



This project is funded by the European Union

ARISE – Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education



Policy Brief: Albania

CURRENT SITUATION IN ALBANIA WITH SOME BASIC INDICATORS LISTED BELOW:

Albania has undergone several reforms in the Education System during the last three decades aiming at a better quality and more equitable education for all, which have had their positive impact on access to compulsory education and student performance.

However, research shows that there is still a gap between policy and practice. More particularly, the Education Policy Review (UNESCO 2018) and similar studies show that Roma children, children with special needs and children in rural and remote communities remain vulnerable in attaining the quality education entitled by Law and there is still a high dropout rate. Therefore, a more strategic investment is essential to the improvement of the education system and to the social, economic and overall development in Albania.

Poverty rate in (2015):

39.1%

of Albanians living with less than \$5.5

Child Poverty rate:

20%

of children in Absolute Poverty

Child Poverty rate:

49.6%

of families with more than 4 children are poor

Poverty rate: 39.1%¹

Child poverty rate²

Public investment in Education:

2017–2018= **3.1%** of GDP in Education
2018–2019= **3.2%** of GDP in Education

Sources: INSTAT3

PISA 2018:

In all 3 domains rural school students' mean scores are lower than urban school students.

Pisa 2018:

Socio-economically advantaged students outperform disadvantaged students in reading by 61 score points.

National findings:

Roma elementary school students score an average 29/100 scores compared to 45/100 at national level.

Source: OECD, 2019⁴

Source: OECD, 2020⁵

- Jorgoni, E., European Social Policy Network (ESPN, *ESPN Thematic Report on In-work poverty Albania, 2019*, p.6. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21126&langId=en> (Referred to World Bank, 2015 calculations based on Living Standard Measurement Survey of INSTAT2012)
- Mapping and Analysis of the Albania Child Protection System*, MAESTRAL INTERNATIONAL, 2015. <https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-news/child-protection-system-mapping-and-assessment-albania>
- INSTAT, Vjetari Statistikor 2019(Statistical Yearbook 2019), p.41. <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6560/sv-2019.pdf>
- OECD 2019, Volume I-III, *Albania - Country Note - PISA 2018 Results* p.19. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_ALB.pdf
- (Maghnouj, S. et al. (2020), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Albania*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris) p.65. https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2871/file/OECD_Reviews_of_Evaluation_and_Assessment_in_Education_Albania.pdf%20



COVERAGE ON EACH EDUCATION LEVEL

ENROLMENT RATE AT:	YEAR-2018	YEAR-2019
Pre-Primary education level	80.5 %	75.75 %
Primary education level	106.99 %	104.81 %
Secondary education level	95.43 %	95.09 %
Tertiary education level	54.96 %	59.78 %

Source: The Global Economy.com⁶

Main problems identified in the national report are closely related to the low Socio-Economic status of students, including those living in poor families, rural areas, minority groups and students with special needs, as well as the low public spending on Pre-University Education (2019-2020= 2.38% of GDP for Pre-University Education),⁸ hence, insufficient resources for better school infrastructure and facilities, teaching materials and continuous teacher training, which does not support the successful implementation of national policies aiming at a quality and equitable education for all.

COVERAGE AMONG SPECIFIC GROUPS:

- **2.5% to 4%** of children in Albania have a disability and **only half of school-age** children in receipt of disability allowance **are in education.** (UNICEF Annual Report 2018, p.16)
- 66% of Roma children attend primary education compared to national enrolment rate of 95% in primary education (UNICEF, 2018)
- Number of Roma Children in Kindergarten has doubled since 2011 (OECD, 2020:65)

Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET): of 2015 was 32.8%.

Source; OECD⁷

“...Disparities and inequalities”, according to UNICEF, “persist among children living in poor families, rural and remote areas, and in Roma communities”,⁹ which are further supported by other studies and the field data collection process. More specifically, poverty, poor home living and learning conditions accompanied by the inability to meet all children’s needs and school requirements, lack of sufficient school resources and facilities, as well as comprehensive school-based policies and teacher training to adequately address low SES students’ needs were recognized as serious challenges that need urgent attention and intervention.

6 Retrieved from The Global Economy.com, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Albania/Preprimary_school_enrollment/

8 Commission Staff Working Document Economic Reform Programme of Albania (2020-2022) p.17. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7468-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

7 Retrieved from OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, Albania. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/7f73878b-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/7f73878b-en>

9 Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/albania/health>



GOOD OR PROMISING POLICY EXAMPLES



Research and Policy Review reports, as well as the national report, where this policy brief is focused, show that there are several promising policies.. They include improvement of the legal framework, the new competency-based curriculum framework, updating of teacher standards, raising Teacher Education Program entry requirements, increasing the number of school psychologists and of assistant teachers for students with special needs and provision of free textbooks to children from marginalized groups, including children with low SES, Roma and Egyptian communities, children with special needs, at all levels of pre-university education and to all children from 1st to 7th grade. Studies show that there is improvement in access to education and student outcome, which is also reflected on the latest PISA results, which show that „long-term trends in mean scores in all three PISA subjects are positive“. (OECD, 2019: 29).

The new competency-based curriculum coupled with a formative assessment framework that assesses students' progress and makes possible identification of their needs, helping the teacher adjust teaching and learning programs to better support students, especially students from

lower SES, are widely recognized as positive steps forward. However, the competency-based curriculum requires a total transformation from the traditional teacher-centered to a child-centered teaching approach that is centered on the belief that each student can succeed if they are given the needed support. In addition, continuous teacher training, mentoring and support together with improved instructional facilities are essential for facilitating the implementation process of the new curriculum reform.

Equity





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT:

- Increased financial investment in the education sector is vital to the successful implementation of national policies and reforms aiming at a quality, equitable and inclusive education for all children.
- Continuous teacher professional development and mentoring accompanied by provision with quality didactic materials, are highly needed for the successful implementation of the new competency-based curricula.
- Higher investment is needed for the improvement of physical conditions in rural schools as well as favorable policies and incentives for increasing motivation of qualified teachers to work in disadvantaged schools.
- Strengthening of collaborative school leadership and inner school structures and cooperation with parents and other stakeholders will support development of an inclusive learning community for all students.
- Reducing overcrowding in public urban schools and increasing educational access and quality for students from marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- Increasing the capacity of teachers and school leaders to promote respect for cultural diversity and develop a welcoming multicultural school environment with well established mechanisms that fight discrimination.
- Enhancement of school-family-community cooperation is essential for effectively addressing the challenges faced by low SES students and creating an enabling environment for their wellbeing and success.
- Strengthening of multi-disciplinary and advanced psycho-social service support system at school and local level through inter-sectorial cooperation, continuous professional development and improved school facilities.
- Increasing financial, social and material support to all low SES students and their families, while continuing provision with free textbooks and necessary school materials, as well as free transportation throughout the year will positively impact their school attainment and success.
- Providing direct financial support to schools and continuous mentoring will ensure a successful implementation of comprehensive School Development Programs, other inclusive policies and practices tailored to the needs of their diverse student community, especially their marginalized groups.

