KCDE - Mëso Online
Kosova Center for Distance Education

ICEDA
Increasing Civic Engagement
in the Digital Agenda

e-learning
laws

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#digital
#regulations
#policies

THE
(LACK OF)
POLICY
GOVERNING
ONLINE
EDUCATION
IN KOSOVA

DISCLAIMER

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Policy Brief

While it has dominated headlines as of late, attempts to provide strategy for "e-learning" in Kosova have been in place for well over a decade. However, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) has sought to update these efforts in response to the pandemic. Two years into this emergency, the measures that were touted as necessary have failed to ensure this mode of instruction is accessible to all students.

Back in the draft of 2010-2015 E-learning Strategy, the focus was on building up infrastructure, as well as identifying subjects/classes that could benefit from e-learning. Stakeholders did recognize the fact that a national strategy would pave the way to set off the e-learning sector; although lacking, their acknowledgement of the importance of "e-learning" strategy was a sign of progress. Representatives and professionals from the working team pointed out that a legal framework should be developed to guarantee the integration of E-Learning at different education levels.

The 2010-2015 E-learning (draft) Strategy envisioned "a qualitative and competitive education, for a knowledge-based society, with a sustainable and comprehensive E-Learning system, which would (will) enable socio-economic development and increase Life Long Learning opportunities".

Creating this framework would be crucial in expanding the availability of "e-learning," as well as encouraging teachers throughout the country to seek training in e-learning. Moreover, various studies have shown that, for students with access to technology, digital learning may be more effective than just traditional learning, enabling them to "learn at their own pace by reading, re-reading or spending time with the concepts they choose themselves". From a policymaking perspective, it is evident that ensuring digital inclusion is just as important as building practical skills when it comes to expanding "e-learning" opportunities. Broadly speaking, in Kosova, policies for e-learning are as lacking as programs for "e-learning" or digital access. The only policy papers are manuals/guidelines which have been approved by MESTI for use in schools that have been forced to adapt to the pandemic.
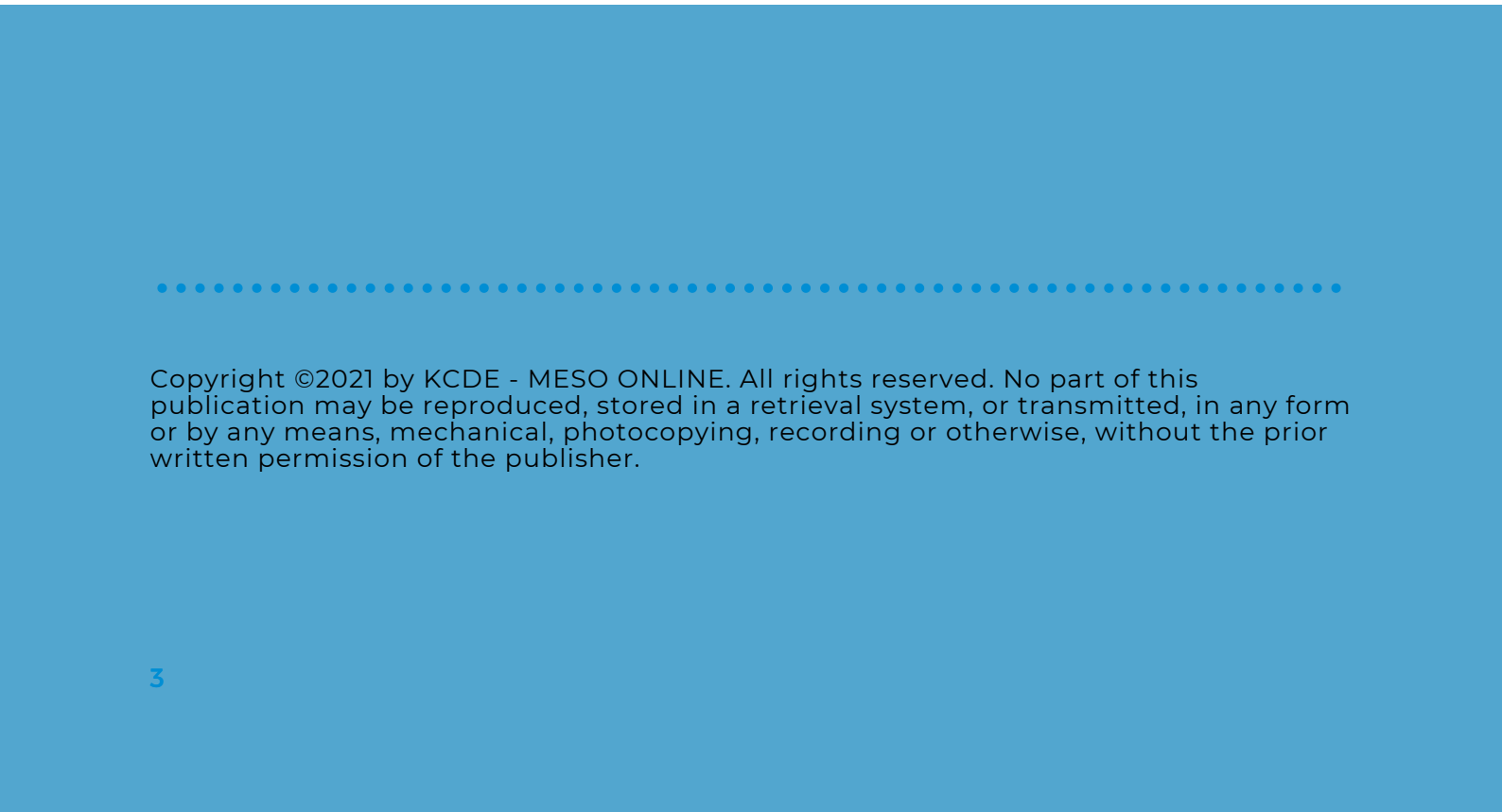
Looking at our present context, our newly-formed working group is in a position to affect policy change. Even so:

1. Do we have the capacities to make these reforms a reality?
2. Do we have appropriate vendors that can take on online enrollment requests?
3. Most importantly, are classroom teachers and school administrators ready to embrace these educational technologies?

One way we can answer these questions is to start getting teachers acquainted with learning online. If we can get them used to seeing that they can learn online, then that is not a big step for them to think that students can learn online. Teachers, not students or parents, are the ones who believe that the only way to learn is in brick-and-mortar classrooms, but if we change that for them personally then maybe we can make progress. Once we have personnel willing to explore the possibilities offered via "e-learning", it opens the door for this form of instruction to be institutionalized.

Looking to a "post-COVID" future, e-learning in Kosova requires significant investment in legal and technological infrastructure. Moreover, it also calls for the creation of digital content, and revamping curricula to make use of educational technologies. Finally, it all rests on securing community support. Kosova Center for Distance Education (KCDE), has been connecting with policymakers to flesh out "e-learning" policy, sharing expertise with them to ensure that the solutions provided address the needs of all students. KCDE is in the process of founding an e-learning committee, which will identify steps that we should take for the sector to take-off. Furthermore, the E-learning committee will serve as an overseeing and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of State Digitalization of Education Strategy.

While the pandemic has sparked interest in the subject, policymakers should take this opportunity to engage with stakeholders throughout the education sector. In case of drafted and approved policies and governing documents regarding e-learning: school administrators, teachers, counselors, mentors, parents, and students in Kosova need representation and accurate information about the changes in educational policy that permit Kosova students to take online courses.