

Overview of Learning Centres in Kosovo and the Implementation of Administrative Instruction 19/2018

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Table of Contents

- Executive Summary5**
- I. Introduction7**
 - 1.1. Education of Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian Students and the role of Learning Centres7*
 - 1.2. Road to Institutionalisation9*
 - Methodology 10*
- II. New Legal Reality for Learning Centres: Administrative Instruction 19/2018 ..11**
 - 2.1. Implementation of Administrative Instruction 19/2018..... 13*
- III. Operation and Funding of Learning Centres.....14**
 - Funding..... 13*
- IV. Current Challenges20**
- V. Way Forward.....21**
- VI. Conclusion22**
- VII. Recommendations.....23**



List of Abbreviations

AI	Administrative Instruction
BSFK	Balkan Sunflowers Kosova
CoE	Council of Europe
EU	European Union
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
GiZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, the German Development Agency
LAP	Local Action Plan
LC	Learning Centre
MAC	Municipal Action Committee
MED	Municipal Education Directorate
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science Technology and Innovation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PRTAN	Prevention and Response Teams towards Abandonment and Non-Registration
RC	Regional Centre
TdH	Terre des Hommes
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UP	University of Prishtinë/Priština
VoRAE	Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian



Executive Summary

This report will examine the current implementation status of the Administrative Instruction 19/2018 (AI 19/2018) on the Establishment and Functioning of the Learning Centres and provide an overview of the learning centre landscape in Kosovo based on research conducted from 2020-2022, as per the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's mandate to monitor and promote human rights.

Learning Centres (LCs) have a long-standing history in Kosovo. Throughout the years, LCs supported children who are disadvantaged and suffer from the consequences of socio-economic exclusion by preparing them for enrolment, providing extra help with their schoolwork and offering recreational and other educational activities. They have also contributed to discouraging school dropouts. Although it was acknowledged that LCs play an important role in contributing to the education of Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian children, their sustainability was at risk due to significant reliance on international donors for their core operating costs. Therefore, there was a pressing interest to gradually place LCs under the auspices of Kosovo institutions.

To create a legal basis and regulate LCs' work, AI 19/2018 was approved by the then-Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in December 2018. The criteria, prescribed by AI 19/2018, to establish the formal framework for the operation of LCs, which have to be registered with the Ministry of Education to continue or commence activities. Upon approval of the facilities, teaching staffing and curriculum as well as the work plan and financial plan, LCs are granted a five-year work permit with the possibility of renewal.¹ In turn, AI 19/2018 equips government and municipal-level institutions with more responsibilities to ensure efficient and sustainable functioning and financing of LCs. The development and implementation of AI 19/2018 became synonymous with institutionalisation with local stakeholders and the MESTI.

Delays, including municipal and ministerial funding, as well as the absence of procedural guidance, have significantly affected already existing LCs and many have closed due to donors' projects ending and lack of funding. As of April 2022, there were 47 functioning LCs in 17 municipalities. 53 LCs closed between 2018 and April 2022 and some municipalities have been left with no functioning LCs.

Some international donors are now more reluctant to fund core costs in the absence of the necessary funding from the legally responsible parties, and those LCs which have managed to secure funding from donors only have short or medium-term financial prospects.

¹ Administrative Instruction 19/2018 on the Establishment and Functioning of the Learning Centres, available at: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/udhezimi-administrativ-masht-nr-19-masht-per-themelimin-dhe-funksionimin-e-qendraves-mesimore/>



After two years of not realizing funding promises nor securing a dedicated channel to meet their obligations, MESTI (Ministry of Education Science, Technology and Innovation) allocated some funding (€97,000 to only three NGOs managing LCs in October 2021; and €200,000 in July 2022). While welcome, neither this amount nor the approach is sufficient in view of the number of registered or non-registered LCs. In parallel, some municipalities are facing challenges related to their responsibilities under AI 19/2018 as they do not have either the financial means or the legal basis to support such activities. The slow implementation of AI 19/2018 has eroded trust at the institutional level as NGOs and community representatives remain concerned about the long-term sustainability of LCs, the very problem institutionalization was intended to help address, and are forced yet again to approach a smaller pool of international donors for the support needed to continue their services - or to cease activities.

I. Introduction

1.1. Education of Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian Students and the role of Learning Centres

Education provision for members of the Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities in Kosovo is often hampered by unsatisfactory participation in compulsory education and very low participation in secondary and tertiary education.² Out of the overall number of children in pre-primary education and primary (lower secondary), Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian make up 2.5 per cent (5,808 students out of a total of 229,333)³ according to data collected by MEST for the 2018/19 school year.⁴ MESTI data reveals that 107 Kosovo Roma, 185 Kosovo Ashkali and 60 Kosovo Egyptian children were registered as attending public pre-schools in the same school year.⁵ The low pre-school attendance is somewhat compensated by LCs throughout Kosovo who offer pre-school services, but still only accounts for less than 20 per cent of Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian children.⁶ Low participation in pre-school is also an issue for pupils from the majority community in a given municipality, but small increases have been reported since 2016.⁷ Comparative literacy rates of specific communities shows the discrepancy between the majority and non-majority communities. Compared to about 98 per cent of the total literate population, only 64 per cent of Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian women and about 81 per cent of men, between the ages of 15-49, can read and write.⁸ The root causes of poor attainment of education are dire socio-economic conditions, as

2 Council of Europe, "Guidelines for teachers for social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in schools", 2015, p. 7; available at: <https://www.coe.int/documents/3843514/13597853/Guidelines-for-teachers-En.pdf/23d76fe4-66d2-4aae-8437-cfcec6d64d5b>

3 According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Kosovo Population and Housing Census 2011 – Final Results, 2012, available at http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/2075/final-results_eng.pdf, p. 143, the latest official data on the representation of the Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities is registered in the 2011 census indicates that 8,824 Kosovo Roma, 15,436 Kosovo Ashkali and 11,524 Kosovo Egyptians live in Kosovo. Kosovo Roma thus constitute 0.51 per cent of the population in Kosovo, Kosovo Ashkali 0.89 per cent, and Kosovo Egyptians 0.66 per cent. These figures, however, do not necessarily provide an accurate demographic image of the three communities, as not all of their members took part in the census, and the census was not conducted in the four northern municipalities.


4 Kosovo Agency of Statistics, "Education Statistics in Kosovo" 2019/20, June 2020, p. 31.

5 Kosovo Agency of Statistics, "Education Statistics in Kosovo" 2019/20, June 2020, p. 28; available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5637/education-201902020-ang.pdf>

6 UNICEF, "Early Childhood Development – A statistical Snapshot: Data on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities", p. 4; Available at: https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/media/196/file/ECD_Roma_Ashkali_and_Egyptian_communities_ENG.pdf.

7 KEEN, "Pre-School Education in Kosovo", 2018, p. 24, available at: http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Edukimi-parashkollor-në-Kosovë_ENG.pdf

8 UNICEF, "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019-2020 and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020 Survey Findings Report, November, 2020", pp. 70-74, available at: <https://bit.ly/3xweeio>



well as prevailing gender roles, among these communities. Often children are forced to work to assist their families, while in addition to this, in the case of girls, early marriages have an adverse effect.⁹ The Gender Parity Index for primary school education for the three communities is 1.01, indicating that more girls than boys attend elementary school. This index falls in secondary school. In lower secondary education the index is 0.94 and in higher secondary, the index is 0.80, indicating that fewer girls continue or complete their education.¹⁰

A very low school attendance rate and the related limited academic achievement by Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian children in the context of lack of social inclusion led to the initiative of NGOs to establish LCs in 2001, with the purpose of providing complementary educational services.¹¹

Throughout the years, LCs played an important role in reducing the number of drop-outs,¹² and positively impacted the performance (reading and writing skills, grades) of children, encouraging them to continue their education.¹³ A positive satisfaction level was also reported among parents, as they have underlined the importance of LCs.¹⁴

LCs, as a supplementary model of development and education, share a common goal – to keep children in school, facilitate their participation in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education and achieve better academic results.¹⁵ In addition to school-age children, some LCs also provide pre-school/kindergarten services. Generally, they provide homework support; catch-up lessons; and basic literacy to children who never enrolled in school. The majority of LCs operate within schools, where they are provided with space by the municipality. Others are located inside the communities they serve.¹⁶ Community based LCs have more flexibility with extra-curricular activities such as summer camps and can offer educational materials and food, while school-based LCs have better cooperation with teachers and school directors. Staff of LCs (co-ordinators/facilitators/tutors and volunteers) usually do not have education qualifications due to the informal character of the centres.¹⁷

LCs tend to target areas of deprivation and children who need extra support to succeed and stay in school. Schools in such areas are typically underequipped and overburdened.

9 KOSINT 2020, *“Impact of Learning Centres on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Education”*, 2018, p. 17. Available here http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Ndikimi-i-QMve-ne-Kosove_eng.pdf

10 Ibid. p.16.

11 Ibid. p. 18.

12 European Commission, *Kosovo 2018 report*, SWD (2018) 156 final, April 2018, p. 27; available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>, and European Commission, *Kosovo 2020 Report*, SWD (2020) 356 final, October 2020, p. 85; available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/kosovo_report_2020.pdf


13 Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society 2017-2021, pp. 42-43; available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/strategy-for-inclusion-of-roma-and-ashkali-communities-in-the-kosovo-society-2017-2021-11-05-2017/> See also: CoE/Unicef, *“Study on the Impact and Sustainability of Learning Centres”*, p.7.

14 Council of Europe/UNICEF, *“Study on the Impact and Sustainability of Learning Centres”*, 2015, p.7.

15 Ibid. pp. 7; 11.

16 Out of 47 active LCs in April 2022, 34 are school-based while 13 are community-based.

17 KOSINT 2020, *“Impact of Learning Centres on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Education”*, 2018, p. 24.



In 2018, more than 5,500 primary and lower secondary school children were attending supplementary classes provided by LCs in both community and school based services. However, in 2022, due to the pandemic and the closure of LCs, that number has fallen to just below 3,000.¹⁸

LCs have been promoted to serve primarily Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities; however, over the years they have expanded to benefit children from other communities as well. The importance of continuation of LCs was also indicated in the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2021, stating that LCs should enjoy special support at least for the next five years, until the overall level of education and the living standards of the members of these communities is increased.¹⁹ Both the Kosovo Education Strategy 2022-2026 and the Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of Roma and Ashkali Communities 2022 – 2026 acknowledge that LCs reduce dropouts and the accompanying Action plan (2022 – 2024) pledges €200,000 for the next three years.²⁰

The value of LCs expands far beyond the children attending, they also benefit their attendee families, their schools, prospective employers, local communities and contribute to health, society and economy. Long term research from developed countries shows that public spending on early childcare and education is a sound investment with high economic and social returns. Research evidence shows that it enhances economic growth, increases financial returns to the treasury, and delivers social benefits including a better educated society and a lower level of crime.²¹ LCs should be recognized for these overarching long term gains and their sustainability seen as an investment in the future of both the economy and society.

1.2. Road to Institutionalisation

Until 2017, LCs operated outside the formal education framework in Kosovo as their work was not legally regulated. The structure, operation and education programmes of LCs can be described as diverse across Kosovo. They vary from one NGO to another due to different management approaches and requirements determined by different donors.²² In addition to a lack of a unified approach, whereby the qualifications and level of


18 Based on research conducted by OSCE field teams in April 2022.

19 Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society 2017-2021, pp. 33.

20 The Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of the Roma and Ashkali Communities (2022-2026) page 29 and Action Plan p. 81

21 Children's Rights Alliance, *"The Foundations of Growth – Investing in the Next Generation"*, Advancing Children's Early Care and Education, available at https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/StartStrong_FoundationsOfGrowth.pdf

22 Council of Europe/UNICEF, *"Study on the Impact and Sustainability of Learning Centres"*, 2015, pp. 13; 24; 26.



preparation of teaching staff vary from one LC to another, municipal officials, schoolteachers and school directors sometimes questioned the effectiveness of LCs.²³

Due to the need for sustainability²⁴ and a harmonized approach, various NGOs came together in 2015 and drafted the first Administrative Instruction. MESTI approved the **Administrative Instruction 12/2017 (hereinafter AI 12/2017) on the Establishment and Functioning of the Learning Centres**, which envisaged licensing of LCs founded and administered by entities with legal status.²⁵ Furthermore, along with donor funding, it set out the obligation of the Kosovo government and municipalities to allocate funds for LCs.²⁶ The AI 12/2017 was a step forward in the process of harmonization of the work of LCs, and committed public institutions to support them financially. The AI 12/2017 was replaced in December 2018 by the more robust **Administrative Instruction 19/2018 on the Establishment and Functioning of the Learning Centres** (hereinafter AI 19/2018).

The AI 19/2018 sets minimum unified standards for LC operation, including approved curricula, staff qualifications, sustainable budget planning; and evaluation and reporting. Together with the Practical Guide,²⁷ it provides LCs with a clear picture of what criteria and documentation are required in order to register the LC. This marked significant progress in the process of incorporation of LCs into the formal education framework, putting LCs under the umbrella of MESTI and municipalities, to which they are accountable. Despite this positive development, there are still delays in the fulfilment of obligations by government and municipal institutions. While the AI was welcomed by different stakeholders,²⁸ delays in its implementation mean that it has not yet fully brought LCs under the purview of municipal and government institutions. In addition, LCs are still threatened by funding shortages, and closures are widespread.

Methodology

Between February 2020 and April 2022, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo contacted over 90 operational and inactive or closed LCs on three separate occasions requesting feedback on their operations, funding status and registration in relation to the implementation of AI 19/2018. In April 2022, Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) in municipalities where

23 Council of Europe/UNICEF, *“Study on the Impact and Sustainability of Learning Centres”*, 2015, p. 40.


24 Ambassador of Norway in Prishtinë/Priština: “Funds are being reduced; these centres are based only on the donor’s help. Unless the government steps in and takes them under their competences, it will be very hard for these LCs to be sustainable.” See: Council of Europe, UNICEF, *“Study on the Impact and Sustainability of Learning Centres”*, 2015, p. 38; available at: https://www.coe.int/documents/3843514/13597853/Study_on_Impact_and_Sustainability_of_the_Learning_Centers-En.pdf/4a76eefe-21d0-432c-800c-ad234f77f4a2.

25 Administrative Instruction 12/2017 on the Establishment and Functioning of the Learning Centres, Articles 7 and 8.

26 AI 12/2017, Article 10(1).

27 Practical Guide for the Implementation of the Administrative Instruction on the Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres 19/2018, available here in Albanian: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2019/12/udhezues.pdf>

28 Statement by KOSINT2020, on 25 August 2017, available at: <https://kosint2020.net/en/news-and-events/approval-of-the-administrative-instruction-no-12-2017-on-the-establishment-and-functioning-of-learning-centers-by-the-ministry/>



LCs are active were also contacted to understand the support provided to LCs. Inputs from the Ministry of Education were obtained through the OSCE – MESTI working group.

The information received was supplemented by desk research, consulting documents and reports concerning LCs. In addition, updates regarding the changing situation, once the registration went live, were sought from video and email interviews with engaged stakeholders.²⁹

II. New Legal Reality for Learning Centres: Administrative Instruction 19/2018

AI 19/2018³⁰ determines the criteria and procedures for the establishment and functioning of the LCs that provide ancillary learning support and educational activities. According to AI 19/2018, the main objectives of LCs are the following:

- Physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children.
- Increase participation of children in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.
- Improve school attendance and performance.
- Reduce or eliminate drop-outs.
- Increase involvement of children in extra-curricular activities.
- Increase awareness of the significance of children’s education.
- Active involvement of parents in children’s education.
- Added opportunities for socialization among children.³¹

According to the AI 19/2018, municipalities and entities holding a legal person status have the competence to establish and administer LCs, and must be registered with MESTI.³² MESTI is then responsible for issuing an official permit for the duration of five years, if the prospective bearer of the LC meets the requirements prescribed under the AI 19/2018.³³

To meet basic requirements, the applicant shall have a suitable physical space and work environment, ancillary learning programme, qualified staff, workplace regulation and


29 Interlocutors included NGO directors, programme managers, donors, MESTI representatives and the EU Office in Kosovo.

30 This AI was issued pursuant to Article 4, 21, and 22 of the Law no. 03/L-189 on the State Administration, Article 5, paragraph 16 of the Law no. 04/L-032 on Pre-university Education, and Article 8 paragraph 1 subparagraph 1.4 and Appendix 6 of the Regulation no. 02/2011 for field of administrative responsibility of the Prime Minister’s Office and Ministries (22 March 2011). In February 2022, the OPM published a legal review of all sector-relevant secondary legislation that has been implemented in order to evaluate its effectiveness. In relation to Administrative Instruction 19/2018 it was concluded that there is no concrete legal basis for issuing this Administrative Instruction. However, in order to avoid the legal vacuum in this area, it was recommended to remain in force until the creation of a concrete legal basis for its issuance.

31 The Administrative Instruction (AI) 19/2018, Article 3, paragraph 7.

32 The AI 19/2018, Article 3, paragraphs 1-3.

33 The AI 19/2018, Articles 3, paragraph 2; Article 4, paragraphs 1 and 5.



regulation for child protection, as well as a work plan and a financial plan.³⁴ These requirements are important to ensure the synchronised and sustainable operation of prospective LCs. An important aspect of the AI 19/2018 is that it specifies necessary qualifications for staff, and, in particular, it sets a minimum academic background for the co-ordinators and teaching staff of LCs³⁵, which is crucial in providing quality education. Existing LC staff who do not meet the necessary requirements will be granted five years to acquire the qualifications.³⁶

In terms of finances, LCs will be funded through two main sources: the Kosovo budget (governmental and municipal); and external donations, which can be given directly to the bearers³⁷ of LCs or to the Kosovo budget earmarked for the use of LCs.³⁸ MESTI is responsible for planning the annual budget for LCs; ensuring that the LC programme financing is in line with the government regulation; and planning special support in the public announcement for financing projects through the subsidies category.³⁹ The municipality, when requested by LCs, is obliged to include financial support in the annual budget and, through special grants, plan the base/initial budgeting for establishment and operation of school-based LCs.⁴⁰ Municipalities are also responsible for providing space for the community-based LCs and covering operational costs.⁴¹ LCs run by NGOs are accountable to MESTI and the municipal education directorate (hereinafter MED). Accountability includes that the bearer of the LC shall submit annual narrative and financial reports to MESTI and the respective MED. In turn, MESTI is responsible for approving and supervising the work of the LC and the municipality is responsible for oversight and support of the LC and overseeing staff selection.⁴²

The AI 19/2018 constitutes a vital tool for the creation of an effective, sustainable and transparent system of LCs by introducing common requirements, as well as charging MESTI and the MEDs with monitoring and reporting.⁴³

Approval of the AI 19/2018 gave high hopes for a smooth transition from fragmented operational approaches and donor dependency towards a more harmonised and sustainable setting, based on a budgetary financing. This is partially how institutionalisation was envisaged, through improved management, regulation and oversight. However, the ambiguity surrounding amounts of actual funding and

34 The AI 19/2018, Article 5, paragraph 1.

35 The AI 19/2018, Article 8, paragraph 2.1, LC Coordinators must hold at least a Bachelor level qualification and paragraph 4.1, LC Teaching Staff must hold a teaching qualification.

36 The AI 19/2018, Article 14, paragraph 2.

37 The AI 19/2018, Article 2, Definitions, Bearers – entities that establish and manage learning centres, as well as institutions responsible for the workflow therein.

38 The AI 19/2018, Article 13, paragraph 1.

39 The AI 19/2018, Article 13, paragraph 2.

40 The AI 19/2018, Article 13, paragraph 3.

41 The AI 19/2018, Article 11 paragraph 3.

42 The AI 19/2018, Article 11, paragraph 3 and 4.

43 The AI 19/2018, Article 12.



sustainable channels of funding falls short of the vision for the institutionalisation.

2.1. Implementation of Administrative Instruction 19/2018

Once the AI 19/2018 was approved in December 2018, it was expected that the Practical Guide for functioning of the LCs would be published within three months.⁴⁴ The Practical Guide for Functioning of Learning Centres to support the implementation of the AI 19/2018 (hereinafter Practical Guide) was not published until almost a year later, at the end of 2019. This delay had serious consequences for the institutionalization of LCs, which led to confusion on how to proceed further with the registration and created dissatisfaction among the NGOs managing existing LCs.

Many of the actionable tasks in AI 19/2018 were linked to references from the Practical Guide.⁴⁵ LCs were expected to comply with the requirements no later than 12 months after the AI 19/2018 came into force; and compliance was also set as a condition by some donors.⁴⁶ However, compliance became practically impossible without concrete guidance. The registration website became operational in September 2020 (with delays attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic). Once the documentation for registration is uploaded, MESTI has three months from the date of application to issue a decision.⁴⁷ Community-based LCs require site visits and, given the restrictions during the pandemic, the process has in practice taken longer.

As of April 2022, seven NGOs had registered some or all of the LCs under their management, totalling 37 LCs, though some of these LCs have since stopped or paused activities due to funding issues. The NGO VoRAE is assisting MEDs where their LCs are active to register them. According to MESTI, no LCs have been rejected thus far.

Out of 37 registered LCs, only 13 have been awarded permits for the full five years, while most have conditional permits of between two to three years. Limited length permits are dependent on improvements being made to the LC operation, which require significant funding and are not being upgraded to standard. While 41 have applied for registration, 23 active LCs have not. Their reasons for not registering vary. Some are aware that they do not meet the criteria, regarding staff or space, and are trying to reach the minimum standards before they apply. Others are waiting until their current donor support ends. They are either not supported by their MED or have not communicated with them at all.⁴⁸ Once registered, LCs, according to the AI 19/2018, should be reporting to MESTI, but there


44 The AI 19/2018, Article 12, paragraph 1.

45 The AI 19/2018 refers to the Practical Guide for registration (Article 7, Paragraph 3) work and financial plan (Article 10 Paragraph 2), and guidance on reporting, monitoring and detailed annual reporting template (Article 12, paragraph 1)

46 For example, fulfilling the criteria set out in the AI 19/2018 was one of the pre-conditions of the Austrian Development Agency to give €21,000 in funding to the NGO "The Ideas Partnership" (TIP), in particular, permanent and functioning infrastructure, the harmonization of the Kosovo-curriculum with the activities of the centres and qualified staff. See: OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Regional Centre Prishtinë/Priština, interlocutor: Programme Manager of the NGO TIP.

47 The AI 19/2018, Article 4, paragraph 2.

48 Ten operational LCs do not have MoUs signed with the municipality.



is no framework set up for this. Some MEDs are hesitant to sign memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with LCs as they are aware they do not have the budget line to pay LC staff. Two LCs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South region had signed MoUs with the municipality for the gradual transfer of responsibilities, but later the MoU, and consequently the application, were withdrawn as they did not have the budget to honour the agreement.⁴⁹ The long delays and lack of clear communication between MESTI, MEDs and LCs have contributed to intermittent and inconsistent implementation of the AI 19/2018.

Other MESTI obligations outlined in the AI 19/2018 have yet to be met. These include training programmes to be developed in close co-operation with the University of Prishtinë/Priština and developing a systematic evaluation of LC activities.⁵⁰

III. Operation and Funding of Learning Centres

As of end of April 2022, OSCE field teams had contacted 47 operational and 53 recently closed or inactive LCs in 17 municipalities.⁵¹ The region of Prishtinë/Priština has the largest number of active LCs, followed by the regions of Pejë/Peć and Prizren (see Table 1).

The 47 currently operating LCs are managed by 13 local and international NGOs.⁵²

In respect to AI 19/2018, TdH and VoRAE have signed MoUs with the municipalities where they operate to gradually transfer financial responsibility for those LCs to the MEDs. This handover is subject to a three-year transition period during which the funds from the NGO decrease as the municipal funds increase.


The German development agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), among others, discontinued funding to more than 20 LCs throughout Kosovo at the end of 2019 when their projects ended. They had played an integral role in advocating for the institutionalization of the LCs, and when MESTI did not allocate funding for LCs, as promised in 2020, they contracted the NGO Edu Task to establish and operate 20 school-based LCs. GIZ funding for these new centres ceased in February 2021, but some schools have opted to keep the programmes going and are now

49 Two LCs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South region are currently looking for modalities with the MED to resolve the problem as both LCs have suspended activities since September 2020.

50 OSCE Mission in Kosovo email interview with MESTI Head of Division for Community Education.

51 Municipalities where LCs are active as of April 2022: Prizren (5), Suharekë/Suva Reka (4), Rahovec/Orahovac (1), Gjilan/Gnjilane (1), Novo Brdo/Novobërdë (1), Ferizaj/Uroševac (4), Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South (1), Vushtrri/Vučitrn (3), Podujevë/Podujevo (2), Gjakovë/Đakovica (3), Pejë/Peć (2), Istog/Istok (5), Gračanica/Gračanicë (2), Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje (2), Shtime/Štimlje (3), Obiliq/Obilić (3), Lipjan/Lipljan (5).

52 See Table 1 at the end of this report for NGOs managing Learning Centres in 2021 and 2022.



seeking municipal support. In March 2021, the Council of Europe made €60,000 available for LCs from April to November 2021, and did not require the LC to be registered with MESTI in order to apply.⁵³

Unfortunately, 53 LCs have closed since 2018, with most closing in 2021⁵⁴, while others have had to reduce activities or staff in the last year (see Table 1). Several LCs reported that salaries had been reduced due to limited financial means, while some tutors indicated that they have been receiving only 50 per cent of their salary since June 2019.⁵⁵ Closures were imminent as major donors, such as GIZ and EU SIMRAES II project planned their funding in accordance with the expected implementation of AI 19/2018.

In Prizren region, there are currently ten operational school-based LCs: five in Prizren municipality, four in Suharekë/Suva Reka and one in Rahovec/Orahovac, providing services for 451 pupils, 245 girls and 206 boys.⁵⁶ Four LCs successfully obtained permits from MESTI.⁵⁷ The six remaining centres have not registered with MESTI. In addition, eleven LCs closed in Prizren region between 2019 and 2021 due to lack of funds.⁵⁸

Co-operation between the municipality and LCs in the Prizren region is generally rated as fairly good - nine out of ten LCs have MoUs with the municipality and one is pending since January 2022. These MoUs include providing space and covering utilities in school-based LCs. In cases where the MED have taken over the responsibility to pay staff, payments are sometimes delayed. It has also been reported that some MEDs are unaware of what constitutes an LC and how many are under their purview. None of the three municipalities with functioning LCs have dedicated budget lines for LC staff salaries; instead, payments are included under short term service agreements.

In Prishtinë/Priština region, As of April 2022, 15 LCs were operational (six community-based and nine school-based): six in Lipjan/Lipljan, three in Shtime/Štimlje, three in Obiliq/Obilić, two in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and two in Gračanica/Gračanice, providing services for 1,394 pupils, 795 girls and 599 boys.⁵⁹ Thirteen LCs have registered with MESTI and received permits, while two have not yet applied. Nine LCs have closed in 2021 and 2022, while one closed in 2017.⁶⁰ After these closures no functional LCs are left in Prishtinë/Priština municipality.

53 According to the call four civil society organizations could apply for up to €15,000 each to cover (3) LCs until November 2021. See at: <https://rm.coe.int/call-for-proposals-supporting-learning-centres-through-small-grant-sch/naive/1680a18f45>

54 Based on information provided to RCs through questionnaires in April 2021 and April 2022.

55 Reported from LCs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions.


56 LCs in Prizren region are managed by NGO Nevo Koncepti (5), VoRAE (4) and Terre des Hommes (1).

57 Two in Suharekë/Suva Reka, (1) in Rahovec/Orahovac and (1) in Prizren.

58 In Prizren municipality (4) school-based LCs managed by Nevo Koncepti and funded by GiZ closed on 31 December 2019, a further (3) were closed in December 2020. Two LCs run by EDU TASK and ADEC closed in March 2021. Two LCs managed by Schuler Helfen Leben, in Rahovec/Orahovac closed in September 2019.

59 LCs in Prishtinë/Priština region are managed by VoRAE (6), Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (5), The Ideas Partnership (2) Romani Inicijativa HAK (1) and EDU Task (1)).

60 In Prishtinë/Priština municipality (2) school-based LCs managed by TdH closed in January 2022 and (6) school-based LCs managed by EDU Task and ADEC closed in July 2021. In Shtime/Štimlje municipality (2) school-based LCs closed in February 2021 and in Lipjan/Lipljan (1) LC managed by VoRAE closed in 2017.



Co-operation between the municipality and LCs in the Prishtinë/Priština region is generally rated as good - 12 of the 15 operational LCs have signed MoUs with the respective municipality. School-based LCs enjoy better co-operation than community-based LCs. MoU provisions include providing space and covering utilities (or providing firewood in the case of community-based LCs). Some MEDs have reported incorrectly on the number of LCs operating in their area, demonstrating lack of awareness of recent closures. None of the three municipalities with functioning community based LCs has a dedicated budget line for LCs.

In Pejë/Peć region, As of April 2022, there were currently ten operational LCs (three community-based and seven school-based): two in Pejë/Peć, three in Gjakovë/Đakovica, and five in Istog/Istok.⁶¹ Four LCs have successfully received permits from MESTI, while six have not applied. Between March 2019 and March 2022, 22 LCs closed due to lack of funds.⁶² Since November 2021 there have been no functioning LCs in Klinë/Klina municipality.

Co-operation between LCs and MEDs in Pejë/Peć region municipalities is quite good, even though only four out of ten LCs have signed MoUs. Municipalities provide space and cover some utilities. MEDs in the Pejë/Peć region do not have a dedicated budget line for LCs and are not yet committed to covering salaries.

In Gjiilan/Gnjilane region, As of April 2022, there were currently six operational LCs (two community-based and four school-based): four in Ferizaj/Uroševac, one in Gjiilan/Gnjilane and one in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, providing services to 383 pupils, 206 girls and 177 boys.⁶³ Four LCs have registered and received permits from MESTI, while the two others have not applied.⁶⁴ Between December 2018 and January 2020, five LCs have closed due to lack of funding, leaving no operational LCs in Kamenicë/Kamenica.⁶⁵

Co-operation between the municipalities and the LCs in the Gjiilan/Gnjilane region is largely very good, with all six operating LCs securing signed MoUs with the three relevant Municipal Education Directorates. MEDs support the school-based and community-based LCs with space and operational costs. Where agreements have been made for MEDs to take over the payment of LC staff, issues are ongoing as there is no specific budget line for LCs. This can cause delays with salary payments and harm the cooperation.


61 In Pejë/Peć region (3) LCs are managed by Terre des Hommes, (2) by Syri i Vizionit, (3) NGO Vizioni 02, (1) by Bethany Christian Services and (1) by Caritas Kosova.

62 In Gjakovë/Đakovica municipality (8) school-based LCs managed by Bethany Christian Services (6), and (2) managed by EDU TASK and ADEC (2) have closed. In Pejë/Peć municipality (6) school-based LCs managed by TdH and (3) by NGO Syri Vizionit have closed. In Klinë/Klina municipality (5) school-based LCs have closed and in Istog/Istok municipality (3) school-based LCs have closed.

63 LCs in Gjiilan/Gnjilane region are managed by VoRAE are (3), by Terre des Hommes (2) and (1) by Caritas Kosovo.

64 Four LCs in Ferizaj/Uroševac have registered with MESTI.

65 In December 2018, the LC in Gjiilan/Gnjilane operated by the NGO "Rrograek" (network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women's Organizations) and funded by Save the Children closed, while (2) others under management of EDU TASK and ADEC closed in 2021. In January 2020, the LC managed by VoRAE in Kamenicë/Kamenica closed, while another is not active.



In Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region, As of April 2022, there were six operational LCs (two community based and four school based): two in Podujevë/Podujevo, one in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South and three in Vushtrri/Vučitrn.⁶⁶ Four LCs have applied to register with MESTI but have not received the permit, two others have not applied. Five LCs in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region closed during 2021.⁶⁷

Co-operation between LCs and MEDs in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region is fairly good as all six operating LCs have a signed MoU with the relevant municipality. Municipalities provide space and cover operating costs. In instances where MoUs include a gradual transfer of responsibilities issues regarding funding are commonplace. Two LCs in Podujevë/Podujevo managed by VoRAE have not been fully operational since September 2020, as the municipality failed to honour parts of a MoU regarding funding for the centre.⁶⁸ Some MEDs have also reported incorrectly on the number of LCs operating in their area.

Funding

Both the Kosovo Education Strategy 2022-2026 and the Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of Roma and Ashkali Communities 2022 – 2026 and Action plan (2022 – 2024) pledge €200,000 for learning centres for the next three years.⁶⁹ The latter strategy will require new municipal action committees (MACs) to be established and new local action plans (LAP) to be developed. The composition of MACs is integral to ensuring that LAPs include support to LCs. However, it is clear that this funding is not sufficient.

Based on 2018 data from the “Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 - KOSINT”, the annual budget for all LCs was €1,807,750, while the average annual expenditure of all LCs per student came to €325, which converts to **€27 per student per month.**⁷⁰ Throughout the years, international donor organizations have been the major source of this funding,⁷¹ while the new legal reality now obliges public funds to meet their expenses. However, this obligation does not define the amount of support required, either at ministry or at municipal level.

66 LCs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region are managed by Terre des Hommes (2), VoRAE ((2), Romano Anglunipe (1) and Danish Refugee Council (1).


67 Two LCs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South under TdH management closed in September 2021 and (3) LCs in Podujevë/Podujevo also closed in 2021.

68 LC Qendrimi Shaban Shala and Qendrimi Ibrahim Rugova in Podujevë/Podujevo have suspended activities due to the municipality not honoring the MoU.

69 The Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of the Roma and Ashkali Communities (2022-2026) p. 29 and Action Plan p. 81

70 KOSINT 2020, “Impact of Learning Centres on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Education”, 2018, p. 7 and 29.

71 The EU Office in Kosovo; The German Development Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ); the German Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation (BMZ); Karl Kubel Stiftung für Kind und Familie (KKS); the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC); Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER); the Danish Refugee Council (DRC); the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), DIAKONIE (Austria); UNICEF; Save the Children Fund; People in Need; Roma Education Fund.



Some donors are withdrawing or have already withdrawn from funding LCs while others have agreed an exit strategy with NGOs managing the LCs that envisages a period of three years during which donor funding would diminish proportionately every year. According to the NGO VoRAE, donors have requested the transfer of LCs over a period of three years. The NGO VoRAE will monitor and coach the new (municipal) administration while the donors gradually decrease their funding, until the municipalities finance them completely. Currently, funding contributions from municipalities are rather limited and do not provide the substantial assistance necessary for the LCs' full operation. Aside from allocation of premises or classrooms in schools, only a few municipalities provide financial support, whether it be assistance to carry out activities, or covering utility costs. Lipjan/Lipljan and Shtime/Štimlje municipalities co-finance the LCs operated by NGO VoRAE, while Ferizaj/Uroševac municipality funds 75 per cent of the costs for the LC in the Ashkali Social and Cultural Centre, in the village of Dubravë/Dubrava; and NGO "Caritas Kosovo" covers the remaining 25 per cent of the costs.

The establishment of new LCs and supporting the existing ones were among the objectives of several local action plans (LAPs) on the Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities.⁷² Ferizaj/Uroševac municipality foresees the establishment of LCs, however this has not been done yet.⁷³ In Prizren municipality, LCs had been established in five schools;⁷⁴ however, the MED failed to employ eight teachers as per the strategic plan.⁷⁵ The LAPs of Lipjan/Lipljan and Gračanica/Graçanicë municipalities envisaged support to LCs through the provision of necessary spaces and covering utility expenses.⁷⁶ The LAP in Vushtrri/Vuçitrn municipality included €2,000 for LC support; however, the director of the LC in Priluzhje/Prelluzhë village stated that, to date, no money was transferred for the LC activities. In recent years a large number of MoUs have been signed between NGOs and municipal institutions through which municipal institutions have pledged to provide school facilities for the LCs to carry out their activities. However, these MoUs are not always adhered to.⁷⁷

Terre des Hommes and VoRAE have been working proactively with municipalities and schools to increase their capacities to administer LCs. They have found that MEDs are interested to fund the LCs. However, many of the budget allocations are dependent on

72 Municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac LAP 2017-2021; Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë LAP 2018-2022; Municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan LAP 2018-2022; Municipality of Prizren LAP 2019-2023.


73 Municipality of Ferizaj/Uroševac LAP 2017-2021, pp. 25-26.

74 Primary and Lower Secondary School (PLSS) "Haziz Tolaj", PLSS "Mustafa Bakiu", PLSS "Ibrahim Fehmiu", PLSS "Abdyl Frasherri" and PLSS "Leke Dukagjini".

75 KEEN, "Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipalities in Kosovo: Monitoring report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six municipalities of Kosovo", November 2019, p. 20, available at: http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Gjendja-e-komuniteteve-ne-komunat-e-Kosoves_ENG.pdf

76 Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN, "Situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Municipalities in Kosovo: Monitoring report on the implementation of local action plans in the field of education and employment in six municipalities of Kosovo", November 2019, pp.82; 95.

77 KOSINT 2020, "Impact of Learning Centres on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Children in Education", November 2018, p. 30.



the Government. COVID-19 has put a lot of additional pressure on local budgets and many budget lines have been reduced. In order for municipalities to assume their responsibilities, budgets and administrative protocols will have to be amended to allow for the LCs to be adequately included. In some municipalities there is a cap on the number of staffing contracts that they are allowed to prepare. LC staff are presented with service contracts that need to be renewed every six months, which in itself undermines the sustainability which was envisaged.

In the 2020 Kosovo budget, €500,000⁷⁸ was allocated for the functioning of LCs. Nonetheless, this money was put in the wrong budget line and was never distributed to LCs during 2020.⁷⁹

During 2021, the figure of €400,000 was indicated as earmarked for funding LCs on a number of occasions⁸⁰, but never transpired.

A coalition of NGOs managing LCs came together to advocate with the Ministry to assign adequate funding for LCs in the 2021 budget.⁸¹

In September 2021, MESTI opened the first call to subsidise LCs through managing NGOs. Originally the call stated €200,000 would be available for NGOs managing LCs. However, once the successful candidates were announced only €97,000 was disbursed.⁸² In May 2022, a second call was announced, again pledging €200,000 for MESTI registered LCs. In July 2022, five NGOs managing 14 LCs were awarded the total amount of €200,000.⁸³

The non-disbursement and the 60 per cent reduction of funds are very concerning to NGOs and donors alike. The opening of government funding calls is welcome. However, the level of funding available means that only a small number of LCs will benefit. MESTI and MEDs still need to allocate sufficient budgets to allow LCs to function adequately for the number of children in attendance. Using KOSINT's calculations of €27 per month per child, the 2022 government funding is estimated to constitute only 20 per cent of what is required for the 3,000 children in the 47 currently active LCs.⁸⁴

78 Practical Guide for the implementation of the Administrative Instruction 19/2018 on the establishment and functioning of Learning Centres, p. 4.

79 According to the Director of Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, Muhamet Arifi the allocated €500,000 was put into the budget line for capital investments and could only be used for this purpose.


80 Deputy PM Emilija Redžepi announced that €400,000 would be available for LCs in 2022. See at: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1647722918946111&id=100011252565132

81 Interview with Education Manager, VoRAE, 1 April 2021.

82 €97,000 was awarded to just three successful applicant non-governmental organizations, who run 22 learning centres, see more here: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2021/10/vendim-per-mbeshtetje-financiare-te-projk-te-ojq-ve-per-ojq-t-fituese.pdf>

83 MESTI Decision 3 – 1483, published on July 12 2022 informed that Bethany Christian Services, managing (1) LC was awarded €22,000, Caritas Kosova managing (1) LC was awarded €22,000, Romani Inicijativa HAK, managing (2) LCs was awarded €42,000, Terre Des Hommes managing (9) LCs was awarded €92,000 and Vizioni 02 managing (1) LC was awarded €22,000, Decision available here, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/ojq-te-fituese-sipas-thirrjes-publike-per-ofrimin-e-mbeshtetes-financiare-per-financimin-e-projekteve-te-ojq-ve-qe-drejttojne-qendra-mesimore-per-mbeshtetjen-e-nxenesve-rom-ashkalinj-dhe-egjiptian/>

84 Figure based on €27 per month per child for the 3,000 children for one year, from calculations made in the KOSINT 2020, "Impact of Learning Centres on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Education", 2018, pp. 7 and 29.



The number of active LCs as of April 2022, is not indicative of the overall need, recent closures have left communities underserved and there are regular calls from NGOs to establish new LCs. An assessment of actual need, exploring areas with high numbers of non-majority children and high number of school dropouts could significantly contribute to improved budgeting allocations for LCs.

It is important to note that the funds allocated to date, covering as they do only a small proportion of the actual costs of the LCs, have not brought about the institutionalisation of the LCs along the lines originally envisaged. These funds are, however, welcome as a short-term transition measure pending the allocation of more substantial funding, to be channelled predominantly through MEDs.


Adequately funding LCs will not be possible until a determination of what 'adequate' constitutes. Without clearly defining how costs of LCs should be calculated, the AI 19/2018 is lacking an important facilitating element towards institutionalisation.

IV. Current Challenges

With implementation of AI 18/2019 proceeding slowly, some issues highlighted by managing NGOs have persisted, while new challenges have arisen. Financial insecurity continues to be the main obstacle for LCs, and this is largely a result of continuing delays in taking forward full implementation of AI 19/2018. As already noted, the functioning of LCs is still dependent on donor support; however, this reliance on donor support does not represent a sustainable option in the long term. Furthermore, interest among donors has declined. Donors are currently operating in a period of transition to full implementation of AI 19/2018, such that they are making only short or medium-term contributions. The drafting of AI 19/2018 and the Practical Guide was itself financed by donors, showing donors' support for finding sustainable solutions involving institutions taking responsibility for the LCs. In order to finance the LCs which they manage some NGOs have recently had to resort to requesting funds from new donors who were not engaged with the development of the legal or policy infrastructure.⁸⁵

Amendments are required at the government and municipal level to accommodate the new budget line and create staffing budget codes within the municipal budget. This will also require capacity building at municipal level for budget planning. Some municipalities where managing NGOs organized roundtables are familiar with AI 19/2018 but others with few or no NGOs active in their municipality will need to be trained on the new roles

⁸⁵ For example, Director of Balkan Sunflowers explained that the Learning Centre Network, consisting of (5) LCs in four municipalities, has had to seek funding from new international donors in order to sustain the LCs.



they are expected to take and on establishing new LCs. Disagreements on hiring procedures and curricula have been reported by NGOs managing LCs where the municipality has misunderstood the transitional provisions relating to LCs operating before the AI came into force.

Municipalities will also have to solve the problem of issuing LC staff with short-term service contracts. LC staff must be treated as public employees and receive the corresponding benefits. Scepticism about MESTI's overall commitment to the institutionalization of the LCs has resurfaced in some quarters due to prolonged delays, the non-payment of the 2020 contribution, the reduction in the 2021 allocation and low 2022 funding. NGOs are questioning the commitment of the Ministry, as they continue to be doubtful about the long-term sustainability of the LCs they manage. This also includes fulfilling ministerial obligations in respect to developing training programmes and evaluations as stipulated in the AI 19/2018.


V. Way Forward

Currently, the implementation of the AI 19/2018 is at an impasse, where a sustainable solution needs to be found and realized quickly. MESTI has an opportunity to institutionalise the logic of the LCs to provide more equitable education to children from marginalized communities.

In order to keep this process moving forward, MESTI can utilise the earlier support and current concern by the International Community for the future of LCs and select a partner to design a roadmap with a timeline for overcoming the prevailing issues. This would explore all the options around sustainable funding from the government, to the municipalities and to LCs, and explore avenues for additional government funding. It should also explore viable options around direct government funding and municipal budgeting challenges. This would require specific calculations around the current cost of running and maintaining a LC on a monthly and annual basis and who the bearer of these costs should be. The roadmap should also include all other MESTI obligations, including monitoring, data collection, reporting, standardized evaluation, annual budgeting and the development of training programmes with the University of Prishtinë/Priština (UP).

Before municipalities can assume payment of LC staff a specific code for this purpose has to be created by the Ministry of Finance. With this code included in their municipal staffing table, municipalities can offer regular employment contracts to the tutors and fully integrate them under their respective directorates of education.

Municipal authorities need to take a proactive approach to providing oversight and support to LCs. The AI 19/2018 states clearly that they have an important role in LC



operations and this should not be dependent on political will. MEDs must include LCs in their annual budgets by allocating budget lines and codes for staff. Municipal Assembly members from the Policy and Finance Committee can draft a formal request to the director, after which a public consultation with relevant NGOs, and stakeholders would inform the drafting of a formal request to add the required budget lines and codes to the directorate. After approval the directorate, in consultation with the Mayor, should make the necessary budget allocations and changes. New staff selection must also be done in line with the provisions outlined in the AI.


NGOs need to come together in a united front to work through the issues they are experiencing with meeting standards of the AI 19/2018 and find a common language to address all their concerns to MESTI. This could take the form of an umbrella association group for LC interests regarding their institutionalisation, including both LCs that will be taken over by municipalities and managing NGOs. The important factor is their views are represented and the pressing issues are brought forth in a coherent and consistent manner. Fragmented approaches by individual NGOs can further delay the process.

In parallel, LC stakeholders need to review the AI 19/2018 for all shortcomings, especially in respect to the amount of funding from each source and specify how this amount should be calculated. Projections should consider the number of children attending or potentially attending a particular setting of LC. Timeframes will also have to be adjusted as the current timeframe in AI 18/2019 foresees LCs that have not yet registered will be outside of the law by the end of 2023.

Donors can still play a part in shaping enhanced programmes within the LC environment. While MESTI and the municipalities take on the core and daily running costs, donors still have flexibility to provide funding for additional projects. These projects can enrich LC activities by granting additional educational and training programmes for LC children and staff, improving the effectiveness of the LC, equipment, premises or expanding programmes to more beneficiaries, including parents, youth and returnees, with a specific focus on women.

VI. Conclusion

The delays and uncertainty surrounding implementation of AI 19/2018 have resulted in the precarious conditions faced by the LCs which are described in this report, creating serious challenges for those managing LCs. They were caught between the obligations stipulated by the legal framework and an absence of procedural guidance. The expectations of both LCs and donors concerning what could be achieved through the new legal framework have not been met. Certainly, delays by MESTI in providing timely



directions necessary for registration and allocation of funds from both government and local budgets, have contributed to this.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, the global pandemic and accompanying restrictions have exacerbated these delays, as resources and funding had to be redirected to cope with additional challenges.

It is clear that there are actions which MESTI can and should still take in order to take forward the implementation of all aspects of AI 19/2018. **This will enable all LCs to renew/strengthen their full operation for the academic year 2023/2024**, and continue to carry out the important work with and for children. Both MESTI and the municipalities need to work together and take responsibility for their new roles in implementing the AI, in close collaboration with those NGOs that have the necessary experience and expertise.

VII. Recommendations

For Ministry of Education, Science Technology and Innovation

- Monitor implementation and effectiveness of AI 19/2018 through Legal Office of the Ministry.
- Increase and ensure annual budget allocations for LC core costs based on number of children attending.
- Develop clear instructions, templates and timelines for registered LCs to report to MESTI on their activities.
- Ensure that the municipalities are properly informed about their competencies and obligations.
- Support municipalities in identifying areas to establish new LCs and guide the process of establishing new LCs.
- Carry out capacity building activities with MEDs and managing NGOs, on effective budget planning, as well as on the process of annual evaluation and reporting with the Education Inspectorate.
- Start the development of specific training programmes for LC staff, in close co-operation with the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtinë/Priština, as per the AI 19/2018.⁸⁷
- Review the shortcomings of AI 19/2018 with all stakeholders regarding budgeting and transitional procedures.

⁸⁶ Guidelines for the implementation of the Administrative Instruction 19/2018 on the establishment and functioning of Learning Centres, p. 4.

⁸⁷ AI 19/2018, Article 8, paragraph 5.4.



For Ministry of Finance

- Create specific budget codes to accommodate LC staff.

For Municipal Education Directorates

- Amend municipal budgets to allow LCs to be fully supported within the annual budget.
- Ensure updated information is recorded on all LCs active in the municipality.
- Co-operate with NGOs managing LCs in the municipality and ensure MoUs are drafted, signed and renewed between the MED and the LC.
- Train staff on the roles and obligations stipulated in the AI 19/2018.
- Plan annual support to LCs in the municipal budget.

For Donors

- Co-ordinate efforts with other long-term donors to prioritise the issue of LCs with MESTI.
- Continue to fund programmes which enhance educational experiences in LCs, such as summer and winter programmes, exchange and study visits, food provision and other non-core activities.
- Organize meetings with municipal representatives to raise awareness on the importance of LCs.
- Offer technical or financial assistance to the municipalities that support LCs.

For NGOs Managing LCs

- Continue to advocate for the importance of LCs for equal education and ensure this remains on the government agenda.
- Join forces with other managing NGOs and stakeholders to adequately channel ongoing concerns and challenges to the government.
- Monitor and report on continued implementation of AI 19/2018.
- Register LCs in line with AI 19/2018.
- Cooperate and share good practices with MEDs on how LC management works.
- Support municipalities in identifying schools with low enrolment, attendance and high dropouts to establish new LCs to support students to stay in school.

Table 1. Information about NGOs managing LCs and municipalities in 2021 and 2022

#	Non-Governmental Organization	LCs -2021	LCs - 2022
1.	<i>Terre des Hommes (TdH)</i>	20	8
2.	<i>EDU Task and ADEC</i>	20	1
3.	<i>Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (VoRAE)</i>	19	14
4.	<i>Nevo Koncepti</i>	10	6
5.	<i>Syri i Vizionit (SiV)</i>	2	2
6.	<i>Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (BSFK)</i>	5	5
7.	<i>The Ideas Partnership (TIP)</i>	2	2
8.	<i>CARITAS Kosovo</i>	2	2
9.	<i>Bethany Christian Services (BCS)</i>	6	1
10.	<i>Danish Refugee Council/Roma Ashkali Social Centre</i>	1	1
11	<i>Romano Anglunipe</i>	1	1
12	<i>Romani Inciyativa HAK</i>	1	1
13	<i>Vizioni 02</i>	3	3
Total Learning Centres		92	47

Data collected by OSCE field teams in April 2022.

LCs Operating as of April 2022	LCs Closed as of April 2022	No. of active Students	Registered with MESTI	LC signed MoU with Municipality
Prizren				
5	9	250	1	4
Suharekë/Suva Reka				
4	0	179	2	4
Rahovec/Orahovac				
1	2	22	1	1
Total Prizren				
10	11	451	4	9

Gjilan/Gnjilane				
1	3*	35	0*	1
Kamenicë/Kamenica				
0	2			
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë				
1	0	17	0*	1
Ferizaj/Uroševac				
4	0	331	4	4
Total Gjilan/Gnjilane				
6	5	383	4	6

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South				
1	2	120	0	1
Vushtrri/Vučitrn				
3	0	123	0*	3
Podujevë/Podujevo				
2	3	83	0	2
Total Mitrovicë/Mitrovica				
6	5	326	0	6

Pejë/Peć				
Gjakovë/Đakovica				
3	8	299	1	0
Pejë/Peć				
2	6	44	0*	2
Istog/Istok				
5	3	88	3	2
Klinë/Klina				
0	5	0	0	0
Total Pejë/Peć				
10	22	431	4	4



Prishtinë/Priština				
0	7	0	0	0
Gračanica/Graçanicë				
2	0	120	2	2
Fushë Kosovë /Kosovo Polje				
2	0	570	1	1
Shtime/Štimlje				
3	2	151	3	2
Obiliq/Obilić				
3	0	170	3	2
Lipjan/Lipljan				
5	1	386	4	5
Total Prishtinë/Priština				
15	10	1,394	13	12
TOTAL KOSOVO				
47	53	2,990	25	37

