ARCADA

Increasing awareness and visibility

A visibility plan for the EU Twinning education project in Kosovo

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Abstract:

This thesis focuses on creating a visibility plan for the EU Twinning Education Project. The Twinning Project works in close co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo (MEST), municipal education directors (MEDs), and 134 schools where 92 schools are piloting the new Kosovo Core Curriculum (KCF). It also works with University of Prishtina (Faculty of Education), and other education professionals. The Project supports the Ministry of Education to implement the new curriculum in Kosovo. It also supports schools with teacher and management training, and by providing teaching equipment to 134 schools.

This thesis focuses on finding ways how to make the Project visible amongst principals of piloting schools and MEDs. A semi quantitative research was conducted with the help of a questionnaire including some open ended questions in order to find out what the target groups think, and based on these findings prepare a communications plan that includes descriptions of who to communicate with, when and which tools to use. With a positively high response-rate on the questionnaire the author managed to gain lots of valuable information regarding the satisfaction of the target groups, and in addition direct feedback of what communication tools the target groups wish the Twinning Project to approach them with.

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1   INTRODUCTION

The situation in Europe has changed a lot in the past years and even months. Kosovo has been part of the hot zone of Europe and it is gradually moving away from being a problematic country to a peaceful nation with lots of potential. Hopefully it will develop in the same way as it has since the Kosovo war 1998-1999. Other countries have given lots of help and the EU has donated lots of money for Kosovo to rebuild itself. EU is a very important part of this thesis as this thesis focuses on increasing awareness and visibility for an EU founded project.

The main purpose of this thesis is to prepare communications plan, or in other words a visibility plan for the EU Twinning Education Project in Kosovo. The plan aims to find better and more functional ways for the Twinning Project to increase the awareness and visibility in Kosovo. People getting aware of the Project is not only about hearing the name of the project but to also know what is the Project's objective, vision and why exactly function in Kosovo. A quantitative research was conducted, and based on the results the author gives recommendations on what communication tools the Twinning project should use when targeting its target audiences. The recommendations are in the form of a visibility plan. To make the plan easier to follow and to keep to a structure the SOSTAC model has been used as a tool to analyse and conduct the plan.

The author did her internship at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in Kosovo and worked during that time worked for the Twinning project. The Project is a 34 months long project as a joint consortium from the Finnish government, the joint Authority of Omnia and the Austrian government, from KulturKontakt Austria.

One of the Twinning Project's main aims is to support the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in implementation of the new curriculum. It has been planned to be implemented in all schools around Kosovo in 2016. The new curriculum differs a lot from the previous one by supporting an inclusive system where every pupil are treated equally. It also reduces the amount of shifts in schools, and it develops a more child friendly school environment (Ministry of Education, 2011).

The Twinning project focuses mostly on pre-university education. Pre-university education includes basic education as well as high-school and vocational school studies. At the moment education is compulsory and free of charge for grades 1-5 and 6-9

(Kosovo.com, 2015). However, a common issue is that too many children do not attend school at all or rarely. This is a problem especially in the rural areas of Kosovo where families have their children rather working and earning money instead of sitting in class (Lindroos, 2015). In order for the Project to raise more awareness of its existence and its main aims in Kosovo, the first step is to increase interest towards the Project among its main target groups. Only that way can the actual aim of the Project be reached.

1.1 Research aim

The outcome of this thesis is a visibility plan for the EU Twinning education project. The aim of the thesis is to make a communications plan where the target groups' opinions have been taken well into consideration, and it includes a part with suggestions for how to communicate with the target groups. The plan is carried out with the help of a SOSTAC model, which helps to make the plan more logical. However, this thesis will not include a budget, but it includes suggestions on what could be made, and it also mentions activities that have already been done on some level.

As there are several projects going on in Kosovo it is vital to make the project visible for the target groups. Once the target groups are aware of the project's aim and purpose there is a much larger chance for the project itself to be a successful one in front of the large public. Therefore, in order to make the target groups aware of the project, it is important to find the right way to communicate with them.

The Twinning project is an EU project, which not only means that there are some guidelines to follow, but also everything has to be carefully documented. This thesis will guide the Twinning project on selecting the effective marketing communication tools, which could be used. In order to be able to make a communications plan, or a visibility plan, a quantitative research was conducted as part of this thesis. The aim was to get as high response rate as possible, with answers that give important insights on how the target group thinks and how they think the Twinning project should communicate with them and other target groups. This information is valuable, because it makes it easier to plan and focus on the most effective communication tools.

A well-functioning plan cannot be made before knowing how to reach the target market. In addition, the target groups have a better understanding of the culture in Kosovo, and they know better what might draw people's attention whenever a project tries

to market itself. Therefore, the visibility plan is largely based on the outcome of the responses gathered from the questionnaire.

Since the Twinning project has several target groups it was not possible to ask and analyse everybody's opinion. Therefore, two main target groups were chosen and asked to take the quantitative questionnaire. The target groups consists of principals of piloting schools and municipal education directors (MEDs). Out of all the target groups, these two target groups were selected due to their professional position and the close co-operation with the project throughout its existence. In addition, due to the amount of people in these target groups it was more efficient to send out the questionnaire to all of them. It not only gave a clear picture of these people's opinions, but it was also more efficient for the author to analyse the answers and this way gain some valuable insights.

1.2 Research questions

When planning this thesis, it was not right away clear who exactly the primary target group is. The main target groups of the Twinning project are teachers, principals, municipal education directors (MEDs) and employees at MEST (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology). However, the real struggle was to decide if these groups are the same target groups that will be primarily focused on in this thesis. It is possible to have more than one target group, but because of the nature of the project (both duration and budget wise) it is important to select the right target group. Therefore, the author together with the Twinning project chose to conduct the survey by having principals and MEDs as respondents. These two target groups are the most important ones at this stage as they have lots of decision making power in the municipalities and schools, and they have worked closely with the project since its beginning.

The research questions help guide the author to reach the aim and purpose of the research. Purpose of this thesis is to make a plan on what different communication tools could help the Twinning project to increase its visibility and awareness. The more acquainted the project's target groups become with the project it will have a positive effect on increasing the importance of pre-university education in Kosovo. Even though the main aim of the thesis is to make the project visible, in return, as one thing leads to another, it will have an impact on the actual aim of the Twinning project, namely improving the education system in Kosovo.

Kosovo is a curious nation; however, people are very selective in what actually is important to them. Kosovar people are very much a laid back nation, which is not always a good thing, because it prevents people from noticing what is right in front of their eyes. A common problem that the project has faced with is the poor flow of information in schools; principals are always contacted in first hand, but relatively often the information does not move forward from the principal to the teachers. In some cases, principals have only informed their closest teacher colleagues. This is a significant problem that needs to be taken into careful consideration, and it will also have an impact on the research questions.

In order to reach the aim of this research the author has narrowed it down to the following questions and sub-questions:

1. **What marketing communication tools are potential tools for the Twinning project?**
   a. What communication tools does the target groups want the Twinning project to use?
   b. How does the target groups wish to be contacted
   c. How satisfied are the target groups in communicating with the project?
2. **How to get schools' staff more interested in improving the education in their school/municipality/nation?**
   a. What does the main target group of this thesis think could work when communicating with teachers?

These research questions will be the most important questions in order to reach the actual aim of the research, namely a visibility plan for the EU Twinning education project in Kosovo. As the project becomes more known to teaching professionals in Kosovo it will automatically "increase the awareness and visibility of pre-university education". Good pre-university education is the corner stone for every country. Luckily Kosovo has understood this and therefore the government of Kosovo requested an education Twinning project (Kaupunki, 2014).

2 KOSOVO'S SITUATION IN SHORT

"In 1999, during the Kosovo war some 850, 000 people fled or were ethnically cleansed -forced to abandon their homes – from the territory. However, ever since the end of the Balkan wars, the region has made huge strides in restoring normality. Indeed, for all their problems, the post-war Balkans are a success story, especially when contrasted with other post conflict areas of the world." (Judah, 2008)

Figure 1. Map of Kosovo (Besliu, 2012).

The history of Kosovo has been very eventful. Kosovo is geographically situated in the heart of the Balkans (see Figure 1), surrounded by Serbia in north, Macedonia in south-east, Albania in south-west and Montenegro in west. It is one of the poorest countries in Europe (Aneki.com, 2016) and there are many development projects going on by the EU, USAID, GIF and other entities and organizations. Several projects do not necessarily get all the necessary attention which they would need. Also, the people living in Kosovo have got quite frustrated about the current situation of the country. People have more interest in making a fast living for themselves or finding a better life outside of Kosovo. Recently a significant problem in has been that Kosovar people migrate out of Kosovo locals and look for a brighter future in some other European country (Salo, 2015).

The people who have indeed got so tired of the situation in Kosovo aim for EU countries. Some sources say around 200 000 people left Kosovo by the year 2015

(Alexander, 2015)(Salo, 2015). Most of them have been returned back home, because they cannot get a residence permit. Especially people from the countryside, (also some from larger cities) leave Kosovo; they sell their houses, cars, practically everything they own. The money they get from the items will be spent on their expensive tickets to EU. Eventually when people are forced to return back home they have no money, no property and they have to start from scratch. The unfortunate part is that the majority of the people who have left Kosovo have very low level of education (Alexander, 2015).

Politics is a very hot topic not only in Kosovo but in the entire Balkans. During autumn-winter 2015-2016 there have been a few tear-gas incidents in the parliament (Kllokoqi, 2016).This raises a question concerning the sophistication and education level of the people that are part of the parliament. How can such behaviour be tolerated? These are the people that are making the most important decisions of the country. Having such decision makers in the parliament sounds quite scary and sad as the aim of the country is to build up a well-functioning nation that also has good education. The ideal situation would be for Kosovar to value their own education instead of constantly preferring other countries before their own.

Kosovo is a very young country as it gained its independency in 2008. It is a relatively safe country and it has lots of potential; majority of the people are between 20-35-years-old. However, lots of people are unemployed, especially the young population (Liason office of Sweden in Pristina, 2008). In order to increase the possibility of empowerment people are encouraged to study, but in Kosovo it is not as black and white. A significant problem has been for long corruption and people buying their university degrees (Likmeta, Vezaj, & Drita, 2008). This means that there are lots of people who have so called graduated, but in reality they are not experts in their field. Also, many people do not believe in the benefits that education gives them. Therefore, it is vital to get people to understand the benefits of education.

If Kosovo wishes to become a stronger nation, it all begins by making the pre-university education strong with highly educated teachers. More co-operation between different entities is important. For a country with limited resources it is surprisingly common that entities, especially those ones that in a way fight for same financial support from the government, do not want to work with one another and there is some tension between them.

3 INTRODUCING THE EU TWINNING EDUCATION PROJECT

The Twinning project is an EU education project, which in this case has two partnering countries and a beneficiary country. The Twinning project, which this visibility plan is prepared for, is run by Finland and its junior partner Austria. The beneficiary country is Kosovo. The idea of a Twinning project is that the beneficial country, needs to do the work themselves, but they receive support from the partnering countries. According to the European Commission the meaning of twinning is "a European Union instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. Twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities" (European Commission, 2016)**.**

Kosovo is in the process of implementing a new curriculum before the year 2016. The Twinning project has been supporting the implementation of the curriculum since March 2014 when the project begun. The project is 34 months long. In addition to the curriculum work, the Twinning project trains teachers in 92 piloting schools, and 132 schools receive school material financed by the European Union. All in all there are 134 beneficiary schools.

"Two Project Leaders, one on behalf of the Member State, Finland, leading the project, Mr. Sampo Suihko, the other of the beneficiary country, Kosovo, Mr. Ferit Idrizi, and our Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) Mrs. Kirsi Lindroos are the backbone of the project. The RTA coordinates the project and is seconded from the lead MS to the beneficiary country for the whole project duration" (project, 2015).

Experts from both Finland and Austria travel constantly on short missions to Kosovo. These experts plan and implement teacher trainings for teachers in the piloting schools in seven different subjects. The subject areas are (1) mathematics, (2) languages & communication, (3) ICT, (4) health & wellbeing, (5) natural sciences, (6) inclusive education, and (7) special education. The idea is that teachers will not only participate in one training, but at least two sessions are held with each region's schools, and same teachers are supposed to take part in both training days.

As leadership and management is a vital part of every organization, school, company and working group, the Twinning project arranges also leadership and management

trainings for the Twinning working group, MEDs and school principals. These trainings have so far been very successful and participants have got a totally new perception of what is good leadership. A challenge in Kosovo is that due to the hierarchy many opinions and decisions are not made as it may affect employees even on personal levels (Hofstede, 2016). For example, if a person who is not in a leader position speaks before the boss in a meeting, it can be regarded as unacceptable. The idea of the leadership and management trainings is to make participants understand to listen to one another regardless of work position or social status.

The Minister of Education Mr. Arsim Bajrami has been in close co-operation with the project and it has given the project a chance to be involved in legislation work. This has helped a lot in increasing the visibility of the project. Mr. Bajrami has taken part in the project's meetings and conferences, which has naturally brought some media attention.

The main aim for the Twinning project is to increase the importance of education in Kosovo, and provide schools with more knowledge and also material. On a general level, people have shown huge interest in the project and people are very curios to hear more. However, the information travels in a different way than for example in the western countries. A developing country such as Kosovo does not have the best infrastructure yet, and this affects the flow of information. Also, the culture and people's life priorities impacts as well.

The project has been visible both on the field when visiting schools for different events such as teacher trainings, and when taking part in fairs, meetings, conferences etc. Some TV and radio stations have also been interested in the Twinning project and that way the project has been mentioned several times on a national level. However, still surprisingly many teachers are not aware of the project. Even teachers in piloting schools. There can be several reasons, but one significant reason is that teachers do not want to renew their teaching methods and they refuse to take part in teacher trainings. Another reason is that teachers are not encouraged to teach differently by principals or co-workers.

Also, another problem is that head masters of schools do not share their information with their colleagues. This could be argued, but by the experience of the author one reason is the different power games that are going on in municipalities, regions and in schools. People are afraid of losing their positions, which increases significantly the

power games between for example principals and deputy principals. In short, some individuals are more concerned about their work position rather than developing their schools.

The Twinning project has three main components which in other words are the focus points of the project. Each of these components have three main activities. The following descriptions of each component and its activities are directly taken from the Twinning project's official documents that describe the project in detail. The text has been summarized to include the main things for each component and activity.

3.1 Component 1

This component focuses on piloting and implementation of the KCF (Kosovo Curriculum Framework) and Core Curriculum. It includes three main activities:

- Activity 1.1 - Piloting and Implementation of the new KCF and Core Curriculum
- Activity 1.2 - Increasing Teaching Competency in Accordance with KCF
- Activity 1.3 - Strengthening Co-operation and Connectivity in the Kosovo Pre-Education Sector

In Activity 1.1 the aim is to support the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and the municipal education directorates (MEDs) by raising awareness of the new Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) and Core Curriculum (CC). This is done by piloting and gradual implementation of the KCF and CC. Support material for teachers will be also provided in selected integrated subjects. This is all part of a professional development plan, where the Twinning project includes support in revising teaching and learning material. The new curriculum has been taken into account in the entire process. In addition, diversity and inclusion has an important role in the aforementioned actions. In this activity, schools, MEST and MEDs are supported with different kinds of training and mentoring. The trainings will include practical examples and activities.

Activity 1.2. focuses on supporting the teacher development and prepare them for the implementation of the new curriculum. The Twinning project will do this in cooperation with the MEST, MEDs, schools and the University of Prishtina (Faculty of Education in particular). The goal of supporting the professional development is to update teacher competency.

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The main aim of Activity 1.3 is to assist the Kosovo pre-university education system institutions to connect with one another and this way build and educational ecosystem. This happens by sharing best practice of connectivity form EU Member States. MEST, MEDs and KCF piloting schools will also build capacity on governance, leadership and school management.

All of the aforementioned activities will support MEST and University of Prishtina and other key stakeholders by mentoring, advising, training and coaching activities and providing examples from EU Member States. The Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) and her counter partner take actively part in planning and scheduling experts (STEs) activities (Project T. E., 2015).

3.2 Component 2

Component 2 stands for quality assurance in education. This component is the main component of the junior partner Austria. This component consists of three main activities:

- Activity 2.1 - Support to the development of a quality assurance system based on EU good practices.
- Activity 2.2 - School based quality assurance
- Activity 2.3 - Effective Monitoring Mechanisms and Instruments.

Activity 2.1 focuses on supporting MEST and relevant stakeholders for developing a quality assurance strategy. The aim is also to prepare a roadmap for implementing the strategy. The given support will be on the already existing practices in Kosovo, and examples will be given from EU Member states and the adaptation will be done in such way that functions in Kosovo.

Activity 2.2 aims to assist MEST, and specifically the inspectorate, MEDs, head teachers/school principals and teachers in pilot municipalities. The aim is to develop and implement effective and efficient school based quality assurance processes and instruments.

Activity 2.3 aims to support MEST and relevant stakeholders to develop effective and efficient mechanism and instruments for monitoring and evaluating pre-university education. Stakeholders are supported in developing a roadmap, which will help to guide the overall quality assurance strategy (Project T. E., Component 2, 2015).

3.3 Component 3

The third component focuses on the learning environment; school supplies and equipment. Also this component comprises of three main activities:

- Activity 3.1 - Analysing and Developing Learning Environments to Support the KCF
- Activity 3.2 - Procurement to Support the KCF
- Activity 3.3 - Monitoring and Supporting the Supplies and Equipment Delivery and Usage

The aim of activity 3.1 is to analyse the needs of basic supplies and equipment in priority schools in Kosovo. 10 schools that pilot the KCF were the starting point of the fieldwork and thereafter a much broader analysis was done.

In activity 3.2 the main activity was to prepare the contract documents for the school supplies.

The last activity, activity 3.3 is to monitor the delivery of the school supplies and also arrange regional training sessions. This way teachers are aware of how to use the equipment (Project T. E., Component 3, 2015).

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter focuses on presenting previous literature related to the research questions. In order to run a project where the aim is to develop the school system of an entire nation, it is important to find out what images or perceptions people have about education. At the moment, the political situation is a bit concerning and corruption is very high in Kosovo (Sadiku, 2010); private interests have more value than common interests. Once understanding the background of the country, what the Twinning project is all about, what is exactly meant by visibility, and what sorts of EU guidelines (European Commission, Communication and Visibility manual for European Union External Actors, 2010, p. 5) does the author have to follow, how the target groups think, only then is it possible to make a visibility plan for the Twinning project.

The theoretical framework will go through the most important points of the Visibility manual for European Union financed project. The concept of a visibility plan will be discussed including vision and goals, identifying and segmenting the target market,

and discussing communication tools and the communication mix with direct marketing specifically in mind.

4.1 EU visibility guidelines

As the Twinning project is an EU project, there are several guidelines to follow as EU is a brand itself. It is important to have the EU flag in all the activities where the Twinning is somehow taking part in (European Commission, 2010, p. 31).The project has its own motto as well:" Learning Together" and it also includes an own logo.

There are strict rules on which flag to use when and what other colours/colour combinations are allowed to be used. According to the European Commission: "The logo should preferably be printed on a white background. Multicolour backgrounds should be avoided, especially those involving a colour that clashes with the blue. Where a coloured background is unavoidable, a white border with a thickness equal to 1/25th of the height of the rectangle must be used". Also, "Contractors and/or implementing partners should be aware that when reproducing the EU flag in newsletters and other graphic presentations it must be used in its entirety, without any alterations or additions made to it. Thus the EU flag must not be shown to incorporate any flag or symbol of another country, donor or institution. Each should be presented separately from the other" (European Commission, 2010, p. 31).

Figure 2 shows three different examples on which EU flag can be used depending on the background colours of the document. The first option with the blue background and yellow stars is the first recommended option. The two other ones should be used if some other colour clashes with the blue flag (European Commission, 2010, p. 31).

The visibility manual has also given the colour codes for the blue and yellow colours; the blue is RGB: 0/51/153 (hexadecimal: 003399) and the yellow corresponds to RGB: 255/204/0 (hexadecimal: FFCC00) (Office, 2015).

Figure 2. Examples of the EU flag depending on the background

Having some specific guidelines does save lots of time. EU provides exact colour codes, templates for different documents, logos and so on (European

Commission, 2010, pp. 5, 31-32). This also means that whatever is published in the name of the project must be carefully thought through and checked by the Resident Twinning Advisor. More importantly is to remember that whatever is published in the name of the Twinning project European Union "is not responsible under any circumstances for the contents of communication by contractors and/or implementing partners" (European Commission, 2010).

According to the Communication and Visibility manual provided by the European Commission the visibility plan needs to include a description of the key audiences and target groups. This is essential as the right audience(s) should be targeted and the content targeted at them should interest them. The plan needs to also include a description of communication activities with details of the nature of the activities and responsibilities for delivering the activities. In addition, and explanation why those tools should be used (European Commission, 2010, p. 8).

The manual also describes the communication activities which include: press releases, press conferences, press visits, leaflets, brochures and newsletters, websites, display panels, banners, vehicles, supplies and equipment, promotional items, photographs, audio-visual productions, public events and visits, and information campaigns. All of the aforementioned activities should add the phrase "This project is funded by the European Union" and also the EU flag (European Commission, 2010, p. 17).

What comes to press releases they should be issued always before the action at hand. They need to include the EU flag, mention of being funded by the EU, and also mention the amount of EU funding. Press conferences are to be organised in cooperation with the Commission (European Commission, 2010, p. 18).

Leaflets, brochures and newsletters work as basic information about the project. They should be always made with the target audience in mind, with short and simple texts. Also these need to incorporate the basic information about the project being founded by the EU. Websites are a basic tool of communication. If the project is a longer project it can be agreed that the website is independent and that way it'll have a longer life (European Commission, 2010, p. 19). In the Twinning project's case for example the website will be open 3 years after the Project ends.

Promotional items such as notebooks and pens also need to include the EU flag. If there is enough space the key phrases should be included. These items can be distributed

during different actions where the Project is active in (European Commission, 2010, p. 20) such as teacher trainings or conferences.

4.2 Visibility plan

A marketing plan is needed for the project to become more visible. For the Twinning project this plan is rather called a visibility plan or a communications plan. EU has made guidelines for each EU financed project, and each project need to prepare a separate visibility plan (European Commission, 2010, p. 5). That is why this thesis uses the term visibility plan instead of a marketing plan.

In order to reach the goals of making the project visible it is important to have a thorough communications plan that improve the visibility among the project's important target groups.

Since the Twinning project's main target groups are principals and teachers of the piloting school, MEDs, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), other educational professionals, parents and pupils it is not smart to waste money on mass media communication. Especially since the mass media focuses on the large public. Instead, it is important to know what kinds of communication methods work for the project's main target group. It is also important to take into consideration what communication tools people have access to. For example, the Twinning project can use Facebook as one social media communications tool, because many people in Kosovo use Facebook (How do Kosovars use the Internet, 2013).

The project's target groups involve people who live in very different circumstances; some piloting schools are located in cities, some in villages and some in even more remote locations. Some locations barely get internet access or then the connection is very slow due to the environment they live in. The mountains surrounding Kosovo can disturb the connection even for normal phone calls. Also, many are still not used to use Internet and/or social media. This needs to be taken into consideration when deciding of the right communication tools.

4.3 SOSTAC

When making a marketing plan a SOSTAC model can be very useful. SOSTAC stands
for:

> ➢ **Situation** - where are we now?
> ➢ **Objectives** - where do we want to be?
> ➢ **Strategy** - how do we get there?
> ➢ **Tactics** - how exactly do we get there?
> ➢ **Action** - the details of tactics/what is our plan?
> ➢ **Control** - how do we monitor performance/did we get there?

Figure 3. SOSTAC model

The situation analysis includes knowing the customer insights. (Smith, 2012) This infor-
mation the author has gathered in her research part, and the outcome of the results will be
used when describing the strategy and tactics of how to communicate with the target
groups. It also includes a SWOT analysis where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities
and threats of the project are mentioned.

Objectives include vision and mission. It describes where the Project is heading
towards and where it wants to be. Strategy is about how to reach the goals. This includes

segmentation, targeting and positioning, sequence of events, how everything is integrated to fit the market and what tools would be used. Tactics are the details of strategy and they explain how *exactly* the Project will reach its aim. The Action is about the execution process; who does what and when. The last stage is about control where the Project monitors its performance. This could include web analytics for example the website and Facebook traffic. Later on new surveys can be sent to target groups in order to see if their opinions have changed (Smith, 2012).

The first four parts (SOST) of the SOSTAC model will be discussed in the following four sub-chapters. The last two parts (AC) of the model will be discussed further in the chapter where the author gives communication recommendations based on the research results.

4.3.1 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is part of the *situation analysis* and it helps to evaluate what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats does the Twinning Project has. The tool is very useful when planning out a strategy and it can be used when making a plan for a product, industry, person, or a company. The Strengths and Weaknesses are attributes of the internal origin. Opportunities and Threats are attributes of external origin. Strengths and Opportunities are seen as helpful in achieving the objective, and weaknesses and threats are on the other hand seen as harmful (Taylor, 2016). For this SWOT analysis the author has thought about elements that will affect the visibility plan in one way or another.

STRENGTHS
- It is a twinning project
- Highly educated staff/experts
- Lots of resources and knowledge
- Language skills and good interpretors
- Dedicted RTA, assistants and experts
- Good networks in Kosovo, Finland and Austrial (and other countries too)
- Close co-operation with MEST

WEAKNESSES
- Large amount of work for the amount of people working for the project
- Cultural differences between the people working in the Project
- Sometimes scarse resources to focus on visibility work

SWOT
ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES
- Young nation with desire to improve
- People willing to change things in Kosovo
- New Curricula to enter schools; teaching and leaarning is moving towards the 21st Century
- Internet becoming more and more accessible to everyone

THREATS
- Cultural differences between the target groups
- Working habits differ from beneficiary country
- People's interest in working for a common cause
- Large differences between schools and municipalities
- Many people struggle with using the Internet
- Problems with the website

Figure 4. SWOT-analysis of the Twinning Education Project

4.3.2 Vision and goals

There needs to be a brief statement of what is the future plan for the project. Vision and goals are part of the *objective* and it focuses on where the Twinning Project wants to be. The overall Project Objective is to develop quality and improve the education in Kosovo (Project E. T., About us, 2015). The goal for the visibility plan is however different, because the plan and the Twinning project are separate things. The goal for the plan is to identify the best communication tools that will help the project to reach effectively their target audience. In addition, the outcome of this visibility plan will be added to the Twinning project's final report that will be sent to the EU office.

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4.3.3 Identifying and segmenting the target market

In order to even know who the project should communicate with it is important to identify and segment the target market. This is part of *strategy* and it deals with how the Twinning project will get to its aim. In the book *Principles of Marketing* edition 6, Kotler & co. lines up the different ways of segmenting consumer markets. There are four major segmentation variables and each of these include several smaller segments.

The first one is *geographic* segmentation, which means that the markets are divided "into different geographical units, such as nations, regions, states, countries, cities or even neighbourhoods (Kotler;Armstrong;Harris;& Piercy, Principles of Marketing, 2013). The second is *demographic* segmentation, which means that the markets are divided "into segments based on age, gender, family size, family life cycle, income, occupation, education, religion, ethnicity, generation and nationality (Kotler;Armstrong;Harris;& Piercy, 2013). The third is the *psychographic* segmentation which is divided into "segments based on social class, life-style or personal characteristics. Personality could also categorized into this segment (Kotler;Armstrong;Harris;& Piercy, 2013). The fourth and final major segmentation is the *behavioural* segmentation. It divides consumers into "segments based on their knowledge, attitudes, uses or responses to a product (Kotler;Armstrong;Harris;& Piercy, 2013).

When beginning the project of this visibility plan it was a bit unclear to identify the target market. It was confusing to decide and understand if the project itself had the same or different target market as this visibility plan has. After some careful consideration the author came to the conclusion that for this thesis the focus will be on only two main target groups.

The segment that will be focused on has three major segments excluding the psychographic. The target groups have been divided into an audience based on their nation (geographic), occupation (demographic), and on their knowledge (behavioural). In other words, the target group for this communication plan are principals of the Twinning project's piloting schools and MEDs. Even though these two groups are the main targets for this thesis and visibility plan, they have been asked in the questionnaire about their *opinion* on how to communicate with the project's other target groups such as teachers and the general public.

4.3.4 Marketing communication tools

The Twinning project does not have traditional customers like a company would have. Instead, it needs to focus on engaging the target group to work on a common cause: improving the education in Kosovo. However, in order to communicate in the best possible way with these people it is important to build a relationship with them and create value for them. People want to know what's in it for them. So, in order to know how exactly the Twinning project will reach its aim, having the right *tactics* figured out is the key to communicate in an effective way.

The communication mix consists of a blend of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and direct marketing tools (Kotler;Armstrong;Harris;& Piercy, 2013). The target groups that will be focus in this thesis are relatively small, therefore they should be addressed directly and on a more individual basis. The very core of direct marketing is to "shift focus from mass to personalised communications" (Fill & Jamieson, 2011, p. 16). This includes for example newsletters per email that is meant specifically for principals or MEDs. Further on, the Project can make newsletters directed primarily to teachers.

Personal selling could also be used by the Project when persuading or reminding an individual or a group (Fill & Jamieson, 2011, p. 14)about the Twining project. It could be a reminder of the project's Facebook page, website, or reminding of a workshop. Personal selling enables instant feedback (Fill & Jamieson, 2011, p. 14), but it might take more time as the audience cannot be too large.

Public Relations is another type of communications tool that has been used by the Project. According to *Marketing Communications* by Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson PR "publicity involves the dissemination of messages through third-party media such as magazines, newspapers or news programmes. There is no charge for the media space or time, but there are costs incurred in the production of the material" (Fill & Jamieson, 2011, p. 15). As our ways of communicating has changed social media is also part of PR (Cohen, 2011) and creating valuable content on the Project's social media pages is a good way to reach the target groups.

4.4 Literature used

The Balkans have a rather unique culture which is very fascinating but sometimes difficult to understand by representatives of other cultures. The near history of Kosovo is sad and violent due to the Kosovo war. Therefore, it is important to get an overview of the historical perspective and the impact the war still has on people, because it affects a lot the nation's attitudes and perception on life.

For the marketing part in this thesis, visibility and awareness theories are discussed. "Principles of Marketing" by Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong, Lloyd C. Harris and Nigel Piercy will be a vital literature source for the marketing part as it explains the very basics of marketing. The author will also discuss what exactly is meant by a visibility plan and how and if it differ from a marketing plan.

Another important book dealing with communication is "Marketing Communications" by Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson from Edinburgh Business School. It discusses in more detail the *marketing communications mix* which can be used in order to communicate with a target audience.

As for the project's part, the EU Twinning project has lots of material, which the author has access to, and it has been produced by the project, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and the European Union. These include for example the new curriculums, EU guidelines for a visibility plan, and some important facts about the project and its aims. It is also important to be aware of what sorts of activities the Twinning project has taken part in and what sorts of visibility actions have been taken so far. All the things that has increased the visibility of the Twinning project must be included in the final visibility plan as the EU needs to be aware of what has been done, what will be done and what could be still done. Various websites, newspaper articles and PDF articles have also worked as important literature.

5   RESEARCH METHOD

Quantitative research method was used for gathering primary data for this thesis. The essential of this research method is to collect numerical data that can be measured. It can be analysed by using statistics, whereas using a qualitative method the results are rather descriptive (Atlas.ti, 2016).

The market research for this visibility plan was done by using a questionnaire that has questions with different options to choose from. It also includes some open-ended questions which give some more insights on how the target group thinks. Due to the open-ended questions the research used is why it is not 100% quantitative.

Quantitative method allows the researcher to get results from a much larger audience (Atlas.ti, 2016). If only a few people had been interviewed the overall opinion of the target group would not have been reached. However, in order to make further findings the questionnaire included some open-ended questions for short answers.

5.1 Material

The main source of material was collected through a semi-quantitative research. Participants of the research were principals and MEDs. All of the respondents are (should be) acquainted with the project and at least know the basic purpose of the Twinning project. Most of the target group respondents have also taken part in leadership and management trainings held by the project.

Secondary data that has been collected on the Internet, books and articles are a very important part of used material for this thesis. It will give a better understanding for the background of the project's beneficiary country, about the project itself, and about the marketing theory.

5.2 Approach

In this thesis the inductive approach will be used. This means that theories will be formulated towards the end of the research. It begins by observations, which for this thesis is the research, theory and the author's own experiences (Research Methodolgy, 2016). After all this research has been made, a theory is formed. The visibility plan is the theory. With some further research it will be easier to understand what communication tools can work at least in theory in Kosovo. Whatever happens after the plan has been made and executed is then testing the theory in practice.

It is assumed that we can influence people's perceptions. By default, the belief is that with the help of marketing it is possible to influence people's opinions (Dictionary, Marketing Objectives, 2016). In this case, they will become interested in and engaged

with the project and therefore interested in education and its meaning. The assumption is that it can be influenced. The quality of education in Kosovo is being developed more and more constantly (President Tarja Halonen, 2015). The more people are interested in the development work the more they will work for it. Kosovars need to believe in the talent that exists in their own country. One important goal of the Twinning project is to motivate educational professionals.

5.3 Data collection

In this thesis secondary and primary sources are used respectively. Secondary data was be collected from previously mentioned literature and internet sources. Primary data was collected in order to gain an insight of how well the project's target groups are aware of the Twinning project, and their ideas on what different communication tools could and should be used to spread the information about the project and its purpose. Having the target group answering the questionnaire gave both the author of this thesis and the project some good insights of how the target group thinks about the communication of the project. Marketing literature will give an insight on how to get people's attention and interest and this helps when deciding which communication approaches to use.

The author conducted her research in Kosovo during her visit on the 14th of March until the 19th of March. During the first day of the visit the author spoke with the project's RTA and assistant of what is the most effective way of getting in touch with the respondents and came to a conclusion about sending it through email. Also, the questions of the questionnaire was reviewed, discussed and translated during the first day of the visit. After sending out the questionnaire respondents were given a week time to complete it.

The author has managed to gain a broad network of connections in Kosovo. Hence, the primary data was collected through a quantitative questionnaire where the respondents were principals of the project's piloting schools and MEDs. The survey was done with the help of Google Forms and the link of the survey was sent to all the possible respondents of the target groups. Google Forms makes it possible to see a summary of all the respondents' answers, or see them individually.

Principals and MEDs were chosen to be the target groups, because of their high importance and influence in Kosovo. They are also some of the main target groups of the

project, and their opinions at this stage is very important. The people in these groups affect a lot on how schools around Kosovo work. There are 134 schools in Kosovo that are in close co-operation with the Twinning project. The survey was sent to all the principals from these 134 schools. There are 32 municipalities in Kosovo, and therefore there are 32 MEDs. All in all the original sample size was 168 people; both Albanian and Serbian speakers are included in this group of people. 24 people out of 168 were Serbian speakers; 8 of them took the questionnaire. 144 Albanian speakers were asked to take the questionnaire; 75 of them took the questionnaire. Percentagewise $33,33\%$ of the Serbians and $52,08\%$ of the Albanians took the questionnaire.

The response rate of the entire questionnaire was in the end $49,4\%$, meaning that 83 people took the survey. The respondents had one week time to complete the 10-15 minute long questionnaire and they were required to give an answer to each question. They were reminded of the questionnaire one day before the deadline.

Language barrier was be a slight challenge for the interviewer as respondents speak either Albanian or Serbian. However, the Twinning project has qualified interpreters whose services the author used in order to get everything translated. It did result in some misinterpretations or misunderstandings as the written responses had to be translated into English.

The Twinning project's RTA's assistant Mrs. Alberta Alihajdari was a major help for the author to execute the survey. She communicated directly with the possible respondents and helped with delegating all the necessary documents that needed to be translated.

The survey itself was done with the help of a questionnaire where the respondents had eight multiple choice questions and some open questions for each multiple chose question where respondents were asked to elaborate more on why they think in a certain way. They were also asked to rate their existing knowledge of the project and how they think the project should communicate with them. The actual questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

If the response rate is high, the less people have to be asked to take the survey. Knowing the culture in Kosovo, the expectations were not set too high, but the response rate was brilliant. It clearly showed the high interest amongst the target group and their willingness to work for a common good.

5.4 Data analysis

As there were be several participants that took the questionnaire, the analysis part was time-consuming. It was positive to see that respondents were from many parts of Kosovo and not only from Prishtina. Having said that, people from smaller municipalities were able to get their voice heard.

The results of the questionnaire required a lot of translation help as most of the questions had a part where the respondents had to explain why they think in a certain way. Thanks to the effective translator Mrs. Sofije Sadiku the author managed to get all the necessary texts translated in order to begin the analysis of the research. 4 pages with bullet pointed answers were translated from Serbian to English, and 28 pages from Albanian to English.

Since the research is a quantitative research it is possible to measure the results and by using tables and graphs it is easier to get a better understanding of how to engage the target group. The open ended questions also gave some insights of why the target groups think in a certain way. Information gathered from this research was not only important for this thesis, but for the project as well. A follow-up questionnaire will be conducted later in 2016 in order to see if respondents' opinions have changed.

The analysis begun by counting the amount of participants; amount of female and male respondents. The amount of principals and MEDs was also an important factor because their responses have been compared for questions 1 to 8. Also, the location of the respondents was vital in order to see which parts the respondents are from. Three tables were created in order to see the statistics of all the respondents, only the Albanian speaking respondents, and the Serbian speaking respondents. Each graph for questions 1 to 8 have been categorized in the same way, including a comparison between principals and MEDs.

Google Forms gives its user a summary of all the answers, however it was more sufficient to add the answers directly to excel and there draw the graphs and later copy them to this document. The x axis on the graphs show the scale that respondents were asked to use (scale 1 to 5, or no opinion). The y-axis shows the amount of respondents in individual respondents or in overall percentage. However, for the comparison between the principals and MEDs the y-axis shows the amount of respondents in percentage.

The questionnaire has a question 9 and a slot for *other comments*. These two questions were more for the project's interest than for this thesis. Therefore, the author will not pay any further attention to those two questions.

5.5 Data interpretation

When interpreting the results the key was to see if there are any major differences between the respondents' opinions, and overall what the general opinion of each question is. The questions that give options for the respondent to choose from were sufficiently put into excel. Graphs make it easier to interpret the results and see if there is a certain pattern for each question.

The most challenging part of the research was to interpret the open ended questions, especially because many respondents have misunderstood some of the questions, or their answer relates only a fraction to what is being asked. All the answers have not been mentioned in the *results* part of this thesis. The author tried to select the most frequently mentioned answers or answers that were significant for that specific question.

Translated text can also always vary a bit from the original language, and that affects the data interpretation to some extent. Also, the literacy skills of the respondents may have caused some difficulties when translating the answers. Kosovo is full of different sub-dialects (Kwintessential, 2016). Even small villages next to one another use their own dialects that are not always understood by even the same language speakers.

6 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The following table (table 1) and the charts show the results of the survey in a visual form. All the questions have been categorized in such way that it is possible to see every respondents' responses in one graph, a comparison in percentage between the Albanian and Serbian respondents in another graph, and a comparison between principals and MEDs in a third graph.. Each questions (questions 1-8) included also an extra question where the respondents were asked to elaborate more on why they had chosen a specific score.
In order for the reader to get a better understanding of the sample size, respondents' demographics and location table 1 shows the information in more detail.

		Albanian	Serbian	All
Gender	Female	21	1	22
	Male	55	7	61
Profession	Principal	64	8	72
	MED	11	0	11
Town/Village	Gjakova	7		7
	Peja	6	1	7
	Suhareka	6		6
	Gjilan	4	1	5
	Prizren	5		5
	Vushtrri	5		5
	Mitrovica	4		4
	Podujeva	4		4
	Prishtina	4		4
	Deçan	3		3
	Dragash	2	1	3
	Kamenica	1	2	3
	Lipjan	3		3
	Obiliq	2	1	3
	Fushë-Kosovë	2		2
	Hani i Elezit	2		2
	Kaçanik	2		2
	Novoberde	2		2
	Rahovec	2		2
	Shterpce	2		2
	Viti	2		2
	Ferizaj	1		1
	Gračanica		1	1
	Istog	1		1
	Klina	1		1
	Ranilug		1	1
	Shtime	1		1
	Skënderaj	1		1

Table 1. Demographics of the respondents

In the next few pages questions 1-8 and 10-12 in the questionnaire are shown in graphs. In the end of the question there is a small comment, and also, the author has included the most frequently said or significant (in the author's opinion) comments made by the respondents. Using a scale of 1=not at all to 5= very much, the respondents were asked to

rate the questionons based on their knowledge and opinion. After each questions respondents were asked to elaborate more on why they think in a certain way. The first graph for each question (questions 1-8) show the answers for all the respondents. The next two figures are comparisons and they are shown in percentage form; Albanian and Serbian respondents were compared as well as principals and MEDs.

6.1 Respondents' awareness of the Twinning Project
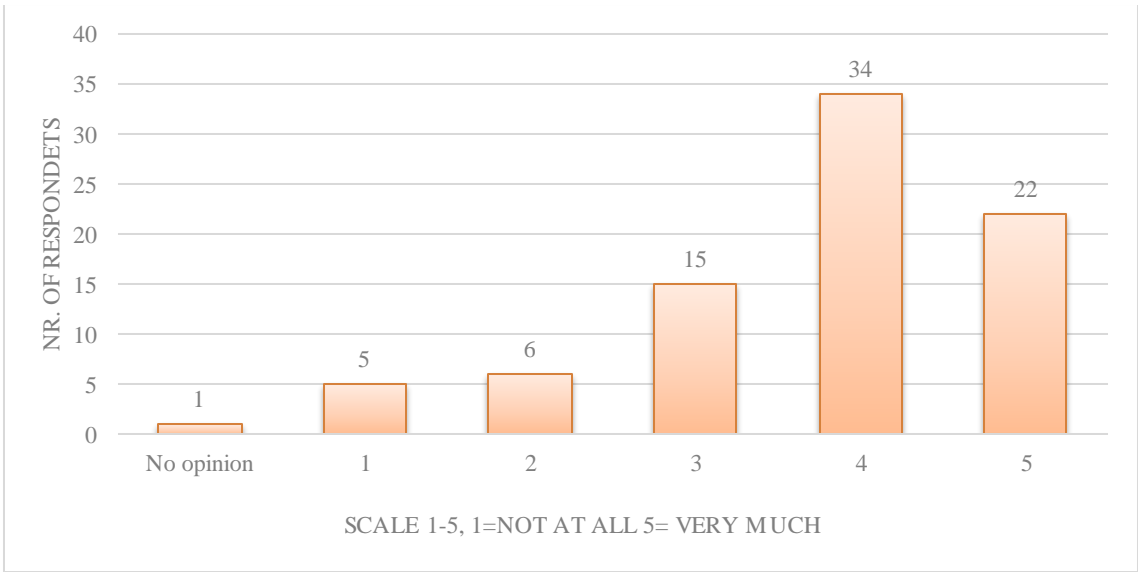
Figure 5. How well are <u>all</u> the respondents aware of the Twinning Project?

The majority of respondents seem to be aware of the Twinning project. In addition to giving a score from 1-5 or *no opinion,* this question respondents were asked to elaborate shortly on what they know so far about the project. As the chart shows, the majority have a good understanding of the project and this also shows in the comments. Some were however only aware of the different trainings that the project has held for schools, MEST and MEDs, and they also knew about the equipment that the project has supported schools with. A few respondents misunderstood the question.

This question is important, because it is good to know how well the respondents know the project, especially since they are important target groups of the project. An important discovery is that, knowing that all the respondents have for sure got information

about the project and many taken part in for example the project's trainings or other meetings, there are still some who say they are not aware of the Twinning project. Everyone can make their own assumptions of how come this is the case.
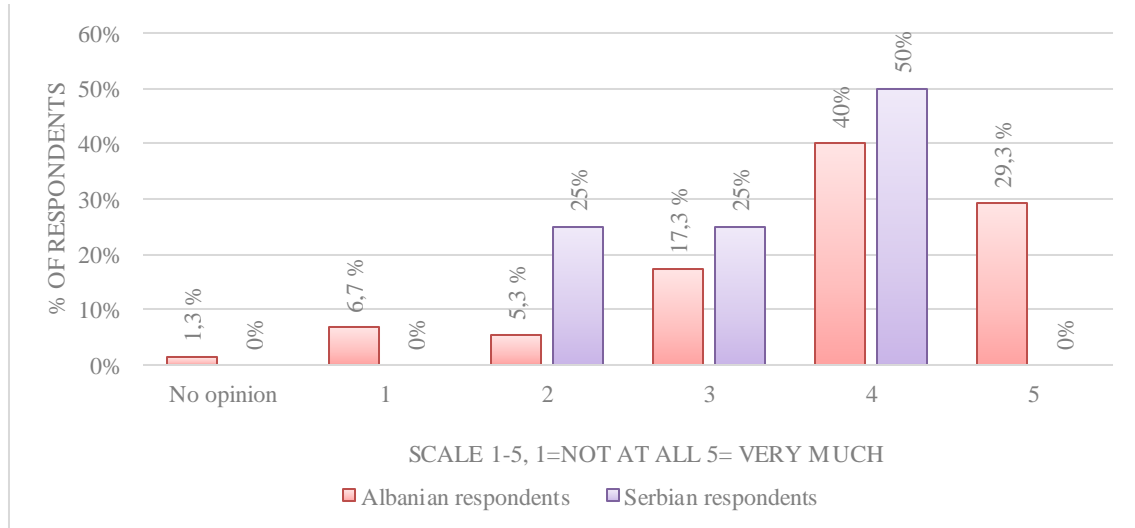
Figure 6. How well are the respondents aware of the Twinning Project (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?

Figure 6 shows some difference between the Albanian and Serbian respondents. However, since there are 67 more Albanian respondents it is quite difficult to make any large final conclusions on what kinds of differences are between these two ethnic groups. Serbians belong to the minorities in Kosovo and they tend to feel discriminated and not noticed (Kosovo, 2016). This graph shows that the Serbian respondents seem to be somewhat well aware of the project, which is a positive sign. Serbian schools have been very interested in the Twinning project's work, but the higher decision makers often do not let them take part in the project's trainings, meetings or conferences due to political reasons. This the author got to witness herself during her internship at MEST in spring-summer 2015.
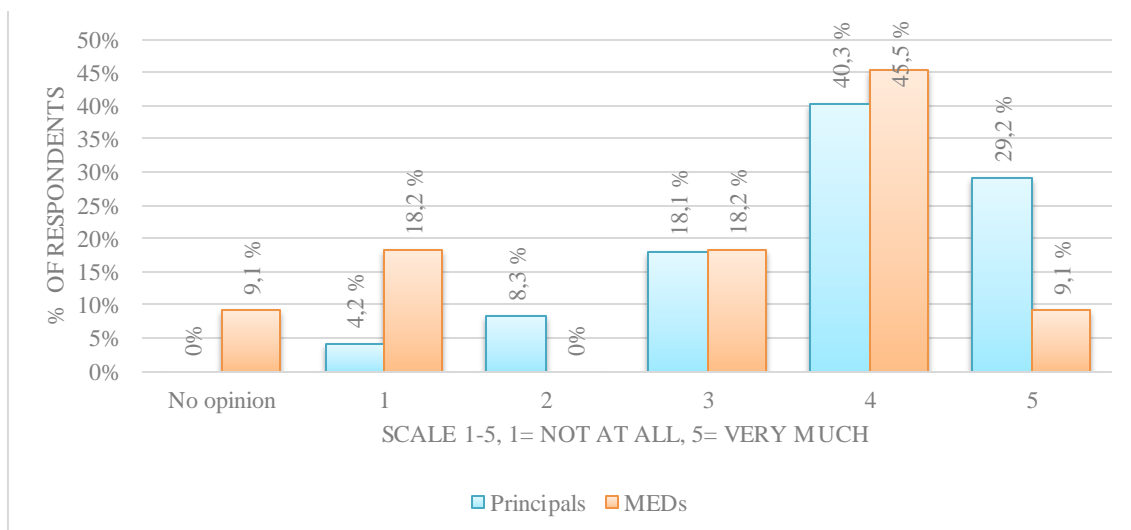
Figure 7. How well are <u>all</u> the respondents aware of the Twinning project (difference between principals and MEDs)?

Figure 7 compares the answers of principals and MEDs. There are some slight differences between these two groups. A significant point to make is that MEDs are not as aware of the project as they should be. They should not only be interested in the project and its aim for personal reasons, but because of their job tasks. MEDs lead the school sector of the municipality and they are responsible for ensuring schools to have proper instruction. MEDs have more and more responsibility in quality improvement and organization of training. The Twinning project support their work and provides them with development tools (Twinning Education Project, 2015).

6.2 Target groups' interest in the Project
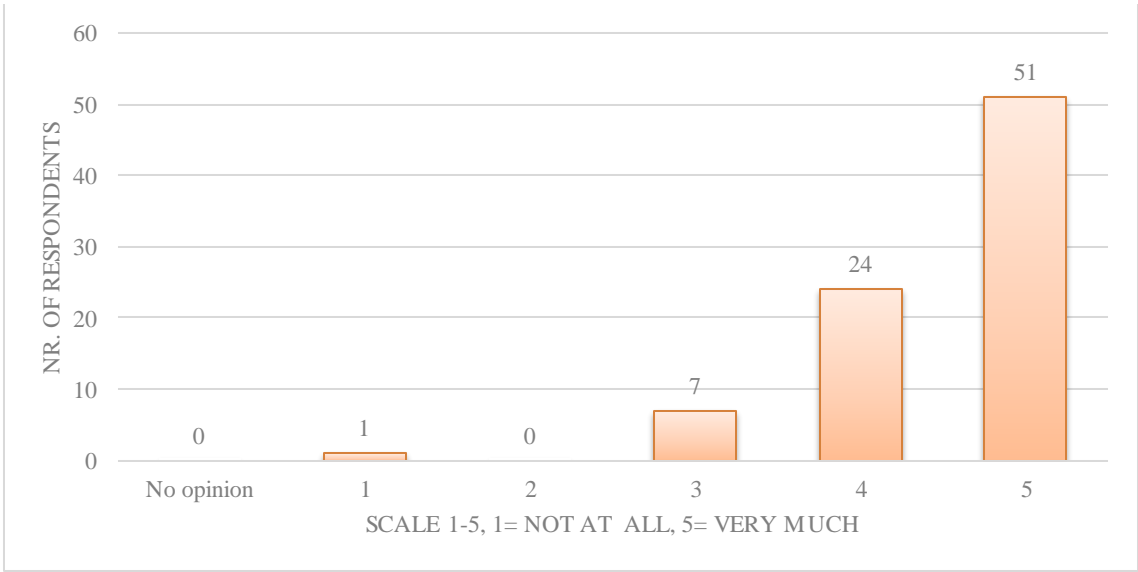
Figure 8. How high is the interest amongst <u>all</u> the respondents to hear more about the events and activities where the project is actively involved?
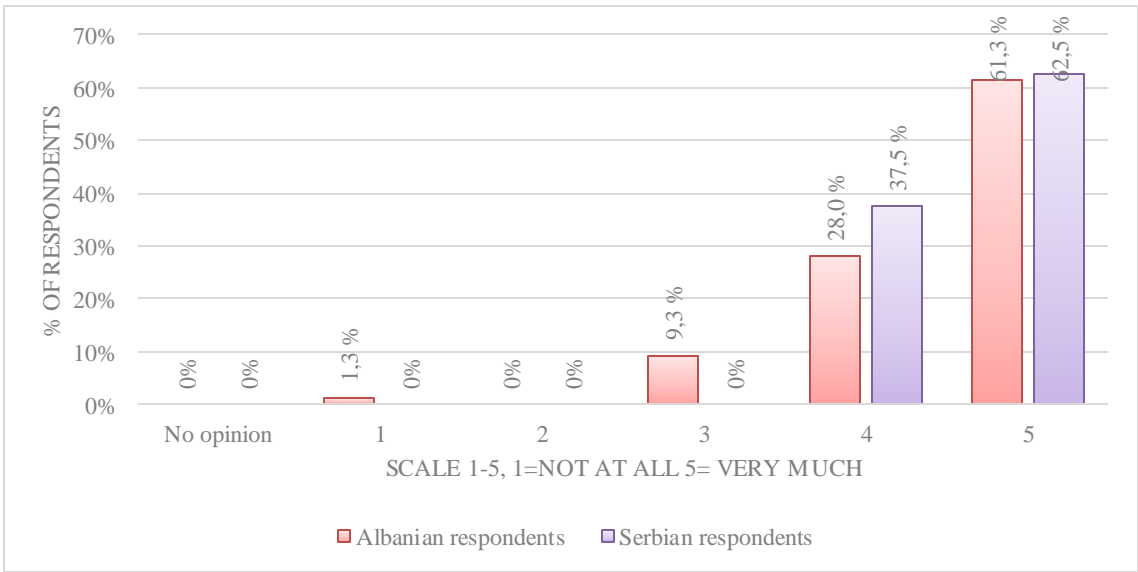
Figure 9. How high is the interest amongst all the respondents to hear more about the events and activities where the project is actively involved (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?
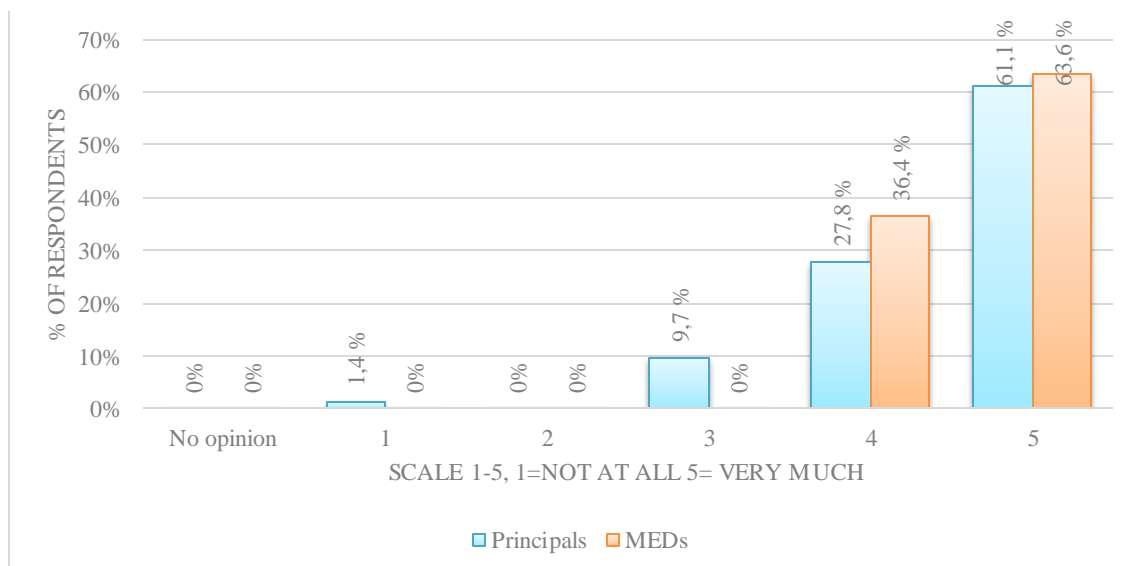
Figure 10. How high is the interest amongst <u>all</u> the respondents to hear more about the events and activities where the project is actively involved (difference between MEDs & Principals)?

The results for this questions are highly appreciated and they show a great amount of interest in the project. The majority of the respondents are very interested in hearing more about the events and activities of the Twinning project. Having target groups that are interested makes it easier to communicate with them than having uninterested target groups. The follow-up question for question number 2 gave more insights on what these target groups wish to hear more about. A few good suggestions made by the respondents are listed here:

- Continuation of training for each subject area
- Use of new methods in teaching
- Activities for functional ICT infrastructures in schools (e-learning)
- Exchange of our experiences in the field of education and the other outside-curricular activities
- The role of the Twinning project; number of trained teachers and the topics treated
- Creating connections between schools
- Assessment and the work of the curriculum area and the cooperation between these two

6.3 Project's visibility at schools/organisations
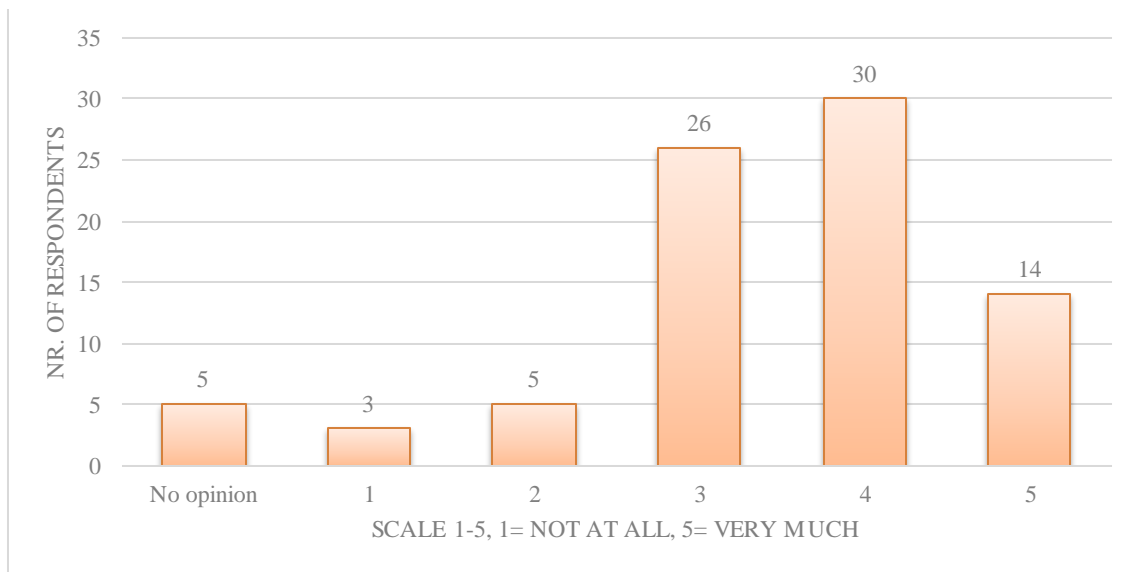
Figure 11. How well has the project been visible at <u>all </u>the respondents' schools/organisations/entities?

According to all the respondents it seems that the Twinning project has managed to be relatively visible at their schools or entities. For this question respondents were asked to evaluate how well the project has been visible. Many mention the trainings and the equipment that the project has donated. Some mention also the implementation of the KCF. All in all, the general opinion seems to be quite positive as the majority score 3 or higher.
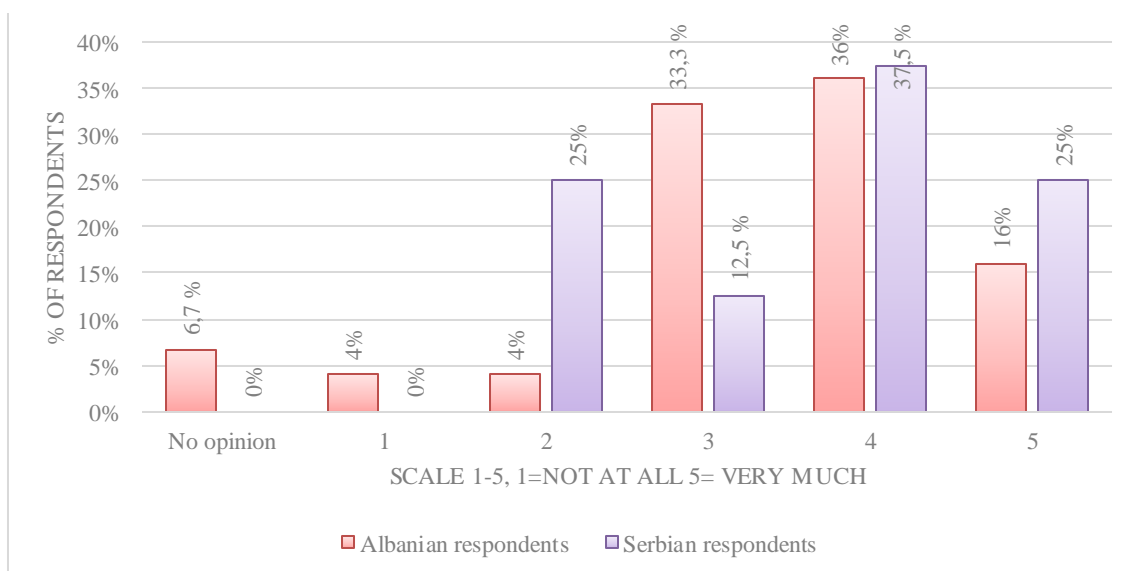
Figure 12. How well has the project been visible at all the respondents' schools/organizations/entities (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?

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Figure 8 shows that Albanian and Serbian respondents have quite similar opinions. According to the graph it shows that no Serbian respondent has answered lover than 2. The majority of both Albanian and Serbian respondents score a 4 meaning that the Project has been visible at their school or organisation.
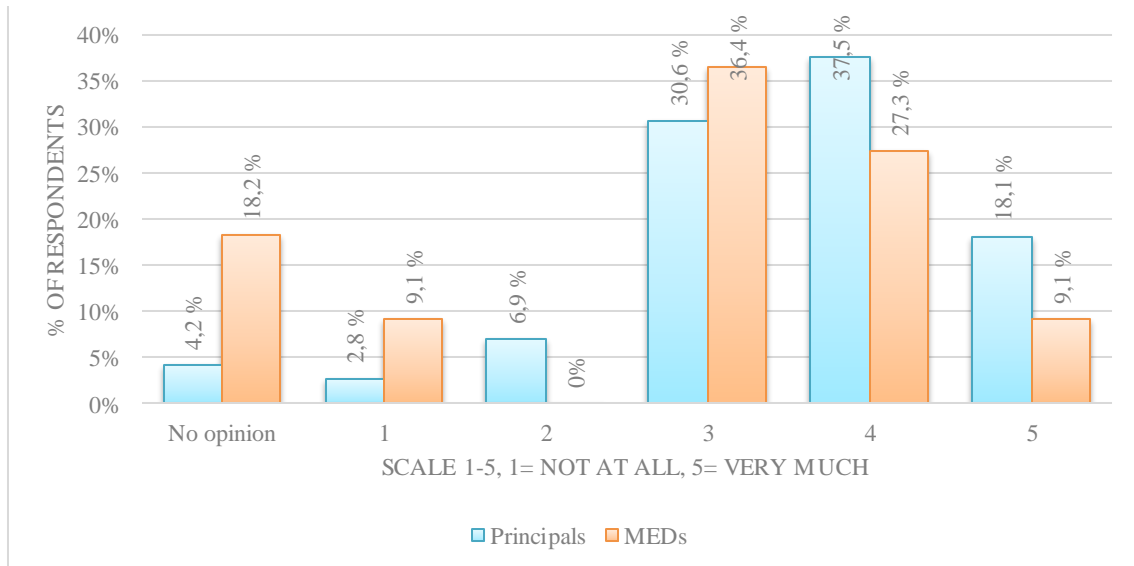
Figure 13. How well has the project been visible at <u>all</u> the respondents' schools/organizations/entities (difference between principals and MEDs)?

The last graph shows in percentage the differences between principals' and MEDs' responses. In general the respondents have used quite similar scores, but it seems like the Twinning project has been more visible in schools than amongst principals. 18, 2% of MEDs have no opinion regarding the question. It is a quite large amount taking into consideration that 11 MEDs took the questionnaire.

6.4 Social media followers
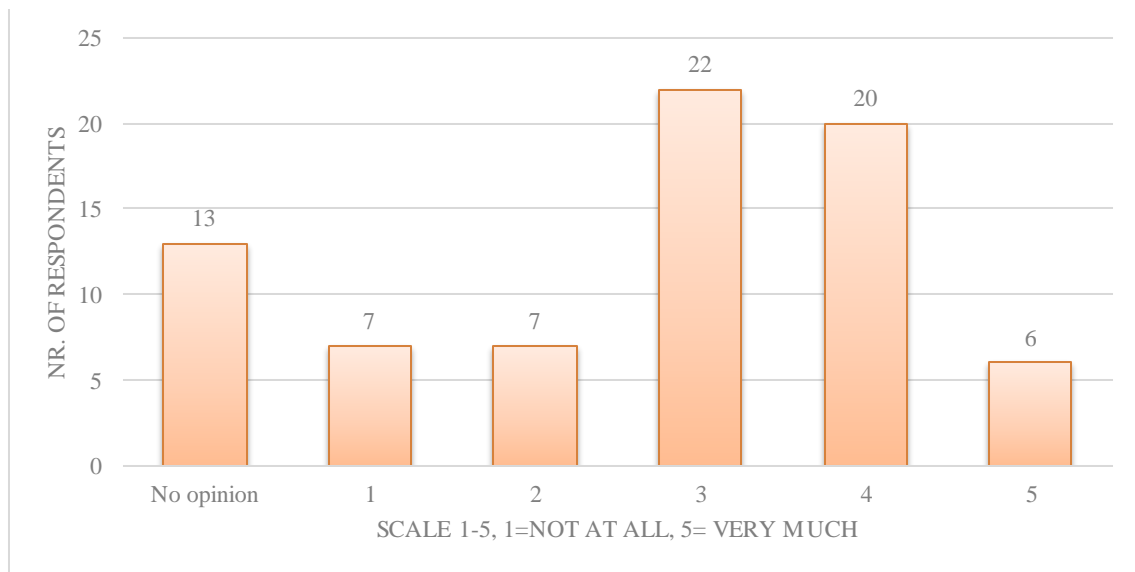
Figure 14. How much do <u>all</u> the respondents follow the project on Facebook or on the website?

Question number 4 was a bit of surprising, but a real eye-opener by giving some valuable information. After scoring the question, respondents were asked if they do not follow the project's Facebook page or website, what is the reason for that, and also what could make them more interested in order for them to follow the Facebook page or website. Many respondents said they were not even aware that the project has a Facebook page or a website. Some also mentioned that they do not own their own Facebook account or that they very rarely use the internet. Respondents who scored high points were on the other hand following the project on social media and many of them found the postings interesting.
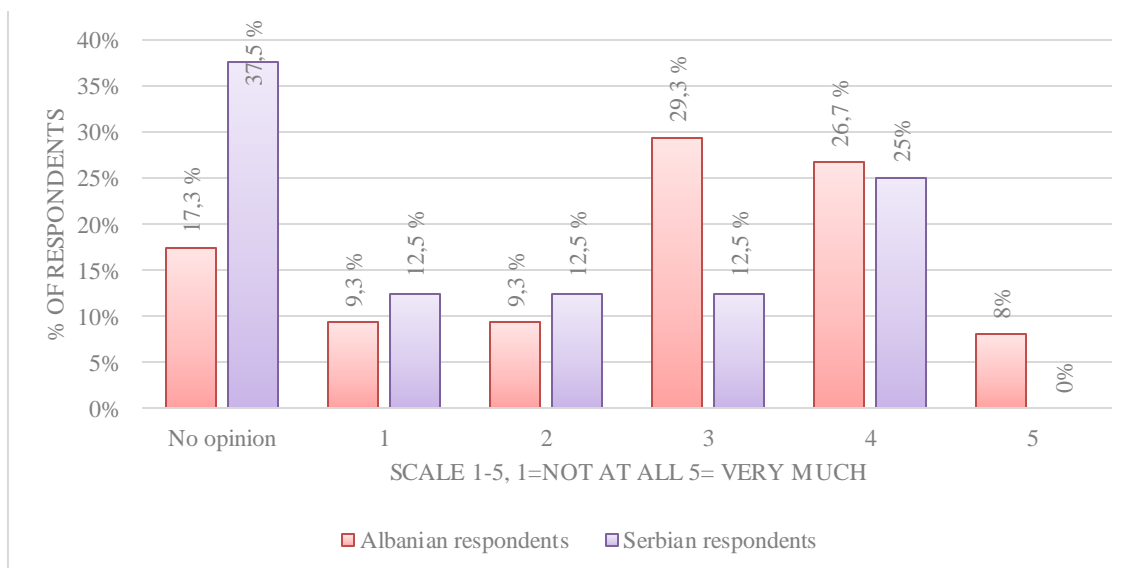
Figure 15. How much do all the respondents follow the project on Facebook or on the website (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?
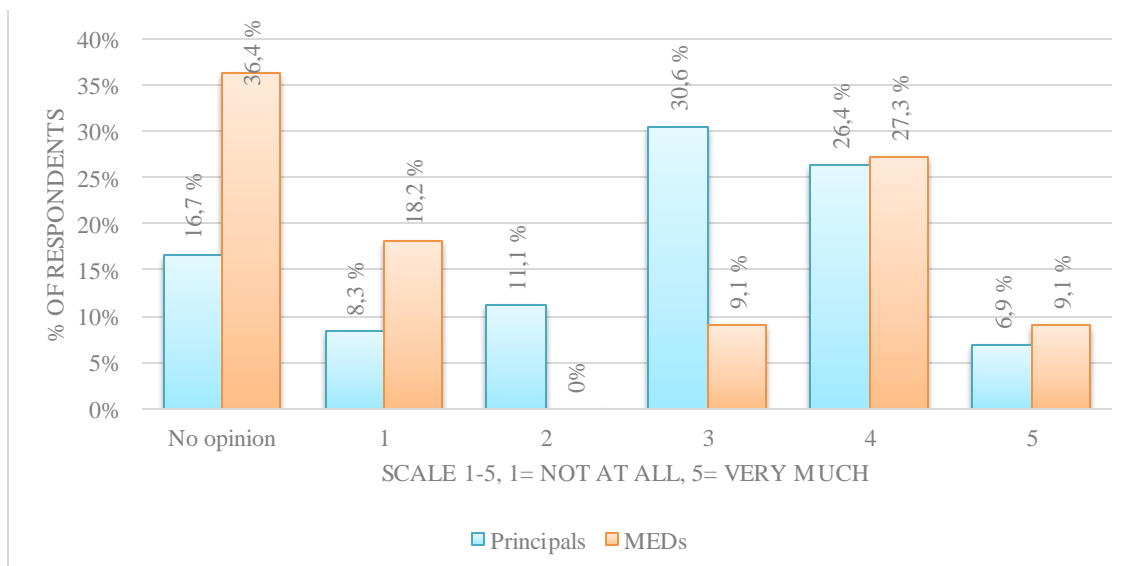
Figure 16. How much do <u>all</u> the respondents follow the project on Facebook or on the website (difference between principals and MEDs)?

Figure 15 shows quite harsh data; the majority of Serbian respondents do not know or follow the project on social media. One Serbian respondent made a good statement: "It would be good if we would get e-mails time to time about the project, so it should be as a reminder that we should follow it (the Twinning project). This is a good point and giving reminders to your target group is part of basics of marketing.

Figure 16 shows that there are some differences between the two target groups. Over 36% of MEDs had no opinion or they did not know about the social media pages

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that the Twinning project uses. That is a large amount taken into account that these respondents have received information about it.

6.5 Satisfaction in the project's communication
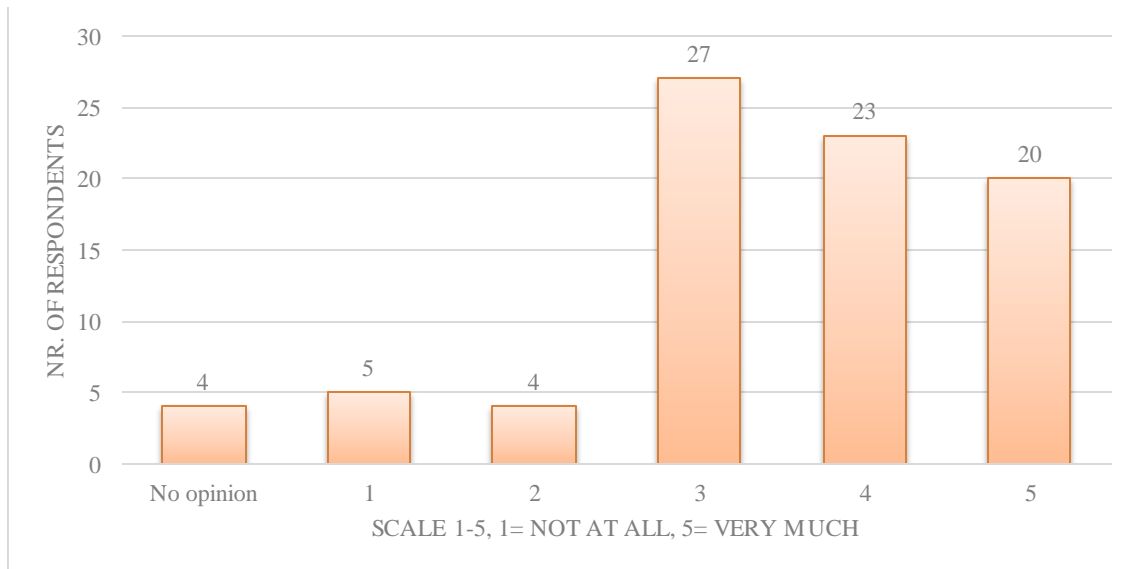
Figure 17. How well have <u>all</u> the respondents been satisfied with the way the Twinning project communicates with its audience

On average the respondents seem quite happy so far with the way the Twinning project has been communicated with them. It is however important to remember that a large amount of respondents are not aware of the two most important communication tools that the Twinning project uses, namely the official Facebook page and its website. Therefore, the results in Figure 17 are a tad questionable. This can also be seen in the extra comments for this question where many said they rarely use Internet, or they were not aware of the pages or they simply lack time. Even with that said, the vast majority score a 3 or higher.

    The differences between Albanian and Serbian respondents seems to be quite small. Also, when looking at the differences between principals and MEDs in Figure 19, these two groups seem to think very much the same way.
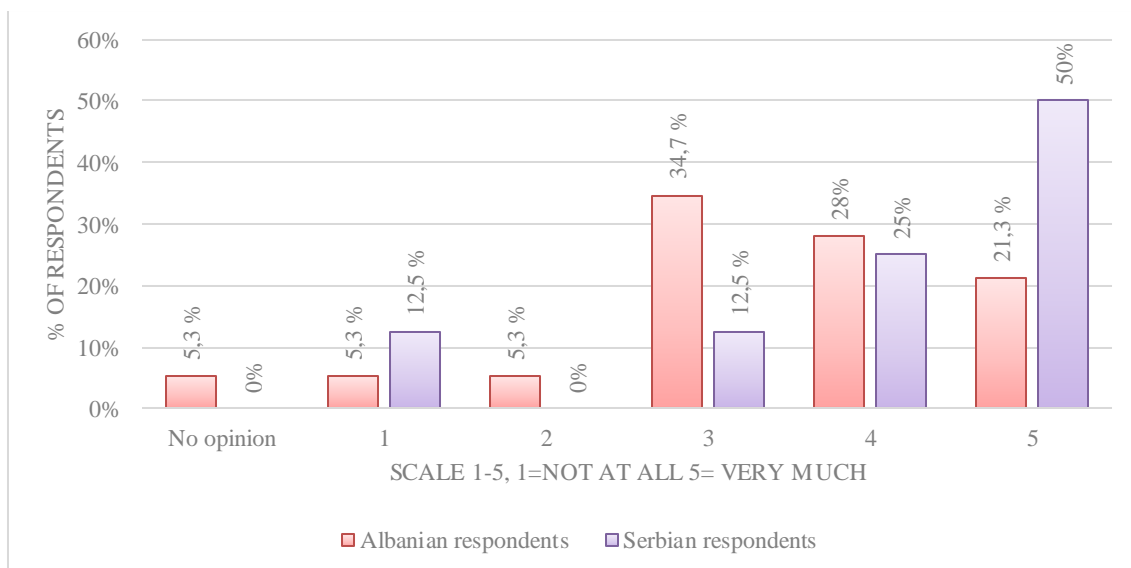
Figure 18. How well have all the respondents been satisfied with the way the Twinning project communicates with its audience (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?
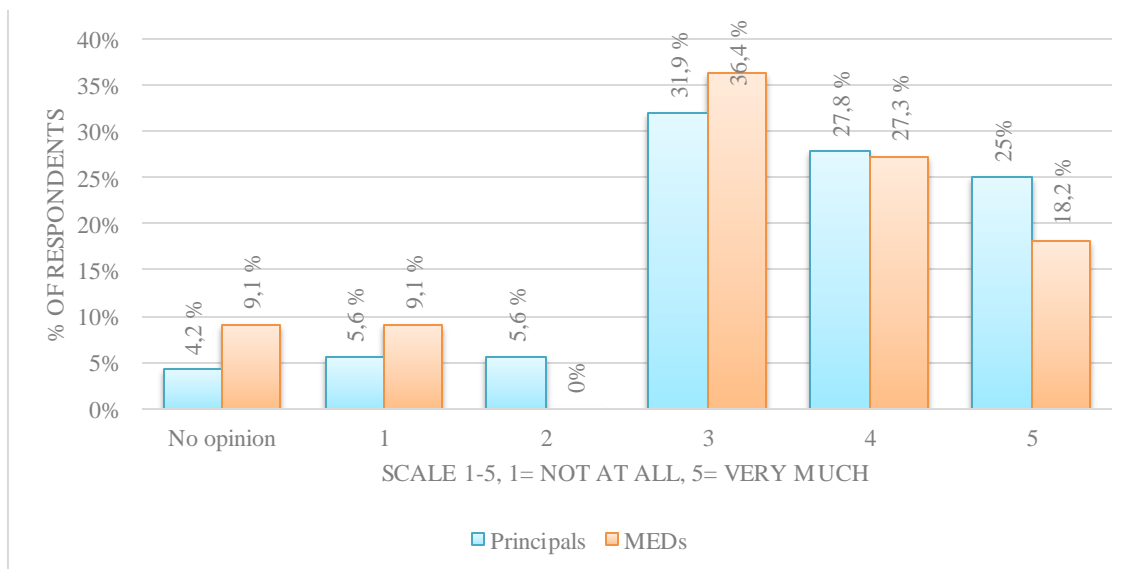
Figure 19. How well have <u>all</u> the respondents been satisfied with the way the Twinning project communicates with its audience (difference between principals and MEDs)?

6.6 Increasing social media activity
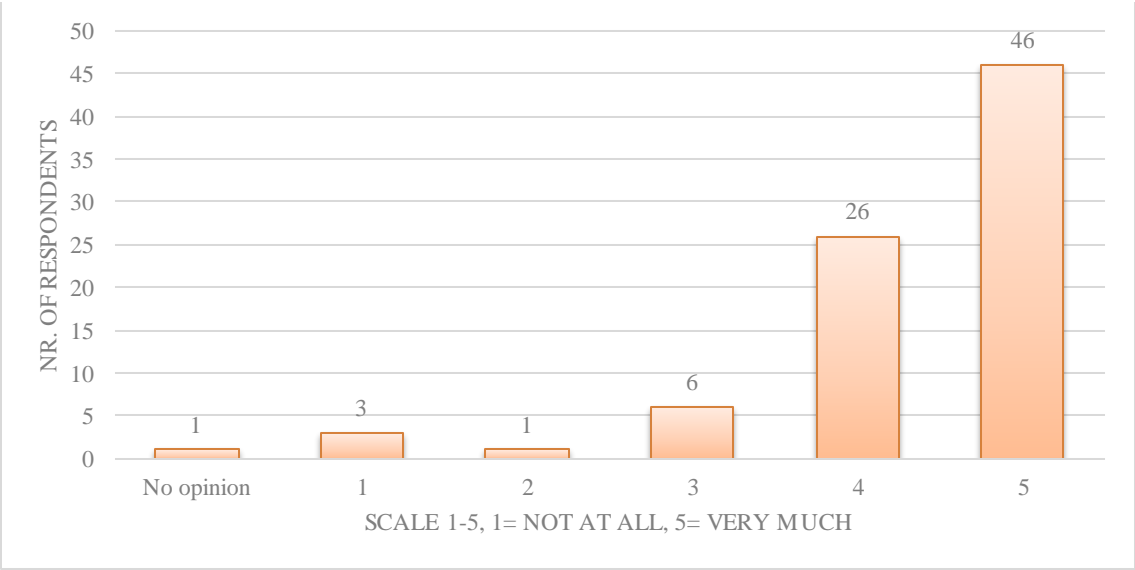
Figure 20. How much more do <u>all</u> the respondents think the Twinning project should be active in posting news to their Facebook page or website about their activities and events?
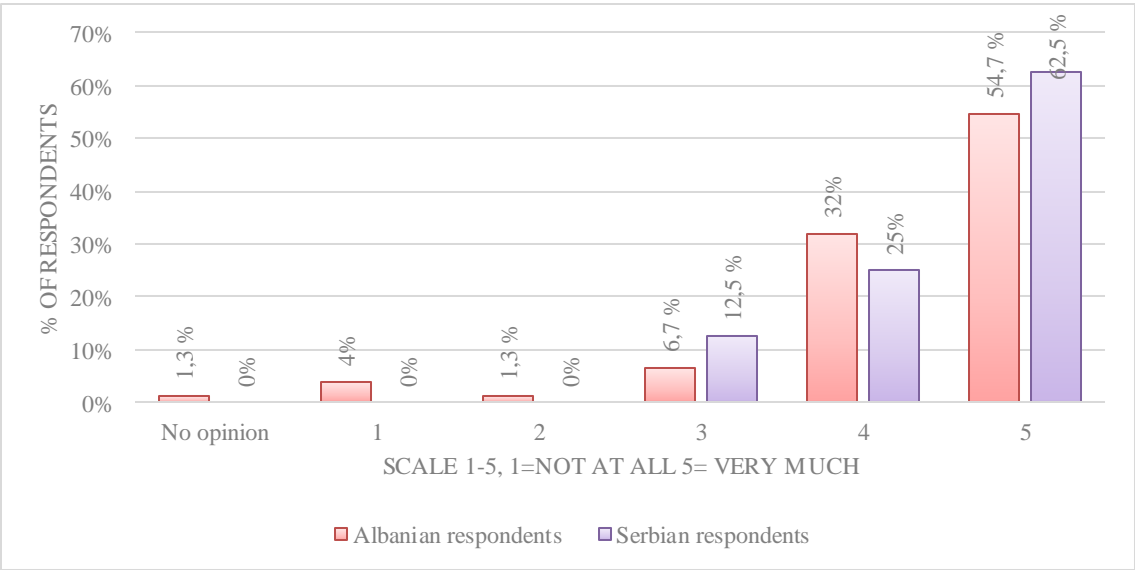
Figure 21. How much more do all the respondents think the Twinning project should be active in posting news to their Facebook page or website about their activities and events (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?
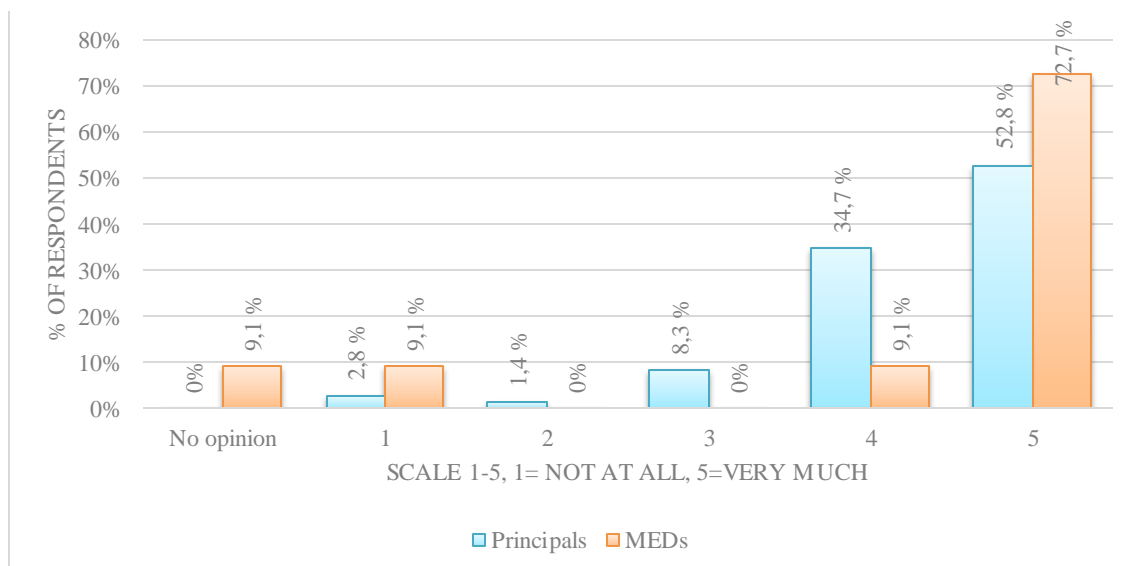
Figure 22. How much more do <u>all</u> the respondents think the Twinning project should be active in posting news to their Facebook page or website about their activities and events (difference between principals and MEDs)?

Question 6 shows that the target groups have lots of interest in knowing more about the Project. Many were satisfied with the amount of activity on social media, but they are interested in hearing even more. Some who were less satisfied, but want to hear more said that the Project should use new approaches and it needs more visibility. Some said that the project has not been active enough.

6.7 Interest in news about the Project
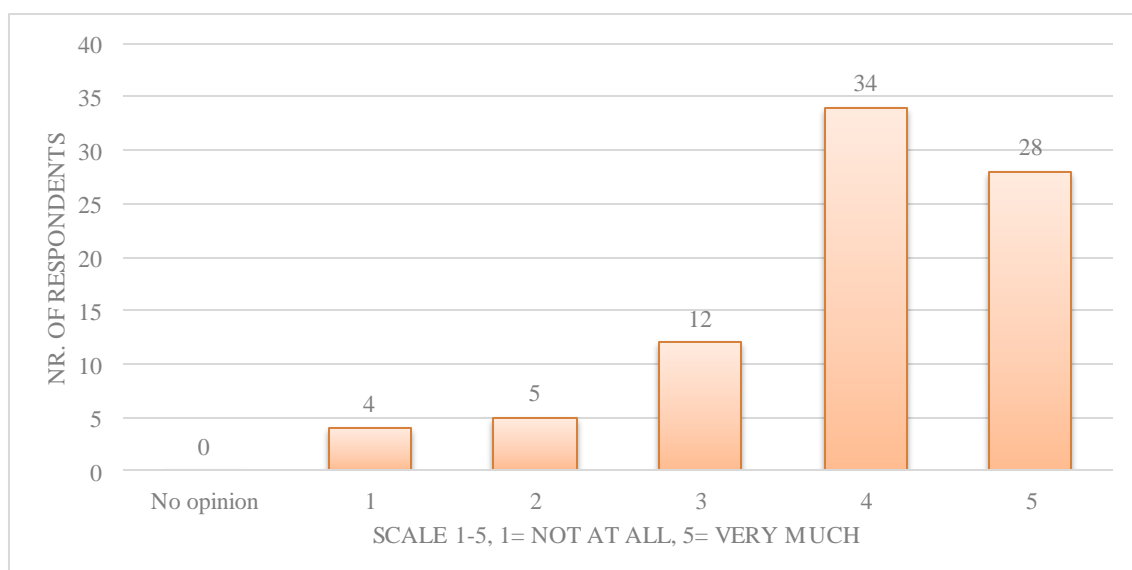
Figure 23. How interested have <u>all</u> the respondents been whenever they have seen news about the project?

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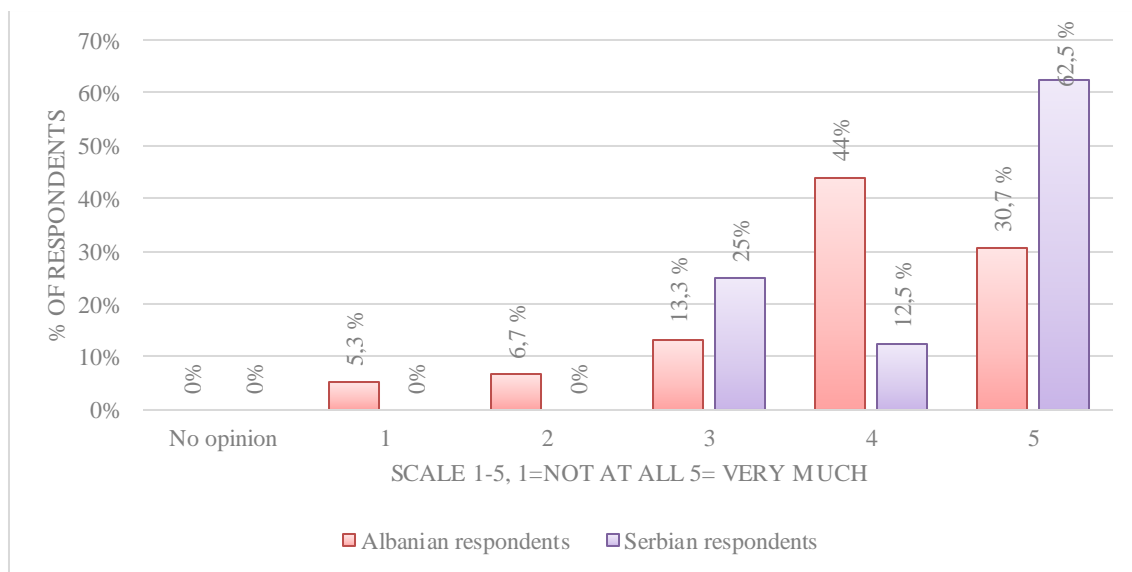
Figure 24. How interested have all the respondents been whenever they have seen news about the project (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents)?
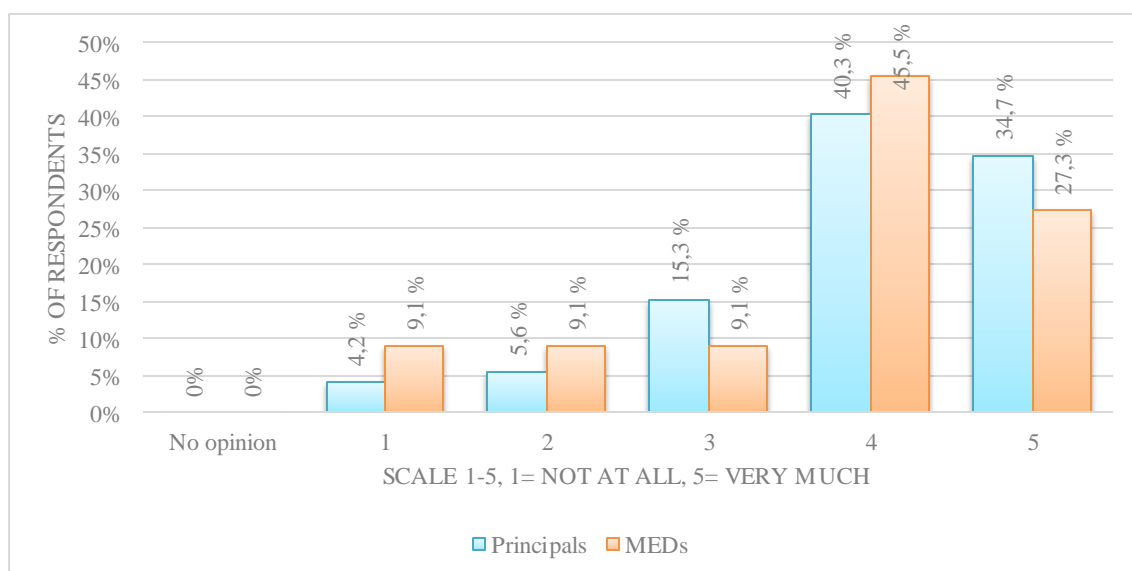
Figure 25. How interested have <u>all</u> the respondents been whenever they have seen news about the project (difference between principals and MEDs)?

It is positive to see that the majority of the respondents find news about the Twinning project to be noteworthy. For this question the respondents were asked why or why not they are interested in the news about the project. Most expressed their high interest towards education. One respondent said well that "innovations aim to increase the quality in learning, improvement of the infrastructure, advanced teaching, it is for my interest and the interest of the society".

6.8 Easiness in approaching the Project with questions
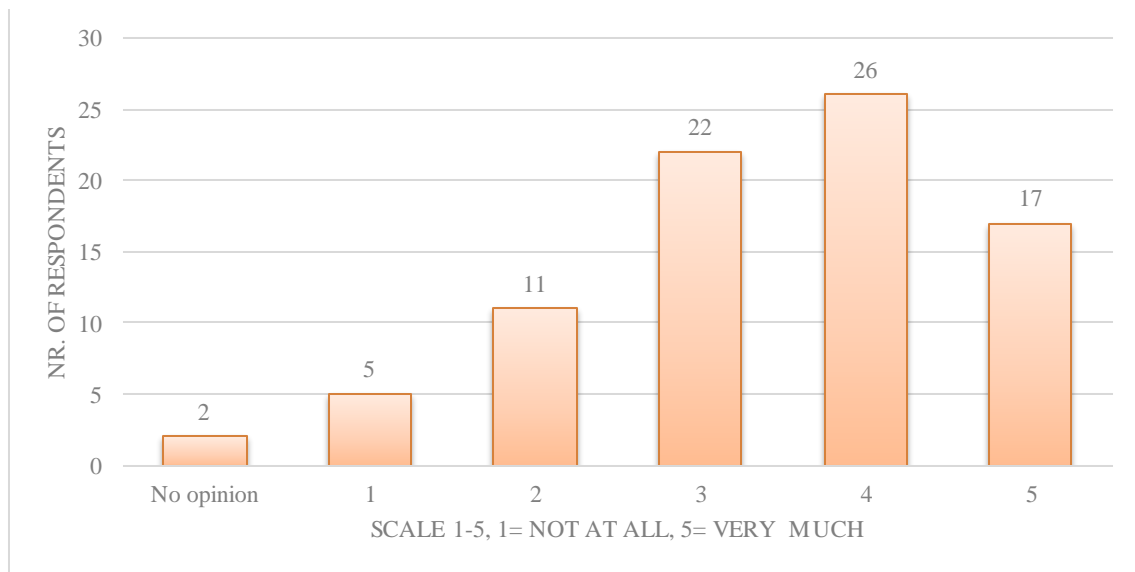
Figure 26. How easy do _all_ the respondents think it is to approach the project if they have had questions?

For this question the graph goes steadily up and in average respondents seem to be quite satisfied with the easiness of approaching the project whenever they have questions. The Serbian respondents' pattern as seen in figure 27 seems a bit different from the Albanian respondents, and no one has given the highest point (5) for this questions.

As a "bonus" question the respondents were asked to elaborate more on why or why not it is easy to approach the project. It appears that many have misunderstood the "bonus" question, because there are a few responses that are confusing, such as: "there are many new things and many questions", "it is easy when we want to work, and difficult if we don't want" or "project is an easier process for students to understand, since the work is done in working groups". However, the main questions which respondents used the scale 1-5 gives a more accurate picture of respondents' opinions.
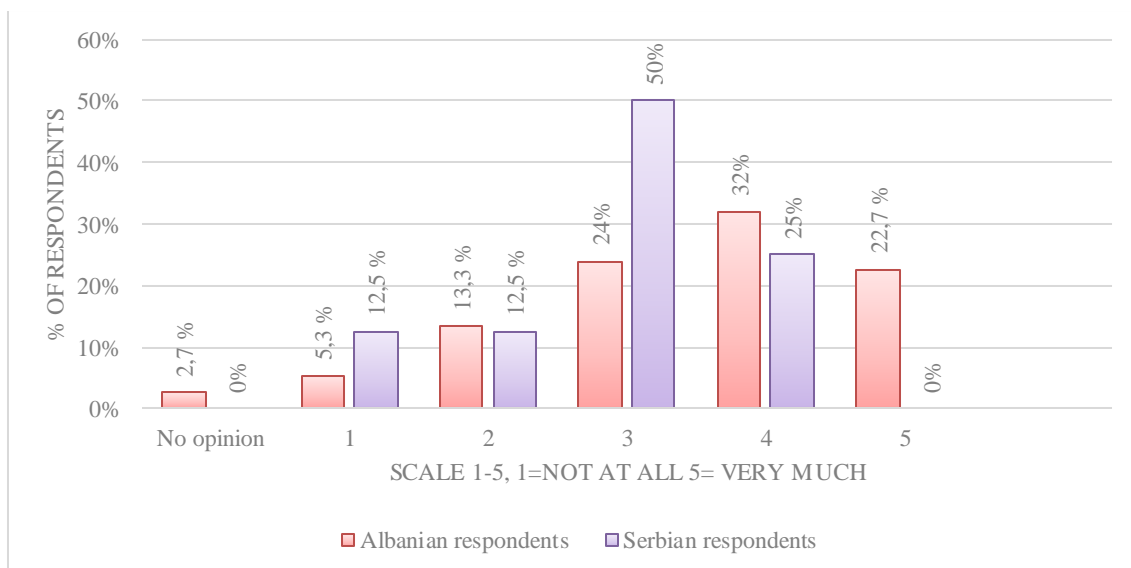
Figure 27. How easy do all the respondents think it is to approach the project if they have had questions (difference between Albanian and Serbian respondents?
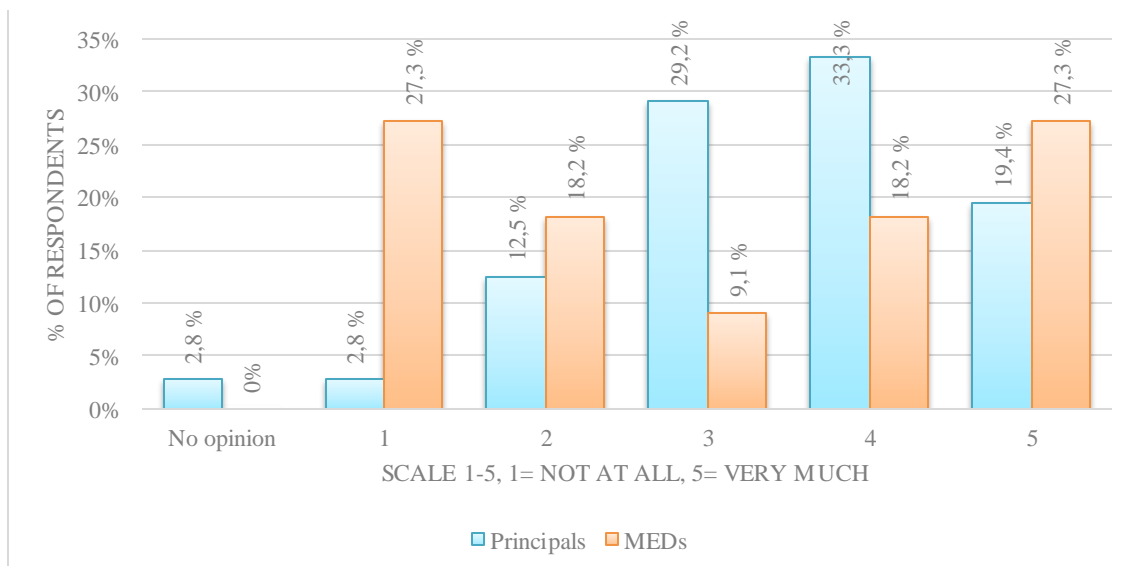
Figure 28. How easy do <u>all</u> the respondents think it is to approach the project if they have had questions (difference between principals and MEDs)?

6.9 Potential communication methods for target groups

Results for question 10 are shown in Figure 29 and 30. For this question respondents were asked to choose, which communication tools would work best when the Twinning project wants to communicate with them (principals and MEDs). Figure 29 shows all the respondents' answers, figure 30 shows a comparison between Albanian and Serbian respondents. All results are shown in percentage form.

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Top three communication tools for all the respondents is (1) website, (2) conferences and (3) email. This shows that social media sites such as Facebook or YouTube are not the most effective or desired communication tools for this target group.

There are some differences between Albanian and Serbian respondents' answers. The top three options for Albanian respondents were (1) conferences, (2) website and (3) email, whereas for Serbian respondents they were (1) email, (2) website and (3) social media (e.g. Facebook).

It is worthy of note to see how important the respondents find email communication. In addition, conferences were scored as a highly important communication tool especially amongst the Albanian respondents, but overall conferences got second most "points".
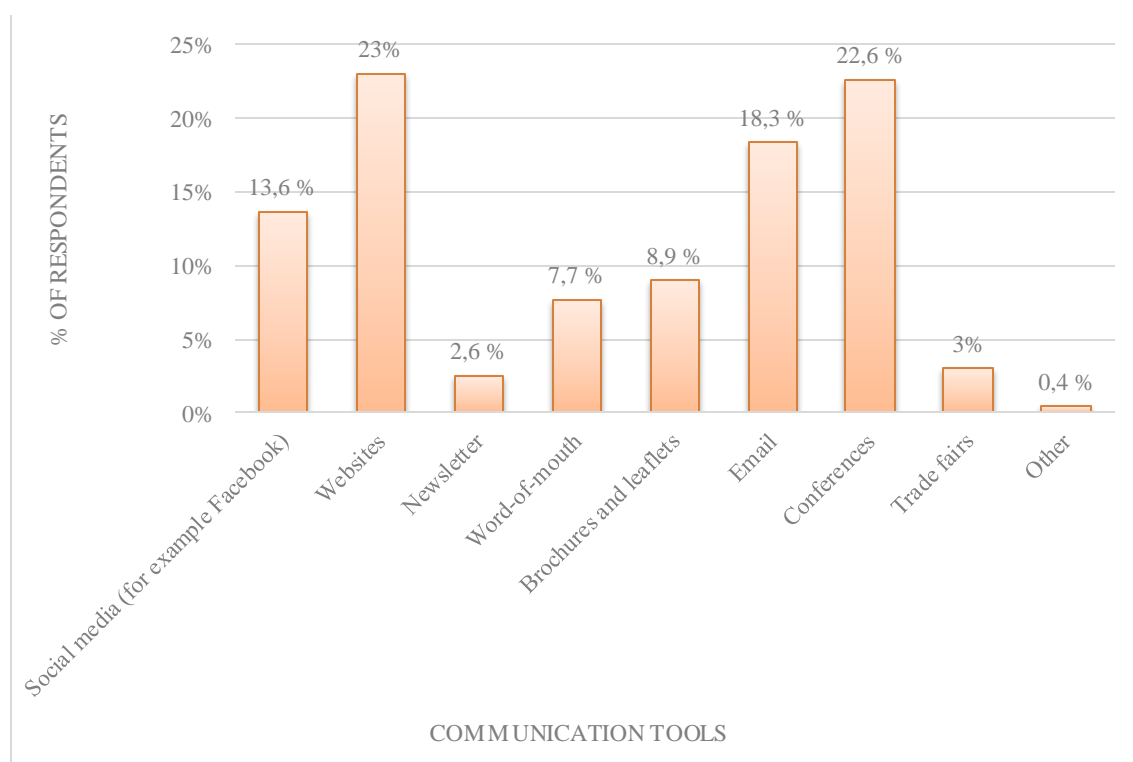
Figure 29. What communication tools work best in Kosovo in all respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with them? (Respondents could choose three options)
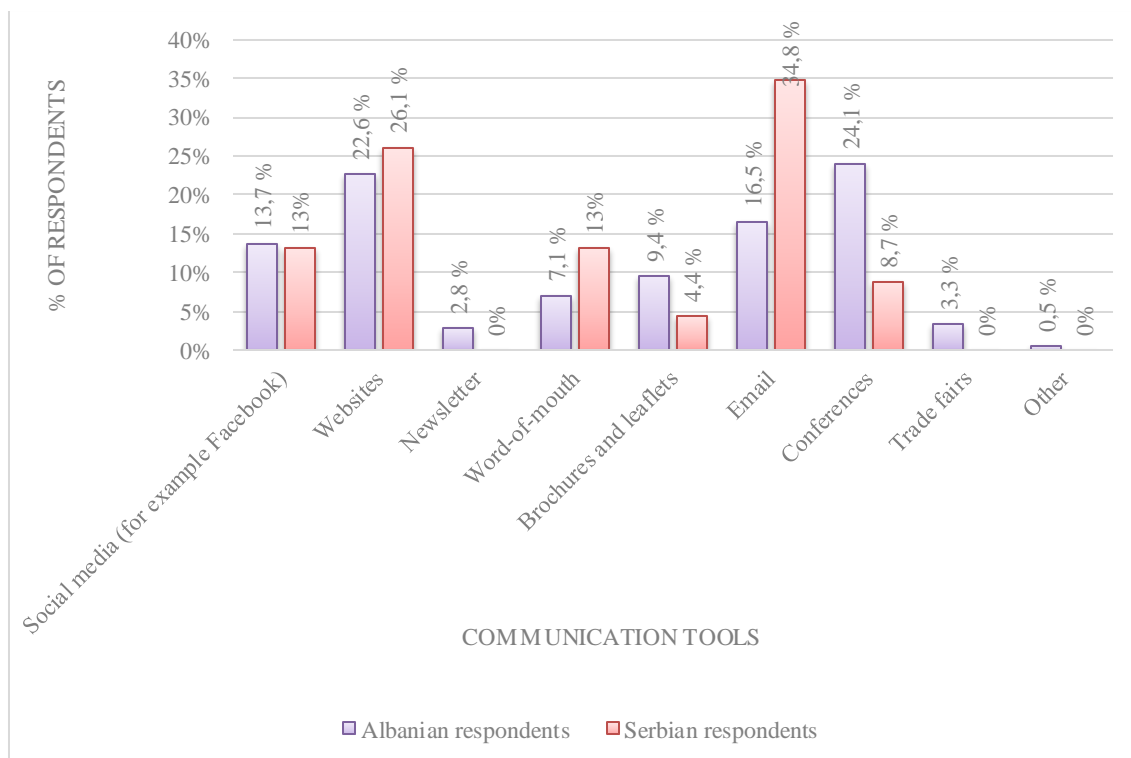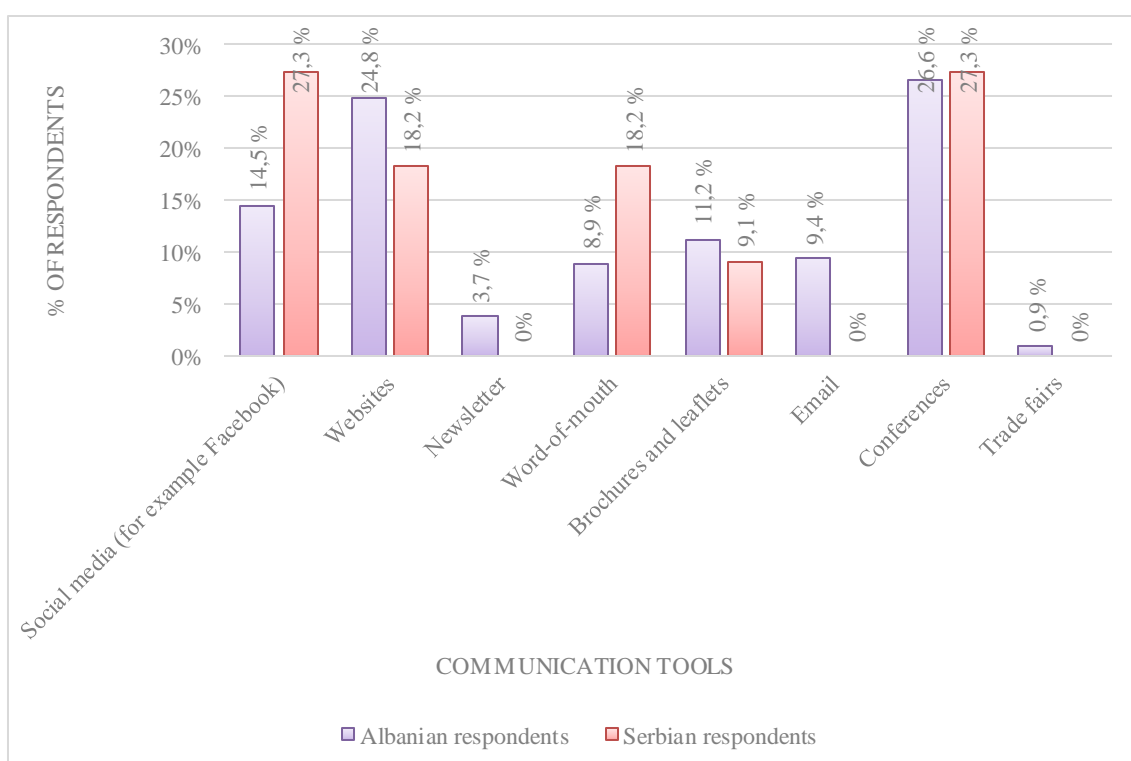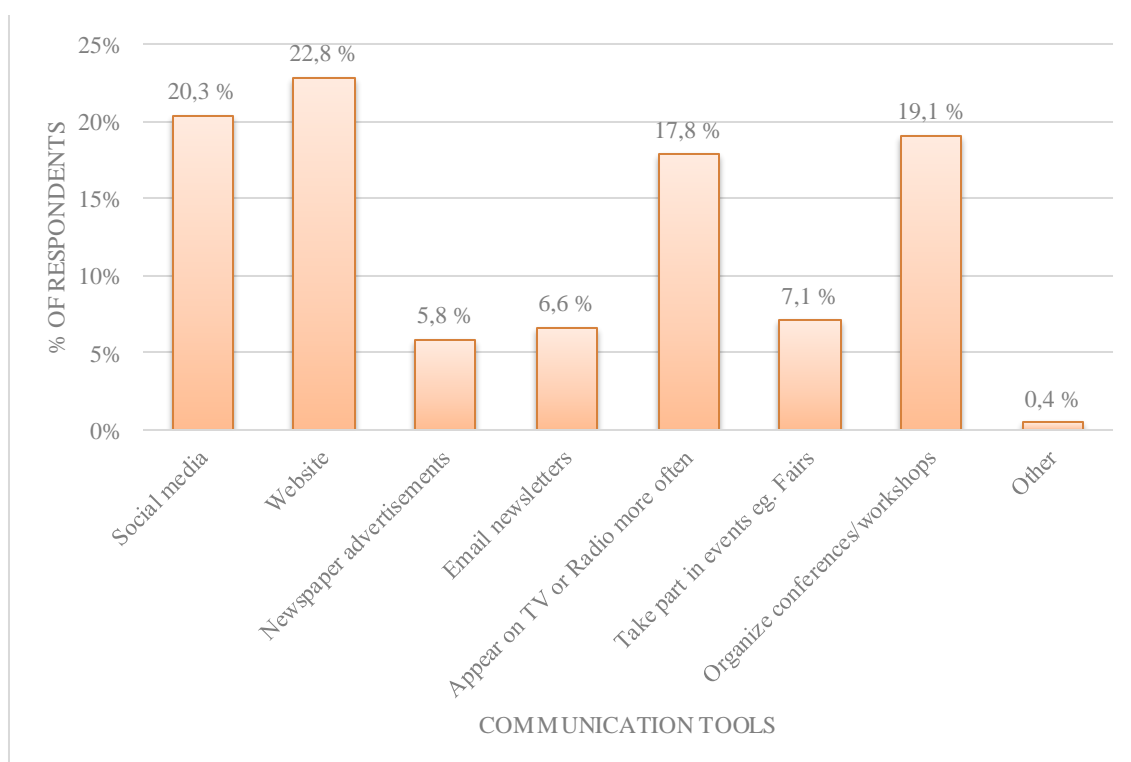
Figure 30. .Comparison between Albanian and Serbian respondents: What communication tools work best in Kosovo in all respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with them? (Respondents could choose three options)

Question 11 was exactly the same as the previous, the only difference being that the respondents had to give their opinion on the best communication tools when targeting another important target group for the Twinning project, namely the teachers. Figure 31 shows all the respondents' answers, Figure 32 shows a comparison of the Albanian and Serbian respondents' answers. Figure 31 shows that the top three options were (1) Conferences/workshops, (2) website and (3) social media.

So far the most efficient way to interact with teachers has been through workshops or teacher trainings. The Twinning project has also opened smaller Facebook group specifically for teachers. These groups have been divided according to subject areas. During these workshops teachers have been asked to join these groups, and there they can share their teaching methods with other teachers around Kosovo who teach the same subject. Serbian piloting schools have not taken much part in teacher trainings, because the schools do not follow the same curriculum as the Albanian schools. Therefore, the opinions might
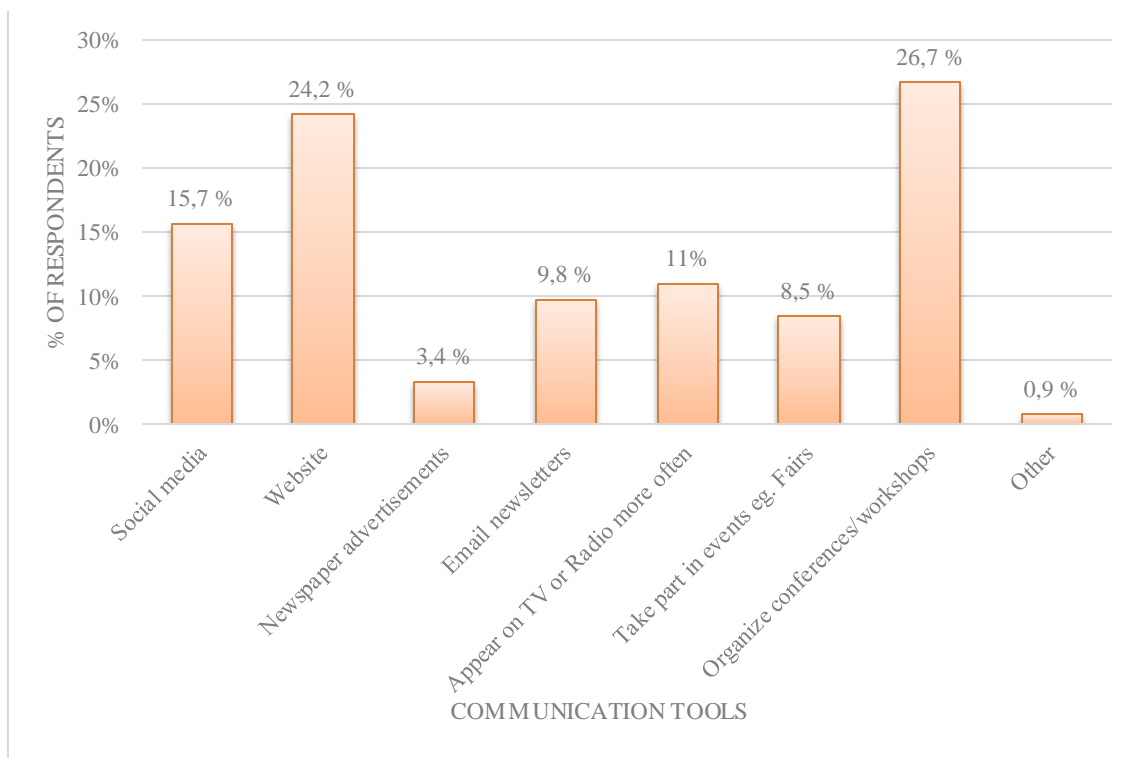
Figure 31. What communication tools work best in Kosovo in <u>all</u> respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with <u>teachers</u>? (Respondents could choose three options)
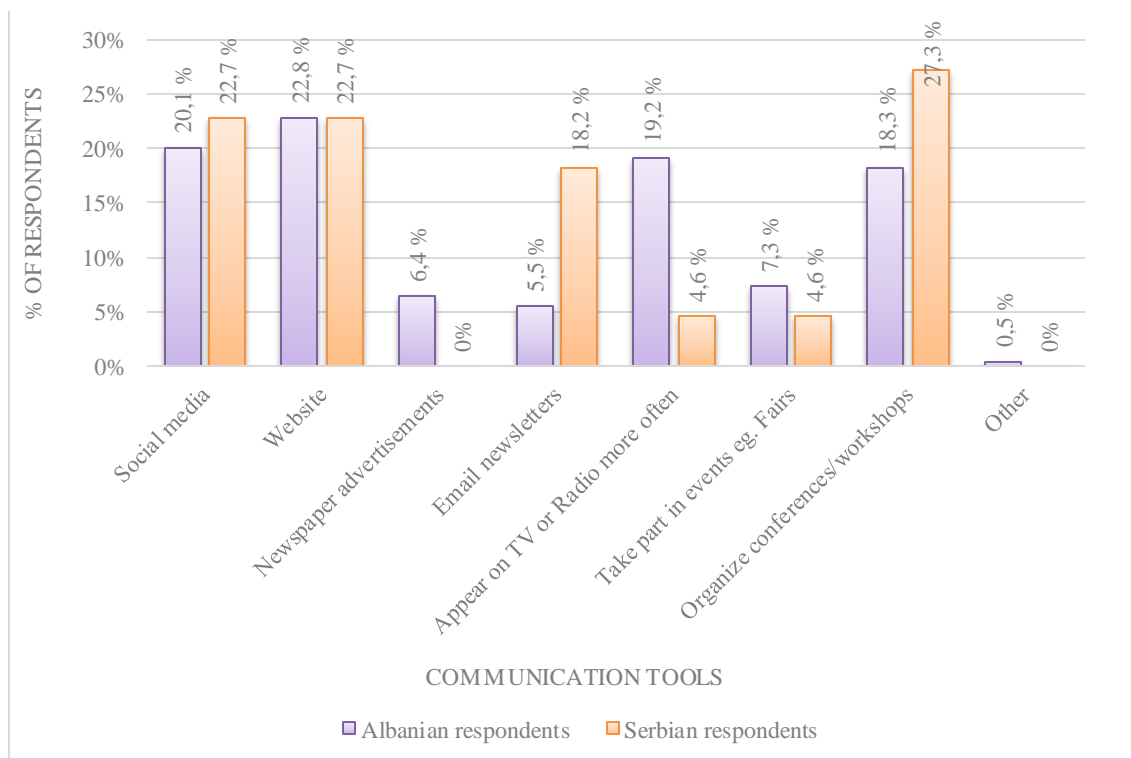

Figure 32. Comparison between Albanian and Serbian respondents: What communication tools work best in Kosovo in all respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with teachers? (Respondents could choose three options)

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The outcome of Question 12 can be seen in Figures 33 and 34. This time the respondents were asked to choose the best communication tools when the Twinning project wants to communicate with the public. This could be considered as mass marketing as the public would not consist of any specific niche audience (Dictionary, 2016). The general public is not the main target group for the Twinning project. However it is an important audience, because the curriculum work that the Twinning project works with affects the entire nation and this way it affects most individuals in Kosovo.

Figure 33 present four communication tools which rule this question: (1) website, (2) social media, (3) conferences/workshops and (4) appearing on TV or Radio. The answers between Albanian and Serbian vary a bit (figure 34): Serbian respondents think that email newsletters would be a good communication tool whereas Albanian respondents gave very few votes for that option. In addition, Albanian respondents find *appearing on TV and Radio* as a much more important tool than the Serbian respondents do.

Figure 33. What communication tools work best in Kosovo in <u>all</u> respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with the <u>public</u>? (Respondents could choose three options)

Figure 34. Comparison between Albanian and Serbian respondents: What communication tools work best in Kosovo in all respondents' opinion when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with the public? (Respondents could choose three options)

7   VISIBILITY PLAN

7.1 Communication actions

With fresh results of the research a better understanding of the target groups has been achieved. Respondents' opinions can be visually seen in graphs and in written answers. After studying the *situation analysis, objectives, strategy* and *tactics*, the next step is to move to *actions* and *control*. With the help of these SOSTAC model elements a visibility plan is made. When thinking about the action part of the SOSTAC model it means who does what and when. The RTA together with her assistants and experts are all involved in the visibility work. Whenever experts go on their missions to Kosovo they need to be active on promoting the website in their trainings, and engage the participants in taking part in discussions on the Project's Facebook pages.

The Project does not have the budget for using any external agencies. Nevertheless, producing one or two Facebook postings a week does not require many hours of work. In

the long run it will engage more people and the page can get more views and likes. Not being active enough will work against the Project.

When implementing the communication activities it is important to monitor how well the target groups are being engaged. This is the last part of the SOSTAC model, namely *control*. The Project can follow for example web analytics both on its website and Facebook page. More on the analytics part will be discussed in 7.2.4 SEO and Analytics. The research gave valuable information about the target groups and therefore similar reviews can be and should be carried out. With such survey it will then be possible to analyse the change in people's opinions, and see if any changes may have occurred.

7.2 Communication activities

This section will include all the communication tools that the Twinning project has been using and will/could be using in the future. It includes especially some recommendations on what could be used, what could be used more, or perhaps changed in such way that it reaches the target groups in a more effective way.

With the results gained from the conducted research questionnaire it gave some good insights of how the target groups wish to be communicated to. Main communications tools will comprise of the website, use of social media (Facebook and YouTube) different kinds of information materials e.g. brochures, notebooks, pens etc., press releases, and briefings or meetings with journalists, email newsletters, and seminars and workshops. Each of these tools will be presented more comprehensively in the next few sections.

7.2.1 Website

The Twinning project opened its own website in spring 2015. A new updated version of the website has been made but due to some severe problems with the installation of the website the release of the website will linger.

The main idea of the website is to give teachers, MED representatives and principals a chance to find material that has been used in the training and coaching sessions. The website is also informative to other interested in education and the project. It includes

lots of materials and videos which are accessible to everyone. Materials and videos can be found in their own subject pages depending on which subject they are related to.

News articles are published through the website as well, in order to keep people updated on what is going on during different phases of the project. Each article can be read in English, Albanian or Serbian. There should be preferably one news article published per month in order to keep the followers updated and not bored.

The website is a great tool for teachers who need more information for their subjects, especially if they have not had the chance to participate in the teacher trainings. The address of the website can be found on the project's brochures, posters and on the information section in each Facebook group. The website has been and will be linked often to Facebook postings. In addition, the website has been verbally advertised in school visits, meetings and in conferences. The website is in English, Albanian and Serbian.

After the Twinning project finishes the website will stay open so that teachers and other target audiences can return back to the page. The page will be a useful tool also for media representatives as all the necessary information about the project can be found there. If the page lacks some information, the project can be contacted through a contact form found in the main menu of the website.

In order to follow the user traffic, Google Analytics will be an essential tool. Analytics gives also a better understanding of which parts of the world users visit the website and how they come to the website. The Twinning project strives to be active online and that way get more people engaged with the website. Another vital piece of information is the bounce rate of the page and how do visitors come to the page (links, directly, Facebook, search engines etc.)

Another tool for capturing a larger audience for both the website and official Facebook page is by search engine optimization. This way the page can get more views if the right keywords are used; the author has installed a plugin to the website where it is possible to improve the SEO. This is a very good tool as it does not cost any extra for the project and whenever people are searching for information about education or specifically the Twinning project, there is a better chance for the website to show on the top of the list of Google. It is of course possible to use AdWords, but then Google will charge pay-per-click.

As the research results showed, surprisingly many said they were not aware of the website. This means that the Twinning project has to mention it more during its trainings, whenever emails are sent to targeted people, during conferences, interviews etc.

7.2.2 Audio-visual materials

YouTube is used as the channel for sharing videos. The videos which can be found on the Twinning project's website are directed to the page through YouTube. It is possible to upload the videos directly through the website; however, YouTube gives the option of commenting the videos and sharing them through other social media channels such as Facebook. This makes it a bit easier and it saves space on the website as no additional files are uploaded on the page.

All the videos must include a still picture of the logo of the project and the EU. This still shot has been added to the beginning and end of all the videos. Most of the videos have been planned by the project's Finnish experts and a local media company has done the filming and editing. Some ICT videos however have been prepared by some Finnish experts and the author of this thesis. Those too follow the EU guidelines and they include the logo of EU and the Twinning project.

7.2.3 Online and electronic materials

Different social media channels have been used in order to reach as many targeted people as possible. Facebook is an effective tool to communicate with teachers and other target audiences on a daily basis. Therefore, the Twinning project has opened a few pages on Facebook; one general page for the project itself and six other groups for different subjects (language & communication, mathematics, health & wellbeing, ICT, natural sciences, and leadership & management). These groups give the participants a chance to actively be involved in the discussions and they have a possibility to share own videos or teaching methods on the forum. In addition, the group members have direct access to gain info.

The main page on Facebook is a general page that shares news, images, videos and links about everything that happens within the project. The smaller groups are more directed for teachers (the leadership & management page is an exception and it is meant

more for education professionals in leadership positions such as MEDs, principals and MEST employees). It is crucial to stay active on the Facebook pages and to post at least one status per week. Postings that would engage the audience would be superb as then the followers would be able to join in some important discussions.

Whenever the Project has some very significant posts that should be more visible and to get more people engaged it is possible to pay for Facebook ads.

As the research results showed, the target group wishes to be contacted more through email. A monthly newsletter email should be sent to each target group. The newsletter should not be a boring email with lots of text, but instead with the help of a newsletter creator a much professional and interesting looking email can be created. If more features are desired it is possible to invest in a newsletter creator, however a free version does good work as well. An example of a good newsletter creator for Gmail is *Flashissue*. The basic version is for free and it comes with plenty of different features. There are lots of other newsletter creators as well for example *Constant Contact*. This company offers a 60 days trial, but after that they start charging. For the Twinning project the author recommends. At this point the author however recommends the Project to use the gratis *Flashissue.*

Depending on the subjects or causes that the Project wants to raise and discuss about, at times both target groups could receive the same newsletter, and during other times these groups would have a newsletter of their own. The main idea is though, that these target groups hear about the Twining Project on a monthly basis and this way they would be reminded to actively follow the Project. This idea can be further developed to target teachers, and why not pupils and parents as well.

7.2.4 SEO and Analytics

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) could be taken into consideration if the project wants to be ranked higher in search engines. This would not be for free, but it would increase the visibility online not only in Kosovo but around the world. In the research respondents did not mention SEO and results also show that quite many respondents are not so active online. However, as the project has other target groups as well, and in the end the main

objective of the Twining project is to improve the education system of Kosovo, it is important to also know that other people than principals and MEDs will be searching on Google with certain potential keywords.

SEO is free unless you use AdWords. In the Twinning Project's case SEO or AdWords for that matter would not return revenue directly in money. However, spreading the word of the project and people getting aware of the project in a way works as revenue for the Project. When using Google Analytics tools it is possible to see what sorts of changes as it made in the amount of visitors on the website for example. If there are no significant changes it is safe to say that SEO is not the most vital tool to focus on when it comes to the Twinning Project. On the other side, if there are some significant increase in web traffic then focusing on SEO might not be such a bad idea.

The website has a plugin which can help improve SEO. With the help of some significant keywords the website will be more visible in search engines. Paying for AdWords may give even more visibility, but using that service has to be thought through if it would in the end help enough the visibility work online. SEO is however a good option as it works for all search engines (Chris, 2015).

In order to monitor performance of the communication activities on for example the website Google Analytics is a helpful and free tool for doing so. It will show information such as where visitors come to the website, how long they stay on the site and which part of the world they access the page in.

7.2.5 Promotional materials

Brochures, pens, posters, notebooks, paper folders and banners are used as information materials. In each meeting or teacher training, which has been held and will be held in the future by the Twinning project, participants have received/will receive a brochure, a pen, a notebook and a paper folder. The brochures have been printed in three languages: English, Albanian and Serbian. They contain basic factual information about the project; information about the objectives and purpose of the project, implementing states and the beneficiary country, duration of the project, describing shortly the main components and the expected results of the project. The brochures are both in paper and electronic form and it can be found on project's website.

In addition to the abovementioned materials, participants of teacher trainings have received their USB stick, which they can use in their work. Some material with useful material has been transferred to the USB stick as well. However, in case a teacher has not been able to participate in the teacher training they can find the same material on the Twinning Project's website.

Other material, which could help improve the visibility of the project, is a magnetic sign(s) that can be attached and removed easily from the side of a car. Whenever representatives of the project are moving around Kosovo, their cars could have signs on the side of the car so that people will become more aware of the Twinning Project. The signs are magnetic since the cars that have been used by the Twinning project are outsourced.

In each Twinning workshop, teacher training or conference banners are clearly visible so that those passing by or taking part in the event are able to read and understand the nature of the action. Schools receive also equipment financed by the EU. Each equipment has to have a tag on them, which indicates that the EU has founded them.

7.2.6 Public Relations

During workshops, conferences and meetings the local media has been interested in the project and experts have been interviewed on a few occasions. The interviews have been shown on both national television as well as on the website of that particular media channel. Newspapers in both Finland and Kosovo have written some articles of the Project. Mainly the project has and will try to be visible for its target groups, and for two in particular: principals and MEDs. Having these important target groups being aware of the project will make it easier and more possible to be visible for teachers, pupils and parents as well.

7.2.7 Seminars and workshops

The Twinning project has had a few important seminars so far. One larger kick-off conference was held in the beginning of the project and another conference 'High Quality Education for 21st Century' was held in March 2015. The third larger scale seminar was held on the 10th and 11th of September. During the first day of the seminar the Twinning

project had the honour of having President Mrs. Tarja Halonen making her opening speech. Media was highly involved in the seminar and it gave lots of positive visibility of the twinning project. Unfortunately, Mrs. Tarja Halonen's visit in Kosovo got very little media attention in Finland.

The results of the research (see Figures 29, 31 and 33) show that principals and MEDs suggest workshops, seminars and/or conferences to be a smart way of raising the awareness of the Project. Workshops and other similar events are however costly for the project as it is expensive to hire experts on even short missions, and the Project needs to cover the lunch costs of the participants. However, for those subject areas that the Project sees as an important investment to set up a workshop/seminar/conference it is important that the venue is setup in such way that the logo of both the European Union and the Twinning project can be seen. This means including roll-ups near the stage, and providing notebooks and pens to each participant.

8 DISCUSSION

The main aim of the thesis was to make a visibility plan for the EU Twinning Education Project with the help of the results gained from a quantitative survey. Before this thesis the Project had already some focus on visibility, but this research gave some more insights of what the key target groups think so far about the communication of the Project and what they wish the Project to do in the future. Respondents also gave answers regarding their preferred communication tools.

Even though the Project staff has worked very hard to improve the education in Kosovo and give support to local education professionals, it was surprising to see that still so many respondents were completely aware of the aims of the Twinning Project. It was also surprising that a country with rather good Internet connection and active users, so few respondents actually use social media or the Internet. Age could be a reason; older generations use less Internet in Kosovo (How do Kosovars use the Internet, 2013). Respondents' age could have been a good fact to include in the research part in order to get some sort of confirmation why so few respondents actually use Internet and the social media.

The research gave not only valuable information in regards to this thesis, but also for the Project itself. The author and the Project had some expectations of how the respondents would think before taking the questionnaire, but when giving them a chance to explain further on why they think in a specific way, it opened up a whole new chapter.

As stated in the research aim, the aim of this thesis is to have a visibility plan with explanations why and how certain communication tools should be used. In order to come to the conclusion why the tools were selected the research worked as a guide. The most important information gathered from the research is that the target groups are eager to hear more about the Twinning Project.

9 CONCLUSION

Kosovo has a long way to get on the level with European Union countries. The EU Twinning Education Project does a very important work to help Kosovo's education system to take a long leap into a brighter future and a mort high quality education. It requires lots of work especially from the beneficiary country. For the Twinning Project it is essential to be visible as it stands for such an important cause for the development of a country. Education gives people more knowledge and skills, and that is why every country has to preserve and improve its education system.

With the help of secondary data and the primary data, which consisted of a semi quantitative research, the author prepared a visibility plan including a marketing research for the Project. With the help of the SOSTAC model the author identified its target audiences, found out about their thoughts and insights through the quantitative research, listed up and discussed each communication tools and planned a way how to monitor the performance once taken action. A plan on how to communicate, which tools to use, with whom to communicate with and when, has a much better chance of succeeding than without knowing if the target groups are even interested in the Project.

Overall the respondents seemed to be on track with what the Twinning project is. An unfortunate discovery was though that still many who have been on several occasions informed about the Project both verbally and by email still claimed to not be acquainted with the Project. Thus, it is crucial to remind the people about the activities and happenings on a regular basis.

The questionnaire was sent out to 168 people. This means that principals from all the piloting schools and MEDs from all municipalities were contacted. Having such high response rate (49%) was a positive surprise, especially knowing that principals and MEDs have lots of work and also according to the results many of them do not use the Internet.

The Project has been a very successful one until now and has worked hard to reach its goals. With a readymade plan the execution of the communication activities need to take place if the Twinning project wishes to gain more awareness and visibility mostly amongst its target groups, but also amongst the larger audience.

10 FIGURES

11 TABLES

12 REFERENCES

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13 APPENDICES

13.1 Questionnaire in English

Gender: □ female,
□ male

Are you a: □ Principal,
□ MED

Which municipality do you work in?:_____

Using a scale of 1= Not at all to 5= Very much, please give your own opinion regarding the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

1. How well aware are you about the EU Twinning project?

Please elaborate shortly what you know so far

_____

_____

_____

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

2. Would you want to hear more about the events and activities where the project is actively involved in?

For example what?

_____

_____

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

3. How well has the project been visible at your school/organisation/entity?

In your opinion how has it been visible, and how has it worked?

_____

_____

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

4. Do you follow the project on Facebook or on the website?

If you do not follow, why not? What would make you more interested?

_____

_____

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

5. Have you been satisfied with the way the Twinning project communicates with the public?

If you have not been satisfied, why not?

_____

_____

1	2	3	4	5	No opinion

6. Do you think the Twinning project should be more active in posting news to their Facebook page or website about their activities and events?

If you think the project has not been active enough, why not?

_____

_____

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
7. Whenever you have seen news about the project, how interested have you been to hear more about it?						

Why have you been interested/why have you not been interested?

_____

_____

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
8. Do you feel like it is easy to approach the project if you have any questions?						

Why/why not?

_____

_____

9. What do you think is the most important focus of the pro-ject?_____

_____

10. In your opinion, what communication tools work best in your country when a project like the Twinning project wants to communicate with *you*? (You can choose up to three options)

- Social media (for example Facebook)
- Websites
- Newsletter
- Word-of-mouth
- Brochures and leaflets
- Email
- Conferences
- Trade fairs
- Some other way, what?_____

11. In your opinion, what communication tools should the Twinning project use more in order to gain more awareness and interest amongst _teachers?_ (You can choose up to three options)

- Social media
- A well-functioning website
- Newspaper advertisements
- Email newsletters
- Appear on TV or Radio more often
- The project should take more part in other events such as fairs
- Organize more workshops or conferences
- Some other way,

what?_____

12. In your opinion, what communication tools should the Twinning project use more in order to gain more awareness and interest amongst the _public?_ (You can choose up to three options)

- Social media
- A better functioning website
- Newspaper advertisements
- Email newsletters
- Appear on TV or Radio more often
- The project should take more part in other events such as fairs
- Organize more workshops or conferences
- Some other way,

what?_____

Other comments

Thank you for your valuable time!