

Child Rights Education Project

Kosovo Education Centre

Project Evaluation

Project No. YUG00097

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an external evaluation of the three year Children's Rights Education (CRE) Project in Kosovo. The project, which ran from November 1st, 2003 to October 31st, 2006, was implemented by the Kosovo Education Centre, (KEC) and funded by Trócaire and Irish Aid (formerly Development Cooperation Ireland). The cost of the three year project was €312,065.

The overall aim of the project was :

“...to advance the rights of the child in Kosovo by building local capacity to deal with children's rights at primary school level, by raising awareness of child rights through discussions, publications and the media, and by facilitating the development of a national strategy for child rights.”¹

The overall strategy of the project was to promote children's rights throughout the country through the training of key resource people, both within primary schools and within the wider community, as well as through awareness raising activities. Action at this local level was complemented by work at a policy level in collaboration with Government, key Ministries (in particular the Ministry for Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and other NGOs inputting to the development of a national strategy for child rights in Kosovo.

The project has been extremely successful in regard to the first two areas. The model employed – training of 49 trainers who then went on to train over 1,200 teachers in all schools throughout the country has ensured that an infrastructure is now in place and operational within schools to advance children's rights. School Directors, trainers, teachers and students interviewed highlight the changes training has brought to relations between children and teachers and within the school more generally where communications have vastly improved and children are encouraged to develop and articulate their views and opinions. Both at a national level and locally, through school activities drawing in the wider community, awareness of children's rights has been promoted through a diverse range of activities which go far beyond the project's original proposal.

The project has experienced some difficulties in relation to policy however. This, as foreseen by KEC in its project logframe, is largely due to an apparent lack of will at state level to prioritise the issue despite commitments within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between KEC and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). KEC has taken the initiative to lead a group of stakeholders (including MoEST officials) in developing a draft strategy however, and continues work on and to lobby for this.

One of the key strengths of the project is its sustainability. In focusing on developing capacity for child rights education among practitioners in all primary schools throughout the country, the project has succeeded in developing a human resource base which will continue for years to come. Both KEC itself and other organisations

¹ Programme Appraisal and Management Form, (PAMF) paragraph 3

have begun using this resource base. One key indicator of the project's sustainability and impact on its target groups has been the establishment by project trainers of the Kosovan Association for Human and Child Rights (KAHCR), a newly registered NGO aiming to continue to build a culture of tolerance and respect for children among education professionals but also within Kosovan society more widely.

Another core strength of the project is the relations and linkages developed with other key players, in particular Ministry officials, both nationally and regionally², as well as other NGOs and donors. Through the "Child Rights Project", KEC has built a high quality reputation as a specialist in the area of educational development and child rights, and is in a strong position to build on the project's work

Two challenges in particular have faced the programme during its implementation and continue on into the future. The first, as identified in the mid-term evaluation, remains the issue of widespread poverty. The implications of this for the project's ongoing impacts are two-fold. Firstly, the project's rights-based approach with a focus on children's right to education competes with the economic exigencies of many families who require children to find work and bring in some income. Secondly, within this economic climate, teacher's salaries are low (approximately Euro 140/month). Consequently some need to find other sources of income to supplement their teaching salaries or are attracted to other work. As a result there are many demands on their time, and there is a danger that the project may lose trained 'counsellors' / teachers to other fields.

The second ongoing challenge to the ongoing impacts of the project is the - albeit changing – legacy of authoritarianism in Kosovo. This, again, has two implications. Firstly, with the project officially completed, trainers, councillors / teachers and students need to take their own initiative in initiating activities within their schools and wider communities. This may prove difficult in a traditionally passive environment, although many interesting and innovative initiatives were reported by teachers and students, and there appears to be a high degree of enthusiasm for the project and its underlying ethos and practice. Secondly, although structures are now in place in many schools to advance children's rights, as with many so-called democratic structures, the potential exists for manipulation and hi-jacking of these structures and their capacity by more powerful local actors. There is a need for all involved to be aware of this and to guard against such abuses so that the significant gains achieved by the project can continue to evolve and develop, with the critical issues facing children taking centre stage in informing future activities and initiatives.

The evaluator would like to thank all evaluation participants for their time and input, and in particular Ardita Hima and Halim Hyseni of the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) for facilitating the process and for their warm welcome and hospitality.

² Kosovo has seven regions. Each region contains a regional MoEST office which is responsible for approximately 20% of curriculum content and a municipal office which is responsible for school infrastructure – source : interview with regional MoEST senior official, Prizren.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABA	American Bar Association - Kosovo
ACHR	Albanian Centre for Human Rights
DCI	Development Cooperation Ireland – now Irish Aid
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KAHCR	Kosovo Association for Human and Child Rights
KEC	Kosovo Education Centre
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PAMF	Project Appraisal and Management Form
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHDR	United Nations Human Development Report
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an external evaluation of the three year “*Child Rights Education Project*” which, implemented by the Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) and co-funded by Trócaire and Irish Aid³, ran from November 2003 to the end of October 2006. The budget for the three year project was €312,065. Its overall objective was as follows :

“...to advance the rights of the child in Kosovo by building local capacity to deal with children’s rights at primary school level, by raising awareness of child rights through discussions, publications and the media, and by facilitating the development of a national strategy for child rights.”⁴

To achieve this the following objectives were set out :

1. *To build local training capacity (Years 1 & 2)*
2. *To build capacity for child rights counselling in primary schools (Years 1,2, & 3)*
3. *To improve the situation of child rights in schools (Years 2 & 3)*
4. *To develop a child rights curriculum at the Faculty of Education (Year 2)*
5. *To raise public awareness of child rights (Years 1,2, and 3)*
6. *Working with government representatives and key stakeholders, to develop a national strategy for the Ministry of Education for child rights education in Kosovo (Year 2)*

This evaluation follows on from an evaluation carried out following the project’s first year of implementation⁵. The mid-term evaluation focused in particular on the activities and objectives of Year 1 with a view to informing decisions and direction for Years 2 and 3 of the project. This final evaluation builds on this to evaluate performance against the specific objectives of the project, the overall aim of the project and the sustainability and impact of the project on a more long term basis⁶.

Following this introductory section, Section 2 outlines the methodology employed in carrying out the research for the evaluation. The findings of the evaluation research are then presented in Section 3. Following the evaluation terms of reference (see Appendix I), these are organised into three further subsections. Section 3.1 analyses the project in terms of its overall objective and presents some overall strengths of and challenges to the project through its period of implementation and on into the future. Section 3.2 goes on to analyse performance against the six specific objectives and details the outcomes and impacts of the project under each. Section 3.3 then goes on to examine issues relating to the project’s long term sustainability, exploring in particular actual and potential directions the project may take. Some conclusions in relation to the project overall are then presented in Section 4.

³ Formerly Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI)

⁴ Programme Appraisal and Management Form (PAMF), paragraph 3

⁵ This previous evaluation, also carried out by Niamh Gaynor, was conducted in November 2004

⁶ See Appendix I for the Terms of Reference of the evaluation

2. Methodology

The evaluation was carried out during the months of May – June 2007. The methodology employed sought to engage the views and opinions of different target groups, (project trainers, teachers, students, ministry officials, and university staff), external stakeholders, collaborators, and project staff. The key elements were as follows :

- An initial meeting with the Léa Valentina of Trócaire where the evaluator examined the project file and selected key documentation for further examination.
- A review of this key documentation including the initial project proposal, project budgets, the project logframe, and progress reports for Years 2 and 3 of the project.
- Development of a guide questionnaire to guide the research in-country.
- Travel to Kosovo and an initial meeting with Ardita Hima, project assistant, to discuss and finalise a programme of meetings
- Three days of field research comprising meetings and interviews with key stakeholders from May 30th to June 1st (see Appendix II for programme of meetings)
- Final meeting with Halim Hyseni and Ardita Hima to provide some initial feedback on findings and to discuss Trócaire’s contribution to the work of KEC⁷.
- Finalisation and submission to Trócaire and KEC of the draft evaluation report on June 22nd
- Finalisation of evaluation report following feedback on July 27th

⁷ There was limited time (twenty minutes) for this meeting as Halim had to leave for a funeral and so discussion focused on the latter aspect in an effort to elicit material for the additional report requested by Trócaire on its contribution to the work of the KEC and the Balkans – see accompanying report “Trócaire’s Contribution within the Balkans : an Assessment”

3. Findings

The following section presents the findings of the evaluation. These are presented under three main headings as set out in the terms of reference. Firstly, an analysis of the project in terms of its overall objective is presented. Section 3.2 goes on to analyse performance against the six specific objectives and details the outcomes and impacts of the project under each. Section 3.3 then goes on to examine issues relating to the project's long term sustainability, exploring in particular actual and potential directions the project may take.

3.1 Effectiveness in meeting the overall project aim

The overall aim of the project was :

“...to advance the rights of the child in Kosovo by building local capacity to deal with children's rights at primary school level, by raising awareness of child rights through discussions, publications and the media, and by facilitating the development of a national strategy for child rights.”⁸

The overall strategy of the project was to promote children's rights throughout the country through the training of key resource people, both within primary schools and within the wider community, as well as through awareness raising activities. Action at this local level was complemented by work at a policy level in collaboration with Government, key Ministries (in particular the Ministry for Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)) and other NGOs inputting to the development of a national strategy for child rights in Kosovo. This section firstly examines the appropriateness and timeliness of the project in relation to its overall aim and then goes on to examine its effectiveness in meeting this overall aim.

The area of focus of the programme, child rights, is particularly significant within the current context in Kosovo. The need for such a focus was repeatedly highlighted by evaluation participants with the aftermath of the war in 1999 leaving a legacy of violence, ethnic tension, and stress within homes. Although it is difficult to ascertain the precise overall extent of child rights violations within the country, recent research by Unicef⁹ reveals that corporal punishment is still an accepted practice in both homes and schools and that violence appears to be very much normalised within Kosovan society (2005 : 12). Among the recommendations of this report is the need for education of parents, children, teachers and other relevant professionals on minimum standards for human rights (e.g. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), thereby equipping individuals and organisations with the skills to better recognise and prevent violence against children. The strategy employed by the Child Rights Project goes a significant way towards addressing this recommendation together with others set out in the report (see Unicef, 2005 : 12-13).

⁸ Programme Appraisal and Management Form, (PAMF) paragraph 3

⁹ UNICEF (2005) *Research into Violence against Children in Schools in Kosovo*, UNICEF and MoEST, Kosovo

More recently, based on the fact that over 50 per cent of the Kosovan population are under 25 years of age, the UNDP's Kosovo Human Development Report (HDR) in 2006¹⁰ chose to focus on the area of youth. Arguing that greater investment in young people is core to progress and poverty reduction in Kosovo, the report also highlights the key role played by education in this regard. A representative interviewed for this evaluation from the MoEST stated that education is one of the three core areas of current government policy (employment and infrastructure being the other two). Thus, the structures developed by the project and its implementing agency KEC are well placed to input to broader policy reform and development in-country.

The overall aim of the project was to advance the rights of the child in Kosovo - through the primary education system in particular, more broadly among parents and local communities, and nationally through evolving policy. As detailed in the following sections, the project has been extremely successful in regard to the first two areas. The model employed – training of 49 trainers – who then went on to train over 1,200 teachers in all schools throughout the country has ensured that an infrastructure is now in place and operational within schools to advance children's rights. School Directors, trainers, teachers and students interviewed highlight the changes training has brought to relations between children and teachers and within the school more generally where communications have vastly improved and children are encouraged to develop and articulate their views and opinions. Both at a national level and locally, through school activities drawing in the wider community, awareness of children's rights has been promoted through a diverse range of activities which go far beyond the project's original proposal.

The project has experienced some difficulties in relation to policy however. This, as foreseen by KEC in its project logframe, is largely due to an apparent lack of will at state level to prioritise the issue despite commitments within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between KEC and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). KEC has taken the initiative to lead a group of stakeholders (including MoEST officials) in developing a draft strategy however, and continues to lobby for this. Government commitment to, and action on policy is often strongly influenced by public opinion as well as, in Kosovo's case, that of the international community. The promotion of a rights based approach to policy and a democratisation of institutions throughout the country by the international community combined with the impact of KEC's project work at local and regional levels, influencing public opinion in relation to the issue among educational professionals and the wider community, increases the likelihood that policy in this area will be addressed in the near future.

¹⁰ UNDP (2006), *Youth : A New Generation for a New Kosovo : Kosovo Human Development Report 2006*, UNDP Kosovo

3.2 : Effectiveness in meeting specific objectives

The following section examines in more detail the project's success in meeting the specific objectives originally laid out.

3.2.1 : Objective 1 : Building local training capacity

The first objective within the project was to build local training capacity for child rights education nationwide. Two complementary activities were carried out in Year 1 of the project to attain this objective. Firstly, in collaboration with the Albanian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) in Tirana, a training programme was devised and delivered to 54 trainees. 49 of these received certification. Secondly, a training manual was developed and distributed to trainers following the course.

3.2.1a : Training of Trainers (ToT)

A detailed evaluation of the training programme was carried out over the course of the mid-term evaluation (all ToT took place in Year 1 of the programme) and so this will not be repeated here – see Project Evaluation, November 2004, pp 9-12 for further detail on this. The main recommendation emanating from the evaluation of this component was that methodological approaches be developed to bring this theoretical material to other teachers and/or counsellors in a practical manner so that they may apply it within their own contexts. This recommendation was taken up in the form of a practical manual which was developed for use by teachers and counsellors in Year 2 of the project. This is discussed in further detail in the following Section.

3.2.1b : Manual for trainers

The manual for trainers had just been developed and was being translated at the time of the mid-term evaluation. This manual is now available in three languages – Albanian, Serbian and Turkish – and has been distributed to all trainers within the project. The manual formed the basis for the training of counsellors which was carried out by trainers with KEC support towards the end of the first year and within the second year of the project.

The manual, entitled “*Child Rights*”, is approximately 200 pages in length and is presented in a very attractive format which is illustrated with cartoons, tables, diagrams and text boxes throughout. Five authors were involved, from both KEC and the ACHR in Tirana, with different chapters prepared by different authors. Trainers interviewed over the course of this evaluation were extremely positive about the manual and felt it provided them with a solid theoretical foundation from which they could prepare their training programmes with the counsellors. Many trainers used the material in the manual as a basis to source additional materials (from the internet and other sources) which they used in their training programmes. One trainer noted however, that, while the general content is excellent, the manual is somewhat disjointed in terms of its overall flow. This perhaps reflects the fact that different

chapters are written by different authors and suggests a need for a greater degree of overall editing. Notwithstanding this however, the manual appears to be in continued use by trainers, a fact suggested by the margin notes and bookmarks observed within the copies of some trainers as they drew attention to sections they used regularly.

3.2.1c : Formation of an Association of Trainers - KAHCR

An additional, and unplanned outcome of the activities under this objective, was the formation of an Association of Trainers. This was established by the trainers themselves at a meeting attended by 26-27 of them, initially so that they might meet up and exchange information informally. However the group was interested in formalising the arrangement and extending their expertise - offering training to other groups. In 2006 they formed the Kosovan Association for Human and Child Rights (KAHCR) and elected a Board of Directors. The Chair is the Director of a school for children with disabilities and other members include five trainers from the Child Rights Project and Ardita Hima, the project assistant.

With the help of KEC, the KAHCR applied for legal status and, in January 2007, was registered as an NGO. KEC has been very supportive in facilitating the new organisation in this process and is providing rent-free office space to the KAHCR (which has a full-time coordinator – one of the project’s trainers) in its complex in Pristina. KAHCR currently has a pool of about 40 trainers from the Child Rights Project. However, the organisation is currently in the process of developing an application form so that membership may be increased to include other teachers, parents, and interested parties.

KAHCR is currently collaborating with the Teacher’s Union in a project supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction, KEC and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA). The project, entitled “Civil Society for Increased Participation in Education”, and running for 18 months, is aimed at building capacity in child rights among KAHCR and capacity in advocacy within the Teacher’s Union. Trainers within the KAHCR plan to use the material from the Child Rights Project and adapt it for training within this new project.

This development demonstrates the project’s success in meeting its objective of building local training capacity to the point at which trainers are now in a position to secure further training and support and employ their expertise more widely.

3.2.2 Objective 2 : Building capacity for child rights counselling in primary schools

The activities carried out under this objective represent the second main phase of the project strategy. The aim was for trainers (those certified as detailed in the previous section) to now, in turn, train teachers selected from all primary schools in Kosovo. There are 530 primary schools in Kosovo. School sizes vary dramatically – for example the school visited in Prizren contains 2,973 students and operates in three shifts from 7am to 7.40pm while schools in rural areas tend to be much smaller.

Activity 3.2.2a : Preparation of training programme

At the initial stages of the project the KEC team made a presentation of the project to municipal and regional education authorities¹¹ in each region to build awareness of and support for the project at those levels. Towards the end of the first year of the project over 1,280 teachers were selected from primary schools throughout the country to participate in a five day training programme.

Activity 3.2.2b : Selection of teachers / counsellors

Teachers were selected by local school directors / principals in collaboration with local officials from regional and municipal MoEST offices. Criteria for selection included teachers who were currently working part-time and so could fit in extra hours, those who had not attended too many other trainings already, and teachers who might be disposed to a rights based approach. At least one teacher was selected from all of Kosovo's 530 schools. Of the schools visited for this research the primary school in Prizren (3000 students) had 15 councillors and a trainer, including one Bosnian and one Turkish councillor, while that in Gjakova (1,400 students) had 9 councillors and a trainer.

Activity 3.2.2c : Training of counsellors

The broad outline of the counsellor training programme was devised by KEC and documented in the training manual discussed in Section 3.2.1. However trainers were free to develop their own modules and formats within this broader format. Counsellors received five days of training initially. This was conducted over five consecutive weekends with groups of between 20 and 25.

Counsellors interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the training programme, stressing in particular the usefulness of the practical components of the course. At least one practical component was included in each session. Counsellors were asked to recall the main aspects of the training programme that remain with them. Although some were somewhat vague on specifics, all cited UN documentation such as the Child Rights Convention, others talked about communication techniques

¹¹ Local structures comprise both a regional education office and municipal education offices. Regional education authorities are responsible for curriculum development, training and appointments whilst municipal authorities, which are elected by local parliaments and are not part of the education ministry, take responsibility for buildings, furnishing and equipment. There are 7 regions in Kosovo.

and teaching methodologies – learning to respect children’s views and opinions and work with them as equals at their level. A specific practical component highlighted by both a trainer and a counsellor as having been particularly useful was the group work (with groups of teachers of similar grades / class levels) developing class plans for activities around particular Convention articles. This exercise provided practical material which may be given to other teachers for their use also. The trainer was particularly impressed with the ingenuity displayed by teachers in successfully managing to incorporate child rights principles into diverse subjects – for example the notion of equality and mathematical fractions.

Activity 3.2.2d : (unplanned) Further training of counsellors on the issue of child labour

Reflecting the wider interest from other organisations and institutions in the pool of trained teachers embedded within schools throughout the country as a result of the project’s training, a further day’s training was proposed to counsellors by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the issue of child labour. As noted elsewhere in this report, in the current difficult economic circumstances, child labour (children street trading etc...) is becoming more common with resultant negative consequences for school enrolment rates and education in the country more generally. The additional day’s training was financed by the ILO. In addition UNICEF also financed a further training day on child rights.

Activity 3.2.2e : Counsellor’s manual

In 2006, with financial support from the American Bar Association (ABA¹²), KEC produced a manual for teachers entitled “*I don’t have a vote, but I do have rights...*”. This was in response to requests from teachers for supporting materials as reported in the mid-term evaluation. Once again, the manual is very attractively presented with cartoons and illustrations throughout. It is organised in line with the articles of the Convention on Children’s Rights with each section containing a small amount of background information followed by a practical exercise which may be used with classes to illustrate the substance of the article. Copies of the manual have been distributed to all schools. It is noteworthy however that one counsellor interviewed had never seen the publication which, it seems, remains in the office of his school director / principal. This raises one of the challenges to the programme – the legacy of hierarchy and authoritarianism which may inhibit project development – this is discussed in further detail in Section 4.

Overall therefore, in line with the objective, capacity was built in all schools in Kosovo through the training which appears to have been very effective and, as recommended in previous report and called for by interviewees, practical. The supporting manual which was produced is reported as being extremely useful.

¹² The ABA is a USAID funded NGO of legal professionals which aims at building legal infrastructure, human capacities and local institutions in Kosovo. One of its areas of interest is human rights education.

However, time remains an issue for the capacity thus developed to be realised to its full potential. This is discussed in further detail in the following section.

3.2.3 Objective 3 : Improving the situation of child rights in schools

Once trained, it was envisaged that counsellors would work within their schools with children on specific activities to improve the situation for children within schools. Two main activities were planned under this objective. Firstly to establish child rights committees in all schools, and secondly, to monitor child rights in schools. Additional activities were carried out in many schools through the child rights committees. The two main activities were supported through the publication of a brochure – again supported by the ABA – which details how to set up a committee and how this might function. Again the usefulness of the practical focus of this brochure was highlighted by a number of counsellors.

Activity 3.2.3a : Establishment of Child Rights / Student Committees

Child Rights committees, or as they are called in the three schools visited, student committees have been established in 400 of the 530 primary schools in the country. These committees are supported by the project's trained counsellors / teachers.

In schools visited, the committees are made up of a representatives from Grades 8 and 9¹³ (in the school visited in Prizren representatives came from both Grades while in the two schools visited in Gjakova representatives came from Grade 9 solely). In Prizren the committee, which was formed in March 2005, is made up of 40 students. These are selected from the students in each class (in Grades 8 and 9) with the best grades / exam results. In one school visited in Gjakova members of the committee (in Grade 9) were selected by secret ballot, while in the other they were selected from a group of high grade students by open ballot.

Students were asked what the aim of the student committee is. They stated that their function is to show children that they had rights and to ensure that bad things that happened to children – defined mostly as problems with teachers or dissatisfaction with grades – were rectified in a positive manner.

Student committees in the schools visited – it should be noted that the most active schools and committees appear to have been selected for the evaluation according to the testimonies of interviewees – have engaged in a wide range of activities. In two schools visited these included participation in activities to improve the physical surroundings of the school – e.g. painting railings, planting flowers, furnishing the school library, or in one case, a delegation of students went to the municipal education authorities to request an additional building for classrooms. Their request was granted. All committees have been involved in concerts and dramas which promoted the issue of children's rights. One committee held a week promoting anti-corruption, in the school system, and more generally. Two committees collected food and clothing from home for distribution (through local NGOs) to local families in need. One committee also collected Euro 1000 to help a local individual with cancer finance the necessary operation.

¹³ Primary school runs from Grade 1 (6 year olds) to Grade 9 (14-15 year olds) following which students proceed to high / secondary school

Committee members were asked where the ideas for their activities came from. They responded that their teachers came to them with ideas although sometimes ideas (such as the fund for the cancer patient) came from those put forward in the 'truth box' (see below). Students appeared extremely enthusiastic about their involvement in the committees, firstly because they thought it was fun and enjoyed the improved relations they had with teachers as a result, and secondly because they felt it reflected positively on them as they saw it as a post of responsibility which would stand to them in the future.

The committees visited were extremely active and enthusiastic, and members clearly enjoyed extremely good relations with their teachers and school Directors. These were observed in meetings between students and teachers and school Directors where students were confident and articulate and related well with teachers and Directors. As the committees visited appear to be among the most active, it is not possible to ascertain to what degree this reflects the experience of committees within other schools more widely however.

Activity 3.2.3b : To monitor child rights in schools

A second activity planned within the project was the monitoring of child rights within the primary schools. This was to be achieved through what are known as 'truth boxes'. These are boxes which are placed within a central location within the school within which students can anonymously post their complaints, recommendations or comments. The aim is to give children an opportunity to express their ideas and/or grievances. In the schools visited, the box is opened on a regular basis (approximately every 2-3 weeks) by the Director in the presence of 2-3 committee members and possibly 1-2 counsellors. Contributions are openly discussed and the Director undertakes to deal with any grievances regarding particular teachers. One counsellor from a different school in Gjakova arrived to the school visited to say that the Director in his school had removed the truth box 2 hours after it was first put up and filled, and has not replaced it since despite a signed petition from the 7 counsellors and 1 trainer from the school. This highlights the difficulties raised in attempting to counter the traditional hierarchical culture within schools – a challenge identified by KEC in its project logframe, and one discussed in further detail in Section 4.

Students in the schools visited noted that they feel their school is particularly good and that there are rarely any serious problems. They asserted that, by and large, the teachers were all excellent and that children were rarely abused. It is noteworthy that, while the Albanian speaking students in Prizren's committee claimed that there was no discrimination against ethnic minorities in the school, the Bosnian speaking representative suggested that there was, although at a subtle level¹⁴. There does not appear to be any documentation of the issues raised from the boxes and so, where the

¹⁴ Prizren, located towards the South of Kosovo, has traditionally had a multi-ethnic population comprising, among others, Albanians, Serbs, Bosnians, Turks and Roma. There is reputedly a high level of inter-ethnic tolerance in the area.

system is functional, this monitoring occurs on an ongoing basis between students and the school Director.

Activity 3.2.3c : Additional activities

A wide range of additional activities have been carried out in the schools visited as detailed above. Examples of these are included in photos, DVD recordings and artwork displayed throughout the schools visited. A national 'Child Rights Day' has been introduced wherein June 1st is designated a celebratory day free for children's excursions and activities. The third day of field research for this evaluation coincidentally fell on June 1st and children in the schools visited were busy holding concerts for children from other schools, visiting other schools, and being taken on different excursions.

This objective lies at the heart of the project. With capacity built among a wide pool of teachers to improve the situation of child rights within schools, the next key step is its implementation. Although this appears to be working extremely well in the schools visited, and the concrete guidelines provided by the Child Rights Project on the establishment and functioning of Child Rights Committees and the 'Truth Box' system appear to be highly useful in this, as is the enthusiasm and willingness of councillors to collaborate with children, it is not possible, within the parameters of this evaluation, to ascertain to what degree it is working throughout the primary school system. Two potential factors appear to militate against optimal attainment of the objective.

Firstly, although the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between KEC and the Ministry, committed to an additional payment of 10 hours per week (2 hours per day) for counsellors to carry out their project work with children, this has not materialised. Although regional and municipal ministry staff sometimes provide financial assistance for particular activities, counsellors are left to carry out their child rights work with pupils in their own time and within an voluntary capacity. Although those interviewed are highly enthusiastic and appear to find time after school and at weekends to work with children, this is clearly a drain on their limited resources, and necessarily must impact the project at a wider level.

Secondly, a significant change in culture is required. The unwillingness of some school Directors to adapt to new the practices and culture engendered by the project is illustrated by disappearance of the truth box in one school, as outlined by one of its counsellors. These difficulties were identified by KEC at the outset and appear in the project logframe. Indeed, KEC, through its liaisons with both national and regional MoES officials, has made strenuous efforts to counter these.

The lesson is that cultural change from a hierarchical, authoritarian structure, however desirable among practitioners – counsellors, teachers, and students, is a slow and conflictual process. In the project's favour in this regard however, is the high level of support and pressure for such change from the international donor community. The Child Rights Project and its team of trainers and counsellors does not stand alone, but rather sits within a broad international community seeking to democratise the

education system, introducing new methodologies and ways of relating to and communicating with children. Change will take time but appears inevitable. The situation of child rights will undoubtedly improve in all schools in Kosovo and KEC's project has provided an infrastructure through which this can happen as the required cultural shift takes place.

3.2.4 : Objective 4 : Development of a child rights curriculum at the Faculty of Education

In addition to its work with teachers and children within primary schools, a further objective within the project was the development of a curriculum at the Faculty of Education within the University of Pristina. The Faculty of Education is responsible for teacher training of elementary, pre-school, and primary school teachers. It caters to over 2,000 students each year. Interviews conducted for the mid-term evaluation revealed that the Faculty's ex-Dean was particularly keen to incorporate the area of children's rights into the curriculum for student teachers and, in collaboration with some colleagues, had developed a curriculum based on a Canadian model with funding for the initiative coming from a Canadian organisation. However, the Faculty had no textbook to support the subject and was seeking funding to this end.

The textbook was funded through the Child Rights project and was published in 2006. Entitled "*Child Rights and Teaching Ethics*", it comprises three main chapters written by three different authors. The Chapter titles are, in turn, 'Children's Rights', 'Education Methodologies and Children's Rights', and 'The Ethics of Teaching'. The course which the textbook supports is currently offered as an elective (optional course) to fourth year students within the Faculty of Education within the four teacher training faculties in Kosovo. The course is offered for one semester for three hours a week.

One of the textbook authors, interviewed for this evaluation, Prof Naser Zabeli, a full-time member of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Pristina, has managed to get this subject also on the curriculum of the Philosophy Faculty. Although it is currently offered as an elective also within this Faculty, a proposal is currently before the University Senate to introduce the subject within the Philosophy Faculty as an obligatory subject. Prof Zabeli noted that the accompaniment of the course by a textbook strengthens the likelihood of its becoming obligatory. He also noted the difficulties in attempting to attract publication for academic textbooks in the Albanian language.

3.2.5 : Objective 5 : Awareness Raising on Child rights

There were two activities which directly fell under this objective. A third, media work and networking is also included as many additional activities were carried out, both nationally and locally, which attracted attention to the project and its issues.

Activity 3.2.5a Roundtables and discussions on Children's Rights

As a means of awareness raising, roundtables were planned every two months throughout the three years of the project. Due to energies expended on other activities – in particular the training - only two were held by the time of mid-term evaluation. One roundtable was attended by both the evaluator and the Trócaire representative in Gjakova during the field research for the mid-term evaluation. Following on from this it was recommended in the ensuing report that break out groups be employed together with possibly a feedback session at the end. Although the field research for this evaluation did not include participation in a roundtable, trainers reported that they had received guidelines from KEC following the evaluation report on options for methodologies to be employed. The evaluator did attend the end of a KAHCR roundtable discussion however, and the format appeared much as before, although the number of participants was much more limited. KEC's Child Rights Project Assistant noted that it is increasingly difficult to attract people to roundtables and the evaluator was given the sense from research interviewees that this method is being used less by trainers with more emphasis being placed on developing and implementing public activities involving children and advancing their rights.

Activity 3.2.5b Publications on Children's Rights

In addition to the academic textbook, trainer's manual, teacher's manual, and teachers and student's brochure, a booklet has been produced which brings together a selection of poems written by children from schools throughout the country. Poems were submitted by children from all schools and a number selected. In addition, the publication includes photos of artwork completed by prisoners of the Lipjan correctional facility where the project assistant, in a voluntary capacity, also works with the youth. The publication is co-funded by ABA and copies have been distributed to all primary schools with copies also being held in the education resource centres¹⁵ in each region.

As part of the work being carried out for the national strategy on Children's Rights (see Section 3.2.6), a baseline study on the condition of children's rights in Kosovo has also been produced by the project. This is currently in draft form but includes a detailed historical, political and economic context, together with a comprehensive collation of secondary data in the following areas :

¹⁵ These resource centres or 'didactic centres' as they are known were developed as a component of another KEC project. A resource centre was established in each region and functions to support teachers in their work providing access to reading materials, policy documents, internet resources, as well as practical office hardware – computers, internet access, photocopier etc.. Generally teacher training is carried out in these centres.

- Protection and care of mothers
- Child mortality
- Orphans
- Food, water and health protection for children
- Education for children
- Rights to free expression for children
- Exploitation and Discrimination

The project has also attracted additional funding from other institutions to help equip its library within its offices. The library holds a wide range of literature on both education in general and child rights education more particularly. Also housed within the library is a collection of press articles on child rights violations collected and compiled by the project in 2004. The library is open to teachers and trainers and is located next to the training room where many of KEC's trainings are held.

Activity 3.2.5c : Publicity

The KEC project also actively seeks media coverage. Throughout the course of the project there has been TV, radio and press coverage of the certification ceremony of trainers, of counsellors certification, and of different public events. The project appears extremely well known among both NGO and Ministry staff, as well as among teachers with primary schools more broadly. The Project Assistant notes that when she calls a school or ministry official, she identifies herself as being from the "Child Rights Education Project", rather than KEC, as this is what KEC is now identified with. The project maintains a comprehensive file of press coverage of different project events.

3.2.6 : Objective 6 : Participation in the development of a national strategy for child rights education in Kosovo

As noted in several of KEC's progress reports, progress in achieving this objective has been hampered by delays on the Ministry's part in organising consultation meetings on the issue. According to KEC, the MoEST wishes to incorporate child rights into a national strategy being developed on human rights more broadly. KEC, however, wishes to see a separate strategy developed. The MoEST official interviewed for this evaluation was asked about the delay and plans within the Ministry for the development of a strategy. She acknowledged that this does not constitute a priority for the government at this time and appeared unaware of what was happening with the strategy. She suggested that the MoEST was willing to follow KEC's lead on this. With many international NGOs working directly with children, the MoEST, with whom KEC appears to have developed good relations, appears to see KEC as a key partner in educational development within the country.

With government intransigence on the issue, KEC decided to advance the process itself and organised a series of meetings in Years 2 and 3 of the programme bringing together Ministry officials, NGO representatives, and some teachers and trainers. Approximately 130 people were involved according to KEC's own estimates. A draft strategy has been produced as a result of this consultation and is currently being circulated to different consultees for comment and amendment. The draft strategy, entitled "*National Strategy on Children Rights Promotion and Advancement in Kosovo : 2007-2017*", sets out a vision and mission for the strategy and includes eight objectives as reproduced below. Specific measures and activities are outlined under each as are critical assumptions for their implementation. The eight objectives within the draft strategy are as follows :

- An efficient legislative framework drafted and its consequent implementation
- Establishment of a functional system for health protection and care for mothers and children
- Establishment of an efficient and effective system for child development during their early childhood
- An efficient and effective education system for children aged 6-18 years
- An advanced system of special education and full social and health care for children with severe developmental difficulties
- A system for child development incorporating leisure, free time, games and recreational activities
- An efficient system for preventing violence, exploitation of different forms, and human trafficking
- An advanced system of equality and integration for minority children of the Kosovan society

Although the project has officially finished, work on this strategy continues. KEC plans to bring together stakeholders towards the end of June to try to work towards a finalisation of the strategy. KEC then plans to take some components of the strategy

and develop a project proposal so that it may ensure part of the plan's implementation.

While it would clearly be preferable for the government to be taking the lead in the development of this strategy as this would ensure greater state ownership and greater potential for its implementation, faced with the option of no strategy, KEC's lead in promoting collaboration on a document is extremely useful in that, at a minimum, it increases harmonisation and collaboration among key stakeholders including the Ministry, and, at a maximum, it may increase the Ministry's engagement with and commitment toward the issue of child rights.

3.3 Project sustainability

Undoubtedly one of the main strengths of the project is its sustainability. This is illustrated in a number of ways.

Firstly, in focusing on developing capacity for child rights education among practitioners in all primary schools throughout the country, the project has succeeded in developing a human resource base which will continue for years to come. The interest of other organisations in employing this resource for their own training purposes (for example The Red Cross in Prizren has used the project's trainers for some of its own training, as has UNICEF) demonstrates the ongoing sustainability of the project's outcomes. Moreover, KEC sees the project as just the beginning for its ongoing work on child rights and plans on using the human infrastructure thus developed for other programmes and projects. The organisation is mid-way through a project promoting multi-culturalism / ethnicity¹⁶ and is using some of its network of trainers and counsellors within this project. 20 trainers have been selected from the Child Right's pool of 49 and have received additional training in multiculturalism, while 300 counsellors will be selected over the summer and will begin training with trainers in September.

Secondly, although within the limits of this research this is difficult to establish definitively, both the findings from ongoing evaluation and monitoring by KEC as reflected in the organisation's progress reports¹⁷, and the testimonies of the teachers and children interviewed over the course of this research suggest that the culture is changing within schools with relations between students and teachers radically altered, even in schools where individual Directors themselves might not have radically altered. With at least one teacher from all schools having been trained within the project as counsellors, children have the opportunity to be able to approach a friendly face with their issues. Moreover, as the example from the school in Gjakova demonstrates, once the 'truth box' system is established, it proves difficult to remove its spirit and intent even if the box itself disappears.

Thirdly, with the establishment by project trainers of the Kosovan Association for Human and Child Rights (KAHCR), a concrete entity has been borne from the project. With the support of KEC it is possible that this new NGO may continue to build a culture of tolerance and respect for children among education professionals but also within Kosovan society more widely.

¹⁶ This is financed by the Balkan Trust

¹⁷ See for example page 8 of the progress report for Year 3

4. Conclusion

As well as being both appropriate and timely in relation to the broader cultural and policy context, the overall aim and strategy of the project – building local capacity in the concrete form of an extensive nationwide pool of both trainers (49 have been trained and certified) and trained teachers (1280 have been trained and 1227 certified)¹⁸ who carry out awareness raising activities more locally – has provided an infrastructure which is now in place to potentially assist in other initiatives focused on the promotion of child rights within educational institutions in-country. As seen in Section 3.3, this is already underway and there is considerable energy, dynamism and enthusiasm among project staff, trainers and counsellors for the ongoing development and consolidation of project impacts.

A further strength of the project as it worked toward its overall aim was the relations and linkages developed with other key players, in particular Ministry officials, both nationally and regionally¹⁹, as well as other NGOs and donors. Through the Child Rights Project, KEC has built a high quality reputation as a trainer in the area and individuals trained through the project are in demand elsewhere.

Two challenges in particular have faced the programme during its implementation and continue on into the future. The first, as identified in the mid-term evaluation, remains the issue of widespread poverty. According to the UNDP²⁰ (2006 : 29-34) Kosovo is the poorest region in the Balkans with the low income level the main reason for the persistent poverty (< Euro1.46/day), which remains at the same level today as at the beginning of transition. An estimated 37 per cent of the population lived in poverty in 2002 with children and youth disproportionately likely to live in extreme poverty. Aid flows continue to fall since transition with the 2006 amount estimated at half that of 2002 (UNDP : 2006 : 27). The implications of this widespread poverty for the project's ongoing impacts are two-fold. Firstly, the project's rights-based approach with a focus on children's right to education competes with the economic exigencies of many families who require children to find work and bring in some income. Secondly, within this economic climate, teacher's salaries are low (approximately Euro 140/month). Consequently some need to find other sources of income to supplement their teaching salaries or are attracted to other work. As a result there is a danger that the project may lose trained 'counsellors' / teachers to other fields and areas of work. While this will undoubtedly be a loss within the field of education, project teachers / counsellors will of course take their new skills and awareness with them and potentially impact in this area within their newly chosen fields.

The second ongoing challenge to the project's impact is the - albeit changing – legacy of authoritarianism in Kosovo. This, again, has two implications. Firstly, with the

¹⁸ Progress report Year 3 : page 3

¹⁹ Kosovo has seven regions. Each region contains a regional MoEST office which is responsible for approximately 20% of curriculum content and a municipal office which is responsible for school infrastructure – source : interview with regional MoEST senior official, Prizren.

²⁰ UNDP (2006), *Youth : A New Generation for a New Kosovo : Kosovo Human Development Report 2006*, UNDP Kosovo

project officially finished, trainers, councillors / teachers and students need to take their own initiative in initiating activities within their schools and wider communities. Although some innovative and interesting initiatives were reported by some interviewees, when asked where their ideas come from, many noted that KEC had provided ideas during the training workshops, or the regional education authority or school Directors provide ideas on an ongoing basis. Within a traditionally passive environment it may prove a challenge to teachers to encourage children and parents to come up with their own ideas. This leads on to the second implication. The overall aim of the project is to “*build local capacity to deal with child rights...*” – i.e. that of children themselves, together with their teachers, parents etc... Although structures are now in place, with the student committee and ‘truth boxes’, for children to raise and voice these rights, it is important to be aware that the potential exists for possible manipulation or hi-jacking of these structures and their capacity by more powerful local actors. For example, student committees interviewed are involved in cleaning projects within their schools, painting railings etc... It is unclear whether this is their agenda or that of their Directors. While such activities undoubtedly benefit all concerned, it is important to be clear whether these constitute the primary issues for students, parents and teachers – or are other issues being left aside? Unfortunately, so-called democratic structures are also subject to abuse and there is a need for all involved to be aware of this so that the significant developments achieved by the project can operate to their maximum potential in promoting and attaining children’s rights for all children concerned.

APPENDICES

Appendix I : Terms of reference for the evaluation

Appendix II : Programme of meetings

Appendix III : Participants in group meetings

Appendix I : Terms of Reference

Child Rights Education, Kosova Education centre (KEC) Trócaire's Ref YUG00097

Background

Yug00097:

Kec has been implementing the Child Rights Education Project in Kosovo since 1st November 2003. The aim of the project is to contribute to the development of a democratic society in Kosovo through achieving internationally recognised standards in respecting human rights in general, and child rights in particular.

The objectives of the project is to contribute to the development of a democratic society in Kosovo through achieving internationally recognised standards in respecting human rights in general, and child rights in particular.

The objectives of the project are:

1. To build local training capacity
2. To build capacity for child rights counselling in primary schools
3. To improve the situation of child rights in schools
4. To develop a child rights curriculum at the faculty of Education
5. To raise public awareness of child rights
6. Working with government representatives and key stakeholders, to develop a national strategy for the ministry of Education for child rights education in Kosovo

Purpose

- To Evaluate performance against the specific objectives of the projects.
- Evaluate whether the overall aim of the two projects was fulfilled.
- Evaluate the sustainability of the projects and of their impacts.

Objectives:

- To provide learning for the partners in order to improve future work.
- To provide learning for Trócaire which can be used in the work of other regions.

Appendix II : Programme of meetings

Tuesday : May 29th

- Travel Dublin-Pristina
- Meeting with Ardita Hima to discuss and finalise the agenda of meetings

Wednesday : May 30th

- Travel to Prizren
- Meeting with group of primary school students of Abdyl Farsheri school to discuss their experiences of the project (see Appendix III for list of students)
- Meeting with a group of school counsellors of Abdyl Farsheri school to discuss their experiences of the project and activities within the school (see Appendix III for list of counsellors interviewed)
- Meeting with Miliam Elshani – Senior Official at the Regional Ministry of Education Prizren, together with the curriculum development and monitoring expert to discuss their views on the project and how it fits into the regional ministries programme
- Meeting with Fatmir Lipoveci, Secretary General of the Prizren branch of the Red Cross to discuss child rights issues in Prizren generally and the Red Cross's collaboration with the Child Rights project more specifically
- Travel back to Pristina

Thursday, May 31st

- Meeting with Merita Jonuzi, Officer for student's and children's rights at the National Ministry for Education, Science and Technology to discuss collaboration with the project and plans for how to carry this work forward
- Meeting with Professor Naser Zabeli of the Faculties of Philosophy and Education at the University of Pristina to discuss the development of the child rights curriculum within the university (objective IV of the project) together with broader issues on the project's contribution to educational development in Kosovo
- Observation of a roundtable event (on European integration) organised by the Kosovar Association for Human / Child Rights (KAHCR)
- Meeting with Veton Sylhasi, Director of the Kosovar Association for Human / Child Rights (KAHCR) – an organisation established by project trainers and supported by the KEC – to discuss the impact of the project and the evolution of the KAHCR as a spin off of the project
- Meeting with Laura Rakovica, Coordinator of the American Bar Association to discuss collaboration with the project
- Meeting with Valon Maxharraj, Director of the Juvenile Correctional Facility in Lipjan to discuss KEC's collaboration and work with inmates
- Dinner with school teachers from KEC's model school 'Mileniumi 3'

Friday, June 1st

- Travel to Gjakova

- Meeting with group of primary school students of Yll Morina school (members of the child rights committee) to discuss their experiences of the project (see Appendix III for list of students)
- Meeting with Arberie Nagavci, Yll Morina school Principal and Arbenor Pozhegu, a councillor from M Keauska school to discuss their experiences of the project and how it is developing
- Travel to Zekeria Rexha school and meeting with the school Principal, Agim Faled, project trainer, Adrian Rudi, and President of the student's child rights committee, Rina Brorissa to discuss the implementation of the project in the school
- Return to Pristina
- Meeting with Halim Hyseni and Ardita Hima of the Children's Rights project to provide feedback on evaluation findings and discuss Trócaire's contribution to the work of the KEC
- Visit to KEC's school, 'Mileniumi 3', in Pristina

Appendix III : Participants in interview groups

Members of School Committee in Abdyl Farsheri school Prizren : May 30th, 2007

Enzama Krasnigi	Grade 8
Xheroilolim Berisha	Grade 8
Elsa Fetahu	Grade 8
Almedina Salihi	Grade 8
Amesoc Topko	Grade 8
Dafina Fetahu	Grade 9
Kiytim Kastrati	Grade 8
Ditjona Yashi	Grade 9

School Councillors in Abdyl Farsheri school Prizren : May 30th, 2007

Erdoan Bajeami
Hayriye Cipa
Thajrije Kràsnigi
Milaeim Avdylaj
Alidim Flugaj

Members of School Committee in Yll Morina school, Gjakova : June 1st, 2007

Argita Canhasi	Grade 9
Korab Deva	Grade 9
Jonila Fetiu	Grade 9
Qendresa Zeka	Grade 9
Kremare Rizramolli	Grade 9