MONITORING AND EVALUATION
OF EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

ORGANISERS:

MOES, NATIONAL CENTER OF EVALUATION, AEDP/SOROS

FINANCED BY: AEDP/SOROS - EAST - EAST PROGRAM

6-7 December 2001

With participation of experts from:

Czech Republic, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo

Content

Conference Address

Dear friends,
Dear participants,

It is a great pleasure to be here altogether. And it is with great pleasure that I extend the best compliments to the organizers of this seminar (MOES, National Center of Evaluation and AEDP) and its co-financers (East East Program and AEDP).

This seminar is organized in the light of the changes taking place in the Albanian educational system. On the other side, the society is demanding that the school educate all the students, not only those with talented skills, at such levels to render them able of stand up to the challenges of the real life ahead. The future professionals of Albania have to be capable to communicate complex ideas, adapt quickly to the new achievements in science and technology, and resolve problems they will encounter during their life.

Therefore, the social, economic and political demands require changes in education in order to increase the capacity of the educational system. But these changes create a gap between the demands of society towards education and the results it delivers. We are all aware that it suffers from serious shortcomings: old ways and structures with recruitment, compensation and evaluation methods that have little to do with a good teaching and learning.

Among the complexity of problems facing the Albanian education system, evaluation and monitoring have become a priority as they represent on of the areas where the weaknesses are more evident. Of course, there have been changes. Admission of students in universities through competitive examination constitutes a big step forward. The establishment of the National Center of Evaluation marks the beginning of the institutionalization process of evaluation institutions. But the reality presents major problems that seek solutions. So, the performance evaluation is sporadic; in most of the cases it is being carried out by school directors whose teaching experience is different from the profile of the teacher that is being evaluated, etc.

The range of issues that are being addressed in the seminar aims to provide a picture of the problems dealing with the monitoring and evaluation of education in Albania.

Traditionally, the norms set by the ministries of education have addressed the educational system inputs: teacher – student rate, types of school furniture, required budget? These norms were intended to ensure that the school was furnished in a way to secure proper conditions for the education of all students. In many countries the authorities went one step further specifying the content to be acquired and developing the same curriculum for all pupils at elementary schools. Meanwhile, in many countries the curriculum was

structured to be implemented within the school teaching classes (In Albania the school teaching class lasts 45 minutes).

However, during the year 1960 and 1970 the situation started to change gradually. Firstly, the ministries of education in many countries decided to encourage the flexibility and responsibility of education systems in terms of input, opportunities and modifications in the content. But more than focusing in the norms of input, they diverted their attention to the specification of educational objectives and establishment of performance standards for the teacher, student, school and entire system in general.

Of course, before the performance standards are established, a decision should be made on what should be the student's level of knowledge and what are they capable of doing. But, a decision on what students should learn and acquire presumes a consensus on education goals, objective and responsibilities. As soon as the goals are set and the standards are established, the next step shall be to gather data on what level the goals and standards are being met. This requires the collection of data on performance evaluation and monitoring of educational progress. But any data analyses might be incomplete and misleading if are not to be taken in consideration the educational contexts, inputs and processes. As it can be noted, the interpretation of evaluation data is preconditioned by the collection and analyses of information on several areas and levels of the educational system.

The focus on results represents a radical change from the traditional way of gathering data on the management resources and educational planning. New roles are demanded now by all players: students, teachers and school directors, local and central levels of education administration, inspectorates, agencies responsible for gathering statistical data about the education systems, and education decision makers and planners.

These are more or less the ideas that accompany all the seminar activities. The Albanian education should move forward quickly in order to be included in the modern streamlines of educational developments. MOES, the National Center of Evaluation and AEDP are working intensively in a number of directions. Firstly a Manual of School Quantity indicators was developed. Being it a powerful tool in the analyses of the educational process at school level, it provided the basis for the development of a complete set of educational indicators at all three educational levels in Albania. This set of indicators has been consulted with prestigious international institutions like: CITO, University of Tel Aviv, etc. In the meanwhile, the Albanian education system was included for the first time in an international evaluation program: PISA/OECD Program. Apart from the opportunity to be confronted with international requirements, the benefit of this participation consists in expected changes in the present curriculum at the Albanian school and gaining a highly valuable experience in organizing such massive evaluations.

On a parallel line, we are working to include the Albanian educational system in the publications of well-known international organizations. It has been identified a group of indicators that will represent the Albanian education in these publications. Thus we will have in our hands useful and reliable information to make comparisons with systems in

other countries, by making concrete step to bring the Albanian educations system closer to the advanced ones.

This is the context of the seminar. The activities on standards are intended to serve to communicating a joint vision on what teachers should know and be capable of in their work. While, the activities about indicators aim at developing reliable and useful evaluations of specific school subjects and schools. These evaluations constitute strong teaching experiences for the teachers. We look very much forward to hear our experts coming from Czech Republic, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo. I believe we all agree that our educational traditions are quite similar and typical at this part of Europe where our countries are located. We all face similar problems and to address them and find solutions would be easier if there was cooperation between all of us. Therefore I wish that we altogether would find the ways that would facilitate such cooperation in order to raise the performance quality in our own education systems.

Large Scale Assessment and Educational Policy in Albania
Vasillaq Zoto, Senior Educational Advicer/Soros Network

In an era when education has become a major concern for each country, designing necessary and reliable educational indicators becomes essential in the development and monitoring of policies in this area. The labor world requires increasingly intellectual qualities, while the quantity of knowledge grows continuously. The economic competition and cooperation present these countries with the opportunity to enhance the efficiency and productivity of their educational systems.

These developments are calling on the educational political leaders to assess if the resources of young people in their own countries, qualitatively and quantitatively, are sufficient. They want to know at what extent the progress in education has been achieved and where do their educational system stands compared to those in other countries. This information serves to keep the general public updated, to lead in a scientific and efficient way the school improvement, and to facilitate the process of setting out priorities and political responsibilities in education at all management levels.

This information would not be useful to political leaders if the educational systems can not be monitored at due time and systematically, and if the collected systemic data can not be presented in a way that secures comparison at international level. Therefore, indicators should be developed for the most significant levels of education: school, local nation wide or national system, and international level. Step by step, this will enable the production of national information systems to become comparable at international level thus increasing the chances for a more fruitful cooperation at this level.

In this context, AEDP is supporting a study, which aims at defining a set of basic "quality" and "quantity" data at school level, then moving step by step to the upper levels and more specifically to the local level and further on to the production of national systems. The working group is composed mainly of experts coming from the Institute of Pedagogical Studies, Ministry of Education and Science, school directors etc. The work is organized in two stages: Firstly it is being carried out the experimentation of "quantity" indicators. This manual has been prepared on this basis and shows statistical data, organized in specific tables in order to increase the comfort of presentation and make their usage simple. In addition, this manual gives instructions on how to interpret and use the tables in order to analyse situations and reach conclusions. The group has initiated the work to develop "quality" indicators as well basing in the experience in Albania and some other countries. With the financial support of World Bank and AEDP (50% at 50%), the group will undertake study visits in several countries to explore relevant experiences in Lebanon, Hungary, OECD Paris and Cambridge, England.

In order to achieve the conclusions introduced in this manual (manual no.1 for the "quantity" indicators), it was utilized the present experience of the educational bodies,

and different experiences in research and concrete work of educational experts, directors of various schools, etc. Moreover, it was utilized the international experience to get from it parameters never used before in Albania and to demonstrate the possibility of designing and implementing educational indicators that can be internationally comparable.

All these steps will contribute to clearly determine the evaluation methods, by developing educational indicators and helping to make understandable their use, interaction and limitations. OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development), Birzea, Scotland, Holland, USA (group of states) and USA (State of Indiana) served as the international resource and comparison. A group of experts visited Holland at the end of 1997 upon recommendation of OECD, as a country that distinguishes in the OECD network for a more specific approach in processing and using the basic data at the school level.

School was the first target because all efforts for school improvement as a way to bring changes in education, place the school in the center of these changes. It is a movement within the school community where the school:
- Sets out the vision and has a strategy to achieve its goals (being in the same line with the general reform);
- Aims at improving the students performance and is focused at the quality of teaching and learning;
- Deals the internal and external conditions that increase changes;
- Monitors and evaluates the process, progress and achievements.

The school improvement is a strategy that strengthens the school ability to face changes and establish effective and flexible structures for a better student preparation. A school committed to improvement becomes a school that thinks, reflects, learns and strives to ensure a qualitative education rather then just accept the directions coming from above without criticism. The school improvement is an obligation to all schools. Changes should start from within the school, but the support from outside is also needed.

The concept of school improvement and effectiveness was fcommon in the west since early 60'. In the 80', following the failure of top-bottom methods for educational reform, the new methods encouraged both top-bottom and bottom-top methods and underlined the importance of teachers and school communities involvement in the efforts for educational reform. In the western countries, schools follow the "road of changes", they receive professional support from the state and local state institutions and universities and from centers for school improvement. While in the Central and Eastern Europe there are no such educational institutions that could treat the school as a one complex and homogeneous organism where all the components are linked together closely. In many network countries, the Soros Foundations are the only organizations that can undertake, support and bring forward movements for school improvement.

The primer criteria to evaluate the school in the past was the student achievements in a specific aspect of its educational development, mainly through its gained factual knowledge, were. This still happens today. Now the schools under "improvement" are

attempting to stress the other aspects of the student development, especially its capabilities and values. A society that changes rapidly sets forth new demands to the schools: they should prepare students for a life long learning rather then seeking to answer all the questions.

The factual knowledge are still important, but less than in the past since there are other aspects that need to be considered, though often the latter are more difficult to be assessed in an objective way. In order to judge on the extent of school improvement, someone might prefer maybe to test the factual knowledge, but someone else might chose to evaluate the empowerment of student confidence, the student ability to discuss and debate on various issues, the respect and tolerance towards each other and other's opinion, and other general abilities like the interpersonal relations, critical thinking and conflict resolution in unfamiliar situation.

OECD started to develop these "delicate" indicators in early 90' in an attempt to move away from the standard evaluation of academic results as the only way to evaluate the school performance, and to also include other important aspects of a complete education. Nowadays more then 20 countries participate in the publication of quality indicators involving the evaluation performed by the general public on specific syllables of curricula, the importance placed to quality and capabilities and the level of decentralization in decision making within the school.

Often it is said that when somebody enters a good school, he/she can instinctively perceive if the school is hospitable, if students are interested and their schedule is busy, and if the building provides proper conditions to serve good the purpose of the school. Many countries have developed a number of other indicators that can help in judging about the climate of learning process in the school. They may be used by external evaluators and the pedagogical staff of the school itself. This approach can be expanded easily to collect information for the selection of curriculum, student behaviour and safety and quality of environment, in other words, for the delicate areas that are so important for a complete education.

The problem is that these delicate indicators and the instruments for measuring them are not yet in the tools bag of the schools (directors and teachers), school inspectors and supervisors or Ministry officials. Schools attempt to analyse themselves the process of change, but usually they do not posses sufficient capabilities and experience to do this. In general, little research work on what happens in the school during the process of change has been carried out. The "applied" research work has not been shared at local level, and if it does schools rarely benefit from it.

In order to overcome these obstacles and to increase the level of self-evaluation and external evaluation of the school activity, through a program of evaluation and monitoring at school level it is aimed to build for the first time a system of basic "quality" and "quantity" indicators through which to monitor and evaluate the work at school level. This development will bring the need in the future for the school and the external evaluators to build by their own the structures and provide the logistics for their

measurement. As a result of the above, the dialogue for education improvement will become more scientific and natural, and the decision makers in all levels of education shall be furnished with arguments deriving from the analyses and debate process that takes place based in indicators that cover the main problems dealing with the educational system at all levels.

Data on the functioning of education systems are being collected from decades. These data constitute an essential instrument for the planning and monitoring of the systems. Only in the last two decades, the information and the need for it has grown like never before. Today there is a major concern on the quality of such information.

In general, in the unconsolidated educational systems initially there is a rush towards the quantitative growth and development. This has happened in our system as well. For the decision makers the main questions they needed to address were: How many pupils have been there? How many can we attract? etc. Even for systems like ours, at some levels like pre-school and secondary education, these questions still remain evident. Seen in relation to other questions, they aim to provide the decision makers with explanations, which may enable them to determine development policies for these levels of education. Their comparison with the same indicators in other countries would help to take more objective decisions to fit the conditions in Albania and provide solutions through the most effective use of the limited financial resources. The questions addressing the compulsory education are related to quality assurance because at the present situation, for a various number of reasons, the dropout rate and the number of students attending school non-regularly has increased. This has derived, among other things, from the presence of new economic elements yet instable such as the establishment in the rural areas of small private properties and the need to perform the agricultural works using the free labour force including children at school age. The intensive demographic movements and the fast growth of school population have caused in several areas high concentration of this population that exceeds the maximal capacities of the existing school facilities. There are to be mentioned here as well the newly established urban areas where the education infrastructure lacks completely. Here the situation needs to be seen in its complexity in order to regulate the disproportion that have aroused between the levels of educations.

But despite the above, today more then ever all the questions converge in: What level of quality can be delivered in education? Therefore it is a requisite to define sophisticated modalities and ways to evaluate the educational processes and results, both in terms of quantity and quality, and above all to ensure more coherent and serious comparison between different educational systems in accordance with the requirements of political decision makers, public entities and users.

Many factors have contributed in strengthening the need for better and more in-depth information. As it is well known, at the present conditions when difficulties are being encountered with the increase of public expenses, the demand to deliver a better quality in education shall be forced as this would require the best use of available resources. In many countries, the commitment to a process of quality improvement has leaded to a greater school autonomy, which helped the schools to become more responsible to

achieve that efficiency they are asked for. In that case, they need to provide the most objective evidence. In the field of economy, the competition has increased significantly and different countries look at their respective general and vocational education systems as a mean through which to improve the competitive position of their systems. They want also to understand where improvement can be applied.

In order to be oriented toward a world of policy development, that is at the same time more rationale and open, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the organization and functioning of school systems so that the available data and the analyses they lead to, can be more useful. It is a necessity to introduce new methodologies of evaluation that would enable modifications in the reference framework where the debate on education is based.

An educational indicator shows something that is related to the efficiency and attitude of a school system and could serve to train the decision makers. Usually, the educational statistic data do not contain all the possible indicators. As all the indicators, independent from the area where they are used, the educational indicators too focus in the main aspects of the object of their study. As a consequence, it is expected from the indicators to give a general picture of the situation in the system in general, of one of its aspects or one element. Of course, the indicators do not reveal us everything about the school system, but as any other indicator, they provide an "immediate profile" of the current situation.

Given the complexity and diversity of educational systems, it is understandable to expect limited information from a specific indicator. Ideally, a system of indicators provides information on the way how different components of the educational system function in joint cooperation to produce an integral impact. In other words, the value of this work stands in providing an understanding of the decision making or analyses of the complexity of information furnished by a system of indicators. In order to have a general picture, the selected indicators should be linked to each other from the logic and empiric point of view. Following this model, we can use a combination of indicators to diagnose the current and future situation. Moreover, specific combinations of indicators could give indications on what is wrong and what might be the changes that could lead to improvement. A joint project with the World Bank entitled "The basic data at school level" is being implemented at the moment. The purpose of the project is to realise the entire informatization of the basic data network at school level and through specific computer softwares, combination of indicators shall be arranged. This is the only way to draw conclusions on a specific issue of the education system.

The selection of a single model for the international system of educational indicators is difficult to be made due to the differences that exist between countries. (i.e. in the principles that guide their policies and education, and in the institutional structure and functioning). It is imperative to avoid conflicts in the context of national systems that are being compared, and implications with the national history, tradition, culture and values that vary from each other in the structure and as systems. But there are fundamental

similar characteristics between the most developed countries, therefore it is possible to identify applicable and widely accepted indicators.

There are many forms of evaluation in education, but there is a common characteristic of all of them and that is to draw information that can be either in qualitative or quantitative format, reserved for administrative use or dissemination to the public. In either cases, the information serves more to help in the judgment, while the methods of analyses and the presentation mode may in a significant way increase or decrease the value of using this information.

In the OECD member countries, the use of evaluation indicators is widely spread through the mechanism of national and local control, public surveys, inspectors' questionnaires and common collection of statistic data etc. From several years, the need for this type of information requested both by politicians and customers has increased.

Many indicators provide valuable descriptive information of educational systems that very often result very useful when it comes to inform the public. But the major part of those who utilize the systems of indicators is normally more interested in comparing and assessing the quality in order to address the questions about the quality rather then about the quantity in education. There is a risk to have scarce comparison which could cause concerns on the efficiency of using the indicators. Therefore, it is aimed through their use to reach more accurate conclusions by making the best effective use of the opportunities they represent.

It is common that a scholar built a model of educational system in order for him to understand better how it functions. The same thing he should do with the indicators. A good example in this area is the study of school effectiveness. Many studies performed in different aspects of the school have been dedicated to the analyses of factors that appear to contribute to a relative success of some schools. The success in general is measured in terms of school results, but in many cases even to serve the many various criteria used from other schools. The researches in this directions allow sophisticated interpretations on the school efficiency and to have a better understanding why a school achieves better results for all students, independent from their social, ethnic and gender origin, while others, that appear to be more efficient, have lower results for certain categories of students.

The use of indicators in comparable studies is common in the area of researches, but it is considered from the majority as a starting point for the analyses process. The interpretation of quantitative data, therefore of relevant indicators, cannot be carried out if are not to be considered the values, objectives and structures of each education system. Thus it can be made by national experts who have a better knowledge and understanding of the functioning of the system. On the other side, the indicators are exposed to wrong interpretations and potentionaly even to incorrect use. This happens particularly when too much is expected from the indicators, when they are considered as objective measurement means even further, as arbitrage instruments rather then partial, inevitable

and not perfectly reliable means which more then anything else can be alerting, diagnosing and that touch the problems related to improvement.

These limitation need to be known specifically to underline the fact that the indicators are simply to support the judgement and can not be replaced with the decisive moments. After all, the interpretations on what the indicators represent and what political decision should be adapted, shall be influenced mainly from the objective information then the judgement on the indicators value. However with or without the indicators, the fundamental conclusions in education cannot avoid the political process, which means the reflection of the debate between decision makers and the public which in the end are responsible for the good functioning of the school.

The interpretation of indicators should be carried out with consideration to the context of objectives and specific values of each country: figures should not be allowed to speak "by themselves" (on their own without giving the context in question)

These are only some reflections on what we are doing to design and use effectively the educational indicators. The discussion is long and does not end here. The introduction of this manual for testing in the school life only gives encouragement for the initiation of a new and complex process that serves the educational system to evidence and give life to the debate for improvement. The desire is to offer something good. It will lead to the further democratisation and decentralization of education. There will come the day when moving from the school level up to the district and then national level, through the analyses of indicators we will be able to publish every year for the politicians and the general public a white book containing the achievements and problems encountered in education during that academic year. This will foster dialogue in the proper extent and in a reasonable way. In general such a dialogue would help us to be more realistic about the needs for funding in education, for changes at specific parts of the system or major changes in the system.

Large–Scale Assessment and Eduacation Policy in Albania

Dr. Shpresa Petrela

Director
Center of National Education Assessment and Examination

Issues related to assessment policy

Education system in Albania is undergoing a continuous reforming process with respect to its structure as well as its content:

1. In order to succeed, this reform should take into consideration the following requirements:

- It should preserve the balance and functioning of education system, despite the type and magnitude of change.
- Education policy should be guided by firm principles, despite the political forces that come to power.
- It should uphold positive achievements that affect further development of reforms.

2. The quality over all education stages should be maintained to reflect present changes and the perspective of Albanian society in general. This implies that:

- A democratic society needs individuals with various skills and characteristics;
- Changes in curricula should be associated with new means of assessment;
- Social and educational diversity require that monitoring of educational standards be improved;
- Social mobility of individuals or social groups within the country or abroad, imposes the need to set up measurable and comparative standards;
- The quality of assessment instruments should be increased in order to provide a high quality education;
- National and international assessment of students should evaluate also the input of teaching and learning processes such as: curriculum, textbooks, teachers, school infrastructure, etc.

While the quality of educational input affects the quality of outcome of education, it can be noted that the actual education quality in Albania, is far from the standards of a modern society based on market economy.

The field of education assessment is very broad and complex. It involves:

♦ Assessment of pupils of 4th, 8th, 12th grade, national examination and daily assessment of student's performance in class;
♦ Assessment of curriculum, content and achievement standards;
♦ Assessment of teachers, teachers' proficiency, standards, licensing and certification;
♦ Assessment of the schools, accreditation;
♦ Assessment of the system, qualitative indicators.

Potentially, the whole society is interested in knowing the data on assessment of educational system.

♦ Students' performance are subject of interest to students above all, their parents, their teachers and then other teachers and directors of the school, employers and the community of the respective area. On a local level, students' performance are of interest to local education authorities, while on a national level these results are of interest to policy designers and decision-makers.
♦ Assessment of curricula is subject of interest not only to teachers, but also to students, parents, designers of educational policies and decision-makers.
♦ Assessment of teachers is of interest to management of the school and local authorities, as well as to students, their parents and respective central authorities.
♦ Assessment of overall functioning of education system concerns directly the policy makers and educational central authorities and is object of their attention and their continuos specified actions.

The above mentioned issues are the focus of assessment development policy in our country, which enjoys the following characteristics as displayed in the World Bank project "Reform in Education":

♦ Knowing the needs at the central and local level, schools, institutions and public in relation to assessment issues;
♦ Designing a core document for assessment development policy;
♦ Establishing a national education assessment and examination system;
♦ Informing the public on assessment issues through booklets and electronic media and getting its feedback on these issues.

The main aim of educational reform is to **ensure a qualitative education and its performance, requires the establishment of a national assessment and examination system.** The process of reforming educational assessment system is difficult and above all costly. Therefore, the process is being financed by external sources such as the credit

from World Bank accredited to our government for educational assessment area, apart other educational related issues.

Center of National Education Assessment and Examination

Center of National Education Assessment and Examination originates in 1994 when it started to operate as a nucleus, part of the Pedagogical Research Institute. From that period and now it was institutionalized as an independent agency from PRI and dependent from Ministry of Education and Science based on a decree of Council of Ministers dated in May 2001, the Center's activities have been focused on :

♦ Building capacity for assessment and examination through intensive staff training within the country and abroad in prestigious and well-known institutions in the area of large scale assessment such as UCLES (England), CITO (Netherlands), ETS (USA), NAES (Romania), etc.
♦ Providing a sophisticated technical infrastructure to enable the fulfillment of new roles and tasks of the Center.

During this period, the status of the Center of National Education Assessment and Examination and that of its staff is changing from two points of view:

♦ The Center is under the administrative subordination of Ministry of Education and Science;
♦ Its staff is gradually changing its status, role and tasks: from subject specialists of writing test (till now this function was performed with regard to university entrance exams) into experts for coordination and administration of national assessments and examinations (new responsibilities taken on during this year's university entrance exams as well as during the pilot testing of first national assessment of 4th grade of elementary school, in Mathematics, Albanian Language and Literature).

Center of National Education Assessment and Examination's goal is to establish the national assessment and examination system. It acts as a supporting, professional and technical unit for people engaged in education and its mission includes:

♦ Designing and administering the tests and other instruments related to learning process assessment;
♦ Processing statistical and psychometric analysis of data collected from national tests and examinations in order to improve them;
♦ Monitoring students' progress at their key stages, informing and giving respective recommendations to Ministry of Education and Science;
♦ Collecting quantitative and qualitative data on overall development of educational system and presenting the data, the conclusions and recommendations to Ministry of Education and Science;

♦ Organizing training sessions for evaluators and other people involved in national assessment and examination procedures and in the daily assessment of students in class;
♦ Providing means for qualification of teachers, network members and education experts on national assessment and examination and daily assessment in class;
♦ Publishing reports on the results of national assessments and examinations and other working papers in the field of educational assessment;
♦ Engages in research activity in the field of educational assessment;
♦ Establishes regulations and guidelines for organization of national examinations and presents them to Minister of Education and Science for approval.

In this framework, the Center will provide expertise in:
♦ Assessment of pre-university education;
♦ Development and implementation of various types of tests and assessment procedures in pre-university and university education;
♦ National examinations and entrance university exams with respect to item writing and test implementation as well as publication of results;
♦ Logistics in test construction and administration, publishing of the results, etc.;
♦ National assessments at different educational stages;
♦ Other assessments assisting educational concerns.

Center's main activities are: national examinations such as those of 8th and 12th grade and entrance university exams, as well as national assessments of students at key educational stages such as in the 4th, 8th and 12th grade.

National Examinations

The meaning of exams.

>   What is the goal of exams?
>   Exams can be used for:

♦ Comparing the performance of a candidate with that of other candidates tested on the same subject or topic(norm - referenced test)
♦ Measuring the attainment of specific criteria of performance by a candidate;
♦ Measuring relative and absolute achievements;
♦ Determining possibilities an individual has to pass from one education stage to a higher one in the future;
♦ Certifying students at the completion of a study course;
♦ Reflecting the goals of education system. However it is difficult to estimate all goals through these exams;
♦ Assessing the extent that the nature and magnitude of students' learning matches its purpose and objective;

- Motivating further the learning process;
- Taking different pedagogical decisions with respect to individual and teaching process;
- Diagnostic purposes;
- Informing parties concerned in education issues and achievements;
- Informing other teachers who need to take decisions about their students;
- Informing parents about their children's performance at school;
- Making possible the assessment of teaching and learning effectiveness;
- Comparing the performance of students taught by different teachers;
- Evaluating teachers;
- Collecting information and comparing across schools;
- Collecting information and assessing the national education achievements.

These can be summarized in three basic purposes:
- Certification;
- Selection;
- Providing information about the quality of education.

Exams can be carried out by the school (internal examination system), by outsiders (external examination system where exams are initiated by independent agencies such as the Center of National Education Assessment and Examination) and by school institutions in cooperation with Ministry of Education (mixed examination system which in our country is implemented through maturity exams of 8th and 12th grade).

Although examination means assessment by definition, there are differences between national examinations and national assessments. The main differences between these two concepts are summarized below:

Examinations	National Assessments
- May be taken by all eligible students - Generally test across a broad curriculum - Do not investigate background variables which affect students' performance - The same pattern of examinations has to be repeated regularly, e.g. annually - Public is very sensitive to examinations. As a result, stakes are high for the agency responsible for construction and administration of exams as well as for politicians	- Usually conducted using a small representative sample and do not measure the performance of specific students - Assesses the main objective of curriculum and core competencies of the student - Results are analyzed against a broad range of other variables which affect students' performance - The same pattern of assessment is not repeated regularly for different subjects and different age groups

♦ Exam 'standards' and year-on-year equivalents are rarely fixed by sophisticated psychometric techniques ♦ The associated stakes for students are high ♦ Teaching and learning may be distorted by 'teaching to the test' ♦ Exams may be used to influence classroom practice (i.e. positive backwash effect) ♦ Security risks are great In many countries students pay examination fees (in our country students pay for entrance university exams).	♦ The national assessments require psychometric techniques after each assessment for test calibration, comparisons, etc. ♦ Public is not very sensitive to national assessments. Stakes for the agency responsible for them and politicians are low ♦ The associated stakes for students are low ♦ Teaching and learning are distorted less (stakes are low) ♦ Influence on classroom practice is weak (negative backwash effect) ♦ Security is rarely a problem (stakes are low) ♦ Students do not pay fees for national assessments.

Given that examinations play an important role for the individual, parents as well as politicians, the responsibility of specialized institutions such as Center of National Education Assessment and Examination is great and subject to the judgement of all concerning parties. At present, our Center is engaged in carrying out the entrance university exams and in 2003, 2004 it will also conduct and administer the maturity exams of 8th and 12th grade.

For the first time, the Center directed the entrance university exams for 2001-2002 academic year. The process was carried out in compliance with international standards with regard to technical quality as well as monitoring of all the procedures involved in the process. However, there are also many other aspects that need to be completed effectively such as item writing, pilot testing, bank of test items, test construction, administration and marking.

Achievements of university entrance examination system

♦ Implementation of competition system
♦ Design standardized tests
♦ Attempts to increase the quality of university education
♦ Qualification of a group of experts, professors, teachers in test construction and administration
♦ Support from students, parents and society
♦ Minimization of corruption
♦ Assigning responsibilities and competencies to the Center of National Education Assessment and Examination for the first time

♦ Establishment of an external group for monitoring the quality
♦ Improvements of regulations for the competition
♦ Improvements of marking scheme minimizing the negative effects of alternative "E": no answer
♦ Publication of guidelines for candidates, test designers and quality monitors.

Some problems and challenges faced by university entrance exam

♦ The quality of test items, especially of the specialized ones, cannot be guaranteed. This is related not only with the time and inappropriate conditions in which they are written but also with the writing techniques and their presentation and printing which are different from one university to another.

Ideally, all the test items should be withdrawn from the bank of test item, which is based on pre-testing. This way, the characteristics of the items are made known. However, we think that there are two main factors, which hinder the implementation of pre-testing in our country:

    -high costs

    -secrecy risks

It is very difficult to overcome the second difficulty. Even if pre-testing takes place with a small number of students, it is very difficult to maintain the secrecy especially given that in our country the inter-relationships among people are strong.

♦ The general and specialized tests measure the same knowledge that students have acquired in high school, i.e. they are based on the same curriculum.
♦ A unique marking technique does not exist
♦ The candidates are overloaded. They have to undergo through two types of tests, the maturity exam and university entrance exam, in a period of three months.
♦ Bulletins containing the results of previous university entrance exams taken on annual bases are not published.

Based on the current problems and other countries' experience, two alternatives which improve the procedures and mechanism for selecting the candidates entering the university are developed. (These alternatives are introduced in the deans' conference in co-operation with Mrs. Nikoleta Mita)

1. National Assessment
♦ Main authority:
Center of National Education Assessment and Examination.
♦ Main mechanism:
National Assessment of candidates in four subjects divided according to their main areas.
♦ **Advantages**
- concentration of competencies and responsibilities on a single specialized authority
- standardized tests
- high quality, reliability and validity

- avoids corruption
- application of international models
♦ **Disadvantages**
- universities lack the experience of using other selecting mechanisms
- there is no legal bases

2. A single achievement test
♦ Main authorities:
- Center of National Education Assessment and Examination.
- Universities
♦ **Main mechanism**
- achievement test on the curriculum of eight subjects attended in high school.
- the test will be constructed by subject working groups of representatives from Ministry of Education, universities and high schools under the supervision of the Center of National Education Assessment and Examination.
- For majors which require special skills, the achievement and performance test will be combined in a ratio of 50:50.
- Administration and logistics will be completed by Ministry of Education, Center of National Education Assessment and Examination and universities together.
- Achievement test on four subjects:
Social sciences, natural sciences, technical sciences and humanity sciences includes eight subjects from the existing curriculum and priority will be given to the number of questions from respective fields
- Candidates with the same number of scores will be distinguished based on the number of scores taken in subjects relevant to that field.
♦ **Advantages**
- Responsibility is shared
- Same standards are used
- The conflict between general and specialized test is avoided
- Corruption is not present
- Candidates with higher points in the subjects of relevance have higher chances of winning
♦ **Disadvantages**
- Candidates are overloaded.

Evaluation of examination effectiveness

It is important that an agency specialized in assessment field, evaluates the effectiveness of the exams it administers. Usually, this process takes the shape of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of test items and administration. Each evaluation of examination process includes:
♦ Distribution of scores and descriptive statistics;
♦ Evaluation of test reliability;

- Correlation between examination components;
- Evaluation of item difficulty level and discrimination;
- Evaluation of test validity.

For the first time, the Center of National Education Assessment and Examination will carry out a broad study on the university entrance examination process that took place in September 2001. This study will help to:
- monitor the achievements of candidates;
- build the bank of data on achievements of high school students;
- improve test items for the next university entrance exams;
- identify the problems of high school curriculum;
- distinguish high schools' quality levels
- publish the results of exams to inform the public, students, parents, teachers and policy designers and decision-makers;
- reform the procedures of university entrance examination process.

Despite the decision that will take the authority responsible for university entrance exams, there are many problems which require that political decisions be taken at high levels. These decisions relate to test distribution among universities, increasing test markers reliability, reaching the agreement among universities, Center of National Education Assessment and Examination and Ministry of Education, test secrecy, etc.

National Assessment
The purpose of national assessment

Usually, literature suggests that national assessment serve four main goals:
- Increasing the validity of system's objectives, i.e. monitoring of students achievements in real life;
- Increasing system's effectiveness, i.e. how competitive the system is for individuals and how does it affect their evolvement;
- Increasing system's efficiency, i.e. sustaining same quality while some of the variables change and some do not, such as when the increase of number of students registered is not associated with an increase of financial sources.
- Increasing accountability in a decentralized system, i.e. assigning a higher autonomy to local authorities implies that central government should report on education outcomes. National Assessment can reveal the efficiency and effectiveness of part of the system, such as those of schools, local authorities, etc. and it can also recommends methods to improve their output.

National Assessment and National Education Policy

One of the goals of national assessment is to inform decision-makers on the development stage of education system. The results of national assessment serve the policy markers and decision-makers to identify problems, formulate reforms and improve efficiency.

Instruments used for national assessments are based on standards that show the purpose of education. However, national assessment employs also other instruments, which measure background variables that effect students' attitude. Based on national assessment data, policy makers determine characteristics of education system development emphasizing given aspects more than others. Therefore, policy makers, decision-makers and all parties interested in educational assessment should support and foster the application of national assessments.

National Assessment and its standards

Standards and the process of defining them makes an important aspect of national assessment. Assessment instruments and results should be based on standards because they are the ones to determine and make clear the official curriculum thus, providing a more realistic view of students' performance. The answer to the question "How good is good enough?" has many dimensions, one of which entails standards. Meanwhile, the process of defining standards is very complicated. One of the main tasks of the Center of National Assessment and Examination is to define specific standards through the implementation of first national assessment in the 4th grade. The Center should utilize advanced statistical techniques in order to provide valid and useful achievement standards.

The importance of national assessment

In order to understand the type of national assessment a country should apply, it is important to know the purpose of assessment:
♦ It informs policy makers:
- national assessments provide information, i.e. differences existing among schools because of issues related to location, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- data from national assessment are used to control the curriculum content, identify its weak and strong points, teaching methods, etc.
♦ It promotes standard monitoring. National Assessment provides data on the status of educational standards at a given point in time.
♦ It identifies other variables which affect students performance such as teachers' qualification, textbooks, school infrastructure, etc.
♦ It encourages accountability
- the government becomes more responsible about the values of education and funds invested in it;
- local authorities and schools become more responsible for their results;
- parents can use the data to select across schools;

- teachers can be criticized or promoted depending on the outcome of national assessment.
♦ It informs the public and increases its awareness. Information on national assessment outcome makes public more aware of issues related to education and reforms.

Information on national assessment is important and can serve its purpose only if it is clear, uncorrupted and credible.

Advantages of national assessment
♦ It assesses across different stages, subjects and objectives;
♦ It identifies factors that can affect positively/negatively the achievements of students;
♦ If the assessment is based on sample , it can be conducted at relatively low cost;
♦ It does not distort the teaching process. (low stakes)

Disadvantages of national assessment

♦ It has limited backwash effects as stakes for students and teachers are low;
♦ It requires special skills and expertise;
♦ The information it provides can be misused.

Pilot testing of the first national assessment of the 4th grade in Mathematics, Albanian Language and Literature in Albania

First national assessment of 4th grade in Mathematics, Albanian Language and Literature will be carried out in May 2002. Its first phase includes pilot testing and it was completed by May 2001.

The purpose of pilot testing: to identify test items difficulty, issues of administration, logistics, etc.

- It was carried out in May 2001
- It involved 4th grade students
- Assessed subject were: mathematics, Albanian language, literature
- Sample included: 1050 students, 29 schools spread over the whole country
- Authority: Center of National Education Assessment and Examination
- The Center of National Education Assessment and Examination determined:

- first national assessment policy
- curriculum and evaluation program
- assessment instruments
- test construction, size, organization, marking scheme
- guidelines for test administrators, quality monitors, school and regional coordinators
- markers training

- final report, etc.

In the future, the Center will face many responsibilities and tasks, and it will encounter many challenges during the further reformation and development of assessment system. Its activities require:
- human resources
- assets
- financial resources
- professionalism
- consensus
- execution
- quality

Change is costly, difficult and slow. However, changes occur when people are willing to accept it and take risks.

December, 2001

The AEDP Experience in drafting
the System of Education indicators

Nikoleta Mita, Professor, Tirana University
Vladimir Pasku, Program Manager, AEDP/Sooros

In the history of education different ways to monitor education in different levels are known. Since the 80-ies, important developments regarding the theory and practice of the education indicators have happened. The most numerous new practices in this field are those of the nineties. After the publication of the Package of the Education Indicators from OECD in 1992, a number of countries started to draft the systems of national indicators for the education and to publish the respective documentation. In January of 1994 Belgium, Denmark, France, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA published their systems of education indicators at the national level. Since that year 27 countries have prepared their systems of indicators. Thus, it has been possible to establish the bank of education indicators at the international level.

The necessity for education indicators

In order to monitor the education in Albania a number of limited indicators have been used traditionally, which have not consisted in a system and which have ensured mainly information about the registrations, participation, the termination of the education according to levels, the passing percentage of the pupils, and some data about the teachers. The data collected in this way has more served as statistics on the education than to analyze the events that have accompanied the development of the education and to take the respective decisions. These data has been mainly used to foresee the most necessary financial, material and human resources. The information has been collected at the national, local and institutional level, but it has been used very little in function of the local and school level.

The actual and perspective developments of the education, the total reform, the knowledge of the world experience in this field, the influence of the international movement for drafting and using systems of indicators for the education are some of the inciting to start this undertaking also in our country.

In the actual period of development, it is put forward strongly the request to collect objective and accurate information in a professional manner, it is put forward the request to take decisions on the basis of scientific analyses and studies, it is put the request for the communication of this information. At the end all this information is needed in order to evidence the efficiency of the investments made in education.

For all the above-mentioned reasons, the undertaking of the initiative for drafting the system of the indicators of the education in our country has become a necessity.

Upon the initiative and with the financial support of AEDP and with its close co-operation with MASH, ISP, the Education Directorates and the schools, since three years ago some projects for the drafting of the education indicators have been initiated.

Initially, it was worked for the quantity indicators at the institutional level and now it has been prepared the manual of the director of the school, where it is presented the system of indicators for this level, and the way of collecting and using the information.

During the work, the idea was developed further and the group of specialists, inspectors, directors of schools and teachers was engaged in the preparation of the system of indicators also for the national and local level. Also, it was deemed proper that the quality and quantity indicators be presented integrated in the system of indicators.

Currently, work is been carried out in these projects: "The integration of the indicators of the Albanian education in the system of indicators of OECD", "The institutionalization of the education indicators in three levels: national, local, and institutional", "Piloting the education indicators in the institutional level".

Besides the work for the preparation of the packages of instruments and the piloting of the above-mentioned projects, currently work is carried out also in two other sub-projects "The education indicators for the lower level of the 8-year school" and "The education indicators for the pre-school education".

Now it has been prepared the Package of the Education Indicators, which contains the system of education indicators at the national, local, and institutional levels. It will make possible to ensure enough information in quantity, information that will cover the basic elements of education, information that can be used to implement the aims of the education reform at all levels.

Through the indicators it will be possible to recognize the importance of education in the economy of the country, their respective relationship; to know the level of education development and the events that accompany it; to know the scale and level of implementation of the goals and standards of the education, to work on the improvement of quality.

The system of indicators of the education

The system of education indicators performs the same functions as the systems of indicators used to monitor the economy, the judicial system, or the other social systems. The statistical indicators are used to monitor the complex conditions, which we cannot judge accurately through the daily observation.

The governments accept the value of the statistics, which ensure accurate information, analyze the inclinations and help to foresee the changes in the education in the close future. For this reason, the drafters of the policies and the researchers aim at preparing the best statistical indicators of the education.

The aim of the indicators is to characterize the nature of the education system through its components. This information is used later to judge the progress as per some goals and standards, and as per comparison against data from some institutions and at the national level.

An education indicator is defined generally as statistics related with the policy which aims at ensuring information about the condition, functioning, or the activity of an education system or a part of it. The education indicators may note a definite aspect of the condition, functioning, or the activity of an education system, but they are not the event in itself.

An education indicator presents the information in a scale. The scale may be numerical or descriptive.

The indicators of the education are statistics, which reflect important aspects of the education system, but not all the statistics on the education are indicative. The statistics are qualified as indicators only if they fulfill the function of the point of reference or of comparison. Normally, the point of reference is a standard (for example, the middle age for basic writing, reading), a value of the past (for example, the level of 1995 for the results in mathematics), or a comparison between schools, regions or states.

An indicator is not the only instrument for the education policy. The indicators have their limitations and their use depends on their credibility and validity.

Another central concept in the discussion of the indicators is that of the system of indicators. In case when the indicators are unique or consist in a statistical composition, a single indicator may ensure a useful information for a complex event such as the education. But a system of indicators is more than a gathering of the statistics of the indicators. In an ideal way, a system of indicators measures the specific components of the system, and also ensures information as to how the components act together to produce the general effect. In other words, all the information ensured through a system of indicators is bigger than the sum of its parts.

As a conclusion, the education indicators are a bank of information that indicates something about the functioning or the activity of the education system, or an education institution. The indicators do not tell everything about the education system. They are a profile of the concrete conditions.

Why will the education indicators be used for?

The systems of indicators are prepared for different levels of the education: for the national level, the local level, and the institutional level.

The system of the education indicators at **the national level** will be used for these aims: to ensure information for the level of education development and progress; to ensure information on the importance of the education in the economy; to monitor and value the quality of the education system; to ensure information on the actual conditions of the education and the possibilities of its further improvement; to assist the drafters of the policies to formulate the aims of the education and to transform them in concrete actions; will be used in the system of inspection and accreditation; to promote the education reforms; to compare the education in our country with the education in other countries.

The education indicators at **the local level** will be used for these aims: to ensure information on the situation of the education at the local level; to monitor and evaluate the quality of information at the local level; to promote the development of education at the local level; to make comparisons between the districts; to take different decisions at the local level.

The education indicators at **the level of school institution** will be used for these aims: to monitor the activity of the school; to ensure information to evaluate the quality of the school; to ensure information to understand the nature of the school problems; to ensure information to improve the activity of the school; to ensure information to take different pedagogical decisions for the school.

Criteria and procedures for the drafting and use of the system of education indicators

The preparation and use of the indicators is realized according to these phases:

I. The preparatory and development phase
    A. The formulation of the indicators

First step: the definition of the fields and main aspects of the monitoring of the education system and the activity of the school.

Second step: the establishment of a system of valid, useful and necessary indicators. During these phase the criteria for the drafting and the selection of the indicators has been defined. In the process of formulation of the indicators it has been kept in mind that the indicators fulfill these characteristics: to be quantitative, qualitative, real, measurable, valid, useful, clearly expressed, usable, sufficient, proper, acceptable, and to be directed to different audiences.

During this phase, the drafters of the indicators have carried out consultations with the possible users to define whether the system prepared is in compliance with the aims of the users.

After the indicators have been compared with the criteria, they are included in the system of indicators.

During this phase, alternative systems of the indicators have been prepared, which have been compared, analyzed and put in the process of selection.

Third step: the definition of the different groups of variables. For each group of variables there are defined the sub-variables.

Fourth step: the definition of the means, instruments and procedures of information gathering. After the model of the system of indicators has been defined and the indicators have been selected, the strategy of data collection is defined. Each procedure, tool and instrument is valuated according to the criteria of usefulness, ease of use, and cost.

    B. The approval of the package of education indicators

II. The piloting phase: the piloting of the education indicators according to the levels.

III. The implementing phase: the use of the education indicators at all levels.

The contents of the Package of Education Indicators

For the drafting of the model of the system of indicators it was used the experience of a series of organizations and countries, such as: OECD, WEI, UNESCO, PHARE Project, the Socrates Program of the European Community, the Netherlands, Scotland, Israel, the USA, Belgium, France, Denmark, and Switzerland. For the system of indicators at the national level it has been selected the OECD model judged as the most complete, participatory, and realized.

The system of indicators at the national level consists of 36 indicators with 196 variables, the system of indicators at the local level consists of 44 indicators with 96 variables, while the system of indicators at the institutional level consists of 40 indicators with 80 variables.

The indicators are grouped according to the following sections:

Indicators of the context

- Demographical characteristics
- Social characteristics
- Economic characteristics

Indicators of the resources
- Financial resources (Data on the previsions, expenses for the education at different levels for the schools and the pupils)
- Material resources (Characteristics of the teaching materials, of the buildings, and school equipments)
- Human resources (Characteristics of the pupil, characteristics of the teacher)

Indicators of the process
- The quality of the programs
- The processes in the classroom
- The organization and functioning of the education system, of the school, of the class

Indicators of the achievements
- Achievements in the field of knowledge
- The improvement of the manual abilities
- The change in the stands
- The change in the behavior

Indicators of the results/achievements
- The employment
- The profit
- The change in the stands
- The change in the behavior

The indicators are drafted by keeping in mind also another classification: the pupils, the students, the teachers, the teaching plan and program, the teaching and learning, the resources, the guidance, the direction, the quality, the school institution, the local education system, the national education system.

The indicators are grouped according to the following sections:

A. The demographical, social and economic context of the education
This group of indicators presents the context where the education acts.

B. The financial and human resources invested in the education
In this section are grouped the indicators of the financial, material, and human resources that the country invests in the education by comparing these resources with a) the national patrimony, the number of pupils and public funds; b) the ways education is financed, c) the resources where the funds come from.

C. The entrance and participation in the education

The sections contains the indicators about the registrations, the participation and termination of the education. The inclinations for the registrations at different levels of the education and the types of education institutions show the proportion of the request and offer in the education.

D. The passage from school to work

The indicators of this section present a big picture of the participation of the new labor force in the education and at work.

E. The learning environment and the organization of the school

This section contains the indicators of the learning environment and the ways of organization of the education system and of the school. There are included in it indicators about the teachers, the teaching time, the teaching program, the organization of the teaching process, the guidance and direction of the education and the school, the use of the teaching equipment, and especially the computers.

F. The achievements of the pupils, students and the results of the education in the social and labor market

This section presents the indicators about the achievements of the individuals and the results of the education in the social and labor market.

The collection of data and the use of instruments

1. At the national and local level it will be collected information about the situation of the education, information about the entrances and participation in the education, the financial resources, the graduation and the employment, because these constitute the basic element for the planning of the resources; data about the school, the teachers, the pupils. The data will be annual and periodical. In order to collect the information statistical evidences, standardized tests, polls, and questionnaires will be used.

2. At the institutional level it will be collected information about the internal life of the school. In order to collect the information statistical evidences, tests, questionnaires, the file of the student, and the file of the teacher will be used.

The supervision and the use of the data and information will be made from different audiences: specialists from the Ministry of Education and Science and from ISP, politicians, statistics' offices, researchers, inspectors of all levels, directors of schools, donors, parents, pupils, and teachers.

The influence of the system of education indicators

The education indicators will influence several audiences and levels.

At the national level, besides other, it will influence the system of inspection and accreditation. **At the local level** it will influence especially the inspection system. **At the school level** it will influence the system of auto-evaluation.

Influence will be exercised also on these audiences:

The pupils and parents, which knowing the quality indicators of the school will be able to understand the level of the school and of the pupils.

The community by informing it about the situation and the quality of the education system and of the school.

The researchers of education issues, which will have an open path for studying further the problems related to the education system and its improvement, the quality of the school and its improvement,

In order to implement successfully this undertaking a total commitment and training of all the persons that will be involved in the piloting and implementation of this new education practice in our country is required.

General Standards in Preschool Education

Pranvera Kamani, Preschool Education Inspector, MOES

The need to develop standards

This last 10 years in our education system has stressed out the necessity to determine reference standards, measuring standards, quality and quantitative standards. This process is not an easy one. Initially patterns should be set up and function to practically prove their truthfulness and applicability then pass over to gradual generalization. It is precisely this, the model followed by preschool education.

The years 1994-2001 were marked by concrete steps taken to build archetypes of educational activities in the kindergarten and its facilities in accordance with the contemporary parameters of preschool institutions. The work in this period was focused in two directions:

- In the experimentation of the educational preschool model in pilot kindergarten: "Step by Step" model, Reggio-Emilia model.
- In introducing new ideas and visions in the educational activity in pilot kindergartens with the specificity that each model brings, by giving priority to the integration of different areas of the educational activity through play.

The successful implementation of the educational models in pilot kindergartens together with the specificity of each model, has put into evidence their superiority as compared to the existing model, related to:

- the overall development of the personality of a 3-6 year old child
- assuring the individual treatment of the child in the kindergarten
- Child treatment as an active subject of self-recognition and increasing the level of the initiative and freedom of action.
- Assuring a variety of educational activities that focus on play, relying on children's interests desires and needs.
- Develop a new figure for the educator that together with the children will be able to organize and develop an interactive educational activity.
- The active involvement of the parents' community in the educational activity in the kindergarten.
- Assuring the appropriate facilities equipped with the necessary didactic materials.

The process of the experimentation of the educational models has been characterized by transparency and the total consensus of preschool education stakeholders: specialists and university professors, central and local education authorities, kindergarten heads and

teachers not included in the project, parent's community. The result of this comprehensive process is the introduction of elements from the experimented methodologies in the kindergartens with appropriate education conditions. Another factor that supports the introduction of knew ideas and their actual implementation in these Kindergartens were the opportunity for self-acting towards a creative implementation of the education program in the kindergarten by the leading staff and teachers of preschool education.

During 1995, private kindergartens began to open. Given the great demand for this service and the limited possibilities of the government to cope with it, private kindergartens were strongly supported by MASH. By fulfilling the requirement for this kind of service, private education institutions are valued and supported for the novelties they brought through the methodologies.

Within this variety of forms, methods, ideas and efforts to make changes happen, the need to develop "General Standards in Preschool Education" as a direct result and coronation of a long work, was felt.

The main goal to develop standards aimed at:

- determining child's achievements in each phase of their development
- determining teachers'achievements in accordance with the implementation of interactive methodologies
- assist teachers to plan, organize and monitor educational activities
- assure progressive growth of the educational activities
- Assure appropriate teacher-child-parent collaboration as an inseparable trinomial of child development and formation.

Preschool standards

Being one criteria or objective of education, standards serve to measure and assess the component elements of education such as: quality of the curricula; quality of teaching, progress of educational activities and preschool institution. By developing the national standards we made efforts to determine the comprehensiveness of skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes that the child acquires in the kindergarten. The development of standards was done in accordance with the objectives and education vision of MASH and will assure the continuous progress of preschool institutions.

What would be the goal of preschool education?
What is the physiognomy of the kindergarten?

The answer to this question will guide us in determining standards that should be respected in preschool institutions. The 80 years experience in our preschool education system and particularly the experience of these last 10 years and the contemporary

international experience must persuade us that the kindergarten of today and the future ones must direct its activity towards:

- Educating and shaping the new individual, free, responsible and active participant in the social life.
- Assimilating skills and communicative, expressive, logical and active competencies.
- Developing psychomotor, cognitive, social, emotional and moral skills.
- Respecting equality of chances for all children.

Society today has a new perception of the child as an active subject involved in a continuous interaction with its peers, with the adults and the social and cultural environment where it belongs. This perception of the child conditions the features of today's kindergarten that should be:

An open educational institution: the harmonized development of the child is realized through continuity of education. Kindergartens should be open to the family and collaborate with other institutions such as day cares and schools and health institutions.

An enriched environment with new and various experiences: the kindergarten must be the first and most important place where the process of the integration of the preschool child starts.

The richness and the variety of educational experiences helps children build and develop their knowledge and prepare to assimilate the structured knowledge at primary school. The activity of the kindergarten contributes in practicing and developing of motor, emotional, social and intellectual skills. The child learns to identify his feelings and emotions, to control his actions to fit with the time, place and social environment.

Play is one of the most important activities in kindergarten. Play helps and supports the fulfillment of goals and objectives of child development.

The child-focused environment. The activity in the kindergarten should respond to the physiological, emotional and intellectual needs of the child and prepare the conditions for the child to have its own environment.

The structured-activity environment. Kindergarten years mark an important stage of child development. The teacher has the difficult task to know and respect child's way of living and learning, his interests and liking. The teacher should as well prepare the child for a smooth transition from non-structured activities to planned ones.

The content of the educational activity. The educational content of the kindergarten should be organized in big activity areas. Each area is very important and must occupy a certain place during child's stay in kindergarten. The implementation of the content of

these activity areas in the interest of the child opens great possibilities of interpreting these activities in the context of one area or of all areas brought together.

Starting from this and from the literature that has been consulted, we determine 8 areas for preschool standards:

1. Child/teacher interaction
2. Curricula
3. Teacher/parent interaction
4. Staff qualification and professional growth
5. Administration
6. Physical environment
7. Health and food
8. Evaluation

Let's stop shortly at each standard and their goal.

1. Teacher/child interaction

Goal: Teacher/child interaction helps the child develop an understanding of himself and the others. This interaction should be characterized by warmness, mutual respect, and individuality of the relationship, positive support and responsibilities. Staff facilitates the interaction of the child itself giving him the possibility to develop self-assessment, social competence and intellectual development.

Standard: All areas of preschool child development –social, emotional, cognitive and physical – are integrated. The positive developments in all these areas depend on the personal and supportive relationships with the adults. Kids develop socially, emotionally and intellectually, through interaction with their peers.

This standards include all the modalities of teachers attitude towards children such as : interaction that values and respects the child, staff responsibility towards the child to develop a positive self-assessment, to encourage and encourages independent action, social behavior, etc.

2. Curricula

Goal: curricula encourages the child to actively involve in the process of learning, to deal with a variety of activities and appropriate materials that help him develop and realize their interests within the framework of the life in the community and throughout the world.

Standard: curricula does not include only of the program goals and planned activities but it involves the daily plan, its validity and usefulness of the materials, the transition activities and the way in which the daily routine in the kindergarten is implemented. The criteria for the implementation of the curricula reflect the environment and the experiences that contribute in developing concepts.

Standard of the curricula stresses the need to clearly determine the philosophy and goals of education. Particular role gains the definition of the educational activities based on the child's needs and interests. Standard of the curricula stresses the need for an oriented planning of the annual, monthly and daily activity independently from the applied methodology. Of specific value is the use of various didactic and entertaining materials including the media, with clear instructions on how to use them. Standards are clearly teacher's tasks and approaches to support child's intellectual, emotional and physical development, the development of skills, habits and of a social behavior.

3. Parent-staff interaction

Goal: the parents get informed of the program and are involved as contributors and observers of its accomplishment. Parents and staff collaborate for the continuity of the program and to assure the highest quality.

Standard: kids are totally linked with the family. Programs would fulfill children's needs when they are knowledgeable of the importance of the child's family and develop strategies to work effectively with the families. The entire communication between program and family should be based on the concept that parents have a great influence in the life of their children.

Based on the rich experiences of collaboration of parents and teachers in our kindergarten and in the new experiences gained during experimentation of contemporary models, this standard encompasses a variety of activities that would see the family an active participant in the life of the kindergarten. Parents will be informed on the educational program of the kindergarten, of the mutual collaboration on the practices of child upbringing, cultural comparison, by avoiding conflicts. A greater importance assumes the active involvement of the family and its contribution in the conceptualization, organization and development of the content of the educational process. To make them active in the life of the kindergarten it is necessary to realize some activities and develop appropriate instruments such as parent's councils, advisory boards, documentary systems, etc.

4. Staff qualification and professional development

Goal: the program is realized by adults who understand child and family development and recognize and fulfill their needs.

Standard: the most important factor for defining the quality of the early childhood program is the quality of the staff. Studies has shown that the high level of the teachers (related to their professional preparation and formal education on child development in general and early childhood education in particular), is linked with the positive results of the children, such as enhancement of social interaction, development of proactive attitudes, speech improvement and cognitive development.

This standard includes the criteria to be respected in selecting the staff; defining type of graduate studies; minimum age of employment in preschool institutions; the need to inform and recognize the newly hired staff; duties and responsibilities of the heads of kindergarten, teachers and other staff members; criteria for in-service training and areas to be considered for continuous qualification; criteria to realize team work, etc.

5. Administration

Goal: the program is administered effectively by focusing on the needs and desires of the child, family and staff.

Standard: the way the program is administered influences on all components. An effective administration creates the environment that facilitates the achievement of a good quality of care and education, for preschool children. The effective administration involves good communication among persons involved in this program, positive relationships with the community, fiscal stability, and a focus on the needs and working conditions of all staff members.

We have tried to express through this standard the existing functioning procedures of the kindergarten and have introduced some new requirements very important for the progress of the kindergarten. For e.g. importance is given to monitoring and evaluating the annual education activity of the kindergarten with the aim to identify the strong and weak points to be able to improve or reinforce them; drafting the job description of the staff at the kindergarten; to the procedure to be followed on every day situations or emergency ones, etc.

6. Physical environment

Goal: the physical environment in and out of the kindergarten accelerates the rhythms through the possibilities that are given to the child to discover and to learn.

Standard: the physical environment influences the attitude and the development of man, i.e. influences the adults and the children who work and live there. The quality of the physical space and materials influences on the level of child involvement and on the quality of interaction between adults and children. Spaciousness, furnishing and use of the space in and out of the kindergarten should be assessed at regular intervals.

This standard sets some criteria regarding the inner and outer space of the kindergarten; child accommodation in small and big groups; developing individual spaces for children; the necessary and most useful furniture; garden arrangement, etc.

7. Health and safety

Goal: Children and adult's health and security should be safeguarded.

Standard: it is essential to foresee a safe and healthy environment. A hazardous environment can not be compensated with a good planning of the curricula or with a positive interaction adult/child. The quality of early childhood programs is crucial in preventing accidents and sickness is depended on the preparation of the staff to solve emergency situations and educating children on health and safety practices.

In this standard, alongside with the existing practices related to preventing and assuring children's health, we have introduced novelties that would improve the activity of the kindergarten towards better upbringing conditions for the children and their safety.

8. Evaluation

*Goal***: the systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the program to serve children and their parents aims at assuring the quality of care and education in the kindergarten.**

Standard: the systematic and continuous evaluation is very important to improve and assure the quality of an early childhood education program. Evaluation is based on program goals and needs assessment, in identifying the strong and weak points of the components of this program.

The evaluation of the program should involve all program areas, the participation by the parents and the community, development of individualized education plans, physical relief, learning environment, individualizes curricula, developing the curricula appropriately, administering and planing transition periods and assessing the program. In this standard we have tried to determine the procedures that should be followed during evaluation.

Finally, I would like to stress that drafting the common standards of preschool education has been a courageous undertaking still not completed. This draft has been subject to long discussions and debates, and all the opinions, ideas and suggestions will be reflected in the final draft of standards.

Dr. Pranvera Kamani
Evaluation of Preschool Programs and Staff
Ilir Duka, Program manager, AEDP/Soros

In Albania, like in many other countries of the world, the control of education is the duty of the state and its responsibility. In the conditions of market economy and of the reality of private kindergartens alongside those public ones, the state can not play properly the central role in the field of control, if it could lack the means to do such a thing, which in our case are represented by the standards of the pre-school institution.

Evaluation of the total program by all interested parties including children where appropriate should be based on the program's goals and objectives and identify the areas in need of improvement. Such evaluation serves as feedback to administrators on their performance. All high quality organizations regularly explore new approaches and seek to continually improve and innovate.

The systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals for children, parents and staff is conducted to ensure that quality care and education are provided and maintained.

Ongoing and systematic evaluation is essential to improving and maintaining the quality of an early childhood education program. Evaluation efforts are based on program goals and assessment of needs, and identify both strengths and weaknesses of program components.

1. Program evaluation is a method of gathering information that can be used to strengthen programs to better meet the needs of children and families.

Program evaluation should include all areas of the program, including family and community participation, development of the individualized learning plan, the physical facility, the learning environment, individualization of the curriculum, developmentally appropriate curriculum, administration, planning for transitions, and program evaluation.

1a. The program has and implements a written procedure which describes the ongoing self-evaluation process and which assures that specific program goals and activities are completed in a timely manner.

1b. All staff have received training on the evaluation process used within each program.

1c. All staff are evaluated on performance at least annually by the administrator or other appropriate supervisor.

1d. Results of staff evaluations are written and confidential. They are discussed privately with the staff member.

1.e Staff evaluations include classroom observation.

1.f Staff are told what they will be evaluated on in advance.

1.g Staff have an opportunity to evaluate their own performance

1.h Staff training is based on the results of the evaluation.

2. At least once a year, staff, other professionals, and parents are involved in evaluating the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and parents.

The program has:

Developed a mission statement that clearly articulates its philosophy.
Developed a strategic plan in partnership with parents, program staff, and key members of other agencies.

The program evaluates:

-Staff effectiveness through:
self evaluation
peer/supervisor evaluation
parent satisfaction, and
staff satisfaction.

-Family-school partnership and parent satisfaction through:
accounts of parent participation,
reports of services needed and acquired by families, and
assessment of parent satisfaction.

-Respect for cultural diversity through:
reviews of materials and toys,
sampling classroom activities, and
parent satisfaction questionnaires.

-Community participation through:
meeting attendance or membership rolls, and
a report of the activities and accomplishments of the advisory council.

-Child outcomes and family expectations and satisfaction through:
parent satisfaction questionnaires,
parents' confirmation that they feel welcomed in the program,
evaluation of whether the goals of individualized learning plans were met,
visits with parents in home and community settings, and
exit interviews with families when a child leaves the program.

3. Individual descriptions of children's development are written and compiled as a basis for planning appropriate learning activities, as a means of facilitating optimal development of each child, and as record for use in communications with parents.

For example:
Means of assessing the program's effectiveness in meeting the child's individual needs could include:
Observation
Case studies
Video analysis
Portfolio evaluation
Parent information

4. The program evaluation process:

communicates the results of its evaluation to all those involved with the program.
Identifies areas where technical assistance or other resources could help strengthen the program.

5. The early childhood programs uses evaluation results to:

modify the strategic plan to better meet the needs of children and families.
Develop a five-year plan for quality programming

6. The program has developed a process to document reasons that parents are not participating in the program, including such issues as :

parent choice,
lack of telephone,
lack of adequate notice about opportunities for involvement,
need for extended day or wrap-around child care services,
lack of transportation.

Evaluation of Preschool Programs and Staff

Ilir Duka, AEDP

In Albania, like in many other countries of the world, the control of education is the duty of the state and its responsibility. In the conditions of market economy and of the reality of private kindergartens alongside those public ones, the state can not play properly the central role in the field of control, if it could lack the means to do such a thing, which in our case are represented by the standards of the pre-school institution.

Evaluation of the total program by all interested parties including children where appropriate should be based on the program's goals and objectives and identify the areas in need of improvement. Such evaluation serves as feedback to administrators on their performance. All high quality organizations regularly explore new approaches and seek to continually improve and innovate.

The systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals for children, parents and staff is conducted to ensure that quality care and education are provided and maintained.

Ongoing and systematic evaluation is essential to improving and maintaining the quality of an early childhood education program. Evaluation efforts are based on program goals and assessment of needs, and identify both strengths and weaknesses of program components.

1. Program evaluation is a method of gathering information that can be used to strengthen programs to better meet the needs of children and families.

Program evaluation should include all areas of the program, including family and community participation, development of the individualized learning plan, the physical facility, the learning environment, individualization of the curriculum, developmentally appropriate curriculum, administration, planning for transitions, and program evaluation.

1a. The program has and implements a written procedure which describes the ongoing self-evaluation process and which assures that specific program goals and activities are completed in a timely manner.

1b. All staff have received training on the evaluation process used within each program.

1c. All staff are evaluated on performance at least annually by the administrator or other appropriate supervisor.

1d. Results of staff evaluations are written and confidential. They are discussed privately with the staff member.

1.e Staff evaluations include classroom observation.
1.f Staff are told what they will be evaluated on in advance.
1.g Staff have an opportunity to evaluate their own performance

1.h Staff training is based on the results of the evaluation.

2. At least once a year, staff, other professionals, and parents are involved in evaluating the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and parents.

The program has:

Developed a mission statement that clearly articulates its philosophy.
Developed a strategic plan in partnership with parents, program staff, and key members of other agencies.

The program evaluates:

-Staff effectiveness through:
self evaluation
peer/supervisor evaluation
parent satisfaction, and
staff satisfaction.

-Family-school partnership and parent satisfaction through:
accounts of parent participation,
reports of services needed and acquired by families, and
assessment of parent satisfaction.

-Respect for cultural diversity through:
reviews of materials and toys,
sampling classroom activities, and
parent satisfaction questionnaires.

-Community participation through:
meeting attendance or membership rolls, and
a report of the activities and accomplishments of the advisory council.

-Child outcomes and family expectations and satisfaction through:
parent satisfaction questionnaires,
parents' confirmation that they feel welcomed in the program,

evaluation of whether the goals of individualized learning plans were met,
visits with parents in home and community settings, and
exit interviews with families when a child leaves the program.

3. Individual descriptions of children's development are written and compiled as a basis for planning appropriate learning activities, as a means of facilitating optimal development of each child, and as record for use in communications with parents.
For example:
Means of assessing the program's effectiveness in meeting the child's individual needs could include:
Observation
Case studies
Video analysis
Portfolio evaluation
Parent information

4. The program evaluation process:

communicates the results of its evaluation to all those involved with the program.
Identifies areas where technical assistance or other resources could help strengthen the program.

5. The early childhood programs uses evaluation results to:

modify the strategic plan to better meet the needs of children and families.
Develop a five-year plan for quality programming

6. The program has developed a process to document reasons that parents are not participating in the program, including such issues as :

parent choice,
lack of telephone,
lack of adequate notice about opportunities for involvement,
need for extended day or wrap-around child care services,
lack of transportation.

The need of establishing the standards for the elementary education

Marjana Sinani & Mimoza Gjokutaj, IPS

Regarding the concept of standards in Albanian education. It is already a short time that the standards of Albanian school are being used in his knowing plan as a composing component of curriculum. In this short-term period, it showed it influence. From the concept of knowing level step by step it is trying to find out its use in the Albanian schooling practice however there are no documents, which passed over the institutionalizations practice.

On the schools their, director offices can establish their standards of the school practice teachers of different subjects requested and established objectives the respect in the educative rules and standards

In up to now experiences, it seems that the terms and the topics on the standards which are growing day by day needs to be understood as a term of the actuality, which is necessary for the education performance in the Albanian reform. At this stage the progress as seems to be up down as the education environment can forward the initiatives through which they need to reflect on changes and the new functioning components such as subject standards.

In most of the educational practices of the progressive countries the preparation, perfection and the standards establishment in education is observed as an important issue of reforming control and making more qualitative the education.

Starting from these knowledge well processed from the specialists of the education area it is clearly understood that the prospective will be open for another change in the area of our school content. Always in the context of Albanian education, it is assessed as a priority the education standard for the qualitative progress of the national education.

At these situation where the Albanian schools is already entered in, when the whole society is passing a transitive process, when in front of the school there are big challenges which are very sensitive to these phenomenon as:

- Contradicts between the insufficient preparations of the teachers and new models for program-planning texts of the learning and assessing strategies.
- Unstudied teaching load to respond the pupil abilities in the psycho-pedagogical plan.
- Lack of coherence, in most of cases the subjects' content.
- Inappropriate conditions of school environment

Such phenomenons are making clear the need of using the education standards.

The education standard understood as a parameters system, accepted as a state rule for the performance of education functioning, it subdues a process that aims to respect the standard and will minimize the above phenomenon and others that results from them.

The concept of standard utilization does not imply the establishment of similar, equal and unchangeable samples between them.

The concept of education area aims in establishment and accordance of some indicators, which remain secrets or does not reply to the actual realities of the society progress and education progress of is own population, in order to match the national progresses and wilder the international society requirements in the human and intellectual view.

2. **The concept on the view of educational standards on respecting the individual rights.**

In the Albanian Republic constitution it is accepted the highest human right, **the education right**. This modality corresponds to the expounded principle in the Statement of the children rights: " Each child should attend the education which could be based on the possibilities equality could develop its abilities and its own judgments, the feeling of morality and society responsibility in order it could be useful member of society (the Resolution of the general assembly of OKB, 20 November 1959).

In the human rights context, the educational standard is a document, which creates important premises for the education right realization that based on its content should correspond to the children rights, as well as those of human rights which deal with educational performances (teachers, leaders, preschool teachers, etc).

Standard establish in education corresponds to the chapter 13 of the international pact, on the economic rights social rights, and cultural rights.

Through this chapter it is made clear the right of respecting the parents freedoms to choose for their children the school, which respond to the minimum of requirements for education, through the schools of different types approved by the government, that provide their children an appropriate education in conformity with the conviction their personal opportunities.

At the meantime the teachers through standards utilization found the possibility to present their experiences in profession, while the standard establishment requires them to find various and means to perform the required standard from the actual society established by a common consensus.

Through the standard utilization there are made efforts that will profit the preschool teachers:

- In different ways the teaching freedom
- The minimum obliged determination of the school content, which will obstruct the teachers in their pedagogical creativity.
- The forms determination and the learning and teaching methods.

3. **Educational Standard in actual situation in the Albanian schools**

The main function of school as a social institution, which contains the fact to make possible the establishment of the rules and individual policies and equivalents of the morality values, ethics, social and legal accepted in a modern democratic society.

Democratization process of education presents as a principal regulation for the framework articulation of standard as a component with positive value which reflect the school content improving in the quality of learning, teaching and assessing, public results.

For the standard of utilization for the subject content, in which is included that of general forming of the pupils of elementary education starting from the recent experiences, from the elementary education and the needs to assess and reassess objectively this chain of elementary education, from which flows the following recommendation.

Recommendation

The standard content institutionalization from MOES.

- Priority declaration for the elementary education "Content Standards".
- Drafts revision for the standards with components, which are part of the Albanian languages subjects, mathematic, natural knowledge.
- Completing of draft revision with components, which are part of general children forming until 10 years according the specification of the subject and integration between them.
- Working groups establishment.
- Consensus establishment with all partners in the education area for their utilization as an important document in the whole school documents.
- Teachers training and the education leaders.
- Cooperation with the assessment center.

Marjana Sinani P.h.D Assoc Prof.
Mimoza Gjokutaj P.h.D Assoc Prof.

The actual practice of the Albanian schools presented such phenomenon, which have obstruct the school practice with:

- The teaching program planning utilization that did not respond to all knowledge areas, which felt in some ways old. Their content have lack of coherence for the progress of actual events of the human society.
- Teaching programs are very analytic and they are helped by the description of the topics on the subject content. In many programs and texts there are still not treated the knowledge through areas, lines and subject sub- lines, this is an aspect in the subject standards drafts which is prepared until now is consumed, but they are not directed to the schools.
- Unknowing of concept to work with subject objectives.
- Confusion in the formulation of subject general teaching objectives and for each part.
- Failed of general teaching objectives or teaching goals within the respective time.
- Teachers have few spaces for the academic freedom to apply for their programs.
- Pupils' number in the classes has over passed the standards for the normal work in a class, as the teachers work pass on the teaching load.
- Assessing system, which continues with the grading system, which cannot give the right details in order to know the quality of education.
- The destruction of an assessment process in the end for the age group of the school cycles (of fourth class) realized that the real achievement of pupils could be known by us only in the end of the eight class, and this is period which cannot create possibilities to modify or reconsider ate the general forming issues of the pupils.
- The above phenomenon makes real the prospective of missing the opportunities that an education system should realize through its own educative and social functions.
- The mentioned affirmation and the arguments described above should lead in the acceptance fact of normative document absolutely new for the Albanian school such as: "The standard of the state education", the preparation which should be placed in the priorities of actual Albanian education. Actually in the Albanian educative context is already over passed this period. It is the right time to overtake concrete steps in the direction of the institutionalization and utilization of standards in the school practice.
- Step by step should be recommended that related to the school content the standards should begin to include in the beginning the elementary education and then step by step the other level. The preparation of this document in the

Albanian school practices which make possible many conditions of the preparative education during last years, which make it realizable for a short time.

Reasons:

- IPR in the last ten years has processed until the teacher level the concept towards the teaching process supported in clear objectives.
- IPR in cooperation with AEDP have processed the concept regarding the standard in education.
- IPR in cooperation with AEDP and MOES has made the initial efforts to prepare the standard draft for the school subjects such as: the Albanian language, mathematic, civil education, nature knowledge, and physic education.
- At this stage for the elementary school are prepared the subject standards drafts of the subject content standards (for the above subjects)
- IPR in cooperation with AEDP has prepared the drafts for the subjects standards detailed in subjects objectives, which could make possible the objective connection with the standards.
- In cooperation with the assessment department are made the right efforts for conception of the performance standards, which are prepared for special chapters
- IPR in cooperation with AEDP and MOES will pilot the content standards, in some of the regions and schools of the country. Here it should accept that their pilot process has been enough to give the exact conclusions about the indication of the school practice.
- IPR in cooperation with AEDP have realized editions, which have processed the concept on the standards that have adapted the concept on our school practice process.

3. The prospective utilization for the subject standards in the elementary education

4.1. The practice implemented up to now related to the subject standard, that of content and that of performance in the elementary obligatory education and that eight-year (without excluding the other level of education) it seems near the usage and acceptance in a school level in the elementary level it gives the opportunity for new acquaintances of the concept and the practice of the work with standards. Those help and make possible the whole vision for the Albanian pedagogical opinion and its clients, parents, teachers, pupils in new directions in order to improve the quality of the school achievements.

The modeling and necessity for the preparation and the standard utilization in the school cycle in that of the elementary education, will prepare us for:

- The creation of a new type of relation between the society and the state, relation that through the standard establishment in education make possible the human rights and civil rights
- To make possible their state and individual preparation in order to establish between them the principle of reciprocal agreement in the realization of politic in the education area, that imply the implementing principle from both parties for the reciprocal obligations on the base of which was made possible the progress in the education area.
- Are established the balances for the reciprocal obligations with each other.
- It is provided the stability in the level of quality, arranged level and required from the society.
- It is regenerated in continuity the content education, saving the stability and safety of time-to-time crises.
- The standard as an education component, established for different components of curriculum expanded in times very good defined, it is necessary to observe and assess as an dynamic component open for changes which should be reflected in the society needs, that are established for their continuing perfection.

4.2 Regarding the possible practices of the standard utilization of content in the elementary education.

The standard in education is obliged to provide possible conditions to over pass the contradicts between the orientation for democratization in education.

The standard of the elementary education, reflecting its own minimum serves as etalon comparing the different types of schools. It should facilitate the education level with the society requirements and provide the increase of prestige in education.

The main function for the standard which define the importance of a modern school progress must be related to:

The counteraction of the anarchy in the education sphere.

The determination of the minimal requirements for the individuals who finished the elementary schools.

The obstacle of the artificial and destruction accelerating of the children for the school young ages, which could be expressed in the time frames for the elementary education (school dropout) in the over passing of the special stages, of progress orientation for the knowledge forming and subject abilities, until the new psycho & individual expressions.

Ensuring of the resolution for priority tasks of the beginning stage of learning.

Determination forming for teaching process as a necessary premise and the conditions of progress for all the personality structures of the pupils.

Creation of preparing premises, of a whiled scientist & human education in the principal school.

In other basis of standard conception in the elementary education must be:

a). The articulation principle of teaching standard in two levels: **minimal level** necessary for the pupil preparation and the **non-variable level**, of school presentation for the teaching material.

Such a standing will provide on one hand of different opportunities for education encouragement, which reflects the social goals (and allow to each teacher, pupils and parent to have an imagine on the obliged level of pupil preparation enough for a further successful learning process.

On the other hand the education system obliges the teacher to work with a higher level for the content giving the possibility to take in to consideration their learning process.

b).   The principle of a concentration attention in the pupil personality performance, which define the planed results orientation not only for the abilities and subject know ledges, but also for those parameters that are very important. For the character of those pupils who finish the elementary school should know:

Teaching and lower activity the behavior culture, the assessment of the civil standards, the rule for relations in the environment where he lives, etc.

In the content standards are included not only the requirements for the elementary school entities, related to the scientist knowledge, but also for the level of progress and pupil education, for the level of abilities of civil sphere esthetic, communicative and other spheres of the personality.

c).   The principle of necessity in changes support in education for the conditions creation, for developing the pedagogical initiatives, that require the obstruction from the standard subject structures.

They are built in complete conformity with the education spheres, which in the effective way are studied in the elementary school, language, mathematic, nature know ledges, etc.

Such a standing would give the possibility to the school collective, upon its own judgments to define the subject choose, which will assist in standard achievements of the obliged elementary education. The requirements fixed in it are basis of the various programs creation such as: "Integrated subjects" for example; "Requirements from natural field could arrive till the studying process of "natural sciences", "ecology", "birth country", or integrated course "the environment. In realization of the general requirements standardized in all those subject variations it is saved the conceptual independence of each author.

Thus, the state standard application, require unique requirements of the society for the pupils education as a pedagogical phenomenon with unique values, it is avoid its uniformity, children preparation to study all the school subjects and in the same time the goal process for self education.

Based on the general analyses and the prepared documents up to now for the realization of the education standard in the content are because of the actual conditions of the Albanian school could begin the application of actual practice of piloting the utilization of content standard., which could not be observed only as a define subject standard but it gives and takes through subjects and the goals of general forming of the pupils in the elementary education.

This practice process will be valued as a very good assistance in order that in permanent way and in the right time we could think and work to prepare the establishment of the progressive standard not only for the elementary education but also for other level of education.

Observed as a mid-term goal, for our elementary education the content standard establishment is supported and is applicable starting from the actual conditions of our school practice process:

- There are prepared content standards drafts for such subjects as: Albanian language, mathematic, natural know ledges, civil education, physic education, which include 80% of the content for the elementary education.
- There are created professional capacities, which could manage the process of realization for the content standards in school practice.
- It is sensibilized the pedagogical opinion for the work with the standards.
- There are editing articles and writing related to the concept of standards.
- There have been observation and cooperation with serious partners for the further step that will be undertaken.
- There exist a consensus with MOES.
-

Standards in Education, Issues and Solutions

Astrit Dautaj, ISP

Again on the concept of "standard" in education

In my speech I would like to stop shortly on some issues we encountered while working on drafting new standards in the subject of Albanian Language, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education and particularly in the subject of Civic Education. I use the word 'some' as issues relative to standards, their conceptualization, drafting, implementation and perfection in time and space are so many that their treatment and solution is out of the possibilities of this report or discussion, and I express my personal opinion it is out of the possibilities that our experience in this field, offers.

Before presenting the issues, I consider necessary to return again to the concept of 'standard', to bring out some elements that I think are related with the issue we will approach in the course of discussion.

Firstly,

> *"Standards create a definite relation between the government and the society. This relation is based on the introducing politics in the field of education, with the acceptance and implementation of mutual obligations, as its complementary part."*

Secondly,

> *"Standards constitute a system of requirements or parameters accepted as governmental norms on different sectors of education."*

Based on these statements, I like to bring out some of the dimensions/aspects standards show in contact/relationships with its numerous users, dimensions that in their integrity define the content of this concept in the field of education:

- Standard as an **objective**
- Standard as a **requirement**
- Standard as a **government norm, obligation**

- Standard as a **measurable unit**
- Standard as **quality level**
- Standard as **control**
- Standard as a **<u>frame</u>**
- Standard as **<u>structure/skeleton</u>**
- Standard as **compromise**

Standard as objective. By the conceptual framework, the education standard can be viewed as a detailing or concretization of the outcomes related to specific education goals set at national level by the central government. Generally, the education goals are expressed in general terms to make them practically immeasurable. It is this the reason that they are transformed into tangible objectives that should be reached out by a specific group of students, during a specific time frame. The specificity of this objective is that it is made official by the government that views it as an achievement in various fields of education in a specific time and space.

Standard as compromise. In its integrity, it is a system of requirements/objectives or a desired and accepted achievement level as *standard is in itself an optimal ratio between framework and structure, obligation, and space and flexibility it carries within.* **This ratio is subjective and objectively dependent on time and space, on tradition, the past, the present and the future, and dependent at a considerable degree, on the ratio between the traditional and the imported once, etc…**

These were some of the dimensions we should keep in mind in the course of work to draft the new standards in the subject of Civic Education, Mathematics, Albanian Language, Science and Physical Education.

Processes and starting points

Before starting their work, the working groups would face a scientific and professional challenge and pressure.

The success of drafting the standards would depend on a decision on the principles and major targets that would help realize this process. There are many question marks. Some of them are:

- What would be the main starting point for drafting standards
- What would be the content of the standards
- Would we talk of new standards or of standards that are drafted for the first time
- How far would we rely on tradition
- How far would do we consider political preferences
- What would be the place of foreign experience and the import of standards in the Albanian national standards
- Would it be considered the accreditation of the Albanian education?

- At what level would we consider the job market in Albania in drafting standards
- Would we stick to one starting point or we would try to harmonize the practical values of each of them, etc…

On the other hand, while drafting standards, good care was taken that they:

- Derive from clear goals and objectives
- Reflect and consider the basic features of the Albanian education system
- Reflect/relate with the current issues of the country
- Be valuable and reliable
- Be applicable
- Give the possibility of comparison
- Give their users the possibility to use them
- Give the possibility of judging and diagnosing progress in education.

In an effort to find a quality solution to the abovementioned issues, the teams have relied on;

- The international experience related to standards in education
- The study carried out by ISP on the theoretical elaboration of the concept of 'standard', by referring to the recent European concepts and practices
- Institutions and individuals, professionally and legally responsible for its accomplishment (MA, ISP, SHBLSH, Schools, Faculties of Education) with the idea to draw the opinion of all partners
- The assistance of the institutions that worked closely with ISP in the process of drafting the standards –SLO, Holland, etc.

Following the above mentioned goal, the products produced at different stages of the project have been undergoing an internal and systematic opponent, something that has been made possible through *consultations, round tables, professional discussions, questionnaires*, with the idea of realizing it on a *horizontal and vertical level*.

Parallel to the internal opponent, foreign specialists have been an opponent as well in the methodological and procedural level and in the field of content. The aim of this opponent has been that the Albanian concept on standards has connections with the same European concept.

We are not able to tell exactly if we have considered all starting points or tell about the quality of the answers to the questions or to the issues mentioned above. Of importance is the fact that they have been a constant problematic source during the whole process of drafting standards, considering that it is the only way to a quality accomplishment of its functions. The expected piloting period aims at improving the draft on standards and bring out new problematic and the best and most qualitative solutions.

Issues and solutions

Apart from the draft of standards for the subjects included in the project, we are here with the experience of many years of hard work, whose content has the solutions to a number of problems.

I. One issue that needed to be solved at the beginning of our work in drafting standards, was:

Did we need to draft standards in each academic year or would this be drafted based on annual cycles.
In other words, the issue is:

At what level would we consider our legal obligations
To what degree would the objectives carry the official seal

During efforts to find the best solution we have considered some factors that would exercise pressure on opposite sides:

On one hand we have the teachers with their requirements for annual objectives. *On the other hand,* we had to face the fear that standardization would enter into the details of content of the subject, and of the student's ability to learn and perform, in the course of life, particularly related to the subject of civic education. Here we must clarify that the fear is not simply related to standards or standardization as a concept as its necessity is now confirmed but it relates to its content, to the degree the state would control and dictate the life of the individual in a democratic society. (Elements such as arrangement or control and obligation are inseparable from the concept of standards).

1. Firstly, the answer to the above question is linked with the concept of standard and the relationships it creates between the government, the society and the school. In this relationship, standards appear with other elements as; objective, arrangement, control, obligation, and measurement. As such it has a direct influence on the degree of standardization of the life of the society in general and that of the school in particular hence even on the level of centralization and democracy in the field of education.

2. Secondly, the answer to this question is linked with the teacher and the possibility of detailing the standards in concert with their requirements

3. Thirdly, the answer is related with the flexibility and spaces that standards would open to their users, with the possibilities to reflect the changes and needs of the future society.

The solution is closely linked to the Ministry of Education and Science at whose level the obligation we just mentioned, assumes legal value. In this viewpoint we think that, at this level, standards must be set at 4-year cycles. This way we think to have left aside the fear

of standardization, to detail the content of the subject matter and to have found a solution to the issue of flexibility and of the possible space to be given to the users of standards in implementing them during the process of change and development and at different economic, social and cultural levels and contexts.

In this context it is worth mentioning our suggestion that the compulsory content of standards in curricula should be kept at the limits of 80% at a time when its users (including the drafters of the curricula) should have 20% space.

This ratio has as its outcomes. It influences:
1. The relations of the school principal or of the district education on one hand with the obligations deriving from the standards, and on the other hand are the opportunities that should be given to the educators, to

    - utilize the *flexibility* of the annual curricula or program
    - realize the objectives of the subject matter by utilizing the variety of information and of the teaching methods.

2. The relationship of MASH with the standards. Here the questions is:

    To what extent the curriculum taught in the school system should be the same at a certain time frame. For e.g. will it be 80%, 75%, 85%? How can we define the percentage?

    This issue becomes more important, particularly when the problem of drafting national tests that will give evidence within the limits of reliability, to the level of achievement standards.
    MASH is the body that will decide if it is ready to accept, for e.g. if 80% of the curricula of a certain subject matter are sufficient to conclude on the level of the achievement standards set by this body in a certain subject.

    II. Another issue related to the new standards is that **of the compliance between the new curricula and the existing syllabus and textbooks**. In other words, the issues are:

    - **In case the draft on standards will be officially approved, will they have a contemporary value, i.e., is it possible for them to be implemented immediately at the above mentioned subjects?**
    - **In this case, what would become with the textbooks and syllabus?**

1. Firstly, the answer to these questions can be found in the process of drafting standards and in those elements that favored it and served as a starting point. It is stated clearly from the start that standards will be drafted based on the existing curricula and textbooks, as some of them are relatively new (we say relatively when we assess them in relationship with the new developments during transition)

and, at a considerable level, reflect the contemporary experience. Naturally, standards reflect new phenomena by creating the possibility for further changes, but in most cases they raise over these textbooks and syllabus. This is why there are no fundamental changes and incongruence between them, let alone contradictions.

2. Secondly, assessing them based on the proposed solutions, on the subject matters and the materials that accompany and complement it, come out in the form of annual detailing of standards based on a 4-year cycle.

3. Thirdly, the work with standards accepts and requires as a necessity the use of alternating textbooks and resources of information by the teacher and the student. This creates the possibility for an increased independence by the teacher even within the framework of a standard or annual detailing.

This and other facts related to curricular areas that will serve to the teacher or to the school and local government, should be the center of attention for the education authorities in general and school principals in particular. This is so because teachers are those who complain most. Very often they are viewed (we do not exclude here prejudices or perceptions and interpretations by the teachers) as hindering novelties particularly in the area of the pedagogy of teaching.

3. What would be the role and place of ISP and of the other agencies dealing with drafting of the curricula and textbooks in this process?

In the framework of the new standards, ISP comes with a new status that would be rightfully understood only if considered in the context of the changes and of the new conceptualization. Otherwise we would immerse in contradictions that we would have difficulty in solving.

Up to date, the product of ISP, the platform of the subject declared official by MASH, in essence, has the value of the syllabus. Based on the standards and judged based on a new perception, ISP and particularly the Department of Curricula will have the mission to elaborate the annual detailing in the form of the curricula, programs or objectives of the syllabus (still to be defined). In this aspect the department comes out with the duty of analyzing (interpreting) standards, up to the school level. It will have the task of the researcher of the reality and of the Albanian school, of the psychology and its mentality, and of the space within which flexibility will function. Thus, on one hand it helps school to use standards, giving them the possibility to take advantage of the freedom related to curricula or the syllabus, a requirement in the framework of school decentralization and on the other side it is a guarantee that the school or the educators will use this freedom properly. The agencies responsible for drafting the textbooks will enter the competition for textbooks and other educational materials.

Some considerations

- Standards help in developing the curricula at national, local and school level, in developing students' and teachers' textbooks, in developing teacher preparation programs in Faculties of Education and their continuous training.

- Standards are not perceived as static and unchangeable. By baring the seal of the epoch, they have the possibility of change that this reality and the school itself impose through their dynamism.

- Standards can not improve mechanically student or school achievement. For this to be achieved, standards should be based on our tradition and students and schools should have the possibility to acquire the necessary knowledge and develop the skills required by standards through teaching and school activities.

- The establishment of standards will have values, if the mission, content and its sphere of action are understood properly. It may happen that incomprehension by the users (drafters of the curricula, inspectors, school principals, educators, etc.) have a negative impact. It may happen that the establishment of standards be understood as an official frame within which happens student education. The reality is different because standards, as stated above, give possible or necessary spaces within which the user can act. It is very important that they act properly to enable the development of the required standard. The teacher must be able to master the mechanism of developing the objectives at chapter level, of a group of themes or of a specific theme, specific objectives and build on this bases the activity that will lead towards standards.

Related to this general consideration that in essence have to do with the expected practical value on drafting standards, rise a series of questions whose answers constitute the object of the piloting process that will be developed during this academic year.

Hoping that during my speech I have been able to transmit moments from our experience with standards, I am closing setting forth some of the abovementioned questions.

1. Does standards comply with the main goals of the subject matter
2. Does standards comply with the current priorities and possible short-term and mid-term perspectives of the school and the Albanian reality
3. Does standards carry the possibilities for improvement or change.
4. Does standards create the necessary space and flexibility for local and individual experiences.
5. Are there equal objective opportunities for the accomplishment of standards? Which are some of the issues and difficulties? Didactic materials, practical possibilities, etc.
6. Is our government ready to work with standards?

- Does it fulfill its obligations of the conditions required in achieving standards?

- Which are some issues rising from their implementation

7. Are teachers prepared to really work with standards?

- What qualification do teachers need to utilize the curricular space.
- Which is the optimal space in the hands of the teacher?
- Would it be defined or it will change within definite margins.
- Who should be the teacher to work with standards?
- What qualification does he need.

8. Does the fulfillment of standards require the use of textbooks or does it require an alternative textbook or other sources of information?
- Is the teacher able to work with different sources of information?
- Is the student able to work with different sources of information?

9. Does standards encompass the education of practical skills or are they mainly knowledge-oriented?

10. Does the existing standards help in creating the necessary spaces for detailing, serving the global potential developments.

Indicators of Preschool Education

Erlehta Mato Ph.D, assoc Prof.
Head of Education Department in QSHDNJ.

The experiments and progress monitoring of an education system depends especially from the indicators, which aim to qualify the governmental authorities in the appropriate country and the other parties, which are interested in assessing the context and the education functioning, as well as the achieved results.

Therefore, the indicators of early childhood will point out some crucial weaknesses on the preschool education and will help us to prepare corrective policies, certainly if our politicians and society aim in changing the things in the good sense.

For easy reference, I would like to be concentrated in some of the main indicators for the preschool education, which are not less important, but based on the time desponded by me I could not treat and I probably skip them.

The preschool Education forms the first chain of our educational system. Actually this chain is represented by the unified system of public chreche and kindergartens, which parts are the children age group of 1-5 years (for the chreche 1-3 years and for the kindergarten 3-5 years), but also they are represented by the private preschool system, which already is in the first steps and it has a quick progressive growing tendency.

A.   The access, the participation and the Progress.

1. Children registration and Attendance in Kindergartens.

The high percentage of ages 3-6 years registered in kindergartens, in most of the European countries, which arrives to 100% in France, about 90% in England, Netherlands, Belgium, makes us reflecting on the importance that the children participation already have in preschool education and the validity of appropriate programs for a more complete progress of the preschool age-group.

All the children should have the possibility of education, not only in the actual kindergartens, but also having other opportunities to support them and their families in order to be more successful in their progress.

In our country the children participation in the preschool education on the year 2001, seems to be lower reduced compared with the year 1990. Actually are offered 23% less

of the children for the agegroup3-5 years, which means that about 65% of the children for this age are excluded from the institutionalized education.

In the following chart you will find the curve of descending number of children in kindergartens.

The number of children in Kindergarten
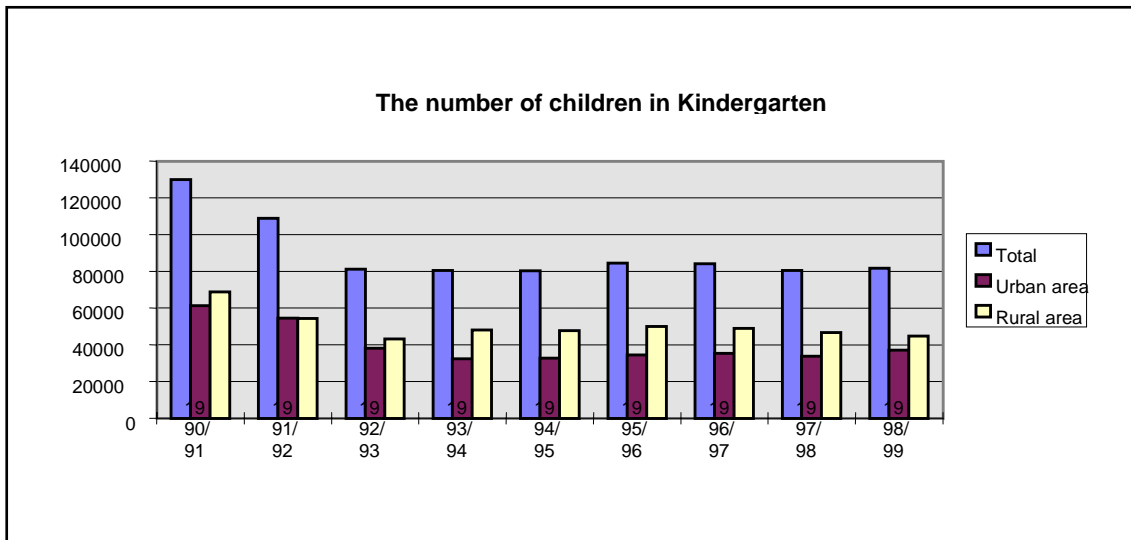
The main reasons for the reduced number of children who attend the kindergartens are as follows:
- Insufficient capacities of the buildings (such as forced occupation of the kindergartens and their utilizations as houses, changing of kindergartens destination from the local government authorities, low level of investments during this year from the state for new kindergarten etc).
- High unemployment level for the women who already are staying in the houses taking care for the children.
- High poverty level, especially in the rural areas as well as in the urbane areas, which can not permit those families to pay for their children education in the preschool institutions.

In the last years it is demonstrated a positive tendency of the families in urban areas to provide education for the children in kindergarten.

The Curriculum and Achievements

The programs offered from the kindergarten served to a various presentation of alternatives in education based on the children and their families' needs.

The Curriculum content and the goals of different activities inside and outside the kindergarten serve to an important role of actual demand dissemination on the education institutions for the preschool children.

During '93-2001, although the indicators for the participation of the children in kindergartens are reduced, it has been worked with good results on the improvement of preschool curriculum and setting up contemporary standards of their education. Thus, different from the other levels of education, that are presented in very conservatory way in front of the changes. Generally, the public kindergarten have been centers for the inclusion of the progressive elements for such models as: "Step by step", "Rexhio Emilia", "Montesori", etc.

The above modules adaptation in our preschool system, have empowered it, making in this way possible new capabilities to face the subject integration and contemporary methodology, the parents inclusion inside and outside the class, the education pedagogy for the preschool children, etc.

The organization and managing for the preschool institutions.

The organization and managing of preschool institutions form an important direction for setting up the qualitative indicators on the children and teachers achievement.
Let have a look on some of the indicators:

1. The children in group and the preschool teacher relation

It is known already that the classes of small groups are assessed because they permit the children to profit attention and affection from their teachers, that is very important for this age and on the other part they can reduce the teacher stress to manage a big group of children on daily basis.

Although there is an already appropriate standard and not far from that European standard for the a classroom where the number of children should not be more than 25-30 children, actually we have a disproportional frame which are presented especially in the urban area where are classrooms with 45-50 children in it. Also there are cases that in the regions the number of children for each classroom is reduced less than 15.

Also the teacher children report is not in accordance with the new philosophies of education that are requiring individualized teacher of the work in groups, while this report as we mentioned above is often unbalanced and it can damage the children achievements.

The private kindergartens are describing a positive tendency in accordance to the group and on the improvement of the report between teacher and children from 1 to 20 or 1 to 15.

2. *The teacher professional Performance.*

The teachers of the preschool education until the year 1994 have been prepared in the pedagogical high schools, branch preschool teachers. After this year, with the opening of the pedagogical branch for the preschool education in the departments of the different universities in the regions it is open a new department. Actually 68% of the preschool

teachers have attended the pedagogical high school, about 11 % are attending the university in this branch and 21 % have attended the unprofessional high schools.

In order that the professional development for the teachers should continue most of the countries have their own special structures that offer training workshops which aim on the profit of the new knowledge and learning practices who can change the quality of the work done in the kindergarten.

In 2001, such a structure is missing, that gives two different visions of in the teachers' staff performance; on one part the teachers of the urban areas where are actually functioning different agencies which assist them in the professional development, on the other hand teachers of rural areas who have years that they have not participate in any training workshop.

In private kindergartens the professional performance of the staff is not considered as a priority and the actual situation shows often in this way that there were working less than at the public kindergartens.

According to other supportive materials for a better professional performance there are more than 10 years that the state did not undertake any initiative similar to that which was raised every September for the obligatory education (for the adding supporting editions to facilitate the work the work of the teachers in the preschool education).

3. Teaching and assisting staff.

Preschool teachers and the assisting staff of service compose the kindergarten staff. After '94 in accordance to the new philosophy of Education, that was introduced in our preschool institutions and concretely in two of the most successful models like: "Step by Step" and "Rexhio Emilia", there were outlined new pictures, different from those traditional: the family coordinator ateliers. Naturally, their number is limited and concentrated only in the mentioned models, because of economic conditions.

Actually in the kindergartens there are 4092 preschool teachers or 1572 less than in 1990. The following chart describes the values more and more of this indicator.

Number of preschool teachers in kindergartens from1990-1999

Legend: Total, Urban area, Rural area (years 1990/91 through 1998/99)
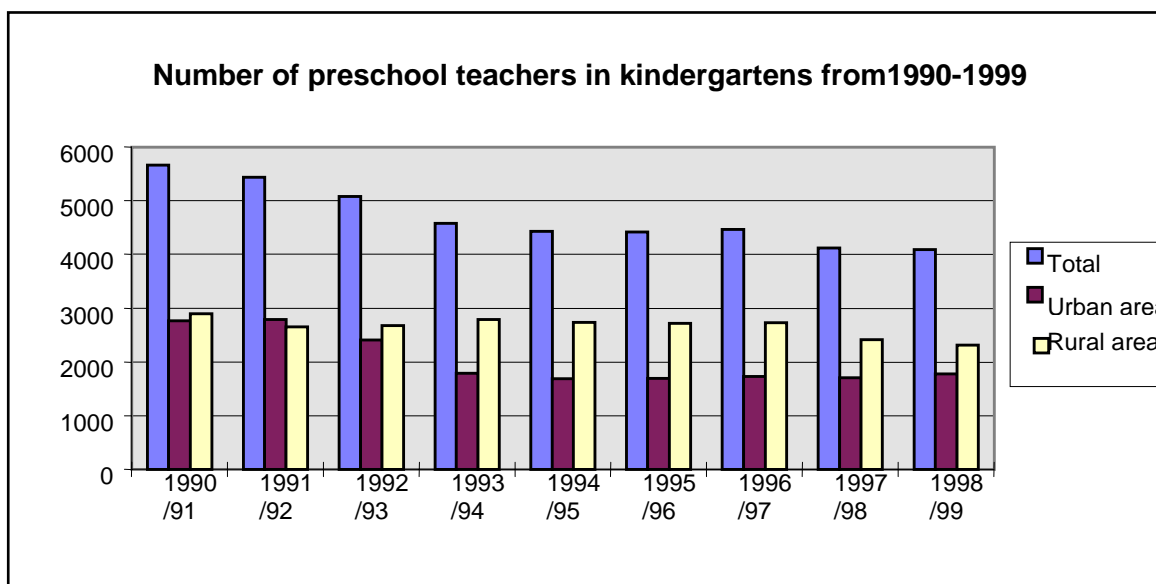
Human and Financial Resources.

Differently from the most of other countries, in Albania does not exict an exact amount for the expenditures of preschool children.

Anyway following we will try to stop some other indicator which make us clear regarding the investments realized from the state authorities and other resources in this level of education.

1. Local Capacities

Based on the statistics of MOES in 1994, 28% of all the kindergarten buildings have been built objects for that reason, while 72% of the kindergarten, have functioned in suitable buildings.

At this point of view our preschool institutions far from the average of contemporary buildings rules, which reflects in the children health as well as in the qualitative realization of the curriculum.

Apart from the most elements such as courts, centrals system of warming etc, it is necessary to stress that while the European average becomes 3 m^2 per children, in our kindergarten the standard average of the classroom surface per children is 1.8 m^2.

Actually one of the sharpest issues related to the reduce number of children that attend the kindergarten in urban areas is the lack of kindergarten buildings. The state investments at this level of education are enough low as those of other donators and they are concentrated more in reconstructions the exciting buildings that in the construction of the new buildings.

As follows, is described the situation for the kindergarten buildings in different years:

Number of Kindergartens 1990-1999
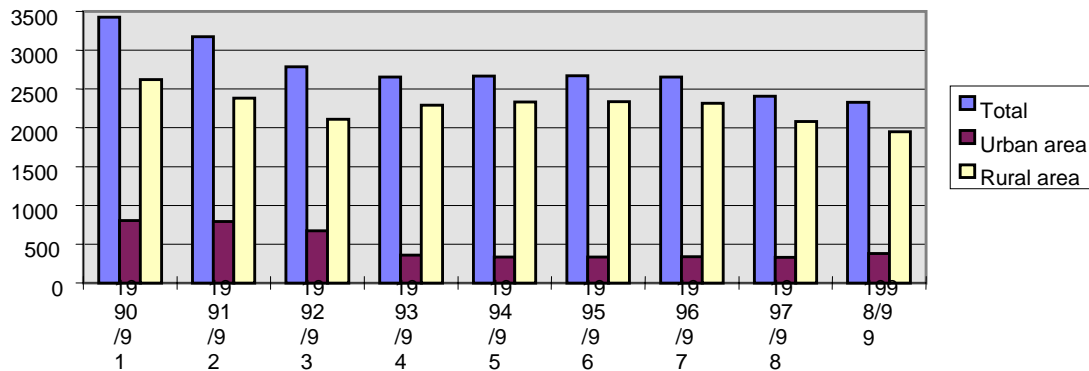
Based on this chart in '99 in urban areas we have had 422 kindergartens fewer than in 1990 and in the rural areas there were 674 fewer.

The situation is gradually improving in the urban areas with the progress of public education.

1. *Preschool teachers salaries.*

The indicators of this aspect are enough low. The salaries in the preschool education are not stimulating the teachers of this sphere, especially those who finish the University degree in order to use their profession in kindergartens. The most of them prefer to work in other professions in this way in the kindergarten can work unprofessional staff.

Concluding, these were some of the indicators regarding the preschool education in our country. They spoke through their language showing that the chances in the paper are similar for every child, but the reality is different because it cannot give to all the possibilities as it is written in the papers.

There is need for much more kindergartens; books and computers, better teachers and politicians who can every moment remember that the children are the sun and the strom of our future. We can meet often together and take decisions in their favor.

Table: The main data on the development of preschool education in the last decade.

Years	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Number of kindergartens									
Total	3426	3174	2784	2656	2668	2670	2656	2408	2330
Urban area	804	793	676	362	334	333	338	328	382
Rural Area	2622	2381	2108	2294	2334	2337	2318	2080	1948
Total With food	665	384	221	111	90	93	100	100	97
Urban area	314	315	212	108	90	93	100	100	97
Rural are	351	69	9	3	0	0	0	0	0
Number of children in Kindergartens									
Total	130000	108880	81117	80395	80384	84536	84232	80418	81734
Urban are	61185	54564	38055	32274	32650	34495	35389	33741	37013
Rural Area	68815	54316	43062	48121	47734	50041	48843	46677	44721
Total With food	31820	23823	9047	4290	5448	6846	8726	8370	9173
Urban area	26478	22735	8885	4290	5448	6846	8726	8370	9173
Rural area	5342	1088	162	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number and Educational level of teachers									
Total	5664	5440	5081	4578	4428	4416	4463	4116	4092

Urban area	2771	2787	2407	1789	1691	1697	1732	1704	1779
Rural area	2893	2653	2674	2789	2737	2719	2731	2412	2313
With high education									
Total	5385	5184	4771	4359	4228	4151	4120	3816	3678
Urban area	2516	2546	2130	1589	1520	1491	1488	1470	1480
Rural area	2869	2638	2641	2770	2708	2660	2632	2346	2198
With university degree									
Total	279	276	303	225	200	265	343	300	414
Urban area	255	257	269	206	171	206	244	234	299
Rural area	24	19	34	19	29	59	99	66	115
Children/preschool teachers relation									
Total	23	20	16	18	18	19	19	20	20
Urban area	22	20	16	18	19	20	20	20	21
Rural area	24	20	16	17	17	18	18	19	19

Indicators	Estimation
Children Registration	35 %
The relation Teacher – children	21:1
Average number for each classroom	23

Integration of education indicators in albania with oecd indicators of education
(project supported by AEDP)
Besa Peçi, MASH

The goal of the project

"Establishing and improving step by step a stable system dealing with collection, calculation and distribution of the statistics and education indicators as an orienting device in drafting state education policies through coordination with OECD indicators."

Beginning from September 2000 up to these days, the working group made up of representatives of the **AEDP, Ministry of Education of Albania, National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), the Ministry of Finances** has been working on the project " Integration of Albanian Education Indicators with the **OECD** Indicators of Education" financially supported by the **AEDP.**

The working group was lead by the statistics specialist B. Peci and had as members the following:

1. Garufa Noti   Ministry of Finances
2. Lili   Dode   INSTAT
3. Eleni Coka   Ministry of Education and Science
4. Merita Haxhiu   Ministry of Education and Science

5. Ilir Kokomiri   Directorate for Education
6. Agim Gorana   Directorate for Education

Phase 1

- We first became acquainted with the **"Package of Education Indicators"** perpared during other **AEDP** projects in former stages.

The "Package of Eduaction Indicators" explains theoretically and in detail the different types and the importance of education indicators in three levels: national, local, and institutional.

We were acquainted with its indicators chapter after chapter.

- After receiving this kind of knowledge **(generally leaving aside figures and tables)** work immediately went on with the weekly analytic study of the edition of the **OECD " Education at a glance OECD indicators"** studying the tables with the given figures as well as their graphic presentation where the situation of every **OECD** member country indicators is given.

- **Further on, we studied and analysed data and existing indicators** that we dispose of and which are calculated by the **Ministry of Education of Albania, the Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Finances**; data and indicators which will be our working basis for the calculation of indicators.

One other very important and worth-mentioning means of collecting information about population divided into groups of age, that fortunately we have been able to access to since autumn, is the **"Registration of the Population 2001"**

- The working group concluded that **we also need other data** not disposed of until now.

Such data not disposed of **our Ministry of Eduaction and Science** for the first phase of this project were the following:

- The number of teaching staff by level of education and years of age
- Information about private education
- The number of graduates by groups of age

These data were collected by the **Ministry of Education** during the months of December, January and February so that they could be available for the indicators' calculation phase.

Phase 2

- **Further on we passed into designing the basic tables to be filled with data from these three institutions: Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Education.**

Institute of Statistics
1. Total population
2. Population by years of age and education level.
3. Employment by sectors
4. Employment rates in the state sector by level of education
5. Unemployment rates by gender and years of age.

6. Unemployment rates for the year_____
7. Average salaries in education
Ministry of Finances
1. Public expenditure on education by level of education and domestic resources.
2. Public expenditure on education (secondary and tertiary) by domestic resources
3. Source of financing
4. Investment made in the education sector through the years
Ministry of Education and Science
All the other tables dealing with :
1. Number of students in education and enrolment rates by speciality
- early childhood education
- primary education
- secondary education
- tertiary education
2. Number of teaching staff in:
- early childhood education
- primary education
- secondary education
- tertiary education
3. Number of education institutions
4. Groups of age in education
- early education
- primary
- secondary
- tertiary
5. Groups of age for students receiving a school-leaving certificate, a certificate of general education and a university diploma.
6. Annual conclusions in:
- primary education
- secondary education
- tertiary education

Phase 3

Next we established the preliminary indicators that can be calculated by us based on the statistical data that we already dispose of and also additional ones.
The **OECD** indicators that we thought of as possible to calculate are listed as follows:
These indicators are listed by chapter as follows:

Chapter A
Demographic, social and economic impact on education
A1/1   Distribution of the population 25 to 64 years of age by level of educational attainment
A1/2a Percentage of the population that has attained at least secondary education
A1/2b Percentage of the population that has attained tertiary education
A4/1   Size of the population aged 5-14 as a percentage of the total population

A4/2 Expected change in the youth population up to the year 2006.

Chapter B
Financial and human resources invested in education
B1/1   Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP by source of fund
secondary education
tertiary education
B1/2 Index of change between 1990 and 1995 in direct expenditure for education relative to the GDP
B1/3 Expenditure on research and development (R & D) relative to the GDP (1995)
B2/1 Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure
-   secondary education
-   tertiary education
B4/1 Annual expenditure per student on public and private institutions
B4/2 Index of change in expenditure on education, enrolments and expenditure per student
-   secondary education
-   tertiary education
B5/1 Distribution of total expenditure and distribution of current expenditure per student by resource category
-   secondary education
B5/2 Average current expenditure per student by resource category
-   secondary education
-   tertiary
B6/1 Expenditure on education by size of government in the :
-   secondary education system
-   tertiary education system
B7/1 Ratio of students to teaching staff by level of education:
-   secondary
-   tertiary

Chapter C
Overall participation in education.
C1/2 Net enrolment rates by single year of age by level of education.
C1/3 Transition characteristics from secondary to tertiary education for 17- 20 years of age.
C2/1 Ratio of upper-secondary graduates to population at typical age of graduation.
C2/2 Percentage of enrolments in professional education to population at typical age of graduation in full-time education.
C3/1 Net enrolment rates for full-time and part-time students.
C3/4 Percentage of full-time under-graduated students and of those over 25 years of age.
C3/5 Distribution of under-graduated students by type of institution:
-   public.
-   government-dependant private.
-   independent private.

C4/1 Graduation rates by duration of programme.
C4/2 Graduates from tertiary education to population at the typical age of graduation.
C5/1 Distribution of percentage by field of study in tertiary education.
C6/1 Students receiving additional resources by category A, B, C.

Chapter D
Transition from school to work.
D1/1 Education and work status of the population 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years of age.
D1/2 Percentage of the youth population not in education by gender.
D2/1 Expected years in education and work for the population 15 to 29 years of age by gender.
D4/1 Unemployment percenatge of the youth population by educational attainment, age group and gender.

Chapter E
Salaries of teachers in public primary and secondary schools .
E1/1 Annual statutory teachers' starting salaries and the salary after 15 years' experience.
E1/2 Ratio of salary after 15 years' experience compared to the changes in the GDP.
E2/1 Age distribution of teachers in primary education .
E2/2 Percentage of women among teaching staff by level of education.
E3/1 Number of teaching hours per year in public institutions by level of education.
E4/1 Intended instruction time for mathematics and science in hours compared to the total intended instruction time.
E4/2 Intended instruction time compared to the total intended instruction time by subject.
E5/1 Distribution of decision-making by size of government.
E6/1 Ratio of total number of students to total number of computers available for students in primary education.
E6/2 Distribution of frequency in the use of computers at school or at home, as:daily, weekly, monthly, rarely, and never.

Chapter F
Students' achievements and transition to the social and labour market
F1/1 Mathmatics achievements in the 4-th and 8-th grade compared to the achievements defined by the **OECD**
F5/1 Labour force for the population 25 to 64 years of age by level of education and gender
F5/3 Unemployment for the population 25 to 64 years of age by level of education and gender

Phase 4
After all these steps, we passed on to the:
Adaptation and acknowledgement of the UOE tables to be filled with the information based on the **OECD** experience.

So that we dispose of two materials which help in the realisation of these tables as well as in their mode of use.

In the following phases the working group will proceed as follows:

- By the end of August we expect to publish a material where the indicators will be presented in the form of tables that we think are possible to calculate, in the first place.

Next we expect work about this project to go on with:

- **Entering data collected from UOE tables** (Experience already known to us but now we dispose of the new tables sent by **EUROSTAT** and prepared by **OECD**)
- **Designing formulae, programmes, and software used also by the OECD**, etc. (We need assistance on this issue)
- **Calculation of the selected indicators**
- **Publishing these estimated indicators and distributing them** to education institutions or even on a larger scale after having explained the following problems in it, based on the experience of "Education at a glance of **OECD** indicators":

a. Indicators' methodology
b. Specific features of our country
c. Its extension
d. Summary
e. **ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education)**
f. Annexes
g. Basic references of the information
h. Graphic presentation of the indicators

During the study of **"Education at a glance OECD Indicators"** it was noticed that the international classification of education levels carried out by **UNESCO ISCED 1997** was used:

Based on the above given reason we are making a short presentation of **ISCED 1997 (UNESCO)** published by **UNESCO**

ISCED = **International Standard Classification of Education**

ISCED does not aim at giving a full definition of education, even less making use of an international standartized philosophy concept; of the goals or the contents of education or reflecting its cultural aspects. In reality, for a given country, coaction of cultural tradition , local customs, social and economic conditions only in few of the cases will result in an educational concept, and in many characteristic ways of this country each effort to make use of an ordinary definition would not be fruitful. However, for the **ISCED** purposes it is necessary to describe the range of action and the coverage of education activities to be included in this classification.

In the **ISCED** framework, the term "education" is used to include all systematic forethought activities conceived to fulfill the need to learn. This includes even what in certain countries is part of a training or cultural activity. In spite of the name given to education, it is generally understood as an inclusion of organized and supported communications, conceived to bring something new about learning.

The key words in this formulation are to be understood as follows:

Communication: a relationship between two or more persons including information transfer. Communication may be verbal or non-verbal, direct/face to face or indirect/profound and they may include a large scale of channels and media.

Learning : each and every improvement in behavior, information, knowledge, understanding, attitude, value and skills.

Organization: it is planned as a model or sequence with explicit or implicit goals .It also includes a security agency that uplifts the teaching environment and the method of teaching through which communication is organized.

This method represents somebody engaged in communication or sharing knowledge and skills with the aim of leading into learning but this might also be for example: a part of a computer software, a movie, a tape, etc.

Content: aims at indicating that the teaching experience includes the elements of education in time and continuity.

Minimal duration is not conditioned, but the appropriate minimum is established in the working manual.

ISCED includes the early childhood education of a person as well as the successive education, the life-long one.

The education fulfilling the goal of the **ISCED** includes a variety of programmes and education types prepared based on national context such as: regular education, adult education, formal education, informal education, primary education, continuous education, long –distance-education, open education, permanent education, etc.

ISCED provides an integrated and stable statistical framework for collecting and reporting international comparable education statistics. It contains two main components:

A statistical framework including all statistical descriptions of national education and the learning system through a system of variables very important in defining national policies compared to those international.

A methodology adapting national education programmes in an international comparable group of categories for (1) levels of education and (2) fields of education.

ISCED application facilitates the transformation of national detailed education statistics in education participators; education providers and sponsors chosen based on national concepts and definitions, various categories comparable in the international framework and whose meaning may easily be interpreted.

ISCED relies on three components: (1) international reconciliability of concepts and definitions; (2) classification system and in (3) an instructing work handbook and a well-defined implementation process.

Understandable and detailed operational specifications are an integral part of the **ISCED** – inseparable from the base taxonomy. The same applies to the implementation process.

The basic unit of the **ISCED** classification remains the education program. Education programmes are defined based on their educational content and also as an alignment or sequency of education activities, organized to fulfill a predetermined objective or a specific direction of educational duties.

Educational programmes are a combination of classifications of education levels and fields each one variable being independent at the same time. Therefore, each education program may be classified in one and only one cell in the level-field matrix.

Obviously, not every level-field combination exists or will exist.

Level 0 –early childhood education.

The level 0 programmes (early childhood education) defined as initial stages of organised learning at first was conceived as a stage of presenting the school areas to the young children, that is to say, it provides a connection between the home environment and the school's atmosphere. After having completed these programmes, children enter the first level of education.

Level 1- **Pre-primary education**.

The level 1 programmes are normally conceived as a base project or unit in order to provide students with base knowledge on Reading, Writing, Mathmatics and elementary knowledge in other subjects, such as: History, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Art and Music.

What is essential in this level, is that this education is expected for children not less than 5 years of age and not more than 7 years of age.

Level 2 – **Primary education or the second stage of base education**.

The subjects of education, as a whole, in this stage are conceived in such a way that the basic education criteria is met, which begins in **ISCED** Level 1.

In many countries, education's main goal is to lay the foundations for a long-life learning and a human development and where its possible to utilise systematically further education opportunities. The programmes of this level are usually based on subjects oriented to the models given, making use of specialised teachers, and more frequently teachers leading their classes in their own specialisation field. This level requires the full implementation of basic skills. The conclusion of this level frequently coincides with the end of compulsory education in the countries that it exists.

The programmes of **ISCED** Level 2 may be classified by destination for which they are conceived, as follows:

* ISCED 2A: programmes conceived for the direct transfer in Level 3, a sequence which will directly lead to tertiary education , such as:entering 3A or 3B **ISCED** levels.

* ISCED 2B: Programmes conceived for direct transfer in level 3

* ISCED 2C: Programmes conceived in such a way that with the conclusion of this level it permits transition directly into the labour market

Level 3 – Secondary education (second cycle)

This level of education normally begins after having completed the full-time compulsory education, in those countries where compulsory education exists. In the **ISCED** level 3 there are more specializations than in Level 2 and often the Level 3 teachers are required to be even more specialized than the ones in Level 2. Admission age for this level is 15-16 years of age.

The programmes of level 3 according to the **ISCED** may be subclassified as follows:

* ISCED 3A – Level 3 programmes, conceived to provide a direct entry in the **ISCED 5** since earlier.

* ISCED 3B – Level 3 programmes, conceived to provide a direct entry in the **ISCED 5B** since earlier.

* ISCED 3C- level 3 programmes conceived to directly lead to **ISCED 5A** or **5B**.For this reason, this programmes lead directly to the labour market, to **ISCED 4** or **ISCED 5** programmes.

Level 4 – Upper–secondary non-tertiary education

ISCED -Level 4 group programmes from an international point of view are in the limit between the secondary education and upper – secondary education even though viewed in a national context they are regarded as the respective programmes of the second cycle of secondary education. Taking into consideration the content of **ISCED** 4 programmes, they may not be regarded as tertiary education programmes.

Level 4 programmes according to the **ISCED** may be subclassified as follows:

* ISCED 4A: Level 4 programmes serve as preparatory for entering the **ISCED level 5**.

* ISCED 4B level 4 programmes that are primarily conceived for direct entry in the labor market.

Level 5 – first cycle of tertiary education

(It does not directly lead to advanced qualification in research studies)

This level consists of high level programmes whose content is more advanced than the ones in level 3

or 4.

Normally, the condition to be accepted in these programmes is terminating successfully level **3A** or level **3B ISCED** or a similar qualification to **ISCED** level **4A**

ISCED Level 5 programmes may be subclassified as follows:

* ISCED 5A – are tertiary education programmes, largely theory-based and are designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements.

* ISCED 5B – are typically shorter than those of tertiary type A and focus on specific professional skills adaptable in the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programmes.

* ISCED 6 – **second phase of tertiary education.**

(Leading to advanced research qualification)

This level is reserved for tertiary programmes that lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification. These programmes are devoted to advanced study and original research.

What is PISA
(the programme for international student assessment)
PERPARIM SHERA, Data Analyst of PISA project in Albania.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a project of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) designed to provide international indicators of the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. Three literacy domains are being assessed in PISA: <u>Reading</u>, <u>Mathematics</u>, and <u>Science</u>. Three cycles of PISA are planned. In each cycle, two-thirds of testing time will be devoted to a main literacy domain as follows: Reading in 2000, Mathematics in 2003, and Science in 2006.

PISA aims to assess to what degree students approaching the end of their compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society. PISA hopes to answer the following questions:

- How well are young adults prepared to meet the challenges of the future?
- Are they able to analyze, reason and communicate their ideas effectively?
- Do they have the capacity to continue learning throughout life?
- Are some kinds of teaching and school organization more effective than others?

<u>THE 2000-2001 PISA SURVEY</u>

Thirty-two countries have participated in the 2000 PISA survey and some other countries participated in the 2001 PISA plus survey. Albania was among them. This study consists of the following:

- Two hours of direct students' skill assessment through reading, mathematics, and science tests. Reading was the major domain and the reading test was based on a new framework.
- A 20-minute self-completed contextual questionnaire administered to students to collect background information to help understand the factors contributing to student achievement.
- A 3-minute section on Information Technology administered to students.
- A 30-minute self-completed school questionnaire administered to school principals to collect information about characteristics of schools.

1012 students were assessed in the field trial selected from thirty schools and about 5300 students were selected to participate in the main study from 184 both high schools and primary in order to obtain information about according to the geographic distribution, urbanization and school types and programs. The assessment was administered in selected schools, during regular school hours, in March and November, 2001.

WHO IS IMPLEMENTING PISA

A consortium of international organizations is carrying out the project under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the PISA Board of Participating Countries. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) heads the consortium that also includes the following organizations:

- Westat Inc, USA;
- National Institute for Educational Research (NIER), Japan;
- Educational Testing Service (ETS), USA;
- Netherlands National Institute for Educational Measurement (CITO); and

In Albania PISA is carried out through a partnership of the following organizations:

- "Soros" Foundation.
- Ministry of Education and Science.

WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED IN PISA

Although the domains of reading literacy, mathematics literacy and scientific literacy correspond to school subjects, this assessment will not mainly examine how well students have mastered the specific curriculum content. The purpose is to assess the extent to which young people have acquired the knowledge and skills in domains mentioned above that they will need in adult life.

Reading domain in PISA

The Reading literacy component requires students to perform a range of tasks with different kinds of text. The tasks range from retrieving specific information to demonstrating a broad understanding and interpreting text and reflecting on its content and features.

PISA assesses reading literacy in three dimensions:

- First, the **form of reading material**, or text. Many student reading assessments have focused on prose organized in sentences and paragraphs, or "continuous texts". In addition, PISA includes "non-continuous texts" which presents information in other ways, such as in lists, forms, graphs, or diagrams. Distinctions are also made between a range of prose forms, such as narration, exposition and argumentation. Such distinctions are based on the principle that individuals will encounter a range of written forms in adult life, and that it is not sufficient to be able to read a limited number of text types typically encountered in school.

- Second, the **type of reading task**. This corresponds at one level to the various cognitive skills that are needed to be an effective reader, and at another, to the characteristics of questions set in the assessment. Students are not assessed on the most basic reading skills, as it is assumed that most 15 year-olds will have already acquired these. Rather, they are expected to demonstrate their proficiency in retrieving information, forming a broad general understanding of the text, interpreting it, reflecting on the content and form of texts in relation to their own knowledge of the world, and arguing their own point of view.

- Third, the **use for which the text was constructed** - its context or situation. For example a novel, personal letter or biography is written for people's "private" use; official documents or announcements for "public" use; a manual or report for "occupational" use; and a textbook or worksheet for "educational" use. An important reason for making these distinctions is that some individuals may perform better in one reading situation than in another, in which case it is desirable to include a range of types of reading in the assessment items.

Mathematical Literacy in PISA

Mathematical literacy entails the use of mathematical competencies at several levels, ranging from performance of standard mathematical operations to mathematical thinking and insight. It also requires the knowledge and application of a range of mathematical content.

PISA assesses mathematical literacy in three dimensions:

- First, the **content of mathematics**, as defined mainly in terms of broad mathematical concepts underlying mathematical thinking (such as chance, change and growth, space and shape, reasoning, uncertainty and dependency relationships), and only secondarily in relation to "curricular strands" (such as numbers, algebra and geometry). The PISA 2000 assessment, in which mathematics is a minor domain, focuses on two concepts: change and growth, and space and shape. These two areas allow a wide representation of aspects of the curriculum without giving undue weight to number skills.

- Second, the **process of mathematics** as defined by general mathematical competencies. These include the use of mathematical language, modeling and problem-solving skills. The idea is not, however, to separate out such skills in different test items, since it is assumed that a range of competencies will be needed to perform any given mathematical task. Rather, questions are organized in terms of three "competency classes" defining the type of thinking skill needed.

- The first class of mathematical competency consists of simple computations or definitions of the type most familiar in conventional mathematics   assessments.

- The second class requires connections to be made to solve straightforward problems.

- The third competency class consists of mathematical thinking, generalization and insight, and requires students to engage in analysis, to identify the mathematical elements in a situation and to pose their own problems.

- Third, the **situations in which mathematics is used**, ranging from private contexts to those relating to wider scientific and public issues.

Scientific Literacy in PISA

Scientific literacy involves the use of key scientific concepts in order to understand and help make decisions about the natural world. It also involves being able to recognize scientific questions, use evidence, draw scientific conclusions and communicate these conclusions. Scientific concepts relevant to the students' world both now and in the near future will be used.

PISA assesses scientific literacy in three dimensions:

- First, **scientific concepts**, which are needed to understand certain phenomena of the natural world and the changes made to it through human activity. While the concepts in OECD/PISA are the familiar ones relating to physics, chemistry, biological sciences and earth and space sciences, they need to be applied to real-life scientific problems rather than just recalled. The main content of the assessment is selected from within three broad areas of application: science in life and health; science of the earth and the environment and science in technology.

- Second, **scientific processes**, which are centered on the ability to acquire, interpret and act upon evidence. Five such processes that are present in OECD/PISA relate to:
    - the recognition of scientific questions
    - the identification of evidence
    - the drawing of conclusions
    - the communication of these conclusions
    - the demonstration of understanding of scientific concepts

  All but the last of these do not require a pre-set body of science knowledge. Yet since no scientific process can be "content-free", the PISA science questions will always require understanding of key scientific concepts.

- Third, **scientific situations**, selected mainly from people's everyday lives rather than from the practice of science in a school classroom or laboratory, or the work of professional scientists. As with mathematics, science figures in people's lives in contexts ranging from personal or private situations to wider public, sometimes global issues.

COMPLETED ACTIVITIES TO CARRY OUT PISA PROGRAM.

1. The selection of school sample.
- The gathering of school data. (National Center)
    - 15-year-old student number for each school.
    - The geographic region where the school are located.
    - Urbanization (rural areas, urban areas).
    - School types (public or private).
    - School programs (general, vocational).
- The determination of schools that will participate in PISA and student sample sizes. (Consortium).
    - School stratification according to following stratification variables: regions, urbanization, school programs, school sizes.
    - The determination of school sizes for large schools (more than 35 15-year-old students), small schools (17-35 15-year-old students) and moderately small schools (less than 17 15-year-old students).
    - The selection of sample schools (174 schools).
    - The determination of student sample size for each selected school according to their size as following: 35 - large schools and small schools; 17 - moderately small schools.
- The participation communication to selected schools, the agreement and the replacing of schools refused to participate. (National Center).
2. The identification of school Co-ordinators. (National Center).
3. The translation of test instruments and manuals. (National Center) and their revision (Consortium).
4. The selection of student samples (National Center).
- Sending schools and preparing by them the list of eligible students.
- Recording the list of students in a computer software (Keyquest database).
- The random selection of students to be tested for each school generated by software.
5. Sending schools the list of selected students and instructions for excluding students. (National Center).
6. Hiring and training of test administrators. (National Center)
7. Printing and sending schools the test booklets and questionnaires. (National Center)
8. Booklets' marking. (National Center)
- The recruiting of markers (8 mathematics and science markers, 16 reading markers)
- The training of markers.
- The marking of booklets according to PISA scheme.
9. The recording of instrument data in the Keyquest database prepared by PISA consortium. (National Center).
- School and student questionnaire data.
- Coded answers of student booklets.
- Student tracking forms.
- Revising and correcting data.
- Sending data to consortium.
10. Data analysis. (Consortium)+(National Center)

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT PISA FIELD TRIAL IN ALBANIA

It is very important to note that there are differences between PISA field trial purposes and PISA main study ones. The field trial had two main purposes:
- To collect data on the performance of test items and questionnaires, for developing instruments for the main study; and
- To test the operational procedures for sampling students and conducting assessments within schools.

The main study has the purpose of obtaining a data file that will permit analyses that give valid statistical inferences about the student population, and the schools that they are in.

We will introduce here some descriptive statistics and some explanations of them extracted from field trial data analysis. These results will be restricted because of the field trial purpose.

In-depth analysis will be performed and published after the main study.

National percent performance																	
Booklet 1			Booklet 2			Booklet 3			Booklet 4			Booklet 5			All booklets		
Mathematics	Reading	All	Reading	Science	All	Mathematics	Reading	All	Reading	Science	All	Mathematics	Science	All	Reading	Mathematics	Science	All
21%	26%	24%	27%	24%	26%	21%	29%	26%	29%	19%	26%	28%	30%	29%	28%	23%	24%	26%

Table 1

Percent correct score by urbanization (rural areas and urban areas)				
	Reading	Mathematics	Science	All
Rural	23%	17%	21%	21%
Urban	30%	26%	26%	28%

Table 2

Percent correct score by school programs				
	Reading	Mathematics	Science	All
General	27%	23%	24%	25%
Vocational	38%	35%	34%	37%

Table 3

Percent correct score according to the question types.

Multiple-choice questions			
Mathematics	Reading	Science	All
36%	37%	42%	38%

Table 4

Open-ended questions							
Mathematics		Reading		Science		All	
Full credit	Partial credit	Full credit	Partial credit	Full credit	Partial credit	Full credit	Partial credit
19%	14%	24%	19%	22%	14%	22%	16%

Table 5

6. Percent correct score of true-false questions in national level - 31%.
7. Percent correct score of short answer questions in national level - 37%

From table 1, we can say that the national performance of reading literacy is the highest (28%) and the one of mathematics literacy is the lowest (23%) among three subjects of the test: mathematics, reading and science. Reading literacy has similar score in all booklets, while mathematics literacy and science literacy have different scores in different booklets.

From table 2, we notice that the national performance of urban areas (28%) is higher than one of rural areas (21%). We can also see this difference in all test subjects. That's, both rural school students and urban school ones have the highest score in reading literacy and the lowest score in mathematics one.

From table 3, we can say that the vocational school students' performance (37%) is higher than the general school students' one (25%).

From tables 4 and 5, we can conclude that students perform better in multiple-choice questions than in open-ended ones.

From the descriptive statistics of PISA test, we noticed few questions with very low score. In general, in comparison with international values, there are only a small number of questions that are more difficult or easier than expected.

Some statistics and conclusions computed and extracted from student questionnaire of field trial:

- Participation total – 1012 students, 571 – girls and 441 – boys.
- About 50 % of students are from families with parents who have finished university and 8% who haven't completed any year of education.
- Low participation in such activities as: movies, theater, music; and good participation in sport activities.
- The tendency of parents to discuss with their children more about their school problems, books and foods than about political matters.
- Parents and other relatives give little help to students on their homework.
- Low index of possibility to have access in Internet. (only 5%).
- Relatively good conditions to study at their homes. 63% of students have their own room, 87% of them have place where to study, 78% have dictionaries, 90% have books at their homes, etc.

- The lack of computer hardware. (81 % say that they don't have any computer at their home.)
- The lack of communication tools at home. (65% of students don't have telephone at home)
- Only a small number of students attend special courses to improve their school results. They mostly attend private courses.
- Most students say that teachers take a great interest in class, stimulate them to learn better, treat kindly and help students.
- The excess number of students in classes.
- In general, the students think that their school is a place where they like to stay, where they make friends, etc.
- 10% of students don't like to go to school.
- The teachers don't assess very often the students' homework and they don't take into account them in final assessment.
- The students spend most time to prepare the mathematics homework than the science or reading ones.
- Most students (65%) spend more than 30 minutes to read for enjoyment.
- Most students like to read books and reading is their favorite hobby.
- Most students have books at home (96%).
- Students tend to read more fiction books.
- Students frequent often public and school libraries. (86%).
- The lack of computers and science labs in schools.

PISA RESULTS

According to the plans of PISA, a data analysis of booklet results and questionnaires will be done and they will make known the respective reports of these statistics. OECD has planned to publish six thematic reports which offer an in-depth analysis of specific topics, including:
- social background and achievement,
- meeting the need of low (and high) achieving students,
- gender and students' achievement,
- achievement, engagement and aspirations – understanding what makes students "ready to learn",
- school factors relating to quality and equity, and
- an international profile of students' reading literacy.

An Albanian report will likely be published after the OECD international report has been released.

Results from PISA will be invaluable to educators, social policy analysts, and other interested groups. These researchers and analysts will have access to important information that can be used in developing programs to deal with both short-term and long-term problems or barriers that young adults may face in their pursuit of higher education or in gaining work experience. Information from the survey will help to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs and practices, to determine the most appropriate age at which to introduce programs, and to better target programs to those

most in need. Young adults themselves will be able to see their achievements compared to those of other young adults.

Finally, it is important to say that this project is a great experience especially for our country because it's the first time a standardized test takes place in Albania. It will influence on all people and especially on stakeholders to change and improve our adult education. It will allow policy makers to compare the performance of our education system with those of other countries. Its results will also help to focus and motivate educational reform and school improvement. It will provide a basis for better assessment and monitoring of the effectiveness of our education system.

University entrance exams
Rezana Vrapi
National Educational Center of Examination and Assessment

Introduction

There is a tradition in our country, related with the criteria of university entrance exams. Before 90's the university admission process included secondary school notes and Matura examinations.

The economic collapse, the weakness of the previous system will influence at the educational system as well. At that time many young people would see the university as a possibility to escape from the hard work in factories or cooperatives. From this point of view, the school and the teachers were continuously under the grade pressures. That would compromise the school and students level.

After 1990, being conscious about the defect of the university criteria admission, some other effaces ways were being looking for. One of this way was the application of university entrance exams. At the beginning those examination were developed by the

universities themselves and included 30% of the four years secondary school grades. But still there were a lot of pressures.

The new admission process (in 1998, which is still now) was designed to remove those elements of the past process that were most susceptible to inappropriate influence. For this reason the new admission process does not include secondary school notes nor the results of the secondary school maturity examinations, both of which were highly vulnerable to influence from parents of students.

Rather, the new admission process relies on a newly created system of evaluations, developed by the National Educational Center of Examination and Assessment under the auspices of the MoE, and produced and distributed with high levels of security and confidentiality, especially in the last admission process.

While these reforms, particularly the introduction of secure, objective, standardized tests- have helped to address the underlying problem of corruption in post secondary admissions, there several areas in which changes or improvements are still needed.

The organization of university entrance exams

The organization of the final examination is regulated by different legal documents issued by the Ministry of Education and Science and Rules and Procedures designed by the National Assessment Center of Evaluation and Testing on annual basis.

In compliance with those documents, the organization of the university entrance test is a joint responsibility of Ministry of Education and Science, NCEEA and university.

The ministry is in charge of overall organization, which comprises the schedule, the examination themes and the general procedures.

NCEEA is responsible for preparing of the General Knowledge test (GK), prints it and distributes the test to the universities on the testing day.

The university is in charge of preparing of the Subject-based examination (SE), administration, as well as evaluation of the examination themselves and reporting of the results.

Three different commissions are set up by in charge person in faculty (dean):

- **The central commission:** is in charge of the preparation of the examination.
- **The commission of verification** is in charge of all the verification and invigilation procedures.
- **The evaluation commission** is in charge of the evaluation of the papers.
- **The re-evaluation commission** is in charge of all the complains.

National Educational Center of Examination and Assessment (NECEA)

At the beginning of the 1997 there was established a specialized center for the measurement and evaluation in education which was part of the Institute for Research in Education. In 2001 the NECEA was depended only by the Ministry of Education and

Science. One of the main tasks of the NECEA is to develop the university entrance exam test papers, as well as other tools and instruments of educational.

Testing goals

The university entrance tests are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills in different subjects and the ability to apply that knowledge aiming their selection to university.

Tests characteristics

The university entrance tests are standardized ones. Those tests are constructed by test-construction specialists, with the assistance of curriculum experts, teachers and university pedagogues for the purpose of determining a student's level of performance relative to performance of other students of similar age and grade. They are administered and scored according to specific and uniform procedures. The items are selected on the bases of content validity for the assessment of previously specified content and objectives. Through this test a comparison is done between the achievement of an individual with a group. Such comparisons are possible because of the availability of norms and the uniformity of procedures for administration and scoring that characterize such tests.

The university entrance tests are objective. The features of such an items make possible an highly objective scoring. It doesn't matter who scores them or there is a double check scoring. In all cases the result will be the same and there is no place for subjective judgement.

Test Development

The GE is developed by subjects specialists of NCEEA in cooperation with curriculum specialists, experts on the educational field and school teachers who:

- Evaluate and update the test content and skills specification (evaluation program);
- Develop the specification grid;
- Write the item bank;
- Prepare the tests (levels);
- Evaluate each question for accuracy and appropriateness;
- Review each item of the test to ensure that it meets the specification and contains an appropriate balance of topics and skills.

Test and questions are subjected to through sensitivity reviews to ensure that symbols, words, phrases, art and content are appropriate and if something is considered inappropriate is eliminated.

The test content, whenever possible, must reflect the nature and specific culture of our society.

Format and content

The university admission process involves examinations with two major components: 1. A two-hour, test of general knowledge acquired by the students during secondary school (worth 180 points –60%), and 2. A two hour, subjected-based examination (worth 120 points-40%), designed to test specific knowledge acquired in secondary school that is most relevant to university study in appropriate discipline at each institution.

Exemptions include foreign language, architecture, fine arts and athletics, where the subject0based examination account for 60% of the total score.

There is not any internal timing. That is, each student could choose how much time to spent on any question(s), whether to GE or SE, but it is suggested to the students to create an internal timing. That would separate the testing of GK from the testing devoted to the subject-based examination(s). This will help them to achieve better results.

The test items, for the both parts are 100 multiple choice items with four alternatives, where only one has the correct answer. Along with those alternatives with answers, there is another one, the fifth: e. "without answers".

The multiple-choice items deal with:

- Knowing of facts, terms and concepts;
- Understanding of basic information;
- Expressing ideas logically;
- Analyzing and interpreting of data;
- Interpreting of graphics, tables and formulas etc.

The GE is based on three levels of Bloom Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension and Application. The weight of each level in the GE test is as follow:

- Knowledge   40%
- Comprehension   40%
- Application   20%

In this way attempts are made for having a same difficulty level in different day of testing.

In the GE test the item number in different subject is in accordance with the weight that those subjects have in the national curricula. So the item number in the test is as follow:

Subject	Item number
Math	12
Literature	11
Physics	8
Chemistry	7
History	7
Biology	6
Geography	6

Scoring

The University entrance test has a worth of 300 points.
Students receive 3 points for each correct answer. They are penalized in those occasions:

1. 1 point is subtracted for: choosing the wrong answer, choosing two or more alternatives, choosing three times the "e" alternative ("without answer");
2. 3 points is subtracted for unanswered questions;
3. 0 point for choosing the "e" alternative.

The total score is then converted through a formula.

The examination papers are marked by the Evaluation Commission set up by the faculties themselves. But all the score procedures followed by the commission must be in accordance with the rules set up by the National Educational Center of Examination and Assessment.

Administration

University entrance tests are administered one time a year. They were given in a period of 6 days on the first week of September. Different faculties have different testing day. But in a certain day the GK test is the same for different faculties. Most of the students take one test, but many students take 2 or 3 tests in different days. In most disciplines the number of test-takers exceeded the number of available places; in these cases, students with the highest total score (GK+SE) were selected for admission.
The test is formulate in two versions A and B, which change between each other only in the items order.

- *Test security*

In 2001, for the first time the NECEA, developed the test security standards and procedures, such as the general norms and the testing conditions; some guidelines concerned with the testing process are given as well.
The examination starts at 10.00 a.m. on the respective dates. The duration is 5 hours. Before the start of the examination the candidates receive detailed information on their rights and obligations during the examination.
There are invigilators in the testing room. They are members of the faculty but are not specialists in the given subjects. There are at least two invigilators per room, but their number is in accordance with the candidates number. There is also a representative by the Ministry of Education and Science who monitors all the testing procedures.

All these standards and procedures have been developed with the dual goals of assuring

that all test takers have equal opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and of preventing some test takers from gaining an unfair advantage over others.

- ***Score reporting***

Each faculty must report the testing results within the 4 days. Scores are hang on in a special place on the wall and the students will receive their total score and the results they have taken at the both parts of the test separately (General Knowledge Test and Subject-based examination).

Students' rights to complain and complaint procedures

Students are given the possibility to complain when he/she does not agree with the score results. The complaint must be done with within the day of given the results. The Re-evaluation Commission will receive the student complaint and after a day will give the final result. This decision is not any more discussible.

Conclusion

The education reform in the Albania is supposed to make an important contribution to the social transformation process taking place in the country. The modernization of the country's educational system needs more guidance. One of the methods to reach this goal is to create national and evaluation standards of education. Such standards must provide the Albanian governance with certain means of control over the quality of education by means of assessment tools to monitor the level of achievement referring to these standards.
Testing and evaluation procedures should be now, at the time of transformation of the Albanian Educational System, seriously improved. It must be clear, that if the examinations at the end of the secondary education are improved, they will have to replace the entry examination to the university. The main aim of this improved testing is to inform all the students of their abilities at the end of secondary school.

School Self-evaluation

Vladimir Pasku, Project manager, AEDP
Neritan Babamusta, Project Coordinator, ISP

The latest developments in education have shown the necessity of delegating the responsibility for improving school productivity. Its is aimed that the school staff, the community, the local government and education authorities work in partnership to increasing productivity at school. The school is involved in an active process of self-evaluation, identifying the weak and strong points, defining objectives and drafting plans for improving the quality of the work. At this point the school is able to declare its status. It is clear that this process is based on evaluation. While in today's viewpoint, evaluation is a new field of the education process. This field is as complex as its object and as such one should be knowledgeable about it to be able to assess it. In this context, I would like to point out one very important aspect of evaluation:

> *It should constitute the basis for an open dialogue between those who assess and those who are assessed.*

Why is this dialogue so important?

This dialogue increases the chances for evaluation to become useful to both parties. It becomes particularly useful for the clients who want to be evaluated, i.e. the schools. If

schools are involved in the evaluation process from the beginning, if they are informed on the progress of this evaluation by working closely with the evaluators, without doubt this dialogue will turn into a constructive element serving school improvement.

This is the context in which the process of self-evaluation takes place in our pilot schools. There had been continuous efforts to identify the best practices throughout the world, practices that can be adopted in our conditions. Initially, efforts are made to follow the American pattern of school accreditation. Accreditation requires that schools be involved in the continuous process of improvement. In order to involve in this process, schools should be knowledgeable of the standards that this improvement requires.

NCA, (Northern Central Association –the largest non-governmental Accrediting Association in the US that accredits more than 7000 schools out of 19 states) has worked out its standards based on the national standards that are equal for all the schools that belong to the same category. Based on this psychology, we can state that the schools involved in the process of accreditation, must think in two dimensions: how to better coordinate their work related to the national standards, with the standards of the accrediting agencies.

Schools have volunteered to involve in the process of improvement and evaluation developed by the agencies. This fact constitutes a very important element of accreditation. If schools want to be involved in the process of improvement, its imperative that they confront the standards of the accrediting agencies. This confrontation will prove that school has either accepted these standards or got over it. The essence of accreditation is:

Achieving or getting over the standards set by an external agency.

This is an apprehensive type of evaluation for our country's conditions. The precondition is the presence/organization of an NGO in the field of accreditation and the involvement of the universities and of a large number of specialists of evaluation, in this process.

The Israeli experience shows that cluster of schools are voluntarily involved in the self-evaluation process. Based on national standards and their features, schools use indicators, tools and various evaluation techniques, to measure the achievement of the objectives they have set. The Israeli experts side with the theory that by imposing to the schools the indicators for their self-evaluation, we limit their efforts.

Holland offers a large number of indicators to be used by the schools involved in the self-evaluation process. This may become a bureaucratic process as the staff may loose its objective by putting too much energy and efforts in choosing the indicators to be used in various contexts.

The education system offers a full package of indicators that has proved to be successful. Piloting has shown that the Scottish experience has elements from the experiences shown previously. The assumption is that schools may be unclear of the use of these standards, they may feel limited in using them, or continue to work under their daily routine.

Which is the essence of the Scottish system?

Generally, people react towards quality of schools on a local level and towards education on a national level. The papers presented by MASH, the Education Directorates and school principal, require from schools to answer the question "How good is the Albanian education?" This material aims at helping educators come closer to answering the question "How good is our school? ".

On the other hand, our perception of quality changes when there are changes in the society. Obviously schools are accountable to the society for the quality of the work and us as educators are involved in goals and policies set jointly to increase student learning. Through this effort we tackle upon:

- The needs of the students and the community we serve
- Guidelines set by local and national authorities
- Reports on the achievements of effective teaching and learning.

When a school is said to be good?

A school is said to be good when it has a clear focus of:

- Its aim
- How successfully are the objectives met
- How to make good use of this successes and make improvements
- The changes that are happening

When schools are aware of this issues and act upon them, it is said they are doing well and have built a system for assuring the quality of the school. This is why self-evaluation of the school is a key instrument to assure quality.

What is self-evaluation?

Self-evaluation means to ask oneself,

- How are we working with the school?
- How are we working with the class?
- How are we doing with our subject matters?

It encompasses:

- A wider focus of the achievements on the major fields. These major fields are; Curriculum; Achievements; Teaching and Learning; Student supporting; Ethics; Resources and Governance, i.e. assuring and managing quality.
- A limited focus of the specific fields considered successful or problematic.

The need for a limited focus could spring by: an issue identified in the wider focus; a regular evaluation cycle by which school reexamines its progress; common issues of schools or local businesses; national or local objectives; parents' viewpoints and the inspectors.

By evaluating all major fields, schools define problematic issues to be improved or qualities to be assured. This is performed through clear indicators that measure success. The work plan or development plan is a means to assess schools.

Why is the development plan important?

If you want to be aware of the progress in your work, you should plan. This principle is widely accepted. A work plan:

- Encourages effective teaching and learning
- Enables implementing agencies to manage and monitor changes
- Helps be realistic in defining priorities, objectives and terms.
- Encourages good use of school budget.

Self-evaluation through a development plan, helps assure quality.

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance is an aspect of school life. It represents quality in the wider sense but not as an uncontrolled quality. It builds the ethics that will help work better at school. By considering quality assurance in this light, we should stress that quality assurance is the responsibility of educators and of the school staff supported by parents, of the local authorities and inspectors, in improving the quality of the school. We can noticeably improve the quality of the Albanian education, by working as a team.

Where lies the difference of school self-evaluation and evaluation by the inspectors?

We need an external evaluation to monitor our progress. Evaluating and monitoring the achievements of the Albanian schools on a national level, is the duty of the inspectors at different levels. There is nothing mystic in it: their evaluation covers the same fields as self-evaluation of the schools and the aim is to implement it by using the same achievement indicators that schools and educators use in their discussions.

It is clear that self-evaluation of the school and the external evaluation while serving different purposes, reassesses the promise to evaluate our work. Self-evaluation and the external evaluation carried out by education authorities or inspectors, analyses school priorities, standards and achievements in the major fields as referred above. Schools and education authorities can do the same thing by posing the same questions as the inspectors:

How is student progress?

How is school managed?
How effective is our school?

Can evaluation become a useful element in school?

We may come to know ourselves through comparison of the achievements and the expectations, expressed in the objectives of the school. Previously we have analyzed school activities and evaluation. It is necessary to analyze the aspect linked with the other objectives. This can be achieved through the achievement indicators complemented with test scores.

In the whole, achievement indicators serves as a measuring instrument of the factors that influence the effectiveness of student learning, something that schools can control.

They help :

-Measure the achievements based on a set of criteria
-Identify fields that require a thorough analyses
-Enable school principals to analyze successes and weaknesses in the process of development of the school.

Achievement indicators can help evaluate the level of achieving our goals. Goals represent general objectives. Various papers presented by MASH, ISP, etc. represent specific objectives in the field of curriculum, stages or problems of teaching and learning. In concert with the goals of the school, they help contextualize the achievement indicators, by suggesting issues to be analyzed. They may be evaluated based on four achievement levels that are an integral part of each achievement indicator.

The school work plan plays a major role in this process and school must work out the monitoring process. The aim is to cover all major fields during a three-year period, but if this is impossible, one must be able to build on the conclusions drawn by the results in the school achievement process. It may happen that the answer to the question "What do we do now" may be "We wont do anything". It may not be perfect but the achievement in this aspect can be considered of an acceptable standard and there may be issues that need to be analyzed. In all these cases, your standards and the paper on quality must:

- Acknowledge the strongest points of the school progress
- Identify the levels of success in various fields
- Identify the needs for development, priorities and set the objectives.

To decide "What do we do now" it is better to choose a selected number of priorities that may fall under attainable and measurable objectives: 6 for the secondary schools and 3 or 4 for the elementary school, for the secondary school departments or special units. The starting point for the selected priorities would be the school goals and must:

- Balance development and level-keeping
- Include local and national priorities in the cycle
- Relate with the level of priorities of the departments/subjects, at school
- Direct towards a clear action plan

Reporting on standards and quality for some schools is a known procedure and should be an integral part of the process of development and self-assessment. The reporting should encompass a three-year cycle and should be discussed at the school community.

Which are the major fields and the achievement indicators to be used during the process of self-evaluation?

There are 7 major fields linked to the main functional aspects of the work at school.

These major fields are:

Curricula
Achievements
Teaching and Learning
Student Support
Ethics
Resources
Management, Governance and Quality Assurance

The major field of the achievement indicators has a number of indicators

e.g. **Field:** *Teaching and Learning*   3.1. Quality of the Teaching process
has 5 indicators   3.2 Quality of student learning
          3.3 Meeting students' needs
          3.4 Evaluation as part of Teaching
          3.5 Parent interview

Themes   *Every indicator has certain themes*

e.g. Indicators: *quality of the process*   - Level and adaptability of the methods
of teaching has three themes   including home work
          - Clarity and objectivity of teacher's exhibits and
          explanations
          - Quality of the teacher-parent dialogue

Levels: the quality to be observed in each theme may be assessed based on four achievement levels

                              Levels

4. Very good   - high effectiveness
3. Good   - effectiveness associated with weaknesses
2. Fair   - some important weaknesses
1. Unsatisfactory   - poor performance

Illustrations	each theme is illustrated in 2 levels (level 4: very good, and level 2: fair) pointing out the issues to be discussed
e.g: Quality of teacher-student dialogue	Teachers collaborate effectively with… Teacher-student debate encourage learning Teacher contribution is encouraged and considered valuable Teachers' questions are sharp and student answers… All students must get involved When there are learning difficulties, efforts are made to…

All that is presented above has been piloted in 14 school at 11 districts. The project "School Self-evaluation" is part of the program on quality assurance in education all over the country. In concert with other projects such as "Enhancing the National Inspectorate of Graduate Education" and "The New Advisory Role of the Education Directorates in the Districts", "School Self-evaluation" completes the tableau of the partnership of all actors interested in assuring and improving the quality of our education system. The aim is to institutionalize such actions that would see education in our country as part of the contemporary development of education in the world.

The project "School Self-evaluation" started its implementation in some of the schools in our country by the end of the year 2002. It was proceeded by a long, careful and professional work to explain the concept of quality assurance, to know the best experiences in the western countries and identify the experience that would be most suitable for our country's conditions. Particular importance has the visit of the leading staff of MASH in Scotland on January 2000, which marks the beginning of the process of institutionalization of quality assurance for the Albanian education. One part of it, is the consensus to implement 20 achievement indicators out of 33 implemented in Scotland.

Year 2001 marks the beginning of the implementation of the project "School Self-evaluation". The decision to begin self-evaluation in the Field of Teaching and Learning by using the achievement indicator - Quality of Teaching - was emotionally but optimistically received.

The first training witnessed that self-evaluation is welcomed in our schools. It showed that this process takes time, requires energy, and financial resources. The importance lies in that that we should be aware that self-evaluation addresses the essence of the process of Teaching and Learning; that school should become aware of its responsibility in assuring and increasing quality and in exercising responsibility; that school is not alone in this process and that there are other actors who profit from this experience. Soon it become obvious that, more then educational, the process of self-evaluation of the school represents a radical change of mentality, it is an effective partnership where everyone is mobilized for a higher quality of learning.

Nowadays we have a modest experience. We have groups of educators that work with passion. We have prepared a training module for self-evaluating the quality of teaching that is available to every school. We are in the process of preparing another module on Self-evaluation of the Quality of Learning. District education directorates have decided to involve in the process of self-evaluation with an even larger number of schools. The steps that we have taken show the necessity of collaboration and support from professional institutions. An ever-growing number of experts offer their collaboration. These indicators fill us with the hope that we following the right direction.

The expertise shows that the process of school improvement is a life-long process: *if it starts it will never stop*. In the course of years, the school will pass through various stages of the process of improvement based on the conditions and aiming greater achievements for all students. The continuation of the process is easier then its initiation as now the school and community have their own experience. The self-evaluation structures are functioning and everyone has a better understanding of the responsibilities. Foundations are set for an elaborate student profile. Undoubtedly these factors minimize the time to perform other tasks but it can be noticed an increasing productivity.

Finally, school results involved in a life-long cycle of improvement. It is obvious that this new cycle will be more successful then the old one. There a time when school must return in its initial process. There is nothing else to do but wish to the school: *success in the new cycle*.

Annex: Seminar Agenda

SEMINAR

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

6-7 December 2001

With participation of experts from:

Czech Republic, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo

The emphasis on outcomes …implies new roles for all actors: the students, teachers and school principals, the central and local school administration, agencies responsible for the collection of statistical data about the school system, and educational planners and decision-makers.

Topics and Agenda

December 6, 2001

08.00 – 10.00	R e g i s t r a t i o n
10:00 - 10:30	Welcome address and the Conference Theme
	Chairman
10:30 - 11:00	1 Large Scale Assessment and Educational Policy in Albania
	- **Vasillaq Zoto, Senior Adviser on Education/Soros Network**
11:00 - 11:30	2 Education assessment in Albania
	- Shpresa Petrela, National Evaluation Center, Director
11:30 - 12:00	*C o f f e e b r e a k*
12:00 - 13:30	3 Educational Indicators and evaluation of school performance (Discussion group on National Assessment)
	- Nikoleta Mita, Tirana University
13:30 - 15:00	*L u n c h*
15:00 - 15:30	1 Preschool Education Standards
	- Pranvera Kamani, MASH
15:30 - 16:00	2 Program & staff evaluation in preschool education

-   **Ilir Duka, AEDP-SOROS**

16:00 - 17:00   3 Content Standards in primary school
                                     Presentation and discussions
                                -   **Marjana Sinani & Mimoza Gjokutaj, IPS**

<u>December 7, 2001</u>
09:00 - 09:20   1 Preschool Educational Indicators
                                 - Erleta Mato, Education Expert
09:20 - 09:40   2 Integration of the Albanian Education Indicators with the

                                   OECD Education indicators
                                 - Besa Peçi, MOES
09:40 - 09:55   3 PISA/OECD Programme in Albania (Discussion group on
                                   PISA/OECD Programme in participant countries)
                                 - Perparim Shera, National Evaluation Center
09:55 - 10:15   4 University Entrance Exams (Discussion group)
                                 - Rezana Lati, National Evaluation Center
10:15 - 10:25   5 School Self-evaluation
                                 - Vladimir Pasku, AEDP-SOROS
                                 - Neritan Babamusta, IPS
10:25 - 10:30   6 Concluding remarks
10:30 - 12:00   School Model visits
12:30 - 14:00   L u n c h
14:00 - 17:00   Meeting Tour in Kruja
19:00   Farewell dinner