



Kosovo Erasmus+ Office  
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# **Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education Impact Study**

Kosovo

This publication is produced based on the field monitoring reports, interim and final reports and other official documents referring to CBHE projects including cluster meetings, institutional visits, feedback from academic and non-academic partners, etc.

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1. Introduction

(aim and objectives of the CBHE impact study)

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The impact of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education (CBHE) projects was very significant on reform and modernization processes conducted within Higher Education sector in Kosovo, which additionally supported Bologna principles implementation as part of the strategical and developmental approach of Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). They assisted the entire HE system in attaining European Higher Education standards necessary to access European Higher Education Area. This kind of impact was very intensive as a complex process that began before the Erasmus+ programme with the older generation of European Union Higher Education programmes that assisted Kosovo, but most importantly under the Tempus Programme (Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies) dating back to 2003 when the Kosovo Tempus Office was established. The Tempus programme in Kosovo supported the modernization of Higher Education in Kosovo through cooperation with the European Union in accordance with its strategic framework for cooperation (`Education and Training 2020` and `Bologna process`). Thus, it strongly supported the implementation of its strategic objectives in the field of HE by establishing the three-cycle system, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the diploma supplement in accordance with the principles of the Bologna declaration. Most of the Tempus projects have been perceived as a tool for curricula development, reorganization of study programmes with new teaching methodologies and implementation of a new Quality Assurance culture at HEIs in Kosovo. In the time-period 2008-2013, 68 Tempus projects have been implemented in Kosovo whereby 19 HEIs in Kosovo have been involved. Six of these projects have been coordinated by HEIs from Kosovo (4 University Pristina and 2 University Mitrovica North) and in 62 they took part as partner HEIs.

Tempus programme was a unique opportunity for HEIs in Kosovo to gain for the very first time crucial experience in project management of this kind of specific projects, which required capacity building of academic and administrative staff, students and other HE stakeholders, involved in their implementation. In those challenging times, the most significant assistance to the International Relation Offices of all public and private HEIs in Kosovo was provided by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the European Union Office in Kosovo, and the Kosovo Tempus Office as the focal point for information, promotion and monitoring of Tempus projects in Kosovo.

By inception of Erasmus+ programme as of 01 January 2014, the good inheritance of Tempus integrated within Erasmus+ was very successfully facilitated within its Key Action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education aiming at supporting the modernisation, accessibility and internationalisation of higher education in Partner Countries, and among others Kosovo.

Following the new development, the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office has been established as an independent non-governmental organisation to support the new Erasmus+ programme and its key actions. Kosovo Erasmus+ Office assisted all HEIs and its stakeholders in obtaining 38 CBHE projects since 2015.

This impact study aims to evaluate their impact at the Higher Education system in Kosovo within the scope of the closed 2015-2017 CBHE projects.

In total, 14 (fourteen) CBHE projects (9 curricular development, 3 university governance and 2 in cooperation among HE and society at large) have been successfully implemented in this time period and the specific objective of this study is to assess their impact at the individual, institutional, national and regional, and international level. A special focus will be given to the sustainability of these CBHE projects to explain how HEIs in Kosovo assured continued utilization of CBHE projects' results after these projects completion.

This publication is produced based on the official documents referring to CBHE projects (project applications, interim and final reports) and various projects' reports from the field monitoring and institutional visits, cluster meetings, including feedback from academic and non-academic partners gathered during information and promotion campaigns, HERE meetings, Technical Assistance Missions, capacity building trainings, and other events organized by Kosovo Erasmus+ Office and its staff aiming to further develop this action of the Erasmus+ programme. All these documents have been utilized to analyze CBHE projects implemented in Kosovo (2015-2017) within their three pillars:

- Curricular development
- Modernizing university governance and management
- Strengthening relation among HE and wider society at large.

and based on national and regional priorities defined by EACEA in cooperation with MESTI, the EU Office in Kosovo and the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office.

At the end of this impact study, the main challenges in implementation of CBHE projects will be elaborated together with the list of the recommendations for different HE stakeholders to assist their endeavours in making Erasmus+ KA2-CBHE even more successful.

The European Union's Erasmus+ programme is a funding scheme, which supports activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. In the period 2014-2020 its budget of 14.7 billion euro provided opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad. Moreover, by merging seven former EU programmes into one integrated Erasmus+ programme, it offered opportunities for a wide variety of individuals and organizations.

Its first phase (2014-2020) Erasmus+ programme offered opportunities for:

- Individuals to spend a mobility or volunteering period abroad and to receive linguistic training.

- Organizations to collaborate in project partnerships in the fields of academic and vocational training, schools, adult learning and European sport events.

Erasmus+ also supported teaching, research, networking and policy debate on EU topics.

The Erasmus+ programme had a strong international dimension with emphasis on cooperation with partner countries, notably in the field of higher education and youth, through institutional partnerships, youth cooperation and mobility worldwide.

# Impact

of the CBHE projects  
on reform and  
modernization  
of HE in Kosovo



## 2. Impact of the CBHE projects on reform and modernization of HE in Kosovo

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Until 2020, Kosovo as partner country benefited with the numerous CBHE grants for thirty-six (36) joint projects and two (2) structural projects aiming to strategically modernized and reform various scientific domains in the field of Higher Education. These CBHE projects aim at curricular development, university governance and cooperation among HE and society at large involving not only HEIs and their academic and administrative staff and students, but also various non-academic partners; among others ministries, governmental agencies, policy makers, industrial and business partners, non-governmental organisations, etc.

They fully supported national Higher Education reforms defined in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KEPS) priorities aiming to upgrade quality and competitiveness of HE through promotion of the excellence in teaching, scientific research, innovation and internationalization including adapting study programmes to requirements of labour market, increasing institutional and staff capacities, reinforcing research infrastructure, facilitating innovation, and restructuring financial management and increasing accountability. The CBHE projects also increased number of mobility of academic and administrative staff and students, to develop their capacities and involve them in research, which are in line with KESP 2 2017-2021 to increase the overall level of staff and students participation in international projects.

Recently, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation extended the scope of its activities to a new segment – Innovation. An attempt to profile public universities established in the last decade has been also conducted by the MESTI and a new law for Kosovo Accreditation Agency has been drafted aimed at safeguarding its independence, strengthen its role and mission, and improve the quality of HE in Kosovo. Some documents on funding of public universities have been developed as well. As there has not been a substantial reform of HE system in the last few years, CBHE projects supported different initiatives of various stakeholders in the field of Higher Education.

As aforementioned, this impact study is focused on CBHE projects 2015-2017. The Kosovo Erasmus+ Office assessed the impact of these projects that received the CBHE grants in these three consecutive years.

In 2015 Kosovo obtained 6 CBHE projects in the field of political sciences, quality assurance, environment, information and communication technology, entrepreneurship, and library network support services, which impacted HE sector in Kosovo as followed:

- **POSIG** developed a new joint degree combining integration policies in the globalized world with knowledge about the needs for good governance encompassing methodology and theory driven academic teaching;
- **QAinAL** established and supported quality assurance processes and mechanisms to ensure effective management and enhance teaching and learning in

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<sup>2</sup>Kosovo Education Strategic Plan

Kosovo and Albania in order to support the private higher education institutions to achieve the EU standards in this domain;

- **KLABS** pioneered educational platform that addresses two current and equally important challenges of urban and rural built environments in Kosovo and Western Balkans – sustainability and resilience to climate change with the common aim to catalyze the generation of innovative, interdisciplinary and highly specialized knowledge, by joining the areas of Engineering, Architecture, Construction and Environmental Protection;
- **DBBT** developed new curricula for education of specialists (experts) involved in the process of transfer of analogue to digital broadcasting, maintenance of digital systems and introducing of new broadcasting and broadband technologies;
- **EUPHORIA** developed and established the links between universities and enterprises in order to increase teaching and learning, to improve the curricula in line with enterprise requirements to improve the sustainable financing of Kosovo's Higher Education Institutions;
- **LNSS** reinforced and modernized libraries and improved the level of competencies and skills of library staff in HEIs in Kosovo and Western Balkan countries through improving the performance, relevance and accessibility of libraries.

In 2016, Kosovo obtained 4 CBHE projects in the field of practical entrepreneurship skills in engineering and ICT studies, social rehabilitation; natural disasters risk management, and spatial data infrastructures, that impact HE system as followed:

- **REBUS** developed, tested, validated and mainstreamed holistic and needs driven open learning modules to promote entrepreneurship competences of ICT and engineering graduates at the interface of academic education and learning in practice business contexts;
- **SOCRE** established user-driven social rehabilitation through modern approaches of education, which required continuous training of rehabilitation staff to enhance education in social rehabilitation and management through lifelong learning (LLL), in line with the Bologna process and in collaboration with education in rehabilitation practice.

In 2015 Kosovo obtained 6 CBHE projects in the field of political sciences, quality assurance, environment, information and communication technology, entrepreneurship, and library network support services, which impacted HE sector in Kosovo as followed:

- **NATRISK** developed education of experts for prevention and management of natural disasters in the region of Western Balkan including Kosovo according to the national and EU policies, where students gained practical knowledge that can be immediately applied;
- **BESTSDI** improved the quality of higher education in Geographical Science and Technology field, Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) and geodesy, enhanced relevance for the labour market and society and to improve the level of competences and skills in HEIs by developing new and innovative education programmes within the field of SDI.

In 2017, Kosovo obtained the same number of 4 CBHE projects in the field of electrical energy market and engineering education, urban agriculture, multimedia and digital TV, and innovation and employment, to impact HE in Kosovo as followed:

- **ELEMEND** educated high profile professionals in intelligent microgrid technologies and emerging electrical energy markets in line with societal and market needs in Kosovo and Western Balkans countries;
- **BUGI** developed new curriculum utilizing ICT tools and virtual knowledge community to enhance modernization and ICT competences fostering regional HEIs cooperation in the area of urban agriculture in Kosovo and WB countries with innovative approaches to agriculture;
- **DIMTV** developed new professional Master with three specific specializations such as Image Processing, 3D Animation and Production and Post-Production leading to higher research collaborations with EU partners;
- **CTPCIE** created the opportunities for long-term partnerships between HEIs, enterprises and public sector through established Theory to Practise Centres that supports professional development of teaching staff based on methodological knowledge and skills transfer.

All public and private Higher Education Institutions and other HE stakeholders (public authorities, private sector, non-governmental organisations, etc) in Kosovo had an open access to Erasmus+ programme and its Key Action 2 – Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education based on the programme requirements. Non-academic partners were also involved in this new EU programme as they offered necessary expertise in the very specific fields (industry, business sector, civil society development) to the CBHE projects, which has increased cooperation among academia and society.

In total, 10 public and 8 private HEIs, 3 public institutions, 9 business partners and 3 NGOs have been involved in CBHE projects 2015-2017. These CBHE projects developed 5 BSc, 10 MSc and 4 MA. In 6 CBHE projects various short cycle courses have been developed. There are 4 courses developed in English languages and 4 interdisciplinary courses. Ten CBHE projects assured for their students internships and placements and they developed their technical, academic, scientific and research skills and linguistic competences, but not that much transversal and behaviour skills. Involvement of vulnerable groups is generally assessed as good, but this could be further improved.

They jointly succeeded to advance university governance through development of quality culture at all HEIs in Kosovo based on the requirements of the Bologna declaration and its principles, to make them able to reach highest European standards in Higher Education while supporting financial autonomy and transparency. The new European trends in developing new curricula were applicable in all CBHE curricular development projects by including learning outcomes, research based teaching, students` centered learning and cooperation with labor market. Thus, students gained new knowledge and developed new competences and skills, demanded at the labour market. In this way, they become competitive for the future employers who recruited such skilled students to assist economic recovery of Kosovo.

The added value of these CBHE projects was found in internationalization of Higher Education sector as this important process was very much neglected before endorsement of EU HE programmes in Kosovo and was additionally supported by European partners who shared their academic and administrative experience in implementation of these CBHE projects.

During the cluster meeting on `Impact of Erasmus+ CBHE projects on reform and modernization of Higher Education system in Kosovo` organised by the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office on 03 December 2020, it was once again confirmed that the impact of CBHE projects is very deep not only at the national, but also very much at the individual and institutional level as these projects engaged academic and administrative staff and students to increase their overall knowledge in various scientific fields and project management of EU funded projects.

CBHE projects also impacted at the regional level as HEIs from Kosovo increased their cooperation with partner countries HEIs from the Western Balkan region, which had an impact on capacity building of each particular HE sector of the involved country, and sometimes it was the first step in reconciliation processes among countries affected by the conflict in 1991 and 1998.

Impact at the international level is also identified in exchange of knowledge, competences and skills with the HEIs from programme countries, but also within different cross-regional projects where HEIs from Kosovo cooperated with the HEIs from the countries belonging to various regions worldwide, which was not the case before.

It is to be concluded that the impact of CBHE projects was innovative and interdisciplinary in its character aiming to encompass the entire HE sector and to support modernization of three-cycle system to produce new professions needed at labour market of Kosovo in line with the best European practice.

**Creating the Network of Knowledge Labs for Sustainable and Resilient Environments  
(561675-EPP-1-2015-1-XK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

KLABS project developed, accredited and implemented innovative curricula in Western Balkan countries in sustainable and resilient environment, introduced virtual mobility of students, developed innovative educational material and studies of real-life cases, created virtual learning platforms and open educational resource, equipped knowledge labs – centers for sustainable and resilient environment and upgraded knowledge and skills of teaching staff .



**KLABS study visit and workshop at the University Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 11-13 September 2017**

**Implementation of the study program - Digital Broadcasting and Broadband Technologies (Master studies)  
(561675-EPP-1-2015-1-XK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

Digital Broadcasting and Broadband Technologies (DBBT) introduced the new master study programmes for academic and vocational studies in the field of DBBT that are in the line with needs of business partners from the labor market of Western Balkan region and in line with modern study programmes from EU countries. The most relevant outcome of this projects are that students are able to apply their knowledge (practical and theoretical) immediately after graduation as they are recognized by the labor market of all Western Balkan countries involved in this CBHE project as very competitive staff.



**DBBT visit to the TV Slovenia after the 3rd project meeting held at Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 18 January 2017**

## Creating Theory to Practice Centers for Innovation and Employment

Creating Theory to Practice Centers for Innovation and Employment (CTP-CIE) project improved the relevance of higher education for the labor market and society in Kosovo through creating sustainable models of interaction between universities and enterprises. The project supports creation of new mechanism for long-term cooperation between HEIs and public and private sector, and increasing of professional capacities of HEIs' staff in partnering HEIs. This CBHE project has achieved its aim to support reform and modernization processes at the HEIs involved by upgrading study programmes in 4 relevant fields: public administration, environment, agriculture, tourism and wood industry.



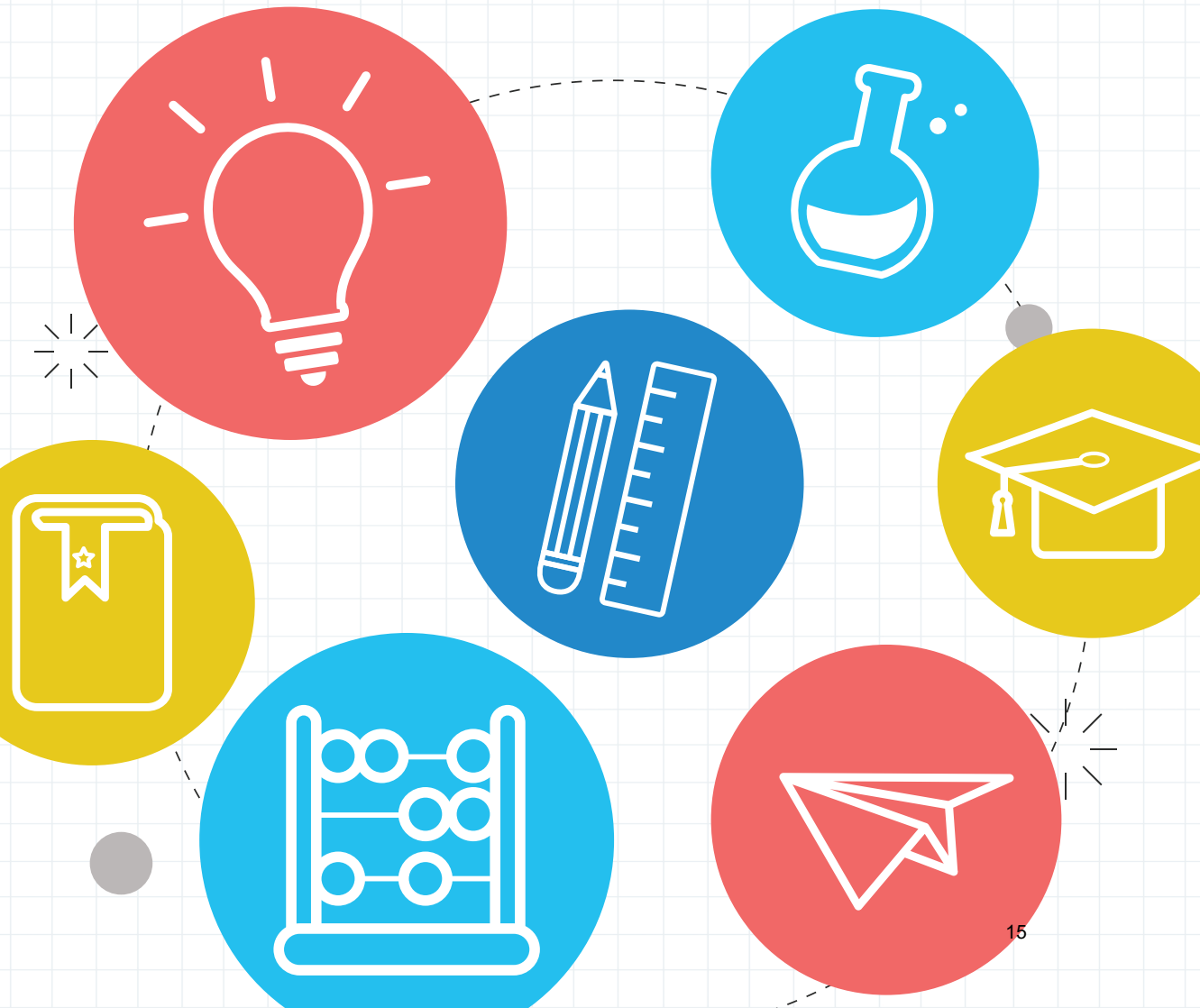
**CTPCIE kick-off meeting at International Business College Mitrovica, Mitrovica, Kosovo, 13 November 2017**



Impact  
Impact

# Impact

at the institutional and individual level





### 3. Impact at the institutional and individual level

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Impact of the CBHE projects at the institutional level was very significant as they were the initiators of the reform and modernization processes of the Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo. Most importantly, CBHE projects supported governance reforms of HEIs assisting them in adopting the new European approach to solve organizational and management issues that had not been given adequate attention. These projects developed new institutional Quality Assurance policies to install transparent Quality Assurance systems, which encompassed different QA mechanisms that gave good results in advancing quality of HE in Kosovo. New quality culture has been brought and recognized by the HEIs in Kosovo, which assured development of the entire HE sector in Kosovo.

Implementation of the CBHE projects in Kosovo implied developing new study programmes and upgrading the existing ones at different study levels in line with European HE standards. This is a significant impact at institutional level as HEIs in Kosovo become HE providers of contemporary knowledge to their students in different scientific fields. As such, HEIs offer their students knowledge, competences and skills that were previously reserved only for students who obtained competitive scholarships to study at European universities.

Therefore, CBHE projects implemented in Kosovo increased the number of students receiving more advanced education in specific scientific subjects that were not offered until now at HEIs in Kosovo. In this way, the students are now more prepared for a labor market that demands new skills that are now integrated into the new and upgraded study programmes developed in the CBHE projects. Their chances to find suitable jobs have increased, not only at local level, but also at regional and international level. Moreover, all curricular development projects are comparable to European qualifications, which opened the door to students from Kosovo to pursue their education further at highly renowned European universities. Thus, students are able to contribute to furthering social dynamics, which is considered an added value of these projects.

All CBHE projects in Kosovo aiming at developing new curricula applied new methodologies in teaching and learning processes. The novelty at HEIs in Kosovo is certainly students` centered learning, which has changed the old approach where professors were in the center of the teaching process, not engaging students to actively participate in the subject taught. Now, professors accustomed with new approach become comfortable to change their leadership styles and become more consultative than directive by involving students in planning, implementation and assessment in students-centered classroom.

Development and application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) at HEIs in Kosovo were strongly supported by the CBHE projects, which had an important impact at the entire HE sector. ICT found their stable place in teaching and learning processes, especially, during the sanitary crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and professors accustomed themselves with electronic, distance and blended learning, which was a very good solution in overcoming consequences of COVID-19, especially, in the continuation of teaching processes in an online mode when sanitary measures included quarantines and isolation of those infected. CBHE projects 2015-2017 supported HEIs in

Kosovo to construct and maintain open education platforms, laboratories equipped with the modern ICT and research centers, who supported online teaching and learning.

Academic and administrative staff who managed these processes received adequate trainings within the lifecycle of CBHE projects at programme countries HEIs. Therefore, the experience with ICT assisted HE sector in Kosovo to face the most difficult time with the pandemic and is still doing so. Moreover, ICT technologies assisted people with fewer opportunities to have better access to HE. They also supported HEIs located in less developed regions to be as competitive as possible in order to attract the sufficient number of students.

CBHE projects are also contributing to increase the level of cooperation among academia and private sector. University-business cooperation was not very much developed in Kosovo, but with CBHE projects, HEIs showed very high openness to cooperate with business partners while designing new curricula and defining competences and skills of future graduates. Several companies from Kosovo have been involved in CBHE projects to offer expertise in specific fields. They also assured internships for current students, but also placements for newly graduates. As non-academic partners, they helped HEIs to profile new graduates with competences and skills needed at the labor market of Kosovo. This was not the case before as HEIs in Kosovo did not take in consideration the needs of the labor market. As a consequence, many young people who already completed BA or MA studies could not find a job, which leads at an increasing level of unemployment.

The main impact of CBHE projects is identified in an increased level of internationalization of HEIs in Kosovo. The Erasmus+ programme requires that CBHE projects have programme countries HEIs involved. In this way, HEIs in Kosovo have to jointly develop certain cooperation modalities with programme countries universities/HEIs to be able to implement their CBHE projects and certain number of project activities, e.g. conferences, seminars, trainings, study visits, organized in Kosovo and abroad. To certain extent, CBHE projects also helped the mobility of the students and academic and administrative staff, which jointly assisted HE sector to be more internationalized and closer to European Higher Education Area. CBHE projects strengthen the position of the university in Kosovo society as HE provider to assist in the resolution of two main problems that currently persist, i.e. high unemployment rate and poverty. Although these two issues have to be approached at systemic level, it is beneficial that they have also been addressed to certain extent with the implementation of CBHE projects.

At individual level, CBHE project 2015-2017 made an in-depth impact at the academic and administrative staff, and students, of HEIs in Kosovo, who were actively involved in implementation of these projects. All 14 CBHE projects during three-year implementation provided necessary opportunities and sufficient time to those individuals to develop, upgrade and utilize their new knowledge at home HEIs in Kosovo and host institutions in programme countries, which they all assessed as very rewarding and enriching experience.

Academic staff as leading university staff in implementation of CBHE projects had a privilege to be involved from the very beginning in various CBHE projects

dealing with curricular development, university governance, and cooperation among HE with society at large. They benefited from the trainings that the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office organised on how to develop a competitive project proposal for EU funded projects. Academic staff learnt about European Higher Education and its systems in different programme countries and novelties endorsed by Bologna and Lisbon declarations in paving a way to European Higher Education and Research Area.

At last, but not the least, they upgraded their academic knowledge in various scientific fields through conferences, seminars, study visits, round tables and many other occasions organised in cooperation with programme and partner countries HEIs and their stakeholders.

They exchange experience and expertise with the academic staff from the most prominent European universities. Learning from the best practise examples, they gained new competences, soft and cross-cultural skills for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of their students at home HEIs while utilizing them in new teaching methodology and approach to students and their academic needs.

Administrative staff at each HEI in Kosovo were the main supporting force of each CBHE project as they had to find new and creative manners to conduct an international project in accordance with the national law. Together with academic staff, they also had an opportunity to join all capacity building trainings and Technical Assistance Missions` seminars organised by the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office, to learn on the HE development in EU countries, but also on how to develop and implement CBHE projects.

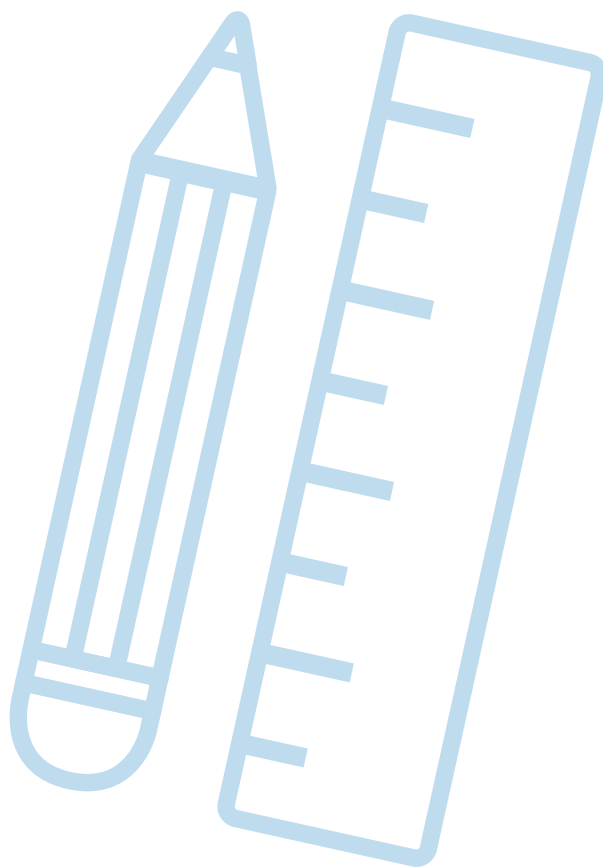
CBHE projects provided the administrative staff with an opportunity to be exposed to the international environment while being involved in implementation of various project activities and study visits. Thus, their administrative, management and soft skills were upgraded to the greatest extent as well as their English language skills while attending different trainings and courses. Some of them have been also promoted to higher positions to assist in the development of new Erasmus+ projects within International Relations Offices at their home HEIs, and to develop new administrative procedures/ regulatory documents to support an easier implementation of CBHE projects.

Students enrolled at the HEIs in Kosovo were also part of CBHE project 2015-2017 and in comparison with Tempus projects conducted in Kosovo, they had more space for active participation through the opportunities provided within Special Mobility Strand. They used mobility opportunities provided within these CBHE projects with great enthusiasm as most of them never studied before at HEIs in programme countries.

While studying at EU HEIs they learned from the European best academics and developed a new perception of the academic process of completing a degree. They also had an opportunity to compare how it is to study abroad and in Kosovo and get the best of both experiences. Those students have also gained new knowledge, and upgraded competences and skills demanded at the local labour market while studying new and upgraded study programmes developed within CBHE projects and attended specific trainings conducted in newly equipped laboratories at home HEIs.

In this way, students become competitive and gained an advantage at labour market in comparison to earlier generations of students who graduated in former study programmes. Their experience under CBHE motivated them to apply for other opportunities provided within Erasmus+ programme in its Key Action 1 – International Credit Mobility. Therefore, they continued to brush their skills for their future employers.

There is also a change of the mind-set identified among students as the number of mobility students who want to study in programme countries is constantly growing in Kosovo.



## Curriculum Development joint European Political Science MA (561485+B4:K27-EPP-1-2015-1-AT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

POSIG project impacted individual awareness of the students as it has brought the idea that transfer and credit mobility and such as joint degrees are very useful and can be very successful in turn highly positive experience. In terms of competence, the project provides unique first-hand experience by visiting European HEIs and getting European experience in learning and studying at world class institutions, which were POSIG project partners. This study programme also strengthens the teacher's confidence and prepares them for the future teaching trends in political science areas. The impact is very high at institutional level as new curricula attracted big number of students. Follow up of the project is also identified in future cooperation of project partners who designed new initiatives concerning joint degrees and student mobility.



POSIG round table at the UBT College, Pristina, Kosovo, 02 May 2017

**Strategic support on strengthening the quality assurance structures at the private higher education institutions in Albania (561510-EPP-1-2015-1-AT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

QAinAL provided capacity building training on quality assurance and design of new study programmes based on labour market needs. It also made significant efforts to develop action plans supporting the processes of quality assurance and enhancement in teaching, learning and administration. In this way, the project itself modernized the infrastructure of Quality Assurance Office and Development of QA guidelines. Thus, impact at the individual and institutional level was significant as academic and administrative staff learnt how to use QA mechanism in their daily work and HEIs involved strengthen their institutional governance.



**QAinAL conference at Pjeter Budi College, Pristina, Kosovo, 13 June 2018**

**Library Network Support Services: modernizing libraries in Western Balkan countries through staff development and reforming library services (561987-EPP-1-2015-1-IE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

LNSS project reinforced and modernised libraries and improve the level of competencies and skills of library staff in WB HEI's by developing innovative libraries as a support to education and lifelong learning. It also developed a library staff development strategy focussed on improving standards and quality of library performance in WB countries so as to improve the quality of library services and higher education generally, enhancing their relevance for the labour market and society. It enhanced the management, governance, innovation capacities and accessibility of libraries in WB countries through strategic planning and policy development and maintain a Western Balkan Library Network Support Services (LNSS) Network for the future dissemination, sustainability and exploitation of project results both nationally and in the WB for the sharing of knowledge, experience, training and expertise.



**Library National Awareness Day at the University Mitrovica, Mitrovica, Kosovo, 16 May 2017**

# **Impact**

**at the national and regional level**



## 4. Impact at the national and regional level

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Strategic objective of the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office is to increase the number, quality and impact of CBHE projects at the HE system in Kosovo in order to assist reform and modernization of the entire HE sector. Thus, all public and private HEIs and different HE stakeholders have an opportunity to access the Key Action 2 - CBHE and to instill their ideas into various CBHE projects. In CBHE projects implemented in the period 2015-2020 for the generation of CBHE projects 2015-2017, the impact was deepened at the national level with involvement of the various public and institutional authorities, HEREs, civil society organizations, industry representatives, etc.

National and regional priorities encompassed by the Erasmus+ call for proposals 2015-2017 have been realized in cooperation with HEIs from the Western Balkan region aiming at reforming and modernizing Higher Education system at the national and WB regional level. They were in line with the needs of various target groups, academic, social and economic partners, to increase the impact of CBHE projects at the national and regional level.

The first key impact indicator is identified within new and modernized study programmes that have not existed before inception of EU HE programmes in Kosovo. They have been developed in line with European standards and further implemented across entire Higher Education system of Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries (Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The second key impact indicator is identified in development of new quality culture brought to HEIs in Kosovo through CBHE projects. Transparent Quality Assurance systems was established and upgraded at the national and regional level based on the heritage of Tempus programme implemented in Kosovo and WB countries before inception of Erasmus+ programme. Thus, the primary task of all HEIs involved was to assure sustainable promotion and improvement of QA mechanisms. This was a key development in their harmonization with highest EU HE standards and one of the demanding criteria for entering into the European Higher Education Area.

The third key impact indicator was identified in increased cooperation among academia and industrial sector and other social partners within CBHE projects implemented in Kosovo and Western Balkan countries. This implied involvement of relevant labor market representatives in curricula development to precisely define courses content and competences and skills of future graduates. They were also assisting students of these newly developed courses with internships and placements, which was a big achievement and novelty in cooperation among academia and societal partners in Kosovo and WB countries.

It goes without saying that the impact at the national and regional level was also very significant in enlarging networking activities among HEIs and HE stakeholders not only within particular national HE system, but also at regional Western Balkan level. Jointly, the most of WB countries have shared the common historical, political and academic background being part of one HE system within old Yugoslavia (Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina), thus through these CBHE projects they renewed old liaisons and improved cooperation modalities after split of old Yugoslavia in 1991.

Moreover, there were also synergy identified in ongoing Higher Education developments with assistance of EU HE programmes, and in particular Tempus and Erasmus+. Therefore, these networking activities at the national and regional level as fourth key impact indicator was even improved to the higher extent in cooperation with programme countries who brought relevant expertise with special emphasis on exchange of best practice examples and research based- education.

It is to be concluded that these CBHE projects had a synergic impact at the national and regional Higher Education systems, which implied development of societies of Western Balkan countries by promoting the role of the university as initiator of democratic changes through development of Higher Education in cooperation with governmental, private and non-governmental sector.

Given the above, it goes without saying that 2015-2017 CBHE projects brought new approach in advancing HE sectors in Kosovo and WB countries, which implied implementation of the best European practices in reforming and modernization processes and application of the contemporary international scientific and research standards as the core principles of European HE values.



## Entrepreneurial Universities for Industry Alliances (561695-EPP-1-2015-1-UK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

EUFORIA project provided new competences in curriculum development and new international cooperation agreements signed with Staffordshire University and University of Ancona who were the partner HEIs in this project consortia. It improved research skill especially in case study development and offered new approach in university-industry cooperation at the national level. Ninetyeight (98) agreements have been signed with industry and five (5) industrial boards have been established in Kosovar HEIs. During the project lifecycle, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Advice Centres at Kosovar universities has been established and one thousands (1,000) student placements have been arranged since the start of the project.



EUFORIA Closing Meeting at the University Gjakova, Kosovo, 10-11 July 2018

**Ready for Business - Integrating and validating practical entrepreneurship skills in engineering and ICT studies  
(573664-EPP-1-2016-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

Two Joint Master Degrees 'study programmes have been developed and 20 more business partnerships and MOUs have been signed during the life cycle of REBUS CBHE project. Thus, the project impact is identified at the national, but also at the regional level for selected WB countries (Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania). HEIs involved in REBUS project adopted new practical entrepreneurship policies and assignment strategy to be implemented in all their departments. Academics and students have adjusted to new methodology and they implemented new validation and assessment strategy in engineering and ICT studies.



**REBUS Steering Committee Meeting at the European University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania,  
11-13 April 2019**

**Development of master curricula for natural disasters risk management  
in Western Balkan countries  
(573806-EPP-1-2016-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

NATRISK project developed new advanced master curricula in Natural Disasters Risk Management (NDRM) in line with the Bologna requirements and national accreditation standards for experts in prevention and management of natural disasters in the region of Western Balkan (WB) according to the national, regional and EU policies. It developed and implemented methodology for identification of natural disasters to be managed in WB region and all aspects of prevention and consequences in order to define specific competencies for professional practice. NATRISK project staff also developed trainings for the public sector and citizens for reaction in case of various natural disasters.



**NATRISK workshop meeting, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria, 05-07 April 2017**

# Impact

at the international level



## 5. Impact at the international level

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Impact of the CBHE projects conducted in Kosovo at the international level is identified as one of the most relevant in internationalization of the Higher Education sector of Kosovo and its Higher Education Institutions. HE systems of different Western Balkan countries converge faster towards European Higher Education Area with assistance provided by various CBHE projects who involved HEIs and HE stakeholders from the Western Balkan region and programme countries.

For the very first time international cooperation in Kosovo was increased to the highest extent as multidimensional and multidisciplinary international networking become the daily life of the academic and administrative staff, students and their organizations, and certain number of Higher Education stakeholders from Kosovo through CBHE projects. This is why this Key Action 2 of Erasmus+ programme has the biggest reputation among academics, but also administrative staff and students and, lately, it is of great interest for the industry as well.

All these target groups in cooperation with programme countries HEIs and their stakeholders had a unique opportunity to learn from various international resources and scientific data not available in the past for Kosovo as many of them had an exclusive access. Thus, scientific development was enriched and new ideas and concepts have been developed within new generation of CBHE projects.

New and upgraded study programmes who designed new academic profiles in line with EU qualifications standards shaped the future of new graduates with skills and competences needed not only at the local and regional, but also at the international labor market opening them new doors for various kind of career development, so they could further contribute to certain scientific field at the international level.

Although nowadays the knowledge itself become globalized and accessible, CBHE projects provided systematic and specialized approach and applicable solutions internationally recognized to particular academic problems that HE sector in Kosovo was facing for more than a decade.

Information and Communication Technologies in Kosovo was given a second chance with CBHE projects to develop online, distance and blended learning, to assure accessibility of Higher Education to individuals with fewer opportunities, particularly to special needs students and those belonging to the vulnerable groups. The contact they had through modern ICT applications increased their self-confidence, socialization and boost inclusiveness.

The mobility is one of the big impact CBHE projects made at the international level as Kosovo was very isolated in terms of staff and students mobility. Through CBHE projects, academic and administrative staff and students, and various HE stakeholders from Kosovo, attended various conferences, seminars, workshops, trainings, round tables, study visit, etc. The number of mobility was in this way increased at the international level to EU and other programme countries.

Taking in consideration European universities` best practice examples, universities in Kosovo undertook a new role in dealing with societal challenges assuming

social responsibility for various issues in their environment. As a consequence, new strategic development plans have been drafted to offer applicable solutions.

Public and private HEIs through CBHE projects obtained an increasing degree of visibility in the European Union countries and their involvement in successful implementation of numerous CBHE projects is an inevitable proof of their academic and institutional quality to adapt quickly to the highest European standards in Higher Education.

Thanks to CBHE projects, it is also evident the successful transition of Kosovo academia to a knowledge-based economy and society that will offer equal opportunities to all its citizens enhancing transparency and accountability, cross-communication and cross-fertilization overcoming taboos to beat long-lasting social prejudices.





## Developing Social Rehabilitation through Education (573733-EPP-1-2016-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

SOCRE project enhanced education in social rehabilitation and management through lifelong learning, in line with the Bologna process and in collaboration with different partners in the field of rehabilitation practice. The programme countries HEIs involved in this project are long-term partners from Belgium, Finland, Netherlands and Portugal, who offered complementary high-level and wide special expertise in modern pedagogy and rehabilitation. The partner countries involved in SOCRE projects are Kosovo and Russia and they both involved 5 HEIs, 3 ministries, 1 NGO and 4 rehabilitation centers in order to achieve its overall and special objectives to provide high quality education in social rehabilitation with clear and practical definitions of the competences of rehabilitation professionals working in different cultural contexts. SOCRE project developed regional, national and international networks for collaboration and sustained development of education as well as best practice and management in social rehabilitation.



SOCRE Study visit on Management and Evidence-based Practice, Ghent, Belgium, 08 December 2018

**Western Balkans Academic Education Evolution and Professional's Sustainable  
Training for Spatial Data Infrastructures  
(574150-EPP-1-2016-1-HR-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)**

BESTSDI project improved the quality of higher education in Geographical Science and Technology field, Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) and Geodesy, enhanced its relevance for the labour market and society, to improve the level of competences and skills in HEIs by developing new and innovative education programmes within this new field. This CBHE project developed, tested and adapted new curricula, courses, learning material and tools within the field of SDI. Existing undergraduate and graduate geodesy and geoinformatics curricula's in the HEIs in the WB region have been upgraded to higher levels, recognising of spatial data for modern society and its development. By the incorporation of SDI concept and other modern concepts based on spatial data and information, the students of the new courses developed the ability to provide efficiently spatial data and services to SDI users. BESTSDI also raised awareness among the students and professionals about the relevancy of SDI and advantages of well organized spatial data.



**BESTSDI final conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
03-05 September 2019**

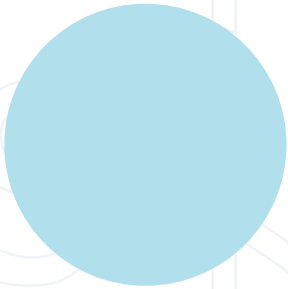
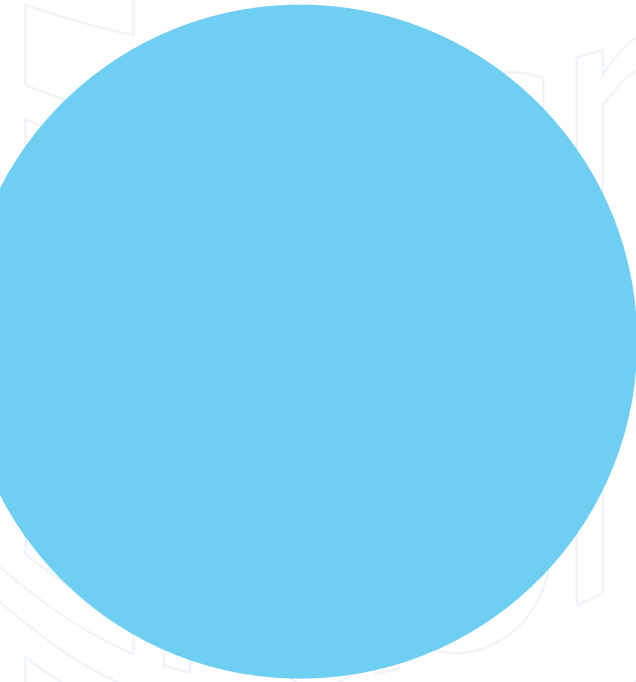
## Electrical Energy Markets and Engineering Education (585681-EEP-1-2017-EL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

ELEMEND project increased capacity building for study in smart grid offered both in English and in local languages at BSc and MSc level in Western Balkan Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved by introducing new ICT teaching methods in development of gamified content and course content for eLearning platforms in teaching processes. ELEMEND project team developed an open online platform with virtual laboratories used by students and professors in WB region, where courses are presented. University - enterprise network is created within this CBHE project, around the core group of the ELEMEND industrial partners to increase employability by targeting WB countries labor market needs in electrical energy related fields (smart grids, microgrids, renewable energy sources).



**ELEMEND workshop, Vigo, Spain, 21-22 February 2019**

**Sustainability**  
of CBHE projects in Kosovo



## 6. Sustainability of CBHE projects in Kosovo

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As the most of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education projects are joint projects in the field of curricula development, the sustainability of this kind of project are strongly supported institutionally through the governmental funds. In order to gain institutional support, all curricular development CBHE projects have to go through demanding accreditation procedure that guarantees that highest quality assurance standards are met in practise by the relevant Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency.

New or upgraded study programmes developed within CBHE projects also underwent reaccreditation procedures. During the accreditation and reaccreditation of these study programmes the quality assurance standards and their implementation in practise have been controlled. In both cases, it was assured that new and upgraded curricula at HEIs in Kosovo set up through CBHE projects are satisfying all accreditation and reaccreditation criteria. Thus, their sustainability is assured through the governmental and institutional funds.

New study programmes until now attracted significant number of students as they are offering new knowledge, competences and skills highly demanded by the local employers. New students are even more attracted when they saw that first generations of students who completed these new study programmes had easily found a job.

The sustainability of the university governance and cooperation among Higher Education sector and society at large CBHE projects are almost the same as the most of them have synergize with the curricular development projects and have strong support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). They become part of the reform and modernization processes of Higher Education sector in Kosovo and fit into the Kosovo Strategy for Higher Education Development.

Their outcomes/outputs have become visible in the new approach in teaching and learning processes and cooperation with local labour market, which was not the case before. MESTI very often additionally supported development of certain CBHE projects in cooperation with various public and private HEIs, to develop further the quality of Higher Education sector in cooperation with private sector who provided internships and placements for newly graduated students.

There is no worrying constrains that KEO identified for CBHE projects` sustainability as HEIs staff further promoted CBHE projects results after EU financial support was fully absorbed. The management of the HEIs are willing to further upgrade their own institutional capacities and to recruit more academic and administrative staff to work on development of new CBHE project applications who would be in line with their institutional and national priorities.



## Western Balkans Urban Agriculture Initiative (586304-EPP-1-2017-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

BUGI CBHE project assured its sustainability by defining postgraduates/trainees knowledge, skills and competences needed to meet national and EU strategies and entrepreneurial sector needs by fostering collaboration with different stakeholders especially from entrepreneurial sector. It fostered "internationalization at home" and collaboration between partner HEIs while providing learning flexibility and interdisciplinary approach thus offering cross-cultural experience and increasing partners HEIs capacity to answer change in society needs by promoting modern business opportunities in urban agriculture and SME related activities.



**BUGI kick-off meeting in Donja Gorica, Montenegro,  
11 December 2017**

## Development and Implementation of Multimedia and Digital TV Curricula (586318-EPP-1-2017-1-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

An important scope of DIMTV project was to increase the number of experts and qualified workers and to reduce the existing unemployment rate in the field of MDTV in both Albania and Kosovo. In the last years, the switch from analogue to digital broadcasting has been a real challenge for both Western Balkan countries. Despite the intensive efforts to make this switching, the full transition to digital TV transmissions has not been finalized yet. Through this project DIMTV project team contributed to the improvement of the actual situation in these countries and reduced both unemployment rate and lack of experts in the MDTV-related areas to an important extent. To achieve this, this CBHE project provided a new Professional Master with three specific specializations such as Image Processing, 3D Animation and Production and Post-Production. In addition to teaching, these modules and the program itself will lead to higher research collaborations with EU partners, both assuring long-term sustainability.



DIMTV study visit to the Tartu University - Institute of Technology in Tartu, Estonia, 11-13 September 2018

# Conclusions

challenges and recommendations





## 7. Conclusions – challenges and recommendations

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Based on the various types of field monitoring visits (preventive, advisory and impact) conducted by the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office staff, and other relevant documents concerning CBHE projects, it could be concluded that the 2015-2017 CBHE projects in Kosovo have been implemented successfully. KEO staff observed dedicated engagement of various HEIs` academic and administrative staff and students, who are now very much experienced in project management and implementation of CBHE projects. These CBHE projects jointly impacted reform and modernization of the entire Higher Education sector in Kosovo with newest curricula that never existed before, reinforced university governance and increased cooperation among academia and society.

This obvious success would not be possible without cooperation with EU partners as they were constantly providing expertise in the various scientific fields backed up with the best practice examples implemented at their HEIs. Study visits organized within each CBHE project to various programme countries higher education providers enhanced knowledge, competences and skills of academic and administrative staff, students, and other HE stakeholders (national and local authorities, industrial partners, NGOs) from Kosovo. They jointly profited not only in academic sense, but also with learning by doing as they took important role in implementation of these CBHE projects.

CBHE projects 2015-2017 gave an example on how to achieve sustainable project results to the future generation of Erasmus+ CBHE projects 2018-2020, so the number of CBHE projects have been increased from 14 (2015-2017) to 38 (new 24 CBHE projects obtained from 2018-2020), which is almost 280 % success rate.

Usually, all CBHE projects have an opportunity to compare its effectiveness, efficiency and a manner in which they were addressing different national and regional priorities and to which extent they are complementary one to another in order to reinforce their impact during two (2) cluster meetings organised by Kosovo Erasmus+ Office on quality assurance and impact of CBHE projects at HE system respectively.

The main lesson learnt with CBHE projects implemented so far in Kosovo is that is never too late to begin new projects and learn new contemporary skills e.g. project management of EU HE programmes, new languages, local laws and regulations in the field of finances, etc.

From the equipment purchased within these CBHE projects, computers, software and laboratory material are mostly requested, but also audio-visual equipment, books and pedagogical material.

Given the above, it could be concluded that the impact of CBHE projects is seen at the academic, economic, social and environmental level and it will be long-term one affecting HEIs and its staff in Kosovo, students, HE stakeholders, national authorities, industry, labor market, civil society organizations, and last, but not least environment.

For the purpose of this impact study, Kosovo Erasmus+ Office also identified certain challenges in CBHE projects` implementation listed below:

- HEIs in Kosovo should revise their internationalization strategies in order to assist CBHE projects` consortia with clear vision of institutional development to adjust their projects` overall and specific objectives to the real needs of HEIs;
- Suitable degree of attention should be given to the frequent replacement of HEIs senior management staff and hand-over of their duties to their successors as this kind of changes either interrupts or slow down implementation of CBHE projects;
- International Relations Offices at HEIs in Kosovo should provide more systematic support to CBHE projects` team in different phases of project life cycle;
- Certain HEIs dealing with a big number of CBHE projects should have been established until now the project office with experienced staff dealing exclusively with CBHE projects to better facilitate their implementation and to assure in-depth impact and long-term sustainability;
- All public and private HEIs should develop special strategy to support synergy among different CBHE projects with certain joint activities in order to exchange experience among project beneficiaries and additionally utilize projects` outcomes;
- Increasing awareness among HEIs in Kosovo that promotion and dissemination activities are crucial for the project impact and sustainability, thus, these processes should not be stopped once the EU support is depleted, e.g. through some kind of annual gatherings to further promote and disseminate projects results among wider academic/HE stakeholders community;
- CBHE projects should not have been monopolized by the certain number of proficient individuals involved in the several projects who aside from making very high staff costs repeat the same ideas within these projects;
- Involvement of non-academic partners in CBHE projects should be increased especially the ones from the private sector to provide necessary inputs for development of new study programmes;
- Accreditation procedure is very demanding and it takes a lot of time due to the workload CBHE projects` team have already while completing wide range of project activities and additional academic and administrative staff should be engaged to complete this task;
- Tendering procedure should be simplified by assigning certain number of administrative staff at each HEIs who will be trained to complete this process more easily as this administrative process took a lot of time and caused various number of delays that prevent certain project activities to be completed in time;
- CBHE projects` teams should assure involvement of national authorities in their projects to further support enrolment of projects` results into national strategies for education;
- Financial management of CBHE projects are facing big administrative burden, thus, the current financial and procedural framework should be adjusted to assure easier implementation of CBHE projects at all HEIs in Kosovo;
- Participation of students` and their organisations in the CBHE projects should be increased especially in the initial phase when project is developed as CBHE projects should encompassed students` needs and needs of their organisations;
- Certain HEI from Kosovo lost its institutional accreditation for the second time, thus, legally, they do not exist as HEI anymore and they could not continue their

participation in certain CBHE project. The similar situation happened to certain civil society organisation who ceased to exist as non-governmental organisation;

- There are no joint degrees developed as the legal framework does not allow it. Therefore, national authorities are encouraged to develop a legal framework favorable to the joint degrees;

Based on the clarification provided above, Kosovo Erasmus+ Office would like to put an emphasis on the certain number of recommendations aiming at increasing impact of CBHE projects in Kosovo:

- HE needs assessment should be conducted by the national authorities and its result integrated into future national/regional priorities for Kosovo and Western Balkan respectively, to be further encompassed by the future CBHE project applications. This will cover scientific domains not been presented in the current CBHE projects;
- New set of national priorities for new generation of the CBHE projects should be defined in cooperation with EACEA to intervene in improvement of Higher Education system number of the structural projects should be increased to directly tackle the problems identified at the level of the Higher Education system with the support of the national authorities as an equal partner;
- Diversity of HEIs and individuals should be assured in all CBHE structural projects who will jointly reach highest EU standards at the system level in order to assist HE system in Kosovo to be further integrated into European Higher Education Area;
- Better utilization and dissemination of the CBHE project results should be assured by HEIs involved through the systematic planning with support of MESTI and other HE stakeholders;
- HEIs in Kosovo should invest in the institutional capacities to develop new and more convenient administration with high skilled employees who will enhance impact and sustainability of CBHE projects;
- New internal mechanisms to monitor implementation and assure high quality of the CBHE projects` results and their dissemination should be set by HEIs themselves to be in line with their institutional strategies to prevent any possible constrains or obstacles;
- Specific trainings should be organised for the CBHE projects` teams on how to use equipment purchased for the implementation of relevant project activities;
- Each HEIs should assure involvement of certain number of new comers in the CBHE projects, especially young academics who will enrich these projects with innovative and creative ideas and utilize these opportunity for further professional development;
- Certain number of individuals are involved in the several projects and this issue should be prevented as this fact decrease the quality of the projects` results and discourage new comers to take an active role into new CBHE projects;
- New approach in involvement of non-academic stakeholders and companies should be developed to assure inclusion of their expertise into new curricula, especially when it comes to relevant competences and skills needed at labor market;

- The most serious constrain identified that cause serious problems in implementation of certain CBHE projects is visa issue. Thus, KEO are going to establish dialogue with concerned Embassies and kindly request support of EU Office in Kosovo and national authorities in order to assist CBHE projects staff with this issue.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL

LEARNING

TRAINING

COACHING

