

PRIVATE EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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Private education sector – general data and equity implications

Number of students in public and private education (year 2000):

Category of school	State institutions No. of pupils/students	Private institutions No. of pupils/students
Pre-elementary	80337	2543
Primary	543967	4717
Secondary	102971	1975
Tertiary	23000	0

Proportion of total educational expenditure:

Spent on public sector it is 12% of the state budget for year 2000.

For private sector there are not data.

Gender issues

There are not gender issues both in state and private sector as well. Pupils and students are proportionally males and females and there are not obstacles from families or other organisations for following the schools.

Special educational needs

There are few demands for some institutions on special educational needs. Their work is supposed to do in collaboration with foreign specialized for that purpose institutions or organizations.

Equity implications of current private educational provision:

The state sector and the Ministry of Education consider private sector partner as a challenge for improving conditions of teaching and learning in Albania. This sector,

recently growing and extending helps very much the education in the country. Students have more possibility to choose and parents to decide for the children education. Generally private institutions have good teachers, good equipment, in many cases they provide children transportation and other initiatives.

Private education sector – further description

There are not in Albania private student loan companies operating. According to Albanian legislation there are not obstacles for such activities. Ministry of Education and Science is preparing some recommendations in order to push the problem.

There are very small ‘chains’ of private schools/colleges operating. Only one of them is included. There are not Albanian companies involved in private sector of education. There are only two foreign companies involved in such activity.

There are some ‘vertically integrated’ private schools. The characteristic is that this vertically integration is only within the same school, organized as kindergarten, then as primary and secondary school. There are one or two attempts for music academies from primary to tertiary level.

Private distance education opportunities are not available. Even state sector in this field is limited. One of the fields could be teacher training, principals training and teacher diplomas for in-service teachers.

There is not in Albania a private tutoring market.

The private sector is very new in Albania. They are not yet producing or publishing curriculum materials. They are using still state sector curricula. Our Ministry of Education is encouraging them for optional curricula and teachers of this sector are invited to write articles or to participate in all state sector conferences. This is one way for approaching the problem. At any case, there are not obstacles to do it. The state is responsible for the in-service training of the private sector as well.

Private education sector – finance

Private sector pays fees to the state.

The private education sector is financed by themselves, mainly from the fees the students pay to the school and investments the owner of the school has done. Usually the owners are reach people and they appoint a principal for educational issues of the school. Usually the principals is a very good teacher or with good experience in education, an educational specialist.

Mainly the capital finance is given by the school owner, usually a reach person, and recurrent finance comes from the fees the student pay to the school. There are some community financing, philanthropy, local government subsidies, vouchers, NGO grants,

micro financing. There are not education with production, bank loans, foreign currency loans, World Bank projects, etc.

Private investment currently is not taking place in public education. However, their curricula and textbooks are those of the state sector and their teacher are prepared and trained from the state as well.

Private limited companies acting in private sector are very few, like Gjylistan and Sema, and foreing foundations like, Arsakeio, SOS Kinderdorf, Harry Fultz, Caritas.

Prospects for expansion and excess demand

The interest of both in-country private educational providers and investors is growing every day. However there are not still any interests from multinational education companies (mainly in abroad) in joint ventures or distance programs in developing regions.

In fact, every year the figures of demands are growing and there is some times a waiting list for private education. This is because private sector with its commodities for the students is more preferable for reach parents. The waiting list exists, because of the number of demands. With actual structure, the Ministry of Education can not to evaluate all demands in due time, because of the small group dealing with private sector, which is not a team working properly for the private sector. The demands, analysis of their curricula etc is done by the same directorate of primary and secondary education. It is the time to set up a structure dealing with the private sector only.

There are only very few cases of movement of students from public to the private sector, only when the economical situation permits it. The opposite movement is more frequent, due to the impossibility for paying the fees, or a very different system of education from the state sector, or the wish to have the same friends as in primary schools, some times discipline issues; some private schools are rigid in terms of discipline or they have separate schools for boys and girls.

Creating infrastructure for private schools, finding lands or hiring buildings, these are problems the private sector should solve by themselves. The state do not gives the license if the buildings do not meet the general requirements.

Regulatory environment

Compulsory education lasts eight years and includes pupils aged from 6 to 14 years old. The compulsory education is completely acquired in the primary schools. A child may work after 18 years old.

Private primary schools should have the same curricula as all Albanian compulsory education. They are allowed to have other subjects as well like starting the foreign language earlier then in state sector, a second foreign language, informatics knowledge etc. The assessment is almost the same as in the state sector, but there are attempts to introduce new methods of assessment as well. Teacher qualification is a requirement

highly controlled. Private sector is interested to get highly qualified teachers and their curricula is obligatory to be enclosed in the documents sent to the Ministry of Education in order to get the licence for opening of the private school. Greatest part of the teacher of the private sector has been instructed in the Faculties of Education of Albanian universities and they have some years of teaching experience, or, in few cases, they are retired teachers as employers. In addition of the curricula, the teachers should have a health and safety document.

The Ministry of Education and Science does accreditation and registration of private educational institutions. The Ministry controls all the private institutions documentation, how they meet all the requirements and decides to give or not the permit for opening of the private institution. If the institution has religion subjects or the teaching process will be in a foreign language, the Ministry analyses all the documentation and its conclusions is forwarded to the Government to decide for giving the licence to the private institution. If the institution is a school, the licence is given only before the starting of the school year.

The regulations on private investment in public education are the same, but the licence is given in any time (for courses and kindergardens). There are not particular regulations on private for-profit investment in education.

Foreign exchange financing of education is done between foundations and banks.

The regulatory environment of education is not politized.

Ministry of Education and Science is actually preparing its mid-term and long-term strategy for educational reform. This strategy will pass by the Government after several round tables and feedback from teachers, educational specialists and different NGOs operating in the field of education. The four strategy objectives are: the normalisation of the education in Albania, acquiring of its efficiency, quality assurance and having the levels of European education. The strategy intends further development of the private sector of education as well.

The regulations for land tenure (freehold/leasehold/other) and the leasing/renting conventions and practices is not a subject between the Ministry of Education and the private institutions, they are regulations between private institutions and other owners. The regulations, conventions and practices are the same as between other private subjects in the country.

The regulations regarding use, or change of use of land for educational purposes are issues between private institutions and local power of Albanian districts or municipalities. There is taxation of private educational institutions.

Investment climate

Actually it is a good and safe climate of investments on education in Albania. The number growing every day of the licence demands is an evidence. The Government and the Ministry of Education are encouraging this investment as well. Some months ago there was a national conference on private education. The conference analysed the current situation and future trends, measures to be undertaken in order to enlarge the private sector of education. There is a very good climate for foreign private investment. There are several foreign private institutions from Greece, Italy, Turkey, France and USA. Still the banks lend a very limited sum for private education, but we believe in the near future the banks will be very active lending for private education, due to the order and security in the country, the accountability of private sector and getting more foreign experience in such a field.