TRACER STUDY ABOUT THE PROJECT “FACILITATING THE TRANSITION OF PUPILS FROM LOWER TO UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS”

MUNICIPALITY OF PEJA

NOVEMBER 2020
Tracer study about the project “Facilitating the transition of pupils form lower to upper secondary schools”

Supported by the Municipal Education Directorate in the Municipality of Peja.
Table of Contents
1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................. 4
2. Acknowledgment ........................................................................................................................................... 5
3. Study methodology ....................................................................................................................................... 6
4. Findings of the tracer study ......................................................................................................................... 7
   4.1 Top favorite professions ............................................................................................................................ 7
   4.2 Top profiles selected in upper secondary school ...................................................................................... 8
   4.3 Enrollment of pupils based on high schools ............................................................................................ 9
   4.4 Match between selected occupations and registered profiles ................................................................. 9
   4.5 The trend of the match and mismatch ....................................................................................................... 10
5. Conclusion and recommendations ............................................................................................................... 12
1. Introduction

This report aims to present the progress and findings of the tracer study within the project “Facilitating the Transition of Pupils from Lower to Upper Secondary School” in the Municipality of Peja, which is implemented by the Kosovo Career Development Foundation (KCDF), with the support of Solidar Suisse and the Municipal Education Directorate of Peja.

Various phases of the project are characterized by numerous activities around career guidance and counseling and entrepreneurship. Therefore, in the concluding phase of this project, a tracer study was conducted with pupils enrolled in grade X in the school year 2020/2021. This was done to track their transition from grade IX, respectively lower secondary school, to upper secondary school.

During the project pupils were involved in a series of activities related to career guidance, among which we distinguish the establishment of focus groups based on occupations declared by pupils after completing Career Tests and discussing their results with parents. Career guidance services were provided to approximately 1,200 pupils from 27 lower secondary schools in the Municipality of Peja, and among them, 585 declared a chosen occupation, while 446 were involved in the tracer study.

Based on the previous activities of the project, the tracking was done by finding out whether there is some correspondence, and to what level it exists, between the focus groups created for certain occupations and the profiles where these pupils were enrolled in upper secondary school, as declared by them.

Through these indicators, KCDF assessed the fulfillment of project objectives by contacting all pupils, including those who did not attend upper secondary school. As a result, the findings derived from this study aim to inform relevant stakeholders about the current situation, the impact of this project and the needs of pupils for new directions or support in identifying the right career path.
2. Acknowledgment

KCDF expresses gratitude and appreciation for the close cooperation and valuable contribution in the establishment of the tracer study to all IX graders of the school year 2019/2020 in the Municipality of Peja, lower secondary school teachers who were directly involved in the project implementation, the Municipal Council for Career Orientation (MCCO), quality assurance coordinators at the school, and other representatives of high schools, parents, professionals from various fields who provided valuable input by presenting their professions and talking to pupils about them, as well as the Municipal Education Directorate in Peja together with Solidar Suisse, who have provided support for all activities carried out on behalf of this project.
3. Study methodology

The project “Facilitating the Transition of Pupils from Lower to Upper Secondary School” was divided into three implementation phases. During this time, a series of activities were carried out by pupils of IX grades of 27 lower secondary schools in Peja. Respectively, the initiation, implementation and closing phases took place during the months of March to September 2020.

In the initiation phase, all MCCO members and Life and Work teachers were presented and informed about the project activities and associated benefits for the schools. In the implementation phase, pupils and teachers were involved in the implementation of activities, in order to facilitate the career guidance process, the development of entrepreneurial skills and the promotion of professional maturity among them. From above 1,200 pupils involved in this project, 585 of them declared their most suitable occupation or occupations (up to 3 occupations could be declared), identified throughout different activities. These pupils used various channels to declare these occupations, such as: phone, Facebook group, SMS, e-mail, Viber, WhatsApp, and Busulla.COM.

In the final phase, a follow-up study was conducted with a sample of 585 pupils who had declared an occupation and who were also enrolled in a certain profile in upper secondary school. The response rate to the survey was 76.2%, or in real terms 446 pupils provided an answer. This study was conducted through several communication channels, where a survey was initially created, the questions of which helped to understand the course of the career path that pupils have followed and the consistency with the occupation declared in June 2020.

All surveys completed by pupils were aggregated and compared among themselves, creating a final list of 446 pupils. Based on this list, results were generated about the match and mismatch of the choice of pupils from grades IX and X, which are elaborated in the following chapters of the study.
4. Findings of the tracer study

As discussed previously, during the implementation phase, pupils were registered on Busulla.COM and underwent career tests, to understand which occupations are most suitable in accordance with their interests, values, abilities, and preferences as well as with their potential assessment test.

Through this activity, KCDF has collected the results of all pupils and has revealed the top 10 dominant occupations for pupils of IX grades of the school year 2019/2020 in the Municipality of Peja, as follows:

1. Doctor  
2. Architect  
3. Actor  
4. Nurse  
5. Fashion Designer  
6. Dentist  
7. Teacher  
8. Psychologist  
9. Teacher  
10. Pharmacist

The support of the project for the pupils of these and other focus groups continued through the exploration of professions on Busulla.COM platform and through the presentations of guest speakers. For this purpose, the project identified eminent professionals from industries related to the above-mentioned focus groups.

4.1 Top favorite professions

Given the focus groups identified above, the following graph illustrates the percentage of pupils who belong to each group, out of the total of 446 pupils who responded to the survey:

According to the diagram above, we can understand that 25% of pupils have turned out to declare that they are most suitable to pursue a career as Doctors, followed by careers in such occupations as Architect (11%), Actor (10%), Nurse (10%), etc.

The national CGIS Busulla.COM classifies occupations based on 13 fields of education. These areas aim to classify professions into broad groups according to their related activities. From these areas of education, we understand that “Health and well-being,” “Arts, humanities and language,” and “Architecture and construction” are top three dominant among pupils.
Some of the top occupations that are part of the field of “Health and well-being” are Doctor, Nurse, Dentist, and Pharmacist. In the field “Arts, humanities and language” are Actor and Fashion designer. Furthermore, Architect belongs to the field of “Architecture and construction.”

4.2 Top profiles selected in upper secondary school

Given that the pupils have already identified their most suitable occupation/s, the study moved further to understand the profile or concentration which they had chosen in the upper secondary school. This would allow the study to understand whether or not there is a match between the occupation declared and the profile/concentration chosen. The top profiles/concentration selected by pupils are presented in the following diagram:

![Top registered profiles by pupils](image)

From the above diagram, one can understand that the natural sciences profile is convincingly more dominant with 34% out of 446 enrolled pupils, the social sciences profile with 23%, the general nurse profile with 14%, followed by auto-mechanical, laboratory technician profile, etc.

It can be easily understood that pupils during this school year were mostly oriented towards gymnasiums of natural and social sciences. This supports the earlier finding regarding the choice of professions by pupils, where Doctor was the first occupation in the top 10 focus groups identified.

However, the diagram also shows that no profile similar that corresponds to the occupation of Actor has been selected. This is perhaps an important finding that upper secondary schools in the Municipality of Peja do not provide guidance or education for pupils who intend to develop a career as an actor, despite the fact that it turns out to be one of the top 10 selected occupations of the pupils involved in the study.

While it is important to note that for the remaining occupations in the focus groups created, upper secondary education in the Municipality of Peja offers at least one profile that supports education.

In contrast, among the number of respondents, 4% or 18 pupils did not enroll at all to pursue education in upper secondary school. The study shows that some reasons are:

- Inability to be admitted at the intended profile.
- Financial problems (especially for pupils who travel from rural areas into the city to attend school).
- Lack of aspirations to pursue further education.
4.3 Enrollment of pupils based on high schools

As it is clearly stated, most pupils are enrolled in gymnasium and medicine, which can be seen in the following diagram, where we indicate the percentage of pupils enrolled per school in Peja:

![Diagram showing enrollment in upper secondary schools]

Gymnasium "Bedri Pejani" is the most attended high school by pupils who have decided to continue upper secondary education, with 45% or 193 pupils enrolled in grade X by pupils participating in this study. Then, the schools below follow:

- Medicine School with 20% or 87 pupils.
- Technical School “Shaban Spahića” with 19% or 83 pupils.
- Arts School “Odhise Paskali” with 11% or 45 pupils.
- Economic School “Ali Hadri” with 4% or 16 pupils.
- Music School “Halit Kasapolli” with 1% or 4 pupils.

The numbers of pupils enrolled for the school year 2020/2021 in these schools are derived from the total number of pupils participating in the study survey, respectively 428 pupils.

4.4 Match between selected occupations and registered profiles

One of the most important findings of this study is the measurement of the match and mismatch between the selected occupations of pupils in grade IX and the profile or concentration in which they are enrolled in upper secondary school. The match of the pupils in this process is presented through the following diagram:
Out of 446 pupils, 50% or 224 of them have continued upper secondary education in profiles directly or indirectly related to the selected profession, 46% or 204 pupils continued in profiles that are not related to the chosen occupations. Moreover, 4% or 18 pupils stated that they had not enrolled in upper secondary education at all.

4.5 The trend of the match and mismatch
The study also analyzed trends of occupations that have more match and mismatch among the ones selected and enrolled in upper secondary school. The top 10 selected occupations are grouped in the respective fields of education and this trend was analyzed. The fields of education identified according to the selected occupations are:

- “Social sciences, journalism, and information” – Occupations: Teacher and Psychologist.
- “Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics” – Occupations: Doctor, Dentist, Nurse, and Pharmacist.
- “Arts, humanities, and language” – Occupations: Actor and Fashion designers.
The following diagram shows the correlation of selected occupations and profiles enrolled in upper secondary school between these 5 fields of education, to understand whether certain fields exhibit a certain pattern different from others:

**Decision matching across fields**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Mismatch</th>
<th>Not enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and construction</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and well-being</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences, journalism and information</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, humanities and languages</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we notice that for the education fields “Health and well-being” and “Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics,” there is a higher matching trend. This can be as a result of many factors that influence career selection, considering the opportunities to find a job, the perspective in these jobs, etc. Other fields have a higher percentage of mismatch; however, the field of “Architecture and construction” has a significantly higher discrepancy between the occupation and the chosen profile. This may include several factors, which may be stereotypes about the respective profile in upper secondary schools, which discourages pupils from enrolling in these school.

Other important factors influencing the mismatch of the preferred profession and the selection of the upper secondary school profile may be the influence of family and society or the absence of certain profiles in the upper secondary school. For example, the study finds that some pupils have chosen the occupation of Actor, but this profile is not offered in the Municipality of Peja.

In addition, another possible factor is the non-fulfillment of the admission criteria in certain profiles, which forces pupils to switch to another profile, in order not to remain unenrolled at all.

Last but not least, other important factors in decision-making are the influence of parents and society, who can change the approach to certain decisions. Therefore, it is important that schools and decision-making institutions address policies and actions that help parents understand the importance of their role in their children’s career choice process. At the same time, schools need to work with pupils so that they can critically manage the influence sourcing from parents, relatives, and society in a way that facilitates and improves the accuracy of their career decision.
5. Conclusion and recommendations

The production of this tracer study has involved many important partners, such as: lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools in Peja, the Municipal Education Directorate in Peja, and the partnership between KCDF and Solidar Suisse.

With the cooperation of the management of the lower secondary schools and the respective teachers from each school, data was collected for the pupils involved in the project. One of the project activities involved registering pupils on Busulla.COM and completing career tests. Although all pupils have completed career tests and understood their suitable occupation, only 585 were willing to share this information with the project. Consequently, this research consists of a sample of 585 pupils, of which 446 pupils responded to our survey questions.

Through this follow-up study we identified the profiles that pupils have selected to continue in upper secondary school, high schools that have enrolled the most pupils, the match between the preferred occupation and selected profile, and other important trends and patterns.

Therefore, the tracer study found that 50% of pupils are enrolled in upper secondary profiles or fields, which are in line with their chosen occupations. 46% of pupils have chosen different directions from the declared occupations and 4% of pupils have not continued their upper secondary education at all. This result has been achieved thanks to the ongoing activities of the project during the months of March to June 2020. Therefore, we consider that the consistent provision of career guidance services from grades VI to IX, would increase the number of beneficiary pupils to accurately identify their career path.

From these findings we can understand that career tests and other activities developed within the project have had a positive impact on pupils, as they have helped them decide on the occupations and incentivize a conversation between the pupils and their parents. They have proven that half of them are following the same path, identified thanks to the provision of counseling and career guidance services. However, for 46% of pupils we have realized that they have changed their decision compared to their statements in June 2020. Furthermore, for pupils who have chosen not to attend upper secondary school it would be useful in future research to identify the numerous possibilities that caused them not to register and how to tackle them.

For decision-makers such as schools, municipalities, and the ministry, it is important to consider conducting such analyzes with as many pupils as possible, to get as much of an accurate grasp of the reality. Such studies would help these institutions understand pupils’ expectations and needs for career guidance and education programs (profiles and concentrations). Consequently, this would ensure that pupils find support in the municipality's public schools to train in certain areas in which they aspire to develop their careers.

Such studies may be further expanded in the future to understand the causes of the mismatch between the occupations chosen and the profiles in enrolled in upper secondary school by pupils. This helps schools understand if they are providing the necessary capacity for certain profiles, while it would also be useful to understand the occupations of the parents and then to analyze the relationship between the occupations of the parents and those declared by the pupils. Such research also helps to understand the role and influence of parents in the career orientation for their children, which is considered to be an important factor in this process.