

## Parents and their Needs for Information and Communication with School

<sup>1</sup>Ma. Rina Gera

<sup>2</sup> Ma. Irida Hoti

<sup>1</sup>University "Luigj Gurakuqi", Faculty of Sciences of Education,

<sup>2</sup>University "Luigj Gurakuqi", Faculty of Social Sciences

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**Abstract** *The communication teachers –parents is going to be even more essential for the progress of the child. So it tends to be direct and all inclusive with the aim of evidencing the progress of the success of the child. The information, is very important in transmitting the changes and the new ideas in the educational process, as a primary form of communication .This study tends to analyze some problems faced in information and as a result in communication parents - teachers. To highlight these problems we have done a questionnaire with approximately 100 parents of primary and secondary school children, from which we tend to present that the information in our schools is not in the required expectations, especially in public schools. In non-public schools, in which the information is more formal and institutional toward every parent are also evaluated some details and elements as: parents meeting, school activities, tests etc., consequently the communication is more different in the simplicity, objectivity in evaluation and judgment. On the other hand this study tends to bring different forms of communication, which are applicable nowadays in Shkodra city schools. Also what they suggest to do in their point of view, what they want from the school, how they want to collaborate with teachers and other staff to be more fruitful and successful for their children.*

**Key words:** *children, communication, information, parents, school.*

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### 1. Introduction

The communication teachers – parents is going to be even more essential for the progress of the child. It tends to be direct and inclusive to the aim of evidencing the progress of the child's success. "Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily...The more fundamental or basic is the idea, the greater will be its breath of applicability to new problems." (Howard, J., 2007). The parents following step by step the children's progress, make them feel more estimated and sometimes more motivated and aware to what they really want to achieve through the education system. The school information, being very important in transmitting the changes and the new developments of the educational process, is the primary form of communication. In Shkodra city the children attend private and public schools. There are children, who have attended both of them. For this reason our study is focused on the way the parents communicate with the school and their needs for information and communication with school. School communication must be transparent, and needs to be permanent. But what happens in our schools? Are our schools prepared to face the challenges of the time? Do our schools try to make the impossible for children, parents to improve their work for all the partners included at school?

### 2. Methodology

For this study we have prepared a questionnaire with 137 parents of children who follow the public and non-public schools in the city of Shkodra. These parents have given their opinions about communication and information from school and they have also expressed their suggestions to improve these conditions. The aim of this questionnaire is to present the needs and the requests of the parents for the public and non-public schools and to the Albanian system of education. The research undertaken in eight public and non-public schools in Shkodra city demonstrates that such procedures are prone to improve communication with parents. The parents are selected occasionally. They have different ages, level of education and also their children follow different systems of education.

All the data are analyzed by *Microsoft Office Excel method.*

### 3. Results and discussion of the study

The results of this study are presented graphically. The graphics show how the parents answered and gave their opinions about the school information and the different models of communication with teachers and staff in Shkodra city.

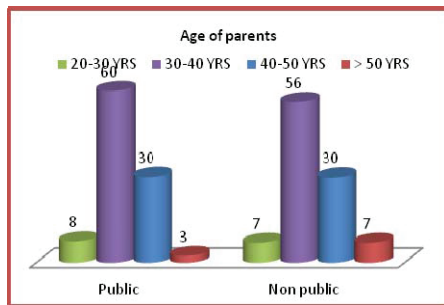


Figure 1

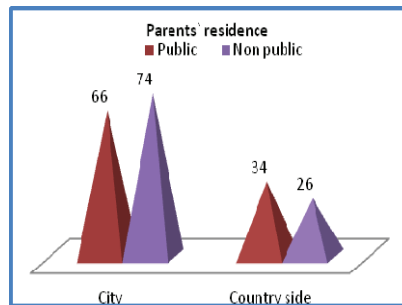


Figure 2

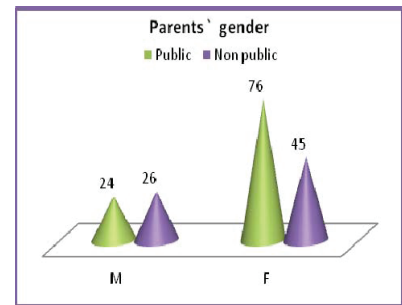


Figure 3

The parents in this study were selected casually, but at a right proportion between public and non-public. For that reason we have chosen 4 public schools and 4 non-public schools in Shkodra city, from whom 2 are colleges (from 1 to 9-th grade) and 2 high schools for each system of education. The parents who fulfilled the questionnaire were in the highest number from 30-40 years old, followed by 40-50 and the lowest number was 20-30 and over 50 years old. The parents are from both the city and country (42% of the public schools and 19% from the non-public schools). That shows the interest of the parents to choose the best possibility they can effort for their children. Females are in a higher number to be part of this study (82% of public and 78% of the non-publics), which shows us that mothers are more involved in school education.

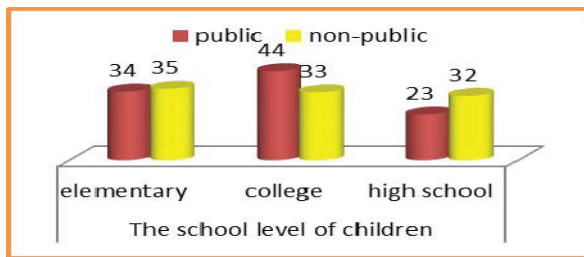


Figure 4

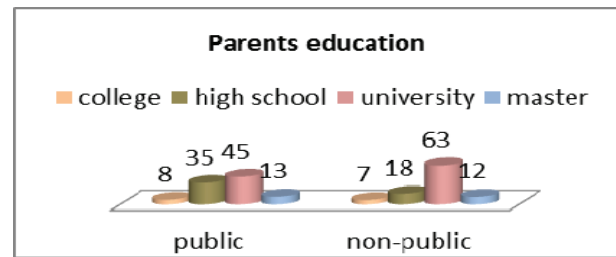


Figure 5

The parents questioned have different levels of education from college to Master degree, but as we can see from the graphics, the highest number of them has university degree. According to the level of education the children follow, they come from the elementary school to high school. The reason of this division was to compare all the levels, the presence of differences between levels and systems. As we can see through the graphics, the highest number of the children is from the college, followed by the elementary and the high school students. (Fig.4.)

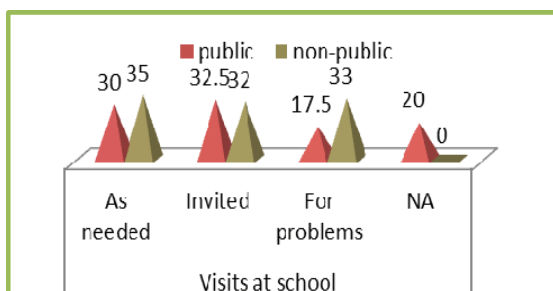


Figure 6

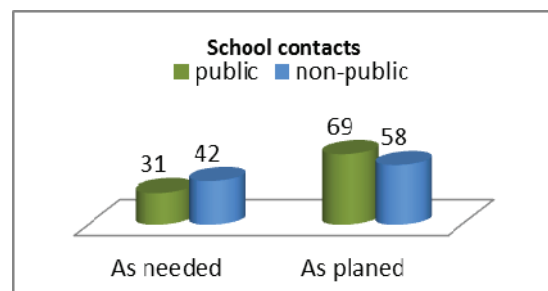


Figure 7

About the visits at school, parents express different ideas. In general they go to school any time need or when they are invited for monthly meetings (this is approximately equal for both systems). But we can see that 33% of parents (non – public) go when they face problems and almost 18% in private schools. They can also go when they need any help for their child. Sometimes the parents see school as a place where their children are safe and secure and they go only when they face problems. Mostly these parents are with low level of education. They think that school proceed without their help and participation. On the other hand, the most interested parents are they who go at meetings, contact teachers, are part of all the activities and try to give opinions as long as they are heard or as long as they influence, depending the school rules, school system, teachers and supervisors. Also we can see that 20% of parents did not give an answer, because don't go to know child's progress.

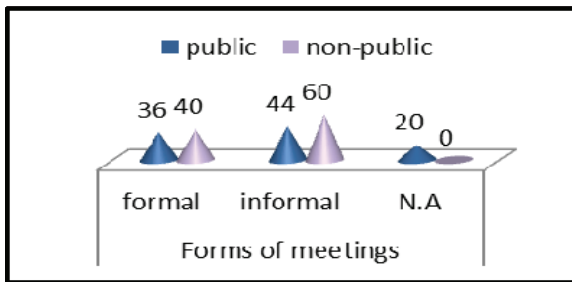


Figure 8

As we can understand from the graphs and also by the information given by the parents, the highest number of cases is informal, (44% in public and 60% in non-public) that means that the parents have a kind of friendship meeting with the teachers which is more frequent in non – public schools. The parents feel comfortable to discuss and to share ideas with the teachers. On the other hand we have 36% of public school parents and 40% of non-public schools parents which admit that their meeting is formal between them and the teachers. Sometimes they say that they don't feel comfortable and are not able to express their opinions that's because of the teachers rude communication or impolite. That maybe can happen because of the large number of parents which frustrate the communication and the privacy between them and the teachers. But we can see also that 20% of parents in public schools which don't choose the 2 forms, they don't give an answer because they don't go to school to meet teachers so they can't give an opinion about these forms. It's evident that 20% of parents in public schools, neither two forms of communications nor give an answer because they never to teacher's meetings

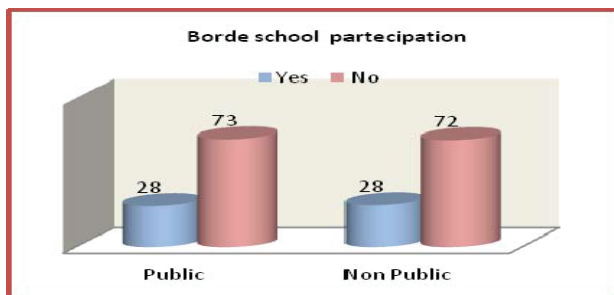


Figure 9

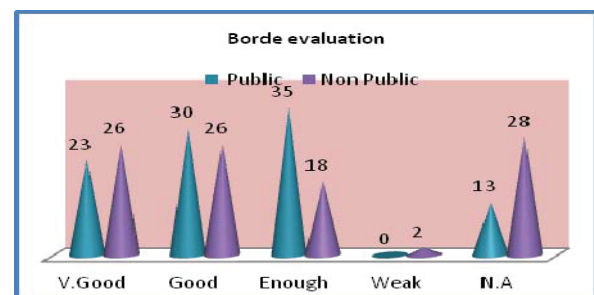


Figure 10

First of all, it is very important for the parents to be part of board's school, and to evaluate the developments of the school. As it is shown in graphics the board school participation at public schools and nonpublic schools is the same in 28% of parents who were part of the class or school board, but the evaluation is a bit different. For the board of the public schools 23% of the parents valuate it very good, 30% good and 35% enough good, for the nonpublic schools 26% parents valuate it very good, 26% good, 18 % enough good. This evaluation vary in these two school systems, it is evaluated very good only from the parents who are part of the board or are more active than other parents and know the development of school life, but in general the parents don't have enough information or they really don't know about the existence of the board. The participation is about 30% of the parents for both systems, but most of the time they aren't active and can't take decisions. From the questionnaire it is evident that many parents about 20% don't know the real function of the school board and that is more apparent at nonpublic schools, because the decisions are made by the owner of the school.

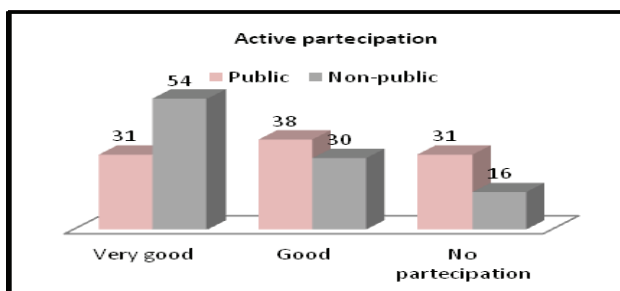


Figure 11

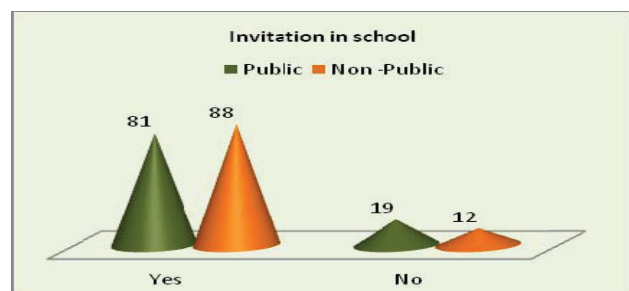


Figure 12

Being part of school for the parents is sometimes formal and the active participation isn't as valued as they want it to be. If we see the graphics in non-public schools the 54 % of parents think that the participation is very good, 30% good and 16 % don't participate at all. In public schools this active participation is different: 31 % think it is very good, 38 % good and 31% no participation. We can say that the parents go to school depending of the school or sometimes of the needs, their free time or problems they face. That is the reason they have this evaluation. In some cases they complain about the time of visits or their possibility to visit school and teachers or the time the school organise the activities , the meetings etc. So they say that they don't have the possibility to be very active to participate, discuss and evaluate the situation, problems or to suggest ideas about the future. They accept that the schools have their activities during the week, when they work or they can not be part of the school. Most of the time parents are interested to be invited at school (fig. 12) for parent's meeting and any celebrations. The parents accept the importance of invitations and as we can see from the graphs in more than in 80% of cases in both systems are interested in schools to discuss about the problems they face with their children the parents. Only in 19% in public school express indifference about it and in 12% in non-publics said that they don't need the importance to give ideas or suggestions about the school ,because for them the school does its work in a very good way. As we can see in the highest number the parents are interested and want to be part of school, to collaborate, to support and to help school and only a small percentage are 100% satisfied or indiferent about school work.

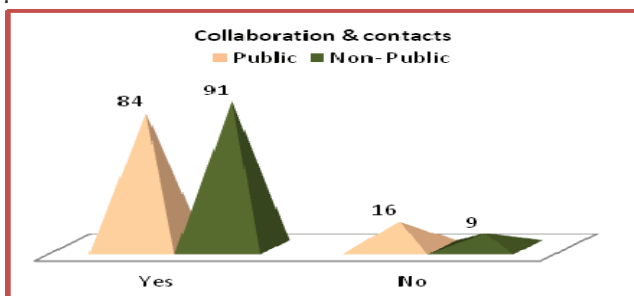


Figure 13

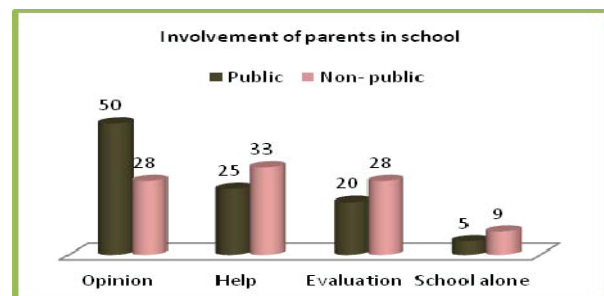


Figure 14

As we can see in the graphic 13 is shown that parents are very interested to collaborate and to contribute on changing the conditions and the quality of school. In 84% of them in public schools and 91% in non-public school they want to be part of sharing and giving opinions to school members, staff and all the actors interested about the improvement of school aspects. About their involvement, in nonpublic schools, 50% of parents tend to influence any school decision, either individually or in group with other parents. On the other hand, in public schools only 30% socially excluded parents do not even try to influence school decisions. In terms of their attitudes, most of the parents consider the school needs to ask them help their children with homework, even there is somebody in the family who can do that. Mothers are more involved in helping their children then fathers, and this proportion increases among socially excluded families

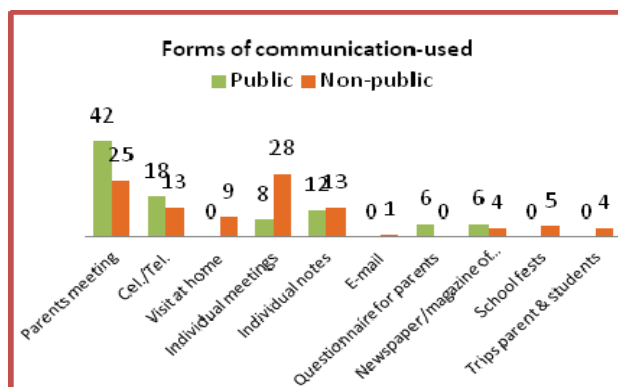


Figure 15

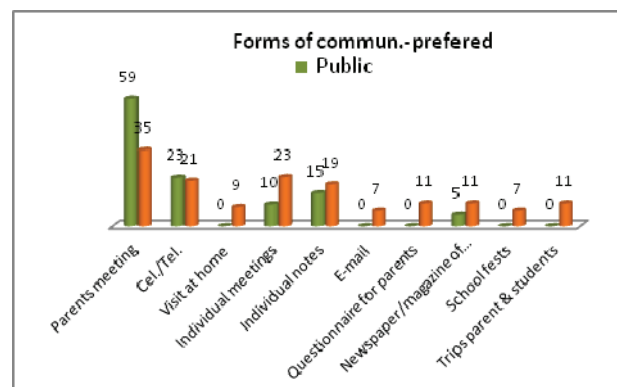


Figure 16

These two graphics sustain the forms of communication used in public and nonpublic schools and the preferred forms of communication. The common forms of communication as shown in the graphic are: visits at home, individual meetings, individual notes, newspaper or magazine, school fests etc. Types of school information vary from school to school, because of the information system chosen by the school and its interests toward the parents. As we see in the graphs the

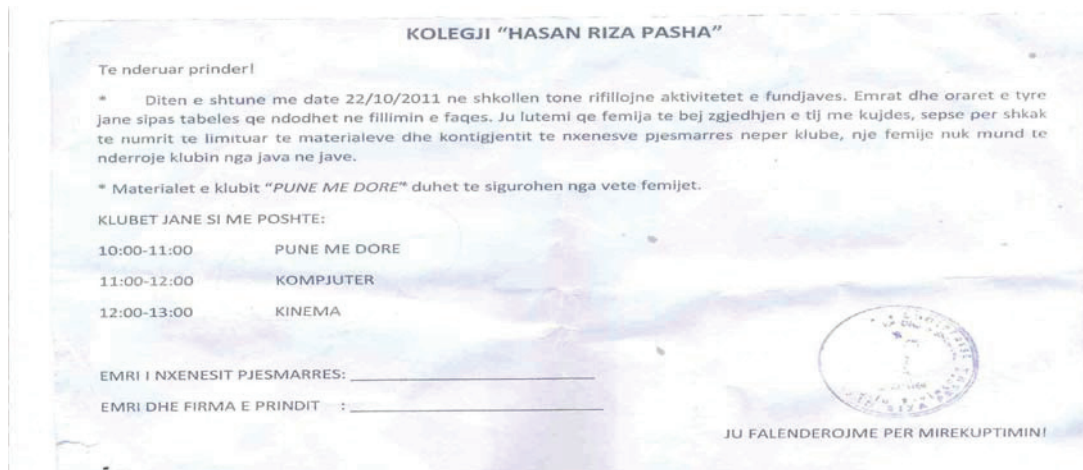
school in general tend to use the common meetings in school, followed by phone calls and the individual meetings (especially in non- public schools) in and out of school. In non-public schools there are ranges of more preferable ways of communication than at public schools. A lot of parents, whose children attend public schools, prefer individual meetings, based on privacy, e-mail or individual notes, in which the parents are really informed for the progress of the child. But we can see that the parents themselves are sticky to the old forms and maybe for them are difficult to change the traditional forms of communication. The visits at home or the trips parents-teachers and pupil used by non-public schools make the relation parent-teacher – pupil more reliable, this leads to child's progress and the motivation to achieve teachers and parents aims.

There are known two different forms of communication and information between school and family direct and indirect. Direct communication includes: parents meetings, meetings between groups of interest, meetings pairs of interest individual, meetings visits in school and home conferences meetings between parents or students, etc. Indirect communication includes: phone calls, e-communication, communication through letters, weekly messages, magazines informal messages, individual notes, notebook of communication, (parents-teachers) notice –board, etc. (Deva. A- Zuna & bashkëautorë, 2009)

In public schools the information isn't mostly given in a formal way, but orally, for activities, parents' meeting, several payments (as the guard of the school, the photocopies of the tests etc.). In non-public schools, in which the information is more formal and institutional toward every parent are also evaluated some details and elements as: parents meeting, school activities, tests etc., consequently the communication is more different in the simplicity, objectivity in evaluation and judgment. Every parent has to sign the school information as for example: Information for the payment of school and books; information for parent's meeting, information about different rips or activities of school etc. The non-public schools communicate with parents through formularies as Information for parents, by which is informed for different reasons as: \*Information about the school (address, phone number, the timetable of school and the fee for the school and for the textbooks and the parent's permission for child's pictures in activities at school to be advertised in internet ). See Model 1. Model 1.

<p> <small>           Rruga "Nënë Kieja"            Llogja Qafëhardhi            4000 Shkodër/Albania            Tel.: +355 069 371 4872            www.hti-shkoder.com            office@hti-shkoder.com         </small> </p>	<p> <small>           Österreichische Schule „Peter Mahringer“ - Shkollja Austriake Shkodër            Höhere Technische Schule für Informationstechnologie            Shkollja e mesime profesionale private për teknologji informacioni         </small> </p>	
<p><b>Informacion për prindërit</b></p>		
<b>Adresa e Shkollës:</b>	Shkollja Austriake "Peter Mahringer" Rr. "Nënë Kieja" (Qafëhardhi) Shkodër	
<b>Numri i telefonit:</b>	069 37 14 872	
<b>Banka</b>	Raiffeisen Bank Shkodër	
<b>Emri i LLogarisë:</b>	Fondacioni Shkollor Austriak	
<b>Nr i LLogarisë:</b>	1400 686 785	
<b>SWIFT Code:</b>	SGSBALTX REUTERS SSAL SGSA	
<b>Të dhënat mbi pagesën:</b>	Pagesa shkollore kryhet në Bankën Raiffeisen çdo muaj deri me datë 10 të secilit muaj. Nëse pagesa kryhet pas datës 10 të muajit, pagesës i shtohet kamata e vonesës. Vonesa e pagesës deri në 10 ditë: është 5 €, deri në 20 ditë është 10 €.	
<b>Të dhënat mbi oraret e shkollës:</b>	Fillimi i mësimit : 07.45 Pushimi i drekës: 12.55-13.35 Mësimi i pasdites: 13.35-15.55	
<b>Librat shkollor:</b>	Shkollja është kujdesur për blerjen e të gjitha librave shkollor. Librat do të shpërndahen në shkollë dhe ju do të informoheni për pagesën shkollore. Vetëm libri i gjermanishtes do të merret hua në shkollë kundrejt në kaacioni. Libri do të dorëzohet në fund të vitit shkollor dhe pagesa do t'ju kthehet.	
	Në faqen e internetit të shkollës dhe në librin vjetor të shkollës paraqiten foto të aktiviteteve shkollore gjatë vitit shkollor. Do të dëshironim të dinim nëse lejoni që fëmija juaj të paraqitet në një nga këto fotografi. Qarkoni po ose jo për këtë pikë.	
<b>Jam dakort</b>	<b>Po</b>	
<b>Nuk jam dakort</b>	<b>Jo</b>	
Ju lutem firmosni për të na bërë të ditur që jeni informuar mbi këto të dhëna.		
<b>Emri Mbiemri:</b>	<u>ENDRIN HOTI</u>	
<b>Firma e prindërit:</b>		
Sekretaria e Shkollës është në dispozicion për pyetjet tuaja nga ora 08.00 deri 13.00. Ju mund të telefoni në nr e tel për të marrë informacionet që ju nevojiten.		

\*For activities (Kind of activity, date and time). See Model 2. Model 2.



\*Results of the child for each subject or as an average mark. See Model 3.

Model 3. (Peter Mehringer , college "Hasan Riza Pasha" and college "Haxhi Sheh Shamia")

Emri	Sytg	D	E	Al	M-Al	B	Ch	Ph	H-Al	G -Al
Nota	9	8	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	10

KLASA E XII..... EVIDENCË PËRPARIMI DHE FREKUENTIMI 14 NËNTOR 2011 – 09 JANAR 20112

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DREJTORIA E SHKOLLËS

EMER MBIEMER

EMER MBIEMER	NOTAT SHTATOR-DHIJETOR 2011				
Reisa Kraja-Khan					
Gjuhë	9	10	9	9	10
Matematikë	9	8	10	10	10
Anglisht	10	9	10	10	10
Dituri natyre	9	10	10		
Histori	9	10			
Kompjuter	8	8	8		

A. Dëska

There are several public and private schools that don't give such a template with the marks of the pupils, the results of the child are given verbally.

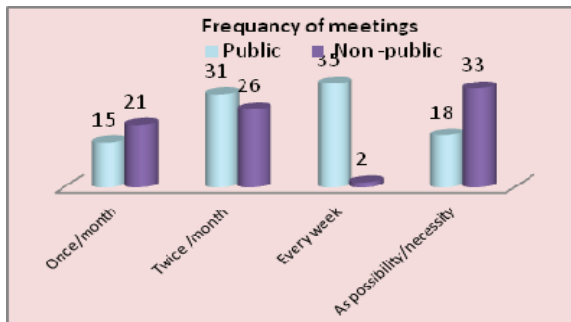


Figure 17

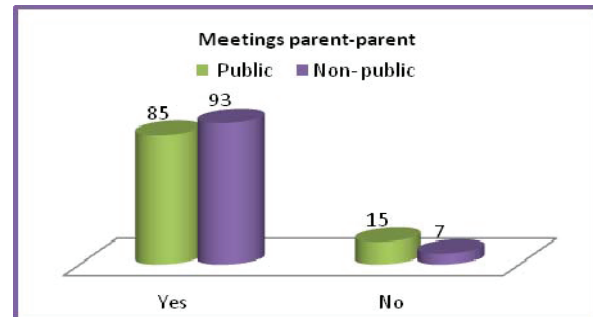


Figure 18

The parent’s meeting is the main contact to receive the child’s evaluation. Parents tend to be more open in expressing their opinion in one-to-one meetings. At public schools the parent’s meeting is once a month, but they would like to have it more often, 30% of the parents think to be twice a month. Especially parents of public schools prefer it to be even once a week. That may be because of not receiving a marks’ list of the child’s results as at non-public schools. These forms of taking results are presented through Model 3 in some non-public schools

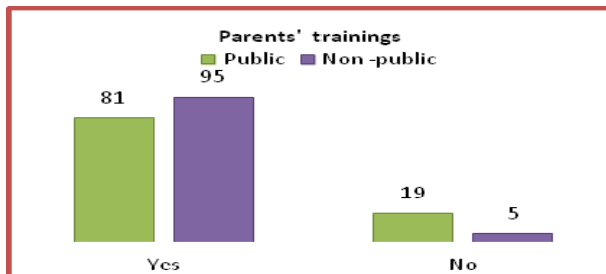


Figure 19

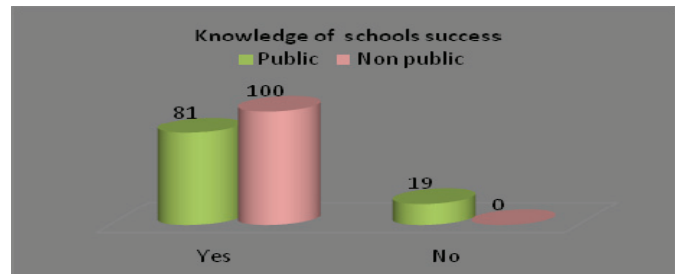


Figure 20

Being trained by school on helping the children in home works, time management at home for their children, it is shown that in 81% of public schools and 95% of non-public schools is preferred to be part of these kind of trainings. They need to be trained about these aspects to nearer their children, to help, support and to conduct their children in the right forms of learning for long life. Only 19% of public schools and 5% of non- public schools do not need these kinds of training, because they accept their own ability to do it without school help. The parent’s involvement at school is as important as child’s success itself, because there are a number of parents, who can contribute in the school success.

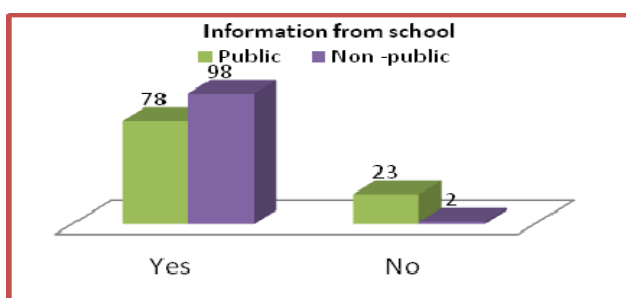


Figure 21

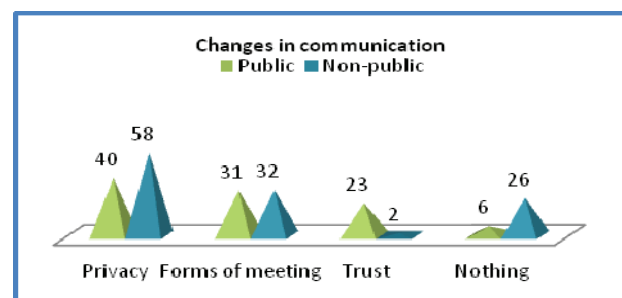


Figure 22

Information at school, as the step from parent to child differs from public to non- public schools. On 78% of public school and 98% of non-public school the parents have information about children test’s results. That means that the parents get the information through their children or through teacher’s meetings .In only 23% of public schools and 2 % of non- public schools isn’t done or the parents are so disinterested that they admit that they don’t want to have this kind of information. According to changes the parents would like to have in communication, it seems to be most in public than in non-public. These changes are preferred especially on their privacy 58% in public schools and 40% in non- public schools. The forms of meetings aren’t so important or if they are traditional, as the way they are performed. The parents want trust from school and teachers and to have privacy of information exchange. It is evident that in 26%, the parents of the non- public schools, are comfortable with the forms of communication and don’t want to change anything of them. So we can say that

we have problems in forms and privacy of communication and the ethic of parents-teacher communication are not well known by both parts.

#### 4. Conclusions

According to the answers given by the parents we can highlight that:

Parent's needs toward children' development have to improve:

- **In collaboration with teachers.** The teachers should be effective communicators, because they understand that the communication and learning are interdependent and the knowledge and attitudes students receive from the classroom are selectively drawn from a complex assortment of verbal and nonverbal messages about the subject, the teacher, and themselves.
- **Parents must be involved in school activities.** The success of the child is related to the parent's involvement at school as a part of school, giving ideas and making decisions.
- **The information of the parent time by time leads the child in achieving good results.** Parents need a greater support from the school in order to help the pupils to improve learning outcomes, because, even if they are willing to do that, they lack necessary knowledge and skills. By advancing communication with parents, schools should think of modalities for offering assistance to parents what can be achieved through information sessions.
- A good communication school- parent/ parent – child/ child – school make the children more motivated and more willing of progressing.

#### 5. Recommendations

From the above conclusions recommendations are divided into two categories.

##### For schools:

- Schools should develop procedures for meetings with parents, specifying the dynamics, preparation and content of such meetings. Group/thematic meetings should become a practice as well as individual meetings with parents.
- It is necessary to train teachers manage different types of meetings with parents and their use for advancing teaching and learning in school.
- In addition to parents' meetings, schools should organize regular information using media, messages transmitted through students, e-mail, etc., particularly for cases requiring immediate parental attention.
- Schools should engage in raising awareness of parents on their role in the school and should train them to exercise such a role. Also, parents should be aware that their role in relation to children is not exercised only by request from the school, but should be regularly exercised in the benefit of the children. A progress may be achieved if parental meetings are structured to convey mobilizing messages to parents.

##### For parents

- To work on raising awareness of parents on their role in the school and other levels. As a consequence, awareness raising activities should be organized in the school level as well as other levels such as: municipality, region and country.
- To work on raising the capacities of the parents' associations in all levels in order to help increase the influence of parents in school life. These associations should be trained to work with parents and their representatives in schools for a better involvement.
- To promote good practices of parental involvement in the school life by creating opportunities to benefit from them.

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