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Non Formal Education and Human Resource Development in Kosovo

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to assess the development of non-formal education in Kosovo and its impact in the educational development of individuals in particular and in the general development of human resources in Kosovo. The research covers the progress with this type of educational attainment and provides an overview of interrelated factors such as social, economic, political, cultural, educational, historical, etc. In the majority of European Union' countries, non-formal education is recognized as a core element of lifelong learning and an effective way for preparing individuals in facing and overcoming everyday challenges. The Human Development Index (HDI) lists Kosovo among medium human development countries, but the lowest among countries of Europe. The HDI is not measured systematically in Kosovo. The latest HDI measurement dates 2004 and ranks Kosovo with an index of 0.734. The figure is extracted from components such as life expectancy index, education attainment index and adjusted GDP index.

Kosovo is facing enormous challenges in its economic development and it is actually labelled as the poorest state in Europe, comparable to countries in Africa. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2007 was merely € 1'573 and the economic growth is quite slow, with a growth of only 5.4 percent marked in 2008.

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In addition, the education attainment doesn't paint a good picture neither. Whereas primary school enrolment is high (95 percent), secondary enrolment (75 percent) and tertiary enrolment (16 percent) are quite low. The main problems

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encountered are retention and high drop-out rates, but also quality of teaching and inadequate schools. Education attainment is particularly of concern for certain specific categories of the population such as women and members of minority communities. Illiteracy is an enormous concern with 2.3 percent of men and 10.2 percent of women below 15 years illiterate.

Keywords: Non-Formal Education, development, Human Resource, Impact

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Introduction

It is well known that the first step to successful human capital management is to acquire the human capital necessary to support the business plan. This requires that the firm has employees with the necessary skills and motivation to perform an efficient job. In this context, there are two options that the firm can adopt: either to hire employees who already have the necessary skills and motivation, or to provide the training necessary to help employees, either new or current, to develop these skills.

Non-Formal Education is, essentially, a value-addition activity undertaken by an organization to enrich the value of its core assets, namely, its people. It plays a vital role in enhancing the efficiency, productivity and performance of the employees. It is a learning process that helps employees acquire new knowledge and the skills required to perform their present jobs efficiently

In this world of growing uncertainty both the employer and employee have a responsibility for improving skill levels. One of the features of working life today is that education and training is acquired at the start, it will almost certainly become redundant or obsolete during the same working lifetime

“Education is very important for the prosperity of our society and for growth, innovation and progress in Europe. The swift changes and the transformation of today’s world represent a big challenge for the education system that needs to adapt constantly to socio-economic changes of society. Today’s education system needs to be a match for the demands of the 21st century which result in perpetual life-learning processes, in mobility and in challenges for the global knowledge-based economy.” (Cedefop 2011).

Despite the increasing effects on training of organizational employees by organizations, there is still limited literature on human resource development issues in developing countries (Debrah & Ofori 2006, 440) and increasing concerns

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from organizational customers towards low quality services in the different sectors.

Key definitions

To manage an organization both large and small requires staffing them with competent personnel. The formal educational system does not adequately teach specific job skills for a position in a particular organization. As a result, many require extensive training to acquire the necessary SKAC to be able to make substantive contribution towards the organization's growth, (Barron and Hagerty 2001). **Companies provide the largest part of non-formal learning activities in almost all countries.**

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Economic triggers of Kosova

Despite modest progress, Kosovo continues to be a poor country, the poorest in Europe. In a situation where 43% of the people are unemployed and more than one third of the population lives below the poverty line, emigration is still seen as a lifeline for both, the emigrants and their relatives back home.

The importance of migrants' remittances for the economy is best understood when one compares and contrasts them with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) as share of GDP. In 2011, remittances amounted to 14% of GDP, and were far more significant than FDI or ODA, amounting to 7.8% and 8.6% of GDP, respectively.

A context marked with poor rule of law and infrastructure, high corruption and organized crime, is necessarily not appealing to foreign investors, hence the FDI figure above is that low. However, sentiment to the country and close family ties has led many diaspora members to invest in Kosovo. Nowadays, policy-makers in Kosovo consider diaspora entrepreneurs as the most potential and imminent investors.

Socio-cultural triggers

Among the most pertinent considerations are those that relate to the significance of family and kinship, as well as cultural values and norms that determine and legitimate the actions and behaviors of people in societies. In the context of

Kosovo, family and kinship have a great importance and this explains why the diaspora has continued contributing extensively throughout decades. To date, the diaspora continues to serve as an important safety net, providing for the subsistence of families, preserving Kosovo's fragile stability and impeding social tension.

On the other hand, cultural values of recognition and reward are deeply entrenched in this society. This emphasizes how crucial it is for public organizations in Kosovo, particularly the ones at the local level (considering they are the primary ones to interact with diaspora members) to modify their approaches and attitudes, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided to the diaspora community.

A specific demographic feature of Kosovo

A specific demographic feature of the country is its very young population, with over 60% of the population below the age of 25- and related specific challenge-unemployment in the age group 15-24 is over 63%. Moreover, Kosovo is also recognized as one of the poorest countries in Europe, with a high poverty ratio and huge unemployment, in average of 43 %. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare records report around 334 595 registered unemployed, 93% of which have been unemployed for a long time.

About 47% of this group is female. The educational level of the unemployed is quite concerning. About 72% of the registered unemployed have only a basic level of education, namely only the primary education. State-funded employment trainings usually address the age group 25-39 and cover about 44%. In a country with generally a low number of individuals with higher education, about 16%, and a poorly developed private sector, the employment prospects are not that promising.

Legal basis for Non-Formal Education

The law requires that training and education programs are in compliance with international standards. The Republic of Kosovo has already approved the Law on Adult Education and Training, Law No. 02/L, promulgated on 07.09.2005, which from a legal perspective considers non-formal education equally important (MEST). Non-formal education in Kosovo is developing slowly. While in developed countries, non-formal education consists of about 2-3% of overall education activities, the figures for Kosovo are concerning, with only 0.2% non-formal education (Getting to Lisbon).

Important dimensions of Non-formal Education

Non-formal education has two important dimensions: on one hand is the need of the individual for personal and professional development.(Roadmap of Kosovo).

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The second important dimension is the capacity of the education system to keep up with technological developments and offer the required trainings that are in line with the needs of the emerging labor market (Krasniqi, Islam 2006).

Research Results

The development of non-formal education in Kosovo increased the opportunities for human resource development. The interest of employers to send their staff in sessions of non-formal education is ever on the increase, and overall the number of individuals attending various forms of professional development has increased. In the aftermath of the Kosovo conflict, non-formal education has developed through recognizable phases. Immediately in the post-war period, non-formal education was focused on foreign languages and information technology. The focus resulted from an increased presence of the international community as well as new technology programs and developments.

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