



**KOALICIONI PËR ARSIMIN E FËMIJËVE NË
SHQIPËRI**

Albanian Coalition for Child Education

ALBANIA:

**THE SITUATION OF PRE-UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION**

- REPORT -

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB	World Bank
BE	European Union
CRCA	Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania
CBA	Quality and Equity in Education
DAR	Regional Educational Directorate
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross National Product
ILO	International Labor Organization
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
MASH	Ministry of Education and Science
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OJF	Non-Profit Organization
PBB	Gross Domestic Product
SKZHAP	National Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education
TIK	Technology of Information and Communication
UNICEF	The United Nations Children’s Fund
VKM	Decision of Council of Ministers

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Education occupies a special place in the Albanian society and presents a great importance to the future of children. Widespread private education institutions is an indication that families and individuals are interested to invest for better education that provides knowledge, employment and better income.

However, for many children and families education is inaccessible, not because there are no buildings or teachers, but because of poverty, which does not allow thousands of children to attend school every day, just like their peers. Work and exploitation constitute the only "school" they could. Through daily work on the road, members of the family and society and through media and internet they achieve some knowledge and competencies.

A society cannot advance unless not all its members' progress. A series of studies display the connection that exists between public investment in education, child education, poverty reduction and growth of the welfare of society. In these 23 years, Albania has struggled through a series of laws, reforms and programs to strengthen the education of children and adults, but not always successfully. Political promises are not always present in government programs and promised funds have not always increased the quality of education.

Albanian Coalition for Child Education had long wanted to make a review study about the situation of Albanian education from 2000 and onwards. Basing on the fact that a series of new policies and government programs implemented we wanted to measure not just their impact, but also to identify what are the problems and issues that dominate the education of children in Albania.

This report constitutes a first attempt to recognize this serious situation, which, does not appear in the best condition expected. A series of issues are challenging the today's education reform in Albania. They must receive the most rapid, positive and professional reaction possible, as the education of children cannot wait.

An extraordinary education expert, Professor, Dr. Mimoza Gjokutaj, whom I had the opportunity to work on a series of occasions in the context of my work in CRCA Albania, prepared this report. Her vision and knowledge in the field of

education enriches this report and provide new concerns that need solutions in order to achieve a new level of education.

Mr. Thornton Barkley, director of the Center for Information and Research on Children's Rights in Albania (IRCCRA) and legal expert of CRCA consulted and edited this report various times.

Mrs. Linda Pino also an expert at CRCA Albania translated the report in English.

On behalf of the Albanian Coalition for Child Education (ACCE), I want to thank all the experts who prepared this report, which sheds light on the situation of education in Albania and recommends a range of solutions for its enhancement.

In this occasion, I want to thank the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), whom with their generosity supported the preparation of this study, as well as the re-organization of the Albanian Coalition for Child Education.

For the Albanian Coalition for Child Education:

Altin Hazizaj
General Director of CRCA Albania

Preface

Education in Albania constitutes an important sector of the national developments, which projects the future of the nation. It aims to equip the future Albanian citizens with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities in order to educate and commit them to achieve the country's economic and socio cultural development.

At the same time, the Albanian educational system aims the fulfillment of the national needs for knowledge and labor market. It is a prerequisite for economic growth and sustainable development of the country. Sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and solution of social problems require first of all reforming the education system in all its components. In this context, the development of comprehensive reforms and the realization of the objectives of the new millennium have a vital importance.

The Albanian education aims to move into the Europe's mainstream of education. National and International documents governs the Albanian education and it follows the Council of Europe's education programs and other European organizations that deal with education. To this extent, over the last decade, Albania has taken serious steps toward the improvement of the educational process.

To highlight the main problems of the current situation and to simplify the study, we will try to group them according to their problematic structure based on the substantial education tactics observed both at global and national levels.

The following issues constitute a substantial part of the report. They aim to emphasize the current pre-university education focusing on the basic education (classes 1-9).

This issue will highlight:

- Albanian education in the current global situation;
- Pre-university participation;
- The development of curricula,
- Teaching and learning quality;
- Teaching reform;
- Evaluation reform;
- Pre-university funding;
- Capacity building
- Support the human resources.

After the 90's the Albanian and the region's economic and social situation have significantly influenced the education and the reforms undertaken. The effort taken for improving the Albanian education had been great in number. Despite the political changes, education imposed profound changes in curricula and all other components that constitute the education process.

Emerging from highly politicized curricula, the new reform has set new principles and modern requirements. It has also established issues such as coherence, equality, humanism and respect of human rights to the content of curricula changes. Other issues that constitute the Albanian Education Reform include the development of pre-school education, reduction of illiteracy, avoiding the phenomenon of school abandonment, improving schools' infrastructure, increasing the teachers' professionalism, providing textbooks for all levels of education, modernization of teaching methods, establishing evaluation standards etc.

The National Education Strategy drafted for the period 2004-2015, with the support of the World Bank, was promoted through “Equity and Quality in Education” program. This strategy offered for the first time to the Albanian education clear objectives easily measurable and financially implemented.

We will focus on some aspects of the Albanian Pre-University Education Strategy 2009-2013 regarding their functioning (compared to the previous 2004-2005 reform). On behalf of this report, we will only compare the results and objectives of the previous strategies and the Integrated Plan of MES.

Through an analysis based on quantitative and qualitative data, collected from sources such as state institutions, national and international independent agencies that work in the field of education, we will describe the progress of the Albanian education reform, the emerging issues and will offer some possible solutions.

Benchmarks and reference points of this report will be the educational guidelines provided by the European Community.

Issues such as school abandonment, low quality of education, the situation of Roma children’s education, the vulnerable strata of society, the education of children with special needs, respecting children’s rights and gender issue will also be part of this report.

This analysis will also describe those factors that influence the quality of education, the respect of human rights, social and economic cohesion each of them compared to the standards of education of the region.

Chapter 1

THE CURRENT ALBANIAN EDUCATION SITUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Initiatives and global movements in education

Initiatives and global movements such as “Education for All” and “Education in the New Millennium” have been incentive strategies in the education for many Eastern countries, including the Albanian education system as well. These initiatives and movements have defined the areas of action, the educational reform goals and their implementation in the context of the Albanian education. These worldwide movements on education give 12 steps that actually have become part of the Albanian National Education Strategy for 2009-2015.

In the framework of European initiatives, which aim the improvement of education in the region, some steps that will improve the development of the movement “Education for All” will be:

- The development of teaching methods that encourage participation and personal development;
- The reform of examination system which will demonstrate the students’ achievements;
- Encouragement of extra curricula based on school levels;
- Increasing parent and community participation in school life;
- Investigation of children’s prohibited works and their involvement in school;
- Attention on the quality of education toward poor children;
- Integration of children with disabilities in education;
- Encouraging the development of early childhood and children with special needs;
- Attention for minority groups;
- Respect the rights of Roma children;
- Controlling the quality of the schools both at local and central level, including the curricula;
- Decentralization of the budget allocated for the education sector.

The International Agencies that have become integral part of many initiatives that support components of the National Pre-University Education have come to conclusions regarding the achievements of the programs implemented by OECD countries, including Albania. Their conclusions observed the following phenomenon:

- The increase of living standards has improved slowly for several strata of the population(rural and unemployed families) therefore the education of this category has made little progress:
- There is some evidence about the increase of the quality of education, but it has been lower than the expectations;
- The increase of unemployment as a global phenomenon has affected the education system;
- The use of child prohibited labor and their exploitation have become significant phenomenon of the Albanian society;
- The emergence of extreme phenomena such as: schools’ emptying or overcrowding;
- School abandonment in rural and urban areas;
- Increase in number of jointed classes;
- Because of foreign immigration and internal migration, students have diminished in number.

Education reforms in these years have brought innovation as well as problems that highlight the deficiencies and increased risks. The complexity of the problems already known does not seem concerned about the reflections, which are weak, sometimes unwilling to accept the negative occurrences and often being unable to solve problems.

Reforms such as the reform of curricula, the evaluation reform, the reform of methods, professional education, inclusion, respect of human rights etc, certainly are appreciate for the changes that have brought, but at the same time have discovered some other problems. This means that education still bares problems, which affect the quality of the school and the pupils' success.

1.2. The content of the reforms in the global context

After the 90s many European countries, which emerged from totalitarian regimes, were involved in educational reforms aiming to rebuild and recompose the educational systems in order to respond to the European standards and the global developments in education.

Albania, being one of these countries, got involved in these changes which took the course of progressive reforms in education and lead to the trends of the time, such as: depoliticizing the educational system, modernization of the educational system, globalization, education for all, lifelong learning ,respect for human rights, equality and quality in education ,inclusion, discrimination etc..

The above issue was included in the program "Equity and Quality in Education" initiated since 2004 .Its content includes structural reforms and some components of education. This program accompanied by a substantial budget has provided important impacts in the Albanian education.

1.3. Transformations and economic development

Albania, in comparison to other countries, spends less on education. In 1999, Albania spent on education 3.5% of its GDP, while in 2013 it reduced to 2.7%. Comparing to the Eastern Europe expenditures that reach the average of 4.6%, the Albanian expenditures on education are almost 2% lower.

Besides this, the expenditure per pupil in elementary and secondary education is among the lowest in the region. According to some statistics in 2005, the population had conducted an average of 8.5 years of education. This is a low benchmark compared with the average of 12 years of education among 10 member countries of the EU, and 14 years of OECD countries. Today Albania has an average of 11.9 years of education.¹

A recent study based on cognitive skills, used the scores of the standardized tests internationally comparable (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2009), and revealed that Albania had the lowest scores of cognitive abilities. Only 40% of the pupils had achieved the basic knowledge in mathematics and science (20% less than Macedonia, which occupied the penultimate rank).²

¹ World Bank Report , 2012, "Assessment on the governance in education "

² idem

Furthermore, the last test results from the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009) noted that even though there was a significant improvement since 2000, its development remain below the expectations. In 2009, the average evaluation score for Albania was about 100 points (or 20%) below OECD average, approximately the same margin below Turkey and 50 points below Bulgaria.³

The Council of Europe has set three basic objectives regarding the average years of education. We can mention:

- The average years of education for every European citizen must be not less than 15 years. In 2012, Albania performed an average of 11.9 years of education.¹
- The schools' dropout average should be not more than 10%, while the government data reveal a margin of 0.9-1.5% (USAID data claim that this percentage is closer to 13%¹);
- About 82% of the population in the European area should have completed the upper secondary education. In Albania this percentage varies around 68%¹;

In relation to education, EFA has defined six specific objectives EFA with quantitative and qualitative character. Some well-known international organizations such as World Bank, UNESCO, PNUD, UNICEF, ILO, have become part of the monitoring program for the elimination of gender inequality, increase of the quality of compulsory education, elimination of illiteracy and discrimination of the most sensitive strata of the society etc.

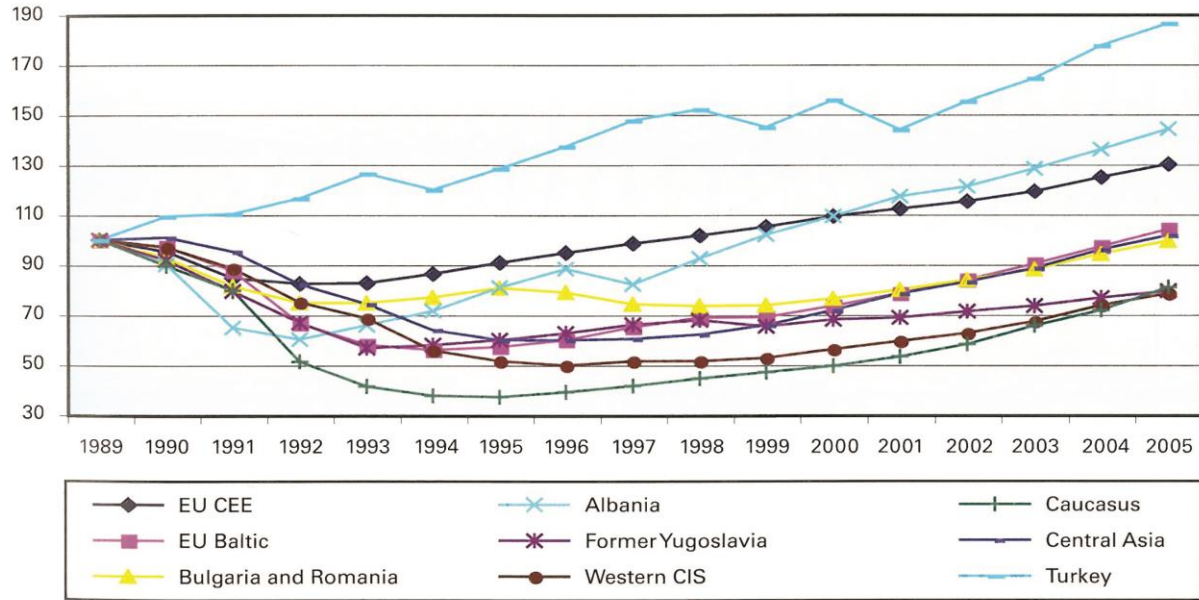
Such programs, are monitored by international organizations have already given their impact. However, the Albanian education system bares problems such as absence of adequate infrastructure for children with special needs, the lack of interest for Roma children, lack of attention toward children involved in the phenomena of blood feud, labor and economic exploitation of children, the impact of divorce on children etc.

Taking into consideration these objectives, the international agencies that work and develop their activities in Albania, have organized their work in full coherence with these issues and the National Education Strategy 2009-2013 implemented by the Albanian Government.

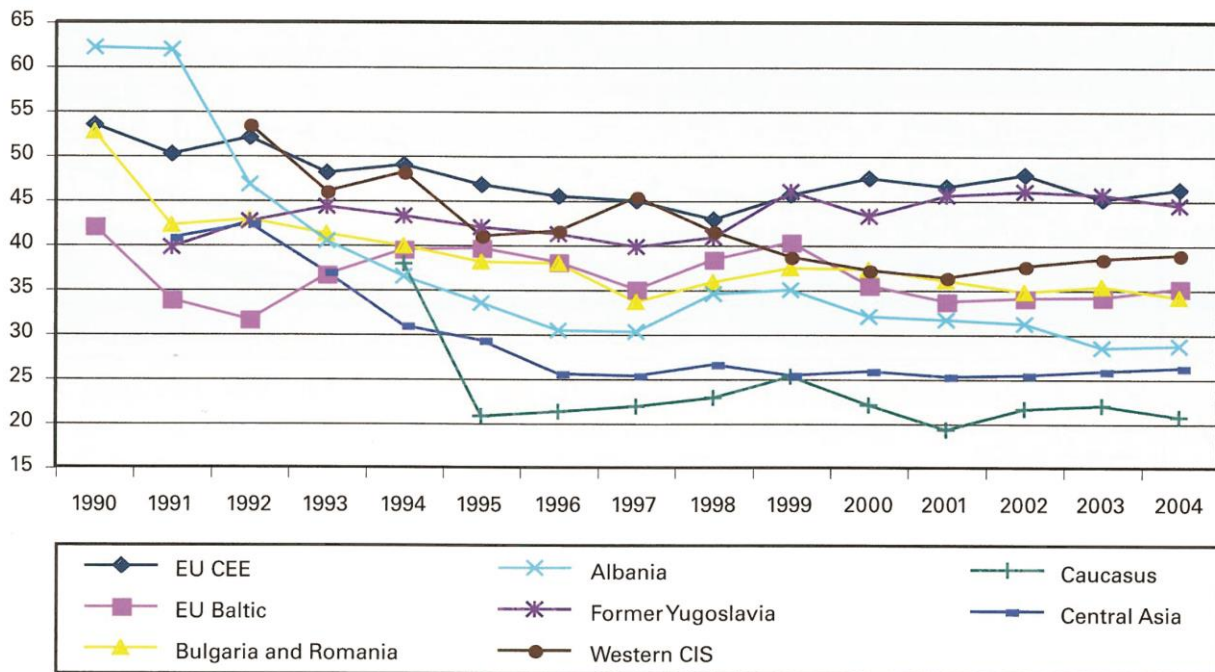
By making comparisons with the data provided by these organizations and taking into consideration the global developments, Albania has shown little progress in her educational reforms. The following

³ idem

prospect shows the development of the education of participating countries based on their GDP.



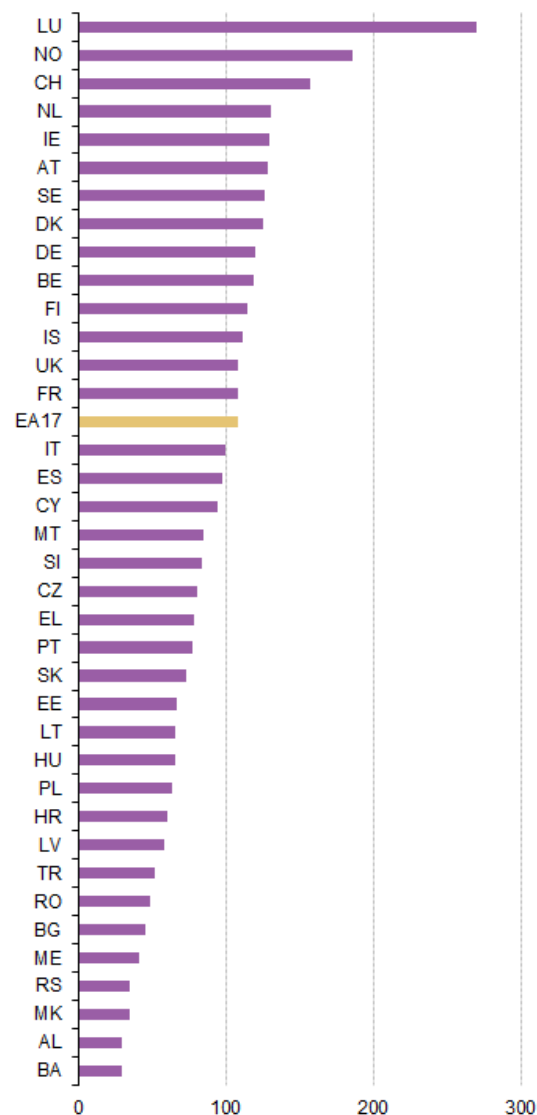
Graph1. Real development of ten European countries based on their GDP (1989-2005)



Graph 2. Development of education based on the costs percent of the country's GDP 1990-2004

1.4. Standard of living

With regard to the chart below, Luxemburg has the highest standard of living among European countries, while Albania clearly distinguishes for her poverty and low standard of living. Bosnia is the only country that has the lowest GDP, while for Kosovo there is no data reported.



	Gross domestic product			Actual individual consumption		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
LU	255	267	271	144	141	140
NL	132	131	131	118	114	113
IE	130	129	129	103	103	101
AT	125	127	129	116	118	119
SE	120	124	127	116	114	116
DK	123	128	125	116	116	113
DE	115	119	121	115	117	120
BE	118	119	119	109	111	111
FI	114	113	114	110	111	112
UK	111	111	109	121	120	118
FR	109	108	108	113	113	113
EA-17	109	108	108	107	107	107
IT	104	101	100	103	102	101
ES	103	99	98	96	95	94
CY	100	97	94	102	99	98
MT	83	85	85	85	83	84
SI	87	84	84	81	80	81
CZ	83	80	80	73	71	71
EL	94	87	79	104	97	91
PT	80	80	77	83	84	81
SK	73	73	73	72	71	70
EE	63	63	67	58	56	58
LT*	55	57	66	63	61	70
HU	65	65	66	62	60	61
PL	61	63	64	64	67	69
LV	54	54	58	52	53	57
RO	47	47	49	46	46	47
BG	44	44	46	43	43	45
NO	177	181	186	134	136	135
CH	150	154	157	128	129	130
IS	120	112	111	111	106	107
HR	62	59	61	58	57	59
TR	46	50	52	51	54	57
ME	41	42	42	50	52	53
MK	36	36	35	41	40	40
RS	36	35	35	44	44	43
AL**	28	27	30	32	30	34
BA	31	30	30	37	36	36

* 2011 population figures adjusted on the basis of the 2011 Census. Therefore the per capita indices for 2011 are not entirely comparable with previous years due to this break in time series.

** Figures for all years based on Eurostat estimate of GDP.

Graph 3. GDP per capita in EU for 2012⁴

Chart 1. GDP per capita in EU for 2012

⁴http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/GDP_per_capita_consumption_per_capita_and_price_level_indices#Further_Eurostat_information

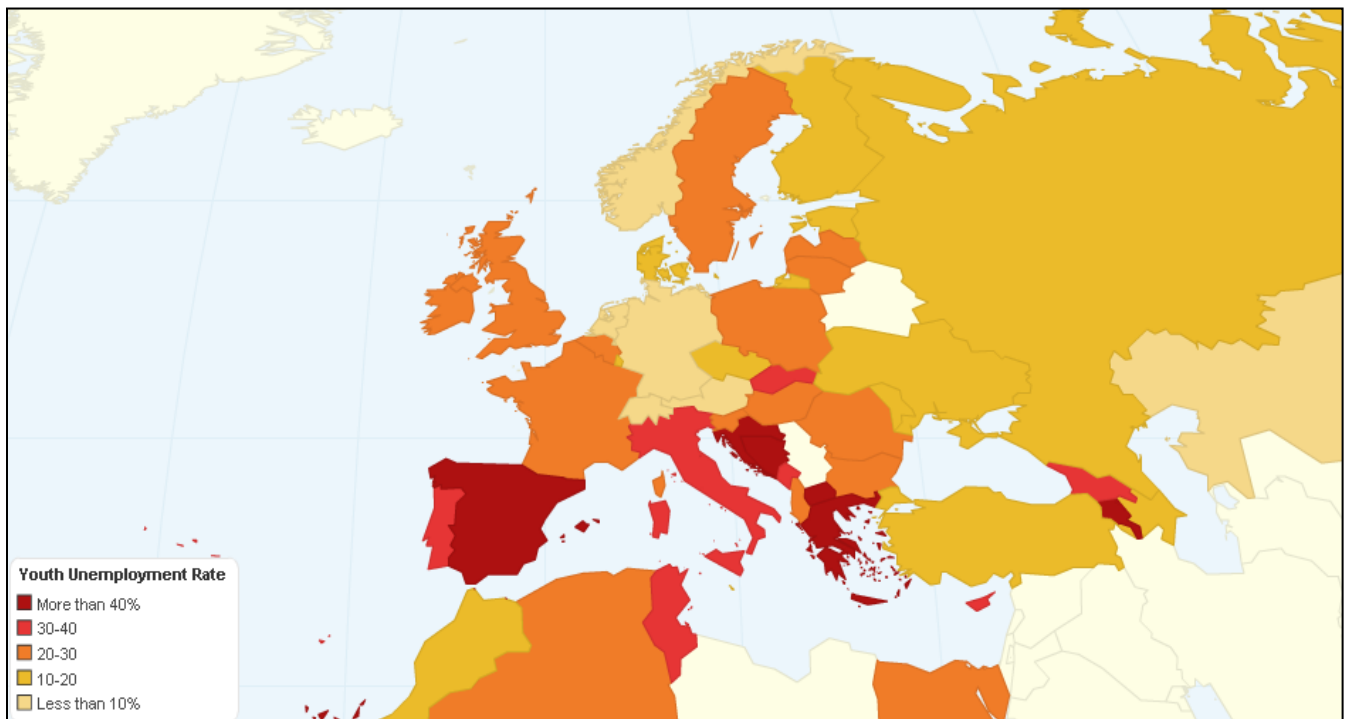
1.5. Inequality

As far as the field of inequality is concerned, we notice that there have been implemented investments and reforms in education, but also have emerged elements of disparity that differ from one region to another and from one place to another. In connection to the European context and the Balkan region, the Albanian education bares low items of comparability. While comparing the quality of education with neighboring countries, Albania occupies the last position of the list.

1.6. Unemployment

According to some given data, both at government level or private sector reveal that the rate of unemployment in the country is relatively high. This influences directly the education by reducing the value of school.

The graph deals with the problem of youth unemployment and unemployment among adults in the country compared with data from other countries of the European continent. If we will accept that young people constitute the highest percentage of unemployment then the prospects of the development become hopeless.

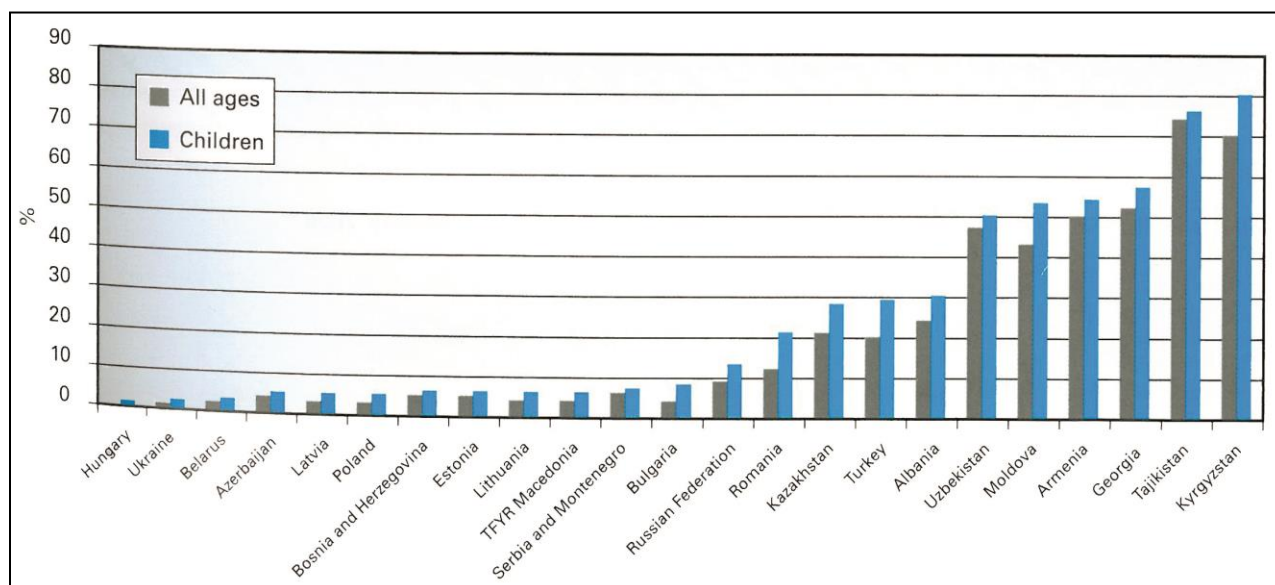


Graph 4: The percentage of youth unemployment in Europe for 2011

1.7. Poverty

If the poverty rate is based on the principle that the power gained is lower than the purchased, than the poverty rate is high. Official statistics reveal that living standards per capita in Albania varies each year. The national debt is 1000 Euro/person⁵.

The chart below gathers information about poverty at European level. It clearly makes obvious the position of Albania, even though the performance of the country has been somehow satisfactory as far as the living standard is concerned, the position of Albania in this chart remain the same. It is a fact that people who live in poverty and the medium and high strata of the population have generated a polarization of the real strata of the population and their living standards⁶. The following chart gives a clear vision of this problem.



Graph 5. Absolute poverty of all ages and children

Census data reveal that in 2002, 25% of the population lived in extreme poverty, during 2005 it was 18.55% and in 2008 it diminished to 12, 4%.⁷ Monthly income per capita in 2006-2007 have been 10 884 lek, ranging from 14 859 which is the highest income to 9142 the lowest income per capita⁸.

Monthly cost of a child education has varied over the years as follow:

In 2002 -177 lek;

In 2005 - 275 lek;

In 2008 - 432 lek

Basic needs:

In 2002 - 958 lek per month;

In 2005 -1087 lek per month;

In 2018 -1447 lek per month

⁵ INSTAT official statistics

⁶ INSTAT, 2010

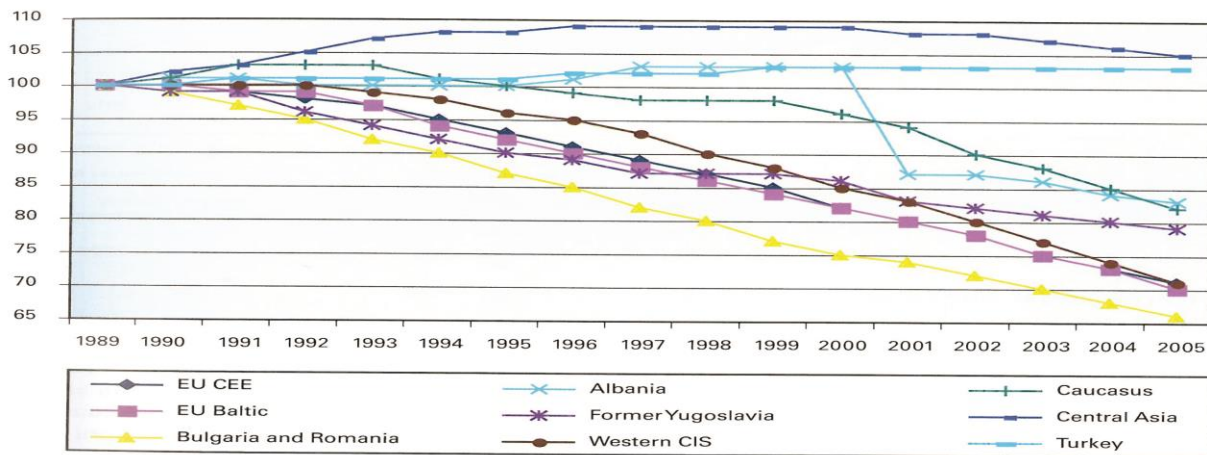
⁷ CENSUS, 2012

⁸ ibidem

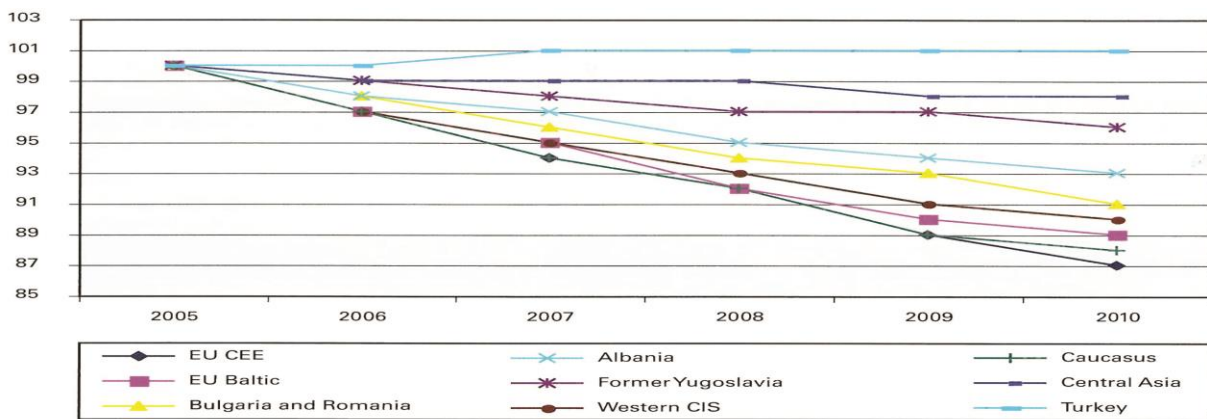
Albania has the youngest population in Europe. Its population in 2007 was approximately 3.3 million, while the recent census shows that the population has reduced 2.800.138. Of this, about 1/3 were children under 18 years old, about 1,396,000 (National Strategy for Children, 2009). The population under 5 years old was 253,000.⁹

1.9. School age population

The graphics below represent the school age population in the region and in Albania. The curves move on the same direction but with different drops. Albania distinguishes for a sudden decline after 1997.



Graph 6. Involvement in education from the age of 0-17 years 1989.2005



Graph 7. Projections of 0-17 year population 2005-2010

⁹ Children in Albania, 2010

CHART 2: Involvement in education compared to the region since 2008 (in %)

Country	Pre-education	Elementary	Lower secondary	Higher secondary	University
Albania	53	93	97	73	30
Austria	95	100	102	99	55
Belgium	122	103	110	108	63
Bulgaria	81	101	86	90	51
Estonia	95	100	102	97	64
France	110	110	110	117	55
Germany	109	105	100	104	...
Hungary	87	99	99	96	65
Rumania	73	100	102	84	77
Russia	90	97	85	84	77
Slovakia	94	103	94	90	54
Slovenia	89	97	96	98	87
Sweden	102	95	103	104	71
Switzerland	102	105	112	85	49
Britain	81	106	103	96	97
Czech Republic	111	103	99	91	59

Both in region and country level, the birth rate have decreased. We can just mention the fact that only 35 800¹⁰ pupils attended the elementary school for 2012-2013 and compared to 62 000 pupils registered during 2004 this indicates the decline of birth rates and a high emigration. During 2012-2013 only 41 704 pupils attended the tenth grade.¹¹ This evidences the phenomenon of school abandonment during the years.

While in some European countries there is evident a rise in number of school age children, in Albania this number continues to reduce drastically, (not including students who leave school or abandon it).

Albania presents the following characteristics:

- Enrollment in primary schools : 96%/95%
- Pre-school attendance rate : 54%/50%
- Children who have accomplished the 5th grade : 90%
- Enrolment in secondary schools: 75%/73%
- Attendance of secondary schools :39%/39%

¹⁰ MES statistics 2013

¹¹ MES statistics 2013

1.10. Albanian population according to literacy rate

The following chart provides data related to the level of literacy of the population according to age groups.

Age group	Know to read/write	Illiterate
Total	2 387 409	67 539
10-14 years old	231 653	1723
15-19	266 391	2355
20-24	240 511	3134
25-29	188 762	3144
30-34	161 531	2444
35-39	165 441	2058
40-44	184 554	1897
45-49	191 116	1778
50-54	193 608	1872
55-59	160 998	1747

The total number of the population that do not attend the school is 1 966 795. About 1,049 197 live in the city of whom 93 230 have never gone to school.

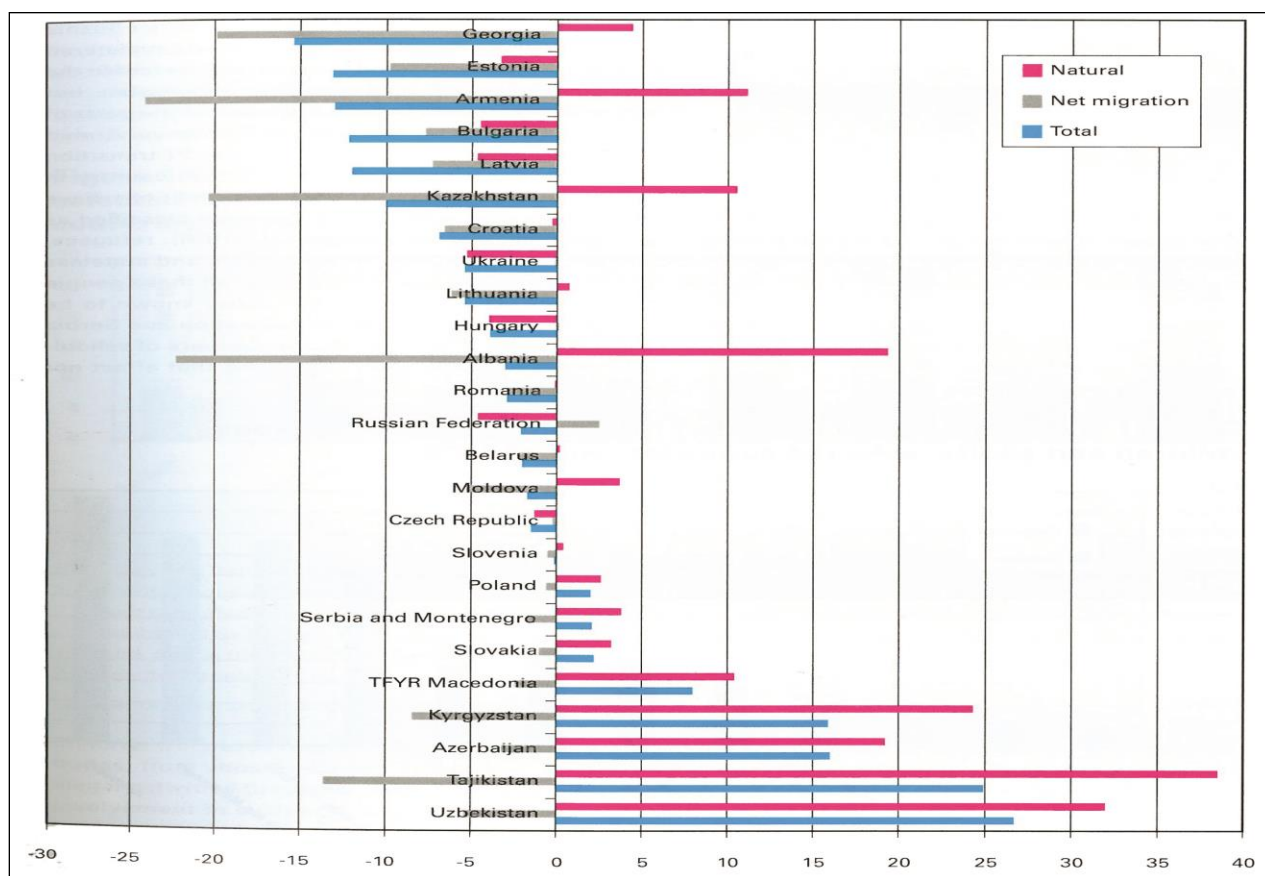
The total number of the citizens who have attended the school is 1,873 565. The number of those who do not have a degree is 12 311, the number of the people who have accomplished the elementary education is 194 955, those who have attended the 7/8/9 degree is 838 717, while 601 984 citizens have followed the secondary education and 222 279 people attended the university..

Have not attended the school but know to read/write	Have never attended the school/illiterate	Have followed the school/know to read/write	Have followed the school/illiterate
29755	63475	2357654	4064

1.11 Emigration

The phenomenon of emigration has affected the European continent and Albania as well. As we know, many post-communist countries have gone and are still going through a difficult transition period. After the 90's the Albanian population has moved from one place to another, from one continent to another. This wave of immigration affected the field of education.

The diminishing number of the population is still present. The results of different census done in different post communist countries reveal the presence of this phenomenon.



Graph 8. Changes in natural populations and migration 1989-2002

A phenomenon that has emerged is the repatriation of migrant families. According to the Ministry of Education and Science at about 5000 children¹² aged 1-18 years, have come back and attend the pre-university education bearing different problems and need special attention during their educational process.

Compared to 2007, the Albanian population has decreased in number with a margin of 15 %¹³. The today's population within the Albanian territory is about 2 800 138¹⁴

1.12 Child labor

The international statistics on child labor state that 215 million children work. The statistics in the region are largely unclear due to the difficulties and the unreliability that this problem present. INSTAT data states that in Albania almost 54 000 children (or 9.8%) that are committed to perform hard and prohibited works¹⁵. Children who live in rural areas are not included in these data. The work for this category is a common phenomenon even in young age.

¹² F. Veisiu, MES, 2012

¹³ INSTAT, Census, 2012

¹⁴ Census, 2012

¹⁵ INSTAT

The high rate of immigration has profoundly weakened the social support for the children. Roma child ethnic discrimination, the lack of proper laws about child labor, weapon conflicts, food emergencies, divorce etc characterize the background of this category.

The issue of child labor has become an important concern, which being part of the European project “Education for All” is attracting each day the attention of the government.

1.13. Minority children

In Albania are present national minorities and ethnic communities, but their children are not discriminated about their nationality. Due to their continuous movement after the 90’s, there is no real data about their total number. It should be noted the Albanian tradition, which does not discriminate the minorities and ethnic communities, and respects and protects the rights of these groups. These communities have always had the same rights and freedom as the Albanian citizens. The depopulation of the areas where these communities live has weakened the education of their children. The number of school age children is continuously decreasing and this makes it impossible to meet the appropriate number for opening teaching classes.

1.13.1 Roma, Egyptians and children with disabilities

There is no comprehensive statistic about the exact number of Roma in Albania, but according to Roma representatives, they might be about 30.000 up to 120.000 people. The Roma live on the peripheries of urban areas and constitute a clearly visible minority, (Cess, 2003), while the Roma children comprise the majority of street children (Tahiraj, 2000).

The presence of poverty, social exclusion, poor living conditions and inadequate health conditions characterize the Roma’s situation. Lacking a basic education, they became unused to enjoy the opportunities that the labor market offers. This becomes a vicious circle in which “poverty breeds poverty” and the social problems pass from one Roma generation to another. The majority of trafficked children are mainly part of Roma families.¹⁶

Chart 4: The number of Roma, Egyptian and pupils with disabilities¹⁷

	Roma			Egyptian			With disabilities										
	Total	At school	Dropouts	Total	At school	Dropouts	Total	At school	Learn at home	Mental (movements)	Mental+physical	Seeing	Hearing	Speech	Autists	Dropouts	
TOTALI	2961	2713	252	7887	7583	304	2123	1999	103	351	328	237	374	116	192	77	110

The chart gives information about the previous category.

¹⁶ MPCSShB, 2007b

¹⁷ Instat,2011

1.14 Children in migration

Children in migration accompanied or not by parents, are becoming part of state intervention and other organizations that operate in this field. There is no exact data about the number of children in migration, but MFA informs that almost 25 000 children aged 6-12 years live in Greece. Only some of them receive instruction in their mother tongue due to the efforts of some immigrant teachers.

Those children who are unaccompanied by their parents constitute the most vulnerable group to labor exploitation and other types of trafficking. During this decade, the number of migrant unaccompanied children who live in neighboring countries is about 4000³. Other data reveal that 6000 children have been moved illegally, used for hard labor, begging and other illegal activities. Due to the clandestine nature of the phenomenon and the lack of information from the hosting countries, it is hard to confirm these data. Even though the figures were lower this represents an alarming phenomenon.

MES reports that by the end of 2013 about 5000 children have turned back from migration.¹⁸

³According to the National Strategy Against Human Beings Trafficking , 2001

¹⁸ Fatmir Veisiu, Interview in the media, December, 2012

Chapter 2

INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BASIC EDUCATION

2.1. Participation in the pre-university education

In comparison to OECD countries, the admission in pre-university education is lower. Actually, in Albania the average school attendance is 11, 9 years, while in OECD countries it is 14 years. This fact explains the low level of secondary enrollment. There also exists a variation as far as the school attendance is concerned in the provinces, for example an adult who lives in Tirana has an average of school attendance 3.5 years more than the Republic's school attendance average.

CHART 5 Statistical data on education (2007-2008) compared with regional countries and the EU ¹⁹							
No	INDICATOR	Albania	Europe	Serbia	Macedonia	Croatia	Slovenia
1	Average of school years	11.9	14,4	13	12	15	16,2
2	Teaching hours						
	Ages 7-8	550	750	620	600	620	630
	Ages 15	790	900	800	800	810	820
	School days	167	185	185	180	183	185
	Weeks at school	35	37	37	36	37	38
3	% net enrollment						
	Pre-education	50	75	45	29	45	75
	Compulsory education	92	95	96	93	90	93
	Secondary education	57	85	82	80	84	91
	Vocational education	19	62,7	70	65	70	

The trend of the attendance of pre-university education at national level is two-dimensional: a) reduction in the absolute number of students because of birth rate diminution
b) Increase of the percentage of those who participate in the higher levels of education

The following chart shows the percentages of the enrollment according to the educational levels:

Chart 6: The enrollment in Albania in pre-university education in the course of the years										
School year	2004 - 2005		2005 - 2006		2006 - 2007		2007 2008		2008 2009	
Pre-education	50	50	50	48	50	47	51.8	49	52.6	49.6
9 years	103	94	101	94	101	94	98	92	94.3	89.3
Secondary	59	51	64	53	68	55	70	57.5	69.5	59.9

With regard to school abandonment, it shows that for 2009 the drop out of the compulsory education reached the level of 0.94%²⁰, while USAID reported that illiteracy in Albania was approximately 13%.²¹

¹⁹ National Strategy on Education 2009-2013

The phenomenon of school abandonment is closely associated to the category of children in need and especially Roma children. Actually, in Albania there are about 5,000 Roma children aged 3-16 years old. The enrollment in the school of the children as prescribed by the law is relatively low. Only 27% of children under 6 years old are actually attending the first grade. Some data reveal that one to two Roma school age children (6-16 years old) have dropped out the school. Approximately 54 percent of Roma school age (6-16 years old) has never gone to school and 43% of Roma children aged 15-16 are illiterate.²² This phenomenon becomes much more troubling for Roma girls. Compared to the Roma boys of the same age the school abandonment of Roma girls after the age of 11 years old is higher. The school attendance of Roma girls at the age of 12 is 23%. The children who live in the remote areas of the country, the girls who live in the areas with backward mentality and those who belong to the category of the families with economic problems constitute other relevant problems.²³

The blood feud, as a phenomenon of the northern part of Albania, has created a new category of children that do not attend the school. Official data reveal that the number of the isolated children who do not frequent the school is about 900.

2.2. Pre-school education

In the last five years, the number of the children who have registered in the preschool education represents a steady number. It suffered a fall after the '90s and the number of the children who attend the early childhood education in comparison to the period before the fall of communism and other countries of the region remains low. The rate of the participation in this level of education remains low, some evidence show that by the end of 2005 only 51.1% of the children from 3-5 years old enrolled in the kindergarten.

Year	Total	City	Village	With meals in the city	With meals in the village
1997	84232	49843	34389	8724	0
2000	80337	36600	43737	10185	0
2005	74460	36487	37973	14424	55
2010	74914	38208	36706	18571	200

During the last 15 years, the development of pre-school education has been slow. Because the pre-school education is not part of the compulsory education, this has conditioned the lack of attention of all governments and consequently the funds allocated for pre-school education have been continuously falling. If during 2001, only 5.9% of the budget was utilized for pre-school education this figure in 2005 was 4.7%.²⁵ Consequently, the conditions of the kindergartens their equipment and didactic furniture is poor and do not meet the required standards. The numerous requests from the parents about this service, especially in urban areas affected by the migration in the last 15 years, remain unfulfilled.

²⁰ Data given by MES statistics 2009-2013

²¹ USAID report data , 2012 for the education in Albania

²² MES statistics 2012-2013

²³ MES strategy 2009-2013

²⁴ Census, 2012

²⁵ MES strategy 2009-2013

The pre-school attendance in the course of years:

1992	2005	2009	2013
34%	48.8%	50%	54%

In relation to the total number of children, the percentage of those who attend kindergartens is increasing. In 1992, only 34% of children aged 3-5 years old frequented the kindergarten, in 2005 this figure was 48.8%, while in 2009 it amounted to 50%. In absolute terms, the number of children both in the city and in the village is decreasing due to the low birth rate, immigration and women's unemployment.²⁶

"In the last few years have emerged some problems related to the attendance of the kindergartens. This relates to the infrastructure (mainly in the rural areas), the equipment, didactic basic tools and the development of the teaching process. Some political and official documents speak for implementing the standards, the concepts, the contemporary practices (already proven in some pilot kindergartens which have nowadays turned into training centers) and the personnel who work in these structures."²⁷

2.3. Compulsory basic education

The compulsory basic education in Albania lasts 9 years. The law on Pre-University Education System constitutes the act that manages the relations generated by the educational system. The structure 5+4 of the basic education has changed with the implementation of the new educational plan approved in 2004 by the Ministry of Education and Science. The law already approves the new structure 6+3. With regard to the region there is no other country that has the same structure as ours, but in the context of the unification of the educational programs of the Albanian areas, such as Kosovo, Macedonia and Monte Negro it can create structural and curricular problems.

Statistical data reveal that the last year about 476,000 pupils registered in the basic education (56,000 pupils less than 2001). During 2005, the total number of the children enrolled for the first time in the first grade was 51,000 and compared to 2002 the difference amounts to 12,000 pupils. This reduction is evident because of the low rate of births and the migratory movement.

In 2012-2013, about 35800 pupils registered the first grade. The physical infrastructure of the pre-university education does not respond in all their extents (especially in rural areas) to the contemporary requirements even though in the recent years have been undertaken reconstruction projects. Some problems that have recently emerged constitute the phenomenon of depopulation of rural schools and the need for expansion of schools in urban areas. They are amortized and do not respond to the overcrowding classes by creating in this manner the lack of infrastructural and human standards.

In the remote and peripheral areas has emerged the phenomenon of unified classes (collective) which damages the teaching quality. The concentration of small rural schools with a small number of pupils near major centers is under discussion, but the situation is not improving even though this component has been included in educational strategies.

²⁶ Ibidem

²⁷ Ibidem

The World Bank noted in a report that, “the issues that concern the curricula are the overcrowded theories”²⁸. At national level, the basic compulsory education includes about 60% of the pupils. It has always had the attention of the state institutions, but the problem of overcrowding classes, teachers the lack of adequate infrastructures etc, have generated different problems related to the school attendance, the low quality of learning and inadequate infrastructure etc.

2.4 Secondary education

During the school year 2008-2009, about 80% of the pupils who had completed the basic education frequented the secondary education. While in the school year 2003-2008 this figure was 71%. In comparison to the European standards (95-100%), the current rate of enrollment in the secondary education is low.

The number of students that frequent the part time secondary education has grown to 7 577 students. The report of pupils’ in general secondary education to vocational education students is 81% to 19%. The general secondary education presents problems of overcrowding classes in major cities, or limited number of students in rural areas that determine the increase of the costs, teaching in tours etc.

2.5 Secondary vocational education

Despite the reforms undertaken in recent years and the support of donors, the current Vocational Education and Training system in Albania remains weak. This situation results due to the vague perception of its educational importance and the incomplete role of the institutions.

The lack of adequate infrastructure, insufficient and unstable financial mechanisms, low human resources, outdated curricula and management methods characterize this educational category. . The system of pre service for teachers and instructors of professional subjects is lacking.

Despite recent developments, the scope and the quality of vocational education do not meet the labor market demands and reacts poorly to the social interested partners. The VET curricula needs for further improvements in order to respond to the market demands and get involved in the European experience.

The qualification and certification system reveals an insufficient guidance to the new European standards.

Actually, at national level operate 41 vocational and technical schools, 33 social-cultural schools distributed in 22 districts. In rural areas, operate three vocational schools whose main direction relates to agriculture and agro-business. The students qualify in 35 specific areas. The vocational schools divide into four main areas: electro-mechanical (19 schools), economic (9 schools), construction and joinery (4 schools), agriculture, foster, veterinary medicine (9 schools).

Taking into consideration the school enrollment during the school year 2007-2008 about 7093 students registered in the first grade. The main branches of interest were; mechanical, hydro installer, economic (5-year cycle), general electric (5-year cycle), while the less followed branches were wood processing,

²⁸ World Bank Report “ Education in Albania” , 2008

farming, forestry, etc. For the school year 2007-2008 the total number of students enrolled in public vocational schools, including artistic, normal school and foreign languages schools (the so called socio-cultural schools), accounted at about 19 % of the students that attend the secondary education.

In comparison to the OECD countries, this number is relatively low. This figure is around 50 % and in some other western developed countries even higher.

2.6. Private education

The increasing numbers of students who frequent non public schools constitute a new phenomenon in Albania. During 2010 -2013, this sector has increased in number by nearly 2000 students. At the same time, the number of private schools is increasing in number too. If we consider the raise in number of the students in this sector, it does not mean that these structures offer a better quality in education. The state graduation test revealed that the phenomenon of qualified students was not part of the non public schools. About 90% of them are student with poor results and consider the private education as a mantle for their real learning capacities.

In this aspect of education, the improvement of teaching conditions and the quality of learning process are not major objectives. We have to admit that even though the competition forces to improve this sector, the quality that these school offers must be in a continuous monitoring process basing their evaluation on reliable indicators.

2.7 Participation in pre-university education during 2012-2013

In order to explain the above-mentioned data let us focus on some statistics charts published by the Ministry of Science and Education for 2012-2013.

A. Number of Pupils, Institutions, and Teachers in the Pre-University Education (School Year 2012-2013)

Public and Private Education								
		Total	Pre-school	%	Basic education	%	Secondary education	%
	No. Pupils	627127	81865	13.05%	390837	62.32%	154425	24.62%
	No. Institutions	3609	1911	50.30%	1472	38.75%	510	13.42%
	No. Teachers	38371	4498	11.72%	25263	65.84%	8610	22.44%

In the chart above are present 286 united public and private schools. In this category are also included the number of basic and secondary schools.

Public Education								
		Total	Pre-school	%	Basic Education	%	Secondary education	%
	No. Pupils	584078	76735	13.14%	370238	39%	137105	23.47%
	No. Institutions	3303	1778	51.40%	1346	38.91%	385	11.13%
	No. Teachers	34559	4136	11.97%	23452	67.86%	6971	20.17%

About 207 united schools constitute the public education. The chart includes also the number of basic and secondary schools.

Private Education								
	Total	Pre-school	%	Basic	%	Secondary	%	
No. Pupils	43049	5130	11.92%	20599	47.85%	17320	40.23%	
No. Institutions	306	133	39.12%	126	37.06%	125	36.76%	
No. Teachers	3812	362	9.50%	1811	47.51%	1639	43.00%	

In the private education are present 79 united schools in which are included the number of basic and secondary schools.

B. Education according to the level of schools, classes, pupils and teachers

Public Education

	Schools				Pupils						Teachers			
	kindergartens	basic	gymnasiums	teachers	kindergartens	basic	kpgj	kpgj	kpp	kpjp	kindergartens	basic	gymnasiums	teachers
National Level	1778	1346	331	54	76735	370238	103404	10820	20209	2672	4136	23452	5380	1591

Compulsory private education

National Level	133	126	113	13	5130	20599	13134	2779	1407	362	1811	1486	153	
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Compulsory public education

National Level	1346	1028	14197	7555	370238	175682	184340	88056	23452	16859	13987	8999
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Compulsory private education

National Level	126	10	1263	104	20599	9705	1992	933	1811	1527	130	104
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Secondary public education

385	223	3994	1254	221	10	123613	58795	35430	17002	13492	4238	2585	684	6971	4407	2036	1073
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Secondary private education

126	8	752	62	63	19	14541	7155	915	395	2779	703	908	244	1639	1069	83	48
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C. The enrollments in the preschool education

Chart 7: Enrollments in preschool education, school year 2012-2013. Public Education

Total	With meals	Village	With meals
No. kindergartens	1778	130	1478 0
No. Groups	3421	510	1965 0
1-st groups	439	140	108 0
2-nd groups	618	173	184 0
3-d groups	935	158	341 0
Mixed groups	1429	39	1332 0

Registered children	76735	16652	37708 0
<i>Female</i>	36426	7708	18131 0
1-st groups	10614	4424	2150 0
<i>Female</i>	5002	2070	1029 0
2-nd groups	15665	5692	3958 0
<i>Female</i>	7475	2631	1937 0
3-d groups	23346	5179	7195 0
<i>Female</i>	11029	2380	3493 0
Mixed groups	27110	1357	24405 0
<i>Female</i>	12920	627	11672 0

Total no. of educators	4136	1138	1955 0
With secondary degree	1544	359	823 0
University degree	2592	779	1132 0

Chart 8: Enrollments in preschool education, school year 2012-2013, Private Education

Total	With meals	Village	With meals
No. Kindergartens	133	70	18 6
No. groups	308	183	33
1-st groups	14	66	52
2-nd groups	3	3	55
3-d groups	100	60	12 6
Mixed groups	62	16	9 0

	Total	With meals	Village	With meals
Registered children	5130	2500	679	260
Female	2513	1259	306	116
1-st groups	884	523	45	45
Female	445	280	18	18
2-nd groups	1368	766	179	90
Female	679	386	89	47
3-d groups	1750	913	231	125
Female	844	448	99	51
Mixed groups	1128	298	224	0
Female	545	145	100	0
Total teachers	362	212	38	15
With secondary degree	74	51	13	4
With university degree	288	161	25	11

D. The number of teachers in the basic education according to their educational degree

Public and Private Education

Chart 9: The no of teachers in the basic education according to their educational degree (school year 2012-2013)

	Public				Private			
	Total	Female	Village	Female	Total	Female	Village	Female
1 Total no teachers	23452	16859	13987	8999	1811	1527	130	104
a. with secondary degree	4595	2979	3410	1965	116	104	7	6
With pedagogical degree	3759	2500	2825	1672	94	88	6	6
b with university degree	18857	13880	10577	7034	1695	1423	123	98

	Public				Private			
	total	female	village	female	total	female	village	female
Teachers in preschool education	9686	8021	5973	4527	716	675	54	53
a. with secondary degree	3213	2278	2400	1540	92	91	6	6
With pedagogical degree	2978	2144	2186	1422	83	82	6	6
b with university degree	6473	5743	3573	2987	624	584	48	47

	total	female	village	female	total	female	village	female
Teachers in secondary education	13766	8838	8014	4472	1095	852	76	51
a with secondary degree	1382	701	1010	425	24	13	1	0
Of these with pedagogical degree	781	356	639	250	11	6	0	0
b with university degree	12384	8137	7004	4047	1071	839	75	51

CHART 10: No. teachers in the secondary education according to their education degree (2012-2013)

Public and Private Education

At national level	Public				Private			
	Total	female	village	female	total	female	village	female
1 total teachers	6971	4407	2036	1073	1639	1069	83	48
a. with secondary degree	190	87	20	7	11	5	0	0
b with university degree	6781	4320	2016	1066	1628	1064	83	48
2 teachers in gymnasium	5380	3462	1973	1039	1486	979	57	34
a. with secondary degree	93	67	17	6	9	5	0	0
b with university degree	5287	3395	1956	1033	1477	974	57	34
3. Vocational education	1591	945	63	34	153	90	26	14
a. with secondary degree	97	20	3	1	2	0	0	0
b with university degree	1494	925	60	33	151	90	26	14

Chapter 3

CURRICULA REFORM AND THE QUALITY OF TEACHING PROCESS

3.1. The structure of Curricula

Curricula and teaching process represent the basement of our educational system. The objective of this chapter will be the problems that arise due to the implementation of the process of curricula. We will focus on some other issues such as the teaching process, the evolution of the reform of curricula and the modernization of the Albanian education system.

The revised three-tiered structure **(5+4+3)**, of the basic education (compulsory) has changed and has been approved the new structure (basic education **3+3**) + (lower secondary education **+3**) + (upper secondary **+3**)

MES says that “ the implementation of this structure will put the Albanian education system at the same level of most OECD countries”²⁹, but also it keeps away from the education structure of the regional countries and the short term objectives that deal with the unification of programs and textbooks of the Albanian area.

The first two levels focus on training, literacy, mathematics, knowledge on health and society, the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for a democratic society.

The third level will develop further the accumulated knowledge, attitude and the skills of the students that they can use on their everyday life. This level moves into two main directions. The first prepares the students to follow the university, while the second provides them with the necessary professional skills in order to become members of the society after they have accomplished the secondary education.

3.2. The content of curricula

Curricula and the teaching process represent the basis of the education system and all the attention and t reforms of the educational system move to the direction of the content of curricula. As far as the changes in the context of curricula are concerned, we can say that it has faced many phenomena that have contributed in the achievement of good results and the quality of education.

Since 1993, the curricula of pre-university education and the teaching and learning process have been matters of continuous improvements.

The New Curricula Framework approved during 2012, bares a broad problem and needs to give clear answers to the following questions: What? When, Where, and How will be implemented the reforms and their subsequent changes.

Despite the positive steps made in the development of the curricula, other issues need additional work in order to create a completed and effective curriculum.

²⁹ National strategy on education 2009-2013

The experimental steps are fundamental for the implementation of the reform. This approach brings damages in terms of its acquisition by both teachers and students.

Teaching the native language must be the main priority of the curricula of the basic education. It shall be developed in the entire Albanian areas and in coherence with the regional and global developments of teaching and learning process.

The curricula results to be overloaded and this fact combined with the incapacity of the students to absorb better the curricula have created many difficulties. Some of the problems generated include the difficulty of learning the Albanian language in the basic education, difficulties on using correct literacy and mathematic skills. These issues create big problems to the subsequent schooling years. The curricula should not be regarded as “makeup of the same face”, but they must be guided by contemporary principles and criteria. In order that the “textbook should not be more competent than the teacher” the curricula makers should clarify every point of the program to the teachers’ community.

The lack of attention to such phenomena has threatened “the challenge of alleviating illiteracy” and it brings the necessity to find mechanisms on school attractiveness.”³⁰

Extra-curricular being part of activities related to the content of curricula to all school levels, have returned to “false” teaching activities organized without specific scope. The teachers have become less interested on performing them even though the students need such activities. In addition, infrastructure such as gyms, libraries, sports fields, teaching character visits etc are missing.

3.3. Subject areas

The necessity of conception and development of a curricula model focused on the knowledge and skills of the citizens has dictated the passage from the existing method named “subjects based curricula” to the new types “curricula based on study” and “curricula based on learning outcomes”. This has lead to the rise in number of new and/or integrated subjects.

The basic education is oriented towards the curricula based on subject areas, which enable the implementation of the teaching process. Despite this, it needs time to consolidate the structure and the content of textbooks, provide the adequate didactic materials and prepare the contemporary draft of teaching methods. The current practices of integrated curricula have shown deficiencies and therefore the teachers were unprepared to accomplish them.

The disruption of the correct function of the so-called “secondary subjects”, constitute a negative phenomenon closely related to the process of subjects’ rationalization. Subjects such as physical education, music and art do not get the right realization in the small, rural schools. Sometimes the teachers do not carry out these programs and avoid the implemented standards of these curricula.

Different reasons explain the low school results performed by a great number of students. The lack of interest on learning constitutes one of them. For this reason, we think it is necessary to adapt the content of curricula and the teaching process to the children’s age, their aspirations and their parents’ intents. Integrating the subjects of the basic education, make the learning process much more effective.

³⁰ National Strategy on Education 2009-2013

“Normalizing the students’ loads is a main objective which must be realized through the elimination of unnecessary material and by consolidating the curricula reform. This reform should be oriented toward the rise of the teaching quality and learning process. It must provide to the students enough time that help them to stimulate their independent thinking, the mental processes of analysis, synthesis and stimulate them to cultivate the habit to work in team etc.³¹

In the context of structural changes in education and in response to the time requirements, the curricula need continuous attention. The programs result to be conceptually overloaded and theoretic character. What you notice is the presence of teachers that only talk, classes that focus only on the teacher. “It is judged that in some cases the linearity of the acquisition of theoretical concepts is lacking and often is fragmented. The students exhibit deficiencies on learning languages (humanistic direction) and mathematics (natural direction). It should be emphasized that these constitute the basic knowledge of the education.”³²

The students’ evaluating process shows some deficiencies. The evaluation bases on their theoretical reproduction. Testing has become a habit that serves as a “trap” that teachers use to penalize their students. The differentiated work is lacking and has never been used forms of its application.

In order to pass this difficulty, the children and their parents regard the private lessons as the only solution. This of course, needs a considerable budget and referring to some statistics, these children represent 15-20 % of the pupils who have serious difficulties in their study and perform negative results.

The scientific laboratories constitute another problem. The educational and scientific laboratories, the presence of computers, the libraries, etc, are in poor conditions and the places in which the lessons take place do not meet the requirements.

3.5. The quality of learning

3.5.1. Preschool education

Some of the main objectives of enhancing the quality of preschool education:

1. At least one year of preparatory school for all children (5-6 years old);
2. consolidation of the programs implemented in the pilot kindergartens where the interactive methodology has been applied;
3. sufficient extension of preschool institutions; providing childhood services to vulnerable groups and especially in the northeast areas;
4. strengthening the experiences of low cost preschool institutions and those supported by the community;
5. support of the actual preschool education (3-5 years) encouraging the development of non-public school

Achieving the above objectives will result unrealistic if in the current situation the following requirements remain unfulfilled:

- Increasing the capacity of existing kindergartens;

³¹ World Bank Report 2009

³² Ibidem

- Ensure the respective classes for the preparatory groups in all preschool education networks of the compulsory education;
- Review the curricula of educational faculties, in order to prepare the “new model” of preschool teachers;
- Preparation of content standards;
- Development of the new curricula for the preparatory year and creation of the training teachers’ program;

While observing the preschool education it results that teachers that work this sector perform a routine work. They sometimes do not implement the curricula programs and work with an outdated mentality. Even though in the Albanian preschool education have been experimented a series of successful models, the teachers do not apply these teaching models in the kindergartens.

3.5.2 Basic education

The modernization of the content of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education closely connects to the creation of a new framework of the curricula. It needs a qualified education service that performs European standards. Both the basic and the secondary education have been part of the curricula reform, which has reformed both the programs and textbooks, but they still suffer from an overload teaching method. The incorrect application of curricula comes because of the inadequate capacity of the teachers to best respond to it. The teachers’ trainings have been spontaneous, unsuccessful and non-thematic. As a result, the students perform low results. The exams done at national level revealed that by the end of the compulsory basic education for many subjects the average grade was 6-7.³³ Almost 60% of the pupils show a minimum level of knowledge.

3.5.3 Education for all

The education system should be constructed in such a way that provide to the pupils’ basic knowledge such as literacy, mathematics, skills in informatics and communication technology since the early stages of their basic education.

As students move to higher levels of education the curricula needs to be more flexible and offer to them the right to choose the subjects. In this way, the specialization improves and at the same time, it reduces the need to offer the students all the subjects. The curricula choice gives the possibility to decide the useful combination of those subjects necessary to the students that will follow the secondary school. This experience is applying in the Albanian schools, but the lack of the capacity of teachers in some specific subjects has revealed the difficulties of the applicability of this change. The students are obliged to follow those subjects mostly attended by the majority of the students, because the subjects with a small number of attendances do not function due to the lack of professional teachers.

Systematical learning is an approach of qualitative learning method that helps the students to improve their learning abilities. Unfortunately, the Albanian school is far away from this practice.

³³ AKP Report, 2011

Except this, the introduction of new subjects such as the environment, business, media, communication, etc, need a review of the curricula and the subjects given to the students. By doing such a thing, they create comprehensive subjects.

3.5.4. The creation of equal opportunities

The high tendencies of immigration and migration have produced a change in the map, but also the overcrowding of the schools. Therefore, many peripheral schools have been abandoned and a rise in number of composite classes. In a few words, the balance between the teacher and the students has changed.

It results that the schools are not economical and inconstant with the education process. This has led to “experimenting alternative models” that provide the education services in the remote areas of the country. The distribution of the population due to the internal immigration has created the demand to centralize the schools. Ensuring the adequate studying conditions for all the students, especially those that live in the remote areas constitute an authentic problem.

The phenomenon of inequality of opportunities is mostly evident among marginalized groups such as the Roma, Egyptians, children in need, children that belong to other minority groups etc. The schools underestimate during the teaching process, the implementation of international norms, expressed also in internal laws such as law on gender equality, changes on family code etc.

Problems related with the creation of equal opportunities can find a solution, but the institutions do not behave properly. Some data given by different organizations reveal a rise in number of the pupils that represent the marginalized groups, but the educational chances of these children remain an unfulfilled desire.

The advanced pupils do not have other opportunities that can help them to improve further their knowledge. Only the families show care toward their further success.

3.5.5 Textbooks

After their choice between alternative textbooks, the students are equipped with them. This is a systematic orientation toward the complete liberalization of the market of textbooks publishers. “Compared to OECD countries, the teaching load of Albanian students remains high.”³⁴

Since 2006, MES has undertaken an important project for the development of the textbooks and the liberalizing their publishing. This project is developing into two main directions:

- The improvement of the quality of textbooks;
- Liberalizing the publishing of textbooks and giving the right to the consumers to choose. (Specialists and schools’ structures)

It has been required that textbooks should use those teaching methods characterized by events of everyday life and have as centre of their attention the students. They should encourage the teamwork and independent, creative and critical thinking. Sometimes the authors perform an intuitive work that is not oriented toward the recent developments of the education methodologies.

³⁴ World Bank Report on Education in Albania, 2010

The regional educational directorate (RED) and the schools bare hardest part on selecting the textbooks, because the directors dictate their selection. During the selection process, the schools turn into “flowering oases” for the directors.

According to the World Bank report about the textbooks reform, MES had accomplished the reform by using a subsidy scheme that alleviates the costs of the families with low incomes. The groups included in this scheme are poor families, families with children with disabilities, and national minorities.

This scheme aims to cover the difference between the price that families pay and the value that the government decides to finance. For example, for 2008 MASH financed 50% of the price of basic education textbooks and 20% of the secondary education. While, for the category of families with low income the government subsidized 90% of the prices of textbooks of basic education and 70% of those of secondary education.

“The quality and content of textbooks have improved. The percentage of pupils and parents that value them positively has increased, but at the same time the percentage of those who think that the prices in comparison with the previous three years have reduced, are minor.”³⁵ It must be noted that during 2012- 2013 the government subsidized only the textbooks of Roma children.

3.6 TEACHING PROCESS

3.6.1 The development of teaching profession

The development of the professional system plays a significant role in the students’ learning process. It deals with the institutional responsibility for upgrading the students’ achievements. The professional system accomplishes this advance through the elaboration and fulfillment of the goals stabilized in different school subjects and in the course of the school years. Teaching quality might improve if guaranteed the following criteria; presence of outside-standardized evaluations; the respect and practice of the professional criteria; an incentive wage.

The revised system of the teachers’ professional evolution must bear the following characteristics:

1. Its management should be based on politic, national, local and school documents closely connected with the professional development of teachers and their strategic plans;
2. it should outline the teachers’ standards and competences; should assure the quality of the services and procedures;
3. should be realized through a free training,; suitable to all the collective needs;
4. guarantee the right of the individuals, teams and schools must freely choose the professional offers;
5. the presence of a high number of agencies that offer training lessons, information including among others the teachers, schools and universities;
6. using the instrument created by the European Union of individual introduction linguistic experience achieved during the formal or informal education process;
7. the teachers career must be connected to the received salary;

³⁵ Ibidem

8. must provide the opportunity to teachers, teams, schools to participate in professional projects competitions;
9. the presence of institutions that guarantee the function of the school as a professional organization;
10. Assurance the schools' self-government on using the government or non-government funding for fulfilling its professional development plan.³⁶

The above-mentioned characteristics constitute some objectives that still need much work for their accomplishment.

3.6.2 Teachers' competencies

It is necessary to reflect these competences in the university teaching programs. They must base on the Bologna process and should include the professional practice as integral part of the teaching program. Actually, it has been designed a draft about the teachers' standards and a strategic document for the reform of the vocational development. The law on education defines the rights and duties of the teachers and all other actors included in this category. In recent years, MES and IZHA have designed strategic documents dealing with the teachers' standards and the ethic code, but they still do not operate.

3.6.3 New models on teachers' trainings

Except the basic scheme of teachers' training, there have been applied alternative models such as; the usage of portfolio and credits, distance and on line training, etc. The involvement of public and private universities is another way that helps the professional improvement of the teachers. They can support the teachers' training according to the demand of labor market.

3.6.4 Teachers' licensing

The licensing and accreditation process of teachers and the implementation of the continuous observation of the teachers' performance are positive steps. The license will serve as a means of obtaining a teaching job.

The 2012 state exam for new teachers revealed that 40% of the candidates did not pass the exam. This fact brings in light the weak performance of new teachers and the universities should take the responsibility for the high failure rate.

3.6.5 Teachers' qualification

As far as the teachers' qualifications are concerned, we can say that trainings have brought contemporary teaching terms, concepts and practices that create a new mentality about the teachers' profession. There is no database available that contain the teachers' performance and their professional requirements.

³⁶ The above characteristics are part of the national strategy on education 2009-2012.

The actual training system shows spontaneous inclinations due to the annual training program that is not basing on national or local mid-term strategic plan.

Because the system does not rely on scientific identification of the professional teachers' needs, we can say that it demonstrates a centralized character. The training programs sometimes does not show clear objectives and competences or rarely focus on teachers' professional standards.

In the recent years, despite the government help on teachers' professional development, the help of nonprofit organizations have been enormous. However, this contribution is uncoordinated, fragmented and geographically unequal.

The teachers' professional evolution system aims at the training process. This has not used the lifelong learning activity. The qualification and professional development of teachers within schools are not considered important for the progress of the teachers with direct effects on education.

The approval of the law on pre-university education has sanctioned the rights and duties of the teachers and has been stabilized standards that permit their continuous professional training through various professional organisms or universities. Each year the teachers have to reach a specific number of credits. This scheme reserves to the teachers the right to choose the best institutions they think assure them the required services.

Through the wage increase, the government aims to develop the quality of teaching and avoid the possibility that teachers focus on other private payments. However, there is no evidence whether this wage increase has generated an impact on the improvement of the teaching process.

There are a limited number of professional publications available to teachers, while the electronic information does not function as an organized service. The weak level of foreign languages usage also contributes to make teachers uninterested on issues relating to contemporary education development. They rarely attend important regional activities such as seminars, conferences that are very important for their professional development.

The following charts display the IZHA (2011) report on the teachers' qualification test for the last three years:

Comparative achievements of the teachers' qualification

Year	Weak	Average	Satisfactory	Excellent
2009	4.50%	11.8%	58.6%	25.1%
2010	2.76 %	19.8%	57.7%	20.49%
2011	1.81%	8.64%	51.9%	35.81%

Teachers' achievement in the school grades

Grade	Weak	Below Average	Average	Satisfactory	Excellent
Preschool	1.44%	13.72%	59.93%	23.83%	1.08%
9-year education, primary	0.71%	4.37%	48.80%	45.13%	0.99%
9-year upper education	2.38%	8.59%	53.66%	33.91%	1.46%

Gymnasium	2.51%	11.97%	48.26%	33.40%	3.86%
Vocational education	0.00%	7.69%	53.85%	30.77%	7.69%
Socio-cultural education	0.00%	7.69%	50.00%	42.31%	0.00%
National level	1.81%	8.64%	51.92%	35.81%	1.81%

The Ministry of education and Science is affording one of the most problematic issues, “the presence and training of about 20% of unqualified and new teachers. They need a continuous training process in order to improve their teaching skills and contemporary didactic methods.”³⁷

3.6.6 Physical infrastructure

The teaching physical infrastructure is another problem that needs an immediate solution. It results that the libraries during all the time are not used and do not contain the proper books while the computer classes remain closed due to the fact that they might be broken. The didactic and teaching laboratories are out of order. Even the teachers are not equipped with the adequate literature.

The schools lack the presence of didactic materials, useful laboratories, and technical maintenance of the schools’ infrastructure.

3.6.7 Alternative teaching methods

The textbook constitutes the main source of the actual teaching process. For this reason, the teachers use the content of textbooks as the only source of teaching without using other references.

It is necessary that some other new alternative sources should be present such as the creation of the libraries in each class. The usage of information and communicative technology in the pre-university education is limited and for this reason, the possibility to create libraries connected with internet lines becomes important.

There is limited number of education research institutions and the universities remain away from the actual problems of the compulsory basic education. The usage of digital technologies should occupy a considerable part of the teaching process. While the function of teachers associations remain a remote possibility.

3.6.8 The process of computerizing schools

Even though during the recent years there is an improvement in the IT schools capacities, they remain low. In 2007 the total number of computers in all secondary schools was 2400, while the total number of students resulted to be 146 293. Therefore, the ratio is 61 pupils per computer. In the village, this ratio is 133 pupils per computer, while in the city 46 pupils per computer.

In 2007, all the secondary schools were equipped with computer laboratories, of these 37 (from the total 411) had two IT laboratories due to the high number of students (800 students).

³⁷ MES Reports

With reference to secondary schools, in 2008 the national average rate was 35 students per computer (in the village 36 students per computer, in the city 33 students per computer).

In 2008, 353 elementary schools equipped with computers. By the end of 2008, the total number of IT teachers trained was 460.

Until mid 2009, in all the schools were 1429 informatics classes consisting of: 17,000 computers, 2000 laptops, video projectors, and 2000 schools connected to internet lines. The rate student/computer assumed a new figure, 32 students per computer.³⁸

The 2012 report underlines that: “in our schools the rate is 100 computers per 5 students”³⁹, so 20 students per computer. On the other side, the teachers need an immediate training for the correct usage of the new technologies.

3.6.8 The massive and effective operation of ICT

The introduction of ICT in the teaching process aims to supply our students with the capacity to properly use the computers and be part of the competitive European labor market. For this reason, it is needed that teachers also should own basic ICT skills and contribute to the improvement of teaching process”.⁴⁰

By the end of 2013, the goal is to achieve in pre-university education the indicator “1 computer per 10 students”.⁴¹ This process will be accompanied with the development of digital teaching contents and multimedia materials; the furnishing of the schools with mobile laboratories; the further development of teaching quality; the integration of ICT in different curricula subjects.

It is unclear if this standard will run by the end of this year.

3.7. STUDENTS’ EVALUATION REFORM

3.7.1. Results and achievements at school levels (state examination)

The National Examination Agency (NEA) has published the students ‘results of state exams for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009. The data published refers the results based at national level, village-city and male-female. The information includes also the students’ achievement at RED/ZA levels. All the data collected became part of a comparative work.

NEA-s report constitutes the only source available used to evaluate the achievements of graduate students. The competencies of the National Examination Agency include, delineate the tests of state examination of both basic and secondary education; manages the examinations’ evaluation process; refines the graduates’ examination results; possesses the data and the annual reports.

We think that the analysis and the comparison of the achievements give information about the real educational situation.

³⁸ Strategy on education , MES, 2009-2013

³⁸ Minister Tafaj , “Mapo” Newspaper , 5 April 2012

³⁹ Minister Tafaj , “Mapo” Newspaper , 5 April 2012

⁴⁰ SKAP, 2009-2012

⁴¹ Ibidem

A highly disputed figure regards the number of non-admitted students, RED/ZA report that only 1% of the total population belongs to this category⁴². The 2008 report on Albanian language and literature subject, at national level reveal the following data:

- There is no difference between the average graduation evaluation mark and the annual average grade (6.73 is the graduation mark towards 6.76 annual average score)

-the students who live in the cities exhibit higher achievements than those who live in the village (in the graduation test 1.1 higher grade toward 0.54 grade by the end of the school year)

-the girls' performance is 1 grade higher than boys. The boys who do not graduate exceed in number the girls. In addition, the percentage of girls who have reached in the final state exam the marks 8,9,10 results higher in number than the boys.

In 2008 in the Albanian language and literature exam, 8.68% of the students who took part performed the annual mark 10, but only 0.88% of them could maintain the same mark at the final examination. 0.02% took the grade 4;, 0.06% the grade 5, 0.26% the grade 6, 0.98% the grade 7, 3.02% the grade 8 and 3,47% have taken the grade 9). Some disturbing aspects:

- Those students who performed during the school year the grade 10 in the Albanian language and literature subject, in the final state exam passed 2-4 grades below. 0.02% of them evaluated with the grade 4.
- No more than 7.78% of the pupils with the annual grade 5, in the final state exam took the following grades 7, 8, 9 and 10.
- Only 3.17% of the student maintained the same grade 9 in the final exam. 0.48% of the student who had nine as annual mark took 10 in the final state exam, while the others evaluated with the marks 8-4.
- None of the graduate students obtained the maximum points of the test (50 points).

3.7.2. Pisa's 2009 results

The students' results represent one of the main indicators that show the quality of the education system performance.

The International Students' Evaluation Program (PISA 11), constitutes one of the most serious international studies that focus its attention on the students' performance. In Albania, this program is applying since 2001.

It revealed that the Albanian students' results were deficient. The Albanian teaching load is too much higher than the OECD countries.

The phenomenon of class overcrowding is one of the main causes of the reduction of the quality of teaching process. This becomes more evident especially in the remote areas of the country. On one side, the public sector has shown little interest about this phenomenon and has forced the schools to exceed their capacity. On the other side, in some rural areas, the ratio student/teacher is low and the inadequate school infrastructure and transport do not enable the regular school attendance.

The OECD Program for the International Students Evaluation (PISA) displayed that Albania justifies the position that it occupies. In 2009, the average evaluation for Albania was almost 100 points (or 20%) below the OECD average, nearly at the same position with Turkey and 50 points below Bulgaria.⁴³

⁴² Final state exam, Report, 2008, AVA publishing, Tirana, 2009, f. 7

⁴³ World Bank Report, Education in Albania, 2012

A recent review on students' cognitive abilities revealed that Albania had the lowest evaluation about the cognitive abilities. At about 40% of the students had achieved the basic knowledge on mathematics and science (20 points more than Macedonia, which occupied the penultimate position). This review based its work on the students' results on standardized tests comparable at international level (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2009).⁴⁴

3.7.3 Exams, evaluations and monitoring the quality of education

The CBA project has made possible the creation of an equivalent correction and classification system. It compares the results of different regional countries by establishing a set of indicators that monitor the development of educational service. The process of developing and correcting the exams needs a review in order to avoid the possibility for copying. The examination management system should eliminate all the conflicts of interests and the compromising situations.

3.7.4 Private courses

During the examination period are being reported cases of corruption. This kind of "corruption" sometimes serves as a help given to the students during the exam. The academic society does not know whether the private courses are sign or not of a weak government. Even though the private courses help the students to develop their skills, serious problems constitute those cases when teachers of the same school conduct these courses. In the poor communities, this "bad practice of private courses" increases the possibility of exploitation of their teaching position on behalf of their personal benefit.

Some information gathered about the private courses for the period 2002-2008 reveal that this problem is not as large and it was previously thought. In 2008, only 4.4% of basic education pupils and 13.8% of secondary students attended the private courses. This percentage during 2005-2008 has declined for the secondary students.

However, what causes some concern is a slight increase of the percentage of students who attend private courses directly from their teachers and teachers of the same school. In 2002, 22.5% of the students said that their teachers conducted these courses; this percentage rose to 31.7% and then fell in 2008 to 23.8%, which is higher than in 2002. As stated above, it is impossible to determine whether private courses are a sign of poor governance or lack of functioning mechanisms. A good teacher might not have enough time to show the necessary attention to all the students and this increase the parents' demand for extra school hours. While a bad teacher who avoids the responsibilities during the classes and create demand for private courses. However, this phenomenon remains unclear.⁴⁵

The increase of "direct teachers' " private courses is a phenomenon mostly noticed among students who frequent the secondary education. A decline of the private courses might reflect the perceived fairness of the state graduation exam and the reforms that reduce the teachers' favoritism toward a student. However, the expectations and behaviors change slowly and some students (parents too) continue to think that attending the private courses directly conducted by their teachers will assure them better results.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ World Bank Report, Evaluating the Albanian Education, 2011

Chapter 4

THE BUDGET FOR PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

4.1. General data

The following chart contains information about the percentage of the pre-university education spending versus the total expenditures for education for the period 2006-2013.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
83%	85%	86%	81%	81%	83%	81%	83%

In 2007, the spending has been increasing. This approximates the OECD and EU reports, which noted that the pre-university education expenditures are 3-4 times higher than the costs of the university education.⁴⁶

Some other sources permit us to make comments on how different annual budgets have affected the quality of education.

For the basic education, MASH has spent in the following years:

Year 2008	310 million lek
Year 2009	320 million lek
Year 2010	328 million lek
Year 2011	331 million lek
Year 2012	345 million lek ⁴⁷

MASH macroeconomic data for 2009-2010

Predictions 2009	Economic growth 6.5	Actual values 3.0
Difference to the plan	-2,100,000	Performance in % 64.8

Capital expenditures

	2009	2010	Difference
Ministry of Education and Science	8,547,311	8,501,224	46,087
Basic education (including preschool)	-4,195,600	- 4,898,511	702,911

Expenditures 2009-2010 in /000

	DENOMINATION	Plan	Fact	In %
	Personnel expenditures	31 028 698	29 742 234	95.9%
	Operative expenditures	3 195 114	2 518 144	78.8%
	Capital expenditures	6076321	3 937 279	64.8%
	Subsidy	892267	8 25 980	92.6%

⁴⁶ National Strategy on Education, 2009-2013

⁴⁷ Soros Foundation Report , 2010

Below we will present an analysis according to the MES programs.

Mid-term budget plan 2011- 2013

	2011	PB 2012	PBA 2011	PBA 2012	PBA 2013
Education	38.304	38.930	40.396	46.204	49.749

MES budget in milliard

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
14.1	16.4	16.3	15.6	15.8

The basic education takes about 60% of the total MES budget, but more than 70% of the population is included on this category. The secondary education takes 20% of the budget, while the university education only 16%.

The 2012 budget for basic education

	Current expenditures	Capital expenditures			Total expenditures
		From government budget	Foreign funding	Total	
Basic education	21.639.610	1.014.560	1.052.990	2.067.550	23.707.160

In order to create a clear vision about the expenditures in the course of years, we will display the data for the period 2005-2012. The following statistics expressed in percentage from the total budget of the government.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
10.37%	11,18%	10.90%	10.33%	10.93%	10.36%	9.80%	9.87 %	9.56%

During the last 9 years, the budgeted has reduced. Compared to 2005 GDP that was 2.81, in 2013 are 2.7. The investments for 2013 are 8.8 % from 10.9 % of 2005 and 20% in 2009. The education for 2013 took from the government budget 400,000,000 lek less than the previous year.

The budget (in milliards) varies as follows:

- In 2010 38.18 milliard lek
- In 2011 38.30 milliard lek
- In 2012 37.93 milliard lek

In 2012, the budgeted increased only 1.6% compared to the budget of 2011, while for the period 2009-2010 the education received the biggest budget (16.3% of the state's budget), from 2012 began its decrease.

The National Strategy on Education, 2009-2013, has included some other specific objectives connected with financing which seem to operate. As far as the development of the standards and the increase of the teaching quality are concerned, there have been decided some instruments and processes for funding transferring such as:

a) "Per student" funding model

The education financing system does not effectively respond to the increasing needs. The internal and external students' migration has generated at regional level problems to the financial system. In order to surpass these difficulties and to assure equal opportunities to all students, the "per student" financing model represents a useful alternative. This model connects directly to the schools and bases to the actual number of students and teachers. It takes into consideration the geographical position of the necessary services and does not deal with the predetermined and non-transparent amount of money used up to now through pragmatic practices.⁴⁸ We have to admit that none of the reports has displayed the cost per capita even though the strategy found it as an innovation.

b) The management of current expenditures by MES

MES manages all the current expenditures. This means all the costs related with textbooks publishing, scholarships, didactic material, the teachers, and students' transport. Taking into consideration the cost-effectiveness, the maintenance of some services at central level constitutes some advantages, but services such as the teachers' and students' transport and scholarships are better administered at a local level. The decentralization of the education system will increase the efficiency of the service and reduce the costs. A detailed budget plan is necessary in order to increase the responsibility of these services both at central and regional levels.⁴⁹ The continuous data and concerns show that the current expenditure has faced some problems. One of these deals with the fact that they did not arrive at the right place in the right time, for example, the funds of the teachers' transports often delayed.

c) Application of the competitive grants method in education budget

Since 2007, competitive grants financed the investments in the pre university education. This is a new financial scheme that harmonizes the requests for investment with the government's priorities and the regional concerns, the quality of the projects, etc⁵⁰ however, some institutions and external indicators have under evaluated this scheme.

d) Revenue collection from schools

We think that, the current practices of achieving income from the schools need a review. The central and local government aim to increase the financial support. The schools and communities must have full control of their income. The schools should increase their independence in the management of the income generated by its equipment and facilities, as well as its employees that work extra hours.⁵¹ In fact, these funds are subject to either taxation or control. In most of the cases, they are under the control of the school principals or heads of parents' board who in many cases do not take the right decisions.

e) Exemption from taxes

The school should be encouraged to find alternative funding sources. In order to increase the contribution of the communities, no alternative funding should be subject to taxation. The NGOs,

⁴⁸ SKAP 2009-2012

⁴⁹ Ibidem

⁵⁰ Ibidem

⁵¹ Ibidem

teachers and the students who purchase materials such as computers, laptop, etc should be exempt from taxes. It is necessary to simplify the rules for such exemptions in order that more people give their economic contribution to the increase of the teaching quality.⁵² Up to now, there has never been present any initiative to tax exemptions even though the strategy on education clearly emphasizes these facilities. None of the pupils, students or teachers has been exempt from these taxes for the purchase of these expensive supplies.

The above quotes are part of the Strategy on education 2009-2012. They of course, constitute a transparent criterion if only they could operate as such, but unfortunately, there is no analysis available that tell us how they are functioning and what have been the benefits of the students, parents, teachers.

⁵²Ibidem

Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT

1. FINDINGS

This report analyzed the situation of the pre-university education. This chapter will focus on some findings.

A. General aspects

- The preschool education has found new spaces of the children's involvement in kindergartens, but this education level still shows some weakness as far as the health education plan, the institutions' curricula, children's inclusion and teachers' qualification are concerned.
- Curricula standards are still under development and there is not any cooperation form between the central and local government for their implementation.
- The curricula overload and the excessive liberalization of textbooks constitute the risks of curricula.
- The old model of vocational education has failed. The students prefer the general secondary education, but it is necessary to develop new teaching schemes. Reforms have been taken in order to increase the students' involvement in the vocational education, but the enrollment is still low.
- The impact of the educational reform in Albania depends on ensuring an adequate and equitable access of all the components of this reform.
- Gender inequality is an evident phenomenon. Almost 70% of the teachers in the Albanian education system are female.
- The family background plays an important role. It begins in preschool education and deals with the mentality of the children's involvement in this educational level.
- Children who belong to the category of social disadvantages develop a low quality of education.
- Differences in the sense of being urban and rural cause damage to the students that represent the students of the rural community.
- The students of the minority population bare some disadvantages related to the content of curricula, teachers, schools, etc.
- The educational situation of Roma population is still unclear. A great number of children of this category enrolled in schools, but they are constantly facing the discrimination and indifference of the state.
- The children with special need have limited opportunities both in public and state institutions discriminatory mentality arises in the families and reflects in teachers and students. They regard this category as obstacles of the teaching process and impose barriers for this social group.

B. Involvement

- The pre-school education has registered an increase but it is still low. Only 58% of the children attend the preschool education, of whom 10% with meals.

- The children with special needs frequent specific institutions. Even though the strategy speaks about their inclusion, itself the system does not include them due to the teachers' and community mentality, the inadequate infrastructure, etc.
- The age 5-6 years old is being included in the schools of group 0.⁵³
- The formal and hidden illiteracy and the school dropout constitute dangers to the basic education. MES declares that this figure is 0.9%, while USAID reports that the percentage of illiteracy is 13%.⁵⁴ These data are very disturbing and alarming for the Albanian society.
- The enrollment in the secondary education is increasing, but still not at the right level.
- The expansion of private education at all levels has become a trend. This fact demonstrates the uncertainty of the youth to deal with the demand of today's learning process, and the powerlessness of the state to assure an expansion of the public university education
- Even though females constitute the Albanian education system, 65% of the heads of the institutions are male.

C. Curricula

- The preschool education has found new opportunities for the involvement of children in kindergartens, but this level still suffers some weakness.
- The curricula standards are still under development and there is no cooperation between the central and local government for their settlement.
- The curricula overload and excessive liberalization of textbooks constitute risks to the curricula reform.
- Alternative textbooks have improved the quality, but they have surpassed the quantity and as consequence, the required quality has faded away.
- Books and other curricular materials should be subsidized. Free books are not a feasible option, but being subsidized they can operate successfully.

D. Teaching process

- Teachers need to be much more involved in the reform processes and better paid.
- The teachers have not fully achieved the teaching methods, and sometimes do not implement them correctly.
- The teaching reform is focusing in the training of in service teachers, while the training of pre-service still has problems.
- Teachers are equipped with teaching models and materials, but their quality should be better.
- Research and analysis in the field of education are few.

C. Evaluation

- The evaluation, final state exam and the inclusion of teachers and students in the learning process brought both innovation and elements of corruption during the process of administrating this scheme.
- The manual test correction damages the reform.
- The private lessons revealed signs of corruption and teaching problems.
- The private lessons are incompatible with the educational ethics; this is seriously damaging the schools.
- PISA assessment noted that the girls achieve better results than the men do.

⁵³ MES, annual statistics, 2012-1013

⁵⁴ USAID report, education in Albania

- The latest PISA international tests evidence unsatisfactory results for Albania in literacy and counting skills.
- Many funds are spent on students' achievement tests, preparation of tests, assessment materials, teachers' corrections.
- The results are manipulated or do not reveal the students' real achievements. This phenomenon mostly occur among weak students, because "cat off "is realized through political decisions, rather than scientific and realistic ones.
- The developments of trends in different times associated with the results of these tests are mixed. Comparing one period to another it comes into light that different developments occur, but they have never gone under analysis and for this reason have remained at the level of charts and figures.
- The development level of the region dictates the level of the students' achievements.
- Often the quality and quantity of best achievements do not match.
- Some data note that socio-economical differences influence the quality of education.

E. Funding

- Hidden costs of education such as school funding contribution, textbooks and clothing costs, corruption of the private and public sector, the schools' environment, inadequate laboratories, etc constitute important issues for the education.
- The government is dealing with the task of redefining the basic entity of educational services that will be offered free of charge.
- The basic compulsory education takes a lot of funds, but there are disproportions between the following educational levels: preschool-basic-secondary-university
- The special education, has acquired a great part of international organizations funding. Nevertheless, their leaders constantly complain about better standards and a relatively high percentage of financial aid allocated to the primary schools and those for children with disabilities. According to them, the children with socio-economic disadvantages receive less financial support.
- In the last years the teachers' salaries has increased. However, they remain low and this has generated forbidden forms of income such as private lessons or bribery that consequently affect the teaching quality.
- The process of decentralization has progressed slowly. It is focusing on the transfer of funds to RED/DA levels and has not found ways to arrive to the schools.
- For the quality point of view, this slow progression does not favor the decentralization and consequently the income at school and district level is decreasing.
- Fund distribution constitutes an important problem. The central level does not allocate funds that are required to control both the system and the reforms.
- The new models of fund distribution such as per student and per teacher funding are not supposed to apply.

2. CONCLUSIONS

A. General aspects

- Expansions of substantial reforms aim to improve the teaching quality.
- Increase participation in primary and vocational education
- The poor families should improve their standard of living for poor families, so that their children do not dropout the school. They suffer the hidden and expensive costs of the education.
- Respect of human right to education for all children. Minority groups and children with special abilities continuously face disadvantages related to their social category, and for this reason, they need particular attention.
- The most vulnerable strata of the population involved in education need specific programs in order to reach significant educational benefits.
- Improving children's physical and social health is very important.
- The children inclusion to the preschool education through the establishment of proper institutions;
- The correct management of migration issues in national and regional level. Give a proper solution to the educational emergencies that result from migration phenomenon.
- Integration and institutionalization of child labor at national level. They are described as" ships that move at night".
- It is necessary to be conducted surveys and create database with real data about working children and creating the adequate conditions for their involvement in education
- Preparation of specific plans based on the new law of pre-university education for children with disabilities.
- Institutional ways for the inclusion of Roma, minority and confined children in schools are necessary.
- Should be prepared real programs related with the early childhood education. This constitutes the field in which the innovations become most obvious.
- Children with special needs should integrate in the public schools. Adapting the schools to the needs of this category should represent a priority to basic education.

B. Curricula

- The preschool education should undertake deeper reforms regarding children's participation, curricula amelioration, development of the infrastructure and continuous trainings for kindergarten teachers.
- The primary education suffers the legal and hidden illiteracy. There are needed advanced studies for this phenomenon.
- The universities should conduct research about the development phenomenon of pre university education.
- The educational and artistic education being part of curricula should focus on the children's physical and intellectual development.
- United classes should dissolve and the rural children should attend the schools in the cities.
- The new models of curricula should avoid the overload and fragmentation of curricula.
- The textbooks should contain up to three alternatives for each subject.
- The textbooks selection should liberalize.

C. Teaching process

- The pre-service and in-service teachers' reform demands funds and capacities.

- Find new approaches that encourage active learning through the enrichment of teaching methods
- Accredited institutions and academic staff should organize and conduct the teachers' trainings. .
- Institutionalize the standards for teachers.
- Increase teachers' editions.

D. Evaluation

- External assessment of students' achievements needs transparency in the process of implementation and administration, because the reliability of the results is low.
- The analysis of all education levels should be based on annual reports and international assessments;
- The digital evaluation and the use of information technologies should be of primary interest.
- The private courses need to be limited.

E. Budget

- The parents' boards should institutionalize. They should directly control and use the school funds collected from the community.
- In order to achieve the required standards and objectives of "education for all", the preschool and basic education funding should increase.
- The process of the construction of schools' infrastructure should be transparent.
- Continuous attention should be to the teachers' salaries growth and their treatment according to their professional and real development.
- The education reform should obtain more funds and it should take into consideration the problems of children with disabilities.
- Removing fees for compulsory and pre-school education is necessary.
- Provide free of charge textbooks for children with social and economic problems.
- Provide conditional amounts of money in order to encourage the school attendance by children of vulnerable strata of the population. The same treatment should have the confined children and to those who live in the most remote areas of the country.

F. Other

- Ensuring the schools' physical quality must be a prerogative.
- Provide the children transport whose schools are more than 2 km away
- Improvement and execute the anti-discrimination legislation for pre-university students.
- Develop active campaign against corruption in education.
- The continuous growth of teachers' salaries.;
- Find a functional formula for realizing the schools' autonomy.
- Support children of disadvantaged communities.

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