected in international treaties and the legal framework;
- ✓ nurture public ownership and shared responsibility;
- ✓ enhance participatory skills that empower effective participation;

Citizenship is conferred at birth, but the knowledge how to exercise civic duties is not. Most adult Kosovars have been raised in a non-democratic system, hence the need for a steep learning curve. Education for democracy prepares those involved -- whether at the elementary, secondary, higher, or adult educational level -- to be active and to learn to solve problems by utilizing institutions.¹ It must be seen as a strategic national priority to encourage participation of citizens in decision-making as a key condition for a robust and functioning democracy, pursuant to the United Nations resolution on democracy education passed in November 2012.

1. Aaberg, Rebecca. “Colombia: Democracy Education for Peace.” Council for a Community of Democracies.

5. International Conventions

Countries across the globe have set targets to nourish the democratic values of their pupils early on in their lives. The UNGA passed a resolution on education for democracy. This resolution was put forward based on universal right to education and the belief that democracy and human rights constitute universal values. The UN Resolution refers to the United Nations Millennium Declaration whereby member states commit to “to sparing no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law” and recognize that education is key to the strengthening of democratic institutions”.
The Resolution

Strongly encourages Member States to integrate education for democracy, along with civic education and human rights education, into national education standards and to develop and strengthen national and subnational programmes, curricula and curricular and extracurricular educational activities aimed at the promotion and consolidation of democratic values and democratic governance and human rights, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices in the field, in order to facilitate citizens’ empowerment and participation in political life and policymaking at all levels;²

The European tradition goes further than the UN Charter as enshrined in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The CoE Charter defines education for democratic citizenship as

education, training, awareness, raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.³

The Charter is driven by the objective to provide every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. Further, the Charter aims to promote social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, value diversity and equality, including gender equality. Learning democratic citizenship is clearly a lifelong process and requires also the development of “knowledge, personal and social skills that reduce conflict and understanding between faith and ethnic groups, build mutual respect for human dignity and shared values, encourage dialogue and promote non-violence in the resolution of problems and disputes”. The CoE charter puts high premium to the development of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. A number of other documents set the standards which to follow:

- ✓ The Charlottesville Declaration, 2013
- ✓ The Outcome Statement of the New Delhi Conference of Asian policymakers on democracy education of January 2013
- ✓ The UNESCO Resolution on Education for Democracy
- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/67/L.25 on “Education for Democracy,” adopted by consensus in November 2012,

2. United Nations General Assembly. 21 November 2012. Education for Democracy Resolution. A/67/L.25.

3. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 and explanatory memorandum. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Charter/Charter_brochure_EN.pdf, p. 7.

- ✓ The Action Plan on Democracy Education, adopted by the Community of Democracies (CD) Democracy Education Working Group at Ulaanbaatar, May 2012
- ✓ The Report of the CD of the Third Pocantico Conference on “Implementing the Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education, September, 2008
- ✓ The Report of the Second Pocantico Conference on Democracy Education in the Middle East and Africa, March 2005
- ✓ The Report of the First Pocantico Conference on “The Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education,” June 2003

6. Entry Points into Kosovo’s Education System

Having focused on building new schools in most of the immediate post-war years, Kosovo has begun to turn its attention to more long-term prospects and democracy education clearly been a priority too. Kosovo has done some progress in democracy education. For years now, a specific course is taught since the third grade, named “Civic Education.”

In the April 2014 workshop, it was highlighted that the Ministry of Education has adopted a contemporary approach to teaching pupils, a new system that exposes youth to global and standard principles of democracy. This system with a new curriculum was initiated in 2011 and is implemented with the support of USAID. Recent reforms at the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina are an indication of greater focus on a student-centered education system, gradually being introduced.

The new curriculum framework is sophisticated and well developed. Its success ultimately depends on the ability of the teachers to inspire pupils to become more active in improving the well-being of the community. The legal infrastructure in place gives schools flexibility in decision-making due to a more decentralized system instilled in the last few years. The experience has been mixed and the teacher training unsatisfactory. Some stakeholders believe that the advanced curriculum may be a problem in itself, for it remains unimplementable. The authorities express transparency and have allowed analysts to oversee – they are satisfied with the curriculum on paper, which has been enriched and detailed out according to best European practices. The authorities further show willingness to discuss jointly how to implement this effectively, for they complain that the “great legislation cannot go very far if teachers do not implement it practically inside the classroom”. Teaching remains scandalously mechanic.

The new curriculum in Kosovo is a very good platform, something to praise the Ministry and all its partners for consulting civil society. The real challenge is its implementation in practice. The first workshop in April concluded that democracy education should be taught both in school and in the informal sector, relying on student centered, participatory methodologies that model democracy in classrooms. Games, classroom activities, and service projects should be emphasized. To be able to conceptualize these methods, an international approach should be adopted and then put into practice.

The education system in Kosovo has undergone several reforms, and the last bout of reforms

seems to be the most ambitious and well-planned. The new curriculum foresees the development of democratic values upon pupils and one of the six key competences in the new curriculum is devoted to democracy education. Among other objectives, the new curriculum has a strategic orientation to contribute towards the “understanding of the roles of the state and society and their interaction” as a key priority for the consolidation of Kosovo’s rule of law. The curriculum further focuses on “the understanding of the improved practice of citizenship at a collective and individual level” as necessary for Kosovo’s transition to a well-functioning economy and social cohesion. Kosovo’s new Curricular Framework states, among other things, that “education in Kosovo aims to develop knowledge, skills, positions and values suitable to a democratic society”. The sixth major learning outcome is listed as “citizen competence,” which aims to create responsible citizens through the attainment of:

“inter-personal, inter-cultural and societal relations, understanding and respect for differences among citizens, tolerance and respect for others, responsibility for issues and issues of overall public interest and responsible public participation, support for initiatives for useful changes for personal lives, society and environment.”

More specifically, becoming a “responsible citizen” is delivered by the following sub-objectives:

- ✓ Understand the social environment and how it works;
- ✓ Understand and exercise their rights and to recognize and respect the rights of others;
- ✓ Appreciate diversity and demonstrate tolerance, respect and open-mindedness towards difference;
- ✓ Manage and solve conflicts in constructive manner;
- ✓ Participate in democratic processes of decision-making (at all levels, from family to state);
- ✓ Respect values and principles of human rights (personal dignity, fight prejudice and discrimination, fight poverty and marginalization, promote gender equality);
- ✓ Show interest for public issues and contribute towards problem solving at the school and community level;
- ✓ Protect the environment and contribute towards sustainable development.⁴

The new curriculum also increases the autonomy of schools. The apportionment of the workload of courses and classes for the elective part of the curriculum is within the autonomy of the school. In cooperation with teachers, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, the school can decide for new and improved content. Schools are to design flexible and innovative programs for this part of the curriculum in given the needs, context, and interests of pupils and of a specific community. Schools take the initiative on how to make use of the elective portion; each school submits the proposal to the municipal department and to MEST for the final approval of the proposed program. This part of the curriculum is monitored and evaluated according to the criteria and principles used for the mandatory part of the curriculum. This enables the school to organize the teaching staff at

4. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. August 2011. *Korniza e Kurrikulës e Arsimit Parauniversitar të Republikës së Kosovës* (The Curricular Framework of Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo). p. 23 (in Albanian version).

their disposal according to the specifics of the community which the school serves. MEST may offer and propose educational programs to the school. Educational programs decided on by the school are to enjoy the support of the municipal and the central level. Little of this flexibility has been utilized in practice, either due to the lack of incentives by the authorities or due to the lack of initiative by the schools.

The new curriculum has already foreseen to promote proactive and creative thinking in schools, and this is partly delivered through greater decentralization of schools and giving greater degree of discretion to teachers to decide on parts of the curriculum. In this regard, the initiative for democracy education should be seen as a two-fold approach: (a) as an independent endeavor that relies on good teachers to set it in motion, and (b) as a strategic aspect that requires some systemic incentives. The April workshop identified several problematic areas which require a more systemic approach:

- ✓ Textbooks on “democracy education” are deemed inadequate, and some even called them scandalous, for they rarely provide any logical understanding of what students should learn;
- ✓ A culture of student inferiority has been cultivated in Kosovo for decades in which students are not supposed to challenge the teacher, a culture of obedience leading to serious dissatisfaction among pupils and perpetuating hierarchical authority;
- ✓ Students find education generally uninteresting and lack motivation to develop skills;
- ✓ Parents are insufficiently involved in the upbringing of their children who are not educated for the common cause and the public good;
- ✓ The educational system is politicized at all levels, due to widespread nepotism and cronyism for political parties often consider jobs in education as one of the key carrots they are able to hand to their supporters;

The authorities and the civil society have also engaged in other activities. The Kosovo Education Center has implemented the Kosovision project for six years (2008-2014), which has helped children to develop a joint vision for the future. The Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (MEST) has committed to embrace this project into its midst and make it a part of the mainstream curriculum.

7. How Can It Be Done?

Critical thinking has turned out to be the cornerstone of the programs developed by various countries that have so far embraced democracy education. Kosovo need not invent ways to introduce democracy education. It suffices to adapt various tools that other countries have tried, much of which are collated in the *Best Practices Manual on Democracy Education*.

The [South African democracy education expert David] McQuoid-Mason notes that learning is best done by doing, and [Canadian curriculum expert Matthew] Hiebert adds that reorganizing the structure of how classroom activities are conducted is part of the hidden curriculum. Student-centered learning makes beneficiaries aware that they can affect the work around them. The examples provided in the Manual show that in many parts of the world, practitioners approach democracy

education through involvement in discussions, games, and activities to solve problems faced by the community. As Hiebert describes in his gap analysis, the distinction made here is one of education for democracy rather than education about democracy. While knowledge is important, building skills is crucial.⁵

Competencies are divided into three components (cognitive, affective, and communicative skills, each a different skill to be attained by the student but interrelated). Divided societies have also taken this to mean co-existence, which can be put to the function of healing wounds of the past and transcendence of conflict.

Local context is critical in designing programs to educate for democracy. Not only does this make the outcome more relevant for beneficiaries while in the program, but it provides those involved with the skills they need. Importantly, diverse actors have varying experiences and see different elements within the local context that need to be highlighted by the program. Designing a democracy education curriculum, therefore, needs to be done in a democratic way, McQuoid-Mason and Hiebert write in the Manual. McQuoid-Mason describes this process as involving stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and others in drafting a National Democracy Education Action Plan (NDEAP) as called for in the Charlottesville Declaration.⁶

How does democracy education fit in Kosovo's school system? How is the class curriculum carried out in our schools and how does an actual lesson look like? How do democracy education programs differ among classrooms, schools, municipalities, and regions? How can we change our democracy value system in schools, making classrooms more participatory as a way to teach students how to behave in a democracy? These questions were discussed in the two workshops, and a list of their potential remedies is presented below.

8. Recommended Actions

While Kosovo has introduced democratic procedures, it must now discover its spirit – but no successful democracy is possible without adequate education. Democracy education encourages children to work together to build their community and promotes conflict mitigation by emphasizing more peaceful processes in problem-solving. To complement the adoption of more inclusive teaching practices and a more democratic classroom in general, democracy education ensures that students receive the depth of education for democracy necessary to foster active, democratically engaged citizens ready for public life. As Kosovo gets to implement the curriculum, it is important to have democracy education become a high priority and that teachers understand its long-term importance. We call that the NDEAP be considered as a source of inspiration for reforms. It is important that the current school curriculum is revisited and critically rethought to determine how democracy education suits its mission both in paper and practice. Books should be revised in accordance with the new curriculum framework. Donors should also see democracy education as a priority. While its effects are not immediate, it is essential for a country to prosper and harmonize its values closer with those of the rest of Europe. The NDEAP will provide the framework through which these ideas can be institutionalized and thus a legacy for the project's workshops and stakeholder meetings.

5. Aaberg, Rebecca. Colombia: Democracy Education for Peace. Council for a Community of Democracies.

6. Ibid.

Inclusive Approach and Cross-Institutional Coordination

Parents should be included in democracy education to equip them with skills and a positive attitude to influence change in the education system. Schools are not currently the best channel through which to educate students about and for democracy. Teachers and school directors have traditionally viewed activism as something orchestrated from outside (e.g. school director in Prizren opposed a student petition calling for the opening of a chemistry lab). Civil society organizations are great catalysts for doing further research, and they can serve as a force to influence decision-makers to take initiatives in this regard. NGOs fill a gap left by formal education. NGOs utilize both spaces, providing opportunities for diverse groups, including both formal and informal settings. There is a need for cooperation among all relevant agencies in Kosovo in order to provide appropriate expertise and resources for the development of relevant educational programmes and materials for democracy. Democracy education involves a wide range of stakeholders including policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, educational authorities, civil servants, non-governmental organisations, youth organisations, media, and the general public. The NDEAP and other efforts should effectively coordinate all the stakeholders working towards the same goal. Increased communication between central and municipal authorities is crucial to help schools become more open and attractive for students. There is a potential gap if there are essential differences in values between democracy education at school and in the family, e.g. about gender equality. Parents ought to be closely involved throughout the process, and a guide-book should be developed to instigate this involvement.

Curricular Reform and Improved Textbooks

The curriculum should introduce a number of improvements, as part of the current efforts during implementation as well as considered for the next bout of significant reforms. The educational practice should increasingly strive to introduce small groups, teachers should dissuade rote learning and promote learning by doing, brainstorming and interactive teaching methods. While it is too early to evaluate the new curriculum and assess its effects. Until a more comprehensive assessment, it is difficult to argue specifically how to change the system. But while systemic changes may wait, there is no reason not to revise misogynist textbooks, assess how the current curriculum is implemented inside the classroom, translate and promote alternative textbooks (e.g. those of CCD), introduce more democracy throughout education. Overall, teachers should engage students to deliberate in an open, constructive space to encourage them to become critical thinkers. Collaboration among book authors and teachers is essential to design and deliver a democracy education program that is customized to Kosovo's context. New "teaching materials and trainings to be offered to teachers" are needed to educate them in becoming more democratic, creative and open to students. Except civic education, textbooks could be revised against a number of criteria, e.g. gender, multi-ethnicity, religion, etc. in order to use a single intervention of curriculum reform for several purposes. This recommendation may have high cost implications, hence the need to introduce it gradually.

Evaluate and Improve the Civic Education Course

It is important that the authorities and various stakeholders discuss widely and come to a consensus on how to promote these values best within our educational system. To this effect, it would be useful to evaluate the effects of the course on Civic Education and to determine the improvements that can further be made with regard to specific deliverables how the course

impacts childrens’s judgment and values. Teachers should actively engage their students and facilitate an open, democratic space, which encourages them to become critically thinking, actively engaged citizens. Moreover, the Civic Education course should be enriched with new content and to be updated continuously en par with societal and technological advances. Education needs to help pupils to understand their society better, to help to investigate how their society functions, and therefore assists them to develop critical thinking skills and a commitment to development that is crucial to transforming the society. In the upper secondary school (8-12 grade), the “civic education” should be replaced with a more advanced course taught by professionals. The curriculum for such a course should consider the following content: promotion of good governance, democracy, sustainable management of the environment and peace and human rights are emphasized and the syllabus introduces the student to critical and reflective thinking, decision-making, positive attitudes, value- building, and personal and civic responsibility and the rights that go with them. Civic education needs to integrate with all other courses. As a course, civic education needs to expand to two hours a week, one of which should be applied in practice, e.g. visit institutions and engage critically about their work. The point 5.1 of the curriculum allows 30% deviation, as a small window which allows schools and teachers to implement this without waiting for instructions from the authorities.

Gear Democracy Education for Various Ages, Starting Early

Even at a very early age, teachers should adopt techniques that encourage voting, considering all viewpoints, debate & argumentation, respect for the rule of law, and think about change constructively. Children should appreciate basic concepts and values that underlie a democratic political community and constitutional order to enable them to uphold and defend the rule of law and diversity of opinion at all times. Lessons both in school and in the informal sector should rely on student-centered, participatory methodologies that model democracy in the classroom and include games, classroom activities, and service learning projects because the traditional “learning by rote” method of teaching is not effective for democracy education.

Classroom Implementation

The new advanced curriculum requires a complex and functional system where teachers are better prepared to teach students about subjects involving “civic responsibility”. To put this into practice, teachers should take independent initiatives to help students learn regardless of what were called “negative circumstances,” training of educators can keep them proactive, creative, and independent in their learning and teaching, and decentralizing schools gives them flexibility to decide more freely about students’ learning experiences. These are some of the main points for the argument that democracy education should be seen as an initiative independent of any government intervention. That said, there were many success stories that support school autonomy from and/or positive reactions to criticism against the government before and after the war of 1999. Studies have shown that actively engaged students absorb information much more effectively than those who receive lessons through the traditional, teacher-centered approaches to education. In order to encourage a democratic and non-discriminatory mindset, the school should organize extra-curricular activities with the pupils. Activities should involve workshops with Student Councils to treat topics such as: prejudice, discrimination, bullying, etc., and to draft action plans how Student Councils could work to reduce or eliminate such behaviours within their schools. Teachers should be trained to educate students to think critically, present two sides of the story, always present an opposing view, promote analytical think-

ing, being able to question what one reads and practice religious tolerance. Teachers are often asked to work in small groups, but this is easier said than done if classrooms have 30 pupils, a problem which cannot be resolved locally. Many teachers have never seen the new curriculum, and they often lack the motivation and complain why trainings are organized on weekends. The mindset of teachers as well as school directors is often a problem, for there is widespread opinion “that learning cannot occur through games”. They must be trained in order to change the mindset of teachers and administrators alike, primarily focusing on the importance of the democratic process inside the class and their communication skills.

Legislative Improvements and Depoliticize Recruitment

There is a need to pass legislation to support creating a democratic environment in schools. An anti-bullying law must be drafted while laws that regulate education should mainstream and make mandatory some of the obvious improvements, including the parents’ councils and other lessons learned. Overall, a more modern legislative framework should remedy negative societal and cultural trends and initiate a proper democracy education in Kosovo. For democracy education to be incorporated into the official curriculum it is highly desirable that schools are depoliticized, i.e. to remove political criteria when recruiting teachers and school directors, which although informal they turn out to be decisive. This will depend on the will of the municipal departments dependent on the political will not to hire and fire educators based on political preferences. Only in such circumstances can teachers be motivated to perform and be held accountable based on meritocratic criteria. Additionally, municipal authorities have the key role in ensuring that schools are democratic and not politically influenced. In this regard, civil society should advocate for depoliticization, and political parties should try to garner votes by promising to change this habit. To get rid of the party lineage, it is recommended to empower the School Steering Council, the Parents’ Council and the Student Council to exercise a greater role in seeking accountability how schools are run, as well as to involve parents and the civil society during the recruitment of school personnel. The authorities should exercise strict monitoring, inspectors should be more capable, and official qualification levels should be strengthened, alongside measurable performance tests. School directors should be trained in inclusive leadership.

Seek Membership in Various International Organizations and Implement Relevant International Conventions

Kosovo commits to implement measures based on the provisions of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The authorities and the civil society will make maximum efforts to ensure that the Charter is widely disseminated to their authorities responsible for education and youth. Both commit to ongoing training and development for education professionals and youth leaders, as well as for trainers themselves, in the principles and practices of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. In organizations where Kosovo cannot formally adhere to, it should unilaterally express its commitment to democratic values as intrinsic values and commits to join the global community where it attains to join formally. The authorities should welcome “international, regional and other intergovernmental organizations, within their respective mandates, to share their best experiences and practices in the field of education for democracy, including but not limited to civic education, with each other and with the United Nations system, as appropriate.” Kosovo should commit to cooperation with the United Nations, Council of Europe, and

other partners to strengthen democracy education as part of the effort to promote the values of peace, human rights, democracy, respect for religious and cultural diversity and justice through education.

Make Democracy Education a Public Value and Habit

There are prevalent societal values that ought to be changed. Informal, community-based programs often provide democracy education to many members of the population, especially adults. Outside of formal classroom settings, informal, community-based programs often provide democracy education to many members of the population, especially adults. Adults rely on other means-continuing education courses, employment-related programs, workshops, seminars, radio and television, newspapers, brochures, and trade union activities-to acquaint themselves with democratic theories and practices. Democracy education should be seen as activism and not as an outcome delivered solely through the administration's hierarchy. More should be done to include youth in educational policies. Projects such as Kosovision should continue, potentially coupled with additional projects and quizzes that encourage democratic values among various age-groups. For any democracy education program, a budgetary cost analysis has to be conducted to ensure that all foreseen expenses are measured and financial support is guaranteed.

9. Reference Documents and Contacts

Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Charter/Charterpocket_EN.pdf

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CCD. Best Practices Manual on Democracy Education. http://ccd21.org/activities/education/resource_guide/best_practices_manual/CCD_Best_Practices.pdf

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The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

World Conference on Human Rights meeting in Vienna in 1993

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1682 (2004) calling for a European framework convention on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education to be drafted;

Romina Kasman, a democracy education specialist who has worked with many countries through the Organization of American States

10. Workshop Participants

Name	Organization
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Mary Tyler Holmes**	USAID
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* attended first workshop only

** attended second workshop only