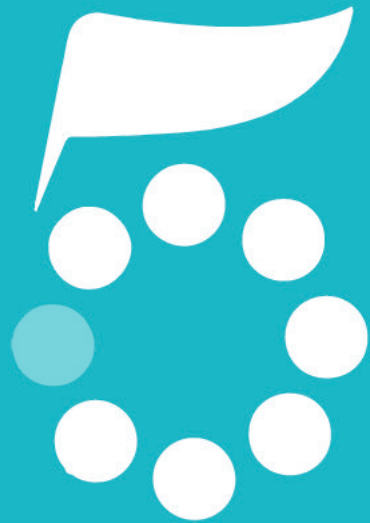




# growth, innovation & trust.

Kosova Center for Digital Education

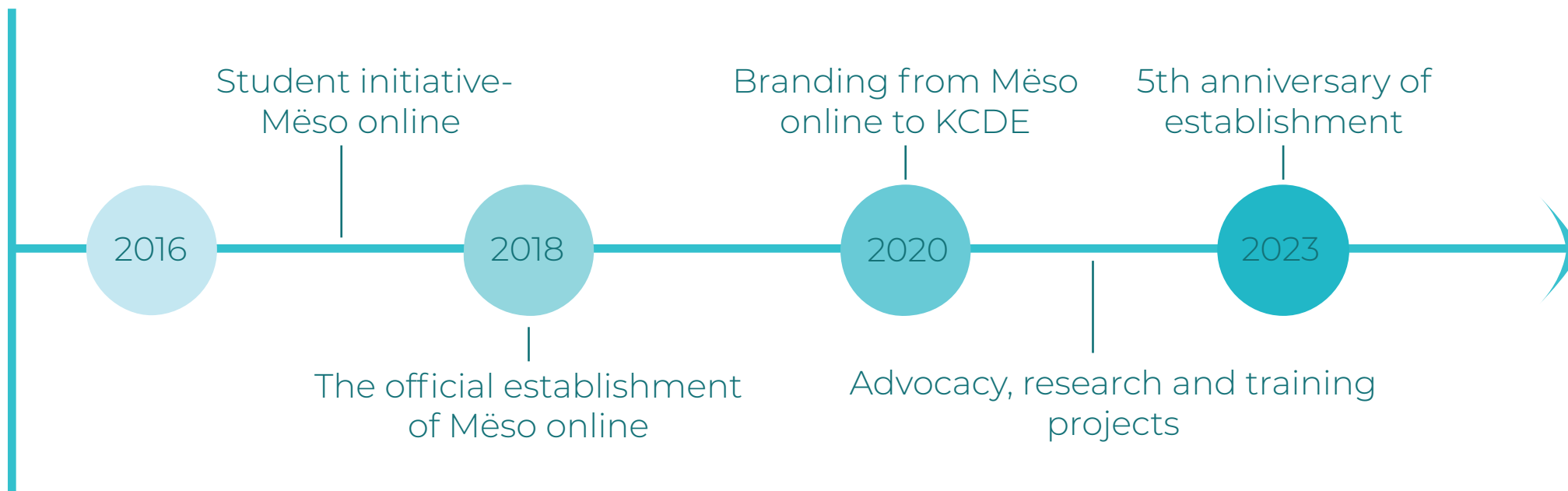


**growth,  
innovation  
& trust.**

Kosova Center for Digital Education

## Table of content

1. Introduction
2. KCDE (Mëso Online 2016-2018)
3. KCDE 2020-2023
4. Partners and supporters
5. Staff, Board, and collaborators through the years
6. Our impressions
7. KCDE Publications
8. Acknowledgment



# 1

# Introduction



## Introduction

This is an important document that describes the development path of our institution with the aim of improving education in Kosovo through the use of digital technology and equal access to educational innovations.

This monograph was written on the 5th anniversary of the official establishment of the center and contains a summary of activities, commitments, and perceptions towards "KCDE" throughout this time. KCDE has organized and developed numerous educational programs, training, and workshops for teachers and school leaders so that they are able to use digital technology in teaching and school management. These programs have highlighted the great need for digital integration in the education system.

The monograph is structured in eight chapters. After the introduction, the monograph begins with the history of KCDE and the rationale for its establishment. This section consists of the memories of the launch

and development of KCDE by the ideator and founder of the organization, Antigona Uka. Next, the monograph describes KCDE programs and projects from 2020 to date. All these programs are supported by many partners, some of whom exchange messages for KCDE. The programs are implemented by a dedicated team, which is presented in the fifth chapter, including staff, board and collaborators over the years; to then proceed to chapter eight, where their messages are summarized. In the seventh chapter, the monograph is enriched with a summary of research engagement over the years, challenges and plans for the future.

KCDE is grateful to all its partners, friends, associates, and its own staff, for their continuous support in realizing its mission of strengthening the education sector in Kosovo through equal access to innovation. Thus, fostering a culture of lifelong learning.



2

KCDE

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## Mëso Online 2016-2018



## Mëso Online 2016-2018

Although officially established in 2018, the roots of KCDE trace back much further. The origins can be traced back to 2016 when Mëso Online emerged as an awareness campaign in Kosovo, backed by the United States Embassy in Pristina.



The activities of KCDE as the student initiative "Mëso Online" during the years 2016 - 2018

The campaign aimed to advocate for the integration of technology into the educational landscape of the country. During our academic journey, myself (Antigona Uka) and the co-founders, Marigona Morina, Fatlum Gashi, Rexhep Haliti, and other organization members, became aware of the immense possibilities that digital solutions hold for education. Inspired by this realization, we were eager to bring technology closer to the educational landscape in Kosovo. With this core vision, Mëso Online initially started as a student-led initiative that provided resources,

information, and support to students to effectively leverage technology for their own studies. The organization conducted seminars, information sessions, and events to raise awareness about the advantages of incorporating technology in the field of education. The activities of KCDE as the student initiative "Mëso Online" during the years 2016 - 2018. However, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, leading to school closures and the urgent need for online learning. This situation brought into focus the issue of the digital divide,

revealing inequalities in the education system. Many pupils and students did not have access to digital equipment and resources, which prevented the continuity of distance learning. At the same time, Marigona and I started a research project to identify the challenges faced by teachers during the transition from traditional to online learning in Kosovo. Through interviews with teachers, we discovered the urgent need for digital resources and support in education.



In the middle of our project, I learned about an initiative called Connect-Ed, started by my friend Gulnaz Kordanova together with her colleague Daniyar Gazizov in Kazakhstan. Connect-Ed aimed to bridge the digital divide that was exacerbated by the pandemic. This endeavor caught my attention, prompting me to consider the feasibility of introducing a similar program in Kosovo. Reinstating Mëso Online as a platform dedicated to promoting digital solutions for education within the education community became the focal point of this idea. Consequently, I shared my intention with Marigona and sought her assistance in bringing this program to Kosovo, particularly given our firsthand experience and awareness of the demand through interviews.

I was aware that forming a team that shared a belief in the greater good and was ready to step up during the challenging times our education system faced would be essential. As such, my friend and colleague, Arbenita Krasniqi, who I had collaborated with for the past two weeks on implementing preventive measures against Covid-19 in the cabinet of the Minister of Health of the "Kurti I" government, agreed to become part of the team.

Furthermore, during this process, Fridon Lala, my friend and colleague from Gjakova, decided to join us after I shared the details of the project and our objectives with him. Fridon is a well-known advocate for enhancing educational access for communities in Kosovo, with a particular focus on promoting equality and justice among minority groups.

Coming from the Egyptian community himself, he strongly believes in the importance of acknowledging and respecting cultural heritage and origins while advocating for a society where everyone can live with equality and without prejudice. Shortly after, Gjina Kaçaniku, a dedicated professional with a strong passion for human rights, and then Adrian Zenuni, a talented young individual with expertise in computer science, joined our team, culminating in the formation of a comprehensive organizational structure. KCDE, originally conceived as a student-led initiative with the primary objective of enhancing the quality and accessibility of education in Kosovo through the promotion of information and communication technology, has now evolved into an institution that is effectively bridging a significant gap in our country's educational landscape.



~ Antigona Uka, founder and executive director of KCDE





3

KCDE  
(2020-2023)



## KCDE (2020-2023)

In 2020, KCDE re-launched full engagement with sustainable programs and partners, and we were gearing up to ensure a successful year. This made us feel happy and inspired for the future. While the KCDE team was preparing for the opening of offices in Pristina, the programs "Connect-Ed Kosovo",

"Girls and the 21st Century Skills", and "Teaching Online at the Right Level" with donors KFOS, the Canadian Embassy for Croatia and Kosovo, as well as GIZ in Kosovo, had begun to be implemented. On August 4, 2021, the Kosova Center for Digital Education held its official office inauguration ceremony, which commenced with an address delivered by the Minister of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation in Kosovo.

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- Ms. Arbërie Nagavci, at the opening ceremony of the Kosova Center for Digital Education.

“On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, it’s my pleasure to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the offices of the organization Kosova Center for Digital Education. This is the culmination of the long-term commitment of Antigona and her colleagues to the promotion of distance learning as a new form of learning in the contemporary world. For years, various organizations around the world, including prestigious universities, have been offering opportunities for people of all nationalities and age groups to expand their horizons of knowledge through distance courses, with a flexible organization of the teaching schedule and with minimal or even free of charge. The range of courses offered is wide, starting from a focus on practical life skills to very specific professional and scientific knowledge. In general, distance learning has become a new dimension of lifelong learning, with the tendency to be, in the near future, the dominant form of learning, at least after the completion of formal education.



However, in many countries of the world, distance learning is part of formal education and this is achieved through hundreds of thousands of study programs that are based in whole or in part on distance learning. Although in our country and in the Balkan region we have had very few such programs, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our attention the necessity to be prepared for this form of learning as well. The first research shows that distance learning during the pandemic, not only in Kosovo but in all countries of the world, has not been shown to be a suitable substitute for face-to-face learning. However, we are aware that this did not happen because distance learning is inferior as a form in relation to face-to-face learning, but due to the fact that no country in the world has such resources to offer distance learning for such a large number of pupils and students as was the case during the peak of the pandemic when over 1 billion children and young people around the world could not attend regular schooling.

Therefore, distance learning, even though it has a short history, should be considered as an innovation and we need to start getting used to it. This form of learning should be promoted through well-prepared courses and conducted using methods suitable for distance learning, with quality illustrations and interaction whenever necessary. Organizations such as the Kosova Center for Digital Education have as their mission the promotion of this approach and should serve as a source of information for others

in terms of defining methods and formats for the realization of distance learning, but also research that provides information on the advantages and the shortcomings of this form. Surely the Center will also develop some distance learning courses that can serve the citizens, considering that we have few such courses in the Albanian language. However, the Kosova Center for Digital Education should also encourage other organizations and educational institutions to develop their distance learning offer.

Since it is a completely new field, I see it reasonable to develop some quality assurance mechanisms for distance learning courses, especially for those that require accreditation, such as teacher training programs. We have no experience in this area and welcome any help that can be provided. In the near future, we will have to develop complex systems for distance learning, as well as make significant investments in ICT infrastructure in educational institutions. These plans have already been drafted and will be reflected in the Strategic Education Plan for the period 2022-2026.

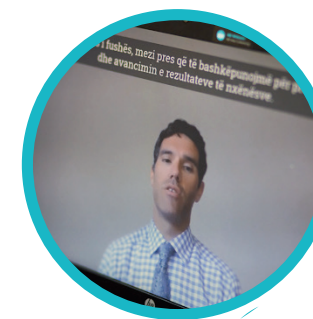
So, I believe that we will have many common points of cooperation with the Center for Digital Education. In the name of this, I wish you good work and much success in fulfilling your mission."

Further, the ceremony was enriched with other speeches from valued partners of the organization such as Joe Freidhoff, vice president of Michigan Virtual and member of the advisory board of KCDE.

“My name is Joe Freidhoff, and I serve as vice president of Michigan Virtual, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance both learning and teaching through research, practice, and partnerships. For more than 20 years, we have been focused on providing digital learning opportunities to primary and secondary students as well as educators who work in such settings. In 2012, we were asked by our legislature to create a center for online learning research and innovation. We are closing in on a decade of launching and building the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute into a national and international resource for best practices in K-12 online learning. It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome the Kosova Center for Distance Education to our field. All around the world, school systems are grappling with how to better meet the diverse needs of students, to provide each individual student with a learning environment and program that is tailored to the specific needs of the child. Additionally, students and their parents seek the flexibility to learn in ways that maximize a student’s learning interest, style, and schedule. They also want access to the highest quality instruction and content and a broad range of curriculum no matter one’s physical location or financial condition. Digital learning is touted as a medium for bringing such desires to fruition. But let me be clear.

Joe Freidhoff's speech at the opening ceremony of the Kosova Center for Digital Education.

”



Digital learning is not a promise of success; it is only a pathway with potential and possibility, not a guarantee. Navigating that pathway responsibly requires disciplined inquiry into what works, for whom it works, and under what circumstances and conditions are most likely to yield intended outcomes. The opening of the Kosova Center for Digital Education marks a significant opportunity for contributing new knowledge and disseminating existing understanding both to the global community and to the schools and families of Kosova. It also represents an excellent lever for legislative leaders in Kosova to accelerate change in a responsible fashion. As an advisor to the Center, I look forward to sharing my experience and expertise in growing a research center from the ground up. As a researcher in the field, I look forward to partnering with the Center to promote and advance student outcomes.”  
Congratulations and I look forward to being a part of your future.



## Program “Teaching online at the right level”



The “Teaching Online at the Right Level” program was developed by the Kosovo Center for Digital Education (KCDE) team with the aim to enhance the capacity of teachers in using educational technology during regular or supplementary teaching processes. As such, this program covers crucial topics aimed at enhancing teachers' abilities, leading to the improvement of online learning experiences and overall educational quality. Throughout the program's development, the KCDE team comprised a group of young professionals, initially including Antigona Uka, Marigona Morina, Gjina Kacaniku, Burbuqe Muhadri, Milazim Behrami, Adrian Zenuni, and Manjolla Iberhysaj-Hajrizi, followed by Valon Mulaj, Edon Abdullahu, Kaltrina Ibrahim, and Kosovare Uka. This dedicated team worked collaboratively to create an innovative program, entirely digital in nature, encompassing preparation,



design, testing, and continuous improvement. The program's evolution was guided by ongoing data on its impact on the professional development of teachers in Kosovo, particularly in the realm of digital learning's advancement and implementation across the country. The program "Teaching online at the right level" received widespread acclaim for its exceptional quality, a recognition that was promptly affirmed in its inaugural year when it obtained acceptance and accreditation from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MASHTI). From its very inception, the program attracted immense interest from the Kosovo community of teachers. In its first year of implementation, KCDE successfully certified over 50 teachers, providing concrete evidence of their adeptness in essential digital skills required to develop digital or online learning initiatives.

## Program "Girls with the 21st Century Skills" – CFLI

In 2020, KCDE started the project "Girls and the 21st Century Skills" with the support of the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. The project aimed to address the gender gap in access to internet and digital learning. The aim of the project was to identify the extent of this gender gap at the municipal level. It was originally planned to include data from the seven largest municipalities in the country, and then the sample was expanded to obtain more comprehensive results. The analysis produced a report which also served as a source to create the "Connect-ed Kosova tracking system" or the tracking system of the digital divide in the childhood and adolescent age groups (grades 5 to 12).

Furthermore, within this project, KCDE developed a 4-week training program that included important areas such as literacy, sustainable development, research and digital competences. The beneficiaries of this program were girls aged 10-15. The girls enthusiastically participated in the training program, which included interactive modules and a final project in the field of sustainable development. Upon completion of the program, the girls were awarded certificates to recognize their participation and dedication. The positive feedback received from the girls and their parents encouraged the project team to expand efforts in other municipalities or expand the program to high school students with the support of potential donors.

Parallely with the training program, the project team undertook the design and implementation of an awareness campaign regarding the digital divide. This campaign aimed to promote the right for digital access for every child, regardless of gender, socio-economic status or geographical location. The video was released on International Women's Day to highlight the importance of promoting digital skills, critical thinking and problem-solving for all children, especially girls, from an early age. The campaign received positive feedback and its impact was strengthened by the representation of different communities of Gjakova in this campaign.



## Membership in DLC + participation in conferences

Three years ago, as a newly established organization in the digital education domain, KCDE became acquainted with the "Digital Learning Collaborative" (DLC) for the first time and initiated initial communications with the network's leaders. After introducing KCDE to the DLC network leaders, the primary advantage was gaining membership on the DLC executive committee. This membership came with an annual compensation of \$15,000, 80% of which was waived by DLC in the first and second year. Additionally, with the support of KCSF, KFOS, and Ipko Foundation, an additional \$1,500 per year for two consecutive years was provided. Being part of the DLC network and executive committee brought numerous advantages to KCDE. Notably, KCDE became the first organization from Kosovo to be represented in the prestigious Digital Learning Collaborative. Regular network meetings provided valuable opportunities to learn from the experiences of digital learning schools and institutions worldwide. Moreover, KCDE had the privilege of participating in the Digital Learning Annual Conference in Atlanta, where influential figures from the digital learning sector gathered on an international scale for three consecutive days. During this conference, Antigona Uka, the executive director of KCDE, led a session where they presented the organization's work and shed light on the state of the digital/virtual learning sector in Kosovo. This exposure and engagement allowed KCDE to make significant contributions and gain insights into the global landscape of digital education. During the Annual Conference, Antigona Uka not only showcased the outcomes of publications focusing on

measuring the transition from traditional to digital teaching but also utilized the platform to expand KCDE's network of potential partners across North America, Europe, and Canada. As a result, KCDE earned digital badges and credentials, highlighting its commitment to digital and distance learning initiatives. In early 2022, the operational director of the Digital Learning Collaborative, Mrs. Allison Powell, expressed interest in visiting Kosovo to gain insight into KCDE's needs and requests and to engage with government officials and other partners. During her visit, meetings were held with Deputy Minister Dukagjin Pupovci, as well as the organization's partners, such as ICK and Ipko Foundation. Additionally, Allison Powell conducted a workshop for all KCDE staff, enriching their knowledge and skills in the field of digital education. The visit further solidified KCDE's position within the international digital learning community and strengthened its relationships with key stakeholders. The Digital Learning Collaborative played a vital role in supporting KCDE in formulating a proposal to establish a similar network, initially in Kosovo and subsequently in the broader region. With the unwavering support from DLC and their dedicated efforts as an independent organization, the Committee for Digital Learning (E-Learning Committee) was successfully formed. Presently, the committee comprises around 10 members from Kosovo, one from Albania, and one from North Macedonia. Thanks to its membership in the DLC, KCDE had the opportunity to invite DLC leaders to introduce the network's concept, initiatives, and methodology during the initial meetings of the E-Learning Committee. This collaborative effort facilitated knowledge exchange and fostered the development of the E-Learning Committee, thus paving the way for further advancement in the field of digital education in the region.



## Visit of Fulbright Specialist

In 2023, KCDE warmly welcomed Joe Freidhoff, who also serves as a board member, as a Fulbright Specialist to collaborate on advancing digital education in Kosovo. During his stay, KCDE provided support and logistical organization, while the Fulbright Specialist program, backed by the American Embassy in Kosovo, managed other related obligations. The project primarily aimed at achieving three main objectives. The first objective involved conducting a comprehensive scan of the K-12 digital education system in Kosovo. Before Joe's arrival in the spring, significant progress had already been made on this front. Working under Joe's guidance, KCDE reviewed the 5-year Strategy and held meetings with partners to gain insights into the digital readiness of Kosovo. Joe's presence aimed to bring clarity and focus to KCDE's strategic planning endeavors, leveraging its key pillars of research, advocacy, and training programs. Simultaneously, KCDE was involved in the digitalization of schools in the municipality of Pristina. During this endeavor, Joe provided invaluable advice, validating findings, and enhancing the overall value of the project through his expertise and insights. The collaboration between KCDE and Joe Freidhoff as a Fulbright Specialist further strengthened the advancement of digital education initiatives in Kosovo, benefitting the education community and enhancing the overall educational landscape. The ultimate goal of the project was to expand the KCDE network by integrating virtual learning experts and potential research and development partners, such as the Digital Learning Collaborative (DLC). This expansion aimed to strengthen KCDE's



position within the digital education community, foster collaboration with leading experts in the field, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices. By bringing in valuable partners like DLC, the project sought to enhance KCDE's capacity for research, development, and implementation of innovative digital learning initiatives in Kosovo and beyond.

## Digital school mapping, a successful model for the digitization of education throughout Kosovo

As part of its dedication to advancing the digital education landscape at the local level, KCDE initiated discussions with the Directorate of Education of the Municipality of Pristina. The main focus of these discussions was to develop comprehensive plans for the digitization of learning processes and to enhance digital support for schools, teachers, and students. By collaborating with the Directorate of Education, KCDE aimed to foster the integration of digital tools and technologies into the educational system, ultimately promoting more effective and innovative teaching and learning methods in Pristina schools. To design and develop concrete solutions, KCDE proposed to implement a needs assessment through focus groups within school communities, including school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. The project "Digital mapping of schools" aimed to help the Directorate of Education of the Municipality of Prishtina in designing a sustainable strategy for increasing the digital capacities of schools in the municipality of Prishtina. This is because KCDE believes that improving the quantity and the quality of technological equipment in schools, such as computers, projectors, televisions, etc., has a direct impact on preparing students for an increasingly digital world. Through this project, KCDE offered help and support in identifying the digital capacities of schools throughout the municipality of Pristina. This process helped to design an action plan for increasing these capacities, enabling effective interventions to improve the quality of teachers on the one hand, and the efficient use of taxpayers' financial resources on the other.

The "Digital mapping of schools" project endeavors to equip schools with essential digital tools and resources, thereby enhancing the teaching and learning processes. By collaborating on this project, the Directorate of Education of the Municipality of Pristina and KCDE aspire to establish a successful model for the digitization of education throughout Kosovo. The ultimate goal is to ensure that schools in all municipalities are well-prepared for the digital future, enabling them to provide a quality education that meets the demands of today's world.



## The year 2023 started with a great partnership for KCDE

Given the importance of networking with the Faculties of Education in the country, KCDE has been engaged from the beginning to create cooperative relations with higher educational institutions. The institutions of higher education in Kosovo are responsible for the preparation of teachers, while the Faculty of Education in Pristina has a long tradition and an important role in this field. Therefore, the management of KCDE since its beginnings has initiated discussions with the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina, Professor Blerim Saqipi, to emphasize the need to enhance the existing programs in which traditional subjects dominate, and to emphasize the importance of inclusion of other important aspects such as innovation, science and technology. In each meeting, Professor Saqipi has consistently stressed their dedication to altering the existing paradigm of teacher preparation and ensuring the inclusion of essential competencies to cultivate successful educators for modern society. Recognizing the shared mission, Professor Saqipi extended an invitation to KCDE to participate in a consortium for a new project that had been in planning since the fall of 2021. This project, known as "Transformation of the Education System of Kosovo and Albania through the integration of digital technology in the teacher education" (TKAEDITE), encompasses 11 implementing partners. The TKAEDITE is a 3-year project financed by European Union funds and is being implemented by the Faculty of Education in cooperation with ten local, regional and international partners.

The project partners are: Faculty of Education at the University of Pristina, UBT, University of Prizren, Linnaeus University, NTNU, OULU, MESTI, KAA, KCDE, University of Tirana and Polytechnic University of Tirana. The project aims to support the educational system by integrating digital competence in pre-university education (including primary education) and, at the same time, improving the digital competences of teachers in Kosovo and Albania. In addition, with the help of the expertise of Finnish (OULU University), Swedish (Linnaeus University) and Norwegian (NTNU University) universities, the Faculty of Education will develop the "Educational Technology" program at the BA level, through which a new generation of educational technologists is prepared.





# 4 KCDE Partners and Supporters



## Partners and Supporters

KCDE has implemented a training and research project supported by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, during which KCDE conducted a study on the gender gap in Internet access and digital education among school-age children in Kosovo, and to help girls of primary and secondary schools in Kosovo to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills that improve their lives through the online training program 'Equipping Girls with 21st Century Skills'. This program has been successfully implemented and has ensured a long-term partnership between KCDE and the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, namely the Canadian Embassy in Croatia and Kosovo.

His Highness, Ambassador Alan Bowman, has honored KCDE by providing a letter of recommendation that conveys a message to other partners about the quality and development of work by the staff and the entire team of KCDE.

”



Zagreb, April 8, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

This letter is to confirm that the organization **Mëso Online: Kosovo Center for Distance Education** received funding from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) managed by the Embassy of Canada to Croatia and Kosovo during the period between September 2020 and March 2021.

Through the CFLI program, Mëso Online received CAD \$16,631.00 for the implementation of a project entitled “**Developing a study on the gender gap in access to internet and distance or e-learning among school-aged children in Kosovo**”. The aim of the project was the development of study on the gender gap in access to internet and e-learning among school-aged children in Kosovo, and equipping young girls with necessary skills for the 21st century.

Mëso Online delivered all planned activities promptly, adhering to all the rules and procedures mandated by the Government of Canada. In addition to regular updates to the Embassy on their activities, implementation progress, and project promotion on their social networks, Mëso Online also submitted a detailed financial report on the adequate use of funds for project activities and for the benefit of project participants.

The project offered a training program entitled “Girls and 21st Century Skills” and developed three training modules: ICT literacy, critical reading, and research and presentation. It also included a capstone project on sustainable development. It also identified the gender gap through data that the organization received from Kosovo municipalities. More than 40 school-aged (10-15 years) girls from the municipalities of Mitrovica and Gjakova were equipped with critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. The project also included content on literacy, sustainable development, research, and digital competence.

The organization Mëso Online had a professional, effective and friendly working relationship with the Embassy of Canada throughout project implementation, even in the challenging context of the COVID19 pandemic. They also provided timely and comprehensive reports on their activities. In this context, we have no hesitation in recommending them to other partners.

Sincerely,



Alan Bowman  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Canada to Croatia and Kosovo

Canada



## Agim Kukaj

Head of the Department of ICT in the  
Ministry of Economy



As the head of the Department of Information Technology and Communication in the Ministry of Economy, in 2020, we got to know KCDE for the first time, through the ConnectEd Kosova program. This program identified the digital divide at the pre-university level in Kosovo. The work done by KCDE has been very serious and has enabled our Public Institutions to take meritorious decisions for the further development of National Policies for Education. Last year- 2022, KCDE served as a member of the Steering Committee for the Digital Summit of the Western Balkans, supporting the Ministry of Economy and our office in the best organization of this international event. In this context, KCDE has organized and led the panel on Digital Education: Policies and Practices. In addition, KCDE has stayed close to the development of the National Network for Research and Education - KREN (Kosovo Research and Education Network) and recently participated in the conference of KREN users in Pristina, where the management and development of Digital Education in Kosovo was discussed. As a partner and as an important entity in raising digital skills in Kosovo - we see the future of KCDE as one of the most important entities in the formulation of national strategies for education, but also as a partner in the implementation of these Policies and Strategies. Cooperation with KCDE is a great pleasure for us who work in the development of digitalization in Kosovo.



**Gulnaz Kordanova**

Founder of Connected Kazakhstan

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“Connected Kazakhstan inspired and supported the start of the Connect-Ed Kosovo initiative that helped students to gain access to equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team took the work forward by integrating the program to the organization's bigger mission on digitalization of the education sector in the country through research and advocacy engagement. Gulnaz believes that the work of KCDE is crucial to provide equal opportunities through digital resources for all students, regardless of their backgrounds and that it will be a driving force for the equity in education.



**Artan Limani**

Higher education researcher, researcher and specialist in international development



"I have worked with the talented staff of KCDE in various capacities in Kosovo, since 2014. As a senior expert in the field of education, I have been able to notice the many talents among the members of KCDE and I have tried to support them in their work to enable the digitization of the education system in Kosovo. KCDE is vital to Kosovo's new democracy and they play an important role in helping the Kosovo government achieve higher standards in the public education system. I congratulate them for the 5 years of excellent work in supporting the challenges and advantages of the digitization of teaching, learning and school administration, in a period where there is a wide spread of artificial intelligence."



**Flamur Abazaj**

Education expert and supporter at KCDE



“Education and technology have drawn an intricate relationship that is fundamental to the growth and development of society in the 21st century. Their interconnected dynamics shape not only the current learning environment but also forecast the future trajectory of education. As we navigate through the digital age, technology has become an integral part of the educational landscape, enabling transformative pedagogical approaches that foster critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. The introduction of adaptive learning systems, digital textbooks, and online learning platforms has not only made education more accessible and inclusive but has also personalized it, catering to the unique needs of each learner. The assimilation of technology into education has fundamentally altered the traditional learning paradigms, paving the way for an immersive, engaging, and effective learning experience. Yet, the importance of this relationship extends beyond the boundaries of the classroom. KCDE plays an integral part through their drive and motivation to bring new practices to Kosovo learning environments and enable a proper transition of the new generations of people into the new generations of technology driven learning methods. I have been both honored and privileged to be able to contribute at a limited capacity to the organization, and see it strive forward despite the many challenges that the current environment presents. The team’s motivation and drive has been an inspiration to me in my own work, and I cannot wait to see what the short and long term has in store for them.”



**Saranda Rexha**

Psychologist and founder of Stress Free Corner

"As a member of the Committee for Digital Learning, as a psychologist and founder of the online platform Stress Free Corner, my contribution is more focused on evaluating the effectiveness of digital learning technologies and platforms from a psychological perspective. Through meetings with other committee members, and genuine collaboration, I have been given ample space to discuss and help create personalized learning paths that address the diverse needs of students. Additionally, I consider that it can be useful in developing adaptive learning systems that can dynamically adjust content and pace based on individual learner needs, abilities, and preferences. Addressing the psychological challenges students face in digital environments, such as digital distractions, information overload, and technology-related anxieties. Above all I consider that my focus is and will remain digital well-being and mental health: My role on this committee I consider contributing to include practices that promote digital well-being, mindfulness and mental health support for both students and teachers who use technologies of digital learning."





**Allison Powell**

Chief Academic Officer, Evergreen Education Group

”

“KCDE is an amazing organization that is working to provide access to the highest quality education for all students across Kosovo! I have had the privilege of supporting their work through both online and in person meetings over the past three years. I got to visit the KCDE office and the Ministry of Education and meet with the team to plan for the future. I have worked with many organizations around the world and see KCDE as a model for other NGOs trying to transform education. I have enjoyed working with the team and look forward to many more years of collaboration!”

## Shpresa Metaj dhe Shpend Aliu

NGN executive director

"Next Generation Network Institute (NGN) is a non-governmental organization that aims to build the capacities of young people, organizations and individuals in the field of telecommunications. The main activities of the organization include: market research, training, building individual/organizational capacities through mentoring and training and advancing the infrastructural capacities of organizations. An integral part of the NGN Institute's program is also public awareness of advanced 5G technologies and high-frequency networks. In this regard, the mission of our organization is the development of young people towards future professions with a focus on the latest world technologies such as high-frequency 5G networks and the application of telecommunications in various fields, not only in telecommunications and broadcast networks. .



Since February 2023, our institution is one of the first organizations in Kosovo, together with Ipko Telecommunications and Vala Kosova, which has been granted permission to use 5G by the Regulatory Authority for Electronic and Postal Communications (ARKEP). The partnership between NGN (Next Generation Networks) and KCDE (Kosova Center for Digital Education) is extremely important in shaping the future of technology and education. NGN, with its innovative network infrastructure and advanced communication technologies, has revolutionized the way we connect and share information. KCDE, on the other hand, focuses on promoting equitable access to education and skills training, especially for those who face barriers to traditional education, such as financial constraints or geographic limitations. By joining forces, NGN and KCDE create a powerful synergy where this partnership opens endless opportunities for collaboration and progress. Through this partnership, NGN and KCDE will build a future where technology and education converge to unlock human potential and create a more inclusive and prosperous society in Kosovo. An appreciation to the staff of KCDE for the willingness to cooperate with NGN and other organizations, we are happy and lucky to cooperate with a staff like KCDE, motivated to cooperate in every idea and project."



## Bjondina Rexha

Founder of Mentoring our Future

We have started cooperation with KCDE since the first steps of the organization. The dedication and vision of KCDE is an added value to our education system. To begin with, we have collaborated in the exchange of information, considering that we as Mentoring our Future and KCDE have the same goal, to help improve and advance the education system. In the last year, we have joined forces and plans to devise the "Beyond the Borders" project, which is being supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora. With this project, as MoF and KCDE, we want to bring together the youth of the Diaspora and the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" in a summer camp where they will work together in creating project ideas in different fields. We intend to continue the collaboration with KCDE in other projects which we hope will influence as much as possible in educating the public on the importance of Distance Learning and the benefits of Mentoring.





International Donors



International Partners



Partner ministries and public institutions



Local Partner Organizations



Municipality Directorates of Education partners



Partner universities



Business supporters





# 5 KCDE

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## Messages and list of beneficiaries





**Fatime Bajrami**

Beneficiary and Alumnus of the program

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"My experience in the training - Teaching online at the right level - was extremely positive. During the five weeks of attending this training, I have gained a number of skills, starting from the effective use of virtual classrooms, the use of various technological programs that make distance learning more attractive, as well as the familiarity of different platforms that enable effective distance learning. Each of these skills, and many more that I haven't mentioned here, have made me a better teacher for my students. Each of these skills has enabled me to convey to the students all the lessons and planned information, although in non-traditional conditions. The training "Teaching online at the right level" not only provided valuable content but was also exceptionally well-organized from a procedural standpoint. The training staff demonstrated a high level of preparation and cooperation, making the entire experience highly professional. Participating in this training has been truly inspiring, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity I was given. I sincerely hope that such training programs will continue to be offered in the future. Personally, I wholeheartedly recommend it to all school teachers, as it has the potential to bring about significant improvements in their teaching practices."



**Elitë Bardhi**

Beneficiary and Alumnus of the program

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“My name is Elitë Bardhi, I am a teacher at the Competence Center in Ferizaj. Last year I was a beneficiary of the "Teaching online at the right level" program. This program was designed and implemented in such a way that it kept us constantly active and engaged in practical tasks.

Indeed, if KCDE sustains its current momentum, it has the potential to become a distinctive and groundbreaking concept, fostering positive transformations in the realms of quality, creativity, and democratic teaching. Therefore, it is essential for KCDE to receive support from local levels, including Municipal Directorates of Education (MDEs), as well as the central level of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI). With this support, programs offered by KCDE can be made accessible to teachers free of charge, thereby encouraging increased involvement and participation. Such initiatives are instrumental in advancing education and empowering teachers to embrace innovative and effective teaching methods, ultimately benefitting the education system as a whole.



**Pajtim Vela**

Beneficiary and Alumni, and tutor of the program



My collaboration with KCDE has been incredibly positive, fair, and advantageous across various aspects. Initially, I participated in their programs and training sessions, and later I became a trainer for KCDE as well. This center for digital education is dedicated to promoting digital equality, ensuring teachers' professional development, and advocating for the digitization of the education sector in our country. Currently, it stands as the sole and most professional opportunity available. Through modules such as "Introduction to Digital Learning," "E-Didactics," "Audio-Visual Materials," "Online Assessment," and the "Learning Management System," KCDE strives to equip everyone, especially teachers and learners in the 21st century, with essential digital education skills. By replacing traditional teaching methods with continuous online learning practices, the long-term growth of our students will be positively impacted. The training offered by KCDE is systematically designed to continuously enhance teachers' professionalism, and it holds accreditation from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) in Kosovo. In my personal opinion, KCDE and the programs/modules it offers are indispensable for teachers. The center consistently encourages and facilitates research to raise awareness about the significance of incorporating ICT in educational processes and classrooms, enabling its application in teaching curricula.

## List of KCDE training program beneficiaries

### 1st Cohort

Besnik Saramati  
Ferdane Mjeku  
Ilirjana Metdervishi - Shunjaku  
Nadire Kryeziu  
Yllka Kusari Radoniqi  
Vjosa Bytyçi Dulatahu  
Vjollca Igrishta  
Shkodrane Salihu  
Pajtim Vela  
Naza Vela

Nikelinda Dakaj  
Natyra Berisha  
Ismajl Jashari  
Elmedina Durguti

### 2nd Cohort

Mirlinda Mehmeti  
Arberina Hajzeri  
Elvane Ismaili-Hashani  
Diellza Sadiku  
Ardian Morina  
Gjylilje Margilaj  
Valire Ismajli  
Bjonda Krasniqi  
Yllka Kurshumlia

Doruntina Morina Mazreku  
Edison Avdiu  
Lendita Surdulli Shabani  
Andi Berisha  
Mirjeta Hasani  
Xhevahire Sejdiu  
Mimoza Kurshumlia  
Arta Zeqiraj  
Elitë Bardhi  
Arbnore Lama Mulliqi

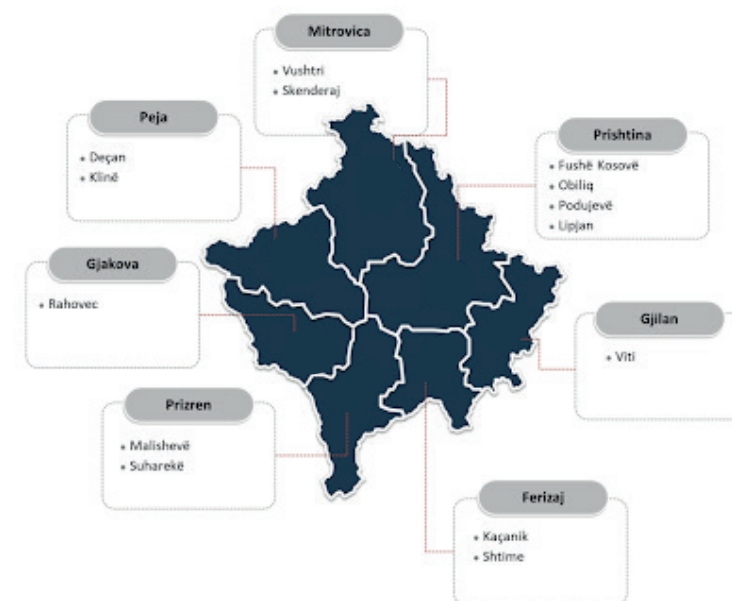
### 3rd Cohort

Fatlinda Drejta-Karahoda  
Hana Gjyrishevc  
Jahir Sumiçi  
Ferdeze Kastrati  
Muhamet Shala  
Labinot Qarri  
Adelina Sopaj Elshani  
Shukrije Hoti  
Arieta Hasolli  
Florije Hyseni  
Gani Kryeziu  
Eneida Berisha  
Bjeshkë Alia  
Armend Limoni

Albulena Hajrizi  
Labinot Rexhaj  
Hadije Krasniqi

### 4th Cohort

Arjeta Ndrecaj  
Shpresa Sadiku  
Qamile Emerllahu  
Qerim Emini  
Fatime Bajrami  
Nexhmie Hoti  
Bajram Morina  
Zejn Bajrami  
Lirie Hasani Fetahaj  
Naxhie Gashi  
Ardita Selimaj Nikqi  
Edona Nushi  
Deshira Haxhijah  
Visare Lubishtani







# 6

KCDE

## Staff, Board, and collaborators

## Staff, Board, and collaborators



### Antigona Uka

#### Co-founder and Executive Director

Antigona serves as an executive director for KCDE). She holds a master's degree in Public Policy from Central European University. She started engaging in the field of online and blended learning since 2015. In the meanwhile, she has also a) co-founded the Teach For Kosova, and b) served as a researcher at Riinvest Institute for Development Research, consultant for OSF, trainer at International Business College Mitrovica, and as a guest researcher at German Institute for Public Administration.



### Marigona Morina

#### Co-founder and Assembly member

Marigona is one of the co-founders of Kosova Center for Digital Education, currently serving as an acting program director. Marigona holds a master's degree in education from the University of Arkansas and is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Educational Research at the University of Calgary. She previously worked as a social sciences teacher at Prishtina High School, course instructor at Rochester Institute of Technology in Kosova, and as a teacher trainer at British Council.



**Fatum Gashi**

**Co-founder and  
Assembly member**

Fatum works at the European Parliament. In the past he has worked as a Policy Officer at World Solidarity Forum. Following his studies at CEU, Fatlum obtained an International Security Studies Certificate from Harvard University Extension School and his MSc in Migration Studies from Oxford University. He has co-authored different reports and research papers on migration issues in south-eastern and central Europe, which was published by Friedrich.E.S, Political Capital Institute, etc. , and has participated and presented his research on migration at different conferences and universities, including Georgetown, Harvard, and Yale.



**Rexhep Haliti**

**Co-founder and  
Assembly member**

Rexhep Haliti completed a master's program in Information Systems at Lund University in Lund, Sweden. He has also graduated from RIT in Kosovo with a concentration in IT and Management. Rexhep joined KCDE as a co-founder in 2016, and his contribution comes mainly in the form of technical expertise. Rexhep worked for three years in the Protax2 project, a Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for continuous development and improvement of the property tax system in Kosovo. For the last few years, Rexhep has been working as a Data Analyst at Nordea Bank in Copenhagen.



**Fjolla Kaçaniku**

**Co-founder and  
Assembly member**

Fjolla Kaçaniku joined KCDE as an assembly member in 2018. Fjolla has more than 5 years of experience as a consultant in the education sector in Kosovo. She has experience with donor-funded projects within EU and GIZ in the field of teachers' professional development, teacher mentoring, e-learning and digitalization of education practice, and curriculum revision monitoring and evaluation. She also serves as a Teaching Assistant in the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina in Kosovo. In 2017, she participated in a three-month junior research fellowship at the Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST). Fjolla earned a PhD in Educational Sciences at the Faculty of Education, the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia.

## Staff



### Gjina Kačaniku

Gjina Kačaniku, is the Project Officer. She is an accomplished lawyer, and the promotion of children's rights as part of human rights is just a staple of her motivation to work toward the development of our organization.

During the last years, she has been engaged as a Consultant at the UN WOMEN, further in the governmental sector and the NGO sector with projects funded by donors such as the United Nations. She considers her contribution to the community to be an active equal rights advocate.



### Edon Abdullahu

Edon Abdullahu, is our IT technician and Web Developer. As a junior Web Developer, he has experience with different and modern technologies such as WordPress, JavaScript and Java. Previously, Edon worked as a freelancer (including web desing) and is keen to develop digital solutions for social benefits.



### Kosovare Uka

Kosovare Uka serves as Marketing and Finance Officer. In the past she has served as a marketing intern at 7ARTE, and has occasionally been involved as a field surveyor/researcher at the Riinvest Development Research Institute. Kosovare has completed the Erasmus exchange program with the Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto - Porto, Portugal as part of the IBCM partnership opportunity where she was a regular student. At the same time, she is continuing her university studies at the University of Mitrovica Isa Boletini, Faculty of Education.



### Robert Pajaziti

Robert Pajaziti is our Digital Content Designer, holding a Master's degree in Educational Science with a specialization in Educational Technology from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). He is driven by a passion for integrating technology into diverse contexts and developing digital solutions. He has worked as a Substitute Teacher at the American School of Kosova, a Research Assistant at the Organization for Increasing Quality of Education (ORCA), and a Project Coordinator at ETEA over the past years.



## Aaron Spitler

Aaron Spitler graduated from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the United States. His research interests revolve around digital development, especially within the Western Balkans. Currently, he has explored these issues as a consultant with the Kosova Center for Digital Education (KCDE).



## Bekrije Azemi

Bekrije Azemi, first-year student at the University of Pristina, Faculty of Law. Participant in the USAID organization in the UP TO YOUTH project, certified in communication, lawyer and leadership training, I participated in the School of Entrepreneurship and in the business incubation training program.



## Adrian Zenuni

Adrian Zenuni, is our IT technician and Web Developer. As an experienced Web Developer, he has experience with different and modern technologies on web development such as WordPress, React JS, Vue.js, Node.js, etc. He has a sharp eye for details and a commitment to work. He has experience working in different tech companies in Kosova like Cacttus, Starlabs, etc, which made him so valuable to our NGO.

## Advisory board members



**Joe Freidhoff**

Joe serves as a vice president for Michigan Virtual. He earned his Ph.D. in educational technologies from Michigan State University and is a nationally recognized researcher in the field of online and blended learning. He has taught in both face-to-face and online settings as well as at the secondary, undergraduate and graduate levels. Outside of work, Joe, his three boys, and his wife, Laura, do taekwondo together. Learning how to kiteboard is next on his list.



**Astrit Desku**

Astrit is an expert in the field of information Technology with a narrow specialization in the management and development of software applications. He graduated from the University of Prishtina. Faculty of Electrical Engineering as a Graduate Electrical Engineer. He is currently a PhD Candidate at South East Europe University, and a professor in the Department of Computer Science.



**Hana Qerimi**

Hana Qerimi is a passionate entrepreneur who has successfully started and expanded two startups internationally which are Digital School an educational institution and Starlabs a tech company. Both of her companies today employ over 100 young Kosovan engineers. Hana has over 10 years of professional experience in project and program management mainly in ICT sector where she has worked as a project and program manager with global clients such as ATT mobility, Vodafone, and eXtenet systems in the United States.



## Art Shala

Art is an avid marketer and business person with more than 12 years of work experience. He holds a Ph.D. in Marketing. Art received his MSc degree in Communication and Economics from the University of Lugano in Switzerland. He has been involved in supporting the education sector and worked with several organizations. Currently, he is Founder and Managing Director at XPR Consulting as well as an advisory board member at MACOA GmbH and Marketing Professor at the University of Gjilan in Kosovo.



## Christopher Harrington

Dr. Christopher Harrington currently serves as Founder of the Institute for Teaching and Leading, LLC, Director of Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute, and Chief Executive Officer of Harrington Education Associates, LLC. Dr. Harrington also served as President of eLearn Institute, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation), and he has experience assisting dozens of school districts across the United States in the design and implementation of blended, online, and personalized learning programs

## Collaborators through the years



### Arbenita Krasniqi

Arbenita Krasniqi was our Project Manager. She holds a Master's Degree in Business Management at the University of Debrecen in Hungary. Has over five years' experience in the public sector and civil society in coordinating and managing youth projects since 2015, through engagement in various institutions such as GIZ, she has trained young people for professional career development. She has taken part in drafting policy recommendations in the field of education within the Ministry of Education and Science and Committee of Education



### Fridon Lala

Fridon, our former Head of Development, is now elected as a Member of Parliament in Kosovo. He is a public policy professional with degrees from the CEU's School of Public Policy and the University of Sussex's IDS. He was a researcher at the UN University in Belgium and a project consultant for Artis International in Washington. He conducted a study visit at Cambridge University and is an author of various scientific works, articles and book chapters. Fridon also served as the Deputy Minister of Regional Development in Kosovo.



### Burbuqe Muhadri

Burbuqja has several years of experience in the private sector and international organizations, mainly in roles related to finance and human resource management. She graduated with a Master of Science in Finance from the Illinois Institute of Technology, IL - USA. Her main strengths are her analytical skills and persistence. She is engaged in KCDE in the role of Finance Officer from 2021 to early 2022, and now lives and operates in Hamburg, Germany.



### Manjolla Iberhysaj - Hajrizi

Manjolla provided support to the KCDE team across multiple facets. She completed her bachelor studies at the University Hasan Prishtina - Primary program and is completing her master's degree in Leadership in Education. Additionally, she brings a unique perspective to the team as a primary school educator at Mehmet Gjevori Elementary School where she has been teaching for two years.



## Milazim Behrami

Milazim was engaged as manager/Instructional Designer of the program. He has a master's degree in linguistics and English teaching from the University of Prishtina. In the past he served as Chairman of the Membership Committee of KETNET (Kosovo English Teaching Network), Project Coordinator for the Prishtina Region which was implemented in collaboration with the US Embassy, the Kosovo Ministry of Education and Science, and KETNET. He has also worked for the United States Peace Corps as an intercultural mediator and TEFL trainer since 2015.



## Kaltrina Ibrahimimi

Kaltrina Ibrahimimi has served as Financial Officer at the Kosova Center for Digital Education. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Prishtina, Department of Management. She previously worked as a Project Coordinator in the Technology and Information Laboratory, within the project "Kosovo Economic Development through Quality and Networking", funded by the European Commission Office in Kosovo. For the last 10 years she has served as a managing owner at the Private Preschool Institution Ala.



## Flaka Krivanjeva

Flaka Krivanjeva served as an intern at KCDE - engaged in the EduPerformance project. She is a first-year student at the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Law. Participant in various trainings for soft skills and leadership, also volunteer in various non-governmental organizations.



## Gramos Buçinca

Gramos is a civil society activist and has worked in the NGO sector for the past 6 years. He's experienced in the higher education sector, working as a proponent for quality in education, through advocacy, research and grass-roots activism. Gramos is also a government consultant on education and project development. His main goal is ensuring taxpayer money is spent to provide best services for the public.



## Gulnaz Kordanova

Gulnaz Kordanova graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Education with a degree in Human Development and Education, specializing in the Global, International, Comparative Education Concentration. She is also an alumna of the 2022 Cheng Fellowship with the Social Innovation and Change Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School. Gulnaz's work focuses on achieving educational and digital equity, and she has founded nonprofits such as Teach for Kazakhstan and Connect-Ed.kz to fulfill this mission in Kazakhstan. Additionally, she has conducted research using the participatory research method called photovoice and is interested in topics of digital equity and social mobility, communities of practice, and the ethical considerations of nonprofits and social enterprises when working with communities.





7

KCDE  
Our impressions





**Fatum Gashi**

Co-founder at KCDE

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"I am happy to see how far the organization has come since we started it during my university years. Education is the cornerstone of the development of a healthy society, and our NGO continues to contribute to the improvement of Kosovo's education system. This monograph serves as a testament to KCDE's commitment to empowering youth through education and improving the education system through effective policy making. I am confident that the team - with all the passion and dedication - will continue to tirelessly serve the communities in Kosovo and will do their best to positively influence policy-making in favor of the best education system."



**Fjolla Kaçaniku**

Assembly member at KCDE

Congratulations to the KCDE on reaching the remarkable milestone of five years since its establishment! As an Assembly Member, I am incredibly proud to be associated with this leading ngo in the digital transformation of education in Kosovo. Being one of the founding members, I have witnessed firsthand the tremendous impact KCDE has made in revolutionizing education through technology in the country. It is truly gratifying to see how our collective efforts have resulted in a shift in education digitalization in the country. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute towards this cause, and I am humbled by the dedication and commitment of the entire KCDE team. Together, we have bridged the digital divide and empowered students and educators to thrive in the digital era. As we celebrate this significant milestone, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to KCDE. May our organization continue to lead the way in transforming lives through digital education, and may we inspire others to join us in this important mission. Here's to many more years of success and impact!





## Dr. Joe Freidhoff

My name is Dr. Joe Freidhoff, and I am Vice President for an educational nonprofit in the U.S. named Michigan Virtual. My association with KCDE began back in 2016 when the idea for the center was beginning to germinate. At that time, my organization had successfully launched our own virtual learning research institute a few years earlier, and Ms. Antigona Uka reached out to inquire more about how that happened and what it might take to replicate something similar in Kosovo. Fast forward a few years, and Ms. Uka and her co-founders had gotten the ball rolling and were preparing for a successful launch of their new center. I began serving as a more frequent advisor to leadership and the board. In 2023, I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant to travel to Kosovo and work with KCDE for couple of weeks. In my time there, I got to spend a great deal of time with the wonderful KCDE staff and meet with many key stakeholders for the center's work.

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There are four key takeaways from my visit:

1. The passion and dedication from the KCDE staff to their mission of promoting digital equity and ensuring teacher development to drive the digitization of education in Kosovo is both inspiring and essential for their long-term success.
2. The scale of the educational transformation needed in Kosovo is substantial.
3. The key stakeholders in the educational enterprise are aligned on education being a critical driver of the country's long-term stability and growth, however, there is a lack of a clear vision on what is needed and how to go about achieving this goal.
4. The existence of organizations like KCDE to provide both vision and research-based strategies will be paramount to expedite progress on this front.

I want to wish KCDE a very happy five-year anniversary. Enjoy the past successes. Look forward to future wins. And along the way, savor the journey of positively impacting the prosperity of your communities and country.



**Astrit Desku**

Board member at KCDE

"Kosova Center for Digital Education (KCDE) is an organization with the primary goal of promoting digital education by contributing to improve the access and quality of education in Kosovo through the integration of digital technology in the learning process. As a member of the KCDE board, I have the privilege of contributing to the direction and development of this important organization for digital education in Kosovo. I further encourage KCDE's collaboration with educational institutions and other partners to develop innovative programs and projects to help students, teachers and educational institutions integrate technology into learning and teaching."

”



**Art Shala**

Board member at KCDE



KCDE has become a highly respected, successful and proof of what Kosovo young and bright minds can do. All the credit goes to the management of KCDE, Antigona for her vision and joint efforts from the team to turn this vision into actionable initiatives and willingness to take the road less traveled to make significant strides in advocating and developing a better access to education within Kosovo. Their vision, dedication, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in shaping the organization's success. It is an honor for me to sit on the board of such an organization. As a board member, I have had the privilege of contributing my business acumen and network to support the organization on their mission and their activities. An organization is the result of their network and my main contribution has been to support establishing valuable partnerships and collaborations, further enhancing KCDE's reach and impact. The positive transformation that KCDE has brought to the community, from policy makers, other education sector stakeholders, to teachers through their activities is something that makes all of us happy to be associated with the organization. On this 5-year anniversary, I am committed to continuing my support for the organization's endeavors as we work together to empower individuals and uplift communities through education. This milestone is a proof of the commitment, hard work, and collective effort put forth by everyone within KCDE and our partners and supporters.



## Fridon Lala

First development director of KCDE (today deputy  
in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo)

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KCDE, our success story

The Connect-Ed program, as an immediate response to the urgent need to equip children with technology in order to enable access to distance education, a method that begins to be applied for the first time in our country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, to join the KCDE team. The cause of closing the digital gap was our leading force, in unpredictable, difficult times not only for our educational institutions, but also for the entire Kosovar society. Providing digital equipment to the neediest students, building a transparent needs tracking system for each municipality, training modules on millennial skills for young girls, were the first fruits, pushing enough for KCDE to pass from the transitional phase of closing the digital gap, in being the leader of the agenda for the digitalization of the educational system in Kosovo. After a while, our professional trajectories changed, to intersect in other dimensions, those of policy-making, me as a decision-maker, and KCDE as an expert organization in the field of digitalization of education. However, to be fair, my journey with KCDE neither begins with my joining Connect-Ed nor ends with my physical departure from the center. I joined KCDE much earlier, when I first accepted, and then shared the vision with Antigona, a vision which she defends with great enthusiasm and passion. And if I am based on the feeling and pride that KCDE's successes give me today, my journey continues with the same intensity. A part of me continues to be at the center, just as a part of the center is part of my personal and professional formation.



## Gjina Kaçaniku

Project Officer, and Researcher

"In August 2020, I began working at KCDE in the position of Project Officer. There, I met an exceptional team and unforgettable friends with whom we share experiences through our common work. KCDE sparked my enthusiasm when I first heard about the Connect-Ed project, which aimed to help out-of-school children reintegrate into learning. Alongside the team, including Antigona, Marigona, Arbenita, and Fridon, we did the impossible to identify children in need and bridge the digital gap among them, providing digital devices door to door. Our work did not stop even during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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While many organizations faced difficulties, we persevered, and I fondly remember that time, as we managed to assist and bring joy to many children. Through our relentless efforts, KCDE demonstrated its strength and secured projects that significantly empowered the organization. In August 2021, we organized the inaugural ceremony, which was attended by numerous partners and friends who made us proud of our work. Today, I am immensely happy that our organization has achieved the reputation it deserves, and I firmly believe that our journey towards fulfilling our vision will never stop. KCDE holds great significance for me, as being part of it allows me to make a positive impact on the lives of others, aligning with my core beliefs. Working together with the team towards a shared vision gives me a profound sense of fulfillment and purpose, motivating me to give my best efforts. Thus, I want to express my gratitude to the entire team, as success would not have been possible without our collective work. I cherish the harmony that still prevails in KCDE and invite everyone to join us in pursuing our mission and vision.



## Gramos Bucinca

### **KCDE – forward-looking organization of education in Kosovo**

In June 2022 I joined KCDE to help with internal development and writing project proposals. Until September 2022, when I temporarily left this role, we managed to send several project proposals to foreign and local donors. One of them, Digital Mapping of Schools in Pristina, was supported by UNICEF and I was lucky enough to return to lead part of the project in the summer of 2023. Digital Mapping was an innovative project, never tested in Kosovo. The Director of the Directorate of Education in the Municipality of Pristina, was interested in measuring the level of human and material capacities of schools in Pristina, in order to move to a more digital environment of the learning process. The Covid19 pandemic had caught educational institutions unprepared, and improvisations to develop distance learning were half-hearted at best. However, the pandemic had started an irreversible process, for which KCDE had been advocating since before it, and that was the digitization of education

The Digital Mapping had several instruments to measure digital capacities, and in its first phase, KCDE measured the level of readiness and preparation of teachers, students, parents and school management, as their perception of the situation and the way forward. to use digital solutions in concrete problems. After organizing nine focus groups, through qualitative interviews we realized that: students were the most enthusiastic about digital transformation, teachers wanted to facilitate the whole process through digitalization, parents were interested in using digital solutions for communication with schools, and school management was not against digitization, on the contrary, certain school principals have started using their own digital solutions. These findings were presented at a table organized by the Directorate of Education, and after the discussion it was proposed to continue with the measurement of digital devices in all schools in Pristina. This is to fully understand the situation and the path to follow for digitization. KCDE has a fantastic team with deep and broad knowledge of the digital education process. There are excellent partners like Michigan Virtual, who have contributed a lot to the digitalization of education in the US, and fortunately they have shared some of their experience with KCDE through close cooperation with Joe Friedhoff, vice president of Michigan Virtual,. KCDE has an excellent leadership, which constantly advocates in the MEST to improve policies about digitalization, and for this reason, the introduction of digitalization as a strategic objective in the new education strategy in Kosovo has been successfully achieved. The future of digital education in Kosovo objectively cannot be realized without the strong input of KCDE. Based on my 7 years of experience in education, I have great confidence that KCDE will lead the process of digital transformation of education in Kosovo.



**Aaron Spitler**

Researcher at KCDE

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“KCDE is an organization driven by its mission, namely ensuring that “e-learning” is available to students of all backgrounds in Kosovo. This was evident when I collaborated with the team to identify the barriers to access faced by Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian learners during the pandemic. My colleagues not only highlighted the need to eliminate inequalities throughout the educational system; they also emphasized guaranteeing all parties have a say in what should be done to address these long-standing problems. All told, KCDE’s desire to make a lasting impact through its work shines through in all the projects they have pursued. Looking to the future, I know this “people-centric” approach will continue to shape the organization’s work. The research they conduct will look for solutions that help those most in need, while the training they offer will enable educators to set their students up for success. Above all, I am confident that their advocacy will elevate the voices of those who fear being left behind during this era of technological change. In all these areas, KCDE truly strives for excellence. I am excited to be part of a group that sets the standard high when it comes to making a difference.”



**Flaka Krivanjeva**

Intern in KCDE

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"I had the honor and pleasure of working at KCDE as an intern for a period of three months. During this time, I was mainly engaged in the presentation of the "EdUPerformanca" platform in the municipal directorates selected for the development of the platform, as well as in other work. KCDE is of great importance in Kosovo for the development and progress of digital education and technology in the field of education. KCDE has played a key role in improving access to education and innovation in the "classroom of the future". I see KCDE as a successful example of cooperation in the development of digital education in our country. Using technology effectively and creating innovative education programs has demonstrated the great potential of digital education in Kosovo. The future of KCDE is very bright and I hope it serves as a source of inspiration and support for others in the field of education. With continuous innovation and improvement of open technology, KCDE can contribute to the growth of education improvement in order to reach high standards and adapt to global developments. Using technology smartly and effectively in education can help solve educational challenges, improve student skills, and ensure equal access for all. KCDE has the potential to deeply influence Kosovo's educational system and help secure the future of digital education."



**Kaltrina Ibrahim**

Collaborator at KCDE

”

"As part of KCDE, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to contribute to its mission to empower the education sector through innovation and fostering a culture of lifelong learning and preparing students for the global digital economy. KCDE has played a crucial role in breaking down barriers in education by providing accessible learning opportunities to individuals who may face geographic or financial limitations. Through distance education programs, KCDE envisions a future where distance education becomes an integral part of Kosovo's education system."



8

KCDE  
Publications



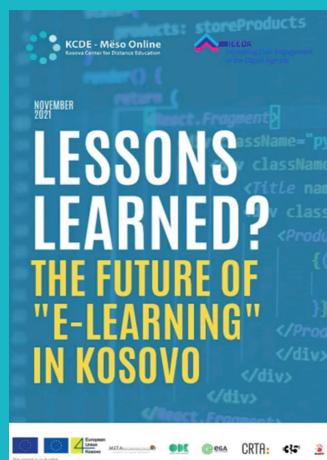
## The Gender Gap in distance Education in Kosova

The Covid-19 pandemic has pushed many countries to seek solutions to provide quality distance education to all students. Some have used traditional media, such as TV and radio, while others have used more contemporary methods such as online classrooms and other online platforms. This variance in approaches has sharpened the divide for access to education among countries as well as among gender. While some countries have been able to provide education using sophisticated technology, children are experiencing the results of a massive digital divide in others. As a result, global crises are often followed by gender gaps in education, causing middle-and-lower income countries to fall short in their progress towards achieving gender equality in education.

Author: Antigona Uka & Marigona Morina

KCDE, February 2021

Link: [The Gender Gap in distance Education in Kosova](#)



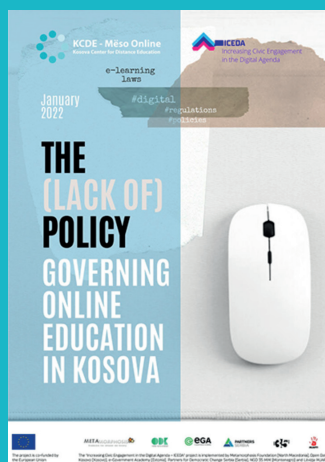
## Lessons Learned? The Future of “E-Learning” in Kosovo

Two years into the pandemic, teachers across Kosovo still struggle to engage their students via “e-learning”. What is the teacher’s own perspective on the role of e-learning in the learning process? ” This research was prepared as part of the project “Increasing Citizen Participation in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA” with the financial support of the European Union. Content is the responsibility of the Kosovo Center for Digital Education(KCDE), and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union. “”

Author: Aaron Spitler & Antigona Uka

KCDE, November 2021

Link: [Lessons Learned? The Future of "E-learning" in Kosova](#)



## The (Lack of) Policy Governing Online Education in Kosovo

Policies for e-learning in Kosovo 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. This research was prepared as part of the project “Increasing Citizen Participation in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA” with the financial support of the European Union. Content is the responsibility of the Kosovo Center for Digital Education(KCDE), and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union. “

Author: Antigona Uka

Editor: Aaron Spitler

KCDE, November 2021

Link: [The \(Lack of\) Policy Governing Online Education in Kosovo](#)



## E-Learning” Programs and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Youth

Although “e-learning” is a format for instruction that can make education more accessible, it is evident that it has not always been an option for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian youth.

This research was prepared as part of the project “Increasing Citizen Participation in the Digital Agenda – ICEDA”, with the financial support of the European Union.

Content is the responsibility of the Kosovo Center for Digital Education (KCDE), and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Author: Aaron Spitler

Editor: Antigona Uka

KCDE, March 2022

Link: [E-Learning” Programs and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Youth](#)



## Disconnected: Inequality and 'E-Learning' in COVID-Era Kosovo

At the height of the pandemic in Kosovo, “e-learning” was touted by policymakers as a way of ensuring all students could receive an education. Did this rhetoric meet reality, especially for groups who are underserved like the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities? To answer this question, Aaron Spitler spoke to experts in the field of education familiar with the situation on the ground. His report not only identifies the challenges learners faced, it also offers recommendations on how to make “e-learning” more accessible.

Author: Aaron Spitler

KCDE, October 2022

Link: [Disconnected: Inequality and 'E-Learning' in COVID-Era Kosovo](#)

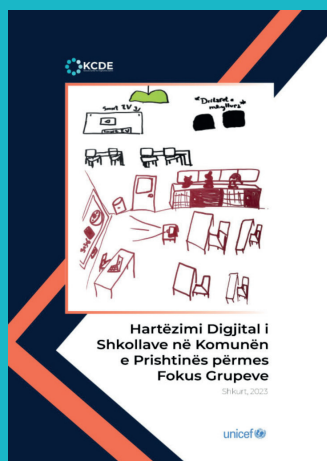


## Increasing higher education opportunities through equal access to e-learning and technology

This document has been produced as part of the “Increase higher education opportunities through equal access to e-learning and technology” project with the financial assistance of the HERAS social dimension small grant funding.

Author: Antigona Uka

KCDE, December 2022



## Digital School Mapping in the Municipality of Pristina through Focus Groups

This research has been produced as part of the project “Digital Mapping of Schools in the municipality of Prishtina through focus groups” with the partial financial support of UNICEF and in partnership with the Municipal Directorate of Education in Pristina.

Author: Antigona Uka, Gramos Buçinca, Gjina Kaçaniku  
KCDE, February 2023

Apart from publishing research papers and publications, the KCDE team actively contributes to other local media in Kosovo, consistently sharing their insights and expertise. Additionally, they actively participate in academic engagements by submitting their work to reputable journals in the field of educational sciences. This continuous dedication to knowledge dissemination and academic involvement further solidifies KCDE's position as a significant contributor to the advancement of education in Kosovo and beyond.

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**A CASE STUDY OF KOSOVAN TEACHERS' TRANSITION TO DISTANCE EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** SUBMIT IDEAL INNOVATION TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

Sep 23 2021 Authors: Marigona Morina, Antigona Uka, Kashif Raza  
DOI: 10.1615/IntJInnovOnlineEdu.202338993  
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**A CASE STUDY OF KOSOVAN TEACHERS' TRANSITION TO DISTANCE EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
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# 9

# KCDE Acknowledgment



## Acknowledgment

On the occasion of this jubilee, KCDE would like to acknowledge all those who have been tirelessly engaged throughout these years to make the first Kosovar Center for Digital Education a reality. Founders, leaders, staff, internal and external collaborators, and all other partners have played a vital role in the successful implementation of the organization's programs and activities.

Today, with heartfelt appreciation for all the energy and contribution given over these years, KCDE stands as a pioneering organization for digital education in the country, with a mission to empower the education sector in Kosovo through innovation and equal access. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning and preparing students for success in the global digital economy, KCDE serves as a true example of transforming education in the country.

Throughout these years, KCDE has been committed to changing the perspective of education in Kosovo and creating new opportunities for the country's youth. Focusing on information and communication technology, the organization has opened doors to a bright future for those ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. Along this journey, KCDE has established strong connections with other educational institutions, resulting in successful collaborations and joint initiatives.

Through innovative programs and technology utilization, KCDE aims to create a fertile environment for developing the necessary digital skills to adapt to the new trends in education and work. By promoting a culture of continuous learning, the organization ensures the preparation of the youth for a rapidly changing world.

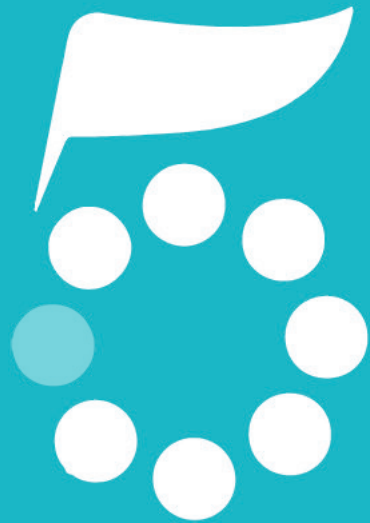
Looking forward to the continuity of its past successes, KCDE is ready to continue contributing to the development of education and innovation in Kosovo. Beyond the borders of the country, the organization aspires to have an impact on the regional and international scene of digital teaching and become a source of inspiration for other countries seeking to transform education for the future.

## Monograph Contributors: Staff, Associates, Partners, Beneficiaries

Lectured by: **Anita Kaçaniku**

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Kosova Center for Digital Education