



ISSN 2309-3455

# Social Studies

## Studime Sociale

Vol. 15, No. 4 (54), 2021



Joseph O. JIBOKU • Isaiah B. ADISA • Peace A. JIBOKU  
• Edo SHERIFI • Naim FANAJ • Sevim MUSTAFA  
• Vasiliki ROUSKA • Edita BEKTESHI • Safet KRASNIQI  
• Andi ÇAUSHI • Shpëtim ÇAUSHI • Sevim MUSTAFA  
• Irida AGOLLI NASUFI • Luiza LLURI  
• Alma GOLGOTA • Elona LIMAJ

[www.sociology.al](http://www.sociology.al)



## Kriteret e botimit në revistën “Studime Sociale”

Revista “Studime Sociale” është revistë e Institutit Shqiptar të Sociologjisë (Albanian Institute of Sociology, AIS) dhe Departamentit të Sociologjisë të Universitetit “Aleksander Moisiu” Durrës (UAMD), bazuar në marrëveshjen institucionale të datës 8 tetor 2018. Ajo botohet me ISSN ndërkombëtar (ISSN: 2309-3455) dhe është certifikuar si revistë shkencore nga Komisioni i Vlerësimit të Titujve Akademikë (KVTA) i Republikës së Shqipërisë, me vendim Nr. 170, datë 20. 12. 2010.

Studime Sociale/Social Studies, është revistë ndërkombëtare dygjuhëshe. Artikujt mund të botohen në shqip ose anglisht. Parimi bazë i saj është rigoroziteti shkencor. Çdo studim që dërgohet për t’u botuar revistën “Studime sociale”, i nënshtrohet një recensionimi të verbër (blind review). Ai u jepet për recension dy studiuesve të fushave ku bën pjesë studimi. Artikulli botohet nëse të dyja recensat janë pozitive. Detyra e përzgjedhjes së artikujve shkencorë është kompetencë ekskluzive e recensentëve anonimë.

Çdo material duhet të jetë në përputhje me standardet gjuhësore. Artikujt mund të jenë shkencorë ose recensionues, krijime origjinale ose përkthime. Çdo artikull duhet të dërgohet në word dhe të ketë këtë strukturë:

- (1) titulli, deri në 15 fjalë;
- (2) autori/autorët (emri mbiemri); institucioni ku është/janë; adresat elektronike – për çsonjërin prej tyre;
- (3) të dhëna për autorin/autorët, 4-6 rreshta, si tekst;
- (4) përmbledhje (shqip), me 200-250 fjalë dhe 4-6 fjalë kyçe;
- (5) teksti, si rregull me 7-9 faqe kompjuterike, me nga 2200 karaktere;
- (6) Referencat e plota;
- (7) abstract në anglisht (varianti anglisht i përmbledhjes).

Artikulli mund të shoqërohet me shënime në fund të faqes (footnotes). Por përparësi në përzgjedhjen për botim kanë artikujt me referenca sipas sistemit të Harvardit (referenca të shkurtuara përgjatë tekstit dhe lista me referenca të plota në fund të tij, sipas rendit alfabetik të mbiemrave të autorëve).

Referencat duhet të përbëjnë pesë elemente, që janë:

- a. Referencat e librave:
  1. autori/ose autorët; 2. viti i botimit; 3. titulli i librit (në kursiv); 4. qyteti/vendi ku është botuar; 5. botuesi (për shembull: Merton, Robert. 1968. Social Theory and Social Structure. New York: Free Press).
- b. Referencat e artikujve nga revistat shkencore, ose përmbledhjet:
  1. autori/autorët; 2. viti i botimit; 3. titulli i artikullit (në thonjëza); 4. titulli i revistës/përmbledhjes ku është botuar (në kursiv); 5. vëllimi, numri dhe faqet (për shembull: Buss, Loreta. 2010. “Childhood in Sociology and Society; The US Perspective”, Curren Sociology, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 355-350).

Referencat e plota, të listuara në fund të tekstit, duhet të korrespondojnë me referencat e shkurtuara nëpër tekst, të cilat vendosen si në shembujt: Për një autor: Weber (1998); (Weber, 1998: 156); ose Weber (1998: 156); Për dy dhe tre autorë: (Lazesfeld & Berelson, 1990) e (Olzak, Shanahan & West, 1986); Për më shumë se tre autorë: (Larsen et al., 1989); për seritë e referencave (Blau, 1980; Kadare, 1995; Uçi, 2003; Pëllumbi, 2004; Omari, 1999). Në qoftë se për të njëjtin autor ka më shumë se një referencë në të njëjtin vit, atëherë shënohet: 2011a, 2011b.

Link: <https://www.sociology.al/en/social-studies-journal>

Author’s guide: <https://www.sociology.al/en/revista-studime-sociale-kriteret-e-botimit>

SSJ Code of Conduct: <http://www.sociology.al/en/code-conduct-ssj>

# **SOCIAL STUDIES [STUDIME SOCIALE]**

**Vol. 15, No. 4 (54), 2021**

## **Editorial Team**

### **Editor:**

**Leke SOKOLI** – Tirana, ALBANIA

### **Deputy Editors:**

**Sejdin CEKANI** – Tirana, ALBANIA

**Besim GOLLOPENI** – Pristine, KOSOVO

**Ali PAJAZITI** – Skopje, North MACEDONIA

**Romina GURASHI** – Roma, ITALY

### **Deputy Editor for Membership and Finance:**

**Elda SOKOLI KUTROLI**

## **International Editorial Board**

**Servet PËLLUMBI** – Chair, Albanian Institute of Sociology, ALBANIA

**Aida GOGA** – University of Tirana, ALBANIA

**Agri SOKOLI** – St. Luis International School Milan, ITALY

**Anisa SUBASHI** – Municipality of Tirana, ALBANIA

**Apostolos G. PAPADOPOULOS** – Harokopio University, GREECE

**Besnik PULA** – Center for the Study of Social Organization; Princeton University, USA

**Brunilda ZENELAGA** – University of Tirana, ALBANIA

**Doreta KUÇI** – University Aleksander Moisiu Durres, ALBANIA

**Enis SULSTAROVA** – University of Tirana, ALBANIA

**Goran BASIC** – Department of Sociology, Lund University, SWEDEN

**Ilir GËDESHI** – Center for Economic and Social Studies, ALBANIA

**Irena NIKAJ** – University Fan Noli of Korca, , ALBANIA

**Jasminka LAŽNJAK** – University of Zagreb, CROATIA

**Jonida LAMAJ** – Albanian-American Development Foundation, ALBANIA

**Klea FANIKO** – University of Geneva, SWITZERLAND

**Klejda MULAJ** – University of Exeter, ENGLAND

**Konstantin MINOSKI** – Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, North MACEDONIA

**Kscanela SOTIROFSKI** – University Aleksander Moisiu Durres, ALBANIA

**Ledia KASHAHU** – University Aleksander Moisiu of Durres, ALBANIA  
**Marina DALLA** – University of Athens, GREECE  
**Matilda LIKAJ** – University Aleksander Moisiu Durres, ALBANIA  
**Miranda RIRA** – Albanian Sociological Association; ALBSA, ALBANIA  
**Rando DEVOLE** – Researcher AIS Roma, ITALY  
**Sabri KIÇMARI** – University of Pristine, KOSOVO  
**Sergiu BALTATESCU** – University of Oradea, ROMANIA  
**Shaban SINANI** – Albanian Academy of Science, ALBANIA  
**Svetla KOLEVEA** – Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, BULGARIA  
**Tonin GJURAJ** – European University of Tirana, ALBANIA  
**Zana STRAZIMIRI** – University of Tirana, Albania

© Albanian Institute of Sociology / Instituti Shqiptar i Sociologjisë

Design: **Orest Muça**

“Social Studies”, Scientific Journal, certified by the Highest Scientific Committee, Ministry of  
Education and Science of Albania

Decision no. 170, date 20th of December 2010

Contacts:

Mobile: ++355692044722; ++355694067682

E-Mail: [albsa@sociology.al](mailto:albsa@sociology.al); [studime.sociale@gmail.com](mailto:studime.sociale@gmail.com)

[www.sociology.al](http://www.sociology.al)

## Contents:

---

Joseph O. JIBOKU Isaiah B. ADISA Peace A. JIBOKU	<i>Pension Administration and Employees' Retirement Anxieties in Nigeria</i> ..... 5
Edo SHERIFI	<i>Educating Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Inclusive Education</i> ..... 27
Naim FANAJ Sevim MUSTAFA	<i>Examining self-esteem and family characteristics (birth order, family satisfaction, educational level, socio-economic status) among nominated children as gifted in Kosovo</i> ..... 39
Vasiliki ROUSKA	<i>The role of art in Greek Religious Education today</i> ..... 51
Edita BEKTESHI	<i>Sustainable Development Goals in Society Education</i> ..... 61
Safet KRASNIQI	<i>Education and Vocational Training in Kosovo, a Challenge and Objective of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> ..... 67
Andi ÇAUSHI Shpëtim ÇAUSHI	<i>Leadership in Education</i> ..... 79
Sevim MUSTAFA	<i>Pros and Cons of digitalization in creativity development with gifted / talented students</i> ..... 85
Irida AGOLLI NASUFI	<i>Civil society and youth participation in peace building and tolerance</i> ..... 99
Luiza LLURI Alma GOLGOTA	<i>Making energy from municipal solid waste is an important step to climate protection</i> ..... 109
Elona LIMAJ	<i>Covid-19: Online Teaching, Lesson Learned Challenges of Teaching Process in the Digital Era – Albania</i> ..... 121



# PENSION ADMINISTRATION AND EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ANXIETIES IN NIGERIA

**Joseph O. JIBOKU**

*Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management*

*Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences*

*Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.*

E-mail: jibokujoe@yahoo.com; jiboku.joseph@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

**Isaiah B. ADISA**

*Department of Sociology, Olabisi Onabanjo University,*

*Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria*

E-mail: isaiahadisa9024@yahoo.com

**Peace A. JIBOKU**

*Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences*

*Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria.*

Email: jiboku.peace@gmail.com; jiboku.peace@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

---

**Joseph O. JIBOKU**, teaches Sociology and Industrial Relations at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye. He holds B.Sc, M.Sc and Ph.D in Sociology and has another Master of Industrial and Labour Relations Degree. His research interests are on issues of development, economic and industrial sociology, skills development and multinational corporations. He is a member of many professional associations. He has attended national and international conferences and has a number of publications in both local and international academic outlets.

**Isaiah B. ADISA** is a management researcher and consultant who studied Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. His co-authored article won the best paper award in 2019 at the 13th MBACademy International Conference on Management Businesses Organization and Innovation (IMBAC2019). He has co-edited two forthcoming edited books (Published by Palgrave) on green marketing and people management in emerging economies. He has also co-authored book chapters and journal articles. His research interest cut across human resources management, organisational behaviour, marketing, and gender studies.

**Peace JIBOKU** is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwote, Ogun State Nigeria. She obtained B.Sc Degree in Political Science at the Ogun State University, now Olabisi Onabanjo University. She has a master's degree in political science from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and a PhD Political Science obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her research focuses on African politics; regional integration, peace, security and development; inclusive governance; civil society organisations and development in Africa.

## ABSTRACT

An employment opportunity presents employees with the assurances of getting the basics of life through the regular payment of salaries; and with the pension scheme, a worker's future is secured. Pension is a social protection to enable employees live a good life after their active working age. However, pension administration in Nigeria over the years has become an issue of concern to many scholars and writers necessitating studies to unravel its dynamics in the country. Cases abound of civil servants who have been relieved of their appointments but are yet to receive their retirement benefits as appropriate. This scenario raises concern for other workers who are nearing retirement as the assumed secured future which employment provides appears to be remote. While some pensioners wait for years to collect their benefits and allowances, others who are not so fortunate die before collecting their entitlements. Thus, rather than providing social protection for retirees, pension administration has resulted into anxieties for retirees and workers alike. What factors could be attributed for the lapses associated with pension administration that have made conditions of many retirees to be pitiable? Why has pension administration become a 'salient' issue in Nigeria despite the country's enormous natural and material resources? What implications do the problems associated with pension administration in Nigeria have for the future of work and workers? This paper examines the issue of retirement anxieties associated with pension administration in Nigeria from the angle of governance deficiencies in the country and advances the case for the social and psychological preparation of workers before retirement sets in. The discourse is situated within the Crisis Theory of Retirement.

**Keywords:** *Anxieties, Employment, Pension, Pension Administration, Retirement, Pre-retirement Anxieties, Retirement Anxieties*

The security and welfare of the citizens of a state should be the primary concern of government (Turan 2010; Nbete, 2012). Laski (1925, 1941:25-28) in his book *A Grammar of Politics*, sees the state not as an end itself, but merely as the means to an end. It exists to enable the majority of men to realise social good on the largest possible scale. The state is a means to the enrichment of individual personality. It exists to enable men, at least, to realise the best in themselves. Thus, any good government is expected to ensure the achievement of these objectives through the formulation of appropriate policies. One of such policies is that which is geared towards providing an adequate reward system for employees who have spent a substantial period of their time and life in work organisations, be it public or private. Work represents a veritable means of providing a source of livelihood

for the working members of society, their families and all other dependants. It is also important for the sustenance of reasonable livelihood after the active working age and is a safeguard against unnecessary hardship pertaining to old age (Nweke, 2016; Doyle, 2019; Opeyemi, 2019). Thus, the welfare of employees should go beyond their active working period as they have dedicated most of their active life to their work organisations (Mirea, Naftanaila and Mirea, 2012; Opeyemi, 2019). Nonetheless, the failure of government to plan, provide and manage the after work life of retirees affects the welfare of workers. One of the implications of this negative situation is that the socio-economic benefits which the aged people could provide for societal development would be lost. It is imperative to note that people are the means and ends of development (Adejumobi, 2009). The



World Bank (1991:31-69) also observed that the principal challenge of development is how to improve the welfare of the people. One of such ways is to ensure that due reward is given to retirees regularly (Pension Reform Act, 2004, PART 1, A33).

This paper argues that while the government and business owners manage the welfare of employees in an organisation during their active working period through the payment of wages/salaries, workers' welfare should be managed through adequate pension when they are retired. Pension, in simple terms is the way of catering for the welfare of retirees (Ayegba, James and Odoh, 2013; Abdulazeez, 2015). It is a periodic income or annuity payment made at or after retirement to employees who have become eligible for benefits through age, earnings or years of service. Pension entails amount paid to workers after their due retirement from active service (Eme, Uche and Uche, 2014; Binuomoyo, 2010; Onukwu, 2017). Pension administration therefore, centers on providing a veritable, pleasant and realistic structure in place for the proper retirement of workers accompanied by the payment of their due entitlements which would be made available at the right time and space (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000; Opeyemi, 2019). Many countries of the world are currently grappling with pension reforms in the face of pressures from ageing populations and Nigeria is not left out, however, the issue of pension and pension administration in Nigeria is confronted with a lot of challenges (Garba and Mamman, 2014; Adetunde et al, 2016; Nweke, 2014).

Nigeria presents a somewhat interesting situation for academic enquiry to unravel the factors responsible for the unpleasant conditions of pensioners who have served the nation creditably and are entitled to pension. Unlike developed countries which have social protection policies for pensioners and regard the elderly as

repositories of knowledge and wisdom, functional social protection policies for the elderly are non-existent in Nigeria (Oparanma, 2011; Mudiare, 2013; Uma and Ogwuru, 2015; Abada and Okuma, 2017). With this situation, notwithstanding, the government has found it difficult to settle the entitlements of a number of pensioners after the retirement of many workers in the public service despite the existence of extant rules and regulations on this subject matter. More so, the pension of civil servants have remained dismally low while payment is irregular (Oparanma, 2011; Garba and Mamman, 2014). The multiplier effects of this unpleasant scenario manifest in anxiety on the part of the present active working employees who appear to be in a state of uncertainty with regards to their after active working life (Adetunde et al, 2016). The anxiety among government employees has lured many of them to engage in unscrupulous behaviors at work such as engaging in bribery, acts of fraudulence, siphoning of public funds and embezzlement (Nweke, 2016; Nwanna and Ogbonna, 2019). In addition, such anxieties have resulted in health issues for some retirees while many others have lost their lives while thinking of their after work source of livelihood as a result of negligence and failure on the part of government. It is notable that series of pension schemes have been introduced in Nigeria before and after independence as the challenges to effective pension administration led to the establishment of new pension schemes. Yet, most retirees in Nigeria still suffer so much pain in the course of collecting what rightfully belongs to them in form of pension and gratuity. Sadly, a number of retirees die in the process of collecting their entitlements and as a result, some of them never lived to enjoy the fruits of their active work life in retirement (Adebayo and Dada, 2012; Garba and Mamman, 2014; Egwenu and Omede, 2019).

The condition of pensioners in Nigeria reveals the failures of government and the leadership at different levels in the country especially those that are saddled with managing pension and welfare of retirees -- the senior citizens in the country. Uma and Ogwuru (2015), present a list of cases showing the pitiable condition of pensioners in some parts of Nigeria. There are also several empirical studies which have revealed significant findings on pension related issues and retirement anxiety in Nigeria. They include those of Sule and Ezugwu (2009); Igbo and Awopetu (2012), Nweke (2016), Adetunde (2017), Onukwu (2017) among others. The most disheartening scenario which this paper emphasises is that while the ugly experiences of pensioners persist, the ruling class – political office holders at the helms of affairs in government have retirement plans that sustain their lives after service which are even enough to take care their subsequent generations (Nations Encyclopaedia – Nigeria, 2020).

## Objectives

There is increasing awareness of the plight of retirees in Nigeria as a result of government negligence and the need for their welfare. The unfortunate and pitiable conditions of retirees have implications on the commitment and dedication as well as the health of those workers in active service who will join the senior citizens as retirees in the future. These two categories of workers and their concerns cannot be overlooked because of the consequences of their actions on governance and development in Nigeria. This paper contributes to the discourse on pension administration by examining the experience in Nigeria, looking at the governance challenges associated with the subject matter. It examines the issue of retirement anxiety for workers who will retire some-day. The paper advances meaningful recommendations to address

the challenges associated with pension administration in Nigeria in order to arrest retirement anxiety and apprehension on the part of prospective retirees who are actively engaged especially in the public service.

## Methodology

This paper is based on desktop research. It analysed scholarly arguments on the subject matter, employing secondary data on the issue of pension administration, retirement anxieties and the policies needed to address such issues for the progress and development of the Nigerian society. Secondary data are compiled data that are now easily accessible for research purposes. It is acceptable in social research and allows for flexibility in its utilisation. However, systematic procedure and evaluation must be guided (Johnston, 2014).

## Crisis Theory of Retirement

The Crisis Theory of Retirement points to the undesirable situation some retirees find themselves that tends to negatively impact on their lives (Maisamari, 2004). It is a reality Ogunbameru and Adesina (2000:6-21) opines, that most working people spend a greater part of their normal day at work when all the hours are put together. These people live a work conditioned life. Work affects social life and has effect on leisure and happiness, health and wellbeing of individuals. It affects living patterns, housing, clothing, food, education of children, and overall socio-psychological wellbeing of individuals. All these are often enjoyed while at work by individuals and their families. At the end of working life however, individuals are expected to retire and start a more private life in retirement (Nweke, 2016; Doyle, 2019).

Retirement is often seen as a critical point in the life of an individual worker as a result of psychological, social crises

and contradictions that life at this stage is subjected to Oparanma (2011; Igbo and Awopetu, 2012; Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan, 2015). The average income falls below the monthly income upon retirement (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000). The issue of concern for instance is: how does a person who has been managing 100% of monthly income cope with 30% reduction upon retirement? With reduced income, some retirees have to take care of their accommodation, transportation, health and medical care which hitherto were enjoyed freely or subsidised while the individual was in active service. With all these tasks before the retiree in the face of reduced income, and of absence of retirement counselling and psychological preparation, the health of the retiree particularly those in the advanced age category begins to wane; life opportunities begin to fall and overall activities of the retiree begin to deteriorate (Maisamari, 2004; Egwenu and Omede, 2019; Adejare et al, 2019). Where gratuity and pensions are not paid for, as literature reveals an average of three years, the retiree becomes helpless and finds himself in a state of crisis (Ogunbameru, 2011; Adeniji et al, 2017; Adetunde, 2017). Without the support of family members, the situation of the retiree could be described as nothing but that of crisis of unimaginable dimension that could even result to serious health complications and in some cases, sudden death (Garba and Mamman, 2014; Egwenu and Omede, 2019). Consequently, retirement is viewed from this dimension as a crisis situation. The Counseling Association of Nigeria, at its 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference extensively deliberated on the need for retirement counseling of retirees as a panacea for preparing them psychologically and socially for the reality of a new life in retirement. This will enable them cope with the challenges of that stage of life when it eventually sets in. Retirement is a reality that cannot be wished away hence, the need to be fully aware and prepared

ahead becomes imperative (see Ker, B.O. (ed.), Conference Proceedings of the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria, 2005).

The Crisis Theory suitably explains the situation in Nigeria particularly with reference to the public service where the high caliber of staff enjoy a lot of paraphernalia of office - official cars, drivers, quarters, gardener, stewards, free health and medical facilities, and other benefits while in active service. Consequent upon retirement, all these benefits are lost to the retiree as he/she has to vacate the serene environment of the Government Reserved Area (GRA) in which he has lived for many years to another environment where he could afford to build his own house. The retiree is also faced with the delay of about three years in getting gratuities paid (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000). The problem that could be thought about is how easy it would be for the retiree to survive in the face of family challenges and social environment. For instance, the Ogun State government paid primary school teachers who retired before 1991 an accrued increment of pension (Pension Nigeria, Pension News, 24, September, 2019). These are arrears that were due to them several years before it was eventually paid. The question to ask is: how many among these retirees were alive to collect these arrears? The Crisis Theory not only explains the conditions of retirement and pension in Nigeria that necessitated the Pension Reform Act of 2004, but also the deficiencies of pension administration in the country and the resultant effects.

## Literature Review

### Defining Retirement

Retirement is a world-wide phenomenon, it a major event which occurs in the life of every worker. It is certain to take place and happens for different reasons.

The first reason could be as a result of old age (Ode, 2004); the ageing population has to be allowed to leave service to enable the young employees to be recruited. This would give room for the old employee to experience some level of rest and the young ones to gain employment. It is also believed that retiring the older workers would lead to enhanced efficiency and productivity in the work place (Egwenu and Omede, 2019). To this extent, both the government and other private employers restrict working age. According to Onukwu (2017:148), retirement is defined as giving up or being caused to give up one's employment on reaching pensionable age. The cause of the detachment from work may not only be due to old age but also poor health, social pressure or apathy (Abdulazeez, 2015).

The word retirement does not lend itself to a simple definition. It not only means different things under different contexts but also presents different experiences for different people (Yunusa, 2013). For Adejare et al. (2019:300), retirement indicates the end of an individual's work phase of life and the beginning of a new one. This period comes with overwhelming challenges if such individual has not well prepared for it. Igbo and Awopetu (2012:571) opine that retirement is the formal disengagement from an employment. Retirement has been defined as "a state of being withdrawn from business, public life or active service" (Yunusa, 2013:53). Vordzorgbe et al (2018:89) observe that retirement affects the living standard of the worker who manages to achieve the status of a retiree. For Ogunbameru and Adesina (2000:1), retirement is "a situation in which an individual who has been working for a period of time voluntarily gives up his job or is forced to give up his job, after serving for at least an officially defined number of years which qualify him/her for pension and/or gratuity".

Retirement can be categorised into

three types namely: voluntary or self-retirement, compulsory or forced retirement and mandatory retirement. In voluntary or self-retirement, it is the individual that willingly decides to withdraw from formal employment, as such, the decision to retire comes from the employee and not the employer (Ode, 2004; Maisamari, 2004; Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan, 2015). It is usually a form of early retirement and the reason for retirement is best known to the individual (Ode, 2004). In compulsory or forced retirement, the employee has no choice whether to accept or reject to retire. Retirement is decided by the employer against the expectation of the employee concerned (Maisamari, 2004). This type of retirement is prevalent in private and public establishments. According to Ode (2004:4), the reasons for retirement might include "decreasing inefficiency of the individual, old age; prolonged ill health, indiscipline or the need to reduce the workforce as a result of economic recession". Mandatory retirement occurs when the employee has attained the maximum age of retirement or years of service (60 years for civil servant, 70 years for judges and lecturers in Nigeria) or that the individual has put in the maximum number of years (35 years in most cases) (Onukwu, 2017; Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan, 2015).

Oparanma (2011); Igbo and Awopetu (2012), Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan (2015) as well as other scholars emphasise that one of the major challenges that confronts the individual worker throughout his/her working life is life after retirement. This is because life after retirement brings with it several challenges that workers need to prepare adequately psychologically, socially and financially for this stage in life before it happens (Ode, 2004). The fact that it happens at old age, makes health also an important consideration (Oparanma, 2011). Another challenge is that the

financial capacity of the retiree is affected (Vordzorgbe et al, 2018). Retirement brings about changes which also affect the activities and social relationships of the retiree (Ode, 2004). For some individuals who have made adequate plans for life after retirement, it is viewed positively, but for those who failed to plan for retirement during their active working lives, it could produce feelings of anxiety (Igbo and Awopetu, 2012; Yunusa, 2013; Vordzorgbe et al, 2018:89). For the latter category of retirees particularly in Nigeria, retirement is not a pleasant experience because of the political and economic factors associated with pension administration in Nigeria. These factors have made retirement in Nigeria to be a cause for concern not only for the retiree but for those who are nearing retirement (Yunusa, 2013; Egweni and Omede, 2019).

Scholars have observed that most workers in Nigeria in the past did not plan ahead for their retirement. However, with the failures experienced in the public sector pension schemes, workers are beginning to appreciate the need to plan as to how to manage their lives in retirement (Oparanma, 2011; Adetunde, 2017; Adejare et al, 2019). Igbo and Awopetu (2012:571) note that irrespective of the type of retirement one enters into, it often seem that the workers are never prepared for it. This leads to pre-retirement anxiety. Thus, in their study *Pre-retirement anxiety among primary school teachers*, they investigated the strategies for curbing pre-retirement anxiety among primary school teachers in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. Similar studies have found that the challenges experienced in post-retirement periods are mainly as a result of lack of planning and the consequences of pre-retirement anxiety (Osborne, 2012; Nweke, 2016; Vordzorgbe et al, 2018; Opeyemi, 2019; Adejare et al, 2019)

## Retirement Anxiety

Felman (2020)'s article, *Anxiety, overview, symptoms, causes and treatments* which featured in the Newsletter, *MedicalNewsToday*, shows that anxiety is a normal and often healthy emotion which however might become a medical disorder when a person regularly feels disproportionate levels of anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry and uneasiness, usually an over-reaction to an impending situation (Vordzorgbe et al, 2018). It is not a pleasant feeling as it is associated with tension and apprehension (Petters and Uwe, 2015). It is however different from fear. While fear is a response to a clear or present danger, anxiety, according to Adejare, et al (2019:301) is often a response to an undefined or unknown threat which may stem from feeling of insecurity. Pre-retirement anxiety involves fear that usually results from impending retirement (Vordzorgbe et al, 2018:90; Adejare et al, 2019:302). Oluseyi and Olufemi (2015:139) on their own part, observe that pre-retirement anxiety is characterised by both positive and negative emotions. This is dependent on how the individual worker views his/her pre-retirement preparation, whether adequate or otherwise. It is also an outcome of how sure the worker who is nearing retirement is certain that his/her employer will be able and consistent in meeting the post-retirement needs.

Retirement anxiety could occur when a worker experiences psychological and emotional instability as a result of thoughts weighing on his or her impending retirement. Uncertainties associated with lack of personal planning for retirement period and perceived hardship associated with lack of work could result in retirement anxieties (Baba, Garba and Zakariyah 2015). From these definitions, retirement anxieties are cause-effect of uncertainties surrounding the disengagement of employee from formal

work life. So many employees are used to the usual everyday working arrangement and when the benefits and reward that comes from formal employment with which they have managed and sustained their lives are about to be taken away from them, many problems bother them (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000). This includes the question of how do I make things work? How do I survive? How do I manage several other social-family responsibilities which I have catered for all the years while in active service? The thoughts of these questions and similar issues could lead to anxieties that might culminate into health problems (Asiedu, Assoah and Wilson, 2018). Pre-retirement anxieties could be caused by several factors.

Scholars have observed that the causes of retirement anxiety for the pre-retiree worker has much to do with the issue of lack of planning (Ode, 2004; Oparanma, 2011; Vordzorgbe et al, 2018). Osborne (2012), Egweni and Omede (2019), Ode (2004) and others state that experience have shown that due to inadequate planning and preparation, some retirees found themselves in a state of boredom; he/she could be confronted with stress due to financial problems (Oguzor, Adebola and Opara, 2011), loss of income, poor saving culture and lack of investment (Igbo and Awopetu, 2012; Arogundade, 2016). The retiree could experience emotional anxiety arising from total loss of status, disconnection from relations, friends, and colleagues in terms of contact and social life; low self-esteem and feeling of dissatisfaction (Egweni and Omede, 2019; Osborne, 2012). Retirement anxiety could also be caused by the issue of non-payment of gratuity and pension and associated problems which include the stress experienced during travels to receive retirement benefits and the death of a family member as a result of such problems (Oguzor, Adebola and Opara, 2011; Adetunde et al, 2016; Opeyemi,

2019). In essence, retirement directly affects the income, residence, standard of living, family structure and the relationship with extended members of the family, friends and colleagues.

It is important to note that anxiety naturally has its effect on the human body system (Petters and Uwe, 2015; Felman, 2020). This suffices for retirement anxiety as well. The effects of retirement anxiety could be economic, psychological and emotional (Adejare et al, 2019). Ode (2004:5-6) explains that for retirement that has not been planned for, or for the retirees who retired compulsorily, they could experience associated psychological and emotional disorders such as: moodiness, unstable behaviour, heart disease and in some cases premature death. In similar vein, Baba, Garba and Zakariyah (2015:23-26) highlighted some of the psycho-social effects of pre-retirement anxieties on employees. Among these are: anger, anxiety disorder, depression and substance abuse. For voluntary retirees, however, retirement helps to remove physical, mental and emotional pressure of a routine job (Adejare et al, 2019). For other retirees, retirement would give them the opportunity to interact more effectively with family members, relatives and friends, or focus more on leisure time activities (Ode, 2004). This, according to Ogunbameru (2017), is quite easy for those who are financially able to afford them. Osborne (2012:45) in his paper titled *Psychological effects of the transition to retirement*, outlines the following effects of retirement anxiety: "partial identity disruption, decision paralysis, diminished self-trust, experience of a post-retirement void, the search for meaningful engagement in society, the confluence of aging and retirement, death anxiety, the critical nurturing of social relationships and self-actualisation".

There are various ways through which an employee could manage his period

of retirement even before the retirement period comes. When retirement is planned for, an employee will sufficiently cope with the conditions as modalities would have been put in place for social absorption of what could be retirement shock. Some of the ways through which retirement period can be planned for, as highlighted by Ali (2014:115-117) are: Equipping oneself and engage in entrepreneurial/small scale business activities; planning for a home to retire in; having a retirement financial plan; participation in community or religious social activities; and having a Retirement Health Scheme. Igbo and Awopetu's (2012:574) study found savings and investments, developing an enlarged network as part of coping strategies in post-retirement period. Instructively, two salient issues in literature on coping strategies for retirement is that of Retirement planning and retirement counselling (Ogunbameru, 2011; Oparanma, 2011; Nyong and Duze, 2011; Oguzor, Adebola and Opara, 2011; Igbo and Awopetu, 2012; Baba, Garba and Zakariyah, 2015; Adejare et al, 2019). For Oparanma (2011:4), retirement planning as the name implies comprises of all activities from an individual's first employment up to last and after his/her retirement relating to ensuring the needs of life. It entails the preparation to be made by a worker towards the time he/she will stop formal work (Egong, Akpama and Usani 2004). According to Ogunbameru (2011:12), pre-retirement planning programmes are known by different names: retirement planning, pre-retirement education, pre-retirement counselling and preparation for retirement. Retirement planning has become expedient for workers in Nigeria as a result of the challenges associated with pension administration.

We now turn our attention in the next section of this paper to examine the subject matter of pension administration and employee' retirement anxieties in Nigeria.

This is so because up until now, formal pension is the major source of income in retirement.

### **Pension and Pension Administration**

Defined simply, pension is the amount kept aside for a retiree. It is a regular monthly payment which is received by a person who has retired for the duration of his life (Onukwu, 2017). Pension is a fixed sum to be paid regularly to a person, typically following retirement from service either based on ill-health, having reached the retirement age or decided to disengage from service before his/her retirement date (Eme, Uche and Uche, 2014). Adeniji et al (2017:320) defines pension as the sum of annuity paid periodically, usually monthly to an employee who retires from work having reached a specified age limit usually 60 years or 35 years of active service. A pension, according to Ayegba, James and Odoh (2013:98) is a contract for a fixed sum agreed to be paid to a retiree at some given point in time either annually or monthly. It is most times confused with severance pay which is quite different. Severance pay is a lump sum that is paid at once for a worker while pension is paid on an instalmental bases, usually for life. For this reason, there are different pension packages that workers could be placed on depending on their contractual agreement. A pension plan made for the benefit of employees is known as occupational or employer pension plan - it is the employers provision for employees after-work life (Gough and Hick, 2009). Occupational pension scheme is designed to provide employees of an organisation with a means of security on retirement so that such employees will continue to enjoy a living standard consistent with that which they enjoyed while in employment (Fapohunda, 2013).

Writing on *The pension system and retirement planning in Nigeria*, Fapohunda

(2013:25-26) observes that pension is one of the indispensable form of employees' solid benefits which has positive impact on employee discipline, loyalty and willingness to remain in the service of an employer. Pension is a key motivator to increased productivity as it inspires the employee on the job and also attracts his/her commitment to the attainment of job goals and concern for the survival of the organisation (Nyong and Duze, 2011; Fapohunda, 2013; Almeida and Boivie, 2018). Beyond this, pension is a factor that has been linked with poverty reduction among the aged and their households (Momo, Andoh and Asuming, 2019). It plays a very important role in defining the poverty level of a country (Abada and Okuma, 2017). In addition, different countries both developed and developing have underlined the importance of sound pensions system in economic prosperity (Binuomoyo, 2010). As Momo, Andoh and Asuming (2019:8) opine, pensions are an aspect of social protection programmes that fall directly under social insurance programmes. Pension is a form of social security which provides something for the employee to fall back on after retirement (Binuomoyo, 2010; Adeniji et al, 2017). Retirement is viewed in this regard as a mark of honor and appreciation from a person's employers and such retirees are rewarded with retirement benefits one of which is pension (Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan, 2015). As such, the importance of pension, in the life of a worker (for those currently in service and nearing retirement and those who have retired) cannot be over-emphasised (Nweke, 2014). Pensions, if not well implemented portends negative consequences not only for the afore-mentioned category of workers but the nation as well.

Pension administration is the "totality of plans, procedures and legal processes of securing and setting aside of funds to meet the social obligation of care which employers

owe their employees on retirements or in case of death (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000:29). According to Fapohunda (2013:26), pension administration comprises of five basic elements: "flexibility, amount of benefit, finance, contribution to cost of pension and gratuity and death benefits". Pensions come with some risks which may happen in the short or long term and the management of pension poses a major challenge to government, the active employees and retirees alike, in terms of contribution and payment (Opeyemi, 2019). The main issue relates to management of the funds (Binuomoyo, 2010) and in developing countries like Nigeria, pension administration is bedeviled with series of political, social, economic factors. Many of these have been associated with the issue of governance and political leadership, corruption and misappropriation of funds, among others.

### **History of Pension Administration System in Nigeria**

Nigeria being a British colony before the attainment of independence in 1960 adopted almost every phase of its social and political lifestyle from the British system including the pension administration programme at the onset of its public organisations and establishments. Consequently, Nigeria's pension administration is modelled in lined with the British style and structure. Pension system was introduced into Nigeria by the Colonial Administration and the first legislative document was the Pension Ordinance of 1951 which was back dated to have been effective since January 1946 (Adeniji et al, 2017). The ordinance was the first to make provision for pensions and gratuity to be paid to public servants. Nwanna and Ogbonna (2019:28) observe that the Pension Ordinance of 1946 provided important information about the public sector pension scheme ranging



from the identification of who a Native Administration Servant is, the nature of benefits (pensions and gratuity) and eligibility conditions. Pension and gratuity were made non-contributory benefits for all public employees and like Tokunboh (1998:25) stated, “the maximum rate of pension was put at two thirds of an employee’s terminal emolument. Gratuity was calculated at the rate not exceeding one-eighth of a month’s emolument for each completed month of public service”. As a follow up to this system, the National Provident Fund (NPF) was established in 1961 as the first legislative enactment to attend to pension matters of private sector employees in Nigeria. The NPF became the foremost social protection scheme for the non-pensionable private sector employees in Nigeria (Bassey, Etim and Asinya, 2008; Nwanna and Ogbonna, 2019). The scheme provided for lump sum payment (Adeniji et al, 2017). After the Nigeria Pension Fund legislation, there were other pension legislations like the Armed Forces Pension Acts (1974), Pension Act of Judges (1985), and the Police Pension Schemes (1976), Local government Staff Pension Board (1987) which was to cover and take care of pension issues among local government employees (Owojori, 2008; Adeniji et al, 2017).

Furthermore, in the year 1993, National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) scheme was established through the Decree No. 73 of 1993 to serve as replacement for the National Provident Fund from 1994 with attention on catering for employees in private sector of the economy (Adeniji et al, 2017). Even so, in 1997 various parastatals were allowed to establish their own personal pension schemes for their staff and also appoint the board of trustees to administer their pension plans as agreed in their standard trust deed and the office of the Head of Service of the Federation. Prior to this period, the Nigeria Breweries had the first private sector pension scheme

in 1954 and followed by the United African Company (UAC) scheme in 1957. The pension schemes are divided into the defined contributory pension plan and the defined benefits plan. The latter happens to be the previous scheme which was in use before its challenges that led to the new pension scheme which is the defined contributory (Ogunbameru and Adesina, 2000; Owojori, 2008; Ayegba, James and Odoh, 2013).

The major problem of the pension fund administration in Nigeria was the non-payment or delay in the payment of pension and gratuity by the Federal and State governments to their retired employees (Udofot, 2012). As a result of government non-payment or delay in the payment, pension fund matters became a thorny issue as millions of retired Nigerian workers could not get their pension and gratuity which were their main source of living (Adeniji et al, 2017; Adebayo and Dada, 2012). All of these problems became characteristic of the pension scheme in Nigeria which had to be addressed. Some of the problems of the old pension scheme were demographic challenges, funding of outstanding pensions and gratuities, corruption, administrative bottle necks, among others (Adebayo and Dada, 2012; Udofot, 2012; Olanrewaju, 2013; Onukwu, 2017). Hence, these problems and the need to remedy the situation culminated into the Pension Act of 2004 enacted during the period of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The Pension Act 2004, established a compulsory contributory pension scheme for all categories of workers in the federal, public service, Federal Capital Territory and in private sector. The scheme is a marked departure from Pay-as-you-go defined benefit scheme that existed in the public sector (Owojori, 2008). The Pension Reforms Act (PRA) of 2004 was amended in 2014 and has become the most recent legislation of the Federal Government of Nigeria that is geared towards reforming

and creating a new lease of life for retirees whose provisions cover employees in the public and private sectors (Olanrewaju, 2013; Pricewaterhousecoopers Limited, 2016). The Pension Reform Act, 2004, was enacted with the aim of addressing the difficulties encountered by retirees under the old pension schemes. The new scheme is regulated and supervised by the National Pension Commission which has the power to formulate, direct and oversee the overall policy on pension matters in Nigeria (Olanrewaju, 2013; Nwanna and Ogbonna, 2019).

Beyond the problems identified with the old pension scheme in Nigeria, different studies have identified several challenges associated with the new contributory pension scheme since its implementation (Fapohunda, 2013; Yunusa, 2013; Eme, Uche and Uche, 2014; Onukwu, 2017; Egweni and Omede, 2019). Yunusa (2013) examined retirement challenges and management strategies among retired civil servants in Kogi State and noted that pensioners face several challenges after retirement that have consequential effects on their socio-economic and physiological well-being. Abdulazeez (2015:5), while identifying the challenges of the new pension scheme found that the new scheme may not necessarily translate into economics security for the retired. Adetunde et al (2016:468) in their paper *Socio-economic adjustment among retired civil servants of Kwara and Lagos States: A theoretical analysis* observed that "corruption and the depth of embezzlement of pensioners' gratuities and pension benefits in the past decades are outrageous". The office handling pension (PenCOM) has been found to be corrupt (Ogunbameru, 2011:23). Onukwu (2017) examined the challenges of implementing the contributory pension scheme in public universities in Nigeria. These include non-remittance of pension funds by government, non-compliance by many state universities to the

contributory scheme, problems encountered by university retired employees in accessing retirement benefits and perception of staff to the scheme among others.

### **Pension administration and retirement anxiety in Nigeria: The governance deficiencies**

While pension is supposed to provide a resounding life for workers after they have dedicated most of their active years in the service an organisation, this has not been the experience as evidenced in Nigeria. The challenges associated with addressing the problems of retirees are multi-dimensional. According to Egong, Akpama and Usani (2004:24), these problems range from: inability of governments to pay entitlements to the retired persons, lack of accurate data about their workers, dishonesty of pension workers through falsification of pension figures, the 'ghost pensioners syndrome' and embezzlement of pension funds". Other issues outlined by Adetunde (2017) include: "improper management of pension funds by the Pension Boards, poor record keeping, lack of proper supervision of the pension managers and the misappropriation of pension funds by successive governments". The major problem of non-payment or delay in the payments of pension have left many retired Nigerian workers in poverty. Others look miserable and frustrated (Ogunbameru, 2011). The most affected are employees in the Nigerian public sector who after several years of retirement are still unable to get their required benefits while many even die without being able to access the reward of their labour (Adebayo and Dada, 2012; Adeniji et al, 2017). There are also cases of ex-military employees encamping in major Nigerian cities for pension related payments (Udofot, 2012).

This paper has emphasised that the various challenges that confront the pension schemes in Nigeria and the resultant effect

on the life of retirees could lead to pre-retirement anxieties for public workers who are yet to retire but are close to the retirement age to the extent of impacting negatively on employee loyalty and organisational productivity (Fapohunda, 2013; Essien and Akuma, 2014; Abdulazeez, 2015; Adetunde, et al, 2016). Some workers who are reluctant to retire would therefore engage in dishonest practices to falsify their record of service such as age and work experience to remain in employment (Egong, Akpama and Usani, 2004; Nweke, 2014; 2016). The outcome of retirement anxieties was evident in literature and the situation could be worse off after working life. Hence, the issue of retirement for the typical Nigerian worker is a bitter pill and a dreadful phenomenon, an awaiting doom and a route to poverty (Egong, Akpama and Usani, 2004), while life after retirement is viewed to be miserable and undesirable for the affected employees (Opeyemi, 2019; Egwenu and Omede, 2019; Yunusa, 2013). These difficulties also makes pre-retirement planning a complicated issue and many retirees in Nigeria have failed to plan for the post-retirement period (Egwenu and Omede, 2019; Garba and Mamman, 2014). While retirement planning as an exercise is fraught with many challenges globally (Oparanma, 2011), several difficulties confront individual employees in Nigeria which affect planning for post-retirement period. These include: the level of resources of individuals which affects personal savings (Dauda, Tolos and Ibrahim, 2017); huge family and dependants (Oparanma, 2011); employee's belief in pension; laxity; lack of exposure to pre-retirement education; apathy and fear of failure; procrastination (Ogunbameru, 2011); and austere economic policies (Yunusa, 2013). Notwithstanding, Ogunbameru (2011:8) emphasised that lack of planning can complicate issues for a retiree in Nigeria where pension is not only inadequate, but not paid as at when due.

Poor pension administration by the government for public sector employees has cost Nigeria a lot of losses in more subtle ways, for instance, in terms of current employees' attitudes to work, employee loyalty and the resultant effect on work place goal attainment ( Fapohunda, 2013; Essien and Akuma, 2014; Abdulazeez, 2015; Adetunde, et al, 2016). It also takes away from the country, the suggestions and wise counsels that the aged could offer with regards to development. Even so, Ogunbameru (2011:1) cautions that, "the Nigerian population is aging and life expectancy is increasing, leading to a swell of retirees, but quite unfortunately, the social source of social security benefits is not stable". This is a disturbing scenario. More so, the Nigerian state, which ideally should provide the basic facilities for quality of life of its citizens and the enabling environment for the realisation of individuals' potentials is weak in performing its responsibilities (Ikejiaku, 2009). The country is rich in natural and material resources, yet majority of its citizens wallow in abject poverty (NBS, 2018); unemployment and illiteracy are persistent socio-economic problems especially among the youths (Onapajo and Uzodike, 2017); healthcare facilities are out of reach of the majority; housing is a far cry from the desire of many (AU/APRM, 2009:274-318). Nigeria is confronted with the Niger Delta crisis; inequality (the widening gap between the rich and the poor); the issue of providing for the needs of its growing population, lack of infrastructures, among other issues (Egbefo, 2015; Evans and Kelikume, 2019). There are political problems -- democratic deficiencies, poor governance and mal-administration, pervasive corruption, misappropriation and embezzlement of funds by public officers, ineffective and inefficiency in public service delivery among others (AU/APRM, 2009). This has led to a weak

political culture, lack of citizens' confidence and trust in the activities of government in the public realm.

With the persisting political and socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, it is not surprising that pension administration is confronted with several bottlenecks. The more concerning aspect of this problem is that most of the political office holders have secured source of retirement that will be enjoyed throughout their lifetime -- compensation plans that span through their active service period and even thereafter while those of the civil servants are difficult to pay (Nations Encyclopedia – Nigeria, 2020). This is just one of the manifestations of Nigeria's administrative ineptitude with negative consequences on performance and service delivery. It may well account for inefficiency of government establishments and parastatals that have been liquidated, sold or have become moribund due to concerns of the employees about the future especially the management staff cadre who are critical to survival of the organisation (Jerome, 2008). The following newspaper reports reveal much about the governance issues raised in this paper:

Akutu, G. 2018. "Life pension for governors, deputies – An aberration". The Guardian Sunday Magazine, 28 January.

Iredia, T. 2019. "Bogus life pensions to public officers for what?" Vanguard Newspaper, 12 May.

Ogundele, K. 2019. "Burden of life pensions for political office holders on wobbling economy", Punch Newspaper, 5 May.

Ogunlesi, K. 2019. "Lawyers hail court verdict on pension for political office holders" – The Guardian Newspaper, 21 June.

Young, V. 2019. "Stoppage of pension for political office holders: Why we're excited

with court's ruling – pensioners". Vanguard Newspaper, 13 August.

Ehiagbe, G. 2019. "Untold hardship of old retirees over unpaid pension". The Guardian Newspaper, 29 October.

Daily Trust Newspaper, 2019. "Ex-governors receive millions, as pensioners groan under unpaid arrears". 29 November.

Olaniyi, S. 2020. "Federal civil service retirees demand harmonised, increased pensions", The Guardian, Newspaper, 21 January.

Olayinka, W. 2020. "Nation forgotten – Nigeria's neglected pensioners", 13 March, *Our Vision* 2020, 4(2), February/March 2020.

Nwezeh, K. 2020. "No date yet for payment of arrears of the military pension, says board" – ThisDay Newspaper, 9 July, 2020.

Bearing all these in mind, it is expedient for employees to realise that having a fulfilling life in post-retirement period depends on their preparedness and not on governmental institutions. It is imperative to put in place various coping strategies to enjoy life in retirement in a 'failing' state like Nigeria. By so doing, the negative effects of the pre and post retirement periods would have been averted for a better healthy life. The following statement made by Ogunbameru (2011:23) during his Inaugural Lecture titled *Retire Retirement through Effective Planning* suffices in this respect:

....Let me spend just one minute to appeal to you not to rely too much on pension. Nigerians have for years been unfortunate with what I call "Do nothing governments". What we are fed with are platitudes and rhetoric without action when it comes to taking care of retirees in this country.

And we read on daily basis the bizarre experiences of retirees who wither slumped or died on queues when they go for physical verification to collect their peanuts called pensions at times. Some even go blind, paralysed or go mental because their benefits take years to mature. It is not an overstatement to say that in Nigeria today, pension has become a *globin*...

## Conclusion

The several challenges to effective pension administration system in Nigeria have made it difficult for retirees to obtain their retirement benefits as at when due and this paper has shown that delayed and irregular pension leads to pre-retirement anxieties among workers. Presently, pre-retirement anxiety is an increasing phenomenon among workers because of the continuing thought of what their after working life would be, having noticed the pitiable conditions experienced by a number of current retirees. Working and intending retirees are experiencing anxieties on what their retirement life would be like due to their loss of trust in government retirement plans. The dangers in retirement anxieties include psycho-social abnormalities like anger, substance abuse, depression and anxiety disorder which all have health implications. The paper thus examined the related concepts of retirement, pre-retirement anxiety, pension and pension administration in Nigeria with emphasis on the deficiencies of the old and new pension schemes in the country. It emphasised that while the payment of pensions is the way an employer caters for the retirement needs of workers and as such is expected to make retirement a pleasant experience for workers, reverse is the case in Nigeria where retirement is considered a bitter pill, undesirable and frustrating for the Nigerian worker. This is due to the persisting political and socio-

economic deficiencies associated with pension administration in the country.

Despite the changes in retirement plans from defined benefits to the defined contributory pension scheme, there are still concerns and apprehensions by workers especially in public service on the extent to which the government will be committed to the guiding principles of the contributory pension scheme without sudden policy changes. In the light of regular inconsistencies that have characterised government programmes in Nigeria and in order for employees to live a relatively comfortable life in retirement, pre-retirement planning has become imperative. Effective pre-retirement planning will achieve its objectives if it enables individuals to put in place realistic and adequate measures that will not only prepare them for their period of retirement but also enable them live well. Our conclusion is that the role of the elderly in the society cannot be over-emphasised; the society benefits from the wealth of experience of retirees, as such, it necessary to take care of this category of individuals for them to live well and be encouraged to contribute to Nigeria's socio-economic progress and development.

## Recommendations

Pension administration and its management has become an important aspect of industrial relations and human resource management discourses in recent times due to the weaknesses of governments at different levels in handling pension schemes for employee's retirement welfare and wellbeing. Many scholars and professionals have identified critical issues bothering on pension -- the methods and techniques, challenges, success stories and failures, and have proffered recommendations for way forward in order to correct the mistakes of the past. This paper furthers the following recommendations:

1. Nigerian political leaders and policy makers should accord priority to formulating and implementing social policies which take into consideration the welfare of the people: This includes social security schemes apart from formal pension for retirees, and social security schemes for the unemployed, aged and disabled people who arguably, form part of the dependents of both the retiree and would be-retiree. This would build trust in the heart of the people concerning the activities of government and will also improve the financial savings of the Nigerian worker.

2. Addressing the challenges to effective pension administration: As an urgent measure to improve the management of pension in the country, the government should put in place a machinery to review all the recurring problems both on their own part and those of the retirees. This should also be with a view to making the process of pension administration more understandable and less cumbersome and evaluating to see how information and communication technologies could be employed to handle technical hitches.

3. Education for employees by employers on the subject matter of retirement planning and pension administration including retirement counseling:

This is essential in sensitising them on the methods and processes of; the protection which they stand to enjoy and the safety measures they could take to cater for different interests in post-retirement period. This form of education should be in the form of continuous in-service trainings, Workshops and Seminars.

4. Effective regulatory framework should be put in place to ensure transparency: The Nigerian government as the largest employer of labour should ensure the transparency of the pension administration process in achieving focused objectives. Sincere commitment in terms of political will, putting in place practical

strategies and committing financial, material and manpower resources to the implementation of policies is strongly recommended. The problem with public policies in Nigeria has always been in the area of implementation. As such, with sincere efforts at implementing pension related policies effectively, this would build confidence in the minds of the workers and reduce the negative orientations about retirement in Nigeria.

5. The imperative of good governance, democracy and effective leadership in Nigeria: Governments are put in place in order to attend to the needs of the citizenry, resolve conflicts and chart the direction for development. However, the priorities and policies of governments can themselves amount to serious problems for citizens and may negatively affect socio-economic development. Nigeria is in dire need of effective political leadership that will promote good governance both at the state and local levels as the success or failure of any group, organisation or society hinges on leadership. The concept 'good governance' has been variously defined by scholars as embodying several positive characteristics. Good governance, according to Srivastava (2009) is linked with "efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. It is equivalent to purposive and development-oriented administration that is committed to improvement in the quality of life of the people". Where good governance exists, government is responsive, recognising the role of individuals as instruments of change and as such, promotes people-centred policies.

6. Addressing issues of corruption and misappropriation of funds

Tackling head on the issues of corruption and misappropriation of funds among other bottlenecks by the political leadership is important. These problems have continuously hindered Nigeria's socio-economic development.

6. Workers can avoid retirement anxieties in the following ways: Engaging in entrepreneurial activities, small scale farming, having small scale businesses, establishing a personal retirement plan that

will involve financial and health schemes, investing in assets and financial instruments, also participating in religious and social activities because they need a great deal of social relations as they grow older.

## REFERENCES

- Abada, U.D. and Okuma, C.N. 2017. "Effect of pension reforms on poverty reduction in Nigeria". *Global Journal of Applied Management and Social Sciences* (GOJAMSS), **14**, September, 73-79.
- Abdulazeez, N. 2015. "Pension scheme in Nigeria: History, problems and prospects". *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, Arab JK. Bus Management Rev.* 5(2), 17 March.
- Adebayo, A.I. and Dada, R. 2012. "Pension crisis in Nigeria: Causes and solutions". *IOSR Journal of Applied Chemistry* (IOSR-JAC), 3(2). November-December. 30-32.
- Adejare, T.A., Dalhatu, H., Ayelabowo, O.A. and Yusuf, M. 2019. "Retirement anxiety, on psychosocial issues and social adjustment and counselling needs among the potential retirees". *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* (IJRISS), 111(1).
- Adejumobi, S. (2009), "Popular participation and Africa's development agenda: Projecting a citizen-based United States of Africa". *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 36(3): 403-422.
- Adeniji, A.A, Akinnusi, D.M., Falola, H.O. and Ohunakin, F. 2017. "Administration of retirement benefits in Nigeria: Periscoping the effect on retirees". *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15(15): 319-333.
- Adetunde, C.O., Imhonopi, D., George, T.O. and Derby, N.C. 2016. "Socio-economic adjustment among retired civil servants of Kwara and Lagos States: A theoretical analysis". Presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on African Development Issues (CU-ICADI 2016). Published by Covenant University Press.
- Adetunde, C.O. 2017. "Socio-economic adjustment of retired civil servants in Kwara and Lagos States, Nigeria: A qualitative study". A PhD Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology, College of Business and Social Sciences, Covenant University.
- Akutu, G. 2018. "Life pension for governors, deputies – An aberration", *The Guardian Sunday Magazine*. 28 January.
- Ali, M. 2014. "Managing post-retirement conditions in Nigeria", *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa*, 2(2): 110-121.
- Almeida, B. and Boivie, I. 2018. "Recruitment and retention in the public sector: The role of pensions". 2018 Annual Meeting Proceedings 1947- Present, Labour and Employment Relations Association (LERA) Proceedings of the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting.
- Amune, J.B., Aidenojie, E.O. and Obinyan, O.O. 2015. "Management of life after retirement and its implication on retired academic Librarians in Edo State, Nigeria". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(10).
- Arogundade, O.T. 2016. "A psychological appraisal of pre-retirement anxiety among some selected workers in Lagos Metropolis". *Studies in Sociology of Science*, 7(5).
- Asiedu, V.A., Assoah, S.K. and Wilson, K.N. 2018. "Managing pre-retirement anxiety among teachers in Asunafo South District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana". *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, 4(2): 11-23.

- AU/APRM, 2009. *APRM Country Review Report No. 8*. Federal Republic of Nigeria. African Union/African Peer Review Mechanism.
- Ayegba, O., James, I. and Odoh, L. 2013. "An evaluation of pension administration in Nigeria". *British Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 15(11): 97-108.
- Baba, M.M. Garba, H.K. and Zakariyah, A.A. 2015. "Pre-retirement anxiety among Nigerian public servants: Counseling intervention strategies for mitigating effects for self-reliance and national development". *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice*, 7(2): 21-29.
- Bassey, N. E., Etim, O.U. and Asinya, F.A. 2008. "An overview of the Nigerian pension scheme from 1951 – 2004". *Global Journal of Humanities*, 7(1&2): 61-70.
- Binuomoyo, O.K. 2010. "The Nigerian pension scheme: Reform and expectations". *Pensions: An International Journal* 15: 3-10, 5 March.
- Daily Trust Newspaper, 2019. "Ex-governors receive millions, as pensioners groan under unpaid arrears". 29 November, 2019.
- Dauda, S., Tolos, H. and Ibrahim, Y. 2017. "The direct predictors of retirement planning behaviour: A study of Nigerian workers". *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*. 19(12), Ver. VI. 41-49.
- Doyle, A. 2019. "Types of employee benefits and perks". The balance careers, December, 2019. Retrieved from: [thebalancecareers.com/types-of-employee-benefits-and-perks-2060433](https://thebalancecareers.com/types-of-employee-benefits-and-perks-2060433).
- Egbefo, O.M. 2015. "Fifteen years of democracy, 1999-2014: Reflections on Nigeria's quest for national integration". *African Research Review*, AFRREV, 9(2), S/No. 371.
- Egong, A.I., Akpama, E.G. and Usani, M.O. 2005. "Counselling for retirement from service: Problems and solutions". In: B.O. Ker (ed.), Conference Proceedings for the 28th Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (COSSAN). Official publication of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. 24-33.
- Egwenu, A.S. and Omede, N.K. 2019. "Contemporary issues and entrepreneurship alternatives for managing post-retirement conditions in Nigeria". *International Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 5(3).
- Ehiagbe, G. 2019. "Untold hardship of old retirees over unpaid pension". The Guardian Newspaper, 29 October.
- Eme, O.I., Uche, O.A. and Uche, I.B. 2014. "Pension Reform Act 2014 and the future of pension administration in Nigeria". *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, 4(2).
- Essien, E.B. and Akuma, M.S. 2014. "The new contributory pension scheme in Nigeria: Gleaning from past pension schemes". *IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance*, 2(5), 33- 40.
- Evans, O. and Kelikume, I. 2019. "The impact of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance on Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria". *International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences (IJMESS)*, 8(2): 58-80. Jersey City, NJ: IJMESS International Publishers.
- Fapohunda, T.M. 2013. "The pension system and retirement planning in Nigeria". *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2). Published by MCSER-CEMAS-Sapienza University of Rome.
- Felman, A. 2020. "Anxiety: Overview, symptoms, causes and treatments". Newsletter, Medical News Today. 11 January.
- Garba, A. and Mamman, J. 2014. "Retirement challenges and sustainable development in Nigeria". *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(39), [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org).
- Gough, O. and Hick, R. 2009. "Employee evaluations of occupational pensions". *Employee Relations* 31(2): 158-167.
- Igbo, H.I. and Awopetu, G. 2012. "Strategies for curbing pre-retirement anxiety among primary school teachers". *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(6), published by Institute of



- Interdisciplinary Business Research.
- Ikejiaku, B.V. 2009. "The relationship between poverty, conflict and development". *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(1): 15 – 28.
- Iredia, T. 2019. "Bogus life pensions to public officers for what?" Vanguard Newspaper, 12 May.
- Jerome, A. 2008. "Privatisation and enterprise performance in Nigeria: Case study of some privatised enterprises". AERC Research Paper 175. African Economic Research Consortium, Nairobi.
- Johnston, M.P. 2014. "Secondary data analysis: A method of which the time has come". *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries* (QQML) 3:619-626.
- Ker, B.O. (ed.), (2005). Conference Proceedings for the 28th Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (COSSAN). Official publication of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. 34-42.s
- Laski, H. (1925, 1941). *A Grammar of Politics – With a new Chapter*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Maisamari, M.N. 2005. "Retirement: Psychology, management and counselling techniques". In: B.O. Ker (ed.), Conference Proceedings for the 28th Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (COSSAN). Official publication of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. 34-42.
- Mirea, V. Naftanaila, C. and Mirea, G. 2012. "Employee benefits – Definition, role, recognition and evaluation". *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 1(5), www.hrmas.com.
- Momo, L.M., Andoh, C. and Asuming, P. 2019. "The role of pensions in poverty reduction in Ghana". *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 8(1). 11 October. 5-23.
- Mudiare, P.E.U. 2013. "Abuse of the aged in Nigeria: Elders also cry". *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3(9).
- Nations Encyclopedia – Nigeria. 2020. Working Conditions. Retrieved from: [nationsencyclopedia.com/economics/Africa/Nigeria-WORKINGCONDITIONS.html](http://nationsencyclopedia.com/economics/Africa/Nigeria-WORKINGCONDITIONS.html). Published by Advameg, Inc. (Accessed: 15 July, 2020).
- National Bureau of Statistics 2018. Computation of Human Development Indices for the UNDP Nigerian Human Development Report 2016. Abuja, Nigeria: National Bureau of Statistics.
- Nbete, A.D. 2012. "The Social Contract Theory: A model for reconstructing a true Nigerian nation-state". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(15).
- Nwanna, I.O. and Ogbonna, K.S. 2019. "Evolution of pension management in Nigeria and its importance to the economy". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS), 24(5), Ser. 1. 28-38.
- Nweke, J.O. 2014. "Assessment of the administrative challenges associated with non-contributory pension scheme in Ebonyi State, Nigeria". *International Journal of Development and Management Review*, 9(1).
- Nweke, J.O. 2016. "Pre-retirement anxieties among civil servants in Ebonyi State Nigeria on the Non-Contributory Pension Scheme". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 6(3).
- Nwezeh, K. 2020. "No date yet for payment of arrears of military pension, says board". This Day Newspaper, 9 July.
- Nyong, B.C. and Duze, C.O. 2011. "The Pension Reform Act (PRA) 2004 and retirement planning in Nigeria". *Journal of Economics and International Finance*, 3(2): 109-115.
- Ode, T. A. (2005). "Counselling for retirement and adjustment". In: B.O. Ker (ed.), Conference Proceedings for the 28th Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (COSSAN). Official publication of the Counselling Association of Nigeria. 3-11.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. and Adesina, W. (2000). *Retirement and Pension Administration: Issues and Problems*, Ibadan: Pat Mag Press.
- Ogunbameru, A.O. 2011. Retire, Retirement through Effective Planning. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at Oduduwa Hall, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, on Tuesday, 9

- August, 2011. Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited.
- Ogundele, K. 2019. "Burden of life pensions for political office holders on wobbling economy". *Punch Newspaper*, 5 May.
- Ogunlesi, L. 2019. "Lawyers hail court verdict on pension for political office holders". *The Guardian Newspaper*, 21 June.
- Oguzor, N.S., Adebola, H.E. and Opara, J.A. 2011. "Understanding stress among retirees of higher educational institutions in Nigeria". *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy* (BJSEP), 5(2).
- Olaniyi, S. 2020. "Federal civil service retirees demand harmonised, increased pensions". *The Guardian Nigeria*, 21 January.
- Olanrewaju, J.N. 2013. "Challenges of the pension system in Nigeria". Paper delivered at Workshop on Pension Schemes and Reform in Nigeria, ITC-Turin. 26 August.
- Olayinka, W. 2020. "Nation forgotten – Nigeria's neglected pensioners", 13 March, 2020. *Our Vision 2020*, 4(2), February/March 2020.
- Oluseyi, A.E. and Olufemi, O.O. 2015. "Development and validation of retirement anxiety scale for secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria". *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 7(2), published by Canadian Centre of Science and Education.
- Onapajo, H. and Uzodike, U.O. 2017. "Poverty and social violence in Africa: Nigeria as case study". AfriHeritage Research Working Paper 2017-005. Enugu: African Heritage Institution,
- Onukwu, J. 2017. "Challenges of implementing the contributory pension scheme in public universities in Nigeria". *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 9(11): 146-151.
- Oparanma, A.O. 2011. "Challenges of Nigerian civil servants retirees". *Journal of Management and Society*, 1(3): 17-28.
- Opeyemi, M.A. 2019. "Post retirement and welfare challenges in Nigeria: Issues and prospects". *Social Science Journal* 3.
- Osborne, J.W. 2012. "Psychological effects of the transition to retirement". *Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 46(1): 45-48.
- Owojori, A.A. 2008. "Nigeria: Risk management in pension fund administration in Nigeria". Adekunle Owojori and Co. 30 October.
- Pension Nigeria – Pension News, 2019. "Ogun State Government accrued gratuities and death benefits between August 2011 and June 2019, under the Transitional Pension Scheme, is N32.8 billion". Pension Nigeria. 24 September.
- Pension Reform Act 2004, PART 1, A33. 2004 Act No. 2. Federal Government of Nigeria, National Assembly, Abuja.
- Petters, J.S. and Uwe, E.A. 2015. "Entrepreneurial training and pre-retirement anxiety among public servants in Akwa Ibom State Nigeria". *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 14(1): 19-23.
- Pricewaterhousecoopers Limited, 2016. "The Nigerian industry: Securing the future". Retrieved from: [www.pwc.ng](http://www.pwc.ng). (Accessed: 15 July, 2020).
- Srivastava, M 2009. *Good Governance – Concept, Meaning and Features: A Detailed Study*. New York, USA: Social Science Research Network.
- Sule, K.O. and Ezegwu, C.I. 2009. "Evaluation of the application of the contributory pension scheme on employee retirement benefits of quoted firms in Nigeria". *African Journal of Accounting, Economics, Finance and Banking Research*, 4(4).
- Tokunboh, M.A. 1998. *Retirement and Old Age*. Ikeja, Lagos: Literamed Publications Limited.
- Turan, Y. 2010. "The role of the state in Adam Smith's thought system and modern public finance theory: A comparative evaluation". *International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies*, 2(2). 87-94.
- Udofot, P.O. 2012. "Building a link between retirement planning in the civil service and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria". *Canadian Social Science*, 8(4).
- Uma, K.E. and Ogwuru, H.O.R. 2015. "Immiseration of the Nigerian pensioners: The socio-economic implications". *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 111(5).

- Vordzorgbe, P.K., Assoah, S.K., Dzakadzie, Y. and Wilson, K.N. 2018. "Managing pre-retirement anxiety among teachers in the Yilo-Krobo Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana". *US-China Education Review B*, 8(3): 89-105.
- World Bank, 1991. *World Development Report 1991 – The Challenge of Development*. New York: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.
- Young, V. 2019. "Stoppage of pension for political office holders: Why we're excited with court's ruling – Pensioners". Vanguard Newspaper, 13 August.
- Yunusa, A.I. 2013. "Retirement challenges and management strategies among retired civil servants in Kogi State". *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 4(1): 53-63.



# EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Edo SHERIFI

*Department of Psychology*  
*Wisdom University College, Tirana*  
E-mail: edo\_sherifi@yahoo.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Introduction: Inclusion in education is of particular importance as it treats all children equally, therefore, professionalism and humanism are required for the training of children with intellectual disabilities. Purpose: The study aims to present the role of inclusive education for the education of children with intellectual disabilities. Methodology: Questionnaires, focus group were used to conduct the study; semi-structured interviews and vertical grid observation; 400 questionnaires were completed; of which 200 were completed by classmates; 100 were completed by parents of typical children and parents of children with intellectual disabilities; 100 were completed by teachers, psychologists and supportive teachers. Results: 68% of typical students say that they feel very good with their friends with intellectual disabilities; 57% of students have very good relationships with their peers with intellectual disabilities; 33% have good relationships with teachers; 55% of typical students answer that they help students with intellectual disabilities with lessons; 25% say they would always help; 57% of parents say they are not bothered by the fact that their child is learning in a class with the child with intellectual disabilities; 69% of parents claim that the integration of their children in inclusive education has improved their emotional state; 82% of assistant teachers help teachers achieve the objectives of the learning process

**Dr. Edo SHERIFI** was graduated from the University of Tirana, Faculty of Political and Legal Sciences in 1979. During 1990-1991, she completed the specialization in Psychology-Pedagogy, while in the years 2006-2008 she completed the Master of Science in Education, at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology-Pedagogy, University of Tirana. In 2010 he was certified for Positive Psychotherapy by the World Center for Positive Psychotherapy in Germany. In 2013 she earned a Doctor degree and, in the years 2005-2016, she worked as a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana, as well as at several other universities. In the period 2014-2020 she was the Head of the Department of Psychology at Wisdom College, where she also chaired the Curriculum Commission.

for children with intellectual disabilities. Conclusions: Children with intellectual disabilities have achieved learning outcomes. There has also been a positive change in students with intellectual disabilities in their emotional state. Positive impact is presented in the process of teaching and learning. In addition to the positive achievements, there have been cases when students with intellectual disabilities have been bullied, so the support of school psychologists has been sought.

**Keywords:** *Children with intellectual disabilities, treatment, effectiveness, inclusion.*

**I**ntellectual disability, you must recognize, understand and intervene as soon as possible to improve it. (Juhel, J. 2010). Children with intellectual disabilities and their families in Albania face many difficulties and receive little help from government institutions. According to the latest statistics available from INSTAT, there are over 74,537 people with disabilities in Albania, of which 55,237 are physically and intellectually disabled. Intellectual disability, otherwise known as “mental retardation,” includes Down syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

INSTAT data show that there are 681 people living with Down syndrome in Albania, about half of whom (305) are under 18 years old. In 2018 World Vision conducted a study, which found that 1 in 10 children aged 2-17 years show a high degree of behavioral difficulties such as: attention disorders, communication or learning difficulties, memory problems, behavior inappropriate, hearing and vision problems, and difficulty engaging. Among others in social relations.

About 70,000 in total or 10% of all children in Albania, show intellectual disabilities. Persons with disabilities receive a state aid of € 85 per month. In 2006, this amount was € 65, which means that in the last 15 years there has been an increase of only € 20. Furthermore, out of 55,237 persons with disabilities, only 2,248 received care services in public care centers throughout Albania. Specialists in the field develop programs for treating people with intellectual

disabilities from an early age to make them more independent when they grow up.

Children and families of people with intellectual disabilities have access to early assessment and receive guidance based on the child's needs. Early intervention should be standardized, unified and operated in public and private centers throughout Albania. Specialized therapy represents an additional cost that families have to bear on their own. Private therapy has an average cost of around 365 euros per month, this is a significant discrepancy compared to the financial assistance of 85 euros per month received by the state for people with disabilities.

## Literature Review

Inclusion is the right of every child to participate and the obligation of the school to admit every child and to give him / her the ability to use all the potential he / she carries within himself / herself. The long history of segregation of children with disabilities at all levels (in institutions and special schools for them, in society), has created obstacles for the practical implementation of inclusive education, preventing it from coming as a natural evolution based on a previous experience or as a need and necessity (ADRIE, 2011).

Unlike other western countries, where the development of inclusive education was a product of the active participation of people with disabilities, their parents and professionals, in Albania international influence and imitation has been the main contributing factor towards this

development. The Salamanca Declaration on the Education of All Students with Disabilities was agreed at a UNESCO World Conference held in Salamanca in June 1994 calling for inclusion (UNESCO, 1994). The necessity and urgency of providing education for all students, whether young or old within the education system is well known.

It is stated that students with special educational needs should be admitted to normal schools and it is added that normal schools in this inclusive orientation are the most effective means to combat discriminatory attitudes, thus creating hospitable communities and building an inclusive society, to achieve thus education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

The basic principle of inclusive schools, as proposed in the Salamanca Declaration, is: All students should learn together when possible and schools should recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, with the full support to meet these needs. In addition, the Salamanca Conference adopted a new Framework for Action. The principle of the Framework for Action is that mainstream schools should accept all students regardless of their physical development, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions (Booth, T. 2010).

### **Inclusive education for children with disabilities**

Children with disabilities are different but united by the shared experience of facing barriers to inclusion in school and society. To date, no universal definition of the term disability has been reached but, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is based on the International Classification and Functioning Standards of Disability, cites key elements of analysis of this term:

People with disabilities include those people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which,

in interaction with various barriers, may impede their full and quality participation in society in the same conditions with others (MAS, 2014).

Inclusive education for children with disabilities is the process of increasing the presence (access to education), participation and learning achievement (quality of education) of children with disabilities. Inclusive education for children with disabilities does not place personal characteristics or skills at the center of “exclusion” from regular education (European Commission, DG-Education and Culture, 2010).

Difficulties in inclusive education consist of: teachers’ attitudes and rigid teaching methods, unsuitable curricula for children with disabilities, lack of adapted teaching aids and teaching aids, being physically inaccessible, non-involvement of parents and the fact that teachers and schools do not rely on the implementation of inclusive education (World Vision, 2013).

Reform for the realization of inclusive education includes changes and improvements in the mentality and attitude of society towards diversity as well as improving the policies and practices of the school and the entire education system so that it is ready to welcome and educate every child. Inclusive education creates conditions for equal and quality education (World Health Organization, 2011).

Provides tailored teaching methods aimed at meeting special needs as well as additional training for teachers and is oriented towards the involvement of parents as necessary partners in the education of the child. Inclusive education for children with disabilities is considered, first of all, as a process constantly improving which requires time as well as the commitment of all institutional actors and partners / civil society in building a successful system (Talker and McArthur, 2010).

## **Integrated Education for Children with Disabilities**

Integrated Education for Children with Disabilities aims to integrate these children into mainstream education. Unlike Inclusive Education, it tries to see the problem of excluding a child with a disability in its physical / intellectual condition. In the process of learning the child is mainly reflected the medical model of treatment of disability. For this reason, integrated education focuses on solutions such as the “adaptation” of the child to the existing education system (Remack, Kulla and Ndrio, 2014).

The problems in integrated education lie in the fact that the child with disabilities has special needs, needs a special environment, needs special equipment, needs special teachers, is different from other children, does not respond learning process, has difficulty going to school etc. With such an approach, the child can only benefit for a limited time (Bertelli, Munir, Harris and Salvador-Carulla, 2016).

Integrated education does not lead to a sustainable and quality education system for children with disabilities. Integrated education is appropriate to encourage the presence of children with disabilities in mainstream classes but does not ensure their full and equal participation in all aspects of school and / or their academic achievement. (Ndrio, M.2012). It is worth noting that often there is no clear perception of the definitions of integrated education and inclusive education for children with disabilities and no distinction is made between them (Sherifi, 2006).

## **Special Needs - Special Education**

Inclusive education is an education system that accepts all children equally and equips them with the best possible quality of education. The term “special need” for

some societies has the same meaning as the term “disability”, while, in other cases, it refers to children who are “otherwise” due to disability, behavior or being vulnerable and weak in society (Osmanaga, 2015). However, regardless of whether the term “children with disabilities” or “children with special educational needs” is used, we are dealing with an inappropriate way of distinguishing a certain group (Practical guide for drafting and implementing the Educational Plan 2017)

We can say that all children have special or individual needs (for example because they have difficulties in a certain subject, have special talents, find it difficult to socialize, etc.). It is not said that the child has a certain impairment or any physical disability (Pre-University Education Development Strategy 2014-2020, MES).

Law no. 69/2012 ARTICLE 63. Principles of education of children with disabilities. The education of children with disabilities aims at the full development of their intellectual and physical potential and the improvement of their quality of life to prepare them for full integration into society and the labor market. The inclusion of children with disabilities in specialized educational institutions for them is generally temporary.

(The Law no.69/2012.a).

The inclusion and integration of children with disabilities in mainstream kindergartens and schools is a priority. Students who do not hear or speak are guaranteed the right to communicate in sign language, while those who do not see are guaranteed the right to use Braille.

ARTICLE 64. Attendance of educational institutions by children with disabilities. Students with disabilities are provided with education in upper secondary schools, according to criteria approved by the Minister and the Minister of Health. The student with disabilities stays in specialized schools until the age of 19 (Law no. 69/2012 Albania, 2012, b).



The local education unit establishes a commission, composed of doctors, psychologists, teachers and specialists for children with disabilities, which, after reviewing the request of the parent or director of an educational institution, gives the relevant recommendations for the attendance by a child of an institution ordinary or specialized education (Ndrio, 2013)

ARTICLE 65. Organizing the education of children with disabilities. Students with disabilities learn according to the curriculum of the usual subject programs, adapted for them, or according to the curriculum of specialized subject programs for them; in ordinary educational institutions, the personalized program for the student with disabilities is drafted by a commission, which consists of teachers of different areas of learning of the institution and psychologists (Law No. 56/2015).

The main factors identified as barriers in school students without disabilities are: Prejudices against children with disabilities, mainly those with intellectual disabilities; Lack of knowledge and skills to communicate and collaborate with children with disabilities; Bullying against children with disabilities; lack of support teachers; lack of special education teachers; lack or inadequacy of adequate services; Poor mobility and communication skills of the child with disabilities; Low self-esteem and fear of facing challenges (Delaney, 2012).

The data obtained mainly in focus groups with teachers highlighted the following factors; Poverty, insufficient economic conditions and lack of employment of parents; lack of technical and logistical skills of school staff; shortcomings in the coordination and cooperation of educational staff in drafting PEIs, exchange of information, etc.); lack of school funding needed to meet the objectives of PEIs. According to DSM-4. Intellectual disability is classified: Mild intellectual disability (KI: 50/55 -70); Moderate Intellectual Disability (KI: 35 / 40-

50/55): Severe Intellectual Disability (KI: 20/25) -35/40); Deep Intellectual Disability; KI: art 20/25 (Nano, 2016).

## Methodology

The study was conducted through a questionnaire with classmates of children with different abilities, with their parents, general education teachers and support teachers. A total of 400 surveys were completed, of which 200 were completed by classmates, 100 were completed. From parents, typical children and parents of children with different abilities; 100 were completed by the pedagogical staff of the school; (teachers, psychologists and support teachers); used as a focus group instrument; semi-structured interview and literature review.

Purpose of the Study. The aim of the study is to address that inclusion aims to create a framework within which differences between individuals are established and accepted. To show that inclusion in education should not be perceived as an auxiliary process only for students with special educational needs, but also for a hospitality and admission within the school of all students who have learning difficulties, for example those who are part of other communities, those living in areas of social or economic deprivation and those from other cultures who may not speak the same language

Objective. Identify all the problems and shortcomings that children with different abilities have; Children with different abilities should have support and assistance from the state in educational and economic terms; Parents, psychologists, teachers and society must work together for the effective progress of these children. To raise awareness, information and awareness on the legal basis of inclusive education and the level of its implementation in school.

Research questions.

1-What are the challenges of Inclusive Education?

2-Are students with different abilities distributed in inclusive education?

3-Is the Albanian education system ready to educate these students in the best possible way?

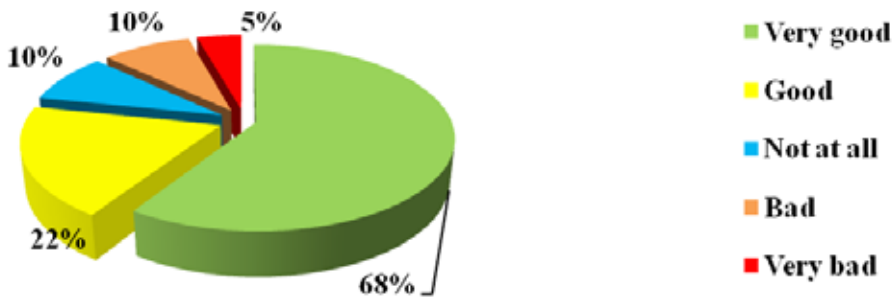
Hypotheses: 1.Education of children with A.K in inclusive education is productive.2. Support for children with different abilities accelerates their progress in inclusive Education.Champion; 200 students, 100 general teachers, psychologists and assistant teachers. 100 parents of children with different abilities and parents of typical children.Instruments: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Focus group. Literature review.

## Results

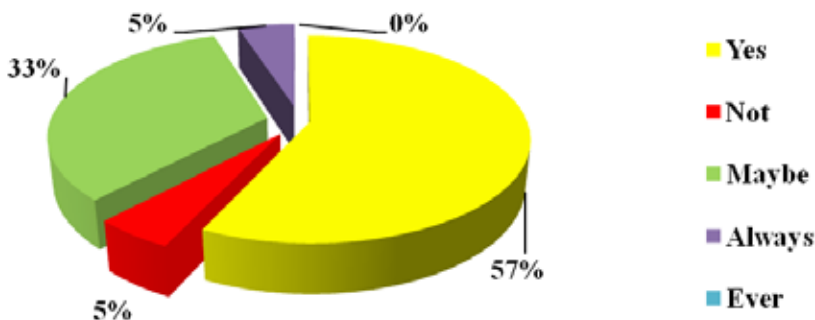
Typical students say 68% feel very good, 22% feel good from the presence of friends with different abilities in their class.

Figure 2 shows graphically in percentage the relationship that students have with their peers with different abilities, 57 % of students have a very good relationship with their peers with different abilities, 33 % have a good relationship, 5% have a not at all good relationships created by the different aspect of the student with different abilities, and only 5% have very bad relationships with their peers with different abilities.

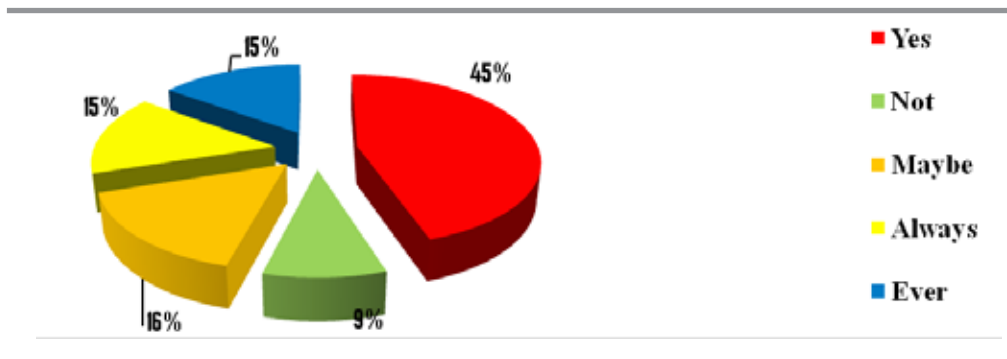
**Figure 1:** *How do you feel in the presence of a friend with different abilities?*



**Figure 2:** *How is your relationship with these friends?*



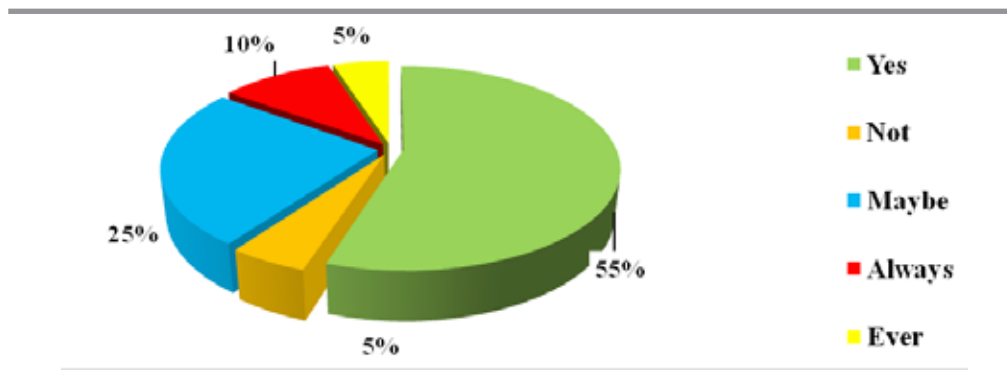
**Figure 3:** *Do you have a drop in lessons as a result of the noise created in the classroom by a friend with different abilities?*



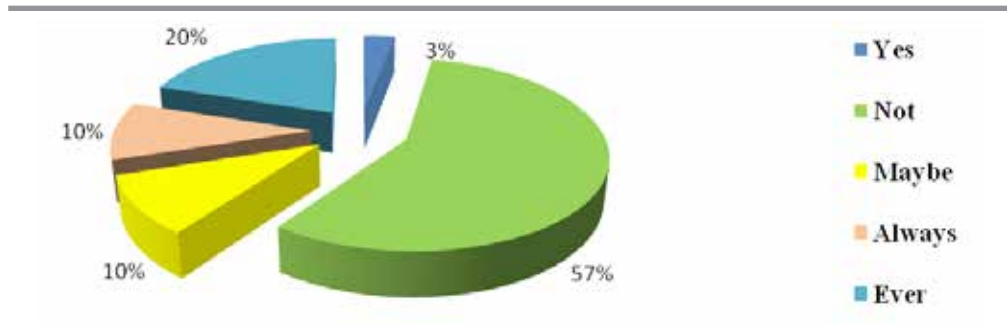
It is presented graphically as a percentage of whether the student with different abilities influenced the drop in grades as a result of the noise created by the child with different abilities, 45% of

the students said that 15% answered that it did not affect; 16% answered maybe the presence of students with different abilities affects, 15% say that the presence of students with different abilities always affects the

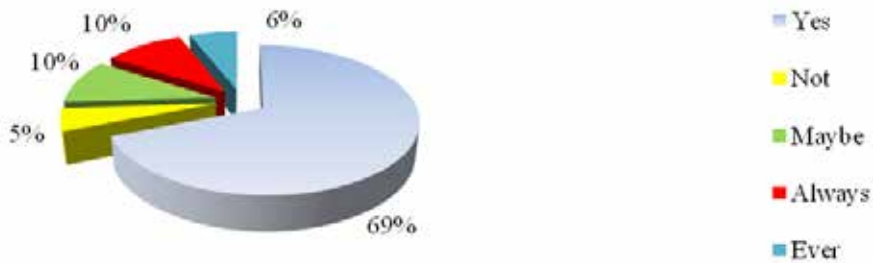
**Figure 4:** *Are you willing to help your classmates with different abilities if they need your help?*



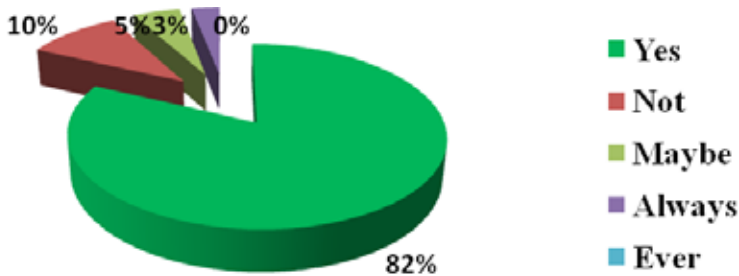
**Figure 5:** *Are you concerned about your child learning in the same school environment with a student with different abilities?*



**Figure 6:** *Has your child's emotional state changed positively from integration to inclusive education?*



**Figure 7:** *Do the assistant teachers help you to achieve the objectives of the lesson including students with different abilities?*



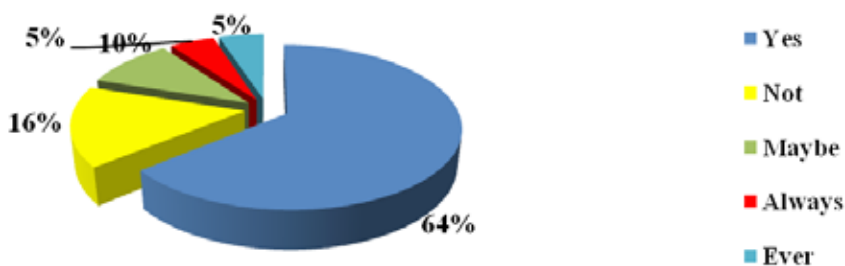
decline of results and grades.

Typical 55% students would answer that they would help students with learning disabilities if they needed to; 25% say they would always help. Typical 55% students would answer that they would help students with lessons with different abilities if they needed to; 25% say they would always help.

Only 3% of parents say they are concerned about the fact that children with different abilities also teach in their child's class. 57% of parents say they are not worried about their child learning in a class with their child.

Figure 6 shows that 69% of parents claim that their child's integration into

**Figure 8:** *Is the learning activity difficult with students with different abilities?*



**Figure 9:** *Is the education of children with disabilities effective in inclusive education?*

inclusive education has improved his or her emotional state.

Assistant teachers to the extent of 82% Assist general education teachers in achieving the objectives of the learning process for children with disabilities

In this graph 64% of teachers say that the learning activity with students with different abilities is difficult, 16% say that this activity is not difficult. It is probably difficult to answer 10% of them.

To the question: “Is the education of children with disabilities effective in inclusive education: 90% of the respondents answer positively; 5% answer in the negative and 5% say that the education of all these children is positive.

## Discussion

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of typical students say that they feel very good in the presence of children with different abilities. The study showed how the result of raising public awareness and educational work that families do for the admission to inclusive classes of children with intellectual disabilities has made typical children aware that children with different abilities have the same rights as typical children. 57% of students have a very good relationship with their peers with different abilities, 33% have a good relationship;

Typical 55% of students answer that

they would help students with lessons with different abilities if they needed to; 25% say they would always help; 57% of parents say they are not bothered by the fact that their child is learning in a class with their child. This shows that the social culture of the Albanian society has increased and the prejudices, stigmas and rejections of children with intellectual disabilities have been reduced; 69% of parents claim that their child’s integration into inclusive education has improved his / her emotional state.

Assistant teachers to the extent of 82% help general education teachers achieve the objectives of the learning process for children with disabilities. Appointment of assistant teachers in schools, in support of children with intellectual disabilities in Albania. The time has come for the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MASR) to appoint assistant teachers in all pre-university schools to increase the effectiveness of inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities.

Children with intellectual disabilities have had learning outcomes. There has been a positive change in students with different abilities in their emotional state. Children with different abilities have expressed a desire to collaborate with classmates. Positive impact is presented in the process of teaching by teachers and learning of students with intellectual disabilities. In addition to the positive achievements, there have been

cases when students with different abilities have been bullied, therefore the support of psychologists has been sought for the progress of the process of social, emotional, physical and mental development of children with different abilities.

## Conclusions

Typical students say 68% feel very good, 22% feel good about the presence of friends with different abilities in their class; 64% of teachers say that the learning activity with students with different abilities is difficult, 16% say that this activity is not difficult. It is probably difficult to answer 10% of them; Assistant teachers to the extent of 82% assist general education teachers in achieving the learning process objectives for children with different abilities. 69% of parents claim that their child's integration into inclusive education has improved his or her emotional state;

Only 3% of parents say that they are concerned about the fact that children with different abilities also teach in their child's class. 57% of parents say they are not worried about their child learning in a class with their child; Typical 55% of students answer that they would help students with lessons with different abilities if they needed to; 25% say they would always help.

It is presented graphically as a percentage of whether the student with different abilities had an impact on the drop in grades as a result of the noise created by the child with different abilities, 45% of students said that 15% answered that it

did not affect; 16% answered perhaps the presence of students with different abilities affects, 15% say that the presence of students with different abilities always affects the decline of results and grades.

Regarding the relationship that students have with their peers with different abilities, 57% of students say that they have a very good relationship with their peers with different abilities, 33% say that they have a good relationship, 10% say that they have a relationship at all good created from the different aspect of the student with different abilities, and only 5% said that they have a very bad relationship with their friends with different abilities.

## Recomandation

The support, assistance and cooperation of parents with the pedagogical staff is required;

It is required that the educational institution has multidisciplinary groups for diagnosing the symptoms of children according to the type of problems they present; Continuous specific training is needed for assistant teachers, why not for caretaker teachers and general subjects and parents. Carrying out awareness campaigns to accept these students equally as it is the right of every individual to be educated; Organizing Individual Education Plans (PEI) specific for each student with different abilities; Increase the number of psychologists in schools as a key link between parent-child, teacher-student, parent-teacher.

## REFERENCES

- ADRE. (2010) "Monitoring report on the implementation of the action plan of the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities" in, A k b E U y f g s V D 123. p. 44-45.
- Bertelli, M. O., Munir, K., Harris, J., and Salvador-Carulla, L. (2016). *Disorders of intellectual development": Reflections on the international consensus document for redefining mental retardation-intellectual disability.* in ICD-11.

- Adv.Ment.Health Intellect.
- Booth, T. (2010). *Teacher education for inclusion: How can we understand that it is of high quality?* Speech Held at the Project Conference for Teacher Education to be Inclusive; p.16-18
- Delaney, S. (2012) *Assessment Study of Child Protection Units, World Vision*, p.13-14
- European Commission, DG-Education and Culture (2010): *Improving teacher quality: The EU Agenda*. Instruction for the appointment of assistant teachers by MASR, p, 5.7
- Juhel, J. (2010). *Mental weakness. To know, to understand and to intervene*. Guttenberg Publishing House. Tirana Albania, p. 33-34
- Law No. 56/2015. *For Pre-University Education in the Republic of Albania*, p. 23-25
- Law No.69 / 2012. *The pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania*, p.39; 56.
- MAS (2014), *Curriculum Framework of Albania*, Tirana, p.13-15
- Nano, L. (2016). *For a deeper knowledge of students with special needs*. Publishing house Abb.Juris. Tirana. Albania, pp. 32-36.
- Ndrio, M. (2012). *The right to inclusive education for children with disabilities* - Analysis of the history of educational development of children with disabilities in Albania during the years 1945–2011.p.16-88.
- Ndrio, M. (2013). *Evaluation of the factors that contribute to the practical implementation of inclusive education*. Tirana: World Vision
- Osmanaga.F (2015) *Inclusive Education*, Tirana: Publishing House Pegi
- Practical guide (2017). *For the design and implementation of the Education Plan*.3.15
- Remack. L. Kulla. F Ndrio, M, (2014) *Manual: I am among you, similar; different, equal*. World Vision and Medpark, pp. 32-33.
- Sherifi, E. (2006) *Training for integration*, pp .15-20; 34-42
- Talker, K. and McArthur, K. (2010) *Child Abuse, Child Protection, and Children with Disabilities: a Review of Recent Research*.Review child abuse. ISSN0952-9136(In press) pp. 67-70.
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action on Special Needs in Education*, adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs in Education: Access and Quality, Paris.
- World Health Organization (2011) “World Report on Disability”, developed by the World Health Organization... with contributions from over 380 experts was published on June 9, pp. 84-89





# EXAMINING SELF-ESTEEM AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS (BIRTH ORDER, FAMILY SATISFACTION, EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS) AMONG NOMINATED CHILDREN AS GIFTED IN KOSOVO

**Naim FANAJ**

*Mental Health Center Prizren*

*& College of Medical Sciences Rezonanca, Prishtina, Kosovo*

Email: naimfanaj@gmail.com

**Sevim MUSTAFA**

*College AAB, Prishtina, Kosovo*

Email: sevimmustafa2@gmail.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Most scholars have pointed out that the family represents an important foundation on which the concept of self develops, and of course self-esteem. A large number of studies have examined for self-esteem in gifted and talented children. Our aim was to recognize

**Naim FANAJ** is Director of the Mental Health Center in Prizren, Kosovo and associate professor at College of Medical Sciences Rezonanca, Prishtina. He completed his doctorate in Psychology at the European University of Tirana in Tirana, Albania. He has presented many researches as author and co-authors in many World / European congresses of Psychiatry & Psychology. He has published several papers in international scientific journals. In 2020 he published the scientific monography **HANDBOOK OF STUDIES ON MENTAL HEALTH IN KOSOVO**. He is the coordinator and lead researcher for Kosovo in the **IMPLEMENTALL** and **MENTUPP** project, within Horizon 2020.

**Sevim MUSTAFA** is professor in College AAB, Prishtina. She holds a PhD in University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia – Faculty of Pedagogy in Gifted and Talented programme. Her research interests lie within the sub-disciplines of Psychology and Psychology of Gifted and Talented. She has participated in numerous national and international conferences and authored many publications on topics such as anxiety, stress, self-esteem, leadership, learning organization, gifted children etc. She is the project assistant for Kosovo in the **IMPLEMENTALL** and **MENTUPP** project, within Horizon 2020.

the levels of self-esteem in gifted and talented children nominated in Kosovo compared to other non-nominated children as well as correlations with some family characteristics such as birth order, perception of family satisfaction, socio-economic level and educational level of parents. This is a cross-sectional study. 1609 participants aged 13 to 19 ( $M = 15.47$ ;  $DS = 1.59$ ); where 960 participants (59.7%) were nominated as gifted by teachers in randomly selected schools. The measuring instruments were Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE; Rosenberg 1965), The Scale of Quality of Family Interactions - KOBI (Vulić-Prtorić, 2000) and sociodemographic form. Results showed that 13.3 % of the sample were classified with low self-esteem. Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant differences scores based on gender, residence and nomination in self-esteem scores. The results show that children born first have a higher non-significant level of self-esteem. Kruskal-Wallis analysis revealed no significant differences in self-esteem scores by family size, number of children in family, marital status, mother level of education, father level of education and socio-economic status. The finding that differences in self-esteem level and family variables are not significant is not uncommon in the literature reviewed here. However, such findings need to be elaborated more specifically in the light of cultural aspects as well.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, gifted, talented, family, Kosovo*

**S**elf-esteem refers to a global feeling of self-worth (Harter, 1999). Scholars mainly agree that global self-esteem or self-worth is the evaluative aspect of self-concept and refers to an overall evaluation of one's value as a person.

Most scholars have pointed out that the family represents an important foundation on which the concept of self develops, and of course self-esteem. The characteristics of the family are numerous and also depend on the definition of the family which is often not easy due to the differences expressed by researchers.

### **Family characteristics and self-esteem**

Based on Gorbett & Kruczek (2008) existing literature has focused on various aspects of family functioning in self-esteem development, including family bonds, parenting styles, communication, and interparental conflict. But there are many other factors that have to do with the family that have been studied such as. cohesion in the family, time of commitment, family structure, family size, family birth order,

age of parents, income level, educational level of parents, socio-economic level, etc. Kawash and Kozeluk (1990) found that general self-esteem scores increased with increases in family cohesion. Greene and Way (2005) revealed in the research that family support is one of the most important factors that provides the greatest encouragement for self-esteem over time. Based on Zervas & Sherman, (1990) studies have shown that parental support and acceptance, warmth, and democratic child-rearing practices foster high self-esteem in children. According to Slavin (2006) the state of the home environment has been noted to have influence on the self-esteem of the student. Biddulph et al, (2003) stated that dysfunctional family processes increased risk of low levels of self-esteem and also revealed that children's sense of self-esteem appeared to be impaired by feeling that their parents did not have enough time for them. Osarenren et al, 2008 found no linkage of family size with young adults' self-esteem. Fomby and Cherlin, (2007) see single parent families to impact self-esteem because they have

less economic resources. Also, Baker and Ben-Ami (2011) discovered in adults whose parents divorced before the age of 15 years, that those who experienced parental alienation exhibited low self-esteem. The constant stressors that accompany poverty reduced parental involvement and hostile living environments profoundly affect the student's self-esteem (Berk, 2006). Findings of Sahin et al (2013) suggest that parental education level positively influences self-esteem of Turkish adolescents. The authors show that these findings are in line with several other studies in Turkey and around the world. Many studies indicate that self-esteem is lower among adolescents of low socioeconomic status (Rhodes et al, 2004; Francis & Jones, 1996; DuBois et al, 2002; Demo et al, 2003; Veselska, 2010). Also Twenge and Campbell (2002) in their meta-analysis find a tendency for lower-class individuals to feel low in self-esteem. But we have seen also in literature mixed results, for example Wu (2019) stated that demographic variables such as household income, maternal educational level may have an effect on youth self-systems, albeit the results indicate that these factors were not significant. Also Sang (2015) not found statistically significant relationship between student's family SES and their self-esteem.

Another element in the family that has been studied a lot is the order of birth of the child. Birth order based on Eckstein et al, (2010) is an extensively researched and controversial concept in the social science literature. Research studies have examined the effect of birth order on numerous topics, among others also to self-esteem. We have a large number of studies that find that firstborns have higher levels of self-esteem than laterborns (Lessing & Oberlander, 1972; Gates et al, 1988; Falbo, 1981; Schwab and Lundgren, 1978; Rosenberg, 1965; Bachman, 1970; Wilson, 2002; Zervas & Sherman, 1994; Kidwell 1982; Romeo, 1994; Osarenren et

al, 2008). But there are studies that have found the opposite (Greenberg, 1963). Others have found no relationship between birth order and self-esteem (Nystul, 1974; Schooler, 1972; Wu, 2019).

### Self-esteem of Gifted

A large number of studies have examined for self-esteem in gifted and talented children. Robinson-Kurpius et al (2009) stated that positive self-esteem has been consistently linked to creativity, talent, and giftedness; although all gifted students may face low self-esteem (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005). Moreover, scholarships (Whitmore, 1980; Tannenbaum, 1983; Davis & Connell, 1985; Folsom, 2009) see that gifted also underachieve because of low self-esteem. Lim & Low (2009) see that Gifted students may already suffer from a loss of their social self-esteem. In the literature we find studies that gifted children have higher values of self-esteem than those not gifted (Hoge & McSheffrey, 1991; Hoge & Renzulli, 1991; 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Kulieke, 1994; Colangelo and Pfleger, 1978; Tidwell, 1980; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Kener, 1993; Leana-Taşçılar and Kanlı, 2014; Topçu, 2015). But we have other studies that do not support this (Tong & Yewchuk, 1996; Chiu, 1990; Bartell & Reynolds, 1986; Glenn, 1978; Bracken, 1980; Vialle et al, 2005) as well as other studies that find the opposite (Yan & Haihui, 2005).

To our knowledge this is the first paper that analyses self-esteem in a group of gifted and talented children in Kosovo and the second work in general in gifted and talented children. In Kosovo, a patriarchal pattern of family functioning, with the traditional family who belongs to the extended type and consists of a large number of family members where it can also consist of two or more nuclear

families but who live together and live in a household.

Our goal is to recognize the levels of self-esteem in gifted and talented children nominated in Kosovo compared to other non-nominated children as well as correlations with some family characteristics such as birth order, perception of family satisfaction, socio-economic level and educational level of parents. The questions we aim to address in this paper are: Do gifted and gifted children differ in their level of self-esteem from other children? Are there differences in the level of self-esteem according to family characteristics such as birth order, perception of family satisfaction, socio-economic level and educational level of parents in nominated and non-nominated children?

Regarding nomination in literature, some specific guidelines are described to identify gifted and talented children which are based on several combined criteria such as. performance, portfolio completion, achievement tests, etc. (VanTassel-Baska, 2005; Brown et al., 2005) where most commonly nominations come from teachers (Renzulli & Gaesser, 2015).

## Methodology

This is a cross-sectional study. There are 1609 participants aged 13 to 19, their average age is 15.47 ( $DS = 1.59$ ). By gender males are 45.5% and females 54%. 960 participants (59.7%) were nominated. According to the order of birth we had participants who were from the first to the ninth. We had families that also had 35 members, but the median of the families was 5, and the median of the number of children in the families was 3. We selected the schools randomly, but based on the fact where we managed to obtain the permits of the municipal directorates of education. The schools involved were from 9 regions of Kosovo. Five schools are from the region

of Prizren, five from the region of Peja, 4 from the region of Prishtina, 2 from the region of Gjilan and one from the region of Gjakova, Deçan, Viti, Suhareka and Obiliq.

Teachers were called to do the nomination, after provided with an information sheet explaining the distinctive criteria that must be considered before student nomination. First, approval from the Municipal Directorate of Education in several regions is obtained for conducting the research. The directors of the selected schools were contacted and notified. A briefing with teachers is held, where is disseminated information sheets explaining the distinctive criteria that need to be considered before student nomination. A written consent was provided by their parents, and to the students as an information letter was attached to the form for completion. Once the nomination is made, the time and place of the questionnaires was determined. The testing place was in the respective school in a classroom.

The measuring instruments used are:

1. Socio-Demographic questionnaire - collects data for age, gender, birth order, number of family members, number of children, parents' age, family status, parental education level and socio-economic status.

2. Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE; Rosenberg 1965). This scale was created by Morris Rosenberg and is very well known in the field of self-esteem. This scale has ten items which refer to self-esteem and self-acceptance, its rating is from 1-4, of the Likert type - I strongly agree (1), I agree (2), I disagree (3) and I do not agree at all (4) (Rosenberg, 1989). Some items are rated reversible afterwards. The sum score for global self-esteem ranges from 10 to 40. A higher total score indicates higher global self-esteem. The cut-off uses to show low self-esteem is below 25. It is a psychometrically appropriate scale for use in school-age children (Chiu, 1988).

**Tabela 1:** *Number and percentage of respondents by variables*

	N	%
By nomination		
Non-nominated	649	40.3
Nominated	960	59.7
According to the place of residence		
Urban	1445	89.8
Rural	164	10.2
By gender		
Boy	650	40.4
Girl	957	59.5
They did not respond	2	.1
By age		
13 years old	179	11.1
14 years old	351	21.8
15 years old	321	20.0
16 years old	268	16.7
17 years old	290	18.0
18 years old	174	10.8
19 years old	26	1.6
According to the order of birth		
First	532	33.1
Second	523	32.5
The third	314	19.5
The fourth	157	9.8
Fifth	54	3.4
Sixth	22	1.4
Seventh	2	.1
Eighth	3	.2
Ninth	1	.1
They did not respond	1	.1
Family status		
Together	1513	94.0
Separated	44	2.7
One parent dead	50	3.1
Both parents dead	2	.1
Mother's education		
Elementary	455	28.3
Middle	678	42.1
Up	476	29.6
Father's education		
Elementary	260	16.2
Middle	736	45.7
Up	609	37.8
They did not respond	4	.2
According to the socio-economic situation		
Bad	1	.1
Average	244	15.2
Good	729	45.3
Very good	634	39.4
They did not respond	1	.1
According to the level of self-esteem		
Low self-esteem	214	13.3
Normal self-esteem	1395	86.7

3. The Scale of Quality of Family Interactions - KOBİ (Vulić-Prtorić, 2000). The scale of quality of family interactions-KOBİ measures the interaction of a child and parents in two dimensions - described as acceptance (emotional warmth, intimacy) and rejection (control, emotional neglect). This is a scale that examines the child's feelings in relation to the family as a whole. We used only the subscale Satisfaction with my family, which has 11 claims related to the general atmosphere in the family. This is a scale that examines the child's feelings in relation to the family as a whole and is modelled on the Family satisfaction scale (Lacković-Grgin & Opačić, 1989). Respondents on the Likert type scale evaluate (from 0 = not at all to 5 = yes, completely) how he feels in his family and how is satisfied with family life. The overall score varies from 11 to 55, and represents the sum of all responses to the subgroups (highest score points for greater satisfaction with their family).

Data processing was done with Microsoft Excel 2013 and SPSS 21.

## Results

Results showed that the mean value for self-esteem in the study samples was 27.39 (SD=3.07). In terms the low vs. normal self-esteem, 13.3 % of the sample were classified with low self-esteem (14.8 % of boys and 12.2 % of girls) (see Table 1).

Despite findings that boys report slightly higher scores as compared to girls, the Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant gender differences in self-esteem scores in the total sample. The same was for nonsignificant differences in self-esteem scores based on residence (rural) and nomination (non-nominated) (see Table 2). Significant differences were not found either by gender separately for nominees and non-nominees. There were also no significant differences by residence

**Tabela 2:** *Mann-Whitney test results for self-esteem scores by nomination*

	Nomination	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-esteem	No-nomination	649	831.79	539833.5	.055
	Nomination	960	786.89	755411.5	
	Nomination	960	790.71	759081	

**Tabela 3:** *Kruskal-Wallis test results for self-esteem scores by Birth-order*

Nomination		N	Mean Rank	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
No-nomination	1.00	190	324.62	.60
	2.00	215	316.60	
	3.00	142	325.08	
	4.00	69	298.41	
	5.00	18	266.47	
Nomination	1.00	342	489.28	.46
	2.00	308	478.17	
	3.00	172	454.57	
	4.00	88	450.03	
	5.00	36	431.44	

separately for nominees and non-nominees.

The results show that children born first have a higher level of self-esteem but the difference has been non-significant based on Kruskal-Wallis analysis for the sample as a whole and especially for the group of nominated children. Also, looking separately according to the nomination, it turned out that there are no significant

differences in the level of self-esteem for these two groups (see Table 3).

Kruskal-Wallis analysis revealed no significant differences in self-esteem level based on nomination by family size, number of children in family, marital status, mother level of education and father level of education (see Table 4). Kruskal-Wallis analysis revealed significant differences

**Tabela 4:** *Kruskal-Wallis test results for self-esteem scores for family characteristics by nomination*

Variable	Birth order		Family size		Siblings		Family status		Mother education		Father education		Socio-economic	
Nomination	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom	No nom	Nom
Chi-Square	2.721	3.608	6.106	9.602	8.176	8.272	6.675	.033	.259	.583	.101	5.298	10.884	3.427
df	4	4	7	8	8	9	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Asymp. Sig.	.605	.462	.527	.294	.416	.507	.083	.984	.878	.747	.951	.071	.004	.330

**Tabela 5:** *Mann-Whitney test results for family satisfaction scores by nomination*

	Nomination	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Family satisfaction	No-nomination	649	826.14	536164	.132
	Nomination	960	790.71	759081	

**Tabela 6:** *Presentation of the correlations between sociodemographic variables - age of students, age of parents and family satisfaction with self-assessment by nomination*

Spearman's rho	No-nomination	Nomination
Mosha nxënësit	.052	-.053
Mosha nënës	.000	-.042
Mosha babait	-.015	-.057
Kënaqësia familjare	-.039	-.062

by socio-economic status groups X2 (3,  $n = 1608$ ) = 11.940,  $p < .00$ ; where the medium group scored higher ( $Md = 29$ ) than good group ( $Md = 27$ ) and very good group ( $Md = 27$ ) for the sample as a whole. When we looked at the nominees and non-nominees separately, this significant difference was found only in the non-nominated group (see Table 4).

Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant differences in family satisfaction scores between nominated students and non-nominated (see Table 5). Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant differences in family satisfaction scores between groups with low self-esteem and normal self-esteem.

Correlation analysis does not find significance between the variables of age, mother's age, father's age and self-esteem level, but finds negative correlation between family satisfaction variable and self-esteem level ( $r = -.050$ ,  $p < .04$ ) for the sample in total. But when we looked separately at whether they were nominated or not, there was no significance (see Table 6).

## Discussion

Overall, this sample showed positive self-esteem value as it is above cut-off 25 (Mean 27.39). This value is between the values resulting from some other research of the author - 25 in studies (Fanaj et al., 2014; Fanaj et al., 2015) and 29 (Fanaj et al., 2012). The findings show that there is no significant difference based on gender. These findings are not in line with other studies such as (Carlson, Uppal & Prosser 2000; DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale & Hardesty, 2002; Kling, Hyde, Showers & Buswell, 1999; Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracey, Gosling, & Potter, 2002) who had found significant differences for boys.

At the same time our findings speak of a lack of significance in the difference in the level of self-esteem between the nominees as gifted and talented and not the nominees. In the literature we find studies that gifted children have higher values of self-esteem than those not gifted (Hoge & McSheffrey, 1991; Hoge & Renzulli, 1991; 1993; Van Tassel-Baska, Olszewski-

Kubilius, & Kulieke, 1994; Colangelo and Pflieger, 1978; Tidwell, 1980; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Kener, 1993; Leana-Taşçılar and Kanlı, 2014; Topçu, 2015). But we have other studies that do not support this (Tong & Yewchuk, 1996; Chiu, 1990; Bartell & Reynolds, 1986; Glenn, 1978; Bracken, 1980; Vialle et al, 2005) as well as other studies that find the opposite (Yan & Haihui, 2005). Examined family characteristics such as order of birth, size of family, number of children in the family, marital status and educational level of the parents do not reach significance either in the total sample or separately for the nominees and non-nominees. In terms of birth order our findings contradict a large number of studies that find that firstborns have higher levels of self-esteem than laterborns (Lessing & Oberlander, 1972; Gates et al, 1988; Falbo, 1981; Coopersmith, 1967 ; Sears, 1970; Schwab and Lundgren, 1978; Rosenberg, 1965; Bachman, 1970; Wilson, 2002; Zervas & Sherman, 1994; Kidwell 1982; Romeo, 1994; Osarenren et al, 2008). But there are studies that have found the opposite (Greenberg, 1963). Thus, our findings are in line with other studies that have found no relationship between birth order and self-esteem (Nystul, 1974; Schooler, 1972; Wu, 2019). Our non-significant findings for family size are similar to the studies of authors such as Osarenren et al, (2008). Our nonsignificant findings on marital status are contrary with studies such as Fomby & Cherlin (2007) with negative effects of single parent families. Also, Baker and Ben-Ami (2011) discovered in adults whose parents divorced before the age of 15 years, that those who experienced parental alienation exhibited low self-esteem. Our non-significant conditions for the educational level of parents are contrary to the study of Sahin et al, (2013), which study shows that their findings are in line with several other studies in Turkey and in the world.

The socio-economic level is the only factor that shows a significant difference where the cases that perceived their level as average had a higher level of self-esteem than those who rated the socio-economic level as good or very good. This turns out to be the same only for the no-nominated group. This finding is in contrast to research findings that link low self-esteem to low socio-economic status (Rhodes et al, 2004; Francis & Jones, 1996; DuBois et al, 2002; Demo et al, 2003; Veselska, 2010 ). Also Twenge and Campbell (2002) in their metanalysis they find one the tendency for lower-class individuals to feel low in self-esteem. The group with average perception of family socioeconomic situation in our sample represents only 15.2% of the sample, compared to 45.3 % (good) and 39.4 % (very good). One explanation may be that in Kosovo the vast majority of families may have an average socio-economic level but also the fact that there is no such thing as a long-term tradition of wealthy families; socio-economic improvement can be rapid and based on a better job; also, for children perception maybe most important is actual situation etc. But we have also seen in literature mixed results, for example Wu (2019) stated that demographic variables such as household income, maternal educational level may have an effect on youth self-systems, albeit the results indicate that these factors were not significant. Also Sang (2015) not found statistically significant relationship between student's family SES and their self-esteem. Another intriguing finding is the negative correlation between self-esteem and family satisfaction. Biddulph et al, (2003) stated that dysfunctional family processes increased risk of low levels of self-esteem. This can be explained by the fact that in a traditional-patriarchal society such as Kosovo, young people with higher self-esteem naturally face higher conflicts



with family and tendencies to express themselves bring a dissatisfaction with the spirit that can be imposed by the traditional family. However, such findings need to be elaborated more specifically further.

### Limitations

This study also has its limitations. It is well known that questionnaires themselves have their own limitations regarding their specificity and sensitivity. The use of non-standardized questionnaires is not sufficient to recognize these psychological constructs considered here.

Also, the sample is not comprehensive because only municipalities are included where we could get permission from the Education Directorates of the respective

municipalities. Also, the non-inclusion of schools from the rural areas due to the small number of students in them and due to logistical difficulties is a limitation.

### Conclusions

The finding that differences in self-esteem level and family variables are not significant is not uncommon in the literature reviewed here. However, such findings need to be elaborated more specifically in the light of cultural aspects as well. The family in Kosovo has many specifics that may be of interest to study in a more appropriate scientific design. This data can be useful for the Kosovo education authorities to reflect on raising more attention to the category of gifted and talented children.

### REFERENCES

- Adler, A. (1979). *Superiority and social interest*. New York: Northwestern University Press.
- Bachman, J. G. (1970). Youth in Transition. Volume II, The Impact of Family Background and Intelligence on Tenth-Grade Boys. Michigan Univ., . Arbor. Inst. for Social Research. Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, L.C. 'Bureau of Research.
- Baker, A. J. L. & Ben-Ami, N. (2011). Adult recall of childhood psychological maltreatment in adult children of divorce: Prevalence and associations with outcomes. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 52(4), 203-219. DOI: 10.1080/10502556.2011.556973
- Bartell, N. P., & Reynolds, W. M. (1986). Depression and self-esteem in academically gifted and nongifted children: A comparison study. *Journal of School Psychology*, 24(1), 55-61.
- Berk, (2006). *Development through the lifespan*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Bracken, B.A. (1980) Comparison of self-attitudes of gifted children and children in a nongifted normative group, *Psychological Reports*, 47: 715-718.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 84(4), 822.
- Carlson, C., Uppal, S., & Prosser, E. C. (2000). Ethnic differences in processes contributing to the self-esteem of early adolescent girls. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 20(1), 44-67.
- Chiu, L. H. (1990). Self-Esteem of gifted, normal, and mild mentally handicapped children. *Psychology in the Schools*, 27(3), 263-268.
- Colangelo, N. and Pfeiffer, L.R. (1978) Academic self-concept of gifted high school students, *Roeper Review*, 1: 10-11.
- Davis, H.B. and Connell, J.P. (1985) The effect of aptitude and achievement status on the self-system. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 29(3): 131-136.

- Demo, D. H., & Savin-Williams, R. C. (1983). Early adolescent self-esteem as a function of social class: Rosenberg and Pearlin revisited. *American journal of sociology*, 88(4), 763-774.
- DuBois, D. L., Burk-Braxton, C., Swenson, L. P., Tevendale, H. D., & Hardesty, J. L. (2002). Race and gender influences on adjustment in early adolescence: Investigation of an integrative model. *Child development*, 73(5), 1573-1592.
- Eckstein, D., Aycock, K. J., Sperber, M. A., McDonald, J., Wiesner, V. V., Watts, R. E., & Ginsburg, P. (2010). A Review of 200 Birth-order studies: lifestyle characteristics. *The Journal of Individual Psychology*, 66(4), pp. 408-419.
- Falbo, T. (1981). Relationships between birth category, achievement, and interpersonal orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41 (1), pp. 121-131. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.41.1.121
- Fanaj, N.; Melonashi, E. & Shkëmbi, F. (2014a). Self-esteem and hopelessness as predictors of conduct problems: a cross-Sectional study among adolescents in Kosovo; Сборник Научни Доклади От VII-Я Национален Конгрес По Психология (Proceedings of scientific works of the 7th National Congress of Psychology, 31.X.-2.XI.2014, Sofia, Bulgaria; 1353-1366 ISBN: 978-954-91472-9-2 Дружество на психолозите в България).
- Fanaj, N.; Melonashi, E. & Shkëmbi, F. (2015b). Self-Esteem and Hopelessness as predictors of emotional difficulties among adolescents in Kosovo. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol.165, 6; 222-233.
- Fanaj, N.; Gashi, L.; Fanaj, B., Misini, V., Azemi, F., Ajredini, A. & Morina, E., (2012a). Hopelessness, self-esteem and other psychological characteristics of adolescents: Comparison between clinical cases and the community sample” *Neuropsychiatrie de l'Enfance et de l'Adolescence*, Volume 60, Issue 5, Pages S130-S131;
- Folsom, C. (2009). Teaching for intellectual and emotional learning (TIEL): Bringing thinking and moral-ethical learning into classrooms. In *Morality, ethics, and gifted minds* (pp. 285-300). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Fomby, P., & Cherlin, A. J. (2007). Family instability and child well-being. *American Sociological Review*, 72(2), pp.181-204.
- Francis, L. J., & Jones, S. H. (1996). Social class and self-esteem. *The Journal of social psychology*, 136(3), 405-406.
- Gates, L., Lineberger, M. R., Crockett, J., & Hubbard, J. (1988). Birth order and its relationship to depression, anxiety, and self-concept test scores in children. *The Journal of genetic psychology*, 149(1), 29-34.
- Glenn, P.G. (1978) The relationship of self-concept and IQ to gifted students' expressed need for structure, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 41: 2,931-A.
- Gorbett, K., & Kruczek, T. (2008). Family factors predicting social self-esteem in young adults. *The Family Journal*, 16(1), 58-65.
- Greenberg, H., Guerino, R., Lashen, M., Mayer, D., & Piskowski, D. (1963). Order of birth as a determinant of personality and attitudinal characteristics. *The Journal of social psychology*, 60(2), 221-230.
- Greene, M. L., & Way, N. (2005). Self-esteem trajectories among ethnic minority adolescents: A growth curve analysis of the patterns and predictors of change. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 15(2), 151-178.
- Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York: Guilford.
- Hoge, R. & McSheffrey, R. (1991). An investigation of self-concept in gifted children. *Exceptional Children*, 57, 238-245.
- Hoge, R. D., & Renzulli, J. S. (1993). Exploring the link between giftedness and self-concept. *Review of Educational Research*, 63(4), 449-466.
- Johson, S. (2014). Investigating the effects birth order has on personality, self-esteem, satisfaction with life and age.esource.dbs.ie
- Karnes, F.A. and Wherry, G.N. (1981). Self-concepts of gifted students as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept

- Scale', *Psychological Reports*, 49: 903-906.
- Kawash, G. E., & Kozeluk, L. (1990). Self-esteem in early adolescence as a function of position within Olson's circumplex model of marital and family systems. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 18, 189-196.
- Kener, Y. (1993). Realistic and ideal self-concept of gifted children. Unpublished MA thesis, Tel Aviv University (in Hebrew).
- Kerr, B. (Ed.). (2009). *Encyclopedia of giftedness, creativity, and talent* (Vol. 1). Sage.
- Kidwell, J. S. (1982). The neglected birth order: Middleborns. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 44, 225-235.
- Kling, K. C., Hyde, J. S., Showers, C. J., & Buswell, B. N. (1999). Gender differences in self-esteem: a meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 125(4), 470.
- Lacković-Grgin, K., & Opačić, G. (1989). Interakcije s majkom i zadovoljstvo obiteljskim životom mladih iz obitelji s ocem i bez oca. *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru*, 28(5), 155-164.
- Leana-Taşçılar, M. Z., & Kanlı, E. (2014). Investigation of perfectionism and self-esteem scores of gifted and average students. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi*, 47(2), 1-20.
- Lessing, E. E., & Oberlander, M. (1972). Birth order and personality adjustment as evaluated by the California test of personality and the IPAT children's personality Questionnaire. *Psychological reports*, 31(1), 23-27.
- Lim, K.K. & Low, A. (2009) Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted. In Kerr, B. (Ed.). (2009). *Encyclopedia of giftedness, creativity, and talent* (Vol. 1). Sage.
- Nystul, M. S. (1974). The effects of birth order and sex on self-concept. *Journal of Individual Psychology*. 1974, 30, 211-215.
- Osarenren, N., Ubangha, M. B., & Oke, T. S. (2008). Family characteristics as correlates of self-esteem among young adults. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 4(1), 17-25.
- Renzulli, J. S., & Gaesser, A. H. (2015). Un sistema multicriterial para la identificación del alumnado de alto rendimiento y de alta capacidad creativo-productiva. A Multi Criteria System for the Identification of High Achieving and Creative/Productive Giftedness (Arellano, trad.). *Revista de Educación*, 368, 96-131.
- Rhodes, J., Roffinan, J., Reddy, R., & Fredriksen, K. (2004). Changes in self-esteem during the middle school years: A latent growth curve study of individual and contextual influences. *Journal of school psychology*, 42(3), 243-261.
- Robins, R. W., Trzesniewski, K. H., Tracy, J. L., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2002). Global self-esteem across the life span. *Psychology and aging*, 17(3), 423.
- Robinson Kurpius, S. E., Dixon, S. K., Carr-Jordan, E. M. (2009). Self-efficacy and self-esteem and giftedness, talent, and creativity. In Kerr, B. (Ed), *Encyclopedia of giftedness, creativity, and talent*, Vol. 2. (pp 794-796). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Romeo, R. (1994). Birth order and mother-child interaction in an achievement situation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43(13), 271-291.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sahin, E., Barut, Y., & Ersanli, E. (2013). Parental Education Level Positively Affects Self-Esteem of Turkish Adolescents. *Online Submission*, 4(20), 87-97.
- Sang, C.C. (2015). Relationship between students' family socio-economic status, self-esteem. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 3(2), 647-656.
- Schooler, C. (1972). Birth order effects: Not here, not now. *Psychological Bulletin*, 78(3), 161.
- Schwab, R., & Lundgren, C. (1978). Birth order, perceived appraisals by significant others, and self-esteem. *Psychological Reports*, 43 (2), 443-454. DOI: 10.2466/pr0.1978.43.2.443
- Slavin, L.R.E. (2006). *Educational Psychology, Theory and Practice*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Sternberg, R. J. & Davidson, J.E. (2005).

- Conceptions of Giftedness*, Second Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Tannenbaum, A.J. (1983) *Gifted children: Psychological and educational perspectives*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Tidwell, R.A. (1980) Psycho-educational profile of 1,593 gifted high school students, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 24(2): 63–68.
- Tong, J., & Yewchuk, C. (1996). Self-concept and sex-role orientation in gifted high school students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 40(1), 15-23.
- Topçu, S., & Leana-Taşçılar, M. Z. (2018). The role of motivation and self-esteem in the academic achievement of Turkish gifted students. *Gifted Education International*, 34(1), 3-18.
- Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2002). Self-esteem and socioeconomic status: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and social psychology review*, 6(1), 59-71.
- VanTassel-Baska, J. (2005). Domain-specific giftedness. *Conceptions of giftedness*, 358-376.
- VanTassel-Baska, J. , Olszewski-Kubilius, P. , & Kulieke, M. (1994). A study of self-concept and social support in advantaged and disadvantaged seventh and eighth grade gifted students. *Roeper Review*, 16, 186-191.
- Veselska, Z., Madarasova Geckova, A., Gajdosova, B., Orosova, O., van Dijk, J. P., & Reijneveld, S. A. (2010). Socio-economic differences in self-esteem of adolescents influenced by personality, mental health and social support. *European journal of public health*, 20(6), 647-652.
- Vialle, W. J., Heaven, P. C. L. . & Ciarrochi, J. V. (2005). The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in high ability students: Evidence from the Wollongong Youth Study. *Australasian Journal of Gifted Education*, 14 (2), 39-45.
- Vulić-Prtorić, A. (2004). Skala kvalitete obiteljskih interakcija – Kobi. In Proroković A. et al. *Zbirka psihologijskih skala i upitnika II.*, Sveučilište u Zadru, 24-33.
- Whitmore, J.R. (1980) *Giftedness, conflict and underachievement*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Wilson, S. (2002). The effects of birth order and parental attention on self-esteem. Retrieved April 30, 2016, from EBSCO Database.
- Wu, N. (2019). Sibling warmth as a correlate of youth self-esteem. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1283686/FULLTEXT01.pdf> .Retrieved April 24, 2021.
- Yan, K., & Haihui, Z. (2005). A Decade Comparison: Self-Concept of Gifted and Non-Gifted Adolescents. *International Education Journal*, 6(2), 224-231.
- Zervas, L. J., & Sherman, M. F. (1994). The relationship between perceived parental favoritism and self-esteem. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 155, 25-33.
- Zervas, L., & Sherman, M. (1990). The relationship between perceived parental favoritism and self-esteem. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 155, 25-33.

# THE ROLE OF ART IN GREEK RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TODAY

**Vasiliki ROUSKA**

*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece  
Faculty of Theology, Department of Theology  
E-mail: varouska@theo.auth.gr*

---

## ABSTRACT

The main theme of the paper is the importance of art in Religious Education as a necessity of today's school reality and society. In order to highlight this topic, it is necessary the comparative study and approach of theological, sociological aids, studies and articles related to the pedagogical theory and teaching of the subject of Religious. The daily teaching experience of the theologian comes to confirm the role and importance that art can have in teaching. Art is understood as a tool that serves the educational process and can create stimuli for students in the subject of Religious in particular but also in each subject of the school curriculum in general. Religious is a subject that has a meaning and substance in today's class and society as it forms religious consciousness in students but also because it promotes freedom and dialogue, issues that art serves. Through art the students discover new worlds and ways of seeking knowledge, without restrictions. Thus art works such as paintings of Greek and international artists, poems, novels, songs, music, temples, photographs, videos with reference to Christianity, sculptures become the path to knowledge and the revelation of God.

**Key words:** *Art, Christianity, education, method, society*

The course of Religious Studies in secondary education is compulsory and integrated in the curriculum of the Greek educational system. The organization and operation are constitutionally based and follow state law and the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights. According to the Greek Government and the decisions announced on March 4, 2020 for the Curriculum in Religious Studies of

**Vasiliki ROUSKA** is Dr. in Dogmatic Theology, specialized in Aesthetics in Theology Department of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She was a scholar of the State Scholarships Foundation of Greece (European Social Fund- ESF). She worked as a theologian in secondary school and she continues with postdoc studies.

Primary and Secondary School, the course “is different from catechism, which is the work of the Church”, while the aims of the course are “To build a solid educational framework / field of knowledge and understanding of the Orthodox Church, guided by its hagiographic-biblical background, its dogmatic teaching, its ethics, its experience in the Holy Spirit, and in general its tradition, as spiritual and cultural of the heritage of Greece and Europe, but also as a living source of inspiration, faith and ethics for modern man”, “To contribute creatively to the development and cultivation of the religious conscience of Orthodox Christian students, and at the same time to contribute to their comprehensive development ( religious, cognitive, spiritual, social, moral, psychological, aesthetic, and creative)”. Also in the aims of the course is “to create the conditions and to offer opportunities for students to develop skills and competencies - but also moods and attitudes - that characterize the religiously literate man, while cultivating his moral and social sensitivity to the modern challenges of our time”.

The creative development and cultivation of students during the educational process of the Religious course today requires more than ever a necessity so that the course does not lose its value and identity. The subject of Religious cannot be understood outside the school reality, as long as its cognitive, cultural, interactive and free identity is maintained and its value, which is timeless, is emphasized. The non-catechistic nature of the course does not imply the eradication of the Orthodox Christian message from it but emphasis is given to the knowledge of the Orthodox doctrine, the spiritual tradition, the experience of the doctrine in Orthodox worship and culture. In order this to be possible, the theologist must be able to properly manage the curriculum and its

topics in order to achieve the transmission of the cognitive object that is the understanding of the religious phenomenon and its manifestations. In this process, in order to realize the “religious, cognitive, spiritual, social, moral, psychological, aesthetic, and creative development” of the students, art can play an important role as an interpretive tool of the educator.

### **The value of art in education**

Art is defined as any human activity that is based on certain knowledge and experiences and that aims to create a spiritual or technical work, the creation of works that express the aesthetic good and provoke aesthetic pleasure to the viewer, the listener or the reader. All the works of art in a certain place and time are called generally art, the set of knowledge and experiences, which are necessary for the exercise of a profession, an activity, the skill, the special ability, the manual profession that requires some technical specialization, the trick. So art does not pre-exist in humans but is cultivated while the criteria that determine what is art and what is not change and are shaped in history depending on social, artistic, cultural - and not only - changes. Art cannot be understood as something static but has dynamics and is characterized by constant fluidity and creation.

Characteristics of art are its dynamics and creativity, a way that pushes the transition of things, to their aesthetic change by combining elements from the material and the spiritual sphere of the world. Art is understood as the ability of man to create thanks to his freedom of will. The work of art is the result of the freedom, truth and sincerity of the person who created it, while at the same time man himself feels co-creator of God, of the truly creator.<sup>1</sup> Through art, man imitates the eminently artist God

<sup>1</sup> Stamoulis, Chr. (2007). *Nature and love and other studies*. Thessaloniki: Palimceston, p. 128-129.

while rescuing himself from nihilism and decay.<sup>2</sup> The creativity of the human face meets other persons, spectators, listeners or touchers -with the new possibilities of technology for the disabled- of art works and art becomes a way and place of society of persons characterized by freedom. Art can even produce symbols that lead to new worlds of understanding things or imaginary worlds. Art often becomes a carrier of a message, a carrier of emotions or even a call to aesthetics.<sup>3</sup>

The cultivation of man not only depends on the education he will have but also on the quality of education and the value it gives to man. Education is also the process during which the culture is transmitted and reconstructed.<sup>4</sup> The education that man receives is also distinguished by a specific aesthetic that can either appreciate the beauty of holiness or not.<sup>5</sup> The one-sided perception of education does not evolve the person but makes him static and non-participatory in the educational process. Art enables man to shape, express and codify, to translate what he feels in a different, unique way. The use of art in education achieves the development of visual distinction, cultural understanding and the development of quality aesthetic judgment.<sup>6</sup> Art appears in all times and in

all societies and is a proof of their evolution. Although art is not related to religion, it serves it to a significant degree.<sup>7</sup> This means that art often serves the expression of religious emotion; it is an interpreting and aesthetical tool. Ignoring the place of art in education, the importance of emotions in it is also ignored. But the issue in education is to have a vision where art could fit in that comes from human emotion to be able to give new perspectives to Religious.<sup>8</sup>

### The importance of art in the subject of Religious Studies

The Religious Studies course is an opportunity in the curriculum, both in primary and secondary education. It is a great opportunity for dialogue, development at the cognitive, emotional and moral level of students.<sup>9</sup> The Religious course is not limited to knowledge but also extends to the formation of students' religious crisis, to the development of their socialization, to the fruitful cultural dialogue between students, to the understanding of the value of acceptance of the other, to freedom and mutual respect for diversity, to reconciliation and in clarification of terms of the fanaticism and the intolerance.<sup>10</sup> The course also cultivates students' moral

<sup>2</sup> Matsoukas, N. (2009). *The problem of evil*. Thessaloniki: Pournaras, p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Petrou, I. (2007). *Sociology*. Thessaloniki: Vaniias, p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> Stogiannidis, A. (2016). Religious Education in Public Schools: Providing Theses, Reflection and Interpretation. *Synthesis*, 5 (1), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Brown E. (1899). ART IN EDUCATION. *The Journal of Education*, 50 (8 (1242)), 142-142. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44061643>.

<sup>6</sup> Schubert, T. (1986). Art in Education: Five Rationales. *Art Education*, 39 (1), 41. -43. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3192939?readnow=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A3afad49451dc06efc4ad8e857be3606f&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3192939?readnow=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A3afad49451dc06efc4ad8e857be3606f&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>7</sup> Langer, S. (1966). The Cultural Importance of the Arts. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1 (1), 5. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3331349?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A69876f63020d0d3fce5338f935611cc9&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3331349?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A69876f63020d0d3fce5338f935611cc9&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) 5-12.

<sup>8</sup> Langer, S. (1966). The Cultural Importance of the Arts. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1 (1), 12. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3331349?readnow=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A69876f63020d0d3fce5338f935611cc9&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3331349?readnow=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A69876f63020d0d3fce5338f935611cc9&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>9</sup> Tsironis Chr. (2003). *Social Exclusion and Education in Late Modernity*, Thessaloniki: Vaniias, p. 401.

<sup>10</sup> Tsironis Chr. (2003). *Social Exclusion and Education in Late Modernity*, Thessaloniki: Vaniias, p. 410-411.

maturity, solidarity, equality and the sense of justice.<sup>11</sup> Based on these characteristics, the Religious course must be pluralistic and universal, i.e. it must not discriminate in any form and aim at the peaceful socialization of students worldwide.<sup>12</sup> Throughout this educational process of teaching this course, art has an important role.

Art can significantly serve the aims of the Religious Studies course. In other words, it can stand as a mean, as a tool for understanding deeper meanings of religious education. The teaching of the Christian Orthodox doctrine requires to deal with biblical sources, the Old and New Testament, the texts of the Fathers, the liturgical texts, and history. At the same time, however, art comes to illuminate every cultural monument that reveals the face of Christ.<sup>13</sup> This does not imply the restriction of cultural references, during the course, exclusively to Greek society and reality but also to a wider reference, globally to all cultures according to the standards of the incarnation of Christ which is universal and does not fit exclusivities and introversions of any kind.<sup>14</sup> Like Christianity, art has no limits but is also universal and can express the truth it serves in various ways.

The course of Religious Studies can be a historical-dogmatic journey through art. Paintings of Greek and international artists, poems, short stories, songs, music, temples, photographs, videos with excerpts from films with reference to Christianity, sculptures. Works of art can express and reveal the divine. The use of art as an educational tool achieves to attract the interest of students, makes teaching more enjoyable for students

and teachers, develops students' combined critical thinking, promotes dialogue and creates the right atmosphere for students to express themselves at the everyday school reality and to form a religious consciousness. The use of art as a teaching tool in the educational process does not imply any kind of discount from the cognitive question but its service from art.

### Examples of the use of art through thematic units in High School

#### a) 1st grade of high school

The textbook of the 1st grade of high school gives many occasions in its thematic units for the use of art. Indicatively, we mention some ideas that can be applied by the theologian during the teaching hour of the lesson. In the 2nd thematic section of the textbook entitled "God and man in the Orthodox Tradition: a relationship of life" in subsection 5 "Man as creation in the image and likeness of God", on the occasion of the section "iii. Man exists only when he loves and is loved! (Gal. 5, 13-17)" and the hymn of love of the apostle Paul the educator can use a variety of audiovisual material. Initially, the teacher can show the students the hymn of love complete in original and translation since in the textbook there is only the passage of the hymn and be read in class by the students alternately original-translation. The theologian can even get the students to listen to the chanting of the hymn as there are many recordings on the internet. Another suggestion is the screening of an

<sup>11</sup> Tsironis Chr. (2005). Religious Education: Towards Peace and Reconciliation. *Religious education, Identity and Culture*, Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Petrou, I. (2005). *Social Theory and Modern Culture*. Thessaloniki: Vanias, p. 310-311.

<sup>13</sup> Stamoulis, Chr. (2016). *What's the Fox seeking in the Fair"? Essays on the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Politics, Culture and the City*, Athens: Armos, p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Stamoulis, Chr. (2016). *What's the Fox seeking in the Fair"? Essays on the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Politics, Culture and the City*, Athens: Armos, p. 192.





Fig. 1: Krzysztof Kieslowski, *Bleu*, 1993

excerpt from Krzysztof Kieslowski's film "Bleu" (Fig. 1). In the excerpt of the film, the hymn of love is heard in Greek while at the same time the students see how the creator of the film combined the words of the apostle Paul with the images he projects in his film. Through the screening of the excerpt of the film, the students listen to the hymn while at the same time their interest is stimulated. Also important is the fact of highlighting the timelessness of the *hymn of love* (1 Cor., 13)



Fig. 2: Paul Klee, *Fish Magic*, 1925, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania



Fig. 3: Vincent van Gogh, *Wheat Field in Rain*, 1889, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania

from the New Testament and its influence on art and the modern world. At the same time, the universality of the message of love through the hymn is emphasized, as well as its international impact.

At the unit "iv. Man as a deacon of the plesion" the theologian can project in his lesson images and mosaics from the Orthodox tradition on the subject of the scene of the "sink" so that students can understand the importance of humility and the importance of service to the plesion. At the lesson "Man as creator" – "ii. Man as a glorious being" we have two psalms from the Old Testament (Ps. 135: 136) in original and translation in which the reference to the creation that reveals God-creator is obvious. These Old Testament psalms are rich in images, images that a theologian can easily associate with paintings to activate students' attention in the classroom when teaching these psalms. By showing some works of art with reference to creation, the educator can ask the students to find verses from the psalms that correspond at their discretion to the respective work of art. Examples include works with a seabed by Paul Klee (Fig. 2) (Ps. 135: "The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths"), works by the post-impressionist Vincent van Gogh (Fig. 3) with clouds and rain (Ps. 135: "He



Fig. 4: Vincent van Gogh, *Starry night*, 1889, Museum of Modern Art, New York City

makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.”) and creation from his series on the starry night (Fig. 4) (Ps. 136: “the sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. The moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.”). The works of art can serve as an occasion for discussion among students in the educational process which does not presuppose an epistemological background regarding art but is based on students’ observation, free expression and the cultivation of their critical ability to combine the image they see with the information they receive from the thematic unit. In this way, students with the help of the educator, can approach concepts such as creation, creation and God-creator and their depiction and their glorify in art.

### b) 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of high school

In the second grade of high school there are also reasons for the inclusion of art in the course. In the first thematic unit “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: The spread of the Church in the universe”, in the first lesson “The Church spreads in the universe” the theologian can use iconographic works on the theme of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church. Through iconography,



Fig. 5: El Greco, *Pentecost*, 1600, Prado Museum, Madrid

students can more easily understand the importance of the event for the apostles but also for the course of Christianity in history. A representative example is the work of Pentecost by Domenikos Theotokopoulos (Fig. 5) which is also in the textbook. Particular emphasis is placed on the manieristic element of the deformation of the figures that seem to stretch in the sky, almost like flying. We focus on the miracle of the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues over the heads of the



disciples. Spirituality is evident in this work. The figures are all illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit. In the 2nd thematic unit “The charismatic personality of the Apostle Paul and his missionary work” the teacher can combine the map of the unit “The missionary tours of the Apostle Paul” with the projection of photographic material from places where the apostle Paul preached.

The third thematic unit “The voice of the Church is felt in society!” is even more appropriate for the use of supporting material, such as the projection of photographs from the catacombs of Milos and St. Kallistos in Rome. There is also material on the internet for catacombs symbols. Even on the occasion of the early Christian churches, the theologian can display rich material from churches in Thessaloniki for which there are many icons and floor plans available on the internet (see Church of St. Dimitrios, Acheiropoiitos). In the textbook there is rich material that can be exploited creatively but also enriched by the educator for the educational process.

### c) 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school

In the textbook of third grade of high school there are also thematic units that are suitable for the use of audiovisual material in the course of Religious Studies. The depiction of the Hospitality of Abraham



Fig. 6: Andrei Rublev,  
*The Hospitality of Abraham*, 1400



Fig 7: father Stamatis Skliris, *The Hospitality of Abraham) and the revelation of the Holy Trinity*

in the hagiography for the 2nd thematic unit “The proposal of life of the Orthodox Church” starting from the image of Andrei Rublyov of 1400 (Fig. 6) and reaching the modern hagiography like that of Fr. Stamatis Skliris in fresco of (Fig. 7). Students are able to understand the historical continuity of the revelation of the Holy Trinity to man and its imprint in art.

In the same thematic unit on the occasion of “i. Imitation of Christ” and the reference to the *Ark of the World* by Fr. Antonios Papanikolaou, the theologian can show on video a tribute or an interview of Fr. Antonios for the non-profit organization and its impact on society today. The same goes for the work of the Mission of the Holy Diocese of Athens. Examples-role models of people who managed to deal creatively with the social problems of the world. In the lesson “iii. Life with responsibility for creation” we can combine the Old Testament psalms with works of art as we suggested in the first grade of high school. The theologian can use paintings with reference to creation. Suggested works again by Vincent van Gogh

that can render the creating and doxological content of the Old Testament psalms such as the *Starry Night* (Fig. 4) (Ps. 8: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place”), *Haystacks under a cloudy sky* (Fig. 8) (Ps. 65: “The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.”), *Wheat Field in Rain* (Fig. 3) (Ps. 65: “You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops”).

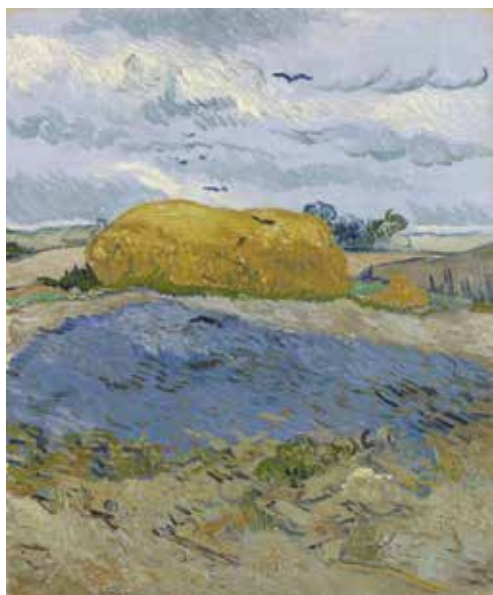


Fig. 8: Vincent van Gogh, *Wheat stack under a cloudy sky*, 1889, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo

On the same subject on the occasion of the text of Saint Porphyry of Kausokalyvitis “Meeting with a nightingale” the theologian can work with parallel texts or poems with similar content. An example is the poem of the French poet and screenwriter Jacques Prévert entitled “In the fate of the birds” (“Au hasard des oiseaux”, 1950), thus connecting the content of the thematic unit with poetry or even using as a parallel another text of



Fig. 9: Paul Jackson, *Sculptured Form*, 2000-2010  
Source: <https://paul-jackson.co.uk/sculpture.html>

the saint Porphyrios Kausokalyvitis from his Lives and speeches. Thus students are not limited to the texts of their textbook but receive at the same time multiple stimuli concerning creation and its creator.

In another unit “Mission and Ministry: The life of the Orthodox Church embraces the whole world!” the educator can introduce his students to the thematic unit from the very beginning with productive reasoning. Initially, the theologian can start with a reference to the depiction of the embrace in the art of sculpture. From the depiction of the embrace in various sculptures (figs. 8, 9) that the theologian will show to the students, emphasis will be placed on the importance of the embrace in human life. Then the educator will focus on the importance of the embrace of the Church for man and his enduring, timeless power in ecumene regardless of discrimination. In this way, students will begin to understand the importance of the universal presence of the Orthodox Church today.



Fig. 8: Vigeland sculpture park, Oslo

### **The need to break free from prejudices**

We often hear from educators that art has no place in educational reality. Obviously such a conclusion can only be characterized as arbitrary since art does not come to replace any cognitive object - and in this case the subject of Religious. Art is a cognitive object in itself with a history and its own scientific field and not any kind of usurpation of the cognitive object exists. But what a theologian can do is use it creatively as a “therapist” of the lesson. Students today are overwhelmed daily by different messages and stimuli and become familiar with the use of new technologies, more easily than adults. So the theologian is called upon to pique their interest in an even more difficult way than might have happened before. For this reason, the creative addition of art monuments to the educational work is considered necessary.

Religious Studies course is not an anachronistic course that is simply part of the curriculum as a remnant of older curricula in Greek school education. The subject of Religious should be understood as the most appropriate course of dialogue, promotion of culture and history with reference to the religious phenomenon, to Orthodox culture but also to the religions of the world in general. Students should understand through the lesson that religion in any form is a piece that concerns them every day regardless of their personal beliefs, their religiosity or non-religiosity. Art can

be the tool, the creative stimulus that will serve the perception and conquest of the cognitive question.

### **Conclusion- Art as an educational tool in religious education**

The course of Religious Education is a course that does not allow exclusions and discrimination. Through the lesson the teacher can create an interactive atmosphere in the school context. Unfortunately or fortunately a textbook alone is not enough to make this possible. The educator is the one who can listen to the reality and the needs of his class. The theologian is the one who has to build bridges between the students but also between himself and the students. It is a two-way relationship that cannot be understood as a straight line but as a zigzag line, which sometimes goes up and sometimes goes down. And this is the beauty of this relationship: its constant movement. In this two-way, non-stop movement, the subject should and must play a dominant role, following the teaching objectives set by the Ministry of Education in Greece. But how these goals will be realized concerns the educator. The theologian is therefore responsible both for the knowledge that is required and for the way, the method that he will follow for the knowledge. Art can be supported in this way in a variety of ways. Art as a reality that originates from man in imitation of the eminently creator can be used as a reference to real art in a creative and pleasing way in the eyes and ears of students.

Art should not be marginalized from education process from the moment it serves the cognitive object but should be used in the right way by the educator in order to benefit from it in his lesson. Art has no limits like religion. The students realize this and their interest in art is remarkable during the lesson. As mentioned above, the use of art during the lesson does not require

any special knowledge from the students but on the contrary all students can have speech and ideas that they can share with their classmates. The look of each student in combination with the thematic unit that is studied each time make the lesson interactive and enjoyable. Also, the different works of art and the contact with them liberate the student from his national context and

assist in his dialogue with the different. An ecumenical movement according to the model of the Church and according to the model of the Holy Trinity, a model of communion, peace and reconciliation. All these are characteristics that can cultivate and develop students with trained senses and respect for the Orthodox faith but also for every culture and religion.

## REFERENCES

- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Institute of Modern Greek Studies. (1998). *[Dictionary of Standard Modern Greek]* Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Institute of Modern Greek Studies, Manolis Triandaphyllidis Foundation.
- Matsoukas, Nikos (2009). *The problem of evil*, Thessaloniki: Pournaras.
- Petrou, Ioannis (2005). *Social Theory and Modern Culture*, Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Petrou, Ioannis (2007). *Sociology*, Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Stamoulis, Chrysostomos (2007). *Nature and love and other studies*. Thessaloniki: Palimceston.
- Stamoulis, Chrysostomos (2016). *What's the Fox seeking in the Fair"? Essays on the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Politics, Culture and the City*, Athens: Armos.
- Tsironis Christos (2003). *Social Exclusion and Education in Late Modernity*, Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Tsironis Christos (2005). Religious Education: Towards Peace and Reconciliation. *Religious education, Identity and Culture*, Athens: Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy.
- Brown E. (1899). "Art in Education" *The Journal of Education*, 50 (8 (1242).
- Langer, S. (1966). "The Cultural Importance of the Arts" *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1 (1), 5.
- Schubert, T. (1986). "Art in Education: Five Rationales" *Art Education*, 39 (1).
- Stogiannidis, A. (2016). "Religious Education in Public Schools: Providing Theses, Reflection and Interpretation" *Synthesis*, 5 (1).

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN SOCIETY EDUCATION

Edita BEKTESHI

*University "Isa Boletini", Mitrovica - KOSOVO*

E-mail: edita.bekteshi@umib.net

---

## ABSTRACT

This paper describes the students' perception regarding the areas of Sustainable Development (SD), which are introduced by the United Nations in 2015 and deal with society that include social issues, the environment that include environmental tasks, and the economy that include human functions. Eighty-nine students participated in this research. Based on the data analysis, the findings are scattered: (1) the students prefer different areas of the SD, (2) they consider that some areas need to be further elaborated and need more discussion; and, (3) there are also students who do not know the importance of these topics. Based on the analysis of student responses, the most common areas of interest focus on society and the economy, while areas related to the environment are not very preferred. The paper also discusses reasons of such preferences which are related to students' previous education and the current Kosovar social needs, as assumed by the Kosovar youth i.e., the students. As such, this paper concludes that few students have knowledge of areas related to Sustainable Development and it suggests that a more detailed and frequent presentation of topics dealing with the SD goals can 'spontaneously' make society/students more aware of the necessary areas of the 21st century.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development; students; Higher education*

**T**hanks to the UN developments and the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, people around the world are able to reach the knowledge of the worldwide issues, i.e. get more knowledge, and expose and solve various worldwide concerns. More precisely, the United Nations in September

**Edita BEKTESHI** is Assistant Professor Doctor at the University "Isa Boletini" in Mitrovica in the Republic of Kosovo. She completed her PhD in the field of English Language Teaching. She is also reviewer of The TESOL International Journal. Her research interests include approaches, methods, and activities conducted to enhance the 21st century education and English Language Teaching, English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes.

2015, adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, that provide the understanding of the 21st global concerns. That is, the UN have prepared the Agenda until 2030 for SDGs : GOAL 1: No Poverty, GOAL 2: Zero Hunger, GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being, GOAL 4: Quality Education, GOAL 5: Gender Equality, GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality, GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, GOAL 13: Climate Action, GOAL 14: Life Below Water, GOAL 15: Life on Land, GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions, and GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal. Based on these 17 goals, Gil-Doménech et.al (2018) recap these 17 goals in “3Ps”: People, Planet, and Profit. That is, if examined topics covered within the 17 goals, Kioupi and Voulvoulis ( 2019) regard SDGs development as a tool that will reshape the worldviews. In addition, Rieckmann (2018) recaps and considers that SDG determine the daily lives of different people who live in different living conditions.

Understanding the importance of the SDGS has made various researches in various countries conduct various studies related to SDGs, such as: in Jamaica (Ferguson and Roofe, 2020), in Kosovo (Bekteshi and Xhaferi, 2020; Beka and Ciani, 2015), in Turkey (Haktanır, Güler, and Öztürk, 2016), Greece (Manoliadis, 2009).

Since it is obvious that all 17 goals are of importance on worldview basis, then the implementation of education for sustainable development-related activities definitely will bring opportunities and challenges within society (Ferguson and Roofe, 2020). That is, Sustainable Development Goals teaching and learning is inevitable as it deals with various experiences that

influence global changes resulting in more social development, i.e. sustainable societies (Bowden, 2010), that will also trigger challenges facing the planet (Leicht & Byun, 2018) in all dimensions.

According to Ferguson and Roofe (2020), higher education has been inarguably considered as the main factor that impacts the fourth goal (SDG 4 ) and forwards education in a realistic and significant way. As such, this study aims to investigate the higher education students' knowledge regarding SDGs. Precisely, to explore the students' targets regarding the 17 SDGs and tries to answer the following questions:

- Which SDGs are the preferred to be learned?
- Which SDGs are considered as the most important?
- Which SDGs do the students consider that need to be further elaborated and need more discussion?

## Methodology

### *Participants and instruments*

The study was conducted at a public HEI and considered a total of 89 participants who filled out the questionnaire. In addition, 34 of them were also interviewed. Initially, an online survey was distributed to them (Bekteshi and Xhaferi, 2020). In fact, although the original survey was divided into three parts (Bekteshi and Xhaferi, 2020), the current study is focused only on two ones: (1) the students' awareness about SD and SDGs, and the preferred goals by the students, and (2) the students' needs and wants to learn specific SD Goals and reasons for that. After the data of the survey were gathered, 34 students were again met and interviewed regarding the questions/ responses. That is, the reasons why do students consider that those specific goals need more attention.



**Table 1:** *Awareness about SD*

Questions:	Goal 1: No Poverty	Goal 2: No hunger	Goal 3: Good health and well-being	Goal4: Quality Education	Goal 5: Gender Equality	Goal6: Clean water and sanitation	Goal13: Climate Action
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Tick five that you have heard of.	40%	24%	44%	56%	40%	16%	4%
Which goals have you learnt at school? Not at the University only.Tick five.	30.00%	23%	58%	77%	54%	4%	20%

## Findings and discussion

The main reason of the SDGs is to educate people to act sustainably. This is also proved by the student's responses who are aware of the fact that that acquiring society should be able to know and take personal responsibilities and act sustainably.

Prior to exposing the students' opinions regarding the study's questions, it is of benefit to present students' awareness regarding SDGs, as shown in table 1. Awareness about SD (Bekteshi and Xhaferi, 2020:84).

Based on the data shown in Table 1, it is clear that students have some knowledge of the SDGs: Precisely, # Goal 4 is the leading

goal, followed by #Goal 3, whereas #Goal 1 and #Goal 5 are in the same position.

If compared with the responses from table 1 (Bekteshi and Xhaferi, 2021) regarding the students' awareness of the SDGs and their preferences to learn about these goals, Table 2 bellow shows three most preferred goals to learn about.

As shown in Table 2, the same goals that the students are aware of, are the same goals that students want to learn about. Based on the results, #Goal 4: Quality Education is considered the most important goal, similarly to Ferguson and Roofe (2020). Whereas, the most important ones are presented in Table 3 bellow.

**Table 2:** *The preferred goals to be learned*

Questions:	Goal4: Quality Education	Goal 1: No Poverty	Goal 5: Gender Equality
Which goals do you prefer to learn?	46%	16%	28%

**Table 3:** *The most important goals based on students' responses*

Questions:	Goal 1: No Poverty	Goal 4: Quality Education	Goal 5: Gender Equality
These goals are important for me.	10%	58%	24%

Again, #Goal 4 - Quality Education is the leading goal as the most preferred one, following similar schemata as in Table 2.

As seen, only # Goal 13-Climate Action is the goal that is selected in Table 1 and Table 4. This shows that students are aware of this goal and issues regarding this goal. It is also taught/presented in schools, however, again students have chosen it as a goal that needs more attention. i.e. to be more elaborated and more discussed. Table 4 also presents #Goal 8 and #Goal16 as other goals chosen for more attention and the reason for this are given in the following discussion. Moreover, this table is in line with: People, Planet, Profit i.e., "3Ps" (Gil-Doménech et.al. 2018)

In the interview sessions that dealt with #Goal 8, #Goal 13 and #Goal 16 and the reasons why students consider that these goals need more attention, the responses are various:

Twenty-two students mentioned labor economics, economics, wellbeing need much more attention. In most of the interviewed the country's economic situation was

evident, which resulted in the need for more attention in this goal. In fact, 18 out of 34 students showed disappointment regarding work and wellbeing.

On the other hand, 9 interviewed students also mentioned # Goal 13-Climate Action- as a goal that Kosovars need to learn more. Again, the reasons show lack of world knowledge regarding factors that contribute to climate change and climate actions that are undertaken and will be undertaken.

Similarly, to the responses regarding #Goal 8 - Decent work, students again showed disappointment: # Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions was mentioned by 11 students. Eight students had almost identical reasons why this goal needs more attention. Based on the students' responses, society needs to have better institutions, especially the justice system. Corruption, job, open calls/announcement, fair selection were words usually used, developing issues mentioned by them in both goals # Goal 8 and # Goal 16.

Although all interviewees mentioned all SDGs, the upper mentioned goals were

**Table 4:** *SDGS that need to be further elaborated and need more discussion*

Questions:	Goal 8: Decent Work and Economics	Goal 13: Climate Action	Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
These goals need more attention and discussion in our society	36%	26%	25%

mostly touched upon. The other goals were only slightly mentioned, therefore this study does not discuss them. Based on the interviews regarding the upper mentioned goals, it is evident that students' responses depend on current social situation in the country and what the students have already learned, or are being informed about. The students are mostly attentive on Education, Gender Equality, escaping the poverty sought by justice and decent work.

### Conclusions

Knowing about the UN's SDGs nowadays is panacea. Nowadays, SDGs have become the symbols of our society and our precious time, investing in globalization, environmental issues, and economic integration. Therefore, SDG 4-education has gained much more consideration in this study.

Based on the finding and the discussions that followed in this study, it is concluded that these HEI students are partly aware of the SDGs presented by the UN. The students selected various goals, however three of them were more preferred goals to learn about: Quality Education, No Poverty and Gender Equality. In addition, these goals were also found to be considered as the most important. Whereas goals regarding work and justice were considered as goals that need to focus upon. Terms and phrases such as 'corruption', 'job', 'appropriate degree/knowledge' quite clearly echo the society

concern. The importance of incorporating more goals to be learned is more than a 'must'. Knowledge of all SDGs can provide students more experiences and opportunities to deal with worldwide issues, becoming more confident with more accurate world information. The main concept of learning about the SDGs must not to simply learn about the goals, but in doing so, the students may learn 'out of the box' issues, supported also by Kioupi and Voulvoulis (2019), who claim that goals are considered tools that will reshape the worldviews. Thus, the study advocates that keeping in mind the necessity of SDGs in modern Kosovo and the youth it has, Kosovar society should adopt all 17 goals and present them in different ways to all students of all generations.

### Limitations of the study

As the study included only a small number of students, we cannot generalize the findings. Moreover, since the participants were from only one public HEI in Kosovo, this study and its discussion and conclusion are focused only these students' responses. And based on their background it is assumed that their approach towards this topic might be somehow similar. Nevertheless, the findings still shed light upon the most known SDGs and on other goals that need more attention among these students and might contribute to the promotion of more learning and more knowledge about the SDGs.

### REFERENCES

- Beka, A. and Ciani, A. (2015). Promoting Education for Sustainable Development at the University of Prishtina, Kosovo. In W. Leal Filho et al. (eds.) *Integrating Sustainability Thinking in Science and Engineering Curricula. World Sustainability Series*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-09474-8\_11.
- Bekteshi, E., & Xhaferi, B. (2020). Learning about Sustainable Development Goals through English Language Teaching. *Research in Social Sciences and Technology*, 5(3), 78-94. <https://doi.org/10.46303/ressat.05.03.4>
- Bowden, R. (2010). Teaching English for Sustainability. *Journal of NELTA*. Vol. 15 No. 1-2 <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4605>

- Ferguson, T. and Roofe, C.G. (2020), «SDG 4 in higher education: challenges and opportunities», *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 959-975. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-12-2019-0353>
- Gil-Doménech D. & Berbegal-Mirabent J. (2018) People, Planet, Profit. In: Dhiman S., Marques J. (eds) *Handbook of Engaged Sustainability*. Springer, Cham [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53121-2\\_38-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53121-2_38-1). In *Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development*.
- Haktanır, G., Güler, T. and Öztürk, D. (2016). Education for Sustainable Development in Turkey. In Siraj-Blatchford, Mogharreban and Park (Eds). *International Research on Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood*. Springer. Pp 139-153
- Kioupi, V. & Voulvoulis, N. (2019). Education for Sustainable Development: A Systemic Framework for Connecting the SDGs to Educational Outcomes. *Sustainability, MDPI*, Open Access Journal, vol. 11(21), pages 1-18, November; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11216104>
- Leicht, J. Heiss and W. J. Byun (eds). (2018). Pp.177-195. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://www.iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/documents/261445c.pdf>
- Manoliadis, M. (2009). Education for Sustainability: Experiences from Greece. *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice*. Vol. 135, Issue 2. 2009 [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)1052-3928\(2009\)135:2\(70\)](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)1052-3928(2009)135:2(70))
- Pesanayi, V. T. & Lupele, Ch. (2018). Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level, <https://en.unesco.org/gap/priority-action-areas/local-level>
- Rieckmann, M. (2018). Learning to transform the world: key competencies in Education for Sustainable Development. In *Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development*. Leicht, J. Heiss and W. J. Byun (eds) (2018). Pp.39-59. <https://www.iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/documents/261445c.pdf>
- UN (2018). Introduction to the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development: Major Groups and other Stakeholders. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 13 December 2018. [https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/HLPF\\_101\\_PPT\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/HLPF_101_PPT_en.pdf)
- UNECE (2009). Learning from each other. The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. UNITED NATIONS. New York and Geneva, 2016 [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/01\\_Typo3site/LearningFromEachOther.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/01_Typo3site/LearningFromEachOther.pdf)
- UNESCO (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals. Learning Goals*. Paris: UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002474/247444c.pdf>
- Weeks, C. (2018). 4 Reasons to Teach the Sustainable Development Goals. Global Education. <https://www.participatelearning.com/blog/4-reasons-to-teach-the-sustainable-development-goals/> (January 2019) <https://www.participatelearning.com/blog/4-reasons-to-teach-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

# EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN KOSOVO, A CHALLENGE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

**Safet KRASNIQI**

*University “Ukshin Hoti” in Prizren, KOSOVO*

E-mail: safet.krasniqi@uni-prizren.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Classes in Kosovo are held in private and public educational institutions. Education in Kosovo went through very hard phases and challenges especially in the years 1990/1999 since differences and the need for change made us not entirely prepared. After the establishment of Kosovo Institutions, the Department of Education and Science (DES) was established within the Ministry of Education. The primary aim was to establish the legal and professional basis as a frontline of the reform of our education system, especially the acceptance of the Bologna processes that facilitate the radical reform of general and vocational education. This paper will address the aspects of reforming and progression of vocational secondary education, vocational schools, and correspondence to the needs of the EU market and the possibility of implementing in post-secondary and university higher education.

**Keywords:** *Kosovo, private and public educational institutions, Bologna Process, KEEN, KESP, AVETAE.*

## Abbreviations

Ministry of Science and Education,  
KEEN – Kosovo Education for Employment  
Network, KESP- Kosovo Education  
Strategic Plan, VET- Vocational and  
educational training, AG-Administrative  
Guidance, MDE- Municipal Directorate of

Education, HSVT- High school vocational  
training.

## Methodology used

During my research, I used documents,  
publications, official documents, reports  
from international donors and agencies in

**Safet KRASNIQI** completed the doctoral studies in political science, in 2013 at the International University of Struga, Northern Macedonia; master studies in International Relations in 2009, and basic studies at the Faculty of Law at the University “Hasan Prishtina” in Pristina, in 1997.

the field of policy-making. Also, I applied the comparative analytical method and partly the historical method.

## Content

When we talk about improving and professionalizing education in Kosovo, we could say that laws and legal acts in force have been drafted, which regulate the scope of activity of this segment of education. Also, there are several NGOs which through their reports monitored the implementation of laws and other legal acts related to Vocational Education and Training as well as the implementation of these legal documents by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. Assess

The Organization, “Kosovo Education for Employment Network - KEEN” from 2019 with the title, Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo; Challenges and opportunities, April 2019 considers that in addition to education, Kosovo also needs to professionalize the workforce, which is the task of the MES. When we say that it is the task of MES then we say that students must acquire the necessary skills to be competitive in the labor market.

Kosovo Education Strategic Plan, 2017-2021 (KESP), is the main document for the development of the education sector in Kosovo that describes the sector of education and vocational training as one of the seven areas of planning. The basis of vocational education and training is the National Qualifications Curriculum. This document was based on the general situation of the population able to work as well as the current situation in Kosovo. According to this document the unemployment rate in 2018 reached 29.4%. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15-24 is even higher,

55%. The said report refers to World Bank statistics according to which Kosovo’s economy should grow by about 6% per year to reduce the overall unemployment by the first half of the 10 years, assuming an annual increase in labor power share by 1.9% and productivity employment growth flexibility of 1.6%. However, as the statistics of the period 2009-2017 show, the domestic gross product increased only 3.5%. The high unemployment rate indicates the loss of human capital which the economy will never be able to recover. The young population is usually considered an asset to a country’s economy. They are the future employees who will theoretically contribute to growth<sup>1</sup>.

Young people’s interest in Vocational Education and Training has increased in recent years. Statistics for 2017/2018 show that 86,813 students were enrolled in the upper secondary level, of which 46,205 students were registered in vocational education schools compared to 40,608 students registered in gymnasiums or 53% registered in VET-Schools compared to 47% registered in secondary schools (gymnasiums). It is estimated that students are enrolled in 17 professional fields and 140 profiles 21. Divided by gender, the data show that compared to women, men are more likely to enroll in VET schools. Thus, education statistics in 2018 show that 27,389 males were enrolled in VET schools compared to 18,816 females; while the number of male students in gymnasiums is 16,982 compared to 23,626 females 22. Percentage-wise 58.2% of women are enrolled in gymnasiums compared to 40.7% enrolled in vocational schools. Recent changes in student enrollment in vocational education can be attributed to external factors, namely the possibility of migration after visa liberalization to the labor

<sup>1</sup> Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo: Challenges and Opportunities, Published by the project “Kosovo Network for Education and Employment - KEEN”, April 2019, Pristina

**Table 1:** *Number of students registered in Vocational Education and Training: 2014 - 2018*

Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of persons employed	41,940	42,600	45,462	46,205
Employed women	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Employed women	16,182	16,723	18,258	18,816

markets in European countries that require a technically skilled workforce. Table 1<sup>2</sup>.

In terms of the level of education according to the needs of the EU market, the greatest difficulties in Kosovo occur in terms of finding employees with the required qualifications, who are needed for different work processes. The study conducted by the American Chamber in 2017, confirms the existence of numerous professional deficiencies particularly in manufacturing, especially in technical directions. This study is part of the project, "Development of the Private Sector through the implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) " aiming to research and find opportunities for harmonization of the education sector concerning the labor market for the Kosovar

companies to compete in the EU market. Based on the information provided by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics for the second quarter of 2018, there is an increase in employment in Kosovo<sup>3</sup>.

Based on the information there are 68 vocational schools in the Republic of Kosovo that is under the management of municipalities. Periodically, the number of students enrolled in these schools has changed due to the changing needs of the labor market. The largest number of enrolled students in vocational secondary schools is in technical fields, then in health, social welfare, and administration. These vocational schools offer International Education Standards programs (ISCED). The number of vocational schools in Kosovo that offer ISCED level programs is

**Table 2:** *Number of students registered in Vocational Education and Training: 2014 - 2018*

	Total	EU	Men	Women and girls
Employed	341,600/ 28.5%	68.6%	269,800/ 44.8%	71,800/ 12.0%
Active workforce	484,200/ 40.4%	73.8%	380,700/ 63.1%	103,500/ 17.4%
Inactive persons in the labor market	714,314/ 59.6%	26.2%	222,628/ 36.9%	491,327/ 82.6%
Unemployment	142,500/ 29.4%	6.8%	110,800/ 29.1%	31,700/ 30.6%
Unemployment from the age 15-24	40,400/ 55.0%	15.0%/ 27,500	27,500 /51.8%	13,000/ 63.2%

<sup>2</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018) <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/07/statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-kosove-2017-18> consulted on date; 02/03/2020.

<sup>3</sup> American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, Education and Labor Market in Kosovo and the European Union, Education and Labor Market in Kosovo and the European Union Project "Private Sector Development through the implementation of the SSA", Pristina, December 2018, p.5.

**Table 3:** *Percentage of students registered in Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions*

ISCED fields (The International Standard Classification of Education)	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Arts and human sciences	2.66%	2.91%	3.3%	3.31%
Business administration, law	31.68%	29.86%	29.54%	28.27%
Production and Construction	31.98%	33.80%	32.69%	33.18%
Agriculture, Forestry, Viticulture and Fishery	3.99%	2.87%	3.90%	3.52%
Health and social welfare	15.03%	15.76%	16.23%	18.31%
Services	2.71%	2.77%	2.79%	2.48%
Other	0,09%	0.00%	0.18%	0.04%

68, and most of them are managed by the relevant municipal authorities. The number of teachers in Vocational Education and Training schools is 3,154, of which 1,287 are women. <sup>23</sup> Over the years, the number of students enrolled in VET has increased, indicating that more young people are enrolling in VET than in general education schools. Preferred fields of study are engineering, production, and construction, then business, administration, and law, as well as health and social welfare<sup>4</sup>.

The report of the European Commission for Kosovo, regarding the economic reforms of Kosovo, 2019-2021, Brussels, 11.4.2019 SWD (2019) and the Report on Kosovo, Brussels, dated 6.10.2020, states that Kosovo has not made any significant progress. The EU, through its programs, funding, and policy coordination of Member States through the open method of coordination, supports education and culture in Kosovo. The VET system lacks practical and applied for courses in most programs. The cooperation of vocational schools and business entities is below the appropriate minimum level. This makes it difficult for donors and private

businesses to obtain projects. There is a lack of effort to give children with disabilities the opportunity for quality education. In 2018, 75 new assistants qualify to work with children/students with special needs, adding the first group of 54. About 53 assistants were employed in 2019<sup>5</sup>.

Teachers in VET centers have the necessary formal qualifications but are not equipped with adequate professional development opportunities. Furthermore, there is a lack of teaching materials and textbooks. There is still a discrepancy between labor market needs and education outcomes. MEST as an objective has foreseen the increase of the percentage of registered students. The performance of the labor market lags far behind the region and the EU and especially the disproportion between the increase in the workforce and new jobs. Another issue worth discussing is the participation of women in the labor market. Economic growth has not contributed to employment as the growth of the able-bodied population exceeds the number of new jobs. In 2018, the labor force participation rate declined to 40.9% from 42.8% from a year earlier. In terms

<sup>4</sup> Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo, *ibid*, p. 15-16

<sup>5</sup> Progress Report for Kosovo, Brussels, 6.10.2020, p.83



**Table 4:** 2017 *pre-university education budget*

Source	Salaries and daily wages	Goods and services	Utility costs	Subsidies and transfers	Capital expenditures	Total
Government grants	13,088,879	1,044,098	254,000	-	810,350	15,197,327
Own source revenues	70,000	178,500	-	85,000	632,650	966,150
Total	13,158,879	1,222,598	254,000	85,000	1,443,000	16,163,477

of gender, the participation of women was only 18.4%, which means that one-third of economically active women are unemployed (33.4%).

In 2017, the overall employment rate was 28.8% compared to 29.8% in the previous year, while the wide employment gap between the male and female population (45.3% and 12.3%, respectively) continued. The unemployment rate fell to 29.6% in 2018, from 30.5% in 2017. Overall, unemployment in Kosovo increased further and reached 55.4% from 52.7%<sup>6</sup> in 2017. The outcome of this is that the workforce is a challenge in itself in terms of gaining basic knowledge to practice a certain vocation. As a concrete example regarding pre-primary education, Prizren can be the second-largest municipality in Kosovo in terms of the number of inhabitants and territory; there are currently 1750 children attending public pre-primary schools. In the public institutions of the Municipality of Prizren, there are 1820 teachers, of which 52 in pre-primary education, 502 in primary education, 1004 in the level of lower secondary education, and 330 are employed in the upper secondary schools of the Municipality<sup>7</sup>. For 2017, the Municipality of Prizren has allocated 16,163,477 euros for expenditures in pre-university education.

Table. 4 shows that 81.4% of operating

expenditures for the education sector of the Municipality of Prizren are dedicated to salaries. Approximately 20% of the budget is used by the Municipal Directorate of Education for the expansion, improvement, and maintenance of school infrastructure. The rate of public current expenditures per student as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product per capita is 12.32%<sup>10</sup> which is below the national average of 14.9%<sup>8</sup>.

This report also includes future objectives related to accountability, increasing the performance of directors and other responsible persons, implementing curricula, quality assurance, etc. The objective of the municipality regarding the professionalization and adaptation of educational profiles in the municipality of Prizren, the labor market, and the needs of the market in the country and markets outside Kosovo is missing. The most challenging are the profiles that need to be opened or strengthen the existing ones that tempt students to enroll. This approach has to do with the empowerment and professionalization of vocational schools which have a long experience in the municipality of Prizren. An example of this is the technical high school in Prizren, which for decades has provided professional staff to the local industry in Prizren and generally to the labor market in Prizren.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp. 18-21

<sup>7</sup> Education development plan, 2017-2021 in the municipality of Prizren, Prizren, 2017

<sup>8</sup> Annual statistical report with educational indicators 2015/16, MEST, December 2016

Various trades have been taught in this school (tanner, silversmith, mechanic, trade, food technician, etc.) which have covered the needs of the labor market in Prizren (the former shoe factory in Prizren, textile factory, food technology factory, commercial enterprises, production of handicrafts, etc.) and these enterprises used to have an internal and external market for the placement of their products<sup>9</sup>.

## Challenges

Among the challenges that negatively affect the continuous professional development of teachers of vocational education and training according to the Report of the Organization “European Training Foundation” titled “Continuous professional development for teachers and trainers of vocational education and training in Kosovo” 2018, are: the dominance of men over the age of 50 in management of the school as more than half of them have no previous experience in school management, monitoring the performance of teachers is performed through direct observation conducted by principals or other management staff of schools, but not by designated mentors.

The lack of teachers with special needs was a critical issue for one-third of vocational schools and the participation of students in vocational practice is a problem in almost half of the schools. Kosovo Education Policies progressed with the development of the Quality Assurance Strategy for Kosovo Pre-University Education 2016-2020,

the Strategic Framework for Constant Professional Development Kosovo, the National Development Strategy of Kosovo 2016-2021, KESP 2017-2021, and administrative instructions (AI) enable the implementation of the Teachers Licensing System, Career and Professional Development of Teachers and Educational Employees. This framework aims to make a coherent link between career, standards, and quality development. The licensing process is ongoing. From 2012 to 2017, 96.55% of teachers have attained career licenses. From the survey results, 47% of vocational teachers in Kosovo have participated in another type of Constant Professional Development during the previous 12 months<sup>10</sup>.

Teachers’ participation in the Conference was the same, but there was an increase from 18% to 32% of teachers who had the opportunity to attend and learn from other schools. Business training has increased from 16% (2015) to 35% (2018). About 62% of teachers of professional subjects attended at least 30 classes of Continuous Professional Development (2015: 48%). This suggests that the duration of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has increased for those with a face in Continuous Professional Development. Only 42% of all teachers have more than 2 classes of training of Continuous Professional Development. There has been a small difference in the percentage of teachers who participated in the CPD (37%) addressing directly their profile or sector (2015: 36%)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The Municipality of Prizren is located in the southwest of the Republic of Kosovo in an area of 640 km<sup>2</sup> (5.94% of the territory of Kosovo) and consists of 76 settlements with 220,776 inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. One of the features of the Municipality of Prizren is its multi-ethnic character, as different communities coexist in it, such as: Albanians, Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. Such a characteristic is reflected in all levels of education starting from preschool education to higher education. In the past, the municipality of Prizren had a local industry where different workers with different professions were employed. The industry in the municipality of Prizren was state-owned.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p.6

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.7

## Government National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training

The strategic plan is the basic document for the development of the education sector in Kosovo for the years 2017-2021. The legal framework approved by the Kosovo Parliament has been drafted, inferring Law no. 04 / L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, Law no. 03 / L-068 on education in the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, Law no. 04 / L-138 on Vocational Education and Training, etc.

*Law no. 04 / L-138 on Vocational Education and Training* is a basic law that aims to train young people in accordance with the needs of the market, their professionalization, creating a general and professional culture. These principles are based on the principles of lifelong learning, technical-technological progress, and other economic developments<sup>12</sup>. Within this law, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) has been established, responsible for the administration and management of Vocational Education and Training institutions. The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), currently has a limited role as it does not cover all schools in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. It is believed that by drafting the secondary legislation this agency will be given additional authorizations for its field of activity<sup>13</sup>. Within the legal acts and rules, secondary legislation (AI, regulations, etc.) has been drafted regarding the definition of the structure and functioning of the Agency for Vocational Education and

Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), medium-term and long-term objectives of this Agency for education and vocational training to be better organized and to achieve the greatest success.

By Administrative Instructions, the above Agency has not been given full competencies and authorizations which make it entirely functional and at the same time, the structure of the Agency is not fully defined in these documents, to clarify the mission of this Agency as efficiently as possible<sup>14</sup>.

An important issue is also the financial position of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), namely the financial possibility for providing educational services in the field of education by natural or legal persons. The purpose of this Administrative Instruction is financial incentives for all legal entities to provide quality services<sup>15</sup>. Kosovo's budget cannot allocate sufficient funds due to budget constraints and lines. The report of the Organization "Aligning Education for Employment (LLED)" on the current situation in vocational education and training, Policy Analysis and Legal Framework, the definition of the selection process and criteria for harmonizing educational programs with the labor market in Kosovo developed by the EIPP for ALLED2 - (European Institute for Public Policy), analyzed the needs of the labor market in Kosovo by economic sectors. According to this report compiled in 2019, the sectors are agriculture, food processing, production, and processing, as well as energy and power supply. In the targeted sector of the ALLED2 project for the sector involved "Production and

<sup>12</sup> Law no. 04 / L-138 on Vocational Education and Training, article 4

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, article 13

<sup>14</sup> Administrative Instruction no. 14/2014 Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), articles 3,4,5, and 8

<sup>15</sup> Administrative Instruction no. 21/2016 on the allocation of budget funds from the category of subsidies and transfers

Table 5

Municipality	School	Sector Profile
Deçan	Tafil Kasumaj	Mechatronics
Gjakovë	Nexhmedi Nixha	Production operator
Glllogoc	Fehmi Lladrovci	Mechatronics
Gjilan	Mehmet Isai	Mechatronics
Istog	Mithat Frashëri	Production operator
Klinë	Fehmi Agani	Production operator
Mitrovica	Arkitekt Sinani	Production operator
Lipjan	Mixed Secondary High Schools	Machinery mechanics
Rahovec	Selajdin Mullaabazi	Machinery Mechanics
Prishtinë	Prishtinë	CNC
Prizren	11 Marsi	Metal processing
Shtime	Sh.M. Profesionale	Machinery mechanics
Suharekë	Skender Luarasi	Production operator Machinery mechanics
Ferizaj	Pjetër Bogdani	Mechatronics Production Operator
Viti	Jonuz Zejnullahu	Production operator
Vushtrri	Lutfi Musiqi	Mechatronics Production Operator

processing - Mechatronics” there are 17 active schools throughout Kosovo<sup>16</sup>. List of active Vocational Education and Training Schools in the targeted sector of the ALLED 2 project “Production and processing - Mechatronics”.

List of active Vocational Education and Training schools in the targeted sector of the ALLED 2 project, food processing.

Fourteen Vocational Education Training schools in 14 municipalities that are active in the targeted sector of the ALLED2 project including “Agriculture” are schools that have been part of the project in order to achieve desired

results. In Gjakova, VET School “Kadri Kusari”, horticulture, veterinary profile, in Glllogoc VET School “Fehmi Lladrovci” Horticulture, in Gjilan the school “Arberia”, Horticulture, Veterinary, and Agribusiness, in Klina, VET School “Fehmi Agani”, Horticulture, in Rahovec, VET School “Selajdin Mullaaba”, Horticulture, in Peja, VET School “Ali Hadri”, Horticulture and Veterinary, in Podujevë, VET School “Isa Boletini” Agribusiness, in Prishtina, VET School “Abdyl Frashëri”, Horticulture, Veterinary, and Agribusiness, in Prizren, VET School “Anton Ceta”, Agribusiness, in Shtime, VET School, Agribusiness, in

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Organization., Aligning Education for Employment, (LLED) on the study of the current situation in Vocational Education and Training, Policy analysis and legal framework, definition of the selection process and criteria to harmonize educational programs with the market in Kosovo developed by Developed by EIPP for ALLED2 - European Institute for Public Policy, Prishtina, November, 2019, p. 41-42

Table 6

Municipality	School	Sector profile
Gjakovë	Kadri Kusari	Food processing
Gillogoc	Fehmi Lladrovci	Food processing
Gjilan	Arbëria	Food processing
Klinë	Fehmi Agani	Food processing
Mitrovica	Arkitekt Sinani	Food processing
Rahovec	Selajdin Mullaabazi	Food processing
Pejë	Ali Hadri	Food processing
Podujevë	Isa Boletini	Food processing
Prishtinë	Abdyl Frasheri	Food processing
Prizren	Ymer Prizreni	Food processing
Prizren	Anton Ceta	Food processing
Suharekë	Skender Luarasi	Food processing
Ferizaj	Zenel Hajdini	Food processing
Viti	Jonuz Zejnullahu	Food processing
Vushtrri	Bahri Haxha	Food processing

Suhareka, VET School “Abdyl Ramaj”, Agribusiness and Horticulture, in Ferizaj, VET School “Zenel Hajdini”, Horticulture, Veterinary, and Agribusiness, in Viti, VET School Jonuz Zejnullahu Horticulture, in Vushtrri VET School “Bahri Haxha”. Veterinary and AGrobusiness<sup>17</sup>.

### Vocational Education and Training System

The VET system in Kosovo comprises formal and informal education. Formal education – the school, vocational education, and training are organized in grades 10, 11, and 12. Classes and qualifications are developed in modular contents in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and Law no. 03 / L-060 on National Qualifications for Vocational Education. The VET system

is organized in two levels of Vocational Education and Training; the first level of vocational education is two years, grades 10 and 11. This level enables students to be equipped with a certificate of professional training of craftsmen. Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework enables the transition to the second level of vocational education, i.e. progression to grade 12, which enables students to obtain a certificate of qualification of the level of a qualified worker. Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework enables progression to the third level of vocational education (technical-managerial level) or one-year courses that enable progression to post-secondary studies in higher university education<sup>18</sup>. In Kosovo, there are 122 Vocational Education and Training (VET) profiles offered in 67 public VET schools. Among these schools, some schools offer

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. pg.42-45

<sup>18</sup> Report reference of KKKs of Kosovo at KEK, AKK, Prishtina, 2016

gymnasiums and Vocational Education and Training in 27 municipalities. During the 2018/19 school year, there were 42,986 students, or about 53% of the total number of high school students<sup>19</sup>.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare through the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo has established eight (8) Vocational Training Centers (VTC) which are located in the seven Regions of the Republic of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica) with 69 workshops and 30 different professions where the training and retraining of persons who are registered as jobseekers, the unemployed and those receiving career guidance services are performed. They are located near all Employment Offices in the municipalities and include (i) Institutional Training in Vocational Training Centers and (ii) Combined Training (Vocational Training Centers and Enterprises). Training is oriented toward improving and adapting professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for efficient performance within a profession aimed at enhancing the perspective of participants in hiring or retaining employment<sup>20</sup>.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, in cooperation with the NGO, "ALLED", drafted the project "Harmonization of Education and Training with the Needs of the Labor Market" which is funded by the European Union and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) ) and implemented by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). This project aims initially to train registered jobseekers and then establish a policy of education

based on the labor market, empowerment, and establishment of vocational schools<sup>21</sup>.

## Conclusion

Vocational education and training in Kosovo continue to be a very important link to education in Kosovo. Law enforcement vacuum, low enrollment of students in vocational secondary schools, lack of experts in certain vocational fields, limited budget are obstacles to the functioning of state mechanisms. Kosovo's growing human capital is Kosovo's main source of economic growth. One of the many opportunities for improving the social well-being of the people of Kosovo is investing in the vocational education and training sector.

VET is the best way for a school-work transformation. Despite the continuation of education reform in Kosovo, curriculum revisions, communication and cooperation with the private business, teachers' training, however, the VET system continues to have shortcomings which are obstacles to the employment of students attending vocational schools. These shortcomings, in addition to the relationship with private business, the lack of clear curricula that professionalize the student, are also the quality of teaching, lack of teaching and learning materials, incomplete access to professional practice and practical training in schools, etc.

This reality shows that VET should not undergo a drastic restructuring, as one of the main ways through which constant gaps can be filled and economic growth can be sought among the social and economic opportunities for development. Therefore,

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, the administration of the Vocational Training Center (QAP) are located in the regions of the Republic of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica)) with 69 workers and 30 different professions. In this center training and retraining of persons who are registered as jobseekers, unemployed and those who receive career guidance services are performed, in addition to all Employment offices in municipalities.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Presentation of the "ALLED II" project. 14.12.2020.

## Recommendations

VET in Kosovo, despite making some steps forward, needs further improvement. However, continuous progress is related to efficient cooperation with the relevant institution of Kosovo. Given the need for the professional development of VET aiming to improve the professional experience in school in order to compete in the labor market, the following steps should be made:

- The government, together with the respective parties and stakeholders should work sufficiently in including the private sector equally in VET. This can be achieved by different projects that include private companies specialized in developing professional profiles;
- Allocation of more budget funds is a basic condition that can be used for creating a fund for VET;
- Development of professional profiles based on survey and detailed research regarding the needs of the labor market

to remove existing capacity gaps in the labor market;

- Entrepreneurship and school management competencies in VET are a significant condition to provide efficient management that would lead to providing the best quality teaching and practical capacity building.
- Development of career centers in VET institutions to offer support services for students, starting from the career guidance lessons in the classrooms, that would improve their skills; and improving the reputation of the VET sector through effective promotion of the sector with the assistance of political interest parties as well as the private sector.

Improvements in the VET system would lead to more efficient use of human resources, and as a result of this that employees would benefit through employment opportunities and the economy in general by productivity growth.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo: Challenges and Opportunities, published by the project "Kosovo Network for Education and Employment - KEEN", April 2019, Pristina
- Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018) <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/07/statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-kosove-2017-18> consulted on the date; 02/03/2020.
- American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, Education and Labor Market in Kosovo and the European Union, Education and Labor Market in Kosovo and the European Union Project "Private Sector Development through the implementation of the SAA", Pristina, December 2018, p.5.
- Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo, *ibid.*, P. 15-16
- Progress Report for Kosovo, Brussels, 6.10.2020, p.83
- The education development plan, 2017-2021 in the municipality of Prizren, Prizren, 2017
- Annual statistical report with educational indicators 2015/16, MEST, December 2016
- The Municipality of Prizren is located in the southwest of the Republic of Kosovo in an area of 640 km<sup>2</sup> (5.94% of the territory of Kosovo) and consists of 76 settlements with 220,776 inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. One of the features of the Municipality of Prizren is its multi-ethnic character, as different communities coexist in it, such as Albanians, Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians. Such a characteristic is reflected in all levels of education starting from preschool education to higher education. In the past, the municipality of Prizren had a local industry where different workers with different professions were employed. The

- industry in the municipality of Prizren was state-owned.
- Law no. 04 / L-138 on Vocational Education and Training, article 4
- Administrative Instruction no. 14/2014 Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), articles 3,4,5, and 8
- Administrative Instruction no. 21/2016 on the allocation of budget funds from the category of subsidies and transfers
- Report of the Organization., Aligning Education for Employment, (LLED) on the study of the current situation in Vocational Education and Training, Policy analysis and legal framework, definition of the selection process and criteria to harmonize educational programs with the market in Kosovo developed by EIPP for ALLED2 - European Institute for Public Policy, Prishtina, November, 2019p.41-42
- Report reference of KKKs of Kosovo at KEK, AKK, Prishtinë 2016
- The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, the administration of the Vocational Training Center (QAP) are those that are concentrated in the region of the Republic of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica)) with 69 workers and 30 different professions. In this center is done skills and re-skills of persons who are registered as job seekers, unemployed, and those who receive career guidance services, in addition to all Employment offices in municipalities.
- Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Presentation of the "ALLED II" project. 14.12.2020.



# LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

**Andi ÇAUSHI**

*University of Elbasan A. Xhuvani, Albania*

*Faculty of Economy*

Email: andi.caushi@uniel.edu.al

**Shpëtim ÇAUSHI**

*University of Elbasan A. Xhuvani, Albania*

*Faculty of Educational Sciences*

Email: shpetim.caushi@uniel.edu.al

---

## ABSTRACT

The school of young leaders, its experience and models in space and time, are the milestones and references of our own national school developed through significant challenges, survival, achievements and successes as an expression of our identity and physiognomy. Through the school and its development in general and the special names are the leaders, who have made an era with their outstanding models. If we want decent leaders, we must assist them in developing the capacity to accomplish their jobs, to make their work possible and useful. For school leaders, the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational development schools and in-service teacher training are critical. Leadership with professional training, integrity and the desire and kindness to follow and develop the process at all times has created meaningful models. Leadership in education is a hugely complex area. We can begin by building on a strong foundation, by understanding

**Andi ÇAUSHI** (1989) completed his studies at Istanbul University with high results, in the branch of Economics, then MSc at Epoka University. For many years he has been part of the Department of Finance - Accounting at the Faculty of Economics, at the University "Aleksandër Xhuvani". Over the years he has conducted research and scientific activities reflected in publications and has been participant in many International Conferences.

**Shpëtim ÇAUSHI** completed his studies at ILA, Tirana. He earned the degree of Doctor and the title Assoc. Prof. Dr. He has been working at the "Aleksandër Xhuvani" University, near the Faculty of Educational Sciences, for 3 decades. He has been elected for two terms Head of Department, elected to the UE Academic Senate, Administrative Board, in 3 terms Deputy Dean, approximately 1 decade president of the University Union and approximately 2 decade's part-time lecturer at the UA.

the type of leader and his competences. Next, by setting effective targets and goals, progress can be monitored. Objectives need to be settled in order to have clear desired outcomes. These can be short-, medium- or long-term objectives. They can be based around activity and effort or results, as appropriate. In addition to, it must be ensured that the individual has adequate motivation. During every period of time, investing and evaluation has been done as necessary for the education, for the school and for its development and future.

**Keywords:** *Leadership, education, motivation, development.*

## Introduction

We begin this study by answering first what is education. This crucial question must be addressed by anybody involved in the educational process. We can only begin to construct a positive concept of education and appreciate its impact on life after we comprehend the goal of education and have a rough idea of what education is. The most frequent definition of education, according to John Dewey, is what is done in school or other places where it is taught. This is a narrow definition that overlooks many aspects of the learning process. In the end, Dewey makes the entire educational process consistent with his perspective of aims and in opposition to the ultimate goals.

Paul Monroe broadens his concept to cover both the process and the final result. In general, education refers to the whole number of processes by which a community or social group, large or small, transmits the aims and power achieved in order to assure the continuation of self-existence and growth. So far, it appears that education takes both into consideration, as it might be the product or process of a goal-oriented attempt to modify experience through the direction and management of learning.

Of course, education involves both the process of collecting valuable learning experiences and the end result of desired personality and behavior changes. While education can be classed as both formative and informative, the true test of education is the type of personality that is developed. True education necessitates individual

growth and personality development. This is accomplished by a process of leadership, extensive experience, and active participation in education. Every subject can grow and develop as a result of the education that has been and continues to be provided to it.

Two concepts are required for a thorough understanding of the learning process. The first is a procedure that involves the integration of ideas and the construction of ideals. The extraction aspect, which comprises the activities side, is the second notion. To put it another way, the entire educational process entails both impression and expression - or explanatory activities.

## Methodology

Teaching and education are important components of a knowledge-based society's economic and cultural characteristics, and should be considered in that context. In order to be effective leader's teachers must be able to:

They must collaborate with others; they work in a field that should be founded on society's inclusive principles and the development of each student's potential. They must be aware of human growth and development and show self-assurance in interpersonal connections. They must be able to work with students on an individual basis and encourage them to grow as citizens. They should also collaborate with colleagues to improve their teaching / learning skills and work in ways that boost students' collective intelligence.

They should work with knowledge, technology, and information, and they must be knowledgeable in a range of fields. Teachers should be able to examine, evaluate, and reflect on the knowledge they impart utilizing technology efficiently and where appropriate as part of their vocational education and training. To create and administer learning environments, they must have pedagogical skills. The teacher should teach and encourage students to use information-gathering networks. They must be well-versed in the subject and view learning as a process for the whole life. They should also use their practical and theoretical skills to learn from their own experiences and adapt various teaching / learning competences to the needs of the students.

Third, teachers should collaborate with and within society; they may help students become more globally responsible citizens. Teachers should inspire multicultural understanding and respect, as well as mobility and cooperation. They must be able to make clear the balance between various student cultures and shared values. They must also be aware of the ethical implications of a knowledge-based society, as well as the variables that contribute to social cohesion and inclusion. They must be able to collaborate effectively with the local community, educational partners, and stakeholders such as parents, teacher education institutions, and advocacy groups. Their knowledge and experience should have an impact on quality assurance processes. The teacher's work in all of these areas must continue throughout their lives, beginning with primary education and continuing with professional development, as they will not be able to hold all of the necessary teaching competences once they graduate from school.

Thus, to conclude each of these competencies must be grasped professionally, to have a successful leader, a successful director.

## Results and Discussion

The leaders' intellectual preparation, civic responsibility, dedication, and professional clarity, as well as the strength, stability, and vitality required to successfully tackle the new problems of the moment, are of interest to society as a whole, as well as to pedagogical staff in particular. Students will be more prepared for the job market as a result of this efficiency, as well as their ability to communicate and utilise contemporary computer information. Aside from learning, the school's primary responsibility is to educate the younger generation. Leaders in schools and pedagogical staff must inevitably assume the role of leader, which necessitates a great deal of effort, perseverance, professionalism, dedication, and the assumption of social, intellectual, legal, and administrative duties.

The school director is viewed as a leader in modern leadership, a foresighted individual who is always in touch with his teaching and learning staff, aiming for them not only in terms of new forms and techniques of teaching as learning, but also in terms of human issues. Students and educators will both feel respected and equal in this manner. Modern leadership is the skill of forming, maintaining, developing, and growing a group in order to prepare it to tackle ever-increasing problems. The environment of reciprocal human interactions between leadership and staff should be one of equal trust and information sharing.

Good management of the educational process presupposes perfect knowledge of science, workmanship and the art of teaching, communication and education. So the educational learning process has three sources: science, workmanship and art. To lead, you have to constantly enrich yourself, that is, to progressively and creatively increase pedagogical, educational, leadership, etc. knowledge. The headmaster

of the school will be a teacher of his teachers, in application of the legal framework, ethical code if he is trustworthy, authoritarian until he perfects his mastery every day, the mastery of the teachers and also the teaching and education of his students.

The leader must strengthen the spirit of cooperation in all teaching groups, listening carefully and solving in time all the problems for the fulfillment of institutional and human obligations.

If you want to be a good leader, first of all you aim to be a good teacher and a good educator, not only in relation to those students you teach, but to all the students of the school and the nearby community. So, to be a true leader, whom you trust and respect is realized only when every day you know better the details of the pedagogical process.

The goal of leadership evaluation is to quantify the process and its outcomes. Measurements should record the outcomes of the leader's actions and decisions, as well as how he got there. As a result, leadership evaluation is a stand-alone process for tracking performance improvement and current events. Modern-day leaders see the future through the lens of the positive present, rather than the issues, flaws, and weaknesses of the present.

## Conclusion

Leadership capacity building of a leader is achieved through the triangle of strength: leader, recognition (communication), influence. The objectives of a successful leader in education are: inclusion, structure, implementation and communication. The vision of the leader for the school should be the stimulation of the elite students that will bring even the first ones. The trinomial: leader, teacher, student is measured through the upper, middle and lower grades. The question of whether teaching and education is directed creatively and organizationally can be answered through

verbal understanding, speed of perception, reasoning, numerical data, memory, fluency, visualization and design.

Thought is born and perfected together with man and it has developed and strengthened over the years by the help of education. This has made the world and society in the global concept develop. Thanks to human thoughts, experience and reasoning; humanity has come to know itself and the world better and to run permanently and steadily the affairs related to education in the whole cycles of the school.

Successful leader means: organizing, planning and defining the work in order to know as well as possible the details of this complex mechanism called school. The role of the school and the environment in the development of trends and the all-round formation of young people should be seen as an opportunity for the formation of future citizens of a civil society.

## Recommendations

Effective leaders act in the educational institution's best interests. To illustrate, it is distinguished between "getting a job done" (success-oriented leadership) and "impacting the disposition of followers" (effective leadership). Leaders sometimes focus on achieving goals quickly but fail to lay the groundwork for productivity to become a permanent part of the group's culture. Short-term goals are prioritized by success-oriented leaders, frequently at the expense of medium- and long-term educational goals.

Effective leaders are more concerned with an organization's long-term aspiration than with immediate productivity. This leadership approach yields long-term, consistent results.

There are two dimensions to leadership behavior: (i) task behavior is the amount to which the leader spells out an individual's or group's duties and obligations. Telling

people what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it, and with whom to do it are all examples of these behaviors. (ii) The amount to which the leader engages in two-way or multi-way communication is referred to as relationship behavior. Listening, facilitating, and helpful behaviors are among them.

A lot of aspects influence how well leadership performs, including followers, supervisors, essential colleagues, organization, job demands, and decision time. However, followership is the most important aspect of the situation. "In a leadership environment, the interaction between the leader and staff is crucial to success".

## REFERENCES

- Conger, Jay, A. & Riggio, Ronald, E. (2007). *The Practice of Leadership: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders*, (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1989). Accountability for Professional Practice. *Teachers College Record*, 91, 59-80.
- JR. Schermerhorn, John R. (2008) Management. (9th ed.) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Kapur, Radhika. (2018). Educational Leadership. Retrieved September 22, 2021 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323691649\\_Educational\\_Leadership](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323691649_Educational_Leadership)
- Kuri, V., Zekaj, Xh. (2012) Formimi i Lidershit dhe Praktikës në të Mirën të Komunikimit të Tyre. (Botim i parë) Tiranë, AL: Reklama.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004) How Leadership Influences Student Learning. Retrieved September 20, 2021 from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.pdf>



# PROS AND CONS OF DIGITALIZATION IN CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT WITH GIFTED / TALENTED STUDENTS

**Sevim MUSTAFA**  
*College AAB Prishtina, Kosovo*  
Email: sevimmustafa2@gmail.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Creativity as one of the most important assets of the human mind is a primary concern within education. Digitalization technology today shapes how knowledge is gained/created. Use of technology with gifted/talented students continue to increase dramatically and this can play a major role in improving the educational skills. The review of literature (books, research paper and gray literature) regarding ways and how technological advances and web tools can impact the education of gifted and talented individuals, mainly focusing in creativity is done. Despite the fact that modern computers and internet-related technologies play more and more active role in educating the gifted and talented yet isn't used full potential. There is growing E-learning via personal learning environments of students which reflect connectivism as a new theory of teaching and learning using electronic means of delivery, usually Web-based. But, this technology/internet development growing fast and tremendously, requires a giant shift in teaching in the field of education in order to incorporate ways students learn. Research studies that investigated the effect of Web-based technology on student creativity are rather scarce, some highlights that students in general are found to be uncritical users, requiring guidelines to address this problem. The growth/access to technology in formal and informal education settings will continue to change

**Sevim MUSTAFA** is professor in College AAB, Prishtina. She holds a PhD in University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia – Faculty of Pedagogy in "Gifted and Talented Programme". Her research interests lie within the sub-disciplines of Psychology and Psychology of Gifted and Talented. Dr. Mustafa has participated in numerous national and international conferences and authored many publications on topics such as anxiety, stress, self-esteem, leadership, learning organization, gifted children etc. Dr Mustafa is the project assistent for Kosovo in the IMPLEMENTALL and MENTUPP project, within Horizon 2020.

education profoundly. We need to adapt to this change by incorporating these tools and to adopt new ways of learning and teaching. Educative authorities must develop policies/ strategies to address needs of gifted and talented children incorporating technology and web-tools to enhance creativity.

**Keywords:** *Creativity, Digitalization, Advantages, Disadvantages, Gifted*

## Defining creativity

Firstly, we faced debate regarding definition of creativity. Many of the earliest definitions of creativity focused on the creative process. Perhaps the most remarkable process definition is of Watson in 1928 which is one behavioral view, but Koestler (1964) stated that creativity involves a “bisociative process”-the deliberate connecting of two previously unrelated “matrices of thought” to produce a new insight or invention. Other theorists have similarly concentrated on thought processes in their definitions of creativity. Gestalt psychologists (e.g., Wertheimer, 1945) suggested that creativity and insight arise when the thinker grasps the essential features of a problem and their relation to a final solution. Newell et al. (1962) stated that “creative activity appears simply to be a special class of problem-solving activity characterized by novelty, unconventionality, persistence, and difficulty in problem formulation” (p. 66). And some developmental psychologists (e.g., Feldman, 1980; Gruber & Barrett, 1974) have proposed that creative thinking shares many features in common with Piagetian transformations.

Most definitions have used the creative product as the distinguishing sign of creativity. For example, Jackson and Messick (1965) proposed that creative products elicit a distinct set of aesthetic responses from observers: surprise, satisfaction, stimulation, and savoring. Bruner (1962) similarly focused on the response that creative products elicit from observers. He saw the creative product as anything that produces “effective surprise” in the observer, in

addition to a “shock of recognition” that the product or response, while novel, is entirely appropriate. Most product definitions of creativity include these characteristics of novelty and appropriateness. Stein (1974) similarly suggested a definition that builds on the basic notions of novelty and appropriateness: creativity results in the production of some novel result that is useful, tenable, or satisfying, and represents a real “leap” away from what has previously existed.

Mednick (1962) proposed associative theory of creativity, defining creative thinking as the process of forming associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful (p. 221). Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1999), for example, has taken a systems approach to creativity that emphasizes the interaction between an individual, the domain, and the field in which creativity occurs. According to Sternberg and Lubart (1998), conceptions of creativity focus on the ability of the individual to make associations from among existing knowledge to arrive at new questions, ideas, interpretations, or conclusions about what is already known. Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) proposed a synthesized definition of creativity based on several recurring elements from the literature. In this paper, I adopt their proposed definition: “Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context” (p. 90). Creativity is often described as the 4Ps, or the combination of people, products, and processes that occurs



within a given place (Mayer, 2010, Kozbelt, Beghetto, & Runco, 2011).

### Education and Creativity

Creativity is a primary concern within education but there is complex relation. Some scholars even make a strong case that an emphasis on creativity in a community has a number of important cultural and economic benefits (Plucker, Waitman & Hartley; 2011). The broad range of definitions of creativity has traditionally confused discussions about creative enhancement. Yet the relationship between creativity and schools is, in most countries, a complex, tenuous one. This is due to the widespread belief, even among educators, that creativity cannot be enhanced.

Leaders in the study of creativity have long held that it can be enhanced. Osborn (1963) argued that creative-thinking skills are available to all people and that these skills can be nurtured through training. E. P. Torrance (1972, 1987; E. P. Torrance & J. P. Torrance, 1973) has spent much of his prodigious career documenting the success of creativity training programs. Several studies and reviews of the literature provide empirical support for the idea that creativity can be enhanced through training (e.g., Fontenot, 1993; Grossman & Wiseman, 1993; Higgins, 1994; Nadler et al., 1995; Pyryt, 1999; Sternberg & Lubart, 1996; Treffinger, Isaksen, & Dorval, 1996). Torrance engaged in considerable efforts to strengthen the relationship between research conducted on creativity, and implementation of activities in classrooms and other educational settings.

Because creativity is a complex phenomenon that is multidimensional (Kerr, 2009) there is also debate where creativity is static or one instance which can be enhanced. Plucker et al. (2004) posit that believing creativity to be a static all-or-none phenomenon is one of the most pervasive

myths surrounding creativity. Despite an abundance of research showing that training can increase creative production (e.g., Amabile, 1983, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1992; Torrance, 1972a), the belief that creativity is static persists (Treffinger, Isaksen, & Dorval, 1996). Nickerson (1999) asserts that, lacking evidence to the contrary, assuming that creativity can be enhanced is compelling, but more interesting is the question of how, not whether, creativity can be enhanced.

In the mid-1970s, Joseph Renzulli developed the Enrichment Triad Model (ETM), a gifted education model that focuses on helping students learn the creative process as it occurs in the real world. Students move through three stages of enrichment, in which they initially become exposed to unusual topics outside traditional school curriculum subjects (Type I) (Plucker, Waitman & Hartley; 2011). They then broaden their horizon of familiar contexts by cultivating a broad range of thinking and feeling processes, including cognitive and affective thinking, 'how-to-learn' skills, advanced research skills and reference material usage, and fostering written, oral, and visual communication skills (Plucker, Waitman & Hartley; 2011).

An Alternative Model is useful to emphasize here. Based on the history of efforts to enhance creativity in students in educational spheres and settings, Plucker and his colleagues proposed a new model of creativity enhancement that seeks to explain how creativity can be effectively and efficiently enhanced in P-20 education. Their new, alternative model has multiple stages that form an iterative process for improving creativity-related attitudes, beliefs, and skills (Plucker, Waitman & Hartley; 2011). These principles stand in contrast to other models for teaching creativity, in that the alternative model places much less emphasis on 'creativity techniques' than other models and curriculum.

In addition to general intelligence, according to the literature the important factors for enhancing creativity are as follows: domain-specific knowledge, basic skills, self-management skills, specific creativity-aiding techniques, purpose and intention, curiosity and inquisitiveness, motivation, self-confidence and a willingness to take risks, mastery orientation and self-competition, beliefs, choice, and the opportunity to discover (Kerr, 2009).

#### *Some best practices.*

Creativity in education is lacking in the United States, while other countries such as Sweden, China, Australia, Canada, and Singapore, are ramping up innovation efforts and spending enormous amounts of money to provide new incentives and to nurture talent for supporting innovation initiatives (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

Two types of programs have been designed to enhance children's creativity (Cropley, 2011). The first involves modifications of the regular school curriculum, such as the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and Mentor Connection, the Talents Unlimited Model, the Cognitive–Affective Interaction Model, the SOI system, and the Purdue Creativity and Enrichment Models. The second includes extracurricular programs that may or may not be affiliated by educators attached to a child's school, including the Odyssey of the Mind and Future Problem-Solving programs and numerous local, regional, and national invention programs.

However, the distinction between these two types of programs is not universal, and programs frequently and successfully transverse this rather artificial boundary (Cropley, 2011).

The Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation (i3) initiatives, are designed to increase creative thinking in the classroom in support of the president's call for greater

emphasis on innovation in schools (Robelen, 2011). The second phase is launched of the i3 program in early June 2011 and the goals of these programs are tied closely to technological innovation and to developing future talents (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

A good example is the European Union Year of Creativity 2009 where the target audience was young people and educators, with the long-term goal of developing lifelong learning in the European community (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

The UK implemented a national program to bring creativity into the classroom beginning in 2002, with emphasis on investment in human capital and the “Creative Partnerships” program introduced in 2003 in the UK was one approach to foster creativity in the everyday classroom (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

What is needed is an approach in which all aspects of teaching and learning adhere to basic principles for fostering creativity. The task for teachers is to challenge children to be open for the novel; to give them courage to think for themselves and to seek the new; to show respect for children and their achievements in order to foster in them self-confidence and high expectations (Cropley, 2011). These tasks involve not only intellectual, but also personal, motivational, emotional, and social aspects of creativity.

#### **Literature review about digitalization in learning and creativity**

We are living in an information era (Shavinina, 1998). Everyday the news about tremendous discoveries and amazing inventions in the area of information and communication technologies does not leave any doubt concerning a novel reality of our life (Shavinina, 1998). The distinguishing characteristic of the new millennium is, consequently, a need for creative and intellectual people—that is, for the gifted

and talented—for further global progress (Shavinina, 1997a, 1997b).

Of course, the idea of developing an individual's abilities through computer technology is not a new one, having been discussed in the psychological literature (Bowen, Shore, & Cartwright, 1993; Olson, 1986; Salomon, Perkins, & Globerson, 1991). The major ways that technology instruction can enhance educational experiences for gifted individuals are by exposing students to emerging innovations, providing more learner control in the instructional environment, and increasing personal productivity (Berger & McIntire, 1998). The possibilities for the use of technology with gifted students continue to increase dramatically (Pyryt, 2009). Despite advances in the research regarding creativity, changes in implementation in the classroom to enhance creativity have lagged behind (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999). Modern computers and Internet-related technologies play more and more active role in educating the gifted and talented (Shavinina, 2009). We do not use the full potential of modern technology in gifted education (Shavinina, 2009).

Emergence of web-based learning and ways of optimizing/enhancing creativity is also new development. The development of integrated software, powerful hardware, Internet expansion, and wireless technology has kept computer technology at the forefront of the educational revolution (Pyryt, 2009). With rapidly changing knowledge and the increasing need for acquisition of new thinking and new ways of operating, creative learning and teaching plays an essential role in the growth of a society (Kerr, 2009). The specific ways an educator engages creative learning in the classroom are varied and multidimensional in nature (Kerr, 2009). To do this, teachers must be educated in creativity to better support creative behavior and creative productivity (Kerr, 2009).

### *Personal learning environments and connectivism.*

E-learning is a form of teaching and learning using electronic means of delivery, usually Web-based. E-learning uses network technologies to create, foster, deliver, and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere (Kerr, 2009). It comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching: applications and processes include web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classroom opportunities, and digital collaboration (Runco & Pritzaker, 2011).

Connectivism is new theory of learning. Connectivism is referred to as a “learning theory for the digital age” (Siemens, 2006a). Youth today are more creative and interactive through Web 2.0 technologies and believe that use of these technologies in school would make them better prepared and engaged (Greenhow et al., 2009). They are collecting information, taking it apart, and recreating what is meaningful and useful to them (Siemens, 2006a). Learners today build personal learning environments (PLEs) to collect information and build knowledge (Attwell, 2007) and PLE is not limited to a single discipline; it is multidisciplinary covering any range of subjects pertinent to the learner (Downes, 2006). PLEs reflect connectivism. Creative processes and activities there now include individuals working in virtual space and collaborations with peers and any others—known and unknown to the individuals—nationally and internationally, making connections (MacCrimmon & Wagner, 1994; Siemens, 2006b).

### *Emergence of digitalization in learning and creativity.*

The generation of youth today have interacted with digital technology from an early age (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin 2008; Jones & Shao, 2011). They have grown up in an environment of computer technology that shapes how information is developed and shared and how knowledge is gained

and created (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). They take the open-source technologies and use them as intended by builders, but they also frequently create new uses. They play, manipulate, re-create, and share what they discover (Downes, 2005; Siemens, 2006a).

With the advent of new Web tools, Facebook, and smart phones available to virtually anyone with access to the Internet, the field of education requires a giant shift in teaching in order to incorporate ways students learn (Greenhow, Robelia, & Huges, 2009). Classroom teachers have opportunities to use their classroom instruction to promote creative thinking in students by using tools already familiar to students (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). However, for teachers to promote creativity in the classroom, creativity needs to be recognized and valued and changes in educational processes should occur, beginning with innovation in curricula to encompass creativity (Shaheen, 2010; Turner-Bisset, 2007; Wilson, 2009). This is particularly important because teachers often have misconceptions about creativity and creative student's classroom behaviors (Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005; Fleith, 2000; Runco, Johnson, & Bear, 1993). Technology can provide an independent learning environment and such an environment operates with a high degree of collaboration (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

#### *Web-based tools for the classroom.*

Web tools provide new opportunities for students to learn skills of communication, collaboration, and creativity (Solomon & Schrum, 2010). Social media connections in a PLE open the way for their members to quickly share ideas and products. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikimedia, eBay, and Etsy are among the social networks used to get creative ideas and products to others in the field, known and unknown (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). Additional technologies for creativity and innovation are mobile devices, game-based learning, and cloud computing

(Johnson et al., 2011). There are also web 2.0 tools encourage artistic risk-taking and creativity in general (Zhang, 2009). There are, quite literally, thousands of tools available.

#### *Bringing digitalization in learning and creativity.*

Research studies that investigate the effect of Web-based technology on student creativity are rather scarce (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). Students are on line, interactive, and engaged with each other and with the world at an ever-increasing level (Levin & Arafeh, 2010). One may suppose that it would be an easy transition to bring these skills into the classroom; yet, this has not been the case in regard to utilizing the technologies for creative purposes (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). Teachers' level of technology knowledge and skills is one obstacle to realizing this transition, and the demand to 'cover' the curriculum is another (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

Educators are responsible to bring creativity in the classroom (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). Foremost, they should realize that most students are already using the tools of technology to be creative, although these are not utilized for learning and may not be necessarily beneficial to learning (Greenhow et al., 2009).

The role and responsibility of teachers in the e-learning environment are not the same as those of traditional classrooms where teachers have face-to-face interactions and student behaviors are directly observable (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

Combining the creative skills of the digital native (youth) with the instructional objectives of classroom education is the challenge that educators face (Greenhow et al., 2009).

As e-learning and distance education become a major part of the modern-day instructional format (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006; Tallent-Runnels et al.,

2006), students' ability to self-regulate their learning is critical. However, learning on the Web and any other forms of online learning require students to be autonomous and use self-regulated approach to learning (Jung, 2001; Kearsley, 2000; Keegan, 1996; Peters, 1998).

At the same time, students in general are found to be uncritical users of Web information, requiring guidelines so that students can become critical users of Web resources (Zhang & Duke, 2011). There is the potential to be overwhelmed by the vast amount of information available. There is much inappropriate information available on the Internet such as directions for making pipe bombs and pornographic websites (Pyryt, 2009).

In addition, the vast information on the Internet can be damaging to education and decision making (Hong & Ditzler, 2013). Evaluation, filtering, and personalization of information are critical. The role of a teacher in the creative use of the vast information is critical as they can guide students through the morass of information to make the information meaningful, valuable, and useful in the classroom setting (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

Teacher training is sorely needed to update teachers with new knowledge and skills that students are very familiar with, so they can supervise and facilitate student learning through the vastly available information and tools in the Internet world (Hong & Ditzler, 2013).

However, beyond studying the technological content knowledge, teachers and teacher candidates must be trained actively in technology skills and applications (Martinez, 2010).

### **Advantages and disadvantages of digitalization in creativity development**

Shaunessy (2000) think that technology has received greater emphasis in educational settings during the last 20 years, especially

with the advent of the Internet, affordable pricing of computers for the general public, and widespread use of technology in business, industry, and academia. Computer technologies are recognized as both learning tools and as a content area in gifted education, each of which should be included in the curriculum for gifted to appropriately address gifted students' intellectual, creative, academic, psychosocial, and leadership needs (Shaunessy, 2000).

Sarsan (2011) stated that digitalization represents access to new worlds because provide information – text, audio and graphic based – about new areas of learning, new places, new shapes, and new worlds. They stimulate new ways of thinking and analyzing problems. With computers, people are free to manipulate the information and look at facts and ideas in different

ways. In 1998, UNESCO identified 15 special properties of computers, which enhance student learning processes.

As observed by Maddux, Johnson and Willis, there is growing interest in the application of computer-based tools to support higher level thinking and metacognitive processes (Sarsan, 2011). Fitzgerald and Findlay (2004) stated that the application of computers is to enable organizations and individuals to 'learn faster' to cope with accelerating social and technological change. McLeod and Cropley believe that computer applications have an important role in maintaining interest, developing curiosity, and fostering the desire to master problematic situations (Sarsan, 2011).

Computers can effectively promote learning, but only if they are used in ways which are consistent with the natural processes of learning. The analysis of several Computer-Assisted Instructional (CAI) projects reveals that computer related learning environments are most successful when they closely resemble the natural learning environment found in the nonschool

world, thereby capitalizing on the student's inherent motivation to learn (Sarsan,2011).

The Internet provides convenient connections between computerized labs, simulations, and research databases. The Internet is a source of information, like a vast library which holds bundles of information in the form of texts, graphics, sound, video, etc. It also provides searching facilities for exploring or seeking information from all over the world and facilitating virtual online shopping accessible to purchasers all around the world.

UNESCO opines that the computer is evolving into a tool to facilitate learning of most of the educational properties of older technologies (books, radio, film strips, phonograph records, television) with at least equal if not greater convenience of use plus communication capabilities. Computers can also be very accommodating – they can reach students at different study levels, any time of the day or night. Additionally, the sense of independence and accomplishment a computer offers children helps fuel their self-confidence (Sarsan,2011). Alden has expressed that relying on a computer as a tool may be one of the most effective ways to build both a child's learning skills and self-esteem (Sarsan,2011). Spender appraises that as we move from book culture to digital culture, we are on the brink of being able to rethink the entire process of teaching and learning (Sarsan,2011). Adler strongly believes that the challenge is in helping children learn to use a home computer to bring out their imagination and curiosity – and learn when to turn it off in favor of more traditional playthings (Sarsan,2011).

As a creativity tool, computers provide access to an infinite color palette and a fine-tuned keyboard keeps children busy creating art and music. Saunders and Thagard (2005) speculated that computers often do unexpected things, but rarely in a way that leads to new discoveries.

According to Boden, creativity is just an unpredictable combination of ideas (Sarsan,2011). If so, computer modeling of creativity could be simple, and could combine ideas at random until something creative emerged. According to Margaret Boden, computers can generate novel ideas in all three ways, though they are best at modeling exploratory creativity (Sarsan,2011). They can also aid human creativity.

Again: Do Digitalization Enhance Creativity or Destroy Creativity? Creativity might be viewed as any process which results in a novel and useful product. People use computers for creative tasks; they flesh out ideas for text, graphics, engineering solutions, etc, (Sarsan,2011). Computer programming is an especially creative activity, but few tools for programming aid creativity. Educational research indicates that there is no single effect of the computer on creativity; technology can support either uncreative drill or creative production.

Egbert et al. (2002) believed that using computer vision research results could provide a high level of motivation to students. It is also an excellent learning tool for teaching students to integrate and use their acquired knowledge.

According to Selker (2005), computers can be designed to foster creativity as well. In the opinion of Mills computers have traditionally been used as tools to raise efficiency (Sarsan,2011). To realize the true value of computers, one should view them as tools to enhance human creativity.

As Hamza and Alhalabi state, technologies can be educators' tools in finding creative ways that encourage students to self-test, self-question, and self-regulate learning in helping them to create solutions to complex problems (Sarsan,2011).

Some researchers speculate that computer simulation technology may have a positive effect on creativity (e.g., Betz, Gokhale, Harkow). However, these

researchers offer no empirical evidence to support their claim.

Some criticize computer use because computers – by their very nature are mechanistic and algorithmic – support only uncreative thinking and production. However, adults increasingly

view computers as valuable tools of creative production.

In the opinion of Eaglestone and Ford, it may at first sight appear that computers are irrelevant to creativity in that they are better at convergent than divergent information processing tasks, therefore having little if any role to play in supporting creative thinking (Sarsan,2011). Clements states that computers have been found to be a fertile tool for supporting creativity (Sarsan,2011). Many articles address IT supports for creative practice.

As stated earlier, there are relatively few empirical studies on the effects of computers on creativity. The lack of research may be because instructional computing has only thrived over the last decade. The following are the few empirical studies found to date that address computers and creativity as measured by the creative product.

A study conducted by Joram, Woodruff, Bryson, and Lindsay found that average students produced their most creative work using word processors as compared to students using pencil and paper (Sarsan,2011).

However, the researchers also found that word-processing had a negative effect on the creativity of above average writers.

Howe concluded that computer graphics technology may enable graphic designers to generate an abundance of ideas, then capture the most creative ones and incorporate them into their designs (Sarsan,2011).

Computers can be designed to foster creativity as well. The steps of the creative process where software can be used include generating ideas, recording ideas,

manipulating ideas, and implementing ideas (Shaunessy, 200).

Many thinking techniques which are performed manually, maybe with pen and paper, can potentially be encapsulated in a program.

Gifted learners often come to school with advanced technology skills and can quickly and efficiently use digital cameras, e-mail, word processors, and games. The Technology Standards for Students developed by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the Technology Content Standards developed by the International Technology Education Association (ITEA) are seminal works in education because each establishes benchmarks in the study and use of technology in all grade levels and disciplines. The ITEA's standards outline educational goals and outcomes that are similar to gifted education, including problem-solving skills; preparing students to become independent, lifelong learners and informed, judicious consumers of information; maintaining technology equipment; and the interdisciplinary nature of technology as a tool to assist students in learning about other content areas, including math and science as well as the arts.

There are many ways in which information technology is being or could be used to amplify cognition and creativity. Nickerson (2005) listed a number of examples, including facilitation of idea generation via computer assisted brainstorming; knowledge assessment; de biasing; value discovering; problem-solving help; error prevention; negotiation and conflict resolution; facilitating probabilistic reasoning; and planning, forecasting, and budgeting.

Also Nickerson (2005) discussed the risks in cognition and creativity amplification, and pointed out that “. . .there are risks involved, for example, the possibility of [· · ·] technology being used

in ‘bad’ way for propaganda, brainwashing, and manipulation,” (p. 23). In addition, the use of the Internet could “facilitate identity theft, distribution of child pornography, false advertising, and other forms of cybercrimes...But such is the price of progress; any tool can be used for bad purposes as well as good, and the more powerful the tool, the greater the potential in both cases” (p. 23).

## Conclusions

The growth in technology and access to technology in formal and informal education settings will continue to change education profoundly.

Hong & Ditzler (2013) state that its rather natural to recommend the utilization of technologies and tools to enable creativity in school as well as out of school. Of course, as Hong & Ditzler (2013) concluded- the concept of classroom teaching needs to be

expanded and teachers need to adapt to this change by incorporating these tools for creative use.

The sophisticated uses of computers in digitalization era are especially important for gifted students because their curricular experiences should include cognitive challenges that can be facilitated through information technology, including all phases of research and project development, such as concept mapping; data gathering; analysis of appropriate and credible electronic sources; communication with experts via e-mail, blogs, chats, or wikis; synthesis of ideas using word-processing tools; and digital presentations in the form of electronic portfolios, Web sites, or presentation media, to name a few.

In same time, educative authorities in my country must develop policies/strategies to address needs of gifted and talented children; why not incorporating technology and web-tools to enhance creativity.

## REFERENCES

- Aljughaiman, A., & Mowrer-Reynolds, E. (2005). Teachers’ conceptions of creativity and creative students. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 39, 17–34.
- Amabile, T. M. (1983). *The social psychology of creativity*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Amabile, T. M., Conti, R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J., & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the work environment for creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154–1184.
- Attwell, G. (2007, January). *Personal Learning Environments - the future of eLearning?* Retrieved June 7, 2011, from <http://www.elearningpapers.eu>
- Behavior*, 6, 114–143.
- Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008). The ‘digital natives’ debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39, 775–786.
- Berger, S. L., & McIntire, J. (1998). Technology-based instruction for young gifted children. In Smutny, J. F. (Ed.), *The young gifted child: Potential and promise, an anthology* (pp.535–546). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Bowen, S., Shore, B. M., & Cartwright, G. F. (1992). Do gifted children use computers differently?: A view from “The Factory.” *Gifted Education International*, 8, 151–154.
- Bruner, J. (1962). The conditions of creativity. In H. Gruber, G. Terrell & M. Wertheimer (Eds.), *Contemporary approaches to creative thinking*. New York: Atherton Press.
- Cropley, A.J. (2011). Teaching Creativity. In Runco, M.A. & Pritzaker, S.R. (2011). *Encyclopedia of Creativity*. Second edition. Academic Press. Elsevier, Inc.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1988). Society, culture, and person: A systems view of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives* (pp.



- 325–339). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In R. J.
- Downes, S. (2005, October 17). *E-learning 2.0*. Retrieved June 24, 2011, from <http://www.elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?section=articles&article=29-1>
- Downes, S. (2006, October 16). *Learning Networks and Connective Knowledge*. Retrieved June 26, 2011, from <http://it.coe.uga.edu/itforum/paper92/paper92.html>
- Egbert, D., Bebis, G., Latourette, N., McIntosh, M., & Mitra, A. (2002). Computer vision research as a teaching tool in CS1. In Proceedings of Frontiers in Education Conference, Boston MA.
- Feldman, D. (1980). *Beyond universals in cognitive development*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Fitzgerald, R., & Findlay, J. (2004). A computer-based research tool for rapid knowledge-creation: A retro-viral agent of change. EdMedia 2004 Conference. Switzerland, 21–26 June, 2004.
- Fleith, D. (2000). Teacher and student perceptions of creativity in the classroom environment. *Roepers Review*, 22, 148–153.
- Fontenot, N. A. (1993). Effects of training in creativity and creative problem finding upon business people. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 133, 11–22.
- Greenhow, C., Robelia, B., & Hughes, J. E. (2009). Learning, teaching, and scholarship in a digital age: Web 2.0 and classroom research: What path should we take now? *Educational Researcher*, 38, 246–259.
- Grossman, S. R., & Wiseman, E. E. (1993). Seven operating principles for enhanced creative problem solving training. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 27, 1–17.
- Gruber, H. E., & Barrett, P. H. (1974). *Darwin on man: A psychological study of scientific creativity*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Guilford, J. P. (1950). Creativity. *American Psychologist*, 5, 444–454.
- Higgins, J. M. (1994, November). Training 101: Creating creativity. *Training and Development*, pp. 11–15.
- Hong, E. & Ditzler, C. (2013) *Incorporating technology and web tools in Creativity Instruction*. In Kim, K.H.; Kaufman, J.C.; Baer, J. & Sriraman, B. (Eds.), *Creatively Gifted Students are not like Other Gifted Students: Research, Theory, and Practice*, 17–38. Sense Publishers.
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). (2000). National educational technology standards for students: Connecting curriculum and technology. Eugene, OR: Author.
- Jackson, P., & Messick, S. (1985). The person, the product and the response: Conceptual problems in the assessment of creativity. *Journal of Personality*, 33, 309–329.
- Johnson, L., Adams, S., and Haywood, K., (2011). *The NMC Horizon Report: 2011 K-12 Edition*. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.
- Johnstone, J. (2007). Towards a creativity research agenda in information ethics. *International Review of Information Ethics*, vol. 7 (09/2007). (WWW document): <http://www.i-r-i-e.net/inhalt/007/34-johnstone.pdf>
- Jones, C., & Shao, B. (2011). *The net generation and digital natives: implications for higher education*. York, UK: Higher Education Academy.
- Jung, I. (2001). Building a theoretical framework of web-based instruction in the context of distance education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 32, 525 – 534.
- Kearsley, G. (2000). *Online education: learning and teaching in cyberspace*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Keegan, D. (1996). *Foundations of distance education* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Kerr, B.A. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent*. Sage Publications, Inc
- Koestler, A. (1964). *The act of creation*. New York: Dell.
- Kozbelt, A., & Beghetto, R. A. (2010) *The Cambridge handbook of creativity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Larreamey-Joerns, J., & Leinhardt, G. (2006). Going the distance with online education. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 567–605.
- Levin, D., & Arafeh, S. (2010, August 14). *The digital disconnect*. Retrieved February 28, 2011, from <http://www.pewinternet.org>
- MacCrimmon, K. K., & Wagner, C. (1994). Stimulating ideas through creativity software. *Management Science*, 40, 1514–1532.
- Martinez, M. (2010). Teacher education can't ignore technology. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(2), 74–75.
- Mayer, R. E. (2010). *Fifty years of creativity research*. In R. L. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 449–460). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Mednick, S. A. (1962). The associative basis of the creative process. *Psychological Review*, 69, 220–232.
- Newell, A., Shaw, J., & Simon, H. (1962). The processes of creative thinking. In H. Gruber, G. Terrell & M. Wertheimer (Eds.), *Contemporary approaches to creative thinking*. New York: Atherton Press.
- Nicholls, J. G. (1972). Creativity in the person who will never produce anything original and useful: The concept of creativity as a normally distributed trait. *American Psychologist*, 27, 717–727.
- Nickerson, R. S. (1999). *Enhancing creativity*. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The handbook of creativity* (pp. 392–430). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nickerson, R. S. (2005). Technology and cognition amplification. In R. J. Sternberg & D. D. Preiss (Eds.), *Intelligence and technology: The impact of tools on the nature and development of human abilities* (pp. 3–27). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Olson, D. R. (1986). *Intelligence and literacy: The relationships between intelligence and the technologies of representation and communication*. In R. J. Sternberg & R. K. Wagner (Eds.), *Practical intelligence* (pp. 338–360). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Osborn, A. (1963). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem-solving* (3rd ed.). New York: Charles Scribner and Sons.
- Peters, O. (1998). *Learning and teaching in distance education: Analyses and interpretations from an international perspective*. London: Kogan Page.
- Pfeiffer, S.I. (2008). *Handbook of Giftedness in Children, Psychoeducational Theory, Research, and Best Practices*. Springer Science+Business Media, LLC
- Plucker, J. A., & Renzulli, J. S. (1999). Psychometric approaches to the study of human creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.) *The handbook of creativity* (pp. 35–61). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Plucker, J., Beghetto, R. A., & Dow, G. T. (2004). Why isn't creativity more important to educational psychologists? Potential, pitfalls, and future directions in creativity research. *Educational Psychologist*, 39, 83–96.
- Plucker, J.A., Waitman, G.R., & Hartley, K.A. (2011). Education and Creativity. In Runco, M.A. & Pritzaker, S.R. (2011). *Encyclopedia of Creativity*. Second edition. Academic Press. Elsevier, Inc.
- Pyryt, M. C. (1999). Effectiveness of training children's divergent thinking: A meta-analytic review. In A. S. Fishkin, B. Cramond, & P. Olszewski-Kubilius (Eds.), *Investigating creativity in youth: Research and methods* (pp. 351–365). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Pyryt, M.C. (2009) Recent Developments in Technology: Implications for Gifted Education. In Shavinina, L.V. (ed.), *International Handbook on Giftedness*. Springer Science+Business Media B.V.
- Robelen, E. (2011, January). Obama Emphasizes STEM Education in the State of the Union. Downloaded August 28, 2011, from [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/01/obama\\_laments\\_quality\\_of\\_us\\_ma.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/01/obama_laments_quality_of_us_ma.html)
- Runco, M., Johnson, D., & Bear, P. (1993). Parents' and teachers' implicit theories of children's creativity. *Child Study Journal*, 23, 91–113.
- Runco, M.A. & Pritzaker, S.R. (2011). *Encyclopedia*

- of Creativity*. Second edition. Academic Press. Elsevier, Inc.
- Runco, M.A. (2004). Creativity. *Annual Review of Psychology* 55(1): 657–687.
- Salomon, G., Perkins, D., & Globerson, T. (1991). Partners in cognition: Extending human intelligence with intelligent technologies. *Educational Researcher*, 20, 2–9.
- Sarsani, M.R. (2011). Computers and Creativity In. Runco, M.A. & Pritzaker, S.R. *Encyclopedia of Creativity*. Second edition. Academic Press. Elsevier, Inc
- Saunders, D. & Thagard, P. (2005). Creativity in computer science. In: Kaufman, J.C. & Baer, J. (eds.) *Creativity Across Domains: Faces of the Muse*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (WWW document). URL: <http://cogsci.uwaterloo.ca/Articles/creativity.pdf>
- Selker, T. (2005). Fostering motivation and creativity for computer users. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 63: Issue 4–5 (October 2005).
- Siemens, G. (2006a). *Knowing Knowledge*. Retrieved March 4, 2011, from [http://www.elearnspace.org/KnowingKnowledge\\_LowRes.pdf](http://www.elearnspace.org/KnowingKnowledge_LowRes.pdf)
- Siemens, G. (2006b, November 12). *Connectivism: Learning Theory or Pastime of the Self-Amused?* Retrieved June 26, 2011, from [http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/Connectivism\\_response.doc](http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/Connectivism_response.doc)
- Solomon, G., & Schrum, L. (2010). *Web 2.0 How-to for Educators*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Stein, M. (1974,1975). *Stimulating Creativity* (Vols. 1 and 2). New York: Academic Press.,
- Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 313–335). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R. J., & Lubart, T. I. (1992). Buy low and sell high: An investment approach to creativity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1, 1–5.
- Sternberg, R. J., & Lubart, T. I. (1998). The concept of creativity: Prospects and paradigms. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 3–15). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaheen, R. (2010). Creativity and education. *Creative Education*, 1, 166–169.
- Shaunessy, E. (200). Technology. Kerr, B.A. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Shavinina, L. (1998a). Interdisciplinary innovation: Psychoeducational multimedia technologies. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 16, 189–204.
- Shavinina, L. V. (1997a, July). Educational multimedia of “tomorrow”: High intellectual and creative psychoeducational technologies. (Paper presented at the European Congress of Psychology, Dublin, Ireland).
- Shavinina, L. V. (1997b, September). High intellectual and creative technologies as an educational multimedia of the 21st century. (Paper presented at the European Open Classroom II Conference: School Education in the Information Society, Sisi, Crete, Greece)
- Tallent-Runnels, M. K., Thomas, J. A., Lan, W. Y., Cooper, S., Ahern, T. C., Shaw, S. M., & Liu, X. (2006). Teaching courses online: A review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 93–135.
- Technology for All Americans Project, & International Technology Education Association. (2000). Standards for technological literacy: Content for the study of technology. Reston, VA: International Technology Education Association.
- Torrance, E. P. (1972). Can we teach children to think creatively? *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 6, 114–143.
- Torrance, E. P. (1987). Recent trends in teaching children and adults to think creatively. In S. G. Isaksen (Ed.), *Frontiers of creativity research: Beyond the basics* (pp. 204–215). Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited.
- Torrance, E. P., & Torrance, J. P. (1973). *Is creativity teachable?* (Phi Delta Kappa Foundation Fastback 20). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappan Educational Foundation.
- Treffinger, D. J., Isaksen, S. G., & Dorval, D.

- K. (1996). Creative problem solving: An overview. In M. A. Runco (Ed.), *Problem finding, problem solving, and creativity* (pp. 223-235). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Turner-Bisset, R. (2007). Performanativity by stealth: A critique of recent initiatives on creativity. *Education*, 3-13, 35, 193-203.
- Wallace, B. & Eriksson, G., (2006). *Diversity in Gifted Education. International perspectives on global issues*. Routledge. Taylor & Francis.
- Watson, J. (1928). *Behaviorism*. London: K. Paul.
- Wilson, A. (2009). (2nd ed.). *Creativity in primary education*. Exeter: Learning Matters.
- Zhang, J. (2009). Comments on Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes: Toward a Creative Social Web for Learners and Teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 274-276.
- Zhang, S., & Duke, N. K. (2011). The impact of instruction in the WWWDOT framework on students' disposition and ability to evaluate Web sites as sources of information. *Elementary School Journal*, 112, 132-154.

# CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PEACE BUILDING AND TOLERANCE<sup>1</sup>

**Irida AGOLLI NASUFI**  
*University of Tirana, Albania*  
*Faculty of Social Science*  
E-mail: iagolli@yahoo.com

---

## ABSTRACT

This paper is developed based on findings from 6 desk research reports that mapped good practices and analyzed the state of play in reconciliation, education for peace building, as well as hate speech policies in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia. The paper explore the problems and difficulties that are preceded by young people and civil society's organization in various studies and reports conducted in the Western Balkans and Croatia. The study describes ways in which policies can encourage civil society organizations to play a crucial role in peace and reconciliation and no hate speech. In the Balkans, peaceful coexistence and tolerance between different ethnic groups as well as acceptance of the existing borders have remained fragile. In the context of peacebuilding, hate speech, minority rights, and youth participation, Civil Society Organizations are playing a crucial role in building bridges between polarized groups, promoting dialogue and reconciliation. Reconciliation among the members of various national and ethnic groups cannot occur when the concept of reconciliation is not presented and understood by society. Young people are a crucial asset in the connection of the Western Balkans region, through

**Irida (AGOLLI) NASUFI** is a lecture at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Tirana since 2006. Her interests and expertise includes social policy, reproductive health and peer education, youth, children rights, gender and development, HIV/AIDS and child protection, etc. Her working experience is also rich in consultancy service to national and international institutions and organizations

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is a product of the Erasmus + funded project "Walking the path of reconciliation- empowering communities for a peaceful society, implemented by BBA and Partners during 2019-2021.

joint projects, collaboration and exchange. Improving the process of reconciliation and hate speech, raises a crucial question regarding the systematic education which would promote democratic culture and critical thinking, as well as objectively introduce youth to these topics.

**Key words:** *youth policies, reconciliation, peace, civil society organization*

## Introduction

The concept of reconciliation is not a self-evident one nor does it follow the same pattern in all post-conflict societies. Moreover, it is accepted that in principle the process of reconciliation “involves mutual recognition of a common violent past and the transformation of a harmful relationship and behavior to promote a shared future towards sustainable peace (Lederach, 1997; Bloomfield, Barnes, and Huyse, 2003). As a process that occurs in the aftermath of massive human rights violations and destruction, reconciliation is connected to dealing with the violent past while establishing a future that will counter violence and extremism. Its fundamental role in post-conflict societies consists of the fact that it enables a better understanding of the violence that has occurred in the past, but also to take relevant initiatives for tangible social, political and economic changes to restore society and ensure lasting peace. Hate speech can generate harmful effects in various aspects. It has the potential of destabilizing social peace, shape attitudes and control behaviors that might be violent and dangerous (Müller & Schwarz, 2018), leading in severe hate crimes such as genocide (Maravilla, 2008).

Reconciliation in the context of Western Balkans and Croatia is a very complex and multidimensional process of establishing long term stability and peace in the region because in order to achieve the change we have to deal with the reconciliation at micro community level, local, national and cross-border or regional level, what also differs from country to country.

Beside this multidimensional aspect,

in regional context we have to be aware also that in some countries reconciliation is happening between minority ethnic groups and majority ethnic population while in others, the equal state constitutive are coming from different ethnicities and none of them is perceived as a minority group at the state level (BIH). We also have to differentiate the process of reconciliation happening in the post-conflict communities after the armed conflict (ex-Yugoslavian countries), and among the communities which are post-conflict, but were not involved in armed conflict.

Hate speech in the context is understood and analyzed as part of the reconciliation and human right policies as developed by the Council of Europe. This paper analyses and focuses more on the online hate speech, as the new rising phenomena in the Europe. In order to assess the achievements in reconciliation process, countering the hate speech, then measure the level of policy implementation and role of relevant stakeholders, we will use the analyses and findings from desk researches developed in the frame of WALK ON project in Western Balkan (WB) and Croatia.

## Reconciliation and prevention of hate speech – story from the practice and how urgent is the situation

The establishment of the Berlin Process provided a new momentum for regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. In particular, it contributed to bringing back the attention to the role and importance of achieving reconciliation and inter societal dialogue in the region. The declaration of the first high level summit in Berlin mentioned

clearly that the collective endeavors are expected to generate additional real progress in the region as well as achieve reconciliation within and between the local societies. It also inspired intergovernmental cooperation through entities set up during its course: the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), the Western Balkans Chambers Investment Forum (WBCIF) and the Western Balkans Fund (WBF). Civil society organizations from the Western Balkans region which represent an important part of this process, quickly understood the importance of the initiative and created the Civil Society Forum – a platform that exists since 2015 for monitoring the progress of the initiatives and feed the process with the policy proposals.

Beside the Berlin process, in 2017 the strategy “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans”, was introduced by the European Commission. This strategy confirmed the European perspective of the WB and investment in a “stable, strong and united Europe based on common values” (European Commission, 2018). It is known as a Western Balkan strategy that includes 6 Flagship Initiatives while one of them is—support to reconciliation and good neighbor relation. Anyhow, both initiatives are recognizing youth and youth organizations as main drivers of establishing peaceful in Western Balkan societies.

### **Governmental approach to reconciliation**

According to the findings from “Walk On” desk-researches, the governmental approach and commitments in dealing with the past are not so significant on the impact level when it comes to achievement of the ultimate goals of peace building and stability. The nature of these attempts was mainly around institution building and legislation development in the entire

Western Balkan countries and Croatia. These normative and legal acts were taken to arrange commitment to the fulfillment and respect of human rights, freedom, and the rule of law and protection of minorities against discrimination. Despite the initiatives and legal framework in place, an all-encompassing strategy was missing on dealing with its past and reconciliation, even though this appears vital to society. In terms of legal regulations all the researched countries have adopted specific constitutions, laws, strategies, and documents (specified in the reports). However, there is a distinct disparity between legal regulations and the implementation of reconciliation policies, especially when starting discussions in the issue of war crimes, which is rounded by political decisions and interests.

Bosnia and Herzegovina have been trying to maintain peace in the first place and establish a civil, legal state. Regardless of the changes done in the last 25 years, the process of reconciliation has not ended yet. Currently, the state is still divided into two entities and district Brcko, which are operating almost completely independent in terms of politics and policies. The entity of Federation of BIH is mostly inhabited with Croats and Bosniaks while Republic of Srpska has Serbs as a majority of the population what in both cases is reflected on elections by having governments which are mostly composed of parties and representatives from majority ethnicity in certain entity. On the other hand, even it is on the higher instance, the state government is manifesting weakness and fragility in the overall coordination of the joint affairs under the BIH state. These political and social divisions, which extend along ethnic and entity lines, have direct implications for the processes of dealing with the recent past in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to recent research on reconciliation, there is wide spread opinion that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also

in other ex-Yugoslavia Western Balkan countries reconciliation didn't happened in last 25 years (Ademovic 2016). On the other hand, the process of dealing with the past remains a key step in establishing a stable and enduring peace in the country (Letic, 2015). International Criminal Tribunal in Hague for Former Yugoslavia is closed in 2017. In its 24years of operation, the ICTY has indicted 161 persons and 90 persons have been convicted. One of the most significant judgments of this court is the verdict for the Srebrenica genocide. This court has sat for more than 10,000days, heard the testimonies of nearly 5,000 witnesses, 90 persons have been convicted of crimes they have committed, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity (Guterres, 2017). However, there are different opinions about work of this court and the general opinion that justice is not completely satisfied what further influences reconciliation process.

Attempts towards reconciliation between the Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo have been initiated by international actors, at the international level as well as at the national level, ever since the NATO intervention in 1999. The nature of these attempts was mainly focused on institution building and legislation. Regarding Kosovo, despite the initiatives and legal framework in place, Kosovo does not have an all-encompassing strategy on dealing with its past and reconciliation, even though this appears vital. Moreover, the general efforts designed so far in Kosovo to reach reconciliation have not generated the expected outcomes. Available past and ongoing research show that for a long time there was no common understanding of what reconciliation in Kosovo and the Western Balkans is, considering also the lack of official and unofficial publications that enable the development of a trustworthy regional understanding and strategy.

A low willingness of the decision makers

to fully commit to the reconciliation is visible in the educational system. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are three different history narratives, phenomena of ethnocentric schools with two educational programs that cohabitate in the same building. The similar situation with ethnocentric education is also present in Kosovo. While in Croatia they try to include these topics as part of the civic education curricula. When considering the initiatives of the government in Croatia directed at youth and educators with a focus on improving the process of reconciliation and hate speech, it remains crucial to respond to the question related to the systematic education which would promote democratic culture and critical thinking, as well as objectively introduce youth to these topics.

Despite heated public debate and numerous political promises, education in Croatia does not offer a well-organized civic education. The same situation is also with Serbia, while in North Macedonia the situation is slightly better than in other countries, but it is still not at a satisfactory level. When it comes to hate speech, there is also a visible influence of the international community and organizations on adoption of the policy measures that should support prevention and countering hate speech online and offline. International and EU institutions are paying increasing attention to the phenomenon of online hate speech and acknowledge this as a growing problem across and beyond Europe. In this regard, the 2015 ECRI report highlights online hate speech as one of the main issues, emphasizing that "hate speech through social media is rapidly increasing and has the potential to reach a much larger audience than extremist print media was able to reach previously". Moreover, UNESCO has recently focused on this growing issue, mapping and analysing the existing initiatives to combat online hate speech in their comprehensive 2015 report "Countering online hate speech".



### Civil society approach to reconciliation

Bottom up approach in peace and reconciliation that should support societal reconstruction and trust building among communities is mostly on civil society organizations and they are doing important job in this field. The Civil Societies Organizations (CSO) have a genuine insight into the “situation on the ground” and in the way, the policies are implemented at the local level. They can also access areas and groups which are difficult to reach and they can also make social change more efficient than the government structures. Organizations that directly work in the local environment have built a trustworthy reputation, assurance and legitimacy by citizens. Such elements contributed to the promotion and success of their project activities. The weaknesses or limitations of Civil Societies Organizations (CSO) in building reconciliation are related to limited organizational capacities and funding, as well as their focus only on the local level.

There are distinguished interventions by the civil society educating youth on reconciliation and post-war interethnic tolerance, as well as those training activists and teachers on how to educate on these topics. Undertaken interventions included various activities organized in different models of education of young activists and students, school presentations to facilitate an open and inclusive discussion, motivating youth to critically think about the dominant national discourse, etc. Researchers welcome intervention on reconciliation which were implemented on a regional level involving discussion and collaboration between youth and educators of different ethnicities. This is even more important taking into consideration the ethnocentric formal education systems in all countries of the region.

### Respect of human rights as a reconciliation mechanism

The need to strengthening minority rights, peace and security both at the national and the regional level became, in particular, apparent at the beginning of the 1990s with the conflicts in the Balkans, involving the persecution of ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious minority group.

A recent study exploring the promotion of human rights and minority protection in South Eastern Europe concludes that there is low awareness on minority rights, which is highly visible among minority groups rather than nonminority groups (European Union and the Council of Europe, 2015). The data shows that this negative trend is more obvious among young respondents than adults and is reinforced and increased as the education level gets lower. This is a concerning issue to take in consideration, as it is expected that minorities should be more aware of their rights than other people in society, involved in minority protection either as professionals or volunteers.

The main barriers perceived by the respondents are lack of commitment, awareness and interest, as well as lack of funding. The international community and minority are deemed as responsible actors for taking minority protection measures, while civil society, local and regional authorities are seen as actors with less responsibility. Concerning the responsibility of actors for taking minority protection measures, the international community is seen as a saving hand implementing and ensuring that such rights are protected for minorities. Instead of a responsible actor, it is assumed to be one of the most trustful actors (European Union and the Council of Europe, 2015)

Albania has a variety of minority groups, some of them persist facing barriers and challenges based on their ethnicity. Problems faced by Roma and Egyptian communities are a priority in the context of

the fulfillment of the European Commission recommendations for Albania and remain as five key priorities for opening accession negotiations. One of these five priorities is the protection of human rights (including non-discrimination policies, the Roma community, and the implementation of property rights). In North Macedonia, the problem of ethnic discrimination is evident; perceptions about members of other ethnic groups are slowly changing in a positive direction, though the formal educational system is not supporting the integration among dominant ethnic communities. The regular Progress Reports on North Macedonia by the European Commission (2019) are pointing the facts about continuing separation along ethnic lines in education.

According to the recent “Youth Study of North Macedonia 2018/2019”, in the past, a dominant ground for inequality was the social and racial belonging, based on which political mobilization was conducted, however, nowadays it is manifested via the cultural belonging, if we are to include in this notion the racial, ethnic, religious and language social groups.

### **Online hate speech - impact on peace and stability**

On line hate speech has become a worrying problem at European level and beyond and consequently has been put in the focus of European and international institutions. As previously mentioned, the 2015 ECRI report highlights online hate speech as one of the main phenomena, emphasizing that “hate speech through social media is rapidly increasing and has the potential to reach a much larger audience than extremist print media was able to reach previously”. Online hate speech is a problem raised by different researches who have done research in the Western Balkans and Croatia. The research conducted in 2019

on hate speech among Croatian youth on the Internet showed that 90% of youth indicated a high level of hate speech present on social media, while 70-89% indicated there is a high level of hate speech on the internet forums, as well as in political gatherings, media, graffiti or banners in public space. 96% of youth witnessed hateful and intolerant comments in the period of 3 months prior to the research. Hateful comments were mostly based on nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical appearance, religion or region (Simonovic Einwalter, 2019).

The majority (56 %) of youth in Kosovo (according to Friedrich Ebert Stiftung study, 2019) access the internet all the time in one form or another. The amount of information young people are exposed to on daily bases through the internet, is enormously high and the sources of these information are not always traceable. Therefore, they are at a great risk to be exposed to fake news and hate speech. The information that youth absorb shapes their opinion, knowledge and their attitudes, influencing thus their behaviour in the community and society at large.

The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in North Macedonia is responsible to manage the platform where people can make reports of hate speech on the social networks/media reports, where on average, 40 cases per month are registered, and many of them are related to hate speech due to ethnic background, as well as to sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2018 (OSCE) the report presented cases related to ethnicity (79 incidents) and political affiliation (31 incidents), which constituted the main grounds on which hatecrimes were committed. The trend of committing this kind of hate crime was particularly striking before and during the elections or before some significant political events in the country.

In Albania (European Commission,

2019), the legislation on hate speech, peace, and human rights is in line with international standards, however, their implementation still remains challenging. The danger of hate speech towards minorities when someone is being targeted as a result of joining a group is high and it can lead to severe cases of hate speech. Independent Media Commissions were established in some of the Western Balkan countries, which are independent regulators to ensure media (audio-visual) pluralism as well as to set standards. Despite the provision of Commissions with sufficient regulatory, monitoring and enforcement powers, there are still difficulties addressing the online hates peece problem. In addition to politics and justice, the regulation of hate speech also plays an important role in constructing realities and as such in reconciliation processes and in building democratic values in post-conflict societies. Hate speech regulation is considered to be of high importance, a first step toward an independent press which plays a key role in promoting democratic values of societies. The civil society organizations unquestionably played the strongest role in creating and implementing interventions on hate speech. Different organizations held activities on local or national levels which mostly included education and workshops with youth and youth educators, promotion of existing support services, advocating and promoting the importance of the issue.

### **Youth work, youth participation and peace building education for stability and joint peaceful future**

One of the major problems of youth remains the exclusion from social and political life, which means that participation of young people in politics, policymaking and social change is on a low scale. The lack of participation of young people in political and social processes also means that their perspectives and needs will

not be reflected in the design process or implementation of policies. Youth play a crucial role in the reconciliation processes and act as transformative force in post-conflict societies that are often characterized by continued distrust, suspicion, resentment and segregation. In North Macedonia the quality of interactions among young people of different ethnicities in formal and non-formal education is still insufficient, having in mind that there is no systematic engagement of national and local authorities responsible for education policies, school management, teachers and all students in interethnic activities, including those who hold negative perception of other ethnic communities.

Considering that education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a “state job”, major decisions in this area are taken by administrative units, which are mainly run by mono-ethnic political structures, we must unfortunately conclude that schools have become new arenas for conflict, employing sophisticated methods to educate young generations about divisions, irrational fear, and distrust of neighbors (Letic, 2015).

Youth work has offered an important contribution to the European integration process by fostering young people’s active engagement in society, civic education, cultural diversity, youth participation in democratic processes and contributing to youth policy development. Programs such as Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the structured support offered by the network of SALTO Resource Centers and National Agencies have offered support for many years, not only by offering to young people and youth workers access to mobility and education across Europe, promoting the fundamental values of Europe and fostering discussion and acceptance of diversity, but also by empowering them to play an active part in policy making. Youth is identified as a distinctive social group of relevant actors in the process of reconciliation and peace building.

## Conclusion

The main findings from the field show that despite the existence of the various policy documents and even implementation of some of them to a certain level, we are living in a status quo in the field of reconciliation. Besides that, due to various socio-economic factors, xenophobia and hate speech are rising in the region and by taking into consideration the low level of prosecuted cases, the legislation in place shows no effectiveness. Education for peace building and reconciliation as well as intercultural learning, critical thinking and citizenship education, are perceived as the most important pillars for building the long lasting peace and stability in the region. However, the formal education system is not very open to multi-perspective history narratives and peace building education, while non-formal education for peace building is not so widely spread for the systemic change. Through international

and national policies, the youth population is seen as a lead in the new wave of the reconciliation. On the other hand they do face low participation and there is a visible low interest for the topic, while they are very fragile to be influenced by ethnocentric rhetoric and education taking into consideration one narrative.

Civil society organizations have a crucial role in both, the top-down and bottom up approaches. On the first scenario CSOs should influence policies through advocacy actions and active participation in policy processes. While on the bottom up approach their role is important to support education of young generation for peace building and active participation in society, targeting the low youth participation and interest about the topic. In these terms, youth organizations who have the power to represent the voice of youth, have to play a crucial role in this process by leading an open dialog and consulting the youth they represent.

## REFERENCES

- Adamović, M, Gvozdanović, A, Kovačić, M, (2017), "Process of Reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A Qualitative Study", Published by: Compexd.o.o, Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (ISRZ), p.103
- Ahmetaj, N, Kabashi-Ramaj, B, Jaquot, M, Buzhala, Y, Hoxha, A, (2017), "Deconstructing Reconciliation in Kosovo", Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication. p.14
- Ahmetaj, N; Kabashi-Ramaj, B; Jaquot M; Buzhala, Y and Hoxha, A, (2017), "Deconstructing Reconciliation in Kosovo", Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication.
- Bloomfield, D, Barnes, T, and Huyse, L. (2003): Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook. Stockholm, IDEA.
- Divided past joint future (2016). Process of Reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A Qualitative Study.
- ECRI (2015) Annual Report on ECRI's Activities Covering the Period from 1 January to 31 December 2014; Available at [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual\\_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf)
- EU (2012). Mainstreaming human and minority rights in the EU enlargement with the Western Balkans.
- European Commission (2018). Communication from the commission to the european parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions. A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans.
- European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document, North Macedonia 2019 Report,

- Brussels, 29.5.2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-north-macedonia-report.pdf>
- European Commission. (2019). Commission staff working document Albania 2019 Report: Communication on EU Enlargement Policy. Strasbourg: European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf>
- European Union and the Council of Europe (2015). The study promoting human rights and minority protection in south east Europe.
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2019c). Youth Study South East Europe 2018 / 2019
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (2019a). Youth Study North Macedonia 2018/2019
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (2019b). Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019
- Gagliardone, I ; Gal, D ; Alves, Th ; Martinez G, (2015), "Countering online hate speech", United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-useccby-sa-e>
- Kalajdzini, A (2019) "Kosovo these days – Empowering Youth in the Reconciliation process", <https://policyblog.uni-graz.at/2019/08/kosovo-these-days-empowering-youth-in-the-reconciliation-process/>
- Kostovicova, D. (2013). Civil society and reconciliation in the Western Balkans: Great expectations? In: Prifti, Eviola, (ed.) The European future of the Western Balkans - Thessaloniki@10. EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, France, pp. 101-109.
- Lederach, J.P., (1997). Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Whashington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Letic, A. (2015) why it is important to study transitional justice in formal education processes.
- Maravilla, C. S. (2008). Hate Speech as a War Crime: Public and Direct Incitement to Genocide in International Law. *Tul. J. Comp. & Int. L.*, vol. 17, no. 113.
- Ministry of European Integration, National Plan for European Integration, June 2014.
- Müller, K., & Schwarz, C. (2018). Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 3082972). Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.
- OSCE (2018) Hate crimes in the Republic of Macedonia in 2018.
- Simonovic Einwalter, T (2019). "Predstavljanje istraživanja: Govor mržnje među mladima na internetu [Presentation of research results: Hate speech among youth on internet]", Presentation (The Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia, September 12, 2019).



# MAKING ENERGY FROM MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE IS AN IMPORTANT STEP TO CLIMATE PROTECTION

**Luiza LLURI**

*University Aleksandër Moisiu Durrës*  
*Faculty of Professional Studies*  
*Department Engineering and Marine Sciences*  
E-mail: luizalluri@uamd.edu.al

**Alma GOLGOTA**

*University Aleksandër Moisiu Durrës*  
*Faculty of Professional Studies*  
*Department Engineering and Marine Sciences*  
E-mail: almagolgota@uamd.edu.al

---

## ABSTRACT

Managing urban waste is a major responsibility for local and central governments, and it is a complex task that requires a suitable organizing capacity within the public-private sector. Different technologies are being adopted and making energy from waste is one of them. The main advantages of adopting such technologies for the reuse of waste and the production of energy from urban waste are the reduction of the amount of waste and

**Luiza LLURI** (Msc. Ing.) is a lecturer in the Department of Engineering and Maritime Science, at “Aleksandër Moisiu” University of Durrës. She holds degrees from the Polytechnic University of Tirana (BSC in Mechanical Engineering), Polytechnic University of Tirana (MSC in Mechanical Engineering). Luiza LLURI has publications in peer reviewed journals at regional, national and international conferences.

**Alma GOLGOTA** (Dr. Ing.) holds the position of Head of the Department of Engineering and Marine Sciences, at Faculty of Professional Studies, at the University “Aleksandër Moisiu”, Durrës. She holds an integrated second level degree in civil engineering, with a profile in Construction Engineering & Road & Bridge, graduated from the Polytechnic University of Tirana, Faculty of Civil Engineering. She has completed the doctoral studies in the specialty Light Construction Structures and Production of Durable Concrete.

environmental pollution and the production of a significant amount of renewable energy. In Albania, waste treatment with energy recovery is being seen as a priority. Energy recovery from the combustion of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is the conversion of non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity, or fuel through a variety of processes, including combustion, gasification, anaerobic digestion and landfill gas recovery. This technology continues to be successfully implemented in a large number of EU countries, and in recent years this option has seen a more positive approach from authorities, environmental organizations as well as experts in the field. Implementation of this project in Albania is an important step in fulfilling the national targets and bridging the gap with international standards according to the directives regarding waste, as a prerequisite for membership of the EU. This technology is expected to provide the potential for reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as a contribution to climate protection, reducing risks and potential environmental impacts bringing benefits from an environmental, technical and economic point of view.

**Keywords:** *Municipal solid waste, manage urban waste, energy production.*

## Introduction

The growth of industrialization, urbanization and changes in the life pattern, factors associated with the process of economic growth, are indicators that the current and next generation will grow in leaps and bounds in regard to the production of waste. Unlike us, a common feature in most developed countries is that the entire waste management system is being treated as a profitable venture by private companies, by non-governmental and governmental organizations with a fee for waste treatment, this being one of the main sources of income.

Municipal solid waste management in Albania is at a low level, but there has been an improvement of the situation through the implementation of the National Waste Strategy and the National Waste Management Plan 2010-2025. The legislative framework was based on the need to protect public health, the environment, and the economy, and aimed to turn waste management into a “priority issue”. Like the EU’s own waste management policy, Albania’s strategy put emphasis on waste reduction, the recovery of resources, the maximization of recycling, and re-use of waste. Albania has started the development of new regional landfills complying with the EU environmental and sanitary standards.

The future challenge is the development of the infrastructure for waste management. Based on historical MSW data the analysis undertaken for Albania will include:

The historical performance on MSW management based on available data and indicators; Uncertainties that might explain differences between the country’s performance which are more linked to differences in what the reporting includes than differences in management performance;

Incineration generally entails burning waste (residual MSW, commercial, industrial and RDF) to boil water which powers steam generators that generate electric energy and heat to be used in homes, businesses, institutions and industries. Waste-to-Energy is a technologically advanced means of waste disposal that is widely recognized for reducing greenhouse gases—particularly methane—by eliminating emissions from landfills.

The typical range of net electrical energy that can be produced is about 500 to 600 kWh of electricity per ton of waste incinerated. Thus, the incineration of about 2,200 tons per day of waste will produce about 1200 MWh of electrical energy. Over 80 percent of thermal waste to energy plants is located in developed countries, led by Japan, France, Germany and the United States. 15 percent of global waste collected is incinerated with energy recovery. According



to the formula, the cost of a 40,000 TPA plant is \$41 million, or \$1,026 per ton of annual capacity. A Medium-sized 250,000 TPA plant should cost \$169 million, or \$680 per ton of annual capacity. These numbers give us the first estimation of how much waste is converted to energy.

**Municipal solid waste management performance**

The municipal solid waste management in Albania is decentralized. The responsibility for urban waste collection lies with the local authorities. About one third of the municipalities provide waste collection services through their own companies. Two thirds of the municipalities are contracting private companies, which are selected by public tender and operate under contracts typically of three- to five-year duration. Some progress towards better waste management has been achieved during the last years through the construction of new MSW landfills, complying with environmental

standards. Such facilities are already in place in some regions, while in other regions the new landfills are still in the process of being commissioned or constructed.

Albania’s waste-management practices are still dominated by a linear collect-and-dispose approach instead of integrated sustainable waste-management. However, the recently adopted National Waste Management Strategy (2020 – 2035) has developed a roadmap towards integrating the principles of the circular economy and extended producer responsibility. Albania processed approximately one million tones of household waste in 2019. Some 78 per cent of this was treated in landfills and disposed of with varying degrees of environmental control. About 19 per cent was segregated for recycling.

Organic waste, which is about 50 per cent of disposed waste, leads to methane generation, a potent greenhouse gas. Landfill gases and leaks pollute both water and soil, endangering agriculture and drinking water supplies.

**Table 1:** *Population forecast by regions*

Regions	Population forecast			
	2018	2022	2027	2032
Berat	159,629	151,851	143,087	135,283
Dibër	139,090	131,304	122,467	114,525
Durrës	334,298	348,156	366,324	385,480
Elbasan	329,358	321,261	311,871	303,252
Fier	360,686	354,527	347,408	340,909
Gjirokastër	90,379	85,687	80,846	77,101
Korçë	253,456	245,634	236,438	227,849
Kukës	87,290	83,206	78,524	74,272
Lezhë	155,560	152,568	149,150	146,072
Shkodër	245,350	239,796	233,491	227,859
Tiranë	944,494	1,007,636	1,092,782	1,185,418
Vlorë	247,774	250,328	254,065	258,418
ALBANIA	3,347,364	3,371,954	3,416,451	3,476,438

**Table 2:** *Waste generation forecast by regions*

Region	Waste Generation Forecast [Mg/a]			
	2018	2022	2027	2032
Berat	39,503	37,616	35,491	33,601
Dibër	26,585	25,097	23,408	21,891
Durrës	105,626	110,081	115,924	122,088
Elbasan	76,175	74,350	72,239	70,309
Fier	84,624	83,197	81,549	80,046
Gjirokastrë	21,376	20,263	19,102	18,184
Korçë	62,575	60,733	58,571	56,558
Kukës	18,178	17,322	16,340	15,449
Lezhë	35,864	35,182	34,403	33,704
Shkodër	62,307	60,910	59,325	57,911
Tiranë	334,049	356,517	386,815	419,778
Vlorë	73,512	74,551	76,005	77,641
ALBANIA	940,376	955,819	979,173	1,007,159

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration has the responsibility of drafting policies and legislation on waste management, and the responsibility for inspections and control concerning the implementation of the law. Other collaborating authorities in this field are the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy, and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection.

### Performance indicators

Tirana in particular has expanded drastically and today forms a metropolitan area together with its suburbs and Durrës city. Data on population and population development are the basis for calculation of current and future waste amounts, both generated and collected waste. These then form the basis for planning of adapted sustainable solid waste management systems. The table 1 reports the population forecast by regions.

In the table 2 the waste generation forecast is summarized at the region level, with reference to the same years as the population forecast.

The table 3 shows the waste collection forecast at the level of the region, referring to the same years as the population and waste generation forecasts.

### Types of Energy Recovery

Energy recovery is the process of converting non-recyclable material into usable heat, electricity, or fuel. This conversion can be accomplished through a variety of processes, including:

**Combustion.** Combustion or incineration is the burning of solid waste in specialized facilities to create heat, steam, or electricity. Combustion requires carefully managing exhaust emissions (e.g., particulates and gases) and safely disposing or beneficially using solid ashes in order to reduce the environmental impacts of the process. Combustion ash is typically land filled.

**Table 3:** *Waste collection forecast by regions*

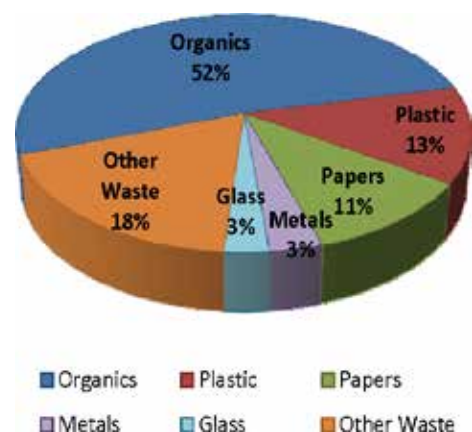
Region	Waste Collection Forecast			
	2018	2022	2027	2032
	[t/a]	[t/a]	[t/a]	[t/a]
Berat	26,516	28,010	29,679	30,874
Dibër	15,212	16,627	18,151	19,263
Durrës	84,703	92,839	103,772	115,614
Elbasan	49,120	53,542	58,817	63,430
Fier	54,557	59,809	66,187	71,992
Gjirokastrë	14,674	15,398	16,269	16,934
Korçë	42,391	45,418	48,941	51,828
Kukës	11,114	11,968	12,915	13,678
Lezhë	24,016	26,495	29,500	31,768
Shkodër	42,490	45,847	49,899	53,348
Tiranë	278,345	312,167	359,150	411,808
Vlorë	54,544	59,603	66,147	72,659
ALBANIA	697,681	767,723	859,428	953,196

**Co-processing.** Co-processing uses waste as a substitute for fossil fuels in industrial processes, such as cement manufacturing. Refuse-derived fuel is required for co-processing in order to ensure controlled combustion. Refuse-derived fuel is generally made up of relatively homogenous waste and is achieved through a series of preprocessing steps, which requires additional capital. Co-processing helps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by using biomass fuels and mixed fuels, and can also be a viable treatment option for non-recyclable plastics.

### The recycling of Municipal Solid Waste

Municipal solid waste (MSW) includes all items from homes and businesses that people no longer have any use for. These wastes are commonly called trash or garbage and include items such as food, paper, plastics, textiles, leather, wood, glass, metals, sanitary waste in septic tanks, and other wastes (figure 1).

There are currently some private recycling companies in Albania that collect and process different types of waste, namely metal scrap, paper, plastic, textiles and used tires. There are about 12 000 individual collectors (informal sector) and about 60 different recyclable waste collection

**Figure 1:** *Types of municipal solid waste*

companies. However, there is a lack of waste separation at the source. Individual collectors and companies face difficulties in finding clean and separated waste. Most of the recyclable waste comes from urban waste and partly from the industrial sector.

Some sorting of glass bottles, paper and cardboard and metal scrap takes place in Albania. Glass bottles are collected, sterilized and reused by beverage companies. Paper and cardboard are sorted only in small quantities at a paper recycling plant in Tirana. Aluminum cans are usually exported to neighboring countries for reprocessing, and a very small part of them goes to a small private Albanian smelter.

The introduction of climate-friendly, resource-efficient and economically viable waste management has reduced health risks and environmental pollution in the medium term. Diverting green waste from landfill to composting and recycling secondary resources has led to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. This process has also saved energy and resources, created jobs in the resource recovery sector and contributed towards the European Green Deal.

In table 4, it can be seen that Albania has a considerable potential for recycling biodegradable waste, as this waste stream constitutes a significant percentage of MSW, accounting for 62 % of the overall quantity

**Table 4:** *Composition of MSW generated in Albania*

Waste stream	Average % in municipal waste stream	Weight within municipal waste of Albania (tones/day)	Weight within municipal waste of Albania (tones/year)
Organics	47.63	1 106	403 690
Wood	1.43	33	2 045
Paper	5.37	125	45 625
Cardboard	8.13	190	69 350
Total biodegradables	62.30	1 454	530 710
LD plastics	8.46	198	72 270
HD plastics	4.75	111	40 515
Glass	5.75	134	48 910
Textiles	5.27	123	44 895
Metals - ferrous	0.56	13	4 745
Metals - non-ferrous	0.57	13	4 745
Healthcare waste	0.17	4	1 460
Rubber	0.20	5	1 825
Inert waste	7.20	168	61 320
San-pro waste	3.25	76	27 740
WEEE	0.31	7	2 555
Batteries	0.02	1	365
Animal by-product waste	1.08	25	9 125
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2 335</b> <b>0,7kg/person/day</b>	<b>852 360</b> <b>266kg/person/year</b>

of MSW generated in Albania in 2009.

Specifically, about 60 % of household waste contains biodegradable residues, wherein at least 50 % of the total is organic residues that can be composted (organic waste and some paper, cardboard, textiles and various residues). Approximately 75 % is combustible and can therefore be turned into energy (paper and cardboard, plastics, textiles, and a variety of combustible organic waste).

Based on the Albanian National Waste Management Plan 2010-2025, the necessary development in recycling and composting of MSW waste in Albania, can only be achieved by increasing the availability of public recycling sites for separate collection of waste and other technologies for the use of materials from waste. The actions required will primarily be funded by the Albanian Government's Waste Strategy Fund. The National Waste Strategy sets the target of recycling/composting 25 % of MSW by 2015 and by 2020 it aims at increasing recycling/composting to 55 % of MSW generated.

Solid Waste Management is very important because impacts cities and their residents in many ways. The prevention and minimization of waste, and the processes and practices intended to reduce the amount of waste produced, is a best practice for solid waste management systems. Reducing waste and reusing materials are not only environmentally beneficial, but can deliver public health benefits and save money. Stakeholders at all levels play an important part in to cleaner and higher-quality materials, and can waste prevention and minimization, and prevention also reduce transport and disposal costs. Incentives and minimization strategies should account for that integrate and foster the involvement of the local social norms and practices, and economic and informal sector can be essential to minimizing waste market conditions.

### **Environmental benefits of better MSW management**

Biodegradable waste through its decomposition releases CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> gases into the atmosphere. The MSW in Albania contains a high percentage of organic waste and currently there is no recycling or composting in the country to prevent the amounts of organic waste from being disposed in landfills.

The most effective abatement measure at this stage would be the introduction of landfill gas recovery infrastructure that could recover up to 70 % of the methane emissions from the landfill. This measure is still not being implemented in Albania.

Promoting sustainable waste management practices can also reduce GHG emissions. Improvement of MSW management will lead to reduction of GHG emissions in the future. Recycling and composting are considered to be the top priority measure for reducing GHG emissions in Albania. Apart from reducing the environmental impacts, better waste management is seen as a beneficial source for waste recycling companies, which will make use of the recyclable waste instead of raw materials.

The estimation of MSW generation in Albania is based on the number of trucks delivering waste to disposal sites. The increase in MSW amounts reflects improvement in reporting collection and disposal activities, rather than an actual increase in MSW generation. Professionalism in planning and operation of waste collection, recycling, recovery and disposal has brought Albania closer to EU environmental standards.

### **The capacity of incinerators**

On top of the previously presented arguments against the current approach of the Albanian government for waste management, another problem is that the

combined capacity of the incinerators in Elbasan, Fier and Tirana exceeds the amount of treatable waste produced in Albania. The draft of the revised National Strategy of Waste Management (2018-2033) estimates that the combustible potential for the waste generated in Elbasan, Fier, and Tirana is only 26% (or 123,000 tons) of the projected capacity of these incinerators<sup>35</sup>. The incinerator in Elbasan has worked for less than 50% of the time in the first year it came into force, due to a lack of compostable waste.

The amount of compostable waste is unlikely to increase over the next few years, due to a series of government initiatives that will promote recycling waste and re-using products. The draft strategy on waste management (2018-2033) has set recycling targets of 50% in 2020 and 65% in 2025, compared to 17% in 2017<sup>37</sup>. This new strategy recognizes that the current approach to waste management makes it difficult for Albania to achieve the EU's mandatory recycling targets. To bridge the large gap between the capacity of the incinerators and the waste generated in Albania (it is currently estimated that 74% of the incinerator's capacity will remain

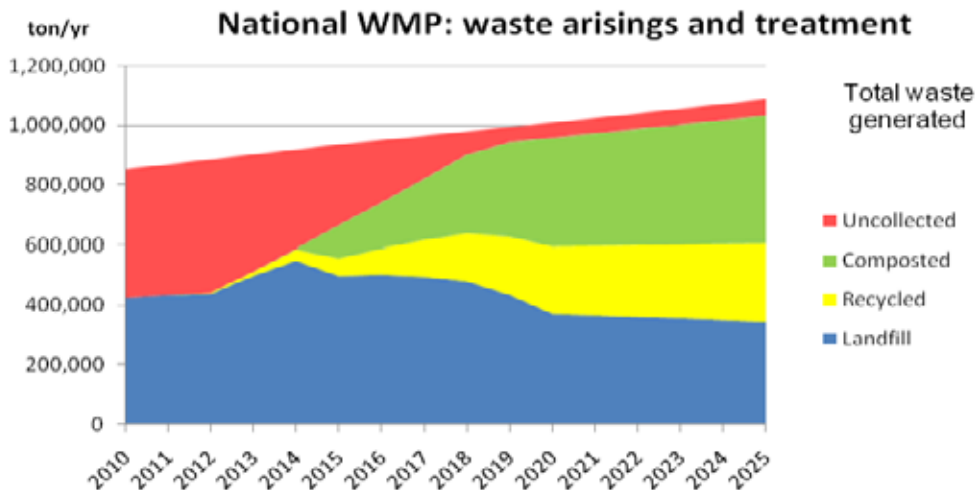
unused), the government proposes to import waste from other municipalities or from abroad. This would create even more unnecessary emission of hazardous carcinogenic and toxic chemicals into Albania's water, air, and soil.

### Implementation of the National Strategy to improve MSW management

The National Waste Management Plan was compiled in consultation with key government stakeholders and the community sector waste industry. It was based on the results of extensive technical assistance projects (CARDS 2006, INPAEL). The government, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration, local authorities, regional development bodies, voluntary organizations, industry and other stakeholders will be involved in the development of sustainable waste management plans that are appropriate for regional conditions. Local waste management plans focus on the collection of waste, including waste separation and recycling arrangements. In order to best manage waste at a strategic level in Albania, the country has been split into 12 waste areas,

**Table 5:** *Landfills in Albania*

No	Landfill	Surface	Capacity
1	Bestrova 1 (Vlorë)	12 ha	1 044 690 m <sup>3</sup>
2	Bushat (Shkodër)	12 ha	1 000 000 m <sup>3</sup>
3	Bajkaj (Delvinë)	5 ha	-
4	Sharrë (Tiranë)	15 ha	2 900 000 tonne
5	Korçë	10 ha	-
6	Rubik (landfill industrial)	5 000 m <sup>2</sup>	3 500 tonne/year
7	Peshkopi	8 000 m <sup>2</sup>	-
8	Bajram Curri	-	-
9	Rrëshen	-	-
10	Paper, Elbasan	-	-
11	Durrës	-	-

**Figure 2:** *Projection of MSW generation in Albania 2010 – 2025*

based on the geographical boundaries of the existing regional administrative districts. In addition, the affairs of these waste areas will be managed by an overarching body - the 'Waste Area Group' - consisting of local and regional stakeholders. Based on the implementation of the National Strategy and Plan for waste management in Albania, new landfills have been constructed and a few more are in the planning process. In table 5 the landfills currently operating or being planned are presented.

### The future possible trends on Municipal Solid Waste

The objectives of the National Waste Strategy will be implemented through the development and implementation of:

- The National Waste Plan;
- The Regional Waste Management Plans;
- The Local Waste Management Plans.

By 2025, aim at the reclamation of energy from 15 % of municipal waste. The National Plan need to focus on municipal waste to increase the amount of waste

collected by local authorities that is recycled or composted to 55 % by 2020.

Overall, a radical change is planned within the Albanian waste management practices. There will be a shift away from the current absolute reliance on landfills to a long term target of reducing landfill to 30 %, with 70 % recovery by recycling, composting and conversion to energy. In practice, much of the early progress in increasing recycling and composting will be achieved by widespread provision, by the relevant authorities, of segregated waste collection services and mechanized post collection separation across the country. By 2020, about 85 % of the households will be served by systems appropriate to the local circumstances and by 2025 this should extend to more than 90 %.

The projection of the generated MSW during the planned period in the above mentioned National Waste Plan (2010-2025) is presented in Figure 2. This projection shows how much biodegradable waste needs to be diverted from landfill, and how much recycled material should be collected separately from municipal waste and be prepared for recycling.

## Conclusions

One of the most important environmental consequences of urbanization is the amount of solid waste that is generated. These wastes have fast outstripped the ability of natural environment to assimilate them and municipal authorities to dispose of them in a safe and efficient manner. The resulting contamination affects all environmental media and has a direct negative effect on human health and the quality of urban life.

Incinerators reduce waste volume by approximately 95 percent and reduce the solid mass of the original waste by 80 percent to 85 percent. (The exact percentage depends on the constituent materials of the solid waste). Incineration does not completely eliminate the need for dump space completely, but it significantly reduces the amount of space required. This is especially important for urban areas, where probably have many other ways that land could be used more productively.

Incineration is a fast way of waste treatment, and very large quantities can be destroyed in a relatively short time. The amount of solid material resulting from combustion represents only 15-20% of the initial weight of the waste, leading to the reduction of the land areas required for storage and their use for other purposes.

Solid waste can actually be turned into electricity. In special facilities, non-

hazardous waste can be incinerated in high-tech incinerators that turn that waste into electricity. This reduces problems on the power grid by creating sustainable energy and saves space in landfills. Giving priority to MSW management will achieve good results in reducing GS emissions. Also recycling and composting technologies are considered as priorities for reducing GHG emissions in Albania

According to studies, solid waste incineration actually produces less pollution than landfills. Compared a landfill and waste incineration facility of the same size the landfill releases higher amounts of greenhouse gases, hydrocarbons, non-methane organic compounds, hazardous air pollutants, nitrogen oxides and dioxin than the waste incineration facility that was tested. Furthermore, over time landfills can release dangerous chemicals through surrounding soil into the underlying groundwater, which contaminates underground water systems. One of the main advantages of successfully implementing waste to energy solutions is that it has a positive effect on the environment because it helps improve air and water quality.

Waste incineration is the last phase of the waste management process and is mainly aimed at reducing the volume of waste to be stored and so reducing its environmental impact. If these wastes also have a high calorific value, then the process becomes profitable.

## REFERENCES

- Albanian Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy/ Development Bank (AMIE). 2018. Sector Study for Investment Demand for Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) in Albania – Final Sector Study Report, 08.2018, <http://infrastruktura.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ISWM-Albania-Final-Sector-Study-Report-20180808-1.pdf>
- Albanian Government (AG). 2009. 'National Plan on Waste Management 2010-2025' [www.moe.gov.al](http://www.moe.gov.al) (*Information in English provided by Arta Kodra*)
- Albanian Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE). 2018. National Strategy for Integrated Waste Management, 2018. <https://mjedisi.gov.al/wp-content/>



- uploads/2018/02/02-Draft-Strategjia-Kombetare-e-Mbetjeve-02-12-2018-REVMQ3-1.docx
- European Commission (EC). 2018. Albania Report, 2018. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-albania-report.pdf>
- European Environment Agency (EEA). 2018. Albania – Municipal waste factsheet, 2018. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/municipal-waste/municipal-waste-management-country-profiles/albania-municipal-waste-factsheet-2018>
- Eurostate, online: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (accessed on 22 March 2020)
- INSTAT. 2018. Urban Solid Waste in Albania, 09/2018. <http://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/mjedisi-dhe-energji/mjedisi/publikimet/2018/mbetjet-e-ngurta-urbane-n%C3%AB-shqip%C3%ABri-2017/>
- National Waste Management Strategy, online: <http://wastepolicy.environment.gov.za/> (Accessed on 24 March 2020)
- Waste Management Resources (WMR). 209. Incineration. 2009, online: <http://www.wrfound.org.uk/articles/in-cineration.html> (accessed on 20 October 2019)
- Yuan, J.; Emura, K.; Farnham, C. 2018. Effects of Recent Climate Change on Hourly Weather Data for HVAC Design: A Case Study of Osaka. *Sustainability* 2018, 10, 861
- Tatarniuk, C. 2007. The Feasibility of Waste-To-Energy in Saskatchewan based on Waste Composition and Quantity. Master's Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, 2007, online: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?pdf> (accessed on 15 October 2019)



# COVID-19: ONLINE TEACHING, LESSON LEARNED CHALLENGES OF TEACHING PROCESS IN THE DIGITAL ERA – ALBANIA

**Elona LIMAJ**  
*Albanian University*  
*Department of Education and English*  
E-mail: e\_limaj@yahoo.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Almost all public sectors in Albania have been subject of fundamental transformations, while education is the less transformed. Can we cope with XXI century challenges with the same old methods of XIX century, especially during online teaching? In a fast-changing world, maximal knowledge cannot be achieved only with transformation of wooden chairs into soft chairs or blackboards into white boards. Forced by development of technology and potential extraordinary situations, a change into teaching methodology would be the right intervention in Albanian education system, amid doubts whether technology really helps teaching. During communist regime all Albanian schools used traditional teaching methods, where the teacher was a point of reference not only in the school venues but even outside it. After change of regime, teachers started embracing modern teaching methods, including use of technology in a classroom. Are Albanian schools capable of embracing use of alternative teaching methods? With the help of a questionnaire addressed to teachers,

**Elona LIMAJ** is a full time lecturer in the Albanian University since 2010. Graduated from Moscow State Linguistics University in 2005, followed by studies of Master of Science in Linguistics in the University of Tirana in 2008 and obtained the scientific degree of Doctor of Science in Linguistics at the University of Tirana. Author of a series of papers published in national and international scientific journals and participants in conferences inside and outside the country. Member of Network of Experts working in the Social Dimension of Education and Training (NĖSET) and member of Editorial Board of “Filologjia” journal of University of Tetovo.

this work analyses types of teaching methods used in Albanian schools, pointing to their advantages and disadvantages and aims to make evident teaching methods in Albanian elementary education, in particular in the midst of this challenging times. Certainly each method is good for various purposes and selection of a method shall vary from students' needs and other circumstances.

**Keywords:** *Teaching, methods, traditional, modern, challenges, Albania*

## Introduction

Before the XX-th century, teaching was based mainly on three opportunities: teacher, textbook and blackboard. Books, letters, texts and pencils were the most useful tools used for communication and exchange of information. Use of personal computers in schools seemed like a distant dream a few years ago. In 2005, in Albanian schools in the entire country were counted about 920 computers, whereas at the end of 2012, this number was estimated at 24 125 and the ratio 0.13 computers per student in 2005, today is 4,65. (Strategy 2014) The same is valid also for internet expansion and its speed in country scale.

The questionnaire in this work helps actors understand the opinion and feedback of teachers regarding their capacities and skills in using innovative teaching methods. It will also provide the necessary information to make a deep analysis to see the inter-connection between work experience, age groups and teaching methods of the teachers.

Rapid development of modern society, as well as boost of information, assisted also by numerous means of broadcast and communication have changed the teaching methods in comparison to the previous decades. Some years ago, the teacher was the only source of information, whereas today he is a leader and organiser of the

teaching/learning process, who leads students to independently search for information and assist them in solving complicated problems. But, despite all investments carried out so far, use of ICT<sup>1</sup> in Albanian school system is limited. The ratio student/computer is not sufficient. In particular elementary school teachers face difficulties in implementing methods and they focus on the fact that what they teach students is more important than the strategy used and the most important is the thinking process and not the special methods used in class. Nevertheless, according to a NESET Analytical Report (2021) all educational levels in many countries suffered during Covid 19 situation.

## Theoretical framework

Education is a public good and vital for any society, because an effective teaching is very essential. A healthy education system is a good requisite for the development of each nation. Education is provided by the state and in this respect authorities draft national policies and strategies. The 2014-2020 Strategy of Development of Pre-university Education<sup>2</sup> issued by Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the current document used by all actors, aims to offer quality of teaching standards compared to EU countries, focusing on professional contemporary preparation

<sup>1</sup> Integration of information technology and communication (ICT) in class understands the use of computers and softwares in a productive way, exploitation of internet and use of computer networks for teaching and learning purposes.

<sup>2</sup> This is the current strategy used by Albanian institution, while the 2021-2026 National Educational Draft Strategy is being drafted by groups of interests.

and development of teachers and directors for a qualitative and all-inclusive learning. One of the numerous objectives of the inter sectorial strategy is digitalisation of learning process and among recommendations for achievement of goals is creation of suitable environments for an efficient learning through improvement of schools infrastructure and preparation of qualified teachers. According to Scrivener (2011) “the role of teachers is to enable learning to happen”, amid the time of global children, teachers in Albania are trying to use teaching methods to explain the material to students with the help of technology in order to make learning happen.

Definition of the term “methodology” in the *Dictionary of Albanian Language* is “the total of methods and tools used to explain something”, which is in full compliance with the understanding of the term ICT that is focused on management of all the information obtained via explanation. Technology in a classroom includes use of computers, printers, scanners, videos and DVD players, digital devices and smart boards. (Musai 2014, 158).

E-learning offers a lot of opportunities regarding place, space, time and rhythm. If in traditional teaching everything happens in schools, electronic learning may occur also outside the school territory. Even regarding time, if learning in a traditional teaching hours happens only at the scheduled time and space, electronic learning is possible 24/7 with opportunities of creating Teaching Rich Learning Environments (TRLE), which include the virtual world, computer simulations, sound registrations. (Mayer 2001, 70-72) These methods place students in real contexts and support the creation of society of knowledge.

As a result, there is a boost in their motivation and they are more curious, more successful and willing to learn. (Woofolk 2011, 3-10)

Development of teaching with the help of internet is costly, even-though is noticed that during the pandemic period it saw a rapid development and choice of teaching methods was a fundamental factor in this respect.

**Table 1:**

No	Name of the school	Administrative Unit	No of interviewed teachers
1	Marie Logoreci	1	10
2	Osman Myderizi	2	9
3	Niket Dardani	3	10
4	Ramazan Jarani	4	9
5	Vasil Shanto	5	10
6	Shyqyri Peza	6	10
7	Sabahudin Gabrani	7	10
8	Skënder Çaçi	8	10
9	Servete Maçi	9	10
10	Konferenca e Pezës	10	9
11	Skënder Luarasi	11	10

**Table 2:** *Percentage of participation of the interviewed according to age group.*

Age group	25-35	35-45	45-55	55-62
Percentage	15	45	20	10

## Data and methods

In the largest region in Albania, Tirana - capital city, where is counted also the biggest number of schools in country scale, teachers were asked to fill a questionnaire on the methodology they use in class during teaching. The questionnaire, addressed to elementary schools teachers, aims to create an idea on choice of teaching methods in general, and during online teaching in particular.

**Sampling:** Answering the research questions raised in this study were 107 teachers from 11 elementary schools located in 11 administrative units of Tirana city.

**Procedure:** Schools were selected randomly: one school per each administrative unit. In concrete, elementary schools that were made part of this study were as following (Table 1).

A coordination of the qualitative and quantitative analyses is provided to indicate the fields in which were marked the main differences. The quantitative analysis aims to identify the level of introduction and use of ICT in Albanian schools. The qualitative analysis aims to offer a more detailed information about use of technology by teachers and respective problematics.

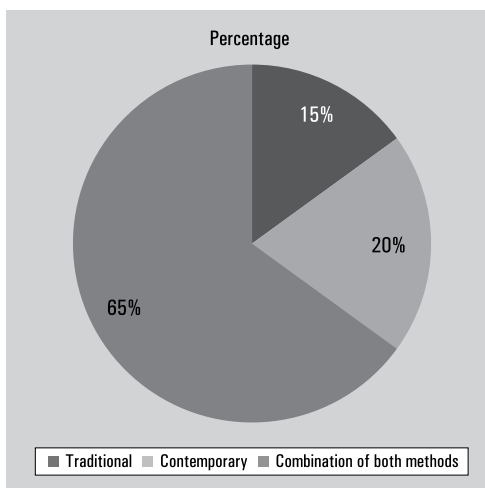
Sampling of participating teachers in this study was characterised by four age groups, and most of participants were female teachers, respectively (Table 2).

## Analysis

Findings from the answers of interviewed teachers, who belong to various age groups and gender, offer us the opportunity to analyse several issues related to the teaching methodology.

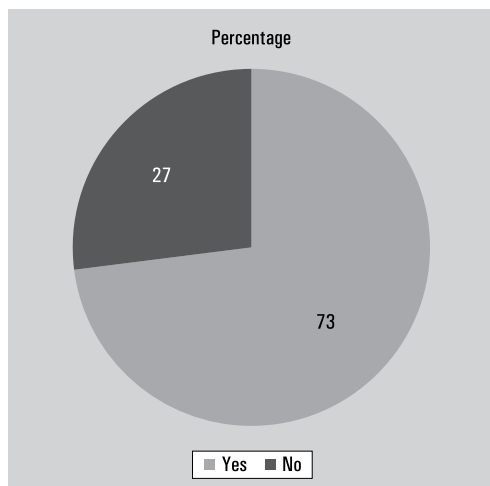
During data processing phase, we used different assessment levels because the questions had various focuses. Regarding gender of the participants in the study, women represented the majority of the interviewers, while men consist of a smaller number.

**Question:** What teaching method do you use during a teaching hour?

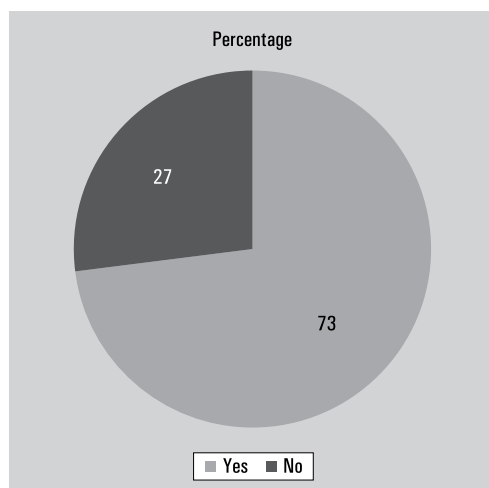
**Picture 1:** *Percentage of use of methods*

The questionnaire clearly showed that majority of the interviewed teachers used a combination of traditional with modern teaching methods. Majority of the interviewers consider the combination of traditional and contemporary methods a good idea. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees, in the comments section of the questionnaire highlighted that some subjects can be taught well enough with the help of traditional methods.

**Question:** Have you ever been trained on use of technology and contemporary methods in the teaching process?

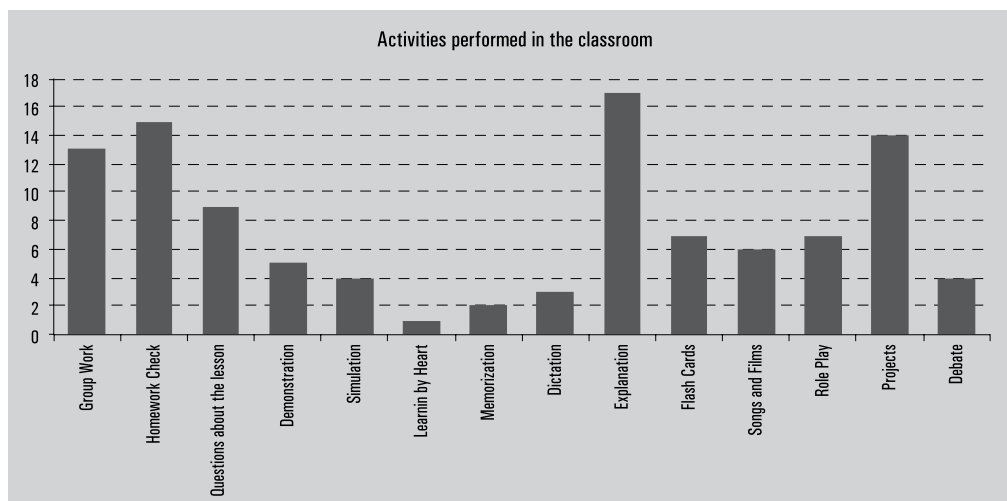
**Picture 2:** *Percentage of answers regarding use of technology*

Regarding this question, majority of interviewees answered no, even though they belong to a relatively young age, who are familiar to use of technology in general. High level of teachers claiming that they have never been trained on use of technology and contemporary methods is an indicator that highlights the reasons why ICT is not fully used in Albanian schools, i.e teachers do not have the necessary knowledge to use such tools.

**Picture 3:** *Textbooks and technology*

**Question:** Do Albanian textbooks favor use of technology or modern teaching methods? (Picture 3).

Percentage of the interviewed teachers who think that current textbooks do not favour use of technology is high. This shows that teachers in Albanian elementary schools use traditional methods because use of ICT is limited and as a result they can not use modern teaching methods.

**Picture 4:** *Type of activities held in class by teachers*

**Question:** Which of the following activities do you perform in class. Choose more than one alternative. (Picture 4).

In order to see in details what methods do teachers use, they were asked to choose among several activities held in a classroom. The fact that majority of them chose a number of activities that were not related to ICT also shows that use of contemporary teaching tools is limited. While in the study report 2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education (2019) mentions use of very advanced devices, such as video streaming or video conferencing with high-speed internet, Albanian schools are still using traditional or minimum of modern teaching methods.

### Conclusions and recommendations

Modern methods are more expensive and cannot be applied in rural areas due to lack of infrastructure, motivation. Majority of the interviewed teachers used a combination of traditional with modern teaching methods, due to lack of infrastructure in most parts of territory of the Republic of Albania.

Key issues arising from this study can be summarized in the following conclusions:

- problems with school infrastructure do not favour use of modern methods
- textbooks do not favour use of modern methods
- lack of teaching tools oriented toward modern methods

- teachers training
- traditional methods are less costly and more suitable for rural and outskirt areas
- many computers are old and schools programs must be updated. Schools have limited access in internet, because network connections is not available for all computers.
- there is no convincing evidence that Albanian teachers could be more efficient in computer-based teacher

The problems raised during the analysis can lead us to the following recommendations:

- continuous training programs for teachers
- increase of pedagogical skills toward understanding of ICT for an efficient use of new technologies in education
- harmonisation of curricula to favour use of technology
- increase of budget for investments in school technology
- internet access, number of computers per student

Integration of ICT in the teaching process in Albanian schools is not at satisfactory levels, therefore, this study would contribute in development of this process in Albanian education system, while conclusions and recommendations of this study would be a point of reference for future policies.

## REFERENCES

- Akademia e Shkencave (2002) *Fjalor i Gjuhës Shqipe* [Dictionary of the Albanian Language], Tiranë: Botimet Toena
- Musai, Bardhyl (2014) *Metodologji e Mësimitdhënies* [Teaching Methodology], Tiranë: Qendra për Arsim Demokratik
- Boris, Gary D. (2000) *Effective Teaching Methods*, 4th ed, Pearson
- Document of Strategy for Development of Pre-university Education* (2014-2020) drafted by Ministry of Education and Science
- Scrivener, James (2011) *Learning Teaching*, 3rd Edition, Macmillan Publishing's
- Law No. 69/2012 "On pre-university education



- system in the Republic of Albania”; [http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Ligji\\_Parauniversitar.pdf](http://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Ligji_Parauniversitar.pdf)
- Deloitte and IPSOS, *Sharing Europe’s digital future* (2019) 2nd Survey of Schools: ICT in Education, European Commission
- NESET (2021) *Analytical Report: The impact of COVID-19 on higher education: a review of emerging evidence*, prepared by Thomas Farnell, Ana Skledar Matijević and Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt
- Mayer, Richard E. (2001) *Multimedia Learning*, New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Woolfolk, Anita (2011) *Psikologji edukimi [Educational psychology]*, Tiranë: Qendra për Arsim Demokratik



## **Social Studies: Author's guide**

### **In general**

ISSN 2309-3455 (Print)

ISSN 2309-3471 (Online)

"Social Studies" is the official Journal of Albanian Institute of Sociology (AIS), and Department of Sociology of University Aleksander Moisiu Durres, Albania. Founded in 1997, it is certified as scientific journal by the High Commission of the Assessment of Academic Titles, with decision No. 170, 20. 12. 2010.

"Social Studies" is a bilingual Journal. The articles can be written either in English or Albanian.

### **How to submit an article?**

The article can be submitted to: [studime.sociale@gmail.com](mailto:studime.sociale@gmail.com); [albsa@sociology.al](mailto:albsa@sociology.al);

The submitted article will be select for publishing by the anonymous reviewers, though a blind review process.

### **Organize the manuscript in the following order:**

Title, author(s), name(s) and institution(s), e-mail address (es), abstract (no longer than 150-200 words), text, references (Harvard System of references), notes on contributor/s (a short CV of a maximum of 10 lines, including both academic and organizational experience, and listing up to three selected publications).

### **Short references in text**

Weber (1998); (Weber, 1998: 156); or Weber (1998: 156); (Lazesfeld and Berelson, 1990); (Olzak, Shanahan & West, 1986); (Larsen et al., 1989); (Blau, 1980; Kadare, 1995; Uçi, 2003; Pëllumbi, 2004; Omari, 1999); 2011a, 2011b.; (Tocqueville [1835] 2010), etc.

### **References following the text**

List authors alphabetically, by surname.

Merton, Robert. [1949] 1968. *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York: Free Press.

Buss, Loreta. 2010. "Childhood in Sociology and Society; the US Perspective", *Current Sociology*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 355-350.

### **© Copyright: the author(s) of the articles**

For more details, contact the Secretary of the International Editorial Board

[www.sociology.al](http://www.sociology.al)

Link: <https://www.sociology.al/en/social-studies-journal>

Author's guide: <https://www.sociology.al/en/revista-studime-sociale-kriteret-e-botimit>

SSJ Code of Conduct: <http://www.sociology.al/en/code-conduct-ssj>

## ALL ANNUAL CONFERENCES (2006-2021)

### **17<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

The role of Technology in the Shaping of Society  
University Kadri Zeka of Gjiilan, Kosovo: 11-12 November 2022

### **16<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Education and Culture in Contemporary Society  
University Fan S. Noli of Korca, Albania: 5-6 November 2021

### **15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Comparative Studies in Modern Society; Balkans in European and Global Context  
University of Prizren Ukshin Hoti, Kosovo: 19-20 March 2021  
(Postponed due to Covid-19 Pandemic)

### **14<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Social institutions in Contemporary Society  
[The Interaction between Education, Family, Religion, Politics, and Economy]  
Durrës-Albania: 15-16 November 2019

### **13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Continuity & Change; Balkans in European, and Global Context  
[Balanced Perspective of Past, Present & Future]  
Mitrovica-Kosovo: 16-17 November 2018

### **12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Good Society – a multidimensional Approach  
Tirana-Albania: 17-18 November 2017

### **11<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Education & Sustainable Development: the future we are creating  
Skopje-Tetovo, Macedonia: 18-19 November 2016

### **10<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

How Migration is shaping the Contemporary Society?  
Pristine-Kosovo: 20-21 November 2015

### **9<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Law and values in contemporary society  
Tirana-Albania 21-22 November 2014

### **8<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Democracy in Times of Turmoil; A multidimensional approach  
Durrës -Albania: 22-23 November 2013

### **7<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:**

Identity, image and social cohesion in our time of interdependence  
Vlora-Albania: 26-28 November 2012

### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference**

Education in turbulent times: The Albanian case in European and global context  
Tirana-Albania: 21-22 November 2011

### **5<sup>th</sup> Annual International conference:**

The social problems: their study, treatment and solutions; Albania in global context  
Tirana-Albania: 7-8 June 2010

### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual International conference:**

Twenty Years of Democratic Transformations: Albania in East European Context  
Tirana-Albania: 10 December 2009

### **3<sup>rd</sup> AIS Conference:**

World Economic Crises and its impact on the Albanian Economic and Social Life  
Tirana-Albania: 22 May 2009

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference:**

Issues and Models of Communitarian Organization  
Tirana-Albania: 27 June 2008

### **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference:**

Political pluralism and Albanian political thought  
Tirana-Albania: 15 June 2007

### **Funding Meeting and the Founding AIS Conference:**

Sociology in Albania and the need of its Institutionalization  
Tirana-Albania: 21 November 2006; Tirana International Hotel