



FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Arts in Education System of Kosovo

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Arts in Education System of Kosovo

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SWEDEN

Introduction

Focus group “Arts in Education System of Kosovo” was held on 10 November 2015 in Prishtinë within the scope of project Forum for Cultural Development, which aims to further develop and strengthen the Forumi Kulturor (Cultural Forum) that was established in 2011 through the provision of valuable advice and knowledge on cultural policies. Project is supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo, and implemented by Cultural Forum, Theatre Oda and DokuFest. The focus group discussion tackled the preliminary findings of project research in respect of how the teaching of arts is treated in the education system of Kosovo. Based on the preliminary findings, new Kosovo Curricula, be it the one for education in general or the one for artistic education, gives quite good opportunities for the development of artistic skills of pupils, as well as of their skills for artistic experience. However, huge problems in day-to-day activities in Kosovo schools make the implementation of activities foreseen in the curricula impossible.

Summary of General Discussions

Artists, culture NGO representatives, journalists and independent activists participated in the focus group on the topic “Arts in the Education System of Kosovo” organized by the Cultural Forum. This focus group presented the findings of the report drafted by Mrs. Besa Luzha. In addition, the topic of “Education through Arts” was also discussed based on the high school curricula. Mrs. Luzha informed us that the Ministry of Education is reviewing the elementary school curricula in line with UNICEF recommendations. The presentation and ensuing discussion highlighted that subjects of Arts and Musical Education are not treated seriously, and that teachers have a cursory approach towards them with Arts being used only for pastime.

According to new Curricula, teachers will employ an integrative approach, and teaching will be more interesting and attractive for pupils. The testing of new curricula has already begun in 7 regions of Kosovo, with teachers of Arts preparing the files of their performance and that of pupils. The new curriculum entails higher level of responsibility for teachers in determining the topics and

materials to be used in the subject of Arts.

The question arises whether teacher is ready to do this?

The Curricula includes the optional subjects of Play, Design, Handcrafts and Dance. Teachers and pupils prepare projects that should be send to the Ministry where they are selected in cooperation with parents. Current practices show that pupils are not able to select what they love, but this is rather done by the school management.

From the discussion with the focus group representatives, it comes out that a teacher of Arts feels as under evaluated in comparison to other teachers.

- Access to vacancies is also problematic: professor of a different subject teaches Arts
- The class schedule is inconvenient and is perceived as pastime
- Infrastructure is terrible
- Implementation remains problematic
- Education is oriented towards processes, instead of being streamlined towards results
- Education of future audiences

- Content is problematic?
- Through theatre Forum the awareness on school violence has been increased
 - Work in different activities improved the will and self-confidence of pupils
 - They express themselves freely in social networks when compared to their families and friends
 - The phenomenon of violence is chiefly tackled through cultural and social activities.

Some of the Challenges of Current Curriculum

In the preliminary report of Besa Luzha about the arts in education system of Kosovo, the fields of **Arts** has been correctly presented in the reviewed Curriculum, including the rationale on why we need to have artistic education. Concepts, values, stands, artistic skills taught through arts were later on elaborated. Based on these findings, the learning outcomes were initially obtained taking into account all current trends in artistic education, including the guidance and guided exploration elements. In this way pupils not only create and are actively involved in artistic, reproduction or creative activities, but they also learn about artistic processes, artistic tools for expression and their use, they get to know the pieces of art of national and global values, as well as learn about various artists.

From the focus group discussions other finding from this preliminary report were identified. One of the reviewed aspects was that the field of Arts in the new Curriculum is not only composed of the subjects of Musical Education and Arts as usually, but also the subjects of Play and Dance have been included, though initially only as optional sub-

jects. Other change consists in the fact that an integrative approach has been tried, at least from the point of view of dimensions and learning results, taking into consideration the specifics of various artistic expression tools available to different forms of art.

The aim of artistic education has once again been emphasized, which is in line with the overall goals of education in Kosovo: “Education through arts enables the development of an active and creative citizen, who:

- Creates, shapes and is actively involved in the quality improvement of his/her living environment.

- Takes part in social, cultural and intellectual interaction of different ethnic and cultural groups putting as priority the human aspect of this interaction.

- Has basic technical and creative skills and competencies important for work and life.”

Conclusion

Analyzing the position of Arts in European countries curricula, we came to conclusion that the way how arts is tackled in Kosovo Curriculum employs more or less the same approach. The aims of artistic education are streamlined towards the implementation of 6 core competencies of new Kosovo Curriculum. However, a lot remains to be done in the preparation of teachers for the implementation of these competencies through an integrative approach where the Arts has its deserved position.

The focus group also came to conclusion that the learning outcomes for the field of **Arts** are set for different levels and do not give the opportunity and freedom to teacher to implement many of the required activities during one class hour. If the increase of classes is not a feasible option, one should think of alternative ways of learning of optional subjects or thematic and multi-disciplinary projects where pupils could be able to functionalize their artistic skills and artistic way of communication on various topics and fields.

also made that Ministry of Education and municipal education directorates should ensure that teaching of artistic subjects be only done by qualified teachers. The schools also need to provide an artistic-friendly environment. The agreement was reached that adequate technologic infrastructure should be made available so that pupils and teachers could have the opportunity to implement artistic education with as many as possible artistic examples from both local and global arts, including visits to museums, exhibitions and concerts as a part of methodology for the implementation of subject.

Last but not least, a conclusion was

Cultural Forum

Oda Theatre held numerous meetings during the end of 2011 with the purpose of establishing a network of the cultural organizations in Kosovo. These meetings were attended by more than 60 participants, representatives of different organizations of culture, thus creating the possibility to organize the founding Assembly on 23 March 2012, which laid the foundation of the Network of Independent Organizations of Culture – Cultural Forum. The founding Assembly laid the foundation of the Cultural Forum with 22 independent organizations as members. Through democratic voting, the Statute was adopted and the network presidency was also elected. The Cultural Forum is an entity registered as a network of independent organizations of culture. It was decided that the role of interim Secretariat will be assumed by Oda Theatre until the capacities are built to form a professional secretariat of the network.

The Cultural Forum of Kosovo is a network of independent organizations of culture in Kosovo, established with the purpose of:

- Strengthening the independent organizations of culture by developing

their capacities for the implementation of their programs ,

- Promotion of member organizations,

- Inclusion of member organizations in decision-making,

- Boosting the support for the independent cultural scene,

- Protection and improvement of the position of organizations vis-à-vis the relevant institutions in Kosovo and abroad.

The Cultural Forum aims to fulfill its mission through the following activities:

- Communication and networking of independent organizations of culture,

- Dynamic exchange of information and experience,

- Lobbying and advocacy activities,

- Specific trainings for the needs of member organizations,

- Organization of debates and fora,

- Coordination of artistic and cultural activities.

Forum for Cultural Development

Forum for Cultural Development is a Project aimed to further develop and strengthen the Cultural Forum established back in 2012, by providing advice and valuable expertise for the cultural policies of Kosovo. The Project is supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo, and implemented by the Cultural Forum, Oda Theatre and Do-kuFest. The first Project activities were carried out in December 2013. The Project is supposed to continue through to November 2015. During this two year period, the Cultural Development Forum will come up with at least 28 cultural policy products that will result from research, debates, focus groups and conferences. The Project will also strengthen the network of independent culture organizations, built its internal capacities and impact the development of culture policies of Kosovo by producing the knowledge for culture. In addition, the Project will spur the dialog and cooperation between the sector of independent culture and public authorities so that concrete solutions for Kosovo's cultural development could arise.

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