



School Management - New Concept and Practice in Albanian Education

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Abstract

Education systems in democratic countries are characterized by the application of democratic principles in the organization, administration, and realization of education; from the intentions to be as open and flexible as possible. School management leads to increased internal and external effectiveness, improved provision, and combination of resources in dynamic structures to meet the basic goals of the system or institution. The aim of this study is devoted to the method of staff selection based on criteria and testing, material needs, field and facility services, health and safety, purchases and finances, information systems and transport, social security, liaison and communication with the public, legal services, etc., which have taken on the values of professionalism. The management of the school is seen not only in the vertical aspect, but also in the horizontal one that has to do with the creation of suitable conditions in everyday life and management of the school, at every level, including the following social actors: teachers, parents, students, leaders, professional or non-governmental associations, personalities of culture, economy, business, etc. Identifying the needs of effective school management makes us sensitive in processing work mentalities and professional relationships to simultaneously identify possible changes. Education employees, scholars and other activists of Albanian life considering new ideas and experiences in school reform from developed countries will present them with efficient choices that will produce inherent values.

Keywords: Management, human resource, expected solutions, professional status, economic position, reflected experience

1. Introduction

Introduction The issue of large-scale decentralization has been at the center of contemporary school reform for a decade or more. In the middle of May this year, while we were preparing this scientific paper, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MASR) has announced and distributed to the public for consultation the *Draft National Education Strategy, 2021-2026*, which will reproduced and disseminated the so-called "inclusive models of school reform", through institutional educational arrangements at the macro and micro levels.

The main focus of this strategy for pre-university education "will be inclusion and equality in education, digitalization, meritocracy and professional development of teachers, management and quality assurance in education, as well as increasing attention to mastering learning competencies throughout life"¹. What does it mean "building an inclusive education system that successfully addresses the individual needs of all our children, pupils and students,

¹ "Strategjia Kombëtare e Arsimit 2021-2026, Kushi: Fokusi tek gjithëpërfshirja dhe sigurimi i cilësisë në arsim", në: Portalin Shkollor ALBAS, f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <http://www.portalishkollor.al/news/strategjia-kombetare-e-arsimit-2021-2026-kushi-fokusi-tek-gjitheperfshirja-dhe-sigurimi-i-cilesise-ne-arsim>
[National Education Strategy 2021-2026, Kushi: Focus on Inclusion and Quality Assurance in Education", in: ALBAS School Portal, p. 1. Material published on the web site: <http://www.portalishkollor.al/news/strategjia-kombetare-e-arsimit-2021-2026-kushi-fokusi-tek-gjitheperfshirja-dhe-sigurimi-i-cilesise-ne-arsim>]

treating them equally and with respect for diversity"²?

Such a vision reinforces the main argument that is added to this paper - the efforts to influence the main models of management practices in Albanian schools, on a large scale, have not been so deep and stable as to go beyond the vision for school and tomorrow. We think that these models that have been given in the form of "recipes" should be based, first of all on scientifically valid practices related to a reconceptualization of the decentralization of the Albanian school, which is related especially to the governance arrangements in the central level structures and that local, are undoubtedly key elements of the reform program.

Reflecting on the problems, the causes of decentralization in education and its practical weight, arose with the preferred tendency for the distribution and transfer of authority from the highest level of government to a lower level, i.e. by ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of educational services, promoting the accountability of each decision-making body to the clients of these services, primarily to pupils and students and parents.

In the framework of the reforms in the education sector in Albania, great changes have taken place, which increasingly aim at its contemporary concept and to better integrate the school in the *market economy*.

Preparing for the job market is a real challenge for a government in its vision, project and efforts related to the education system. If we want all schools to achieve higher results, we need better coordination and management of all human and material resources by the principal³.

The socio-economic and demographic changes of recent years in our country have placed the Albanian school in front of strong challenges. Increased effectiveness of schools is required, while the system itself is moving towards the distribution of responsibilities in the context of decentralization of the pre-university and university education system. This trend is manifested in the strengthening of *school autonomy* and the *power of school boards*.

Such a similar trend was institutionalized some time ago in the field of reform and strengthening the capacity of policy-making, management and decision-making, through the scheme "To manage by decentralizing", which led us to hope that ideas for public opinion can be turned into programs⁴.

Decentralization aims to involve citizens, directly or indirectly, in the decision-making process in a larger number of areas, such as: education, urban and rural planning, health, culture and local economic development.

In this logic, the program of complete necessary changes, legitimized by decision makers after an extensive professional discussion, becomes necessary for at least three reasons:

- From the urgent need that our school is experiencing today, as a result of a misinterpreted and inefficient administration. The way in which decision-makers are distributed among the actors in the system, the delegation of competencies and the provision of support resources, mutual motivation, etc., imply ways and behaviors in accordance with official or formal rules in education. The school is not clearly defined in terms of needs, or what they are delegated to the base. School leaders wander into offices to get "what they have been given" because there is no flexibility and transparency of funds allocated (for services and supplies done at school, it is enough to sign a bill). They do not have the proper authority to manage the teaching staff, which has often been replaced by the moral authority of counseling and proposing. Decision making is an attribute of the central and middle level. Nothing inherent is placed at the base, where needs arise and services are performed. For example: some school services, teacher transportation, receiving funding from non-governmental sources, encouraging boards to include committee parents, etc., seem more than a vision of transferring competencies in favor of the base, a relief burden for educational institutions at the macro level.
- From the presence of ready-made alternative models, which can be adapted, because it is a violated path, through which education must pass. Our educational staff, researchers, actors of Albanian life have contacted ideas and experiences of educational reforms in the civilized countries of the world, have presented them according to the ways they have described, with the alternatives that have appeared, in the respective geographical areas, together with solutions that continue to produce more inherent values.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Fjala e ministrit të Arsimit dhe Shkencës në analizën vjetore: "Të centralizojmë duke decentralizuar", në: *Mësuesi, organ i Ministrisë së Arsimit dhe Shkencës, Tiranë, 06 shkurt 2002, f. 1-2.*

[Speech of the Minister of Education and Science in the Annual Analysis: "To Centralize by Decentralizing", in: *Teacher, Body of the Ministry of Education and Science, Tirana, February 6, 2002, pp. 1-2.*]

⁴ Ladi Shahini, "Tranzicioni nga administrimi i centralizuar në pjesëmarrjen e përgjegjëse në vendimarrje", në: *Administrimi & Menaxhimi i Arsimit, Nr. 5/2003, botim i Institutit të Studimeve Pedagogjike, Tiranë, 2003, f. 5.*

[Ladi Shahini, "Transition from Centralized Administration to the Participation of Responsibilities in Decision-making", in: *Education Administration & Management, No. 5/2003, Publication of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies, Tirana, 2003, p. 5.*]

- From the participation of the most qualified specialists of our country in the concretization of this change. In the last 20 years they have built the scheme of administration of education levels with their directions and goals, with the basic components of the model, with adjustments at the macro level, regional and school level, with structures, roles and responsibilities which, after expert level discussion, can be experimented.

In general, such a practice, conditioned by the above reasons, requires the creation of full responsibility and awareness of the public administration and its subordinates, to expand the participation and increase the effectiveness of stakeholders in outlining educational projects. and their implementation.

It is now known and accepted by all the necessity of taking into account the values carried by the school management and beyond, "which is accompanied by the necessary changes in the field of competencies of the school and other institutions. This means that, in parallel with the legal guarantee of substantial autonomy in the curricular area and the policy of training and development of human resources, large schools or group schools must become entities that are economically, financially and administratively independent"⁵.

In general, this whole process, but also the autonomy that schools should have, is required to be carefully managed and administered, through new quality instruments of institutional management from the center to the base. And in this decentralized system, schools must also take on great responsibilities in the area of planning, managing and improving the quality of the services they provide.

For the purpose of the study, it is interesting to fully understand not only the roles they have for the local education authority, but also to clearly define the roles of structures at each administrative level of the education system in the Republic of Albania, after 2015. This better understands the functions and avoids overlaps and parallels.

2. Institutional Governance at Central and Regional Level After 2015

During the past year, exactly in March 2020, Covid-19 or coronavirus produced a difficult situation on human society, which is still shaking through the most serious disaster, the change of life. Humanity is still struggling to recover its existence under a new political-economic and educational-cultural organization, reducing the pace of concern, adapting to new facts and at the same time accepting its own development.

The most vibrant and persistent part of the society towards this development are the educational institutions at all levels and their educators (pupils / students). They are oriented by knowledge and driven by their intelligent consciousness, to study and inform society that its existence and continuity, in the near future, are determined by a healthy, knowledgeable and engaging generation.

The totality of this thought does not flow as a process of ordinary everyday morality, but as a process that educational institutions, its leaders, teachers and students are living and embodying in their pre-university and university life. They resume, especially at the beginning of the reform, based on the norms, values and expectations that shape their work - they function most effectively when the pressure of internal and external accountability occurs.

The main implication of this view is that "strong internal accountability is a condition that precedes and determines the response of educational institutions to external accountability"⁶. Consequently, investments in internal accountability must logically precede any expectation that education in Albania will respond productively to external pressures on performance. Otherwise, educational institutions at all levels will implement the requirements of external accountability systems in this way, without taking the trouble to adopt the values of responsibility and efficiency, which are the main objectives of school management - a new concept and practice for education in Albania.

To fully understand the new roles that are currently for the authority at all levels of the education system in Albania after 2015, we have referred to the fact that a balanced distribution of authority and responsibilities at the central and local level of education is currently realized, but and clearly define the roles of structures at each administrative level of the education system.

Reforms in education through defining the policies that have been pursued in this study period and the objectives and those to be achieved essentially requires the understanding of

the existing situation and the establishment of structures in education, in relation to the level of time requirements

⁵ Po aty, f. 114.

[Ibid, p. 114]

⁶ Richard F. Elmore, *Reforma shkollore nga brenda dhe jashtë (Politika, praktika dhe performanca), përkthet nga anglishtja Valbona Nathanaili, Tiranë: "Shtëpia botuese Univesitare U.F.O. Press", prill 2011, f. 148.*

[Richard F. Elmore, *School Reform from Inside and Outside (Policy, Practice and Performance)*, Translated from english by Valbona Nathanaili, Tirana: "U.F.O. Press University Publishing House", April 2011, p. 148.]

and integration processes where Albanian society is involved. Measurable indicators are clearly defined to assess the achievement of the reform objectives. Reference is made to the quantitative data presented in the first chapter. Indicators, as statements of targeted changes, are presented as qualitative and quantitative details of the set of objectives and the envisaged path of implementation of the Strategy. Their use, not only at the end of the process but also during the implementation of the Strategy, is the conditional mechanism on the basis of which the progress is monitored, the level of progress at any point in time, accountability is performed and measures are taken for further improvements.

Of particular importance in the process, as well as the objectives, is their "mastery" by all stakeholders interested in the reform development of university and pre-university education institutions. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MARS) plays a leading role and bears the main responsibility in the process of implementing educational reforms in our country. It remains the main financier in financing the education system, consequently it is the one that distributes the funds according to a national formula, which is based on the number of students.

3. Institutional Arrangements at the Central Level

3.1 Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth

The main role of the *Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY)* is clearly expressed in the formulation of an overall strategic policy, in overseeing its implementation and ensuring adequate funding. This institution is the highest executive authority for the management of pre-university education, whose mission is to implement national education policies, set by the Council of Ministers and to continuously improve the quality of educational services for all Albanian citizens. It ensures this through the drafting and monitoring of the implementation of national educational strategies, the legal basis for education, the issuance of bylaws, budget planning, as well as cooperation with basic units of local government and setting curricular, administrative and infrastructural standards; drafting professional development policies⁷. In carrying out this role, the MoESY finds and implements relevant mechanisms for its identification, collection of information and processing. It does this in collaboration with dependency institutions at the center and at the local level, schools, the community and other actors.

It is of interest to monitor and evaluate the progress of the reform, which is carried out through the General Directorate of Policies and Development of Education, Sports and Youth (GDPPDESY) at MoESY, the General Regulatory Directorate and Compliance for Education, Sports and Youth (GRDCESY), General Directorate of Economic and Support Services (GDESS) as well as Dependent Institutions in the center and districts⁸.

Achieving MoESY objectives in such strategic areas as decision-making, evaluation, quality assurance and accreditation, etc., "would require the fulfillment of responsibilities such as: formulating and promulgating national education policies and the national reform program; decentralization of the educational service and increase of school autonomy. Improving management capacities and skills at the central level (MoESY), regional, local and subordinate institutions; development of a system of national indicators: qualitative indicators for measuring the progress of this reform & measurable quantitative indicators); performance-based management (PBM) has been transferred from MoESY to subordinate institutions as well as at regional and school level; effective implementation of legislation and regulations on school autonomy in the field of staff. New position of full-time teacher and diversification of his competencies; establishing quality assurance mechanisms; lending to public and non-public schools; guaranteeing diplomas for students who graduate, according to the level of schools or who successfully pass the final national exams; recruitment of teachers in accordance with the new criteria of the Ministry of Education and Science, based on the database on "Teachers for Albania" and the system of accreditation of the teaching profession and quality assurance function effectively. His position has been adjusted to that of civil servant; drafting the list of professions and their standards, creating the Albanian Vocational Qualifications Framework according to European qualifications standards with a completed legal

⁷ *Ministria e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë*, në: Koalicioni për Arsimin në Shqipëri (ACE), f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <http://www.arsimi.gov.al/>

[Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth ", in: *Coalition for Education in Albania (ACE)*, p. 1. Material Published on the web site: <http://www.arsimi.gov.al/>]

⁸ *Urdhëri i Kryeministrit Nr. 163, datë 5.10.2017 "Për miratimin e strukturës dhe të organigramës së Ministrisë së Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë"*, f. 1.

[Prime Minister's Order No. 163, dated 5.10.2017 "On the approval of the Structure and Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth", p. 1.]

framework; as well as providing support for special education areas or such schools"⁹.

Completing the above functions would require the MoESY to reflect on these basic principles: clearly define the decision-making responsibilities and functional spaces where its authority is exercised; to separate the political level from the technical level of the central administration; eliminate duplication between directorates, which are created to manage the sectors of the school system by the directorates that provide the functions; as well as to transfer development functions as well as the administration of national examinations and tests to autonomous agencies.

The concretization of the above ideas required a reconstruction of the organizational structure and organizational chart of MoESY, which was concretized with the approval of the Prime Minister's Order No. 163, dated 05.10.2017 "On the approval of the structure and organizational chart of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth".

The central body proposed by the Council of Ministers is the National Council of Pre-University Education^{*}, which serves to support the activity of the Ministry of Education and Science and to make the necessary opposition in the implementation of educational policy.

Such a body that represents civil society, has enabled the establishment of close cooperation relations, both with MASR, and with the Ministry of Economy and other sectors, while maintaining its independence. Its institutional basis, competencies and rules of operation, defined in its statute, currently affect the full coordination of MASR activities with other interested sectors. It develops a system of national indicators, which will be used by every level and every school.

3.2 Educational Services Center

The *Center for Educational Services (CES)* is a public institution established by law^{**}, under the Minister responsible for education, whose mission is to provide services and ensure public access in the field of higher education and pre-university education. It was established as a special institution for organizing, monitoring, supervising the problems of educational reform for quality assurance in the field of assessment of achievements and exams. It "exercises a technical, professional, supporting and recommending function of the evaluation policies and the organization of the State Exams"¹⁰.

9 Jani Sota, "Decentralization as A Wide Social Subject - School System Policies and Autonomy in Post Communist Albania", in: *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences (MJSS)*, January 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy, (Index Copernicus Year 2011 Impact Factor 6.44 Global Impact Factor: 0.377), 2014, pp. 21-29.

* On February 5, 2021, on the proposal of the Ministry of Education, the Council of Ministers approved the decision to appoint members of the National Council of Pre-University Education, selected by public competition. The members who will be in the National Council of Education are: a) Mrs. Klodeta Dibra; b) Mrs. Majlinda Ziu; c) Mrs. Anila Papparisto; ç) Mrs. Lura Turhani; d) Mrs. Mimosha Oktisi; dh) Mrs. Natasha Poroçani. (Taken from: "Zgjidhen 6 anëtarët e Këshillit Kombëtar të Arsimit (EMRAT)", në: *Dosja.al*, f. 1 Material i publikuar në web site: <https://dosja.al/zgjidhen-6-anetaret-e-keshillit-kombetar-te-arsimit/>)

[Taken from: "6 members of the National Council of Education (EMRAT) are elected", in: *Dosja.al*, p. 1 Material published on the web site: <https://dosja.al/zgjidhen-6-anetaret-e-keshillit-kombetar-te-arsimit/>].

** Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution, Article 10, of Law No. 9000, dated 30.1.2003, "On the organization and functioning of the Council of Ministers", of Law No. 10171, dated 22.10.2009, "On regulated professions in the Republic of Albania", as amended, and Law No. 69/2012, "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania", as amended, on the proposal of the Minister of Education and Sports, the Council of Ministers decided: 1. In Decision No. 1013, dated 10.12.2010, of the Council of Ministers, the following changes are made: 1. In the title and everywhere in the content of the decision, the name "National Examinations Agency" is replaced with "Educational Services Center". [...] 2.2. The Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Finance and the Center for Educational Services are in charge of implementing this decision. This decision enters into force after its publication in the "Official Gazette". (Marrë nga: *Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë*, Nr. 67, 26 shtator 2017, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 7151-7208. Udhëzim Nr. 8, datë 13.3.2017 "Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e Qendrës së Shërbimeve Arsimore".) [Received from: *Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania*, No. 67, 26 September 2017, Publication i Instruction No. 8, dated 13.3.2017 "On the Organization and Functioning of the Center for Educational Services".]

10 *Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë*, Nr. 164, E hënë, 21 shtator 2015, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 11449-11490. Ligji Nr. 80/2015, datë 22.7.2015 "Për arsimin e lartë dhe kërkimin shkencor në institucionet e arsimit të lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë" (më tej: *Ligji Nr. 80/2015, datë 22.7.2015 ...*), Kreu II: Organizimi i arsimit të lartë dhe kërkimit shkencor, Neni 10: Funksionet e Qendrës së Shërbimeve Arsimore, pika d.

[*Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania*, No. 164, Monday, September 21, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2013, p. 11449-11490. Law No. 80/2015, dated 22.7.2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Institutions of Higher Education in The Republic of Albania" (hereinafter: *Law No. 80/2015, dated 22.7.2015 ...*), Chapter II: Organization of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Article 10: Functions of the Center for Educational Services, Point d.]

In accordance with Instruction No. 8, dated 13.3.2017 "On the organization and functioning of the Center for Educational Services"¹¹, CES "performs its activity based on these functions: conducts national exams, performs the process of assessment of student achievement and administers the database of these results; conducts and administers external national and international assessments and / or sampling the achievements of students in the pre-university education system; contributes to the design of educational policies and strategies and their implementation; processes and analyzes the results of national exams, assessments, state exams, according to contemporary standards, and the annual reports which it publishes; organizes and administers the *State Exam*, which is developed through digital technology, in cooperation with the relevant competent authorities, according to the law on regulated professions; creates the state database for the candidates registered in the State Exam; digitizes the funds of the questions approved by the commissions of the State Exam and conducts this exam, through digital technology; periodically trains the organizing and supervising staff of the State Exam and national exams; publishes on-line the orientation program of this exam and the question funds for each regulated profession; administers the database for pre-university education; creates, archives, updates and administers the electronic database of student achievement in national exams; as well as contributes to the drafting of laws and bylaws, which are part of the object of its activity"¹².

In order to fulfill this mission of hers, she has tried her best to ensure that all assessments she undertakes are fair, ethical and in line with technical standards. However, we need to be aware of the extent to which assessment affects classroom learning patterns and content. All the work of teachers and leaders, in coherence with the curriculum, emphasizes the importance of matching goals, pedagogy, learning materials and assessment.

The Center for Educational Services offers a method towards a higher quality, towards a better connection between learning and assessment, promoting the improvement of the classroom learning process.

3.3 Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education

The *Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (AQSP)* is a new institution, established as a public institution under the MoESY, based on the Institute for Educational Development (EDI) established in March 2010¹³, but the origin of this institution, with attributes of expertise, counseling and study in education, begins much earlier, since 1965^{*}.

¹¹ Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 67, 26 shtator 2017, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 7151-7208. Udhëzim Nr. 8, datë 13.3.2017 "Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e Qendrës së Shërbimeve Arsimore".

[Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 67, September 26, 2017, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2013, pp. 7151-7208. Instruction no. 8, dated 13.3.2017 "On the organization and functioning of the Center for Educational Services".]

¹² Po aty. Shih edhe: "Qeveria rishikon ligjin për arsimin parauniversitar, ja çfarë ndryshon për mësuesit dhe maturantët", në: *Bulqiza ime*, f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <http://www.bulqizaime.al/qeveria-rishikon-ligjin-per-arsimin-parauniversitar-ja-çfare-ndryshon-per-mesuesit-dhe-maturantet/> (Postuar më 26/04/2017)

[Ibid. See also: "The Government is Reviewing the Law on Pre-University Education, Here is What Changes for Teachers and Graduates", in: *My Bulqiza*, p. 1. Material published on the web site: <http://www.bulqizaime.al/qeveria-rishikon-ligjin-per-arsimin-parauniversitar-ja-çfare-ndryshon-per-mesuesi-dhe-maturantet/> (Posted on 26 / 04/2017)]

¹³ Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 67, 26 shtator 2017, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 7151-7208. Vendim i Këshillit të Ministrave Nr. 67, datë 10.2.2010 "Për krijimin e Institutit të Zhvillimit të Arsimit (IZHA).

[Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 67, September 26, 2017, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2013, pp. 7151-7208. The Council of Ministers decision No. 67, dated 10.2.2010 "On the Establishment of the Institute for the Development of Education (IDE).]

* In 1965, the Institute of Studies and Publications was established in Tirana, which functioned mainly as the director of school publications, initially with 5 and then with 10 specialists. In 1970, the Institute of Pedagogical Studies was established as a separate institution, which was initially organized in 3 scientific sectors and then reorganized in 1983 into 7 scientific sectors. The Institute of Pedagogical Studies functioned until 2003 and played an important role in the development of education in Albania. In September 2003, the Institute of Pedagogical Studies, with the aim of closer institutional specialization, was split into two new independent institutions: the Institute of Curricula and Standards (ICS) and the Training and Qualification Center for Education (TQCE). Both of these new institutions carried out together the tasks of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies in two basic areas of its activity, that of curriculum development and training - qualification of educational staff. Due to the demand for better coordination between these educational activities and in the framework of education reforms, in October 2007, the Institute of Curricula and Training (ICT) was established, organized in two directorates: Directorate of Curriculum Development and Standards and Directorate of Training and Qualification. ICT made a valuable

AQSPE provides the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and educational institutions in the country with expertise and counseling with a high level of professionalism, based on the results of scientific research and educational practice. Its object of activity is the drafting of curricula for the pre-university education system, the development of policies for pre-university and higher education, the preparation of various documents related to national policies in the field of education and the conduct of research work in the fields of didactics and the use of modern technologies in teaching and learning.

AQSPE has the task of: preparing products in the field of education and providing expertise to policy-making and decision-making structures for education policies and reforms in the field of education; to conduct research, as well as to provide expertise and advice to educational institutions of all levels in the fields of didactics and the use of modern technologies in teaching, as well as the direction and management of the school and education as a whole; to support MoESY in drafting studies, periodic analyzes, which serve as a basis for drafting policies and strategies in the field of education at all levels; provide counseling to students and citizens in the field of education at all levels; develop methodologies for quality assurance and evaluation of pre-university education institutions, as well as their curricula; develop programs and standards for the qualification of teachers, professors and leaders of educational institutions; develop methodologies and standards for textbooks; develop information activities for institutions, pupils, students, employers and employees; carry out publications in accordance with its mission and objectives; perform other tasks assigned to him by the government and the MES within its mission¹⁴.

AQSPE "reports to the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth regarding: activity, implementation of work plans, implementation of programs, expertise and consultations with a high professional level, which has in its mission; the progress of budget implementation; as well as the efficiency and results of its activities; the degree of fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the annual plan"¹⁵.

It also makes proposals and advises MoESY on: improving and formulating educational policies; changes in education legislation, review of educational strategies and decision-making in the field of educational reform; studies and research in the field of curriculum development; and studies in the fields of didactics and the use of modern technologies in teaching and learning"¹⁶.

To fulfill its mission and task, AQSPE "cooperates with MoESY directorates in the performance of tasks and carries out joint activities with it at national and international level"¹⁷. Also, AQSPE "cooperates with the institutions subordinated to the MES to coordinate activities as well as with other public and non-public institutions inside and outside the country to enable the fulfillment of its objectives and functions. It "organizes meetings, symposia, conferences to inform stakeholders about the studies and findings carried out. [...] Carefully collects detailed data and disseminates the successful practices of institutions and individuals by doing so in a special way , through publications or its official website"¹⁸.

contribution to the implementation of educational reforms of this period, such as: gymnasium reform, training-qualification reform, connection and cooperation of the institution with other analogous bodies abroad. In March 2010, to expand the mission of ICT beyond curriculum and training issues in pre-university education, to better reflect on the development objectives of Albanian education and to support education policies and reforms at all levels of education , the Institute for Educational Development (EDI) was established, organized in directorates and sectors that better respond to new educational developments. The Institute has already expanded its field of scientific activity. It operates on the basis of three directorates: Curriculum, Standards and Qualifications Directorate; Directorate of Didactics and Teaching Technologies and Directorate of Educational Policy Development. (Taken from: "Historiku i Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin Parauniversitar", në: Rreth nesh, f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <https://www.ascap.edu.al/rreth-nesh/>) [Taken from: "History of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education", in: About us, p. 1. Material published on the web site: <https://www.ascap.edu.al/rreth-nesh/>]

¹⁴ Ministria e Arsimit, Rinisë dhe Sportit & Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin Parauniversitar, Statuti i Agjencisë së Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin Parauniversitar, i miratuar nga ministri Lindita Nikolla më 24 mars 2016, Tiranë, 2016, f. 3. Kreu II: Organizimi, Neni 4: Detyrat, pika 1.

[Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports & Quality Assurance Agency in Pre-University Education, Statute of the Quality Assurance Agency in Pre-University Education, Approved by Minister Lindita Nikolla on March 24, 2016, Tirana, 2016, p. 3. Chapter II: Organization, Article 4: Tasks, Point 1.]

¹⁵ Po aty. Pika 2. a), b), c), d).

[Ibid. Point 2. a), b), c), d).]

¹⁶ Po aty. Pika 3. a), b), c), d).

[Ibid. Point 3. a), b), c), d).]

¹⁷ Po aty. Pika 3. a), b), c), d).

[Ibid. Point 4. a), b), c), d).]

¹⁸ Po aty, f. 4. Neni 5: Marrëdhëniet me institucionet e tjera, Pika 1, 2, 3, 4.

3.4 National Higher Education Financing Agency

The *National Agency for Financing of Higher Education (NAFHE)* is a public institution under the ministry responsible for education, which organizes and operates a decision of the Council of Ministers¹⁹. Its main task is "distribution of public funds for: supporting the activity of public institutions of higher education, which includes teaching, research and participation in academic and administrative management issues; supporting scholarships for excellent students with maximum grade point average from the upper secondary education system, students in study programs in priority areas and students from social strata in need, as well as guaranteeing the student loan scheme"²⁰. Also NAFHE, "proposes to the Ministry responsible for education the criteria for the distribution of public funds"²¹. The latter (MoESY - J. Sota & F. Fuli) "approves and announces every year the document of priorities, according to the main directions"²².

3.5 National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation

The *National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI)* is a public institution under the Ministry responsible for education and science, whose main task is "distributing funds for research programs, based on projects submitted by higher education institutions. and research institutions in the fields of natural sciences, engineering and technology, medicine, agriculture, social sciences and humanities"²³.

NASRI during its work identifies the priority areas of research, technology and innovation, as well as evaluates at the national level programs and projects in the above areas; is responsible for disseminating information and coordinating application processes in international research projects in higher education; organizes every four years the process of evaluation of the research-scientific activity of the basic units of the institutions of higher education, as well as ranks them based on this evaluation; communicates the assessment to the National Higher Education Financing Agency. The methodology of the evaluation process is regulated by a decision of the Council of Ministers; and approves, on the basis of free competition among applicants, funds for doctoral study projects; as well as manages other funds for research and innovation, in the framework of national, international and bilateral research programs, which distributes them based on the applications of institutions"²⁴.

Also, "The Agency submits to the Ministry responsible for education, sports and youth the annual report of its activity. The results of its work are evaluated by the ministry responsible for education and science, based on funds received nationally from international research programs"²⁵.

3.6 Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education

The *Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (QAAHE)* is a public legal entity. It is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. QAAHE, through quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation and other processes,

[Ibid, Article 5: Relations with other institutions, Points 1, 2, 3, 4.]

¹⁹ Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 164, E hënë, 21 shtator 2015, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 11454. Ligj Nr. 80/2015, datë 22.7.2015 ..., Kreu II: Organizimi i arsimit të lartë dhe kërkimit shkencor, Neni 11: Agjencia Kombëtare e Financimit të Arsimit të Lartë, pika 5.

[Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 164, Monday, September 21, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2013, p. 11454. Law no. 80/2015, dated 22.7.2015 ..., Chapter II: Organization of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Article 11: National Agency for Financing of Higher Education, Point 5.]

²⁰ Po aty, Neni 11, pika 1, a), b), c), d).

[Ibid. Article 11, Point 1. a), b), c), d).]

²¹ Po aty, Neni 11, pika 3.

[Ibid. Article 11, Point 3.]

²² Po aty, Neni 11, pika 4.

[Ibid. Article 11, Point 4.]

²³ Po aty, Neni 12: Agjencia Kombëtare e Kërkimit Shkencor dhe Inovacionit (AKKSHI), pika 1.

[Ibid. Article 12: National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI), Point 1.]

²⁴ Po aty, Neni 11, pika 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

[Ibid. Article 11, Point 2. a), b), c), d).]

²⁵ Po aty, Neni 11, pika 7.

[Ibid. Article 11, Point 7.]

monitors and evaluates the quality of the institution and the programs offered. QAAHE bases its activity on its guidelines, in the Code of Quality of Higher Education, which is updated with European standards and quality guidelines in the European Higher Education Area²⁶.

QAAHE "carries out the evaluation process for the accreditation of higher education institutions and the study programs they offer, as well as the ongoing monitoring of their quality; cooperates with higher education institutions for the establishment and functioning of the internal system quality assurance; enjoys independence in drafting and approving its procedures, evaluation criteria and formats, selection of experts and special evaluation commissions, as well as the content and results of academic quality evaluation reports; as well as acting through elected and independent commissions*, according to the main fields of higher education in natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical, agricultural, social and humanities"²⁷.

For the accreditation process of higher education institutions and study programs, the Accreditation Board is established at QAAHE, which is a collegial decision-making body and independent in its activity. The Board makes the final decision on the accreditation of higher education institutions and the programs they offer; and approves at the request of the institution of higher education, the performance of external evaluation by one of the member agencies of ENQA²⁸. The Accreditation Board consists of foreign and domestic experts, personalities in the field of higher education and quality assurance.

4. Institutional Arrangements at the Regional Level

The central level coordinates its activity with the activity of the *Regional Education Directorate (RED)* and the *Local Education Offices (LEO)* and promotes the creation of a non-governmental network of educational change at national and local level.

For the purpose of the study we will refer to the implementation in practice of new alternatives for the structure and staff of local offices of pre-university education according to the Order of the Minister of Education and Sports, No. 234 of 19 April 2019, published in the *Official Gazette* of 2 May 2019 "On the approval of the structure and staff of local offices of pre-university education"²⁹.

The government's decision provided for the division into 4 regional education directorates, which meant the amalgamation of 13 directorates which have functioned in 12 regions of the country. The merger was based on a new organization undertaken by the government of that time, but such an initiative has been greatly contested not only by the opposition and right-wing mayors, but also by teachers, school leaders, various specialists. in the field of education etc.

According to the DCM no. 234, dated 19.04.2019 "On the approval of the structure and staff of the local offices of pre-university education"³⁰, It was clearly defined that Durrës, Fier, Korça and Lezha are the regional offices that have separate main subdivisions as well as which cities to cover the local Education Offices. According to this DCM, it was determined that "the total number of employees of the Local Offices will be a total of 428 people"³¹, specifying organic

²⁶ Po aty, f. 11455. Neni 14: Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë, pika 1.

[Ibid, p. 11455. Article 14: Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Point 1.]

* Elected and independent commissions have a temporary character and are composed of experts with academic qualifications, experience in higher education and scientific research and knowledge of quality processes [Note to Authors].

²⁷ Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 164, E hënë, 21 shtator 2015, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2013, f. 11455. Ligj Nr. 80/2015, datë 22.7.2015 ..., Kreu II, Neni 14, pika 2, 3, 4, 5. [Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 164, Monday, September 21, 2015, Publication of the Center for Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center for Official Publications", 2013, p. 11455. Law No. 80/2015, dated 22.7.2015 ..., Chapter II, Article 14, Point 2, 3, 4, 5.]

²⁸ Po aty. Neni 15: Bordi Akreditimit, pika 2, 3.

[Ibid. Article 15: Accreditation Board, points 2, 3.]

²⁹ Fletorja Zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë, Nr. 63, Viti 2019, 2 maj 2019, botim i Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare, Tiranë: "Shtypshkronja e Qendrës së Botimeve Zyrtare", 2019, f. 4833-4848. VKM-së Nr. 234, datë 19.04.2019 "Për miratimin e strukturës dhe organikës së zyrave vendore të arsimit parauniversitar".

[Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania, No. 63, Year 2019, May 2, 2019, Publication of the Center of Official Publications, Tirana: "Printing House of the Center of Official Publications", 2019, pp. 4833-4848. DCM No. 234, dated 19.04.2019 "On the Approval of the Structure and Staff of the Local Offices of Pre-University Education".]

³⁰ Po aty.

[Ibid.]

³¹ Po aty.

and geographical distribution.

- 4a) **The Regional Education Office of Durrës** based on the decision of the Albanian Government, will have as structure 4 separate local education offices: 1) Tirana with 25 people, 2) Durrës with 13 people; Dibër, Krujë, Kamza with 30 people and Bulqiza, Mat, Klos, Shijak, Kavaja, Vora, Rrogozhina with 42 people³².
- 4b) **The Fier Regional Education Office**, will have 3 local offices distributed in this way: 1) Patos, Roskovec, Divjaka, Mallakastër, Selenica, Delvinë-Finiq with 36 people; 2) Tepelena-Memaliaj, Përmet-Këlcyrë, Sarandë-Konispol, Lushnje, Gjirokastër-Libohovë-Dropull with 50 people; 3) Vlora-Himara, Fier with 28 employees³³.
- 4c) **Korça Regional Education Office**, will have as a structure 3 local offices with such a geographical distribution: 1) Oil bridge, Kuçovë, Cërrik, Belsh, Peqin, Gramsh, Librazhd, Përrenjas, Maliq, Kolonjë, Devoll with 66 employees; 2) Skrapar-Poliçan, Berat, Korçë-Pustec, Pogradec with 40 employees; 3) Elbasan with 14 employees³⁴.
- 4d) **The Regional Education Office of Lezha**, which includes the whole north of Albania, has 3 local offices: the first with the districts of Has, Tropoja, Mirdita, Malësi e Madhe, Vau i Dejës with 30 employees; and the second with Puka-Fushë-Arrëz, Kukës, Lezhë, Kurbini with 40 people. While the Local Education Office of Shkodra with 14 employees³⁵.

This new division is different from the territorial functioning that operates in Albania according to the Law "On administrative-territorial division of local units in the Republic of Albania", approved in 2014 by the left majority does not define the division into regions. According to article 1 of this law it is clearly defined that, "local government units in the Republic of Albania are: a) municipalities - 61; b) regions - 12"³⁶.

Regarding this division, MoESY specialists had clarified the public opinion that such an organization is made in order not to have two regional directorates in a city, based on the fact that Shkodra will have an office for Health. "The establishment of these 4 directorates (with offices in Lezha, Durres, Fier and Korca), - emphasizes a specialist of MoESY, - has been done following the model of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. [...] Consequently the decision is not to be set up by two regional directorates, for example, the Regional Directorate of Health Services for the north is in Shkodra, while the one for education is in Lezha. But Shkodra, like all other municipalities will have its own educational office that covers all schools of the Municipality of Shkodra. So the idea is for the regional directorates of health and those of pre-university education to be in different cities, so that as many services as possible are closer"³⁷.

With the new reorganization, each education office at the municipal level has the opportunity to assess the quality of teaching in the school, but also to suggest measures when the quality is not at the right level. These 51 Education Offices are currently managed by 4 small regional directorates (with 15 people each) that have a support and inspection role "³⁸.

5. Reflection: Knowing and Doing the Right Thing is the Right Thing to Do!

This issue describes the problems of accountability based on performance and improving education from the perspective of poorly performing policies. Also, the reader will find a preliminary formulation of some touches of our conclusions, the

[Idid.]

³² Po aty.

[Idid.]

³³ Po aty.

[Idid.]

³⁴ Po aty.

[Idid.]

³⁵ Po aty.

[Idid.]

³⁶ "Shkrija e 12 drejtorive arsimore, zbardhet vendimi i qeverisë" (më tej: "Shkrija e 12 drejtorive arsimore ..."), në: Si, Gazetë e pavarur, Tiranë, 03 maj 2019, f. 1-3.

[³⁷The Amalgamation of 12 Education Directorates, the Decision of the Government is Revealed" (hereinafter: "The Amalgamation of 12 Education Directorates..."), in: Si, Independent daily newspaper, Tirana, 03 May 2019, pp. 1-3.]

³⁷ Musa Kurtulaj, "Ministria e Arsimit, Besa Shahini, mes notës 10 dhe 4!", në: Dita, Gazetë e pavarur, Tiranë, 23 maj 2019, f. 3.

[Musa Kurtulaj, "Minister of Education, Besa Shahini, Between Grades 10 and 4!", In: Dita, Independent daily newspaper, Tirana, 23 May 2019, p. 3.]

³⁸ "Shkrija e 12 drejtorive arsimore ..., f. 1-3.

[³⁸The Amalgamation of 12 Education Directorates ..., pp. 1-3.]

result of a long research work, part of the efforts to understand the work that needs to be done to improve education for many cases that have seemed really difficult and helpful we can give to people who are in charge of teaching in them or are interested in educational developments in our country.

The "Achilles heel" of this article is the large-scale improvement of school management, which means the mobilization of knowledge, skills, incentives and capacities within schools and school systems in order to achieve results in terms of coordination and good management of all human resources with material by managers - should be understood as a development process, not as a final act that aligns with a particular policy.

In this logic, we think that school management is improved by collectively engaging in the benefit of new strategies, not by assuming we do what policymakers want. This requires, first, to recognize the problems of failed education and performance-based accountability; second, if we do not pay special attention to the fact, that is, whether or not a change has actually occurred in practice, then we may run the risk of praising what has not happened.

During these years taken into study, by all governments, everything that has been done, everything that has happened and has not happened has been considered successes: in the field of institutional arrangements at the macro and micro level, necessarily related to the management of human capacity (teacher); in the field of curricula; in the field of technology and didactic material base; in the field of education budgeting etc.

In the field of institutional arrangements at the macro and micro level, a new structure and staff of local pre-university education offices has been applied in the last two years, which is being trumpeted as a success. Given the great importance of this reorganization related to the auxiliary-monitoring-control bodies of the quality of teaching in schools of knowledge acquisition, "it should be necessary to precede this project with a wide discussion in the premises of education at the national and local level, and not to pass without feeling an official order, which we have mentioned above, as if it is about building a school building and not about the organizational reform of the pre-university education system! So, for such an important order, it was silenced even before the approval, it is being silenced even after the approval, publication of the implementation process that is being implemented!"³⁹. On the basis of this order, "some small municipalities will be covered by the education offices of the municipalities that are closer, so it falls to 10 education offices to be common, therefore there are not 61 education offices as the number of municipalities"⁴⁰.

However, in this way the education service goes to each municipality and as close as possible to students and teachers. But as a novelty in the education offices, each has a sector with 3-6 employees that deal only with the evaluation of the quality of education in the school. This has been a missing service until 2018. Absolutely at this point, we think that this change deserves to be welcomed and supported, as it has to do directly with what is most important in schools: strengthening the learning process, controlling teaching, controlling the knowledge that students gain, namely the level of mastering the program and their preparation.

Not only that, but also the determination of the measures that should be taken without wasting time, in cases when it is found that there are problems in this or that school, with this or that teacher and so on. With this, the education offices return point by point to their mission which is the direct help they give to the schools to equip the students with as much consolidated knowledge as possible. We must not forget that from 2007 to 2018, unfortunately the education offices only had such a name, as they were filled with economists, lawyers, financiers, engineers, etc., while genuine education specialists were very few because such was the structure. This has caused a lot of damage to pre-university education, as municipal education offices or regional education directorates had neither the opportunity nor the capacity to control the quality of education in schools. Currently, with the change of the structure, composition and content of the local education offices, the conditions are created for the schools to be directly helped to be real schools. However, we should not rush to this point, as there is room to discuss because in some of these offices are not assigned people with experience, qualified and comprehensive knowledge of education, consequently there is little hope for a positive turn. In fact, as far as we are hearing, genuine education specialists will stay away from these offices, as they are paid more as teachers in schools than as education inspectors, because salaries are not incentive. Anyway let's wait for this in the not too distant future.

Human capacities, teachers and pedagogues, a large part of them, graduates in these transition years, especially in the period 1991-2010, have significant weaknesses, both in scientific and professional training. Consequently, the

³⁹ Daniela Grrica, "Shkrija e Drejtorive Arsimore, ministria të kthejë mbrapsht vendimin", në: Shekulli, *Gazetë e pavarur*, Tiranë 04 maj 2019, f. 4.

[Daniela Grrica, "The Merger of The Education Directorates, the Minister to Reverse the Decision", in: Shekulli, *Independent daily newspaper*, Tirana 04 May 2019, p. 4.]

⁴⁰ Po aty.

[Idid.]

figure, personality, dignity of the teacher and the pedagogue have been violated to some extent.

In the field of pre-university education curricula, after many years of experimentation, a curriculum assessed as contemporary is being applied recently - competency-based curricula. This too is being trumpeted as a success by curriculum designers. The practice of our school has highlighted not only the difficulties during its implementation in teaching activities inside and outside the school, but has also ascertained its bureaucratic aspect, which dominates over the professional aspect, the formal one over the formal one. For example: keeping two records, commenting on a descriptive grade, student portfolio tasks are often plagiarism and not original, learning outcomes according to key competencies every day, etc⁴¹.

If there has been a positive change, what has really happened in recent years is the significant improvement of school infrastructure, such as: functional, quality buildings according to contemporary standards in particular. If there is anything positive that is happening, it is the school evaluation system related to the State Matura and the Exemption Exams, are of a European standard.

If something good is happening, it is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the teaching process. If something positive is happening is the functioning of two subordinate institutions of MoESY such as CES and AQSPE, which with the work of specialists in the field of education have promoted quality standards for everything that is done in our school. It is these leading institutions at the macro level in education that lead us to believe that the risk of glorifying what has not happened should definitely diminish.

But it was quite different with the rights and freedoms, duties and responsibilities that teachers / leaders and pupils / students have - as the main actors of a democratic society. Currently, some teachers and leaders of educational institutions are unprepared and untreated for change, finding the solution of various problems in the extreme liberalization of school life, creating in some cases anarchy. There are other cases where teachers are hacked that students do not perform their duties and responsibilities; that executives violate their rights. Students complain that their rights and freedoms are violated by teachers or administrators. What we will understand is, first, teachers and students overestimate their rights and freedoms and underestimate the duties and responsibilities in school settings; secondly, the teacher / leader-student balance is disturbed, which guarantees order, safety and stability in the school, but also the duties and responsibilities of everyone; thirdly, the indifference of some teachers is overcome to the highest degree of negligence even towards the implementation of the tasks and objectives that the school has.

So, in order to adjust this balance, teachers must never forget that teaching is a profession that requires above all professionalism, passion, love for students and why not even sacrifice.

Finance, the state budget for all levels of education, compares only to the lowest digital indicators in the world. To understand how much the governments have been interested in the development of education in Albania and especially in the development of higher education and scientific research, below we present some official data on the financing of the state budget for education and the number of students. registered for the period 2014-2020.

In 2014, the total funding from the state budget for all levels of education was 40.287 billion ALL or about 2.85% of the country's GDP, budget funding for higher education was 5.436 billion ALL or about 0.39% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.177 billion or 0.013% of GDP⁴².

In 2015, total budget funding for education was ALL 39.471 billion, or 2.76% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 5.909 billion or 0.41% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.177 billion or 0.012 % of GDP⁴³.

In 2016, total budget funding for education was ALL 35,355 billion, or 2.34% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 6,516 billion or 0.43% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.354 billion or 0.023% of GDP⁴⁴.

⁴¹ Jani Sota, *Didaktika e historisë. Metodologji veprimtari dhe strategji të mësimdhënies*, Tiranë: "Triptik", 2021, f. 273-281.

⁴² Jani Sota, *Didactics of History. Activity Methodology and Teaching Strategies*, Tirana: "Triptik", 2021, pp. 273-281.]

⁴³ INSTAT, *Vjetari statistikor 2010-2014 (më tej: Vjetari statistikor 2010-2014 ...)*, botim i Institutit të Statistikave, Tiranë: "AdelPrint", 2015, f. 58-65. Arsimi. Shih edhe: World Bank, *Improving Quality and Strengthening Governance in Albania's Education System, 2014c*, Published material web site <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/04/10/improving-quality-strengthening-governancein-albania-education-system> (Accessed 29 February 2016).

[INSTAT, *Statistical Yearbook 2010-2014 (hereinafter: Statistical Yearbook 2010-2014 ...)*, Publication of the Institute of Statistics, Tirana: "AdelPrint", 2015, pp. 58-65. Education. See also: World Bank, *Improving Quality and Strengthening Governance in Albania's Education System, 2014c*, Published material web site <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/04/10/improving-quality-strengthening-governancein-albania-education-system> (Accessed 29 February 2016).]

⁴⁴ INSTAT, *Vjetari statistikor 2019, botim i Institutit të Statistikave*, Tiranë: "Media - Print sh.p.k.", 2019, f. 43-50. Arsimi. 36-46

[INSTAT, *Statistical Yearbook 2019, Publication of the Institute of Statistics*, Tirana: "Media - Print sh.p.k.", 2019, pp. 43-50. Education.]

⁴⁴ Po aty.

[Idid.]

In 2017, total budget funding for education was ALL 34,701 billion, or 2.19% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 6.597 billion or 0.42% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.394 billion or 0.025 % of GDP⁴⁵.

In 2018, total budget funding for education was ALL 38,307 billion, or 2.32% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 7,571 billion or 0.46% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.380 billion or 0.023 % of GDP⁴⁶.

In 2019, total budget funding for education was ALL 39,261 billion, or 2.24% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 7,258 billion or 0.41% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.649 billion or 0.037 % of GDP⁴⁷.

In 2020, total budget funding for education was ALL 41,980 billion, or 2.24% of GDP, funding for higher education was ALL 9.730 billion or 0.52% of GDP, while funding for research was ALL 0.500 billion or 0.027 % of GDP⁴⁸.

Based on the above data which are according to the Institute of Statistics and Statistical Reports of the Ministry of Education, it is obvious that the education budget for the period 2013-2020 approved by the governments has gone with small increases and decreases from year to year, but as a trend in absolute value it has remained unchanged for 7 years in a row, while as a percentage of GDP, budget funding for education has decreased from 2.85% of GDP in 2014⁴⁹, to 2.24% of GDP in 2020⁵⁰.

If there was one thing that really happened, it was that the government promised at the end of 2019 that it would increase the education budget to 5% of GDP. Which means that what has happened or should happen has not really happened during 2020.

Compared to Kosovo which is the country with GDP and the poorest budget in Europe, according to data from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo, was financed from the state budget 3.7% of GDP, while the average government funding for education in the 27 countries of the European Union is 4.6% of GDP⁵¹.

Even for higher education, the governments of EU countries finance 2-3 times more than the Albanian government as a report on GDP⁵².

While in terms of research and development, the funding of the Albanian government is very low and incomparable not only with EU countries which have financed on average 2.19% of GDP, but also with countries in our region where Kosovo has the lowest indicator with 0.5% of GDP, ie about 2 times higher than Albania⁵³.

Referring to the official data in Albania in the academic year 2013-2014 studied about 176 thousand students in public and private universities⁵⁴, while in the academic year 2019-2020 study about 130 thousand students⁵⁵, ie 46

⁴⁵ Po aty.

[Idid.]

⁴⁶

⁴⁷ Po aty.

[Idid.]

⁴⁸ Banka e Shqipërisë, Njoftim statistikor, botim i Departamentit të Statistikave Financiare, Tiranë, 10 Qershor 2020, f. 1-8. Bilanci i pagesave.

[Bank of Albania, Statistical Notice, Published by the Department of Financial Statistics, Tirana, June 10, 2020, p. 1-8. Balance of payments.]

⁴⁹ INSTAT, Vjetari statistikor 2010-2014 ..., f. 58-65.

[INSTAT, Statistical Yearbook 2010-2014 ..., f. 58-65]

⁵⁰ Bajram Hysa, "Prioritete kombëtarë të arsimit të lartë: diploma me vlerë profesionale sipas ofertës së tregut të punës", në: Telegraf, gazetë e përditshme e pavarur, Tiranë, 28 Janar, 2020, f. 6.

[Bajram Hysa, "National Priorities of Higher Education: Diplomas with Professional Value According to the Labor Market Offer", in: Telegraf, Independent daily newspaper, Tirana, January 28, 2020, p. 6.]

⁵¹ Jan Peeters, Quality of ECE Services in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, Main Report: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29754.59843, Publisher by Vernieuwing in de Basisvoorzieningen vdor Joonge Kinderen (vbjk), Gent, Belgium, pp. 7-8. Material i publikuar në web site: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310605215_UNICEF_report_Quality_of_ECE_Services_in_Albania_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_Kosovo_and_Montenegro

⁵² United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Arsimi Gjithpërfshirës: Vizioni, Teoria, dhe Konceptet, Tiranë, 2015, f. 7. Material i publikuar në web site: <http://www.inclusive-education.org/basic-page/unicef-trainer-trainers-modules-inclusive-education> (I aksesueshëm në shkurt 2016).

⁵³ Po aty, f. 9.

[Idid, p. 9.]

⁵⁴ UNESCO, Shqipëria. Analiza e Politikës Arsimore: Çështje dhe Rekomandime (Raporti i zgjeruar), botim i Seksionit të Politikës Arsimore (ED/PLS/EDP), Paris, Gusht 2017, f. 41. See also: J. Sota, Pre-University Education in Post-Communist Albania ..., p. 192.

[UNESCO, Albania. Education Policy Analysis: Issues and Recommendations (Extended Report), Publication of Education Policy Section (ED / PLS / EDP), Paris, August 2017, p. 41. See also: J. Sota, Pre-University Education in Post-Communist Albania ..., p. 192.]

⁵⁵ Enea Janko, "Politikat arsimore dhe universitetet "me nam" të Kryeministrit Rama", në: Pamflet, Platformë mediatike analitike, f. 1. Material i publikuar në web site: <http://pamfleti.net/politikat-arsimore-dhe-universitetet-me-nam-te-kryeministrit-rama/>

thousand students less or about 35% less.

While in 2013 about 2500 students left Albania to continue their higher studies in other countries⁵⁶, in 2019 about 5000 students left⁵⁷, ie twice as many. Currently there may be over 30 thousand Albanian students studying abroad, who spend over 300 million Euros in one year alone.

So in short, we are not at the risk of praise, but in the praise of what has not happened in these years or should happen in the near future. That is why we are here where we are!

The long-term future of education reform, as we are convinced today, relies mainly on this tension between the uniform requirements of external accountability systems and the special characteristics that all levels of education have in reality. New accountability systems will continue to survive or fail, depending on the degree of recognition: how educational institutions at the macro and micro levels change in the conception of management - a new concept that is necessarily related to accountability. Part of what we hope to learn in the future is: Knowing and doing the right thing is the right thing to do!

6. Conclusion

In the aforementioned paragraphs we expressed the importance of reconceptualizing education management, ideas for a decentralized school system, and decentralized education laws - as part of change efforts.

Today's social needs require that the Albanian school adapt the re-establishment of its best values, identified on the principles of self-management and the common contribution of all, for all. Managing by shifting responsibilities in the context of decentralization leads us to hope that ideas for public opinion can be turned into ideas for programs or strategies of necessary holistic change, legitimized by policymakers.

Management, according to the analysis of the situation, the needs of the system, school institutions and the vision for the near future, aims to harmonize the movements and changes that give our educational reforms a systemic and structural nature, which serve to decentralize the system as a whole. pre-university in particular. Such policies would certainly require transparent, accountable and inclusive administration, but not so effective and efficient, to be able to create intentional processes for reproducing success.

One of the biggest lessons we have learned from large-scale reforms, especially after 2015, is the astonishing naiveté that success can be achieved by shifting from one environment to another, no matter how decision-makers are distributed among actors. in the system, delegation of competencies and provision of human resources, respective motivation, etc., in accordance with modern standards of administration and management of education at the macro and micro level.

What will we mean, that such a practice requires not only reconceptualization of full responsibility and awareness of the central institution and its subordinate entities, for the efficient management of human resources; but also to try to find out where the problems are - only then can we understand what needs to be done next in order to achieve what we want.

Problems are everywhere, in every serious attempt at change in education; both within the effort itself and through unplanned interventions. Problems are inevitable, but their positive side is you can learn or be successful without them. Also, problems are necessary to learn, but not without having the ability to research in order to learn the right lessons.

Often the problems associated with changing the way a school is run are forgotten, denied, or used as an opportunity to blame others or to defend oneself. The success of the efforts to achieve change in the Albanian school is much more diverse, if the problems are treated as natural and expected phenomena, but also when they are deliberately required. Only by trying to figure out where the problems are can we figure out what needs to be done to achieve what we want.

Successful change management requires problem-solving techniques such as "list of concerns" and regular review of problem-solving decisions at further meetings to see what has happened. As circumstances and contexts change constantly, sometimes and in strange ways, it is essential to instill in everyone a reflective spirit: *Education is the best economic policy, it is the most sustainable long-term policy to have a developed and sustainable economy!*

[Enea Janko, "Educational Policies and Universities "With the Name" of Prime Minister Rama", in: Pamphlet, Analytical media platform, p. 1. Material published on the web site: <http://pamfleti.net/politikat-arsimore-dhe-universiteti-me-nam-te-kryeministrit-rama/>]

56 Po aty, f. 1,

[Idid, p. 1.]

57 Po aty, f. 1,

[Idid, p. 1.]

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