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POLICY BRIEF

on addressing Inequalities
in Education in the Municipality
of Kamenica



POLICY BRIEF

**ON ADDRESSING
INEQUALITIES IN
EDUCATION IN
THE MUNICIPALITY
OF KAMENICA**

This report is prepared with the support of the one-year project Innovating Development for Education Advancement - **IDEA 2022**, funded by the Office of the European Office in Kosovo (EUOK) and implemented by Kosova Education Center (KEC), as part of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) signed between KEC and EUOK in November 2019. The content of this publication shall not in any way reflect the opinion of the European Union.

Introduction

Research shows that poverty affects cognitive development of children more than factors such as parents' education or parents' cognitive abilities. Poor and low SES children perform significantly worse than their middle-class peers on many indicators of academic success such as: test scores, grade retention, course failures, high school graduation rate, high school dropout rate and completed years of schooling.

The ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education – project is a platform created by a pool of NEPC members NGOs and research institutes from Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA countries) that will support schools, grassroots organisations and policy makers in developing actions and policies aimed at mitigating the effect of low socio-economic status on students' achievement, reducing inequalities in education.

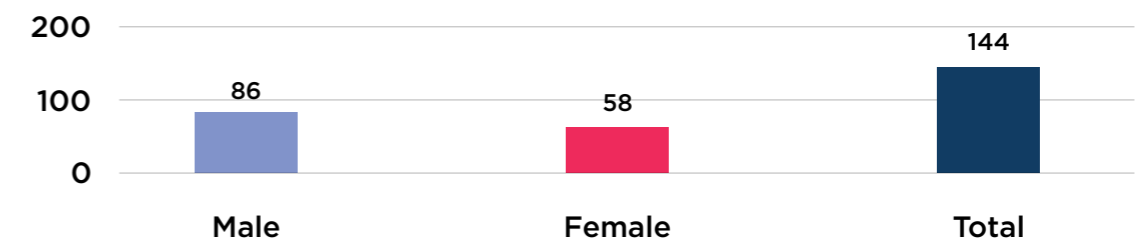
During the last ten years, Kosovo has gone through major reforms in education, starting from the decentralization of the education system to the development of the competence-based curriculum framework, development of quality assurance mechanisms, professional development of teachers and licensing system, expanding use of ICT, etc. However, despite these reforms, the quality of education remains poor. This was also proven with the results of PISA 2018, which showed that a 15-year-old student from Kosovo scored among the weakest results in all test disciplines.

Education in the Municipality of Kamenica

In the Municipality of Kamenica there are 2 preschool institutions, 16 primary and lower secondary education institutions, and 5 higher secondary education institutions. 721 employees work in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. 4 pedagogues, 8 psychologists, 8 teaching assistants for children with special needs, and 4 speech therapists, are also working in the Municipality of Kamenica¹.

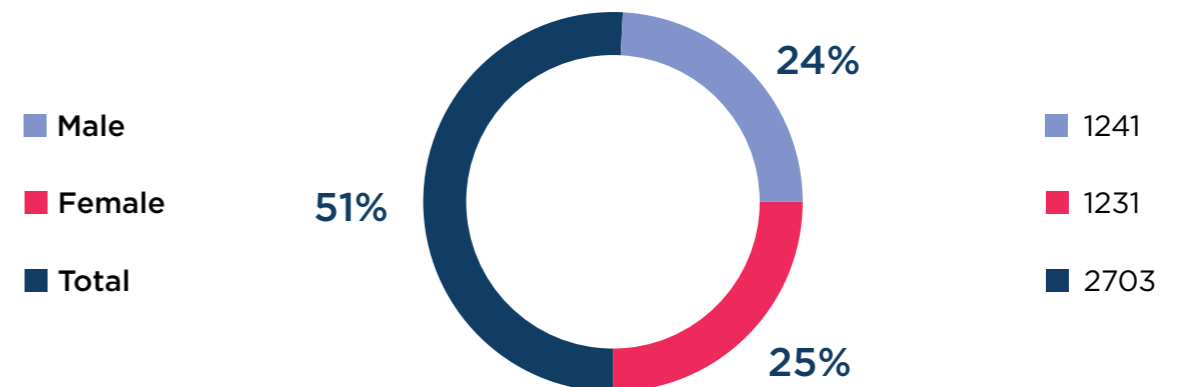
1.1 Table 1.

Number of children in preschool education² - Preschool (0<5 year-old)



1.2 Table 2.

Pupils in primary and lower secondary education

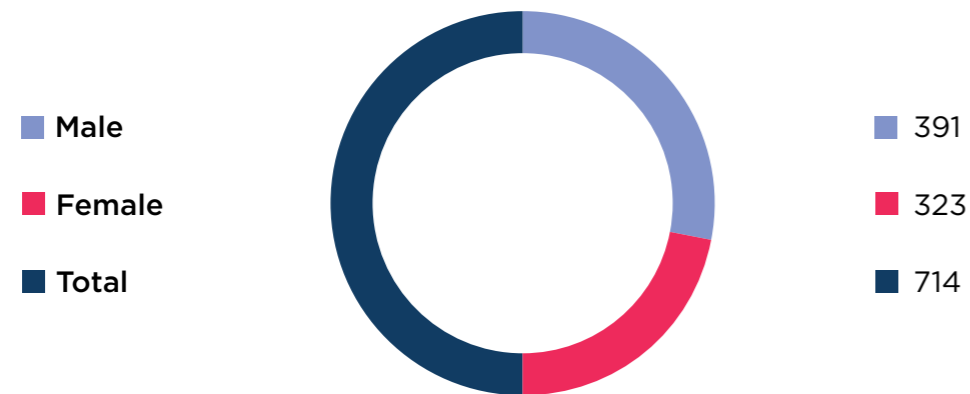


¹ According to the data provided by the schools in October 2022, Municipal Education Directorate, Municipality of Kamenica

² Kosovo Agency of Statistics(KAS). (2021). <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/statistikat-e-arsimit-20202021> and according to the latest records from the Education Directorate of the Municipality of Kamenica

1.3 Table 3.

Number of pupils in upper secondary education







Addressing the needs of low SES children, through school planning and a comprehensive approach

Within the ARISE project, 5 schools from Kosovo have been selected. The selected schools are:

- PLSS “Nazim Gafurri”, Prishtina
- PLSS “Liria”, Stroc, Vushtrri
- PLSS “Ibrahim Mazreku”, Malisheva
- PLSS “Dr. Ibrahim Rugova”, Obiliq
- PLSS “Anton Zako Çajupi”, Mitrovica



Each of the partner schools have established a “School Action Team” composed of representatives of the: Student Council, Council of Parents, Teachers and School Management.

-  School Action Teams - SATs from partner schools have designed Action Plans to address the needs of low SES students, which can be integrated into the School Development Plan - SDP, or included in the form of an Annex to the SDP that specifically addresses the reduction of inequalities in the school, namely, addressing the needs of low SES students.
-  In March 2022, in consultation with and approved by the School’s Steering Council, the SATs started implementing these “Action Plans”.
-  Each of the objectives of the Action Plan contains: activities, responsible persons, resources, financial costs, deadline and evidence of activities.
-  In its Action Plan, each school has set as a general objective: *Establish a supportive and inclusive school environment that ensures equal opportunities*

Challenges, measures and recommendations on ensuring equal opportunities in education

The right to education and development of a child’s full potential is one of the fundamental rights and as such is guaranteed by the Constitution of Kosovo. In this context, Kosovo’s legal framework foresees and supports a comprehensive approach, which counters the abandonment of compulsory education and guarantees equal access to education regardless of ethnicity, gender, race, economic status, etc.

Support for low SES children is included in the Education Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2026. More specifically, Activity 2.3.7 of the Education Strategy and Action Plan defines the support of low SES children, while the MED is responsible for its implementation. Progress in this area will be measured by these two indicators:

1. Increased number of low SES children in compulsory education, who benefit through various forms of support (scholarships, transport, etc.)
2. Number of children benefiting from alternative forms of learning, divided by gender

Standard Measures for Reducing Inequalities in Education



Compulsory education with equal and free access;

Continue free transportation for children who live within a distance of four (4) km from the school;



Free preschool education for children from vulnerable categories (social assistance, children with special educational needs, children without parental care);

Establish Learning Centers in the municipality to support children from vulnerable groups in education;



Operationalize and strengthen mechanisms to prevent school dropout and non-enrollment in school (EPRBM), and promote diversity through an integrated education system;

Scholarship for low SES students from all communities, especially from the Roma community, who are enrolled in higher secondary education.



Recommendations for the municipality of Kamenica aimed at reducing inequalities in education:

- In their Planning, schools should include the addressing of the needs of low SES children;
- Enhance cooperation between schools, the MED and the Center for Social Work, in identifying cases of school dropout of low SES children;
- Organize supplementary classes and other counseling programs at the school level, to improve student learning and involvement in school;
- Address the issue of poverty and students affected by poverty, by amending and improving educational and social policies that can provide long-term solutions for creating equity in education;
- Intervene at the school level to address the urgent needs of low SES students, by providing a supportive and inclusive environment
- Enhance the engagement of parents in schools; while teachers should work and cooperate more with parents and low SES students;
- Improve school conditions / classrooms, because they contribute more than family characteristics to changing the learning rates of low SES children;
- Provide additional programs and trainings for teacher professional development (TPD) and school leaders based on needs;
- Enforce Administrative Instruction No. 19/2018 on the establishment and operation of educational centers in the municipality;
- Increase and allocate the municipal budget for student transportation;
- Members of Councils of Parents should be more active and demanding towards the provision of transport and the improvement of conditions in schools in general;

