

External Evaluation Report

Supporting and Developing the Structures for the QA at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosova

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List of Abbreviations

QA	Quality Assurance
PHEP	Private Higher Education Providers
R&D	Research and Development Department
WUS- Austria	World University Service Austrian Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
KAA	Kosova Accreditation Agency
MEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
HE	Higher Education
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the external evaluation of the project - Supporting and Developing the structures of QA at the Private Higher Education Providers (QA-PHEP), funded by the European Commission through Tempus Project and implemented by University of Salzburg in partnership with University College Cork of Ireland, University Politehnica in Bucharest, World University Services Austria (WUS-Austria), Kosova Accreditation Agency (KAA), and 10 Private Higher Education Providers.

The main objective of the external evaluation was to assess the impact of the project and achievements to date in relation to expected results and planned activities, and also recommend other necessary activities to advance QA structures and processes within PHEP. The evaluation was carried out in three phases including desk research of all project documents and reports; semi-structured interviews with 14 partners including 10 semi-structured interviews with Quality Assurance officers and College representatives, and three informal interviews with Vice-Chairman of the University of Salzburg, Prof. Peter Eckl, Dean of the University of Politehnica from Bucharest, Prof. Mariana Mocanu, Director of the Kosova Accreditation Agency, Ms Ferdije Zhushi, and Regional Coordinator of WUS-Austria, Mr. But Dedaj and Project Coordinator, Ms Mjellma Carrabregu. The interviews with PHEP and project partners were conducted in Kosova and during the study visit in Romania; and an online survey with students, carried out during the month of Oct-Nov, in which 117 students from 7 PHEP have participated.

In general, with regards to developing and strengthening the quality assurance structures at the PHEP, a great sense of satisfaction prevailed among all partners and students. The project played a crucial role towards raising the awareness among all structures about the significance of the QA systems at the PHEPs. In addition, the main achievements of the project were standardization and making functional QA structures, and establishing solid grounds for cooperation between all PHEP, as means of cooperation to contribute towards increasing the study program's quality at the PHEPs. The project in itself and project coordinating office in Kosovo (WUS Austria Prishtina Office) is viewed as unbiased implementer and an umbrella institution that provided the unconditional support to all PHEPs.

Nevertheless, considering the duration of the project and considering the dynamic nature of the quality assurance processes, sustainability concerns were raised in post project scenario. Subsequently, most PHEPs and students have recommended numerous activities indicating the need further support from an independent institution in order to further strengthen and advance their quality assurance structures and processes in relation to the R&D work; organizing the student service and career center; establishing and managing the online library; teacher training on new teaching and evaluation methods; making the student's union more active and raising awareness for the importance of student participation in decision making processes and advancing the quality assurance office.

For the same reasons stated above the implementing partners recommend active student participation and objective assessment with regards to program and teacher evaluation process; the methods to evaluate student's progress should be based in the learning outcomes; PHEP's should base their study programs on the expected competencies that students should gain during studies, in order to address the labor market needs.

In conclusion, considering the fact the QA process is an ongoing process, and the interest of other PHEPs to join the program, all partners agree that the second phase of the QA@PHEP should be considered, in order to advance QA structures in the current PHEPs and support 5 additional PHEPs interested to join the program.

Project Description

Post-conflict, Private Higher Education Providers (PHEP) in Kosova bloomed. By 2008, there were 30 PHEPs that were operating under the Law No. 2002-3 of 2003. The Law specifically required the fulfillment of three main criteria: having at least 600 students per faculty; at least five faculties (in total at least 3000 students); and having a research program. Although, many of them have started to offer their own degrees notwithstanding the law, the quality of their study programs was uncertain. As a result, on 2008, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) initiated the survey to inspect PHEPs. Hence, the British Accreditation Council (BAC) was engaged by MEST, to identify to what extent PHEPs were offering value to potential students; to ascertain and expand educational opportunity without quality; and find ways to carry forward the governance of Higher Education (HE) and Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) in Kosova. The survey resulted with the Kosovo Accreditation Project Report which pointed out that although all 30 PHEP "argued that QA systems contained mechanisms to guarantee that the loop between aims and outputs was closed", a few had effective QA systems, whilst not being able to demonstrate specific actions that ensured the ultimate judgment of the outputs such as employment of graduates. Thus, the key recommendations of the report were "to have a greater comparability of management and QA Systems" and to initiate "programs for improving QA practice across the HE and TVE sectors, led by or under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. (Bristow & Vickers, Jul 2008)

In view of BAC recommendations, some PHEP that aimed to pass the first phase and get the candidate status for the accreditation process, merged with the other PHEPs. Whereas, the ones that were not flexible or could not meet the basic requirements for getting the candidate status have dissolved.

Hence, in ten months time after the survey there were only 15 PHEPs offering different study programs in Kosovo.

However, the lack of the proper QA systems still was an issue that needed attention and concrete actions for establishing and improving the QA systems in the three levels at the PHEP that include teaching, management and administration, and research & development as a precondition for their survival in a very competitive market.

Hence, the main objective of the project “Supporting and Developing the Structures for QA at the Private Higher Education Providers in Kosovo” was to establish and strengthen the quality assurance centers/units at the eleven PHEP in Kosovo, in accordance with the goals of the Strategy for the High Education and Bologna principles and recommendations of the British Accreditation Council regarding the organization of the Quality Assurance. (QA@PHEP, 2009)

The expected outcomes of the project and activities carried out to achieve the outcomes are:

Outcome 1. Awareness-raising and deep need analysis regarding the Quality Assurance at the Private Higher Education Institutions

- Activity 1.1. Organization of the information days;
- Activity 1.2. Questionnaire development
- Activity 1.3. Distribution, collection and analyzing the questionnaire.

Outcome 2. Capacity building

- Activity 2.1. Training of the university management and teachers
- Activity 2.2. Training for students
- Activity 2.3. Training for administration

Outcome 3. Developing the QA system at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo

- Activity 3.1. Staff recruitment
- Activity 3.2. Establishment/upgrading of the QA Centre
- Activity 3.3. Study visit to the University of Salzburg
- Activity 3.4. Equipment purchase
- Activity 3.5. Manual development for managers
- Activity 3.6. Development of the guidelines – organization of the workshops
- Activity 3.7. Study visit at the University College Cork
- Activity 3.8. Study visit at the University POITEHNICA of Bucharest

Outcome 4. Dissemination

- Activity 4.1. Printing and distribution of the guidelines
- Activity 4.2. Continuous awareness-raising on QA at all private HE institutions
- Activity 4.3. Development of the webpage/networking
- Activity 4.4. Update of the relevant web links
- Activity 4.5. Printing and publishing
- Activity 4.6. Preparing news and media coverage

Outcome 5. Sustainability

- Activity 5.1. Takeover of the QA Centers by the Private Higher Education Institutions
- Activity 5.2. Yearly meetings about the QA trends and development

Outcome 6. Quality control and monitoring

- Activity 6.1. Self-evaluation at the Consortium Meetings
- Activity 6.2. Questionnaire distribution to the participants
- Activity 6.3. Quality control and monitoring of the project implementation and management plan of the project

Outcome 7. Management of the project

- Activity 7.1. Coordination of the partners and activity implementation
- Activity 7.2. Budgetary issues and contracting
- Activity 7.3. Reporting to the EU

The Evaluation Objective

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the project and achievements to date with regards to expected results and planned activities.

Since the project is ongoing, the specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- Assess the importance of project activities and how the project is perceived by beneficiaries,
- Assess future activities or support that be given to QA offices in particular of the 10 PHEP¹ in order to improve their QA systems and processes, and
- Recommend future support to sustain the quality assurance in PHEP, as it is a dynamic process.

Evaluation Methodology

Given the time and the nature of the project, the evaluation was carried out in three phases.

First phase – Preparation and Desk research

Project documentation review

First phase included screening and analyzing project documents, defining the evaluation purpose statements of the QA @PHEP and identifying the primary and secondary stakeholders, as a basis for selecting the evaluation type. The project documents and report as provided by the WUS-Austria office in Prishtina and other related documents such as BAC report, laws and administrative directive related to the Higher Education in Kosova were reviewed and consulted. This provided an excellent background and the basis for understanding the project and achieving results. During the first phase were defined the evaluation questions and survey instruments (such as questionnaires and informal semi-structured interviews) to be utilized for collecting necessary data.

¹ Initially, 11 PHEP have participated in the project, but since Institute for Social and Economic Studies “University of Prizren” was not accredited, the mentioned institute could no longer benefit from the program.

Second phase – The actual evaluation

Questionnaires

The second phase overlapped, the first phase given that the interview process started prior to submitting the draft report. Subsequently, after deciding of the survey instruments, two types of questionnaires were developed. Both questionnaires were prepared in Albanian and in both cases respondents were informed about the purpose of the interview/online survey and were assured that the information from the survey was strictly for the purpose of the project evaluation and would be kept confidential. Prior to carrying out the interviews and online surveys, both questionnaires were confirmed by WUS Austria Project coordinator in Prishtina.

The questionnaire for semi-structured interviews with project partners/beneficiaries (10 representatives of the PHEP), included 47 questions structured in 5 sections based on the outcomes of the project and a section for future recommendations to sustain the project results (see Annex 1 – Questionnaire for Private Higher Education Providers)

The online survey was prepared by using Google browser (see Annex 1 – The Online Survey Form for students of PHEP). It included 22 questions, structured in four main sections (general information, quality assurance structures, and their involvement and future recommendations). The sample size was 1000 students from 10 PHEP. Taking into consideration that it was an online survey, the expected level of response was 15-25%. The Quality Assurance Officers/College representatives in PHEPs were asked to share the Google link of the online survey to enrolled students of every institution. Initially all representatives were informed that the online survey will be active from October 15 to November 1. But, since the semester started on October 15, the deadline was extended to November 21, 2011. Although the expected level of response was 15-25%, the received level of response was satisfactory (11.7%). The results of the online survey indicate that in total 117 students from 7 PHEPs responded, out of which 13 students from AAB-Rinvest College; 18 from the Biznesi College; 4 from the Dardania College; 17 from the Pjetër Budi College; 35 from the UBT College; 1 from the Universum College; and 29 from the High Professional School-Tempulli, whereas 40% third year students; 26 % second year students; 34% first year students; 92% of them were BA students and 8% MA students.

The second phase also included site visits, meetings with Quality assurance officers and college representatives, and study visit in Romania. During this phase, 14 project partners were interviewed; 10 semi-structured interviews with Quality Assurance officers and College representatives, and four informal interviews with Vice-Chairman of the University of Salzburg, Prof. Peter Eckl; Dean of the University of Politehnica from Bucharest, Prof. Mariana Mocanu, Director of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Ms Ferdije Zhushi, and Regional Coordinator of WUS-Austria, Mr. But Dedaj and Project Coordinator, Ms Mjellma Carrabregu. The interviews were conducted in Kosova and during the study visit in Romania.

Third phase – Report Writing

Data Analysis

The draft evaluation report included the information gathered from both, the desk research and qualitative data collected during the semi-structured interviews and informal interviews with college representatives. The collected data from the online survey with students of 10 PHEP (quantitative data) was processed and analyzed in the third phase of the evaluation and all information is presented in the final evaluation report.

Report writing

The report was prepared to present the project achievements to date, how the project is perceived by partners involved and also provide recommendations from three parties involved (PHEP, KAA and other partners, and students) in order to sustain the achievements of the project and have the multiplier effect by including other PHEPs who did not benefit from the first phase.

Assessment and Findings

In view with BAC recommendation “... a major program be embarked upon of improving QA practice across the HE and TVE sectors.” (Bristow & Vickers, Jul 2008), University of Salzburg in cooperation with WUS Austria initiated and implemented QA@PHEP. The project consisted of 7 outcomes that included specific activities of which 11 PHEPs in Kosova were expected to benefit. However, in total 10 PHEP benefited, since the Institute for Social and Economic Studies “University of Prizren”, was not accredited from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, as such could not participate in the program, since the project’s aim was to strengthen and establish QA structures within PHEPs which were accredited by KAA. In order to confirm the information, I also asked the Director of the KAA, Ms Zhushi and Project coordinator, Ms. Carrabregu, both informed me that the Institute for Social and Economic Studies “University of Prizren” was not accredited and as such no longer exists as an institution.

In general, a great sense of satisfaction prevailed among all partners given that the project supported the development and strengthened the quality assurance structures in higher education institutions in Kosova. All partners perceived the QA@PHEP project as crucial with regards to raising awareness at three institutional levels about the significance of the QA structures and systems at the PHEPs, to ensure qualitative programs and services that have students in the center. All PHEPs have indicated that the main project achievement was creation of linkages between QA officers and networks created during the project implementation.

Moreover, from the perspective of the institution in charge of accreditation, the director of the KAA, Ms. Zhushi, expressed a high level of satisfaction with regards to project achievements. As indicated by the director “the main achievements of the project were standardization of the QA structures in the PHEPs, and the role of the QA officers was taken more seriously, whereas the management in some institutions transferred all competencies to QA officers; as well increased quality of the study programs, and better prepared and well organized self-evaluations report when submitted for accreditation”.

In addition, 79 (94%) out of 84 respondents who have heard about the QA@PHEP project through QA office (55%), brochures and poster (42%), and/or administration (24%), indicated that the project influenced the advancement of the student services (52%) and career center (57%) and improvement of the methods for student evaluation (57%) and study programs (59%), and advancement of the research programs within the institution (62%).

However in post project scenario, sustainability concerns were raised given that the Quality Assurance process is ongoing and dynamic process that never ends, hence there is a need for ongoing support in the field of QA. As indicated by Ms. Zhushi, there is a need for permanent investment in developing and improving programs and quality assurance structures in order to meet QA international standards, and also create a culture whereas all institutions are self aware about the quality programs.

The project in itself and project coordinating office in Kosovo is seen as unbiased and umbrella institutions providing the same unconditional support to all PHEPs.

In alignment with the outcomes of the project, the following sections will present an summary of findings from the structured interviews and the online surveys.

Awareness-raising and deep need analysis regarding the Quality Assurance at the PHEP and Dissemination

The key objective of the project was to raise awareness among PHEP that quality assurance systems and structures as a corner stone for institutional sustainability. Hence, numerous activities were carried out including the organization of the information days in 10 PHEP; development of the project website and distribution of the project's promotional materials; ensuring good media coverage to raise awareness about the importance of the QA; and carried out a needs assessment to identify strengths and/or weaknesses of PHEPs in 5 levels.

The questionnaire for PHEP contained questions to evaluate the level of the satisfaction and achievements in every activity and outcome.

The project played a crucial role with regards to raising awareness about the importance of active involvement of all institutional structures to ensure quality and information sharing about the benefits of the project for all PHEP. Therefore the information sharing days, promotional and information materials that were disseminated to every institution were highly evaluated by all participating partners and students. The results from the online survey indicate that students heard about the project from different sources² such as: QA office (55%), brochures and poster (42%), administration (24%), and web page (14%).

In addition, joint meetings and information days were valued as very important. Quote "the consortium meeting and information days were the first time when all 10 PHEP met together³"

² Note: This question had multiple choice answers, whereas they could choose two or more sources of the information.

³ Quote from interviews with PHEP

Similarly the website was another tool or source of information that kept all institutions in the loop about the project activities and developments. 9 out of 10 valued the website as a very good tool for sharing the information and experience. All respondents have indicated that the website is a tool that can be utilized in the future. The website was also a tool utilized by students to get additional information for quality assurance.

However, to make this tool user-friendly some constructive recommendations were made, such as: developing an active webpage whereas through forums initiate discussions about different issues and/or share experiences in QA processes; provide information about QA events in the region or events that are organized in other world universities; very institution to be able to upload different surveys through which they can gather necessary data to increase quality of their program studies.

When asked, who should maintain the website after project ends, all indicated that it has to be an independent institution (unbiased) such as WUS Austria, or a sector within the KAA, whilst the financial sources for maintaining the website can be secured through financial participation of PHEPs or request a financial support from MEST.

All PHEPs indicated that needs analysis questionnaires were a great tool which help them identify strengths and weakness of the institution. However, when asked to identify 3-4 strengths and weaknesses, all without exception identified at least 3-4 strengths but were reluctant to identify weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses identified by them were: lack of the budget; a need for improving student services; a need for improving the research and development department; roles and responsibilities of the QA are not well defined; QA office proposals are partially considered; due to other tasks as imposed by KAA, the reports are not submitted in timely manner; lack of literature and publications; no e-learning studies available; lack of infrastructure compared to level of interested students; and the QA office is not well structures as witnessed in other EU countries.

However they indicated that they took all necessary steps to improve some of their weaknesses as advised by Prof. Peter Eckl.

Capacity Building

The PHEPs have acknowledged the contributing role of the project in building capacities of all three structures/levels including management and academic staff, administration and students. Specific training courses were delivered to specific target groups, all evaluated with average grade 4 – 4.4 (out of max 5).

QA officers have recognized the contribution of the training for managers and academic, since they have received a continuous support from the institution and their suggestions to improve the quality of programs, student's evaluation methods were taken seriously by management or academic staff of the institution. However, there are cases when professors hardly change their ways of lecturing and evaluating students.

QA officers also acknowledged the impact of the training for administration and students. As indicated by them the administration plays an important role in delivering qualitative services whereas students demand qualitative services and at the same time as the end users of PHEP's services can measure the

quality and always recommend improvements. QA officers have indicated that the training courses have served the purpose of emphasizing that QA is a joint effort and achievement in which three structures of PHEP should play their role.

At the same times students highly appreciated, the student's training that was organized by QA@PHEP project whereas 23 students (respondents from the online survey) from 7 PHEPs have participated.

At the same time students also indicated improvement in the quality assurance structures as a result of the QA@PHEP, taking into consideration that 69% (78 out of 113⁴) of them confirmed their involvement into the quality assurance processes, out of which 94% (74 out of 78) of them received and completed evaluation forms through which they evaluated teaching and evaluation methods, and study programs; and 54% (42 out of 78) have participated at the discussion panels for college accreditation.

The same results are confirmed, if, calculated from different perspective, 79 (94%) out of 84 respondents who heard about the QA@PHEP project, indicated that project impact was seen mostly in advancing student services (52%) and career center (57%) and improving student's evaluation methods (57%), improving of study programs (59%) and advancing the research programs (62%).

Developing the QA system at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosova

Equipping Quality Assurance offices and providing partial financial support for hiring (or motivating) the QA was instrumental for improving and strengthening quality assurance structures in all PHEP and without exception all PHEP appreciated the project intervention. The QA@PHEP is regarded as the only project in the area of supporting private higher education in Kosova.

During the study visits at the University of Salzburg in Austria, University College Cork, in Ireland and University Politehnika, in Romania, the QA officers and the college representative were exposed to new information and ideas, different experiences and new ways for ensuring quality. Some of these experiences and materials were adapted to the needs of the PHEPs and implemented upon return in Kosova such as: One-on-one advisory service; Work placement and Job fairs; Peer review guidelines; Student evaluation surveys; Evaluation, Reporting and Monitoring Forms; Quality review procedures; Working in functionalizing/establishing the R&D department, etc.

Study visits also played a crucial role with regards to raising awareness among all PHEP about the importance of institutionalizing the QA which requires involvement of all structures including management, academic staff, administration, and students. This fact was also confirmed by the Director of the KAA, Ms Zhushi, who indicated that the project achieved to increase the quality of study programs since now the QA office is requesting feedback from students with regards to study programs and evaluation methods.

In addition study visits were instrumental for changing the approach, when new study programs are introduced whereas QA officers have acknowledged the need for carrying out the market research and doing cost/benefit analysis prior to preparing the curriculum for one study program. Some QA

⁴ 113 out of 117 students, indicated that in their college exists the office that is in charge for quality assurance

officers/representatives of PHEPs have indicated that they have started to implement the new approach.

Nonetheless, some PHEP representatives expressed their concerns with regards to visiting public universities (except study visit in Romania) that have extensive experience in the field of QA and do not face the same financial challenges as PHEPs in Kosova are facing. Thus, pointed out that PHEPs in Kosova are in early stage of QA development and some areas to which they were introduced are too advanced for their institution. Therefore, prior to Romania's study visit, they suggested visiting private higher education providers in EU countries, as one of the ways to compare their achievements and also create linkages with private PHEP in Romania. Subsequently, the QA@PHEP project addressed their concern. Hence, during the study visit in Romania, the implementing partners organized presentations by two PHEP and one visit at one private higher education provider. PHEP from Kosova were also introduced to the accreditation process and national qualification process in Romania.

Initially, the aim of the QA@PHEP was to support PHEPs, develop the template manual for quality assurance procedures and policies which can be adapted by every institution accordingly and this was the expectation of the representatives of the PHEPs.

But, since the manual is considered as an important tool for managing all activities in line with quality assurance, Prof. Eckl's and Prof. Mocanu have suggested that all PHEPs have to work themselves in developing their own manual since it may differ from one institution to another and this can be considered a competitive advantage for an institution. Whilst, the implementing partners in this case Prof. Eckl will review the manual of each and every institution. Upon finalization of 10 manuals, QA@PHEP will support the printed out.

Sustainability

The main purpose of this project was to establish and develop functional and sustainable QA offices that will serve PHEPs and at the same time ensure that quality at PHEP will be taken seriously, even after the project has ended.

The semi-structured interviews with 10 PHEPs have confirmed that all institutions realize the importance of the quality assurance structures, systems and their implementation towards achieving the overall aim, for increasing the employability rate of their students as a competitive advantage that will help them succeed in their future endeavors.

Moreover, the development of better structured and well functioning QA offices, was also confirmed by 72% of respondents from the online survey and from the director of KAA, Ms Zhushi.

The standardization and functionality of the QA structures, and creation of the solid grounds for cooperation between all PHEPs which will contribute towards the enhancement of the quality at the PHEP, can be considered as the main achievement of the project.

As a result of the QA@PHEP, all PHEPs have indicated their commitment to sustain the QA offices and their staff, after completion of the project.

In addition they have expressed the interest to continue the cooperation and communication in the field of R&D work, student and professor mobility, and working together to overcome challenges that all PHEP face.

The project contribution was also confirmed by most PHEP external evaluation reports completed on 2011. For illustration I'm using the quote from the External Evaluation Report for Akademie Evolution completed on 2011 :

“The 2011 site visit showed that those recommendations had been addressed and the EE Team was pleased to note the vigor with which quality management is being addressed by the Executive Manager, who now heads the Quality Assurance Office. It was also clear that the college has benefited greatly from its association with the Tempus Program, which has helped provide training and guidance on setting up effective quality assurance processes.” (Evolution External Evaluation Report 2011, p.5)

Quality control and monitoring

After every workshop, training and study visit evaluation forms were send to all participants, ensuring that project is addressing the needs of the sector and suggestions of the participating institutions are taken into consideration.

As presented above, QA officers raised their concerns that during first two study visits they were introduced to more advanced QA structures and systems at the public universities which have extensive experience in this area. Study visit was highly evaluated but it did not fit their model considering that they were representing PHEP sector. Hence, suggested that the next study visit should address this issue. The study visit in Romania addressed this issue, whereas two private higher education providers introduced their programs, QA procedures and challenges. The study visit in Romania proved that the suggestions from the beneficiaries were taken into consideration.

Management of the project

Management of the project in all levels was acknowledged and appreciated since all implementing partners had extensive experience in higher education programs and project management. In addition the responsible organization (WUS Austria) for coordinating activities in Prishtina was given the highest acknowledgments by all PHEP. Most of PHEP, were proposing the continuation of the project whilst suggesting that the same organization should take the responsibility of coordinating future projects.

Recommendations & Conclusion

Recommendations

Since the quality assurance is an ongoing and dynamic process which requires ongoing efforts to maintaining and/or improving quality at the PHEP, concerns were raised about the duration of the project for dealing in depth with issues of maintaining and advancing the quality assurance at PHEP.

During the course of the interview with PHEPs, partners and online survey they were also invited to recommend future activities or interventions in the field of Quality Assurance.

Following are the suggestions and recommendation from PHEPs:

- ✓ an additional support in establishing/empowering the R&D department in every institution and strengthening career center activities;
- ✓ more teacher training programs for using new teaching methods;
- ✓ support on finding ways to establishing e-libraries;
- ✓ organizing study visits in region with regards to sharing experiences in QA whilst considering the specifics of the study programs;
- ✓ establishing the Association of Private Higher Education Providers which will be the voice and promoter of PHEPs;
- ✓ support on establishing mechanisms and procedures for evaluating research work;
- ✓ additional training on student evaluation process;
- ✓ training on how to manage the library;
- ✓ KAA and MEST should be more involved and offer more information on the accreditation process and promote transparency at all levels.

Following are the suggestions and recommendation for improvements from the project partners:

- ✓ Find ways to increase student's participation in the evaluation process because students will benefit from this process considering that they are end user of these services or customers;
- ✓ Draft evaluation forms to ensure that students will give relevant and objective answers which can be analyzed by QA office, in order to contribute to the improvement of QA process and study program;
- ✓ Students in the other hand should be more objective when they are given to evaluate subject professors, study programs and the QA structures of the PHEP;
- ✓ The methodology for student evaluation should be based in the learning outcomes of every subject;
- ✓ When developing study programs the subjects should be based on the competencies that the student is expected to have after finalizing its studies, since this will contribute to student's employability as the overall goal of every institution;
- ✓ Considering the fact the QA process is an ongoing process and there are other PHEPs who are interested to join the program, the project definitely should have the second phase whereas more PHEPs can be included in the process.

Following are the suggestions drawn from the online survey with students⁵ according to the percentage:

- ✓ Establishing online library (62%)
- ✓ Advancing student's service center (55%) and advancing the career center (33%)
- ✓ Student's union to be more active (52%)
- ✓ Increasing students' participation in decision making processes (44%)
- ✓ Advancing QA office (42%)
- ✓ Improving methods for student evaluation (31%)

⁵ This question had multiple choice answers, whereas students could choose two or more recommendation

- ✓ Establishing labs for specific subjects as necessary (30%)
- ✓ Advancing the department for Research and Development (29%)
- ✓ Linkages between PHEP and business community (26%)
- ✓ Creating a climate of cooperation between students and professors (22%)

Conclusion

From the semi-structured interviews with 10 PHEPs, 4 implementing partners and after the observation during the study visit in Romania, and online surveys with 117 students, can be concluded the following:

- ✓ The project was successful in achieving its overall goal for developing and strengthening the quality assurance structures at the PHEP in Kosova, by equipping the QA offices with all necessary equipments for carrying out its usual activities and providing partial salary contribution, through study visits, training programs and promotional activities and materials, raised awareness about the importance of the quality assurance to be imbedded into the institutions culture.
- ✓ Most of the outcomes/outputs of the project were achieved successfully; however beneficiaries and KAA raised their concerns with the regards to the need for continuous support in this area considering that the quality assurance process is an ongoing process and needs continuous improvement. Hence, two years are not enough for knowledge transfer and absorption in such a broad subject as QA; public universities in the region usually benefit from a min. 5 years of programs for enhancing QA at their institution (covering all aspects of administration, management, teaching , research and development etc).
- ✓ The main achievement of the project was the standardization and functionality of the QA structures, and creation of the solid grounds for cooperation between all PHEP which will contribute towards the enhancement the quality at the PHEP. This cooperation will continue in the future.
- ✓ The major beneficiaries of the QA@PHEP are threefold: Due to better prepared higher education institutions, the process of the evaluation and accreditation for KAA was easier task; Better prepared PHEP's in the accreditation processes will result with more qualitative programs and better student's services; whereas better quality programs and better student's services will increase chances of student employability after finishing the study program.
- ✓ New initiatives were taken by QA offices with regards to adapting and adopting evaluating, monitoring and reporting forms; these initiatives are supported by the management and assisted by the administration.
- ✓ The Quality Assurance officers are more empowered by the management which is resulting with better services for students and qualitative study programs.
- ✓ The quality of the study programs and evaluation methods has improved, as confirmed by Director of the KAA, Ms Zhushi.

- ✓ In general, all PHEP (partners or beneficiaries) acknowledge the crucial role that the project played to raise awareness with regards to quality assurance structures and process, whilst all structures in the chain should be involved in order for the system to function.
- ✓ Students (end customers) have experienced improvement with respect to student's services and career centers, however there is still a room for improvement;
- ✓ Student's evaluation methods have improved but students still think that QA office should play a role towards continuous improvement in this regard;
- ✓ The quality of study programs has improved, however students think that institutions should invest in the establishment labs for some subjects;
- ✓ Students admit that there was advancement in the research and development department but there is a need for more investment (this fact was also confirmed from the External Evaluation Reports 2011).
- ✓ Both PHEPs and students accept the importance of establishing the online library that can have a positive impact in the department of the research and development, and increase the quality of student's studies.
- ✓ Although all students have indicated that every college has student's union, only 29.8% of them are members, whilst 10% of them do not know the role of student's union. This information is confirmed since more than 52% of respondents indicated that student's union should be more active.
- ✓ Although 69% (78 out of 113⁶) confirmed their involvement into the quality assurance processes, and their participation in the discussion panels for college accreditation, students still evaluate highly their inclusion/participation in decision making processes

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⁶ 113 out of 117 students, indicated that in their college exists the office that is in charge for quality assurance

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Annexes

Annex 1 - Evaluation Questionnaire for Private Higher Education Providers

External Project Evaluation

Supporting and Developing the Structures for QA at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosova –

QA@PHEP

Questionnaire for Private Higher Education Providers

The aim of the evaluation is to determine how effective is QA@PHEP project for Private Higher Education Providers in Kosova, and identify the benefits that your institution had as a result of this project, and in your opinion what can be done in addition to assist you in QA processes. The same questionnaire will be filled in by all project partners (beneficiaries) and the collected data will be used for the reporting purpose only.

General Information about the Institution

Name of the Institution						
Respondent						
Telephone						
Date of interview						
How many study program are in your college?						
Indicate all study programs						

How many students are enrolled in each program						
Developing the QA system at the PHEPs – QA office equipment and Staff Recruitment						
Do you have a quality assurance office/unit?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>					
When it was established ?						
Please describe roles and responsibilities of the quality assurance office/unit? What this unit does?						
How many employees are engaged in this office?						
Please indicate position according to levels in the hierarchy (<i>i.e. Manager/Director, Assistant, etc</i>)	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____					
Are competences of each position described?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>					
Where you supported from QA-PHEP project on the establishment/development of the QA office/unit?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>					
If YES, please indicate in what aspect the QA-PHEP supported your insitution?						

<p>If No, what do you think should be changed, in order for you to benefit more from this project?</p>	
<p>Do you have any other recommendation?</p>	
<p>Awareness-raising and deep need analysis regarding the QA@PHEP/Dissemination</p>	
<p>How helpful were the information days that were organized during on October 11-15, 2010? <i>(tick one option)</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 5 <input type="checkbox"/> (not at all) (a little) (somewhat) (very helpful) (excellent experience)</p>
<p>In what sense these days were beneficial for your institution?</p>	
<p>How you evaluate the project web-page?</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 5 <input type="checkbox"/> (not useful) (a little) (somewhat useful) (useful) (very useful)</p>
<p>Was cooperation between PHEPs, as a result of webpage and how?</p>	
<p>Do you have any other recommendation how this webpage can be improved in order to serve the purpose of PHEP?</p>	
<p>Do you think that the webpage will serve you in the future (after the closure of the project)?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>If YES, then who do you think should maintain it and populate it with information?</p>	
<p>During the situation analysis with Prof. Eckl, have you identified strengths and weaknesses of your institution?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If YES, then please indicate 3-4 main strengths that you identified during this evaluation.</p>	<p>1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____</p>
<p>If YES, then please indicate 3-4 main weaknesses that you identified during this evaluation.</p>	<p>1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____</p>
<p>If NO, please indicate WHY?</p>	
<p>From the period when you've carried out this evaluation, have you taken any action to improve your weaknesses to ensure quality of your programs?</p>	
<p>Developing the QA system at the PHEPs – Training and Study visits</p>	
<p>How you evaluate study visits in Salzburg, Ireland and Romania? <i>(tick one option)</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 2 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 3 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ----- 5 <input type="checkbox"/> (not at all) (somewhat) (good) (very good) (excellent)</p>

What elements you have implemented as a result of workshops and study visits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Career Counseling Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Screening Process for Advisory Service
		<input type="checkbox"/> One on One Advisory Consultation
		<input type="checkbox"/> Career Education and Employability Training
		<input type="checkbox"/> Career Information Center
		<input type="checkbox"/> Career Website
		<input type="checkbox"/> Work Placement
		<input type="checkbox"/> Job Fairs
		<input type="checkbox"/> Research for measuring the results of the career services
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify
	<input type="checkbox"/> Online Library (journals, e-books) implemented	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality Review procedures adopted	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer Review Guidelines utilized	
	<input type="checkbox"/> PEST Analysis	
	<input type="checkbox"/> SWOT Analysis	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Report Guidelines for Departments/Programs/Units	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Report Guidelines for Administration and Support Services	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Students Evaluation Survey	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research for measuring the success rate of research programs	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determining key performance indicators	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establishing Research Department	
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Forms, Report and monitoring forms		

	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify					
<p>Please describe shortly how study visits helped your institution to:</p> <p>1. Improve the quality of study programs?</p> <p>2. Better manage the quality assurance office and processes?</p> <p>3. Increase satisfaction among students?</p>						
<p>How important was teacher and management training?</p> <p><i>(tick X in the respective box)</i></p>	<p>Very important (5)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Important (4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Somewhat important (3)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Not that important (2)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Not important at all (1)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Do you think that teacher training and training for management has any impact in the capacity building of your institution?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>					
<p>Please, specify some elements that you used from this training and have resulted successful.</p>						
<p>How important was training for administration?</p> <p><i>(tick X in the respective box)</i></p>	<p>Very important (5)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Important (4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Somewhat important (3)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Not that important (2)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Not important at all (1)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Do you think that training for administration has any impact in the capacity building of the QA office?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>					

Please, specify some elements that you used from this training and have resulted successful.						
How important was training for students? <i>(tick X in the respective box)</i>		Very important (5)	Important (4)	Somewhat important (3)	Not that important (2)	Not important at all (1)
Please, indicate how students are using the knowledge gained during the training? <i>(i.e. student's union was established or any other structure...)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact /Sustainability/Recommendations						
Do you think that the QA-PHEP project has increased cooperation among 10 PHEPs?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>					
As a result of cooperation, do you think that the quality of education in PHEP has increased?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>					
If YES, in what aspect has increased the quality of the higher education?						
If NO, what is lacking in this process? Why you think that quality in the higher education did no increase?						
Do you have any other recommendation, what this project can do to build capacities	Training programs					
	Study Visits					

at the PHEPs in Kosovo	
After the project ends are you willing to continue your cooperation with other PHEPs?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, please specify how you will cooperate?	
If NO, please specify the reason why?	
Any other comments	

Thank you for your time and contribution!

Best Regards,

Vjosa Mullatahiri

Annex 2 - Evaluation Questionnaire for Students

Project Evaluation - Supporting and Developing the Structures for QA at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosova – QA@PHEP

Dear students, please fill in this questionnaire for evaluating the project Supporting and Developing the Structures for QA at the Private Higher Education Institutions in Kosova (QA@PHEP). The aim of the evaluation is to determine how effective is QA@PHEP project for Private Higher Education Providers in Kosova, and identify what were student's benefits in every participating institution as a result of this project, and in your opinion what can be done in addition to assist you as students in being more successful in your studies.

The same questionnaire will be filled in by all students of project partners (beneficiaries) and the collected data are confidential, and will be used as statistical data for the reporting purpose only.

*** Required**

Emri dhe Mbiemri *

Vendlindja *

Emri i Kolegjit *Zgjedhni Kolegjin ne te cilin jeni duke studiuar



Kolegji - AAB-Riinvest



Kolegji - Biznesi



Kolegji – Dardania



Kolegji – Fama



Kolegji - Iliria



Kolegji - Pjeter Budi



Kolegji - Universum



Kolegji - UBT



Shkolla e Larte Profesionale e Arteve - Evolucioni



Shkolla e Larte Profesionale - Tempulli

Niveli i studimit *Zgjedhni nivelin e studimit



Bachelor



Master

Viti i studimit *



Viti i I-re



Viti i II-te



Viti i III-te

Drejtimi/Programi *Nga lista e meposhtme zgjedhni drejtimin/programin te cilin jeni duke e studiuar
<input type="text" value="Agrobiznes"/>
A ka kolegji juaj Union te Studenteve? *
<input type="checkbox"/> PO <input type="checkbox"/> JO
Nese PO, cili eshte roli i Unionit te Studenteve?
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
A jeni anetar i Unionit te Studenteve? *
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PO <input type="checkbox"/> JO
A keni ndegjuar per projektin - QA-PHEP -Perkrahja dhe Zhvillimi i Strukturave per Sigurimin e Cilesise tek Insticionet e Arsimit te Larte *
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PO <input type="checkbox"/> JO
Nese PO, nga kush keni ndegjuar?
<input type="checkbox"/> Unioni i studenteve <input type="checkbox"/> Zyra per sigurimin e cilesise <input type="checkbox"/> Administrata e kolegjit <input type="checkbox"/> Broshurat <input type="checkbox"/> Posterat <input type="checkbox"/> Web-faqja e kolegjit <input type="checkbox"/> Web-faqja e projektit QA-PHEP <input type="checkbox"/> Trajnimi i studenteve <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>

A keni marre pjese ne trajnimin e studenteve te organizuar nga WUS Austria, si pjese e projektit QA-PHEP? *

PO
 JO

Nese PO, si e vleresoni kete trajnim

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Aspak i nevojshem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shume i nevojshem

A ka kolegji juaj zyren per sigurimin e cilesise? *

PO
 JO

Nese PO, sipas mendimit tuaj cka bene kjo zyre?Shkurtimisht pershkruani cka ka bere kjo zyre

A merrni pjese ne proceset e sigurimit te cilesise? *

PO
 JO

A ju eshte shperndare nga kolegji juaj ndonjehere pyetesor per vleresimin e mesimdhenesve/lendeve ose sherbimeve te kolegjit? *

PO
 JO

Nese PO, a i keni plotesuar

PO
 JO

Nese e keni plotesuar, sa i kuptueshem/objektiv ka qene pyetesori?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Aspak i kuptueshem/objektiv	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shume i kuptueshem/objektiv

A keni marre pjese ndonjehere ne panelet e diskutimit gjate procesit te akreditimit te kolegjit tuaj *

PO
 JO

A mendoni qe projekti QA-PHEP ka pasur ndikim/efekt ne sigurimin e cilesise ne institucionin tuaj? *

PO
 JO

Nese PO, sa ka ndikuar ne strukturat/aktivitetet e meposhtme *Ju lutem vleresoni se si ka ndikuar ne secilen strukture/aktivitet

	1-aspak	2	3-disi	4	5-shume
Aktivizimin e Unionit te Studenteve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avancimin e sherbimit te studenteve ne kolegjin tuaj	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avancimin e sherbimit te karrieres ne kolegjin tuaj	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avancimin e metodave per vleresimi te studenteve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permiresimin e programeve studimore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avancimin e programeve hulumtuese dhe zhvillimore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rritjen e pjesemarrjes se studenteve ne proceset vendim-marrese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vetedijesimi i studenteve per rolin e tyre ne permiresimin e cilesise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bashkepunimin me te mire student-profesor-menaxhment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pjesemarrjen aktive te studenteve ne komisione dhe grupe punuese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nuk ka ndikuar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ne te ardhmen cka duhet mbeshtetur per te avancuar arsimin e larte ne Kosove *Zgjedhni se paku tri fusha

Aktivizimin e unionit te studenteve

Avancimin e sherbimit te studenteve

Avancimin e zyres per sigurimin e cilesise

Avancimin e metodave per vleresimin e studenteve

Themelimin e bibliotekes online

Avancimin e sherbimeve te karrieres

Nderlidhjes se institucionit te arsimit te larte me biznesin

Ndertimi/zhvillimi i kabineteve sipas lemive specifike

Avancimin e departamentit per zhvillim dhe hulumtime

Krijimit te nje klime me te mire bashkepunimi ne mes te profesoreve dhe studenteve

Rritjes se pjesemarrjes se studenteve ne proceset vendim-marrese

Other:

Ndonje koment tjeter