

FINAL EVALUATION

KSV/020

Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform in Kosovo (Phase II)

PROJECT SUMMARY DATA

Country	Kosovo
Long project title	Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform in Kosovo (Phase II)
Short project title	Support to VET Reform in Kosovo – Phase II
LuxDev Code	KSV/020
Version of the Report	September 2023

RATING OF THE PROJECT BY THE EVALUATION MISSION

Global rating (Effectiveness)	3 On a scale of 1 (excellent results, significantly better than expected) to 6 (the project was unsuccessful, or the situation has deteriorated on balance)
Rating using other evaluation criteria	Relevance: 2 Coherence 3 Efficiency: 3 Sustainability: 4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall vision of the Luxembourg's support to Kosovo is to contribute to the economic growth of Kosovo through the modernization of its education system, more specifically through reforming the vocational education, and training system of the country. Project KSV/020 – Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform in Kosovo (Phase II) - is the continuation of the previous initiative, project KSV/015 (Phase I), which aimed to support the reform of Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo. The project primarily focuses on enhancing the structure and performance of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training system and its delivery in Kosovo, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all. To achieve these objectives, the project proposes assisting the Government of Kosovo and more specifically Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in implementing legislative, financial, governance, managerial, and modernization changes within the Technical Vocational Education and Training sector.

The overall objective of this project (Phase II) is “to support the creation of a technical workforce that is relevant to the social and economic development of Kosovo”, while the specific objective of the project is “improving the Technical Vocational Education and Training system and delivery in Kosovo to better respond to the new socio-economic needs and increased competitiveness into context of the country’s current and future development”. Furthermore, the project focuses on three main results:

1. Technical Vocational Education and Training policies, systems, and legislation reviewed and strengthened.
2. Vocational Education and Training institutions supported by the project are strengthened.
3. Information Systems for the Technical Vocational Education and Training sector are upgraded.

The initial implementation period of the project began on July 1, 2018, for a duration of four years. The project underwent two extensions: the first extension added an additional six months, extending it until the end of December 2022. The second extension further prolonged the project until the end of June 2023. Consequently, the total implementation period of the project amounts to 60 months. The project had a total actual budget of 10,304,000 EUR, with 82% of the funding provided by the Luxembourg government and the remaining 18% by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Kosovo.

The objective of this evaluation was to undertake a final evaluation of the project KSV/020, including:

- analyse the results and the specific objective compared to targets;
- analyse the results achieved in terms of capacity strengthening;
- analyse management and monitoring of the project;
- analyse the project using Development Aid Committee evaluation criteria;
- analyse specific questions, including assessment of the financial system, COVID-19 and other questions;
- provide recommendations and establish lessons learned.

Overall objective: To support the creation of a technical workforce that is relevant to the social and economic development of Kosovo

Both indicators connected to the overall objectives were achieved as according to UNICEF 2022 Annual Report for Kosovo, poverty rate dropped 6.7% and unemployment rate decreased 22.1% during the implementation of the KSV/020 project. However, the evaluation team assesses that, although this project has contributed to decrease of poverty and unemployment, it is hard to measure its concrete impact due to a number of other factors that can impact the correlation between project results and overall objective indicators. On the other hand, the evaluation team assesses that project was working in the right direction and that it has achieved a promising base for the creation of a competent technical workforce, especially in the sector of Information and Communication Technology and the most demanded technical profiles.

Specific objective: Improving the Technical Vocational Education and Training system and delivery in Kosovo

The first indicator of the specific objective was “A new Vocational Education and Training sector financing policy is included in the Kosovo Education Strategy Plan (2022-2026)”. The evaluation team assesses that this indicator was partially achieved as the project contributed to the development of the new policies for Vocational Education and Training sector sustainable financing, but a new Vocational Education and Training sector financing policy still has to be developed by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The second indicator of the specific objective was “At least 60% of the companies are satisfied with the level of competence of the students during their professional practice”. National Tracer Studies Report of the first pilot phase shows that Vocational Education and Training schools graduates gained valuable knowledge and skills in their Vocational Education and Training schools, which was supported with the findings of the interviews with the private sector companies. The evaluation team assesses this indicator as achieved, with a remark that this indicator should have been adjusted, as there was not enough time to effectively increase the knowledge level of students and for the companies to gain significant opinion regarding the competence level of students. The evaluation team assesses the specific objective achieved, as it is evident that the Technical Vocational Education and Training system in Kosovo was improved through this project. This system now responds better to the new socio-economic needs and increased competitiveness. However, the evaluation team sees the second specific objective indicator as inappropriate as there was not enough time within this project for the companies to gain significant opinion regarding the competence level of students. The project should have redefined this indicator to efficiently measure what has been achieved.

Result 1: Technical Vocational Education and Training policies, system and legislation reviewed and strengthened

Within Result 1, this intervention planned to develop and adopt by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation a Vocational Education and Training sector sustainable policy. This action has not been fully implemented as Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation handed over this activity to another project (ALLED 2 - Austrian Development Agency) which was not implemented by LuxDev. Within the second action, this intervention planned to develop a management system for Vocational Education and Training schools which will be endorsed by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. This action has also not been fully achieved due to a lack of endorsement from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation after the government changes in 2021 which led to the reshaping of the Vocational Education and Training governance and a suspension of the endorsement of the so-called business model approach. Following actions were achieved or overachieved within Result 1: providing support to Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation for the revision and development of the legal framework regulating the Vocational Education and Training sector in Kosovo, increasing the knowledge of at least 50 officials after trainings in selected Vocational Education and Training topics, implementation of at least 5 developed/updated qualifications sets of the supported profiles in five supported Vocational Education and Training schools, updating/development of at least 10 curricula by the project and development/revision of Teaching and Learning Materials for at least 10 supported teaching profiles. Evaluation team assesses that Result 1 was achieved to a high degree, as most of the indicators were achieved or overachieved. Two indicators that were not fully achieved were influenced by other factors outside of the project, such as political decisions by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation or overlapping with another project.

It is evident that Result 1 had a national wide impact due to its focus on the improvement of Technical Vocational Education and Training policies, system and legislation. The evaluation team assesses that this result has significantly led to the achievement of the specific objective of this project connected to improving the Technical Vocational Education and Training system and delivery in Kosovo, however, participants of the focus group acknowledged the lack of expertise with teaching background involved in developing of curricula. Furthermore, the evaluation team highlights the need for similar projects to include all relevant stakeholders more effectively in the specific activities.

Result 2: Vocational Education and Training institutions supported by the project are strengthened

Within Result 2, project planned to achieve up to 90% of enrolled Vocational Education and Training students supported by the project pass the academic year and decrease the dropout rate to 3.5% in Vocational Education and Training-supported schools. Although first indicator was achieved and the second one was not, there have been some irregularities in the data collection. The evaluation team assesses these actions as partially achieved but proposes that these indicators should be measured in the aftermath of the project, which was not feasible during the project implementation. One of the key actions of this project was the establishment of the fully operational Information and Communication Technology Centre of Competence in Pristina, but due to two years delayed construction work and not fulfilling the terms of contract by the construction company, it has not been built, although the furniture and IT equipment was purchased. The evaluation team assesses this action as not completed and recommends transferring this action to the next similar project in the Vocational Education and Training sector, as it is already planned. Project actions that were overachieved were: signing at least 15 active cooperation agreements by the project-supported Technical Vocational Education and Training institutions, equipping or renovating at least 50 workshops in the supported Vocational Education and Training schools, training up to 200 Vocational Education and Training schools' staff in at least one of the selected Vocational Education and Training-related skill areas and adopting a financial monitoring mechanism in at least 10 supported Vocational Education and Training schools.

The evaluation team assesses that this result was achieved as most indicators were achieved or overachieved. In order to fully measure the achievement of this result, project should have adjusted some indicators that were listed on the final beneficiary level. The delay with the construction of the Information and Communication Technology Centre of Competence in Pristina was caused by external factor, therefore, in order to fully scale up on this result, construction of the Information and Communication Technology Centre of Competence should be transferred to the new connected Vocational Education and Training project. Impact of the Result 2 on the specific objective was partial as it focused on strengthening only selected Vocational Education and Training schools. Impact on other schools outside of the project is hard to measure, although, project has worked continuously throughout its implementation phase to effectively disseminate its results on a nationwide scale and it has ensured the possibility to transfer this approach to other Vocational Education and Training schools in Kosovo. Therefore, the evaluation team highlighted the opportunity to continue similar investments also in other Vocational Education and Training schools in Kosovo in order to achieve full impact on the specific objective of this project.

Result 3: Information Systems for Technical Vocational Education and Training sector are upgraded

Within Result 3, this project has planned to develop a functional information system endorsed by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation as the official platform for occupational orientation, education and career guidance in Kosovo. The evaluation team assesses this action as partially achieved as the information system Busulla.com was developed and endorsed by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, but from March 2023 not working due to non-payment of maintenance and accumulated debt regarding payment obligations of different Municipality Education Directorate for its maintenance. The project indicator that was overachieved was usage of the Career Guidance Information System by at least 150,000 students in Kosovo. The evaluation team assesses this action as overachieved due to an early implementation of Busulla.com which led to a total number of 509,618 users by the end of 2022. The last action of Result 3 was the development of at least four Information Systems modules supported by the project and presented to Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The evaluation team assesses this activity as fully achieved as five information system modules were developed by the end of 2019.

The evaluation team assesses that this result has been achieved as all indicators have been met. In order to fully achieve the result, the information system Busulla.com should be rebooted and used by students in Kosovo. Result 3 also has a national wide impact due to its focus on the development of information system for Technical Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo. The evaluation team assesses that this result has significantly led to the achievement of the specific objective of this project connected to improving the Technical Vocational Education and Training system and delivery in Kosovo, although currently, the information system is not working.

Ratings according to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Aid Committee criteria

Global rating (effectiveness): 3, relevance: 2, coherence: 3, efficiency: 3, sustainability: 4.

Global rating (effectiveness) of this project is rated with 3 as this intervention achieved planned results and objectives to a high degree despite the external challenges that it had to face, but some indicators have not reflected the actual change intended by the project and description of the intervention logic as proposed in the design stage.

The relevance of this project is very high (2) as the results comprising the project are clearly defined, reasonably feasible and in line with the recommendations given by the evaluation missions for projects prior to this one, as well as with priorities of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Moreover, coherence of this project is rated with 3 as intervention has shown solid internal coherence and as external coherence has suffered due to insufficient display of coordination by the Government of Kosovo.

Efficiency of this project is rated with 3 as intervention has delivered achieved results in timely and economic way despite the external challenges that it had to face, but there was a need to ensure better and more efficient decision making at the Project Steering Committee level.

Finally, sustainability of this project is rated with 4 as the potential for sustainability of project results was not achieved to a high degree and as Project Closure (Exit) plan did not provide enough guidelines for the capitalisation of results and sustainability.

Lessons Learned

- As some involved Vocational Education and Training schools mentioned through the focus group that the business community was not to a large degree involved into qualifications sets development, more significant involvement of the business community has to be ensured.
- As some involved schools mentioned through the focus group that relevant Vocational Education and Training teachers were not to a large degree involved into curricula development and that they are not satisfied with the work of the external experts who were in charge of curricula development, more significant involvement of Vocational Education and Training teachers has to be ensured.
- As some involved Vocational Education and Training schools mentioned through the focus group that they were not enough involved into the decision and process of equipment acquisition, as in number of cases project has purchased cheaper equipment due to price increases, more significant involvement of schools has to be ensured.
- As this project was conducting a few activities similar with other projects in Kosovo, in order to avoid overlapping of the project activities, better coordination of activities with other similar projects should take place during their formulation and through their implementation.
- As some indicators within this project do not reflect the actual change intended by the project and description of the intervention logic as proposed in the design stage, indicators in such a long programme have to be adjusted to the changes in socio-politic environment, in order to reflect what is actually achieved.
- As Risk Assessment and Management Matrix has not foreseen mitigation measures for the changes of Government and COVID-19 pandemic, Risk Management Matrix should be adapted during the project implementation to better respond to unexpected challenges.
- As there has been a problem with maintenance of Busulla.com and its payment obligations, the maintenance of important project results (such as Busulla.com) should not be divided among many stakeholders, but there should be one specific actor designated to manage and take care of the sustainability of the project result.
- As there was a discrepancy between project;
 - analyse the project using Development Markers that were scored as significant and those that were reported about in the end, there should be more clarity about which markers should project report.

Recommendations

1. As this project has significantly included only a small sample of selected Vocational Education and Training schools in Kosovo, future Vocational Education and Training projects should continue investing into core Vocational Education and Training activities in other Vocational Education and Training schools outside of this project.
2. As more than 30% of costs within Result 2 were not used due to problems with building of the Information and Communication Technology Centre of Competence in Pristina, unused funds should be transferred to the next connected Vocational Education and Training project in order to build and establish Information and Communication Technology Centre of Competence in Pristina.
3. Given the challenging circumstances in Kosovo and the size of the Project Steering Committee, setting up small technical subcommittees on pressing problems with key stakeholders who might make crucial decisions in between formal Steering Committee sessions should be explored in order to ensure the efficiency of the project management and stronger coherence.
4. Due to the lack of coordination of similar initiatives, it is recommended that Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation consider a comparative assessment of the quality of implemented projects and make an internal evaluation that will allow a better analysis of areas where there is a need for improvement, whilst establishing good practices in regard to aspects in which coherence has been estimable.
5. Modality of transferring and allocating certain parts of activities due to duplication of certain segments of components and/or due to the inability for one donor project to implement certain activities should become established as part of the implementation palette that will lead to a more successful coherence progress, as this was a problem within the implementation of KSV/020 project.
6. As Busulla.com is currently not working due to non-payment of maintenance and accumulated debt regarding payment obligations of different Municipality Education Directorates, a new solution for its financing should be implemented to ensure its sustainability.
7. As this project has not developed detailed Exit and Capitalisation Strategy, to improve the sustainability of a future project, detailed Exit and Capitalisation plans should be made, which should, apart from others, contain the following: clear objectives and goals, future stakeholder engagement plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, knowledge transfer plan, risk assessment and mitigation.