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Usage of Demographical Population
Trends and Statistics in Public Policy in
Kosovo

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Abstract

This project investigates the usage of statistical data and demographical population trends in the process of policy formulation by the decision makers in Kosovo. On a larger scale, this study aims to explore whether policy makers in Kosovo are following the practice of evidence-based policy making, and if not, what are the reasons behind it. Thus, it seeks to investigate whether there are any challenges to evidence-based policy making and based on those challenges make recommendations that would improve the policy making process in Kosovo. Specifically, this project investigates education policy making in Kosovo and the challenges that evidence providers and decision makers in this field face in adopting evidence-based policy making.

The research is based on qualitative research methods—primary and secondary research. Through secondary research (literature review) data were gathered from different evidence providers and decision makers such as Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Pedagogical Institute of Kosovo to be used for analysis and comparison. For this report, primary research was conducted, as well. Eight interviews and eight questionnaires were carried out with evidence providers and decision makers in the field of education policy making.

The research findings show that decision makers in Kosovo do not base policies on evidence (statistics, demographics, etc.). In addition, the main challenges to evidence-based policy making were found to be lack of experience, lack of political will, lack of reliable data, lack of resources, and lack of cooperation and coordination.

To improve the current situation, certain recommendations are provided. The main one is to institutionalize evidence-based policy making through legal acts that require its usage. Further, cooperation and information exchange with regards to good practices of evidence-policy making should be promoted. Other recommendations are to increase transparency in policy and decision making, encourage cooperation and feedback between decision makers and evidence providers within specific fields (e.g. education), improve data-collection systems and methods of official statistics, and encourage evidence providers to make the data available.
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1. Problem Statement

The aim of this project is to examine the usage of statistical data and demographical population trends in policy formulation by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. The main drive for this study comes from the fact that formulation of policies based on evidence has proven to be a success in the region and has played a remarkable role in developing countries. In Kosovo such positive results have not been visible, especially in the field of education. Education has its particular importance in public policy since it is considered the basis of other fields. That is why evidence-based policy making should be the norm in such relevant fields as education.

In addition, this study seeks to explore whether policy makers in Kosovo are following the practice of evidence-based policy making. Further, it investigates challenges that decision makers and evidence providers face in adopting and contributing to evidence-based policy making in Kosovo and make recommendations that would help to improve the policy making process and, consequently, result in policies that would benefit the society. Considering the broad scope of policy making and the fields it comprises as well as the importance of education compared to other fields, this study is concentrated in education policy making.

2. Literature Review

Demographical population trends and statistics are commonly used in public policy and they are considered the base upon which policies are formulated. To formulate policy, evidence, such as statistical data and demographic trends, is essential. Through statistical data, policy makers can make informed choices. Similarly, demographics have played an important role in policy formulation. For instance, demographic analyses have raised awareness in the world regarding public policy issues, such as pensions and health care, by pointing out the trend of an aging population. For that reason, ‘evidence-based policy making’ is a new and important term used to explain policies that are formulated based on sound statistical evidence.\(^\text{1}\) Nevertheless,

\(^{1}\) Scott, 2005. *Measuring up to the measurement problem: The role of statistics in evidence-based policy-making.*, p.1
‘evidence-based policy making’ is not always simple and straightforward. There are challenges that might hinder it and lead to policies that are not based on evidence.

Therefore, this chapter will be dedicated in helping the reader understand better the practice of evidence-based policy making, its importance in developing countries, regional success stories, as well as its usage in the process of policy making in Kosovo

2.1 The Policy Making Process

Public Policy and specifically policy formulation are subject to numerous discussions as they affect social, economic, political, as well as other fields, mainly due to the complex processes involved in decision making as well as different interests involved in both, Public Policy as a science and policy formulation as a process. Public Policy is defined by Anderson\(^2\) as “[a] purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern.”\(^3\)

A remarkable change in terms policy formulation in 21\(^{st}\) century was the increased influence of governmental and non-governmental organizations, special interest groups, and individuals in government’s decisions.\(^4\) That was achieved through publication of evidence by these organizations and its usage in policy making by decision makers, or what is known as ‘evidence-based policy making.’\(^5\) The term evidence-based policy making became eminent during 1997 in Great Britain, when the Labour government led by Tony Blair decided on using the philosophy ‘what matters is what works.’\(^6\) What has also contributed to the increased importance of evidence-based policy making is the increased number of individuals, among the decision makers and public, who are educated, accessibility of statistics, demographics and other data,

\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Nutley, Davies & Peter, 2000; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005.
\(^6\) Nutley, Davies & Peter, 2000, op. cit.,p.1; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, op. cit., p. 1
increased number of organizations conducting quality and scientific research, and increased importance on government’s accountability.  

2.2 What Is Evidence-Based Policy (EBP)?

Evidence-based policy (EBP) is defined by Sutcliffe and Court as a “discourse or set of methods which informs the policy process, rather than aiming to directly affect the eventual goals of the policy.” The purpose of EBP is to promote rational policy making and analysis while its importance stands on the fact that it contributes in achieving better policy outcomes and holds the government responsible for those results. However, to better understand EBP, one should define the term ‘evidence.’ In public policy, according to Scott and Baehler, this term is equivalent to the results coming from empirical research.

Evidence-based policymaking uses a variety of research methods and types of evidence. Some of them mentioned most frequently in the literature are: “quantitative evidence and statistics, qualitative evidence such as observational studies, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, quasi experimental studies, descriptive evidence, expert opinion, and experiential studies” (for more details regarding the types of evidence see Figure 1)

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9 Sutcliffe & Court, 2005, op. cit., p. iii.
Figure 1: Components of the evidence base

As Figure 1 suggests, evidence consists of statistics and other similar data. Considering that this study is concentrated on the usage of statistics and demographics as evidence in policy making, their definitions and importance should be stated. Demography is defined by Scheidel as “the study of the size, structure and development of human populations.” In regards to public policy, information regarding the structure of the population, such as age and sex, are among the most important. Based on the analysis of such data (demographics), as well as demographic changes and trends, policies can be formulated.

Similar to demographics, statistical analysis is the base upon which policies are created. According to Michael Miller, “[the] object of statistics is information [while] the objective of statistics is the understanding of information contained in data” To be able to interpret and

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13 AbouZahr, 2011, op. cit., p. 5.
15 Shrestha & Heisler, 2011, The changing demographic profile of the United States., par. 3.
formulate policies based on statistical data one should have statistical literacy. Statistical literacy is a “term used to describe the ability of an individual or a group to understand and comprehend statistics.”¹⁷ Hence, statistical literacy is considered to be essential for decision makers. They have to be able to find data, collect, and use them properly, as well as critically analyze and accurately interpret them.¹⁸ Thus, statistics themselves are not useful in the process of policy formulation or decision making without an understanding of them by policy makers. What is needed is the correct analysis and interpretation of these numbers to create evidence.¹⁹

**2.3 Evidence-based Policy Making and Its Importance**

Evidence-based policymaking, as a modern practice that has gained much support among policy makers, promotes the usage of factual evidence in public policy formulation.²⁰ There is plenty literature on evidence-based policy making and its importance. Out of this extended literature, few findings that were relevant to our research are mentioned in this section.

The usage of data in public policy, or what is known as evidence-based policymaking, is seen as crucial in formulating credible, transparent, and functional policies, as well as in monitoring and evaluating them.²¹ In addition to being important for the process of policy making, it is also considered important as a promoter of democracy.²² There are two reasons, which are cited more often in the literature, why evidence-based policymaking is considered a promoter of democracy—those are, transparency and accountability.²³ Firstly, it “enhances the transparency of policymaking,” meaning that it enables citizens to see the basis upon which the policies were formulated.²⁴ Secondly, “evidence-based policymaking enhances the accountability of

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¹⁸ Ibid. p. 10.
¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 25-26
²⁰ Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, op. cit., p.iii; UNSW Press, (n.d.), op. cit., p.5; Brian Head, (n.d), University of Queensland, Evidence-based policy: principles and requirements., p.13
²¹ Scott, 2005, op. cit., p.35
policymakers,” meaning that the evidence used by policy makers is available to the citizens, who in turn can monitor the performance of the government.25

There is also extensive literature on the role and importance of evidence-based policymaking in developing countries. According to Sutcliffe and Court (2006) and Scott (2005), evidence-based policy making is even more important in developing countries.26 The reasons for this are “the increasingly sophisticated methods of policy analysis that require the improvement of evidence-based policy making, increasing public demand for data, and high costs of making wrong public policy decisions.”27 Another reason cited is that EBP has larger potential to make changes in developing countries rather than in developed ones.28 However, EBP is not always used in developing countries. Hyden, Court and Mease (2004)29 and Sutcliffe and Court (2006)30 in their respective studies mention few reasons to explain why this is the case: (1) there are less resources to be used for research due to financial restraints; (2) political freedoms and accountability might be limited and weak (3) lack of freedom of expression of public, media, and academia. A study in Sri Lanka by Hornby and Perera (2002) showed that factors that limit the usage of evidence in policy making are: “the lack of performance management within many developing countries; the lack of indicators at the political level or which monitor service provision; the lack of institutional mechanisms; and the lack of ongoing evaluation.”31

Even though EBP is not a common practice in developing countries, to be able to solve problems, especially economic ones, such as poverty, it is suggested that they should adopt it.32 Two examples that illustrate the importance of EBP in developing countries are mentioned by Sutcliffe and Court (2005; 2006). The first one shows how the usage of factual data improved people’s lives. In Tanzania, the government was able to reduce infant mortality in two pilot districts (2000-2003) by deciding to reform health service based on household surveys that they

26 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4; Scott, 2005, op. cit.
27 Scott, 2005, op. cit., pp.35, 47-48
28 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, op. cit., p.iii
30 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4
32 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4
had conveyed. The second example shows how the negligence from the side of government that did no use evidence to solve problems resulted in destruction. Many countries have ignored the evidence regarding HIV/AIDS, what causes it and how to prevent it, thus worsening the crisis. This literature has drawn some conclusions that may be relevant for our research. Considering that Kosovo is the case upon which the whole research is based, by acknowledging that there is a higher need for the usage of evidence-based policy making in developing countries, we also acknowledge that there is also a need to base policies on evidence in Kosovo, too.

Same as in developing countries, in developed ones, EBP is not always considered a common practice. While as a theory it is supported, in practice it is not used by politicians. Some authors suggest that policy making, more often than not, is affected by different interest groups. This comes as a result of politicians who do not base policies in data but rather try to please a particular group and sometimes even the public in general, or try to avoid opposition. In addition, many of their decisions are based on “their own values and political ideologies.” As a result, most literature on the usage of factual data in policy making suggests that “politicians will tend to balance any scientifically-based evidence with other sources of information, including personal experiences, values, political ideologies, …media,” public opinion, culture, political goals, etc.

So, why are policies sometimes not based on evidence? Even though much support exists for the EBP, utilizing it in policy formulation is sometimes challenging. This happens mainly because evidence, which comes from different sources and sometimes is inconsistent, does not directly lead to a certain policy. Furthermore, lack of EBP is a consequence of politics, especially political actors, whose interests affect policy formulation and sometimes cannot be disregarded.

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33 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, op. cit., p.iii
34 Sutcliffe and Court, 2006, op. cit., p.4; Sutcliffe and Court, 2005, op. cit. p.iii
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Malik, 2010, Establishing the health information needs of Ministries and Ministers of Health: Findings from a literature review, as cited in Carla AbouZahr, 2011, p.7.
by the policy makers.\textsuperscript{41} Other actors that might influence policy making process include think-tanks, NGOs, public at large and others. And the last factor in this context cited by Nutley et al.\textsuperscript{42} is the different interests followed by investigators and those who generate data, on the one hand, and policy and decision makers, on the other.

\section*{2.4 Research Conducted Abroad}

There is a considerable literature on the usage of evidence-based policy making and its importance in the world, and particularly in Europe. Out of this extensive literature, there are many success stories where the usage of evidence in policy making has produced desired results.

In their respective articles Salah, Djokovic-Papic, Petrovic, Jankovic and Vasic\textsuperscript{43} showed how data distributed by DevInfo system has been used in policymaking and budget planning in Moldova and Serbia. In Moldova, through DevInfo, a bulletin was produced which consisted of a strategy to reduce poverty.\textsuperscript{44} This bulletin was published regularly in Moldavian newspapers and government’s websites. Based on the data published, in 2006, government took the decision to invest 21\% more in the social sectors.\textsuperscript{45}

Same as in Moldova, in Serbia, too, DevInfo has provided great results. In this country, DevInfo consists of different indicators that are used to oversee Millennium Development Goals.\textsuperscript{46} Additionally, they are used to monitor the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the National Plan of Action for Children. This system was also used at the municipal level in the process of policy making.\textsuperscript{47} One of the best examples where DevInfo has produced results is that of the municipality of Pirot.\textsuperscript{48} Through the system, decision makers were able to notice social trends that could not be noticed otherwise, such as the number of children out of education.\textsuperscript{49} DevInfo revealed that many children, and particularly disabled and Roma children, were overlooked.\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{41} Scott & Baehler, 2010, op. cit. p. 54.
\bibitem{42} Nutley et al., 2000, op. cit. p. 317
\bibitem{43} UNICEF, 2008, Bridging the gap: The role of monitoring and evaluation in evidence-based policy making., p.12
\bibitem{44} UNICEF, 2008, op. cit., p.12
\bibitem{45} Ibid.
\bibitem{46} Ibid.
\bibitem{47} Ibid.
\bibitem{48} Ibid.
\bibitem{49} Ibid.
\bibitem{50} UNICEF, 2008, op. cit., p.12
\end{thebibliography}
This led to the creation of a team consisting of education experts and Roma representatives, who are working to improve the education system and make it more inclusive for these two marginalized groups.\textsuperscript{51} Another usage of DevInfo by the Government of Serbia was during the budget allocation. Government decided to increase funds when DevInfo data showed that there is a growing demand to improve child social services.\textsuperscript{52} Because of all these data and the indicators they provided, government decided to provide 7 times more funds dedicated to children in just two years.\textsuperscript{53}

2.5 The Case of Kosovo

Considering the broad scope of policy making and the fields it comprises, this research is limited to one field. Since education is considered to be the basis for other fields and its specific importance in developing countries, the researcher decided to analyze education policy making in Kosovo.

2.5.1 The Education System in Kosovo

The education system in Kosovo consists of pre-school (children aged 0-3), pre-primary (children aged 5-6), primary (5 years), lower secondary education (4 years), upper secondary (three years), and tertiary education. Compulsory education extends from primary to lower and upper-secondary education (1-12).\textsuperscript{54}

In the academic year 2012/2013 in the pre-university education, according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 418,352 students were enrolled.\textsuperscript{55} Out of this number 5,389 were enrolled in pre-schools, 20,317 in pre-primary, 288,378 in primary and lower-secondary, and 104,268 in upper secondary (See Figure 2).\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} UNICEF, 2008, op. cit., p.12
\textsuperscript{54} Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), (n.d.), Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016., p.
\textsuperscript{55} Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), (n.d), Shënime statistikore 2012/13, Arsimi Parauniversitar. p.1
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
The budget allocated for MEST in 2013 was 45,705,848 €, which is 3.8 percent of the total budget allocated for the central government (1,204,496,976 €). While the budget dedicated to education on both, central and local level, was around 13 % of the total budget (1.5 billion) (See Figure 3). According to the World Bank (WB), education is one of the largest government expenditures; however, when compared against regional standards, it is still considered to be small. Because of the high number of students enrolled (young population), government’s spending per student is quite low.

**Figure 3**: Education spending (central and in total)

Source: Ministry of Finance

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57 Ibid.
58 Ministry of Finance, Budget of Republic of Kosovo-Central Budget
60 Ministry of Finance, op. cit.
Main problems in the education system mentioned in reports and studies are: high level of dropouts in secondary schools, schools operating in double shifts, and poor school infrastructure.\(^{61}\) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in its report (“The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011 -2016”)\(^{62}\) mentions also some of the problems that the education system in Kosovo is facing. The main issues are: inclusion of minorities and children with disabilities and special educational needs, gender issues, over-crowded schools, double-shifts, lack of child/friendly school environments, etc.

2.5.2 Decision Makers and Evidence Providers in Education Policy

Among the main evidence providers in education policy making are: Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Riinvest, Kosovo Education Center (KEC), Kosovo Pedagogical Institute (KPI), Parliamentary Research Unit (NDI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), schools, municipalities, etc. While the main decision makers are the Parliament, MEST, and Municipalities.

The main source of evidence is the Census on Population and Housing that was conducted in 2011, which contributed much in generating new statistical data about Kosovar population. Another source of data on education is Education Management and Information System (EMIS), which is a system supported initially by the World Bank (WB) and now GIZ. The main aim of this system is to “[build] capacities within MEST and schools’ authorities in charge of data collection.”\(^{63}\)

2.5.3 Research/Studies Conducted In Kosovo

There is limited literature with regards to the usage of evidence in policy making in Kosovo and its importance. Despite the limited research, there are few publications dealing with the quality

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of statistics and government’s accountability and expenditures. Considering that the project is concentrated in the usage factual data (evidence) in education policy making, literature concerning this topic was reviewed, despite the fact that there were only few such studies.

The first study by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency/Sida (2012) explains the problems that Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) is facing. One of them is lack of independence—institutional and budgetary. According to Sida, another problem that KAS is facing is lack of demand for data from government. Most demand for data comes from international organizations and agencies.

Further, according to Sida, quality, reliability, and coverage of data are still below the EU standards. They stated that KAS has problems with the “coverage of the sampling frames and the data collection [that] is not of sufficient quality.” KAS has always experienced such weaknesses in coverage; that is why KAS outsourced some sectors of data production. Education Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) that is controlled by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), represents such example. It was also pointed out “that management direction, skills and training are among the central weaknesses of the institution.” Reasons for this have been stated to be unsound leadership and frequent changes of CEO.

Other studies, with regards to statistical data in education, are also limited. A research study conducted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2011 showed that there is lack of reliable data about school dropouts. The main reason behind this is the inappropriate supervising tools by schools and other agencies related to education. While MEST claims that “official dropout rate in compulsory education has ranged from 0.6 to 0.8 per

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64 Schmidt et al., 2012, Sida, Evaluation of Co-operation with the Statistical Office of Kosovo., p.9
65 Schmidt et al., 2012, op. cit., p.9
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p.11
68 Ibid., p.11
69 Ibid., p.10
70 Ibid., p.12
71 Ibid., p.12
73 Ibid.
cent since 2006, largely under the regional average,” the research carried by OSCE found that official statistics regarding school dropouts were “unreliable and incomplete.” 74

What is more, 37 per cent of schools that were surveyed by OSCE claimed that they do not collect data on dropouts or have not experienced any dropouts in the last three years. 75 There is also incompatibility between the data provided by the departments of education in municipalities and what schools reported to OSCE; thus, “demonstrating flawed data collection methods and a lack of information sharing between institutions.” 76 One such example is that of municipality of Prishtinë, where the director of the department of education claimed that in a specific school there were few cases of students who dropped out of school, while the director of that school claimed that those students were still attending the classes. 77 “The failure to disaggregate enrolment data also makes it difficult to draw any conclusions from the information that is available, such as the scale and causes of dropout and nonattendance trends, both in general and amongst any disproportionately affected groups or communities in various localities” stated OSCE. 78

In terms of evidence-based policymaking in education, the same study by OSCE found out that policy making is more based on personal and anecdotal beliefs rather than facts. 79 For instance, many schools believed that there is a low number of students leaving the school, thus they did not keep record of the dropout statistics at all: “about one-third of the schools surveyed that reported not keeping any data on school dropouts indicated their reason for not doing so was the supposedly low number of dropouts in their respective schools.” 80 According to OSCE “the poor quality of education data demonstrates the inadequacy and unreliability of monitoring methods used by the MEST and municipal institutions to track school dropouts and non-enrolment.” 81

74 Ibid., p.3
75 Ibid., p.4
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., p.5
80 Ibid., p.5
81 OSCE, 2012, p.5
Another report, specifically related to education policy making, is the Torino Process 2012, which deals with Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{82} This report emphasizes the lack of evidence-based policy making in Kosovo and points out that the main reasons why this is the case are lack of research instruments and mechanisms to produce evidence.\textsuperscript{83} Other studies concerning data are concentrated on their collection, quality, and improvement, and to some extent they mention the lack of evidence-based policy making, but none of them studies specifically the usage of statistics, demographics or other types of evidence in public policy in Kosovo.

3. Research Conducted

This section explains the research methods used in this project. It is separated in to four sections that explain the research questions, hypotheses, data gathering methods, and methods of analysis that were used.

3.1 Research Questions

In this project, the researcher is trying to answer two research questions. The first question is: Do policy makers in Kosovo use statistics and demographical population trends (evidence) in policy making. While, the second question is: What are the main challenges in the evidence-based policy making process in Kosovo.

It is important to answer the first questions since policy making affects the country in general and people’s lives. If policies are not based on evidence, then decision makers are formulating policies that do not address the current issues properly. Regional studies mentioned in Literature Review section showed how important evidence-based policy making was for countries similar to Kosovo and how it produced positive social and economic changes.\textsuperscript{84} Furthermore, as it was suggested in the reviewed literature, policies based on evidence are even more important in developing countries since the cost of making mistakes by not basing them on evidence is higher

\textsuperscript{82} ETF Kosovo Team, 2012, Torino Process 2012 Kosovo.,
\textsuperscript{83} ETF Kosovo Team, 2012, Torino Process 2012 Kosovo.,
\textsuperscript{84} UNICEF, 2008; Sutcliffe and Court, 2006; Scott, 2005
than in developed countries.\textsuperscript{85} That is why, understanding whether policies in Kosovo are based on evidence is seen as important.

In addition, by answering the second question, one is able to recognize the challenges and thus address them. Few studies suggested that because of the challenges that decision makers and evidence providers face in terms of policy making and evidence providing, policy makers were unable to use evidence in policy formulation stage.\textsuperscript{86} That is why, identifying and understanding the challenges will help in providing recommendations that in turn would pave the way to decision makers to adopt evidence-based policy making.

### 3.2 Hypotheses of the Research

In this research project two hypotheses will be tested:

\textbf{Ha:} Decision makers in Kosovo do not base policies on evidence (such statistics and demographic trends).

\textbf{Ho:} There is no relationship between evidence and policy making.

\textbf{Ha:} The main challenges to evidence-based policy making in Kosovo are political influence, lack of coordination and cooperation among governmental agencies (evidence providers and decision makers), lack of resources, and lack of independent and reliable data.

\textbf{Ho:} There is no relationship between political influence, lack of coordination and cooperation among governmental agencies (evidence providers and decision makers), lack of resources, and lack of independent and reliable data and evidence-based policy making.

The bases for the hypotheses are found on the reviewed literature and researcher’s opinion about the current situation regarding policy making in Kosovo.

The first hypothesis is based on the studies/literature that suggests that policies in Kosovo are based more on anecdotal evidence rather than factual evidence and as such evidence-based

\textsuperscript{85} Scott, 2005, op. cit., pp.35, 47-48

\textsuperscript{86} ETF Kosovo Team, 2012; OSCE, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2012.
policy making in Kosovo is not adopted as a practice. ⁸⁷ One study even suggested that there is lack of demand for statistics from governmental organizations, suggesting that they are not used in policy making. ⁸⁸ Furthermore, examples mentioned in the reviewed literature as well as those observed by the researcher contributed to the basis of the hypothesis. ⁸⁹

The second hypothesis was based also on the reviewed literature which suggested that main challenges to evidence-based decision making are lack of financial independence that in turn leads to political influence, lack of coordination and cooperation among governmental agencies that has resulted in data that are different and inconsistent, as well as lack of independent and reliable data. ⁹⁰

### 3.3 Data

To test the hypotheses, a triangulation method that involves questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis was applied. Qualitative research, such as primary (field research) and secondary (desk research), were used.

Primary research consisted of in-depth interviews and questionnaires, while secondary research consisted of analysis and review of the existing literature and studies. This triangulate approach that involved data collection from three different methods provided the research with different perspectives and lowered the risk for any possible generalizations.

Publications and literature that was analyzed were mostly research conducted in the field of education policy making in the last 7 years. Literature that deals with the usage of evidence in education policy making in Kosovo was limited. That is why the researcher decided in conducting the questionnaires—to gather information about the latest research/studies in the field of education. The rest of the literature that was reviewed was used in the analysis part of the project, where the existing data and publications by evidence providers and policy makers in the previous years are compared to one another, to see whether there are any inconsistencies.

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⁸⁷ OSCE, 2012, p.5
⁸⁸ Schmidt et al., 2012, op. cit., p.9
⁸⁹ OSCE, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2012; ETF Kosovo Team, 2012.
⁹⁰ Schmidt et al., 2012; OSCE, 2012; ETF Kosovo Team, 2012.
The questionnaire and the interview questions can be found in Annex III, IV, and V. Interviews were chosen among other methods of qualitative research because of the flexibility they provide in gathering more detailed information and more perspectives. The purpose of the interviews was to see whether decision makers and evidence providers perceive policies as based on evidence and what they consider to be the main challenges in adopting evidence-based policy making in governmental agencies. All the individuals interviewed were provided with informed consent forms where they had to give their written permission that they understand the project and are willing to participate in it. Further they were informed that their confidentiality will be respected if they require so (Refer to Appendix I for the Consent Form).

3.3.1 Documentary Analysis

With respect to literature review (secondary research), different organizations (domestic and international) have been identified as potential sources. Their publications about education policies in Kosovo have been used to identify the main issues that exist as well as to formulate the hypotheses. They were also used to analyze the quality of evidence provided in the past few years. Literature that deals with the usage of evidence in education policy making in Kosovo was limited. However, there were few of them that were used in the research. Based on these publications on education policies, the researcher was able to identify decision makers and evidence providers in this field and contact them.

Few organizations, such as OSCE and Sida, whose publications were used in the project, were not contacted for the interviews and questionnaires, thus leaving space for the representation of other organizations/institutions. Additionally, the literature and data found through desk research were used in the analysis part of the project to see whether there are any inconsistencies in terms of statistics produced from one source to the other and also to see whether certain policies, identified by the researcher as important, were based in evidence. Finally data gathered through secondary research was used to identify the existing challenges to evidence-based policy making.
3.3.2 Questionnaires

A small-scale questionnaire was conducted with 8 evidence providers to gather information on their recent publications related to education policies that could not be found through desk research. Further, through questionnaires, the researcher was trying to learn more about the main fields that are researched, factors that affect the choice of topics, and to what extent does government base its policies in evidence. The questionnaire was a combination of open-ended questions and close-ended questions (see Appendix V). It was written in English and Albanian and send to the 10 identified evidence providers via e-mail. Out of 10 questionnaires, 8 were completed and returned.

3.3.3 Interviews

Lastly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 8 decision makers and evidence providers (See Appendix III and IV). Interviews were used to capture the perspectives of each actor.

The aim of these interviews was to assess whether policies, and particularly education policies, are based on evidence. Furthermore, through these interviews, the researcher tried to include more perspectives in the process of policy making and different experiences. Interviews were a tool to back up the documentary research findings and make up for the lack of sources in the field of policy making in Kosovo.

Because of timing issues, we asked 10 previously identified evidence providers and decision makers to participate in the interview via e-mail and received 8 interviews back (See Table 1). The interviews were conducted in English and Albanian. Those interviews that were conducted in Albanian had to be translated and transcribed in English. Few of the interviews were not realized because of the unavailability of potential interviewees and because few of them did not respond to the request.
Table 1: Names of the organizations/institutions for which interviewees work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the organization</th>
<th>GAP</th>
<th>NDI</th>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>KEC</th>
<th>Riinvest</th>
<th>MEST</th>
<th>MEST</th>
<th>KAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The following are the names of the expert who were interviewed and allowed for their name to be used in the project.

**Jeton Mehmeti**, Research Director at the Institute for Advanced Studies GAP

**Avni Zuka**, Program Officer at the National Democratic Institute

**Ismet Potera**, Kosovo Pedagogical Institute

**Dukagjin Pupovci**, Executive Director of the Kosovo Education Center

**Enver Mekolli**, Director of the Statistical Office at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

**Alban Hashani**, Research Director at Riinvest

### 3.3.4 Selection of the Participants

The research focuses on two groups of actors involved in the process of policy making. The first ones are the evidence providers, organizations/institutions/agencies that produce data, publish research and other evidence about education in Kosovo. As part of evidence providers, there are governmental and non-governmental organizations/agencies included. The second group involves decision makers, those individuals/agencies that formulate policies regarding education in Kosovo.

Decision makers with regards to education were considered all governmental agencies that are responsible for the formulation of education policies such as the Parliament of Kosovo, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and respective municipalities. While evidence providers were considered all non-governmental, governmental, and international organizations that produce evidence (data, research, reports, etc.).

To decide who should be interviewed from the pool of potential interviewees, a certain criteria had to be set.
a) Evidence Providers:

1. Has worked previously in a project or has published data/publications/research related to education

2. Works in a Governmental or non-governmental organization that produces data

b) Decision Makers

1. Has experience in education policy making

2. Work in a Governmental or non-governmental organization that deals with policy making

3.4 Methods of Analysis

The analysis of the data in this study will be conducted based on two methods. The first method is qualitative analysis of the data gathered through expert panel study of interviewees’ perceptions and questionnaires. Considering that studies regarding evidence-based policy making in Kosovo lack, expert panel study was considered as the most appropriate data gathering method. This method allows the researcher to tackle this issue that requires experts’ knowledge and gather data/information through their responses.

Further, data that were gathered from interviews and questionnaires were coded and later analyzed through qualitative method. The first step towards this analysis was data coding. Answers from the interviews and questionnaires were coded, so that those that were similar were grouped and labeled with a common term. Answers provided by the respondents to each particular question were grouped. The data were reviewed and coding categories were developed for Question 6 for decision makers and 7 for evidence providers (Refer to Appendix III and IV for the interview guides). Themes that were mentioned the most were considered as codes. During the analysis of the respondents’ answers, 19 codes were extracted. Out of 19 codes, 12 categories were created that were mutually exclusive and exhaustive (Refer to Appendix II for
the Code Book). Out of these 12 categories, 3 main themes were: lack of experience, lack of political will, and lack of reliable data.

The last step was the analysis of these data. The coded data were summarized to answer the research questions. In addition, these experts’ opinions were used to test the hypothesis and were compared to the results gathered through literature review.

The second method of analysis was meta-analysis of the data on enrolment rates from MEST/EMIS and KAS for primary and lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and VET schools. In this section, data obtained for enrolment of children in primary and lower-secondary schools from these two sources were compared. The aim of such comparison was to see assess the quality of data and see whether any inconsistencies exist and relate it to the answers of experts regarding the challenges in evidence-based policy making.

In addition to data on VET schools dropout number at the end of academic year 2010/2011, were analyzed. Besides the actual number of students, percentages of these enrolment data were calculated, to make the analysis and comparison of the data easier.

\[
\frac{\text{Students who dropped out of VET 10/11}}{\text{Students who dropped out of upper-secondary schools 10/11}}
\]

The percentages were calculated by taking the number of students that dropped out of the VET schools and was divided with the total number of students that dropped out of school in that respective year. The aim of this analysis is to see the percentage of students who dropped out of VET schools and see whether it is a problem and if it is tackled by the decision makers.

Other data gatherings that were subject to meta-analysis were data on the number of schools constructed 2001-2012, number of children enrolled in primary and lower-secondary schools 2004-2013, and data on migration of the population 1998-2003. These data were gathered to see the trends of the two variables (population movement and enrolment rates) and their relationship.
with the number of schools constructed. Findings from this case will show whether decision makers base policies on evidence.

The last case of meta-analysis is that of data on university enrolment rates and number of professors working in the universities. Data on enrolment number and number of professors were gathered for the University of Prishtina (2002-2012). In addition, student to professor ratio was calculated:

\[
\frac{\text{Number of Students in x Academic Year}}{\text{Number of Professors in x Academic Year}}
\]

These data were gathered and analyzed to see if the ratio student/professor is increasing or decreasing and if such trend is addressed properly by MEST in their policies.

4. Main Findings

This chapter is organized in two sections. The first section looks whether policies in Kosovo in general and education policies in particular are based on evidence. The findings in this section are based on other studies/literature and evidence providers and decision makers opinions. The second section looks at the challenges of evidence-based policy making in Kosovo, again, based on the findings from the research conducted.

4.1 Evidence-based Policy Making in Kosovo

The main finding from interviews, questionnaires, and meta-analysis was that policies in general and education polices in particular are not entirely based on evidence.

One example that shows the lack of evidence-based policy making in education policies is that of Vocational Education and Training schools. These types of schools are facing major problems, and one of them is the high level of drop-outs. What is more, this problem is not addressed by MEST in its strategy. According to the Torino Process-2012 Report, the drop-out rates for
vocational schools are high: “[d]rop-out rates are higher in VET than general upper-secondary schools”\(^91\)

Statistics from KAS show that such problem is present in VET schools. In the academic year 2010/2011, out of 108,503 students initially enrolled in upper-secondary schools, 48,991 were in gymnasiums and 59,512 were in VET schools.\(^92\) At the end of academic year 2,982 students dropped out of VET schools while 584 dropped out of gymnasiums.\(^93\) This shows that out of the total number of students who dropped out school (3.2%), 84 % were students from VET schools. Nonetheless, such problem is not mentioned by MEST. High drop-out rates are considered as an issue in general but not addressed specifically with regards to VET schools. According to MEST, most of the drop-out cases in the upper secondary level come from RAE communities and girls in the rural areas.\(^94\) This fact increases the importance of addressing this issue as soon as possible.

Another policy analyzed is the one regarding the construction of primary and lower-secondary schools and the basis on which it was formulated. Data on enrolment rates in primary education as well as migration trends are analyzed—to see if they are consistent with the number of schools built.

In the years 2003-2004 there were a large number of schools in Kosovo being built and reconstructed. Figure 2 shows the number of primary schools built from 2001 to 2012. If this table is presented as a graph, one is able to notice the peak of trend-line—that is, years 2003-2004 (See Figure 4). Most of these schools were built in rural areas.

\(^{91}\) ETF Kosovo Team, 2012, op. cit., p.29
\(^{92}\) Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011, Statistikat e Arsimit 2010-2011, pp. 70-74
Table 2: Number of primary and lower-secondary schools (2001-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>01/02</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>03/04</th>
<th>04/05</th>
<th>05/06</th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>08/09</th>
<th>09/10</th>
<th>10/11</th>
<th>11/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1071</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>1029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics\(^{95}\)

Figure 4: Trend of school constructions (2001-2012)

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics\(^{96}\)

During the same year when a large number of schools were being built, a wave of migration took place in Kosovo that resulted in a lot of people moving from rural to urban areas. During the wave of migration in Kosovo, a large number of people from those areas moved to larger cities, thus, leaving behind empty and unused schools.\(^{97}\) Data regarding the population movement were available at the time when such policies to construct schools in large scale were undertaken—that is, years 2004-2005 (Refer to Table 3).\(^{98}\)

\(^{95}\) Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Statistics on Education 2001-2013

\(^{96}\) Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Statistics on Education 2001-2013

\(^{97}\) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (n.d.), Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, p.68

\(^{98}\) Vathi and Black, 2007, Migration and Poverty Reduction in Kosovo, p.7
By comparing these two tables, one is able to notice that this policy contradicts with the evidence available. While evidence that was easily accessible at the Kosovo Agency of Statistics suggested that population was moving from rural to urban areas, MEST was continuing to construct schools that were not necessary. This example shows how government policies are often not formulated based on evidence. Such fallacy regarding the construction of schools was admitted even by MEST in their Education Strategy 2011-2016: “… [Some] rural schools that were renovated immediately after the war are now sparsely populated due to the fact that many of the residents of these communities did not return to their villages.” These statements support our hypothesis that decision makers in Kosovo do not base policies on evidence.

What is more, Figure 5 shows that despite a small decrease in the years 2005-2007, there has been an increasing trend in the construction of new schools in Kosovo. Same as previously, data on enrollment rates in primary schools suggest that such schools are not necessary. Table 4 shows the number of students enrolled in Primary Education, which in the last years has decreased significantly. Nonetheless, despite the decrease in the number of students enrolled in primary education, an increase in the number of schools in the years 2010-2012 is noticeable.

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Table 3: Lifetime Migrants and Recent Migrants (1998-2003) by Region in Thousands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of Birth</th>
<th>In-migrants</th>
<th>Out-migrants</th>
<th>Net-migrants</th>
<th>Migrated in last 5 years</th>
<th>Migrated out last 5 years</th>
<th>Net migrants 1998-2003</th>
<th>Total net migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gjakove</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>-9.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
<td>-11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjilan</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>-9.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrovica</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
<td>-12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peja</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prishtine</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferizaj</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Vathi and Black99

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99 Vathi and Black, 2007, op.cit., p.7
Table 4: Number of students enrolled in Primary Education (2004-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>327,207</td>
<td>322,180</td>
<td>324,614</td>
<td>326,911</td>
<td>322,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MEST/EMIS\textsuperscript{100}

This downward trend in children’s participation in primary and lower-secondary schools is presented better through the graph in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**: Participation of children in Primary Education

Source: MEST/EMIS\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Ministry of Education (MEST)/EMIS, Statistical Reports of 2001-2013

\textsuperscript{101} Ministry of Education (MEST)/EMIS, Statistical Reports of 2001-2013
Same as in 2003-2005, these data were available and could have been used by decision makers to see whether such schools are necessary.

Another example of a policy not based entirely on evidence is that of Higher Education planning, or more specifically high enrolment rates in the University of Prishtina (UP) and low number of professors teaching there. Table 5 shows the number of students enrolled in UP from 2002 to 2012 and the number of full-time and part-time professor in that period. Based on these data that were available at KAS and easily accessible, student to professor ratio was calculated and an increasing trend in this ratio was noticeable (See Figure 6).

Table 5: Number of students enrolled and teachers working in UP (2002-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of students enrolled</th>
<th>Number of professors</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>18,833</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>21.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>26,908</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>28,832</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>28.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>28,707</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>29.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>27,274</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>25.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>25,840</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>24.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>29,051</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>27.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>37,839</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>37.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>44,130</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>43.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>47,070</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>46.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{102} Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Statistics on Education 2001-2013
This means that instead of increasing the number of professors along with the number of students, decision makers are reducing the quality of the university by not providing the optimal working conditions. That is, a professor will be less available to help in the development of students. What is more, in the strategy of MEST for 2011-2016, increasing the number of students enrolled in public universities is one of the main goals, while increasing the number of professors in long-term is not considered as a policy option. This again is contradicting to the evidence that suggests that policies that would reduce the ratio are required since the quality of the University of Prishtina is at risk.

Furthermore, to conclude whether policies, and in particular education polices, are based on evidence, the researcher asked both evidence providers and policy makers about their beliefs. The main question was if they believe policies are based on evidence. All the interviewees declared that policies formulated by the government agencies are not always based on evidence, with exception of a decision maker who answered that policies of MEST are actually based on evidence.

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics

103 Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Statistics on Education 2001-2013
104 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (n.d.), Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, p.34
evidence. Nonetheless, when asked to name the main challenges and provide solutions, the same respondent was able to write few of them.

Most of the actors declared that the Government and the Parliament understand the importance of EBP and base their policies in evidence to some extent. Nonetheless, there are some based on assumptions and anecdotal evidence. The answer of one evidence provider, Mr. Jeton Mehmeti from the Institute for Advanced Studies GAP, related to this was that “both of them [Government and the Parliament] in the past have taken decisions not entirely based on evidence. Even worse, there are decisions based on assumption.” Such were the cases that we mentioned previously on the project, that prove that evidence-based policy making in not adopted by decision makers in Kosovo.

Another evidence provider, Mr. Avni Zuka from National Democratic Institute stated that “if we take into consideration the current situation, I cannot notice any tendency from the Government to base policies on evidence, while the Parliament lacks the capacities to do so even when there is willpower.”

Further, the interviewees provided examples of policies that were not based on evidence and that they know of. One such example provided by one of the evidence providers was the case of importing cars:

“In 2011 the Government decided to expand the age gap for importing vehicles from 8 to 13 years old. The Government’s justification was that this policy would generate more than 20 million euro extra budget. Not only the Government failed to reach this target, but the entire decision was not based on any evidence or detailed study. It was based on assumption. This is an example of policy making not based on evidence. The Parliamentary committees too often make decisions without any clear evidence. This is mainly a result of the lack of research capabilities within the Parliament.”
This example shows how there are cases when the Government of Kosovo without having full information and without conducting any study to gather evidence take major decisions to formulate and implement policies that later did not result to be successful.

Privatization was mentioned in the interviews by one evidence provider as a policy that lacks evidence. According to a respondent privatization is not being based on analysis but rather personal gains:

“I do not think any serious person could be satisfied with the formulation of policies in Kosovo. Mostly they are formulated for campaign purposes, namely for personal gains. Take for example the privatization policies that everything should privatized at any cost. There are reasonable doubts that the people who do such privatizations are associated with policy makers, and as a result privatization takes place to secure investment funds that are in the function of ensuring political positions.”

Political influence and ideologies followed by decision makers might hinder evidence-based policy making as it was suggested in the reviewed literature and now from out interviewee. This is another factor that contributes to the lack of practice of basing policies on factual data.

When asked specifically about the process of policy making in education, the interviewees in general were not satisfied. They stated that policies are not entirely based on evidence but rather are affected by political interests and are based on anecdotal evidence and lack long-term vision. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that it is better than in other fields and that MEST is trying and cares about gathering evidence and observing the current situation.

An evidence provider stated that

“there are certain policies that are made for political reasons and not entirely based on evidence. The fact that the Ministry organizes a lot of meeting groups before it proposes a particular strategy to the Government shows that the Ministry cares about evidence and situation observation. However, there are cases that show little evidence in policy making.”
Others provided more or less the same answer that policies of MEST are moderately based on evidence. The fact that all respondents agreed that education policies are not entirely based on evidence again supports our hypothesis that evidence-based policy making is not used as a practice in governmental agencies.

Some example of policies that were not based on evidence, according to some evidence providers are the case of University of Prizren, construction of school buildings in rural areas, implementation of Bologna reform, etc.

The issue of high enrolment rates in universities mentioned previously and high student to professor ratio was also mentioned by one of the interviewees. The respondent, said that “…in Kosovo are six public universities when there are only 1336 Doctors of Science and more than 100,000 students. So, instead of investing in quality, they aim in increasing the enrollment rate that already has exceeded country’s capabilities.” These specific cases tell us that policies are not always based on evidence; thus, they support our hypothesis that suggests the same.

The example of the University of Prizren mentioned by Mr. Mehmeti is similar to that of University of Prishtina which was mentioned previously. According to Mr. Mehmeti, this university suffers from the same problems in planning that is not based on factual data as UP: “University of Prizren which was opened without serious preparation and evidence on why this university should have these departments, why it needed a foreign rector, where would students be accommodated, is there a specialized academic staff, etc.”

An additional relevant example provided by an evidence provider is that of schools that were built in unpopulated rural areas discussed previously in our study. These schools are one clear example that education policies sometimes are not based on evidence: “In Kosovo, there are many schools build in rural areas in the last 5-6 years that are half-empty, since no one cared to gather information about how many children are in that area and if there is a need for such building.”

These numerous examples provided by the experts suggest that there are problems present in the process of policy making considering that the responsible decision makers have formulated these
specific policies without basing them entirely on evidence or have avoided statistical indicators that have been available.

In general, when asked in the questionnaires how much evidence providers believe that government agencies use the data published by their organizations in policy making process in a scale from 1 to 5 (1-never; 5-always), on average, they wrote 3.5. This suggests that, on average, they believe that government agencies base their policies on evidence moderately. This result supports our hypothesis that states that decision makers in Kosovo do not use evidence-based policy making.

Contrary to evidence providers, a policy maker declared that now that the Education Strategy 2011-2016 exists, MEST is basing its policies in statistical indicator to be able to assess the overall performance of the Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo.

In conclusion, most of the evidence providers declared that the current condition in other fields comes as result of inadequate education policies. They believe that education policies are formulated based on Government’s needs to gain political support and not on evidence. These findings are in line with our hypothesis that decision makers do not use evidence in policy making.

**4.2 Main Challenges**

Main challenges as perceived by the interviewees are the lack of experience and professionals, lack of political will, as one evidence provider suggest, to make “harsh policies in order to control unlawful activities such as working with fake diplomas,” and lack of reliable data. Furthermore, some evidence providers stated that there is a lack of coordination among governmental agencies and they ignore the Parliament and its suggestions (See Figure 7).
Other evidence providers claimed that governmental organizations lack tradition of EBP. Policy making still is an old-fashioned process, which is affected by personal interests. There are other problems such as lack of political will and time inconsistency.

With regards to data gatherings, interviewees declared that there is no professional data analysis and policy making, data gatherings are methodologically unreliable, lack of data (especially demographics), lack of raw data from the census, lack of a quality census, and lack of resources. Finally, lack of specialized institutions that produce professional, independent, and reliable data that can be used in policy making is seen as a major challenge by evidence providers.

Most of these challenges were predicted in the hypothesis, namely political influence, lack of coordination and cooperation between governmental agencies (evidence providers and decision makers), lack of resources, and lack of independent and reliable data. Thus, these findings support the hypothesis.

In addition to the findings from interviews, research from the literature review gave the same findings. With respect to data gatherings, there were inconsistencies in data from different
coming from different official sources, thus making the data unreliable. These agencies used the same methods in generating the data and the same time periods. Data regarding the enrolment of students on Vocational Education and Training secondary-schools had such problem.

According to MEST (EMIS), in the academic year 2011/2012 out of 106,829 students enrolled in upper-secondary schools, 59,633 or 55.8 % were enrolled in VET schools while 47,196 or 44.2 % in gymnasiu.ms. While the other source, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, states that in the academic year 2011/2012 109,513 students were enrolled in upper-secondary schools, out of which students in VET schools make up 54.8 % (59,979). Examples like this one where the data differ from one another are numerous. One might suggest that in general official data in Kosovo are not reliable considering that statistics provided by these two official sources are not the same.

There are other inconsistencies found in the publications of KAS and MEST. For examples, according to KAS in the academic year 2011/2012, 294,419 children were enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools, while EMIS publications state that they were 295,218 children. In addition, Kosovo Population and Housing Census which was conducted in April 2011 showed that during that time when the census took place there were 342,644 children aged 6-15, who are all subject to compulsory education and as such should attend primary and lower-secondary school. However, data from KAS show that the number of students enrolled in primary and lower secondary school in 2010/2011 was only 302,253. Other discrepancies are found on the number of students enrolled in upper-secondary schools in 2011/2012. While KAS states that there were 109,513 students enrolled, EMIS report states that there were 106,829 students enrolled.

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105 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology/EMIS, 2012, Statistikat e Arsimit në Kosovë 2011/12, p. 27
106 ETF Kosovo Team, 2012, op. cit., pp.29-30
107 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), 2012, Statistikat per arsimin fillor dhe të mesem te ulet 2011-2012, p. 12
110 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), 2011, Statistikat e Arsimit 2010-2011, p.15
There are few broader issues that lead to such inconsistencies in data and as well lack of policies addressing such major problems as VET drop-outs. According to Torino Process 2012 Report, in Kosovo data regarding VET schools lack. This happened because Kosovo does not have “primary data instruments as well as systematic research tools and mechanisms.” As a result, there are few cases of polices based on evidence.

What is more, with regards to data gatherings and publications (Appendix III, Question 9), the main problem mentioned was the usage of different methods by MEST and KAS in producing data, thus, leading to differences in numbers (inconsistencies). This in turn makes it harder for governmental organizations to based policies in this type of evidence. A unification of these two agencies is provided as a suggestion by many of the respondents.

In general, one can conclude that the main challenge, by observing the interviewees and the inconsistencies in the data, is the lack of proper cooperation between decision makers and evidence providers. As a result, many of the data published by KAS and MEST were different. Furthermore, evidence-based policy making is not an institutionalized process that should be followed in policy making. This approach leaves space for personal/group influence since the decisions depend on the policy makers themselves. That is why many of the interviewees saw political influence as a challenge which hinders the proper process of policy making.

When the interviewees were asked what would they improve and how, they provided answers that were not specifically related to the challenges mentioned before. The answers were mostly related to the need to have proper rules, legislation, systematic control, and increased accountability. One suggestion was to not pass any major decision without Parliament’s approval. Further, some suggested that the process of policy making should me more structured: “Policy planning process should be structured more structured.” One of the evidence providers suggested that certain steps should be followed: Steps that should be followed were: firstly, the initiative should be taken by politicians; secondly, it should be backed by a feasibility analysis; and thirdly it can be discussed and approved. Finally, other options such as the formulation of a National Education Strategy based on the assessment of the current situation, needs, and national

and international development trends, as well as inter-ministerial and cross-sectorial cooperation were mentioned.

5. Conclusion

This chapter is a reflection on the project’s purpose and main findings. Further, another separate section is dedicated to potential future work.

The aim of this project was to determine whether evidence is used in policy making in Kosovo and to understand what the main challenges to evidence-based policy making are. Being that the formulation of policies based on evidence is important, especially in developing countries, researching policy making in Kosovo is thus important and necessary too. Further, regional success stories of the countries that have adopted EBP have been a motivation to study this topic in particular. The study was concentrated on education policies since it is one the most important fields of policy making that affects other segments to a large extent.

Data gathered through secondary research as well as through primary research showed that evidence-based policy making is exception rather than the rule in policy making processes in Kosovo. Examples provided by interviewees and meta-analysis of the data gathered from decision makers suggested that even though policy making is acknowledged as a necessary practice to be adopted by decision makers, in practice it is not used. Such was the case with education policy making in particular. Evidence suggested that major policies formulated by MEST have not been based on evidence and most of them have had a negative impact on the welfare of the society.

The main challenges to evidence-based policy making identified in the findings include: lack of experience and professionals, lack of political will, and lack of reliable data. These are the main problems mentioned by interviewees and encountered while conducting meta-analysis of data gathered. Other problems that were identified are political influence and lack of cooperation between agencies. All in all, lack of specialized institutions that produce professional, independent, and reliable data was seen as the most crucial challenge that needs to be overcome.
These findings support the hypotheses set in this project that policy formulation in Kosovo is not based on factual data and that

5.1 Limitations

It is important to point out some limitations of the finding.

First, there is a difference between data gathered through questionnaires and document analysis and those gathered through interviews. The first one is more reliable and objective, while the second one is subject to personal perceptions of individuals and the influence of organization to which they belong—thus, is more subjective.

Second, the perceptions and beliefs of the interviewees do not necessarily represent those of the organization/institution to which they belong. However, it is technically possible to interview everyone in the institution and especially the CEOs, since usually they are occupied with higher priority tasks and delegate this type of requests to their workers.

Fourth, this is a representative sample, and even though the researcher did provide variety among the interviewees, there might be generalizations due to the limited number of evidence providers and decision makers available to be interviewed. Further, despite the researcher’s attempt to present the reality as clearly as possible, there might be some gaps.

Finally, all the interpretations, possible generalizations, mistakes, and conclusions made in this project are sole responsibility of the researcher.

5.2 Further Work

This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. Answers from evidence providers and decision makers have been very insightful regarding the process of evidence-based policy making. They have raised question regarding the topics that are currently covered by evidence providers and the on the factors that influence such choices.
According to the data from questionnaires (Annex V, question 7), the field researched the most by evidence providers was education. Nonetheless, education was mentioned 5 times considering that one criterion in determining the potential evidence providers was their experience in the field of education policy making. Other fields researched the most by evidence providers are Energy, Labor Market, Agriculture, and Economics, while fields like Transport and Environment were not researched by any of the organizations (Figure 8). Important topic such as Health, Environment, and Private Sector Development are researched very little. Fields like these that affect society and the welfare of the country, should be more researched.

**Figure 8: Research contribution by field of research**

![Research Contribution by Field of Research](image)

Reasons why this is the case might be different. One such reason might be the influence of different factors in the choice of topics. When asked about the factors that have impacted the choice of these topic (Annex IV, question 18), the interviewees answered that what is socially relevant is usually the topic that is researched. Further, organization’s mission and research interests influence their choices. This question is also related to the funding, since 2 of the interviewees answered that donor’s preferences and governmental agencies impact their choice (Figure 9).
Therefore, it would be interesting to research on the factors that impact the choice of topics and see why there is more research in one field than the other and provide recommendations that would contribute to this research in improving the current situation in policy making in Kosovo.

6. Recommendations

To improve the situation in the field of education and policy making in general and to overcome the present challenges to evidence-based policy making, certain actions need to be taken. Few of these actions are recommended below.

- Institutionalize evidence-based policy making

Considering that evidence-based policy is not a common practice used in decision making, institutionalizing it would increase the usage of evidence in policy making. One way to do so is to adopt legislation that requires the usage of evidence-based policy making in governmental institutions. This would leave less power to individuals and less opportunity to promote their political agenda and follow their personal interests through specific policies.
• Cover more fields in terms of data production

It was seen that there are many fields for which there are no data or related to which evidence providers are not willing to conduct research. Promoting and financing specific projects in fields that are less covered would create the evidence base in which policies can be based.

• Encourage exchange of good practices of evidence-based policy making with neighboring countries

Few studies in neighboring countries, mentioned also in this project, showed that there have been different systems of data collection and publication that have proven to be successful. They have changed the policy making process by offering reliable evidence that policies could be based on. Encouraging exchange of these experiences through conferences or other forms of meetings would be a learning process for decision makers and would help them adopt the best systems and improve evidence-based policy making.

• Increase transparency in policy and decision making

Many of the policies that were analyzed in this study were not explained in detail and information regarding the process of formulation and evidence that they were based on were missing. By requiring agencies and decision makers to publish detailed information about their decisions and policies, processes such as monitoring and evaluation would be easier to be carried out.

• Encourage cooperation and feedback between decision makers and evidence providers within specific fields (e.g. education)

It was seen in the study that cooperation between decision makers and evidence providers is limited. Allocating project-based funding in specific fields and engaging decision makers and evidence providers to work together on projects would help in producing useful data and evidence-based policies.
- Improve data-collection systems and methods of official statistics

This study showed that the major drawback in the system of data production is lack of reliable data. Improvement of methods of collection is required in order to increase the quality of data. Further, harmonization of methods of collecting data by MEST and KAS is necessary so that they do not end producing conflicting data that. Development of a strategy that would harmonize methods of collecting data is suggested.

- Encourage evidence providers to make the data available

One problem encountered by citizens is that data are not always available. During this study, basic data regarding the field of education was not available online. By publishing the data in official cited, policy monitoring and evaluation are possible even for the citizens. This in turn would promote evidence-based policy making due to the pressure of society on decision makers to formulate policies on evidence.
References


7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix I

Interview Consent Form
Fitore Hyseni

“Usage of Demographical Population Trends and Statistics in Public Policy”

Public Policy and Governance Unit
American University in Kosovo

Description of the project: The main purpose of this project is to see whether decision makers use statistics, which are the main problems, and, based on the results, provide some recommendations. The study is concentrated in education policies. As part of the research, different expert’s opinions and perspectives in the field of education and policy making will be brought together.

I approve to be interviewed for the purposes of the Honors Thesis named above.
The purpose of the interview and the nature of the project have been explained to me.
I approve for the interview to be electronically recorded (via e-mail).
Any questions that I have asked regarding the interview and the project have been answered by the researcher to my satisfaction

Select 1 or 2

1. I understand that the student may publish the project and my name may be used.
2. I do not want my name to be used/ cited or my identity disclosed in this project.

Name of interviewee
Signature of interviewee
Date
I have informed the interviewee about the project and the implications of being interviewed. I consider that the decision to participate is informed and that the interviewee understands the implications of being interviewed.

Name of interviewer:
Signature of interviewer:
Date:
### 7.2 Appendix II

#### Code Book

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number of Codes</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Number of codes</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that the problem is lack of experience, few years of working in the field, and lack of tradition, newly established institutions, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/19</td>
<td>26 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Political Will</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that politicians are not willing to change the current way of acting</td>
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<td>3/19</td>
<td>15.8 %</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Reliable Data</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that the data produced suffer from flaws (methodologically or other)</td>
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<td>2/19</td>
<td>10.5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that lack of financial means or other resources related to infrastructure</td>
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<td>1/19</td>
<td>5.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Time inconsistency</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that data are not published regularly</td>
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<td>1/19</td>
<td>5.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that the</td>
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<td>1/19</td>
<td>5.3 %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>main problem are lack of professional worker and work</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that there is no cooperation between agencies/institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that evidence providers do not coordinate publishing of data and decision makers do not coordinate policy making</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Political influence</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that the main problem are group interests, corruption, political ideologies, etc.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Available tools</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that agents do not use the available tools offered to them</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Raw data</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Demographic data</td>
<td>Responses that suggested that demographic data and indicators, such as deaths, births, etc. are missing</td>
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7.3 Appendix III

Interview with evidence providers

1. What does evidence-based policy making mean to you?
2. In your opinion, do governmental organization and the Parliament of Kosovo base policies on evidence?
3. In your opinion, are policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, based on evidence?
4. Please give some examples of evidence-based policy making in Kosovo, if you know any.
5. Are you satisfied with the process of policy making in general Kosovo?
6. Are you satisfied with the process of education policy making in Kosovo?
7. What do you think are the main challenges in evidence-based policy making in Kosovo, and particularly in education policies?
8. What would you improve and how?
9. According to your opinion, who do you think should provide evidence for education policy making in Kosovo?
10. Do you think that the evidence produced by your organization is useful for policy making?
11. Which research organizations (evidence providers) in the field of education in Kosovo do you find to be the most relevant?
12. How do you see the role and contribution of international organizations in terms of evidence-based policy making in education in Kosovo?
13. How would you describe the relationship between your institution and governmental organization?
14. In which fields your institution has produced/published the most data (such as education, health, economy, agriculture, etc.) in the last five years?
15. Which topics within the field of education have been researched by your institution in the last five years?
16. Has any of the reports/data published by your organization been used in the policy making process?
17. How do you choose the areas and topics for your research (based on whose
needs/perceptions)?

19. Does funding have an impact in the choice of topics?
7.4 Appendix IV

Interview with decision makers

1. What does evidence-based policy making mean to you?
2. According to your opinion, does your agency/ministry base policies on evidence?
3. Please give some examples of policies that were based on evidence by your ministry/agency that you know of.
4. Are you satisfied with the process of policy making in general Kosovo?
5. Are you satisfied with the process of education policy making in Kosovo?
6. What do you think are the main challenges in evidence-based policy making in Kosovo, and particularly in education policies?
7. What would you improve and how?
8. According to your opinion, which institutions should provide evidence in Kosovo?
9. According to your opinion, which institutions should provide evidence for education policy making in Kosovo?
10. Do you think that the existing evidence is useful?
11. According your opinion, which topics in the field of education should be researched?
12. What do you think is necessary to make evidence match the needs of decision makers?
13. Which research organizations (evidence providers) in the field of education in Kosovo do you find to be the most relevant?
14. How do you see the role and contribution of international organizations in terms of evidence-based policy making in education in Kosovo?
15. How would you describe the relationship between your Ministry and institutions that produce evidence?
### 7.5 Appendix V

**Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nb.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
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<td>Name of your organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Educational institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Government organization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other (specify which)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Type of institution</td>
<td>☐ Central Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Municipalities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ General public</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ International organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Scientific community/Academia</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other (please specify which)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(More than one answer is possible.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Which of the following, according to your organization, are the main users of your publications?</td>
<td>☐ Central Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ General public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>☐ Students</td>
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<td>☐ International organizations</td>
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<td>☐ Scientific community/Academia</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other (please specify which)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(More than one answer is possible.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>In scale from 1 to 5 (1-never; 5-always) please tell how much do you believe that government agencies use the data published by your organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>How often does your institution publish reports and data?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How many employees does your institution have that work in the field of education policy analysis?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Which of the following fields have been researched by your organization (are more relevant to you)?</td>
<td>☐ Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Agriculture</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Please provide the most important publication of your institution in the field of education?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Please list (if available) the most important topic in the field of education that have been covered by your organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>In case you would like to add some information that you find to be relevant to our project or survey, please do so here:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thank you for your time!*