

The general goal of this project is to introduce mechanisms and skills in initial teacher education institutions in Kosovo to implement internal quality assurance practices that lead towards enhancement of quality of the graduates that are capable of driving school reform forward. Increasing the quality of teacher education graduates in Kosovo has the potential to influence everlasting changes in school practice which have been acknowledged as necessary in Kosovo school system. Changing teacher practice to reflect the new professionalism implies the need to develop teacher education institutions that are oriented towards improvement and monitoring the achievement of those targets to close the significant gap between current teacher practice realities in schools and the demanded teacher professionalism as reflected in current local policy set up and European level references.

The specific aims of this project are:

- Develop internal quality assurance mechanisms and processes within initial teacher education institutions in Kosovo which respond to specific indicators of quality;

- Develop capacities for management of internal quality assurance mechanisms in teacher education including adoption of ITE staffing policy and course design policy;

- Develop capacities of teacher educators in delivering quality of teaching as one of the indicators in internal quality mechanism;

- Implement a full quality assurance process for all relevant fields of teacher education (course implementation, program relevance, research program, international cooperation, student services, administrative and management practices, etc.) to identify an improvement program for teacher education institutions in Kosovo.

The four elements above are critical to move towards a reality in which initial teacher education institutions engage continuously in improving the quality of program delivery and quality of its services. The implementation of comprehensive internal quality assurance processes within this project will mark the extension of current practices of course evaluations towards adopting the improvement culture that is based on student, staff and school feedback on quality of program design, quality of teaching, quality of services, quality of research, quality of international cooperation, quality managerial practices in ITE institutions. The project is placed in a good position to enable to partner institutions to implement the quality review and assurance practices for all the dimensions specified above to pave the way for sustainable implementation beyond the project. Implementing comprehensive quality assurance system entails the need to develop quality indicators for all areas of functioning of initial teacher education institutions, develop instruments and processes as well as actually implementing the new system and acting upon the feedback and policy input it generates.

The project will also target the development of management capacities to manage comprehensive internal quality assurance processes which contribute to the understanding of weaknesses and development of interventions that lead to improvement. This is a demanding task for initial teacher education managers and adminstrators (quality assurance coordinators, student service staff, department heads etc) since it requires a set of clear policies, manuals and instruments for implementation as well as capacities to manage the process in a professional manner and make the process reliable and trustworthy so that teacher educators and students are engaged to implement the findings. The capacity building for managers will imply the need to also understand the policies and standards of teaching profession as well as how this impacts the way teacher education programming is managed and delivered. In addition, the project aims to introduce a culture of making teacher educators connect with quality indicators on teaching in teacher education (by abandoning current lecture-based and input oriented course delivery practice). The project will model the revision of teacher education courses to demonstrate the new teacher educator practice as well as will develop blended learning courses in each institution to introduce the culture of modern pedagogy. An open source platform will be used for introducing the blended learning model. This new practice of teacher education provision is meant to be used as a piloting intervention of standards and quality focussed course provision whereas the project will result with an approved policy on staff development and course design by all ITE institutions to ensure all institutions embrace the same principles and practices in staffing and course design for the purpose of ensuring ITE is linked to the teacher professionalism in school context.

It is important to note that the specific objectives of the project are relevant for all partner country institutions involved despite the minor differences that may be especially in capacity building programs for managers and teacher educators. These specifics will be addressed during the implementation. Otherwise, the introduction of comprehensive quality assurance practices in initial teacher education that contributes to the development of demanded teacher professionalism is relevant for all partner country institutions. A full implementation of comprehensive quality assurance in initial teacher education will in long run make a shift in the tradition of teacher education by introducing the practice oriented approach (i.e. what graduates are expected to perform once they transition to school). In addition, the project will also mark the implementation of comprehensive internal quality assurance practices in the partner country institutions - which are based on clear quality indicators - with the expectation that it can be extended and sustained to other areas (in addition to teacher education) beyond the life of this present project.