ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN KOSOVO

unicef
for every child

30 September 2019

Analysis of the Situation of Women and Children in Kosovo*

Development Pathways
30 September 2019

*All references to Kosovo are made in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

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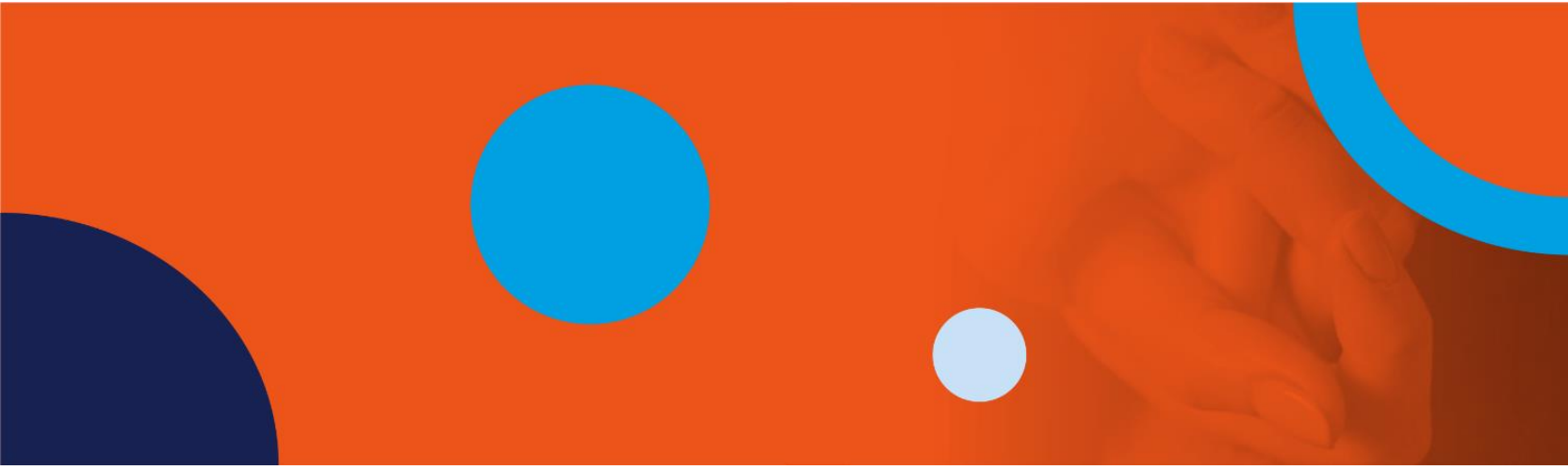

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The data in this report and its interpretation and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of UNICEF. However, as always, UNICEF welcomes any comments and suggestions that might contribute to strengthening the shared understanding of and action towards achievement of full and equitable rights for children and women in Kosovo.

Abbreviations

AI	Administrative Instruction
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CCPJC	Council on Child Protection and Justice for Children
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CMR	Case Management Roundtable
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSW	Centre for Social Work
CYAS	Central Youth Action Council of Kosovo
DTP3	Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis immunization
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIS	Health Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRU	Human Rights Unit
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMCCR	Inter-Ministerial Committee for Child Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KEEN	Kosovo Employment and Education Network
KOMF	Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection
MED	Municipal Education Directorate
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRTAN	Prevention and Response Teams towards Abandonment and Non-Registration
SNAPC	Strategy and Action Plan on Children's Rights
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Foreword

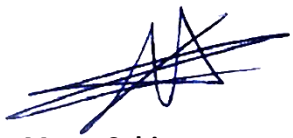
This analysis of the situation of children and women stems from a collaborative process involving institutions of Kosovo, sister UN Agencies, civil society organizations, representatives of the private sector and young people, with technical support from the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO). It captures both the significant achievements and the enduring challenges which institutions and people face as they move towards the full and equitable realization of the rights of all children and women in Kosovo. The report forms the basis for UNICEF's Programme design for 2021 to 2025, contributes to the UN Common Analysis and other strategic planning exercises of partners, including reporting on progress against the SDGs in Kosovo.

The analysis - prepared in a life cycle format – highlights breaks in the continuum of care, from conception to adolescence and beyond, which lead to unfulfilled potential and non-realization of rights. While there has been significant aggregate progress in critical areas such as reducing infant mortality and malnutrition, the analysis shows there are also substantial disparities: children with disabilities, those in rural areas, children living in poverty and children of ethnic minorities (notably the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities) all experience inequalities. The analysis also highlights challenges in enrolment in early childhood education, the quality of education and the specific issues facing adolescents and young people. Overcoming these difficulties is essential for strengthening human capital in Kosovo.

A wide range of recommendations are included in this report which provide concrete suggestions in areas where shortfalls in achieving goals have been identified. At the same time, they inform the Kosovo institutions in taking the necessary actions to overcome these shortfalls while taking into consideration areas that require additional support for the realisation of children's rights.

These include focusing more attention on strengthening the capacities of actors at all levels for implementation of child focused programmes; developing cost-effective and innovative models for achieving child rights at municipal level which can be scaled up and sustained all municipalities in Kosovo; for authorities and partners, increasing investments in human and financial resources; and broadening and deepening evidence generation and partnerships for advocacy and investment including with academia and the private sector.

We would like to express our appreciation to all our partners for their unyielding efforts to achieve results for all children as we mark the 30th anniversary of the Child Rights Convention. We remain committed to realizing the rights and meeting the changing needs of the children and young people.



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Executive Summary

This Situation Analysis is based on a detailed desk review of all available sources of data and information, complemented by a series of key informant interviews carried out during field work in Kosovo to better ground the analysis and fill key data gaps. Consultations with Institutions of Kosovo, UN staff members, NGOs, youth groups and senior executives from the business sector were essential to validate and add value to the findings of the desk review, based on their expert knowledge and on-the-ground experience. Since the end of the conflict, Kosovo has been engaged in rebuilding its infrastructure while creating new institutions along with a new legal and policy framework. There has been steady progress in this area, but additional efforts and resources will still be needed to ensure the full and equitable realization of child rights.

A relatively benign policy environment has been unfolding and there is growing recognition of the critical role that children, youth and women play in national development. However, that recognition is not yet reflected in the availability and efficient use of human and financial resources to address the most critical remaining bottlenecks to maximizing their contribution. National priorities and resource allocation are focused on growing the economy through strengthening the private sector to improve competitiveness, increase exports and build infrastructure as a means of addressing issues of unemployment.

However, this strategy has thus far failed to significantly improve the trade balance or reduce unemployment.[1] There is a substantial gap between policy, planning and implementation in Kosovo, implying that the good intentions of policy makers are not always translated into results on the ground. Consequently, significant challenges remain to be addressed in order for the equitable realization of rights and results for children in Kosovo. Poverty remains a harsh reality for many in Kosovo, with the proportion of children living in poverty estimated at around 23 per cent, including more than 7 per cent living in extreme poverty.[2] Living in poverty is a root cause of many negative consequences for the fulfilment of child rights in Kosovo, including child labour, child marriage, lower access to services and poorer social outcomes. Poverty in Kosovo disproportionately affects women, children, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and rural populations.[3]

While the available data shows continuing improvement in child survival and development, especially in infant mortality, the areas of neonatal and maternal mortality remain challenging. Neonatal mortality, as a proportion of infant mortality, is at 75 per cent, indicating issues with the quality of maternal, neonatal

[1] World Bank Group, Western Balkans Regular Economic Report #15: *Reform Momentum needed*, Washington, Spring 2019.
[2] World Bank/KAS, *Consumption Poverty in the Kosovo, 2012-2015*, Pristina, April 2017.
[3] Ibid.

and child health services; there is no recent data on maternal deaths or maternal health and nutrition. There are also problems with the availability of and access to Early Childhood Education (ECE), inclusive education and equitable access to services, opportunities and social outcomes.

In particular, children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower attendance rates at schools, fewer employment opportunities and are more likely to be in poverty. For children with disabilities, obstacles remain in the form of limited access to appropriate education, health care and rehabilitation services, and barrier-free access to public facilities and services.

Access to appropriate education includes accessible and inclusive learning spaces, the availability of teachers and assistants trained in the area of inclusive education and provision for addressing other barriers such as transport, access to assistive devices and appropriate toilet facilities. Similarly, children in the second decade of life struggle with successfully navigating the complex employment market due to issues with the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of education systems. Approximately 20 per cent of Roma students finish secondary education compared to 80 per cent of non-Roma students. Youth unemployment continues to edge upward, reaching 55.3 per cent in 2018.[4] This compares to a national unemployment rate of 29.6 per cent.[5]

One of the most significant challenges facing Kosovo is persistent gender discrimination hindering women's access to economic, political and social opportunities. Gender bias reduces the capacity of Kosovo to reach its development goals. Gender based violence, for example, remains a sad fact of life with 19 per cent of women in Kosovo reporting physical or sexual abuse and 29 per cent sexual harassment;[6] in 2017, 80 per cent of women aged 15-64 were inactive in the Labour Force compared to 34.7 per cent of men.[7] The policies put into place, while leading to some gains, have yet to lead to transformative change in gender roles and the overall status of women. In the 2017 municipal elections only 8 out of 204 mayoral candidates were female[8] and, in 2018, just 11.9 per cent of senior decision-making positions were held by women.[9] Addressing this issue is an essential element of securing the rights of children and women.

[4] Kosovo 2018 Labour Force Survey
[5] Kosovo 2018 Labour Force Survey.
[6] OSCE led Survey on Violence against Women: Wellbeing and Safety of Women, Brussels, March 2019.
[7] KAS, *Kosovo 2017 Labour Force Survey*, Pristina, 2017.
[8] Ibid.
[9] *Gender Inequality is still pervasive in decision-making and politics*, Dafina Halili in K2.0, February 2019. Prishtina.

Critical issues affecting children through the life cycle

The key issues in the first decade of life include:

Despite good progress over time, the relatively high proportion of infant deaths during the neonatal period (75 per cent)[10] signifies the need for a stronger focus on maternal, neonatal and child health. Perinatal mortality has declined significantly from 29.1/1000 live births in 2000 to 11.2/1000 live births in 2017. However, despite this, the rate of stillbirths and premature deliveries remains high.[11] The situation is beset with inequities particularly affecting Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. While infant mortality among the under-five population as a whole was estimated at 9 per 1000 live births, it was 41 per 1000 live births among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations.[12] This is underpinned by low levels of vaccination of these children. Whereas 79 per cent of children 24-35 months old are fully immunized according to the Kosovo immunization schedule, among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities immunization coverage is 30 per cent.[13] In addition, the neonatal, infant and child mortality rates are higher for boys than girls.

Due to data constraints, not much is known about the current state of maternal health and mortality except that the growing proportion of caesarean sections reached 27 per cent of total births in 2015, well above the WHO guideline of 10-15 per cent. The procedure is linked to higher risk of future complications and increased hospital recovery time for the mother as well as both short- and long-term complications for the infant. Furthermore, unnecessary caesarean sections place an undue burden on the health care system, which can inflate health costs and serve as a barrier to universal health coverage.[14]

Despite relatively positive headline indicators of nutrition (with stunting at 4.3 per cent overall),[15] there are challenges with infant and young child feeding including lack of early initiation and low levels of exclusive breastfeeding, resulting in low values for minimum acceptable diet and necessitating additional support for mothers. Furthermore, despite efforts to address them, there are significant inequalities disproportionately

[10] Data from The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Pristina, 2014.
[11] *Building an enabling environment for improving child health, development and wellbeing in Kosovo: A policy brief based on MICS 2014*, WHO Regional Office for Europe and UNICEF, 2015.
[12] Data from The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Pristina, 2014.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Dartmouth Global Health Policy Lab, *Promoting Maternal and Child Health in Kosovo: Policies to Address the Overuse of Caesarean Sections*, January 2018.
[15] Data from The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Pristina, 2014.

affecting poorer, rural and ethnic minority households. At the household level, parental support for learning - as reflected in engagement in 4 or more activities to promote learning and school readiness - is low, at about 43 per cent among mothers and 6 per cent among fathers.

Despite a recent increase to 92 per cent at pre-primary level, attendance at early childhood education facilities[16] is still too low to have the desired effect on school readiness. The number of children aged 0-5 attending licensed preschool institutions is just 4.9 per cent and only 19.1 per cent attend preschool and pre-primary.[17] This is despite universal agreement that Early Childhood Education and school readiness is an essential component of human capital development, as acknowledged in both the National Development Strategy (2016-2020) with a 2020 target of 95 per cent and the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017-2021). There are gaps in services for children with disabilities throughout the life cycle starting with early identification during pregnancy and infancy, classification, care and support programmes for those aged 0-6 At the primary school level, they face challenges with access to transport, including reaching the upper floors in school buildings and having access to disability-friendly toilets.

There is virtually universal enrolment, attendance and completion of primary school (95.6 per cent). However, this great achievement is offset by issues of quality, attendance and performance particularly among children from non-Serbian ethnic minorities. The gross enrolment rate of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in compulsory education is about 85 per cent, well below the national average.[18] Furthermore, only 73 per cent of girls and 88 per cent of boys from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities complete primary education.

However, some improvements can be noted. Despite being significantly below average and the fact that many young Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians do not reach higher levels of education, their enrolment rates have been increasing. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has increased the number of scholarships for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students from 500 to 600 in the current academic year and has allocated funds to the so far mainly donor-funded learning centres specifically established to assist this group of children to improve their inclusion and performance in the school system.[19]

[16] *First Report on the Implementation and Results of the National Development Strategy (2016-2021)*, Office of the Prime Minister, October 2018.
[17] European Commission, *Kosovo 2019 Report*, Brussels, May 2019.
[18] MEST, *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*, Pristina, 2016.
[19] *EC Country Report 2019* for Kosovo, page 31.

In the second decade of life the key issues include:

The upper secondary school overall net attendance ratio stands at 82 per cent. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children have the highest dropout rates compared to the general population and their enrolment stands at 30.3 per cent in upper secondary school.[20] Females in non-Serbian minority communities are additionally disadvantaged for reasons that include the cultural preference for girls to stay home and the continued prevalence of early marriage.[21]

Based on all available information, children with disabilities continue having difficulties in accessing education. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) confirms that there is no complete data on their inclusion in the education system while their identification and classification continue to be a significant issue.[22]

Poor quality of secondary education contributes to a mismatch between the demands of the labour market and outputs of the education system. Around half of all students in upper secondary education take applied courses, with just a few being accredited by the National Qualifications Authority and only limited relevance to employment opportunities.[23] Another indication of the poor quality of education is the performance of students from Kosovo in international assessments such as PISA 2015, where they featured among the bottom three countries.[24]

The highest unemployment rate in Kosovo is recorded among youth aged 15-24 (55.4 per cent in 2018),[25] well above the Western Balkans average of 38.6 per cent.[26] Despite improving over the past decade, this still represents a massive waste of human potential. Among unemployed youth, 63.5 per cent were female and 48.4 per cent male.[27] Limited access to information on sexual and reproductive health and adolescent and youth friendly health services, alongside traditional cultural practices, contribute to early marriage and childbearing.

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[20] Data from The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Pristina, 2014.
[21] *Kosovo Constraints Analysis*, Millennium Challenge Kosovo, Pristina, 2016.
[22] Kosovo Employment and Education Network, *Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan in 2017 Evaluation Report*, Pristina, December 2017.
[23] European Commission, *Kosovo 2019 Report*, Brussels, May 2019.
[24] Kosovo Employment and Education Network, *The Impact of Teacher Quality and In-school Resources on Kosovar Students' Performance: Findings from PISA 2015 results*, 2016.
[25] KAS, *2018 Labour Force Survey in Kosovo Report*, Pristina from the website of KAS accessed on 11 July 2019.
[26] *Human Capital Development in Kosovo: Policies, Challenges, Solutions*, European Training Foundation, May 2019.
[27] Ibid.

Approximately 10 per cent of women aged 20-49 were married before age 18 and 11 per cent of girls from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities were married before age 15.[28]

Services and capacities for supporting young people experiencing emotional difficulties or behavioural problems are few and far between. In a national survey around 53 per cent of children aged 6-18 reported low self-esteem and 16 per cent abnormal levels of emotional difficulties. Overall 25 to 40 per cent of Kosovar adolescents score in the deviant range for self-reported emotional and behavioural problems; this is above international norms.[29] Other challenges include sometimes tense inter-ethnic relations due to lack of trust, insufficient inclusion of ethnic minorities and risky behaviours among adolescents and youth, notably drug and alcohol use. Although there has been notable progress in each of these areas the rate of fundamental change has been slow.

Important cross cutting issues include:

Child Protection: While much has been done to ensure the protection of children in Kosovo, a number of issues remain. In addition to children living in situations of poverty, eleven per cent of children are involved in work including 7 per cent working in hazardous conditions. An estimated 61 per cent of children up to age 14 have suffered from psychological and physical violence. Alternative care services for children include living with relatives, foster care and to a limited extent residential care. Reports from governmental and non-governmental institutions speak about increasing child involvement in behaviours that are in violation of the law, including theft, violence and substance abuse.[30]

Children with disability: Limited availability of data makes it difficult to track progress in meeting the needs and rights of children with disabilities. This starts with the absence of reliable and comprehensive data on the number of children with disabilities. The approach to disability in Kosovo is dominated by a medical model which says that people are disabled by their impairments or differences, which need to be fixed. In contrast the social model holds that disability is caused by the way society is organized which causes people to lose independence, choice and control of their lives.[31] Challenges with early detection and intervention and absence of specialized staff and equipment make it difficult to ensure that their rights and potential are realized. Key

[28] Data from The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Pristina, 2014.
[29] See for example: Naim Fanaia, Erika Melonashia and Fleura Shkembia, *Self Esteem and Hopelessness as Predictors of Emotional Difficulties: A Cross Sectional Study among adolescents in Kosovo*, Pristina, 2014 and Mimoza Shahini, Leslie Rescorla; Johannes Wancata and Adelina Ahmeti, *Mental Health Problems in Kosovar adolescents: results from a national mental health survey*, Pristina, 2015.
[30] *Kosovo 2017 Child Protection Index 2.0*, KOMF, Child Pact and World Vision, Pristina, December 2017.
[31] See for example: UNICEF Kosovo, *Situation Analysis: Children with Disabilities in Kosovo*, Pristina, November 2017.

challenges include lack of inclusive education in terms of enrolment and quality of education, social inclusion and limitations on opportunities for employment.

Kosovo has **high levels of poverty** by European standards. Despite some progress, it also has challenges with building an inclusive society and improving the quality and accessibility of social services. Spending on social protection is well below regional levels and its programmes are not focused on poverty reduction or enhancing equity, but pensions and payments to war veterans (about 90 per cent).[32] As a result, the Social Assistance Scheme which provides means tested assistance has been shrinking as a proportion of overall social protection expenditures.[33] Despite the existing assistance schemes, recipients remain in poverty due to the low value of grants and restrictive eligibility criteria.[34] To make matters worse there is no comprehensive national strategy for poverty reduction.

Implementation of social services - which have been decentralized to the municipal level - suffer from a lack of sustainable funding, low quality of services provided and poor linkages with other sectors for social inclusion.[35]

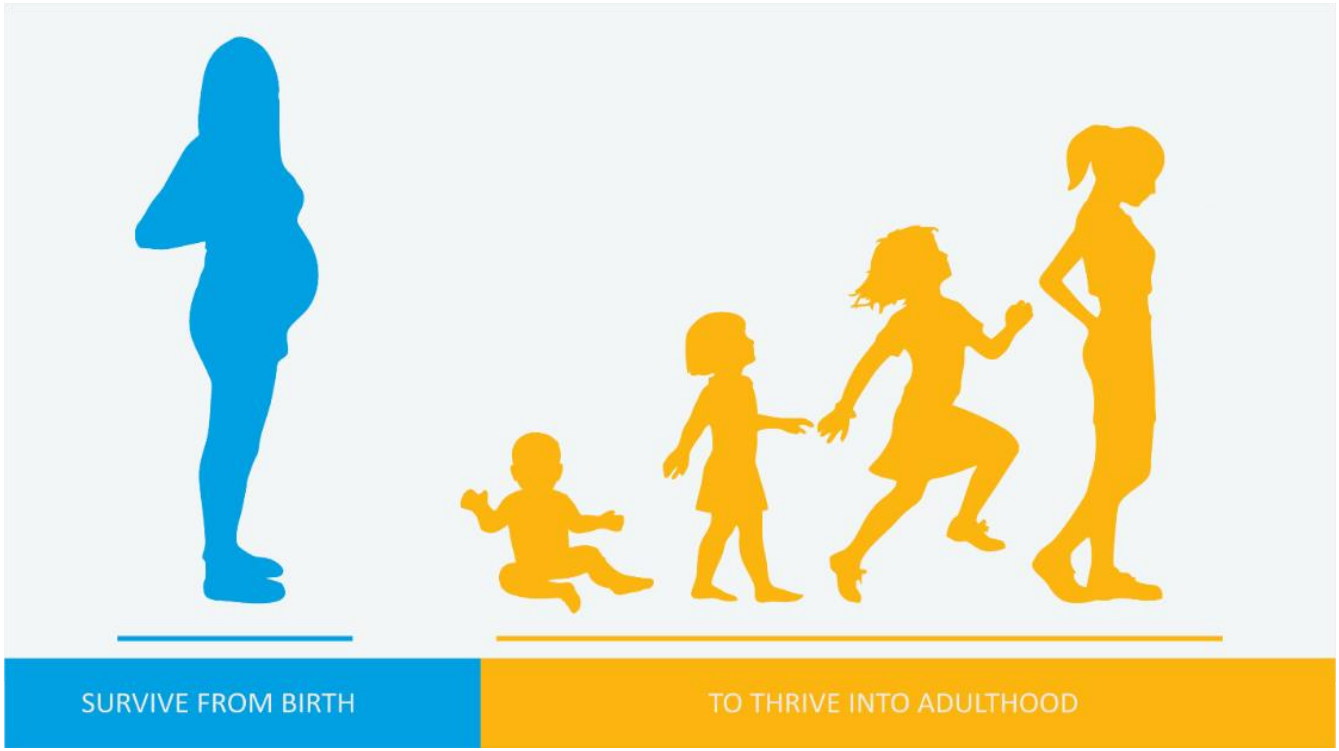
Data on Child Rights: Overall, the key challenges remain data quality (due to lack of standardization of definitions and methodologies), lack of completeness, poor coordination, absence of a central repository for child rights monitoring and insufficient human and financial resources at Kosovo Agency for Statistics (KAS). Given the importance of data for development it is essential that these issues be addressed expeditiously to facilitate planning, monitoring and taking corrective actions where required.

The **private sector** is already contributing to advancing child rights in Kosovo through its voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. However, significant opportunities exist for strategic partnership with this sector in the further advancement of child rights and in the spirit of the SDGs. An overall strategy is needed to take advantage of the opportunity.

[32] European Commission, *Assessment of the Economic Reform Programme of Kosovo (2019-2021)*, Brussels, April 2019.
[33] Ibid.
[34] World Bank Group, *Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme Study: Assessment and Reform Options*, Washington, March 2019.
[35] Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, *Strategic Plan 2018-2022*, Pristina, 2017.

Environmental Concerns: A report on air quality by the European Environmental Agency concluded that Kosovo has amongst the highest concentration of the dangerous PM 2.5 particles in Europe, a situation that has contributed to 3,700 premature deaths in the country.[36]

Figure 1: *Challenges from a life cycle perspective*



[36] *Air quality in Europe 2018,* European Environmental Agency, 2018, p.66. Premature deaths are deaths that occur before a person reaches an expected age. This expected age is typically the life expectancy for a country stratified by sex. Premature deaths are considered to be preventable if their cause can be eliminated.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES	
Early childhood	**Middle childhood (primary education)**
• Poor quality and accessibility of PHC services including neonatal and maternal • Poor attendance at early childhood education • Poor parenting practices • Every weeks 8 children die from preventable causes • Limited visibility of maternal health, nutrition and mortality • Insufficient attention to early identification and treatment of children with disabilities	• Limited school readiness • Primary completion rate=97.3 per cent; 80.5 per cent for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians • Poor quality of education • Gender parity throughout primary • Little or no counselling on career opportunities • Bullying and other forms of violence • Limited access for children with disabilities to health, education and other facilities
Adolescents and young people	**Across the life cycle**
Poor quality of education – poor performance (PISA) Poor human capital formation High unemployment rate (55 per cent) Limited opportunities for participation – sport, political life, decision making Limited ARH and mental health services Risks for drug and alcohol abuse Child marriage	• Serious inequality in social outcomes between general population and rural dwellers, children with disabilities, men and women, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians • Significant data gaps, e.g. on disability, maternal mortality • Violence against women and children • Social assistance does not help reduce poverty

Recommendations on the way forward for children's programming

Policy direction

There is a clear need for **increased allocation of public budgets** for child-relevant services, notably health, education and social protection, while improving the efficiency of resource use to strengthen the enabling environment for child rights and national development.

Continue giving priority attention to **strengthening maternal and neonatal health** with strong focus on the first 1,000 days, including strengthening of relevant services particularly for pre-term births and parenting skills in the areas of infant and young child feeding, stimulation and hygienic practices.

Strengthen the national effort to **improve education quality and outcomes** in order to develop a critical mass of knowledge, skills and critical thinking necessary to improve the quality of human capital and drive national economic and social development. In particular focus on improving teacher skills, strengthening the use of computer aided and student-centred teaching and learning, and ensuring the curriculum is relevant to the needs of society.

Ensure **inclusion of children with disabilities** in health, education and sports starting from preschool and including adequate specialized training of teachers, provision of rehabilitation facilities and accessible infrastructure including disability friendly toilets and access to all school floors. Develop and implement guidelines for **early detection and interventions for reducing the burden of childhood disability**.

In order to address the ongoing challenge of poverty, Kosovo institutions should ensure that social assistance programmes are reaching the most marginalized families, including those from female headed and poor households and ethnic minority groups, **to reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion**.

Give greater priority and **focused attention to the issue of mental health** with particular attention to adolescents and young people.

Decentralization

Test models for early childhood education in a limited number of municipalities to facilitate replication of successful approaches adapted to the Kosovo context.

Strengthen the capacities of municipal authorities to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for children.

Municipalities and other implementers at the subnational level should make more extensive use of tools and techniques such as **Communication for Development** to reach households with valuable, life-saving or altering information and gain an enhanced understanding of the situation in households and communities.

Scaling up solutions

Scale up the scope and coverage of the **home visiting programme** to ensure that poor and vulnerable households have improved access to affordable Primary Health Care (PHC) including access to health information and good parenting practices.

Build on recent progress in **ECE enrolment** using models tested and evaluated at the municipal level as the key modality for extension towards universal access. In the process, implement a system for training and certification of teachers at the community level.

Expand access to Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services. In particular, improve the quality, relevance and sympathetic nature of health services for adolescents and young people focusing on increasing availability of information and services in areas such as mental health; reproductive health and the promotion of optimal health and nutrition behaviours.

Given the importance of good nutrition to educational performance, develop and extend a national **school feeding programme** starting with poorer and more remote rural areas, in complement with efforts at the household level.

Knowledge management/Innovation/Monitoring and evaluation

Harness the power of business and markets for children, adolescents and young people to advance realization of child rights and strengthen the momentum towards investing in sustainable human development before the opportunity for accessing the demographic dividend passes.

In order to facilitate the use of evidence and data to inform policies and programmes KAS should continue its work with partners to close existing data and information gaps. Of particular importance in this regard is the need to generate population estimates at municipal level by single age and the development of a central repository to facilitate monitoring of child rights.

Reorient youth empowerment programming to be more inclusive, with a stronger focus on entrepreneurship and employment relevant skills and attitudes, especially for those not in employment, education or training (NEETs), to facilitate better engagement with the labour market.

Systematically document and assess or evaluate good practices in child rights programming to facilitate their replication as a means to accelerate progress towards achievement of child rights.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

Kosovo is in the midst of a long transition from a legacy of conflict to a future of peace and prosperity. Achieving that future will require overcoming a number of obstacles currently obstructing progress. Kosovo's population is the youngest in Europe, estimated at 29.5 years in the 2011 census, compared to an EU average of 40.9 years.[37]

The exuberance and creativity of its youth is being tempered by the realities on the ground, including poor governance, lack of opportunities for employment and an education system not yet fit for purpose. In combination, these lead to the loss of hope and a lack of trust in governing institutions and each other, resulting in the outflow of around 30,000 young people every year.[38] Reversing these trends will require a strengthened process of national reconciliation and peace building, a revitalized economy and a change in mentality on the part of all duty bearers and rights holders.

It is in this context that UNICEF is undertaking an analysis of the situation of children and women aimed at better understanding the key challenges these groups face, their causes and what actions need to be taken to address the challenges so as to contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous future.

This analysis is part of a new generation of analyses in UNICEF which are more externally focused. It aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders including Government, Civil Society Organizations, Development Partners and the Private Sector and is expected to feed into the UN Common Analysis, the UN Strategic Cooperation Development Framework (UNSCDF) and, ultimately, the new Kosovo Programme (2021-2025).

Overall Objective

To update the common understanding of progress, opportunities and constraints through the life cycle on the way towards achieving the rights of children and women in Kosovo.

Specific Objectives

[37] *UNICEF Kosovo Contextual Review*, Pristina, December 2018.
[38] See: *Annual Population Projections* by KAS; the latest data for 2018 was for an outflow of 28,164 in 2018.

1. Document achievements, success factors and opportunities and identify key challenges and risks hindering the realization of the rights of children and women and their causes, to facilitate improved understanding among decision makers and partners on the current status of children's and women's rights in Kosovo.

2. Provide concrete assessment and analysis that will contribute to strengthening the capacity of Government for planning and monitoring at national and subnational levels, in order to address geographic, ethnic, gender, disability, wealth and other disparities in a way that adheres to human rights principles and accelerates progress towards the SDGs and fulfilment of global human rights conventions including Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

3. Serve as a reliable reference on the situation of children and women in Kosovo so as to provide a source of advocacy, a tool for resource mobilization and support to national decision-making processes.

4. Contribute to national research on the situation of disadvantaged children through identification of gaps in knowledge and understanding, to foster and support knowledge generation with relevant stakeholders.

Methodology and Conceptual Approach

The methodological approach for preparing this SitAn is based on UNICEF's global Guidance on Conducting Situation Analysis of Children's and Women's Rights (2019), UNICEF's Guidance on Conducting Risk-Informed Situation Analyses (2012, updated in 2015), the Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP), the equity focused Key Determinants Analysis and the guidance and toolkit on Private Sector Partnership. Despite Kosovo not yet being a member of the United Nations or the EU, the key human rights conventions most relevant to children provide a useful benchmark against which the situation of children and women can be compared.

The normative framework for the analysis is based on the CRC, CEDAW and CRPD. The document will also be consistent with National Priorities, the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the agreements reflected in the UN Common Development Programme (UNCDP). It has three broad overall components: assessment, analysis, and implications for action. These are collectively referred to as the "Triple A Approach" and are reflected in all substantive chapters of this Sit-An.

Assessment

The identification of challenges and analysis of causes is primarily based on an in-depth review of the sources contained in the Bibliography of this document, including surveys, studies, evaluations and analytical reports from Kosovo institutions, UN agencies, research institutions, and bilateral and multilateral donors.

It involved using all available data and information to identify trends, patterns, incidence and causes of key deprivations and challenges, disaggregated by relevant segments of the population and areas of the country. In this respect, special attention has been paid to geographic, gender, wealth, disability and age dimensions of the issues studied. Of particular importance in this regard is the SDG data mapping exercise which provides a snapshot of SDG data availability in Kosovo. The coincidence of the Situation Analysis with the process of localization of the SDGs allows the assessment phase to focus on the current status of child relevant SDGs.

Analysis

An analysis using the tools of the Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming was undertaken, based on an in-depth literature review, mapping of trends and development of a clear picture of the gaps in enjoyment of rights. The tools employed were:

- Causality analysis required to understand the causes at different levels of challenges or non-fulfilment of rights we are trying to address;
- Role-pattern analysis, understanding who the rights holders and duty bearers are and their relationship from household through community to national and international levels;
- Capacity gap analysis, an analysis of the gaps in capacity that make it difficult for rights holders to claim their rights or duty bearers to fulfil their duties.

On the basis of these analyses we are able to understand the problems hindering achievement of child rights, their causes, who is responsible for taking action and what is preventing them from doing so. This evidence and analysis can help child rights actors to accurately target interventions.

Key Determinant Analysis complements the analytical tools of the HRBAP. The determinants of achieving child rights are generally clustered into the following four groups:

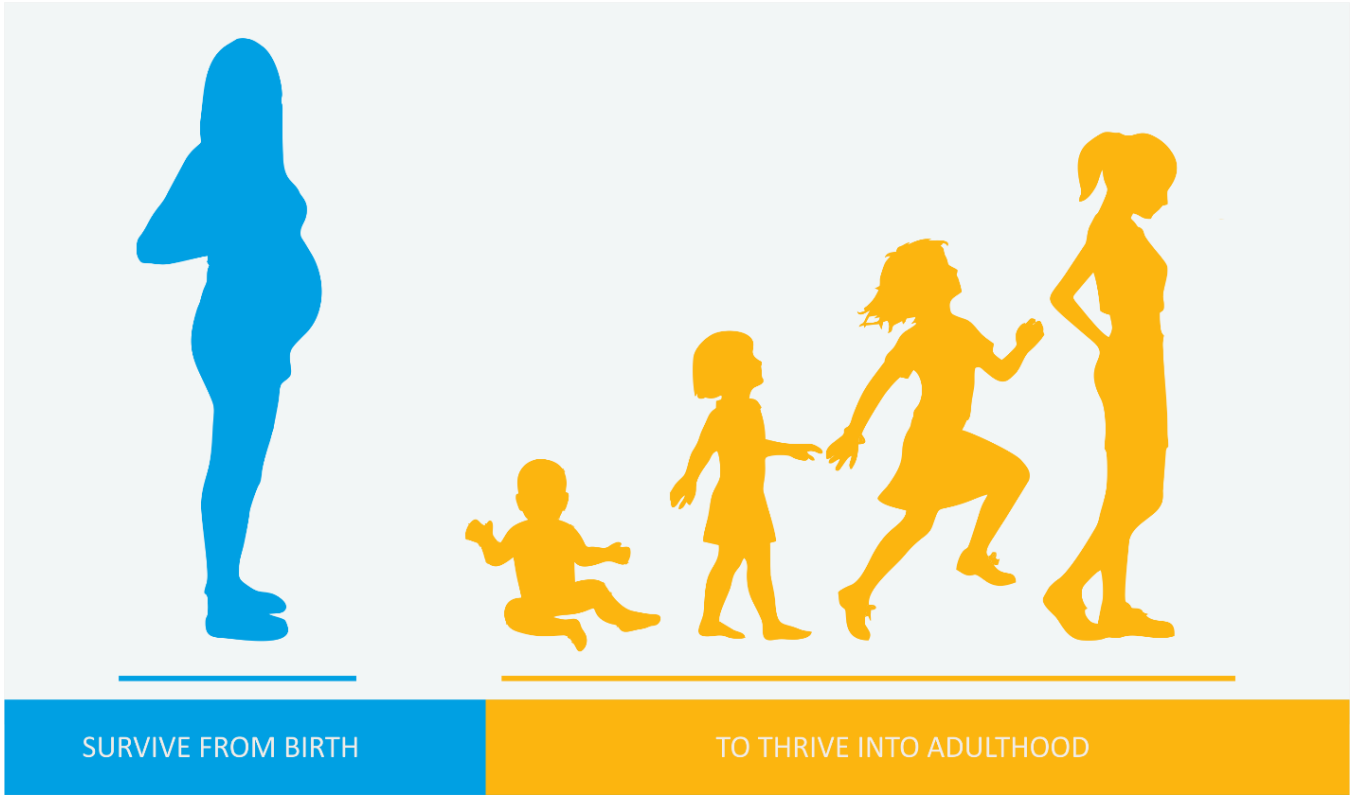
1. *The enabling environment* including social norms; legislation or policy; budget and expenditure; and management and coordination.
2. *The determinants of supply* include availability of essential commodities or inputs and access to adequately staffed services, facilities, and information.
3. *The determinants of demand* include financial access, social and cultural practices, and beliefs and continuity of use.
4. *The quality of services provided* includes criteria such as adherence to required national or international quality standards or norms.

Integrating the key determinants into the framework, we can see that issues of supply, demand and quality correspond quite closely to the underlying causes whereas the enabling environment corresponds to the structural causes. Therefore, rather than doing separate analyses we integrated the two sets of analysis in a combined approach.

In its application there are two broad areas of analysis: understanding and explaining the success factors that contributed to improvements in child welfare; and identifying the causal factors that need to be addressed for sustaining progress towards national child-relevant SDG targets.

Theses analyses are undertaken within a **life cycle perspective**, focusing on the changing needs and priorities of boys and girls as they grow and develop. The life cycle perspective has been used to ensure a holistic analysis of intergenerational and multi-sectoral linkages underlying the wellbeing of women and children. Though services for children and women in Kosovo, as elsewhere, are necessarily organized along sectoral lines, an examination of the totality of their needs at different stages in their lives, as well as the linkages and causalities between these stages, is required for a thorough understanding.

Figure 2: *The life cycle perspective*



Actions

Suggested actions stemming from the analysis are reflected in each substantive chapter and also in the final chapter on Conclusions and the Way Forward for Children's Programming in the form of recommendations which are categorized into four quadrants: Influencing policy direction, developing and testing models based on lessons learned and good practices for key interventions at the municipal level, partnership for scaling up successful interventions and knowledge management, innovation, monitoring and evaluation.

Limitations and constraints

- Limitations on the availability, consistency and reliability of administrative data.
- Insufficient current survey data contributing to significant gaps in updated disaggregated data on which to base the analysis.
- Insufficient opportunities to enrich the current document with a wider range of perspectives notably from those left behind in the development process.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

To design programmes that maximize the potential of children and women in Kosovo and sustainably and equitably achieve their rights it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the context in which they live. Due to historical circumstances and the fact that Kosovo is relatively small, landlocked and situated in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula, that context has been challenging. However, despite the complex environment, there have been some significant achievements to celebrate alongside the remaining or persistent challenges.

The people of Kosovo

Kosovo has a diverse population composed of Kosovo Albanian (92 per cent), Kosovo Serbs (4 per cent), and other minorities such as Bosnians, Gorani, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (in total 4 per cent).[39] Languages spoken include Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian and Turkish. The main religions are Sunni Islam, Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism.

According to data presented in the Kosovo Human Development Report (2014), KAS estimated that slightly more than 700,000 citizens of Kosovo, including 154,000 children, lived abroad.[40] Given the recent upsurge in migration it is now likely that more than 800,000 are abroad with the largest numbers in Switzerland, Germany, the USA and Scandinavia.

Population dynamics

The population of Kosovo has fluctuated quite widely over the years due to political uncertainty leading to different waves of emigration. The current population is estimated at 1.8 million with roughly 60 per cent living in rural areas.[41] Kosovo has the youngest population in the region; the child population (0-18) is estimated at 31 per cent with roughly one quarter under the age of 15 and half under the age of 30. The under-five population is estimated at 162,000. However, demographic developments point to major declines in the youth

[39] *Analysis of the situation of women and children in Kosovo*, UNICEF 2017.
[40] *Human Development Report 2014*, UNDP, 2015.
[41] Data from KAS reported in Eurostat online population data.

population and increased aging over time due to falling birth rates, increased mortality and the continuing out migration of young people, primarily in the age group 20-39.[42]

There are two main types of migration both driven by the need to find better economic opportunities. Migration within Kosovo was estimated at 9,376 in 2017 and 8,967 in 2018, with many rural areas losing a significant proportion of their young populations to urban and peri-urban areas. External migration was estimated at 11,623 in 2017, increasing to 28,164 in 2018;[43] in 2018 immigration of 6,772 lead to a net outflow of 21,402. Out migration has affected Kosovo in many ways, including contributing to a brain drain with potentially serious consequences extending long into the future. The cost of educating professionals who subsequently leave is discouraging. At the same time, however, migration has allowed Kosovo to be a recipient of remittances which have helped to alleviate poverty.

This trend could accelerate should Kosovo join the EU, as in 2014 and 2015 when restrictions on entering the EU were loosened and 50,000 to 100,000 Kosovars left the country.[44] At present, not much is known about the impact of migration on Kosovar children. However, the shrinking population can be expected to result in a decline in the school age population, providing an opportunity to redeploy teachers to early childhood education and for using redundant school infrastructure for other purposes.

In 2017, KAS, with technical assistance of UNFPA, developed population projections up to 2061 disaggregated by age and gender.[45] Using the medium variant, the population in all age groups except those aged 65 and older is projected to fall significantly, reaching a total of 1.49 million by 2061. Dependency rates are falling as more adolescents move into working age but are expected to start rising again in 2021. The window of opportunity for a Demographic Dividend (when the dependency ratio declines) is expected to close by the mid-2030's.[46]

[42] UNICEF, *Kosovo is in its early Demographic Dividend Stage: A time sensitive opportunity*, Pristina 2016.
[43] KAS, *Estimation of Population Projection in 2017*, Pristina, June 2018.
[44] Millennium Challenge Corporation, *Kosovo Constraints Analysis*, Pristina, June 2016.
[45] *Population Projections 2017-2061*, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2017.
[46] UNICEF, Kosovo in its early demographic dividend stage – a time sensitive opportunity, Pristina, July 2016.

Poverty and inequality

Kosovo is one of the poorest territories in Europe and as of 2017, approximately 18 per cent of the population was estimated to be living below the national consumption poverty line including 5.1 per cent below the extreme poverty line.[47] In common with other social indicators, certain groups, including rural populations, women and children, are especially marginalized and disproportionately affected. In rural areas, the poverty rate was approximately 19 per cent compared to 16 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, 5.4 per cent of those living in rural areas were living in extreme poverty compared to 4.7 per cent in urban areas.

While in previous years, female headed households experienced more poverty than male headed households, the last available data from 2019 suggests a reversal of that trend, with 18.3 per cent of male headed households in poverty compared to 14.8 per cent of female headed households.[48] However, on an overall basis the poverty rate for women (19 per cent) remains higher than that for men (17 per cent) and reflects their marginalization in society; employment rates for men are estimated at 45 per cent compared to 12 per cent for women.[49]

For children, the total poverty headcount was 23 per cent in contrast to 18 per cent for the overall population; extreme poverty was 7.2 per cent compared to 5.1 per cent for population as a whole. While poverty may affect various aspects of society, what the data suggests is that it is often the already marginalized groups which are hit the worst. Individuals belonging to more than one marginalized group experience a compounded effect. This is acknowledged in the 2015 Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA), where it is found that one of four children under age 18 was deprived in at least two dimensions.[50]

The complexities of inequality are also represented in the fact that from 2012 to 2017, the Gini co-efficient for those in rural areas dropped from 25.6 to 23.2 (suggesting less inequality) while it rose from 26.2 per cent to 27.8 per cent in urban areas (suggesting more inequality).[51] The multidimensional nature of poverty suggests that quantitative data alone cannot explain the whole story, and qualitative aspects must be better understood.

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[47] *Consumption Poverty in the Kosovo 2012-2017*, World Bank and KAS, May 2019.
[48] The report with this information suggests treating this data "with caution" as female headed households represent only 11.3 per cent total households.
[49] European Commission, *2019 Kosovo Report: Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*, Brussels, May 2019.
[50] *Wellbeing of Children in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244): Poverty and Deprivation among children using the Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA)*, October 2015.
[51] Ibid.

The high degree of informality in the economy, for instance (estimated at between 30 and 40 per cent of the total), means that poverty is highest amongst those in occasional employment with low productivity jobs, as well as among people with disabilities who rely on their families for financial support and help with daily activities.[52] It is estimated that 33 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men with disabilities have never even been enrolled in school.[53]

It is not just children with disabilities that struggle to be incorporated within the education system. Ethnic minorities have difficulties with educational access as well. When looking at the different levels of education (preschool, primary school, and high school) some staggering insights are revealed. While Kosovo already has a low proportion of children attending preschool level (approximately 14 per cent for those aged 3-5),[54] only 0.2 per cent of those are Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian. These rates are higher in pre-primary level, primary level, and lower secondary level, but fall again to 0.6 per cent at the upper secondary level.[55] Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children struggle to get inside the education system and then, if fortunate enough to attend, struggle to finish their schooling.

The political context

Kosovo has had a turbulent history characterized by conflict and major population displacements; these legacies are slowly being overcome but deep wounds remain. The EU and other partners are playing a key role in helping to keep the peace, stabilize Kosovo and put it on the path to EU membership.

Much has been written on the turbulent post-independence political history of Kosovo. In this section there is an attempt to summarize the current state of play. Among others, Security Council Resolution 1244 passed in June 1999[56] established the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and provided for the establishment of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), which is responsible for establishing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all in Kosovo. Under the same Resolution, the European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) was established in 2012 to assist and support the Kosovo authorities with the rule of law,

[52] *Multidimensional poverty analysis of Kosovo 2017*, Embassy of Sweden, Pristina, March 2017.
[53] Ibid.
[54] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Priština, 2014.
[55] Bajrami, Kushtrim, and Kujtim Koci. *Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Children in Education*. Prishtina, "Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020, Nov. 2018.
[56] For a complete understanding of the context it is recommended to read the Resolution available online in its entirety.

specifically the police, judiciary and customs. Over time the functions of these bodies have been gradually handed over to the Kosovo authorities; at present this process is at an advanced stage.

Achievements during this period included the establishment of a democratic multiparty system under which three elections have been held since the declaration of independence[57] and the adoption of a new constitution in 2008. The government of Kosovo is composed of a Judicial branch (represented by the Kosovo Judicial Council), a Legislative branch (represented by the Assembly of Kosovo) and an Executive branch (represented by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Cabinet). The administrative divisions of Kosovo include 38 municipalities which were established with the power to self-govern under Law NR. 03/L-040.

While this process of decentralization has allowed municipalities to focus on their interests, it has also resulted in discrepancies for the achievement of full and equitable child rights. A great deal of assistance has been provided for the establishment of a legal, policy and strategic framework which is in conformity with European and international standards. However, this framework has not been matched with the corresponding implementation capacity, contributing to a great deal of frustration. Furthermore, real or perceived corruption as documented in EU Progress[58] and World Bank Ease of Doing Business Reports[59] has led to a low level of trust institutions and between ethnic groups.

Kosovo is not a member of the EU or the United Nations. However, in April 2016, the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) came into force as the main vehicle to regulate the trading, stability and prosperity of Kosovo to facilitate EU accession. In order to meet its SAA obligations, Kosovo needs to engage in further democratic reforms, achieve social and economic development, and progressively align with EU legislation and standards, so that it is able to fully implement the EU "acquis" (the accumulated body of EU law and obligations from 1958 to the present day) upon accession.In 2013, Pristina and Belgrade reached the landmark Brussels Agreement on normalizing relations. Both sides also agreed not to block each other's efforts to seek EU membership.[60] To date, health, education and social protection in Kosovo-Serbian majority municipalities are under the Belgrade administration.

[57] At time of writing another election was under preparation.
[58] *EU Kosovo Progress Report 2018*, Commission staff working document, April 2018.
[59] *Doing business 2019 Kosovo: Training for Reform*, World Bank, accessed from the website doing business.org on 30 June 2019.
[60] The full text of the *Brussels Agreement (2013)* is available online.

Economic context

Kosovo is a lower middle-income country with a GDP per capita estimated at US$3,877 in 2017.[61] The country has experienced robust growth over the past decade and, due to its limited integration into the global economy, is one of only four European countries to have experienced growth every year since the global financial crisis of 2008.[62] In the post conflict era, growth was driven by reconstruction efforts. In recent years, relatively high growth rates have been sustained by substantial increases in public spending. In order to maintain this momentum, the economy will require increased international and domestic investment from the private sector.

However, despite growth outperforming that of its neighbours and being largely inclusive, Kosovo has not significantly reduced the high rates of unemployment. Nor has the country been able to provide sufficient formal jobs, particularly for women and youth, or reversed the trend of large-scale outmigration.[63] Seventy per cent of GDP is contributed by the service sector, 18 per cent by industry and only 12 per cent by agriculture. Given Kosovo's natural resource endowments and relatively young and educated labour force, significant opportunities for investment exist.

At present, the economy is hamstrung by a very small domestic market, limited integration into international markets, including lack of direct sea access, and challenges in the business environment comprising the availability of a reliable energy supply, a mismatch between outputs of the education system and the needs of the labour market, widespread informality and limited business support. These factors have led to low levels of job creation and labour demand. The labour market is characterized by low levels of participation and employment, high unemployment, vulnerable employment and low wages.[64]

The growth model relies heavily on remittances to fuel domestic consumption but has recently shifted toward more investment- and export-driven growth.[65] At present, exports represent only a small fraction of imports, though Government policies designed to attract investment and support competitiveness and exports are in place. According to the IMF, inflation is projected to remain low at 0.9 per cent. The budget deficit is expected to be around 1.5 per cent of GDP, well within the ceiling of 2 per cent. The banking system remains sound and financial deepening continues. For 2019, growth is expected to be around 4.2 per cent supported by a

[61] From the website of the World Bank in Kosovo accessed on 5 April 2019.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] *Labour Force Survey 2017*, Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Pristina, March 2018.
[65] *From the website of the World Bank in Kosovo accessed on 5 April 2019.*

temporary increase in public investment, and over the medium term is expected to remain at its potential of 4 per cent on the back of robust domestic demand and exports.[66]

Were reforms to take hold in the labour market and in governance, higher growth could be possible. However, according to the IMF, there is the risk that spending pressures combined with shortfalls in projected tax revenues could increase the fiscal deficit and undermine confidence. Failure to reach a political settlement with Serbia could also act as a deterrent to private investment and economic growth. The near-term outlook is broadly positive, with robust growth and low inflation. However, growth potential remains constrained by weak external competitiveness, high informality, low labour force participation, and a large infrastructure gap. In a complex political environment, the structural reform progress has been slow and fiscal risks have increased.[67]

Disaster Risk Profile

According to a Risk Profile prepared by the World Bank in 2016,[68] the people of Kosovo are vulnerable to floods and earthquakes with the province of Mitrovica having the highest risk of floods and the Region of Prizren the highest risk of earthquakes. The average annual population affected by flooding is 10,000 with an estimated average cost of US$50 million. The average annual population affected by earthquakes is about 30,000 and the average cost about US$90 million, with little or no fatalities. A Disaster Risk Capacity Assessment undertaken in 2017 also identified forest fires as a natural hazard with approximately 44.7 per cent of Kosovo's surface area covered in forest. The report also cited global climate change and rapid technological development as presenting diverse risks and threats.

The assessment noted landslides, drought, heavy snowfall and water reservoir dam bursts as additional sources of risk. In addition, there are environmental disasters caused by the former lead factory in Mitrovica, in which strong winds and storms contribute to the pollution of drinking water and food contamination with consequences such as disease and epidemics. These hazards constitute a permanent threat to the citizens of Kosovo.[69]

[66] Kosovo, *IMF Staff Report for Article 4 Consultation*, December 18, 2018.
[67] Ibid.
[68] *Disaster Risk Profile for Kosovo*, GFDRR, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, 2016.
[69] Ibid.

Kosovo has a Risk Reduction Strategy and Plan of Action covering 2016-2020[70] in place. This strategy is meant to coordinate the work of actors at the local level, relevant ministries and foreign and local donors to reduce disaster risk and contribute to sustainable development. It aims to integrate risk reduction in development policies and plans, strengthen risk management capacities, and create safe and resilient communities while raising awareness among institutions and national entities on disaster risk.

This document is the first strategy on risk reduction in Kosovo and, as such, will serve as a baseline on which the disaster risk reduction programme will be built in the coming years. It is in compliance with international standards and its goals are in line with the Sendai Framework and the European Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries (2009).

Environmental challenges

Kosovo has its share of environmental challenges. Overall, Kosovo is more water scarce than all its neighbours, and has among the lowest level of water resources development and storage making it extremely vulnerable to climate shocks.[71] There is land pressure due to high population density; loss of biodiversity; struggles with waste and water supply management; and air pollution.[72] Air pollution is a critical environmental problem around the world.

Many health issues, including mortality due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, lung cancer and intrauterine growth restriction (low birth weight at term), are associated with poor air quality.[73] Although the exact contribution of each is unknown, widespread usage of coal, wood and biomass for space heating at the household level; coal fired power stations; and automobile emissions are the primary sources for ambient air pollution in Kosovo.[74]

A report on air quality by the European Environmental Agency concluded that Kosovo has amongst the highest concentration of the dangerous PM 2.5 particles in Europe, a situation that has contributed to 3,700 premature

[70] *Risk Reduction Strategy and Plan of Action (2016-2020)*, Kosovo Ministry of Internal Affairs, December 2015.
[71] See: World Bank Group, Kosovo Water Security Outlook, Washington, June 2018 for a more detailed review of the water situation
[72] *Kosovo Environmental Strategy 2013-2022*, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, 2013.
[73] See for example: *Air Pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air*, WHO, Geneva, 2018.
[74] *Kosovo's silent assassin*. Arian Lumezi in Kosovo 2.0 – 12 April 2019.

deaths in the country.[75] Pristina is particularly affected due to its location in a valley. Temperature inversions, in which fog traps air pollution in the valley, are common during winter.

While the air pollution concentrations are a significant concern to residents of Pristina, there is a lack of information on the source sectors that contribute to the high air pollution concentrations, a lack of awareness of health impacts caused by air pollution and the disease prevalence data that would allow health impacts to be routinely estimated.[76]

Despite a number of legal and strategy documents to the contrary,[77] the Government remains focused on coal as the primary energy source. Agencies dealing with environmental issues are generally under-resourced and unable to make a difference. Among others, this suggests the need to develop strategies to eliminate domestic burning of coal or wood for space heating during the winter months by replacement with technologies that are zero emission at the household level[78] while taking measures that over time would result in a reduction of the contribution of other sectors.

Gender dynamics

For Kosovo, progress towards gender equality is a formal requirement for EU accession. Much literature is available on the subject.[79] In summary, despite significant improvements, formal equality in legislation has not yet translated into transformational change in gender roles. Women in Kosovo generally have lower socio-economic status and educational attainment than men. These roles are perpetuated by social norms and values, most notably patriarchy, and unchallenged by the legislation written to upend them.

The 2015 Law on Gender Equality protects and promotes equality between the sexes including equal opportunities for the participation of men and women in political, economic, cultural and social life. However, due to **limited prioritization of gender mainstreaming,** including gender responsive budgeting, and constrained capacity for implementation and enforcement, significant gender gaps remain in almost all areas of life.

[75] *Air quality in Europe 2018*. European Environmental Agency, 2018, p.66.

[76] *UNICEF Kosovo, Impact of Air Pollution on Health and measures to reduce exposure in Kosovo*, 2017.

[77] Including the Law on Environmental Protection (2009), the Strategy for Air Quality (2013-2022), a draft law on Protection from Pollution is also in process.

[78] UNICEF Kosovo, *Impact of Air Pollution on Health and measures to reduce exposure in Kosovo*, 2017.

[79] See the bibliography but also *Kosovo Gender Analysis* by Kosovo Women's Network.

An agency for Gender Equality was established responsible for promotion, implementation and monitoring of Law on Gender Equality and there are gender equality officers in all government ministries and municipalities. Officials in these institutions, however, suffer from limited resources and political influence, hampering their ability to mainstream gender issues in the laws, policies and plans of Kosovo. This is reinforced by the lack of institutional data needed to monitor progress and inform strategies and actions.[80]

Violence against women or gender-based violence (GBV) is a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. Identifying the scale of the problem is a first step to tackling it at its root.

According to currently available information, **GBV** in the form of rape and assault remains a serious issue. Nineteen per cent of women from Kosovo interviewed in the OSCE survey on violence against women indicated that they had experienced physical or sexual violence.[81] Women from Kosovo with disabilities were the most likely to experience abuse in the past 12 months (41 per cent) followed by women with children (35 per cent). At the same time, 49 per cent of respondents from Kosovo indicated that they were unaware of where to go for help. It is worth noting that the data reported for Kosovo is well below that for other countries surveyed or for the EU. Understanding why this is the case would be important for gaining a more comprehensive picture of the situation.

Despite such a high prevalence, gender-based violence in Kosovo is known to be heavily underreported. In the same survey only 2 per cent of Kosovo respondents indicated that they had reported violence against them by a current partner compared to 7 per cent for the survey as a whole[82] and 8 per cent for the EU. The continued perception that domestic violence is a private matter, fear of stigmatization and embarrassment, fear of retaliation, economic dependence on the perpetrator and an overall lack of trust in rule of law institutions all contributed to under-reporting.

Gender-based violence significantly impacts children who witness it and are socialized into believing that this is a socially acceptable form of gender relations. Making matters worse, a 2015 survey indicated that around half of the women of Kosovo justify male violence against them.[83]

[80] In order to address this issue, an integrated database on domestic violence was rolled out in April 2019.
[81] OSCE led Survey on Violence against Women: Wellbeing and safety of women, Brussels, March 2019
[82] The survey as a whole covered 7 countries plus Kosovo.
[83] Reported in *Women of Kosovo: A mirage of freedom and equality*, Sidita Kushi Open Democracy, July 2015.

A survey on the role of social norms in violence against women and children concluded that gender-based violence in Kosovo is influenced by strong social norms, social expectations and factors that encourage violent practices against women and children. This is reinforced by strong socialization on the respective roles of women and girls and men and boys[84].

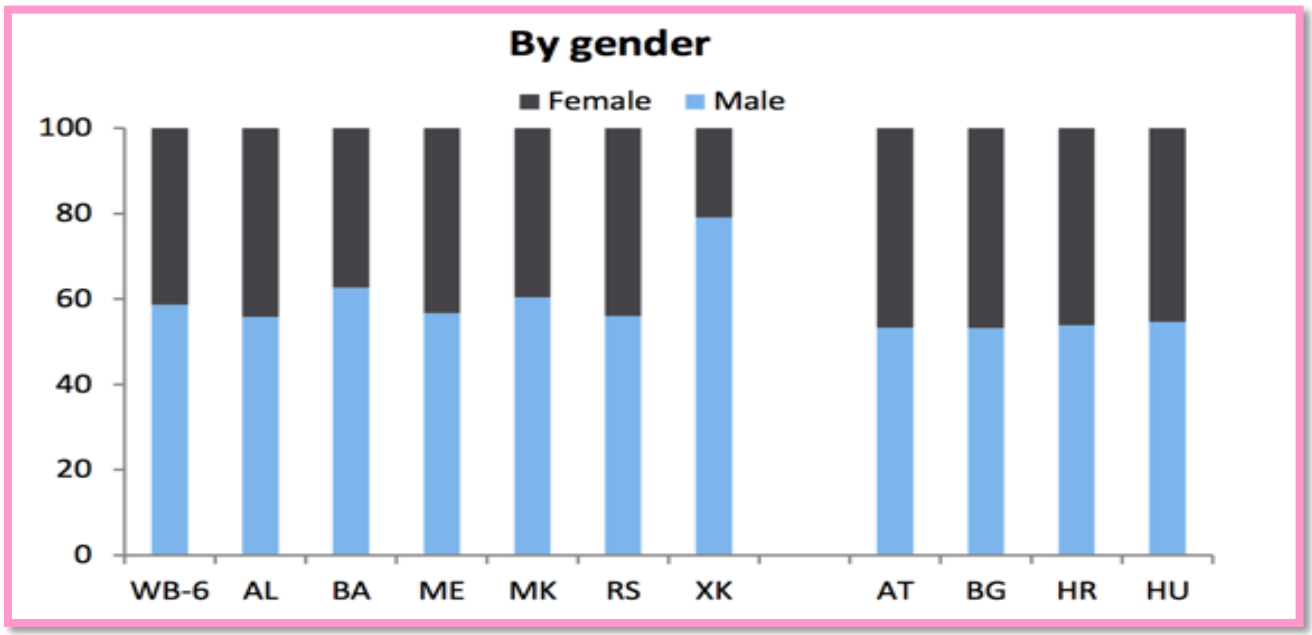
Women are also poorly represented in the **labour force.** According to the 2018 Labour Force survey, overall labour force participation is only 40.9 per cent for people aged 15-64 with the overall employment rate at 28.8 per cent. This means that 59.1 per cent of people of working age are inactive.[85] While 45.3 per cent of males are employed, only 12.3 per cent of females are. As shown in the table below, of those who are employed in Kosovo, 79 per cent were men while the remaining 21 per cent were women (as of the second quarter of 2018).[86] This represents the highest disparity in employment between men and women in the region.

The challenge of increasing employment and, more specifically, increasing women's participation in the labour market has become a public policy priority for Kosovo. There are multiple barriers to entry for women including family responsibilities, limited access to quality and affordable child and elder care, conservative social norms, the high cost of maternity leave for employers and women's limited access to assets and productive inputs.

Kosovo should reform the system of maternity and parental leave, which presents an obstacle to the hiring of women, particularly in the private sector. Limited access to child care and to flexible work arrangements are also considered barriers to women's employment, as formal options for care beyond maternity leave are limited, and family-friendly schedules are often not available.[87]

[84] UNICEF Kosovo, Qualitative Research on Social Norms around Gender Based Violence and the Physical Punishment of children in Kosovo, Pristina, June 2016.
[85] *Kosovo 2018 Labour Force Survey*, Kosovo Agency for Statistics, 2019.
[86] European Commission, *2019 Kosovo Report: Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*, Brussels, May 2019.
[87] European Commission, 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy: Kosovo 2019 Report, Brussels, May 2019.

Figure 3: *Employment in Kosovo by gender*



Source: Western Balkans Labour Market Trends 2019

Given the low participation of women in the workforce, Kosovo is losing out on the immense untapped potential of women as productive citizens. There are more young women not in education, employment or training compared to men, and in adolescence, more girls tend to drop out from upper secondary education compared to boys. Adolescents is a critical time to invest to ensure girls stay in school and experience quality education and do not leave the public space to become more restricted by socially ascribed roles.

Linked to this is the issue of **property ownership and inheritance**. Although the law guarantees inheritance and land ownership rights to women, these are often overridden by social norms and customs. Women are often are hampered by cultural norms and gender stereotypes to claim their property rights, and may be uninformed about their rights under the law. Furthermore, administrative and judicial proceedings are extremely slow and it is therefore discouraging for women to claim their property rights. The Agency for Gender Equality in cooperation with the Cadastral Agency have compiled the Administrative Instruction on Special Measures for the Registration of Common Immovable Property on behalf of both spouses, whereby couples register property free of charge if registered in the name of both spouses. This normative act aims to improve the status of ownership and access to common property for all women. Of the 105 registered cases by couples in 2016, the

number increased to 4,000 by the end of 2018.[88] Nevertheless, property ownership among women and girls has been increasing from 8 per cent in 2012[89] through 15 per cent in 2015 and 20 per cent in 2017 thereby achieving the National Development Strategy (NDS) target of a 25 per cent increase from the 2015 baseline.[90] Women's access to economic resources is further constrained by the fact that men occupy most of the senior positions in Government and private sector and are also the greatest beneficiaries of social transfers[91].

There is limited participation of women in **political affairs and decision-making**. Despite electoral victories and the 2011 appointment of the first woman President, politics is largely considered a men's domain. Since 2000, thirty per cent of the 120 parliamentary seats have been reserved for women. There were 38 women in Parliament (32 per cent) by 2017. Women in senior decision-making positions in Government reached 11.9 per cent in 2018, up from 5.6 per cent in 2015. In the last municipal elections held in 2017, only eight of 204 mayoral candidates were female.[92]

The business case for moving decisively towards gender equality has never been stronger. Inequality, in addition to being a **violation of human rights and the Constitution**, contributes to an inability to fully harness Kosovo's human resources for economic development. Investments towards gender equality contribute to economic growth and transformation through a number of pathways, including poverty reduction and more equitable and sustainable development outcomes. Changing hearts and minds towards gender issues is an essential element of peacebuilding.

Achieving gender equality will be a lengthy struggle given the long standing and deep-rooted cultural norms involved. It is, however, a process which must of necessity involve men and women, with clear leadership from the top - including sufficient allocation of resources. The process is underway and the atmosphere for women is improving, especially in bigger cities such as Pristina and Mitrovica. A young generation of men and women with growing expectations of real freedom and gender equality is rising.[93]

[88] Agency for Gender Equality

[89] Reported in *Women of Kosovo: A mirage of freedom and equality*, Sidita Kushi Open Democracy, July 2015.

[90] *First Report on the Implementation and Results of the National Development Strategy (2016-2021)*, Office of the Prime Minister, October 2018.

[91] The Gap Institute, 2019 Draft Budget: Income and Expenditures, Pristina, November 2018.

[92] *Gender Inequality is still pervasive in decision-making and politics,* Dafina Halili in K2.0, Prishtina, February 2019.

[93] *Women of Kosovo: A mirage of freedom and equality*, Sidita Kushi, Open Democracy, July 2015.

Capacity gaps in the area of gender equality

Household level

- Lack of awareness of the laws and policies relating to gender equality and the rights of girls and women.

Community level

- Socialization at school reinforces gender stereotypes.
- Lack of awareness and enforcement of the appropriate laws and policies.
- Insufficient numbers of male champions.

Municipal level

- Limited capacity for planning, monitoring and reporting on issues of gender equality.
- Insufficient resources and priority given to gender equality.

National level

- Lack of coordination of agencies responsible for ensuring gender inequality and prioritisation of adequate financial resources for advancement of gender equality agenda.
- Large backlog of cases in the judicial system due to shortage of legal professionals.
- Inadequate resources allocated for coordination and programming of gender equality issues.
- Insufficient disaggregated data to support planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Significant barriers to entry exist for women wishing to engage in the labour force as a result of lack of reliable, quality and affordable supporting services such as services for child care; social care services for elderly who remain the burden of women; and services for persons with disabilities.

The Legal and Policy Environment in Kosovo

The Constitution of Kosovo contains provisions protecting the rights of the child (Art. 50) and safeguards for women who are guaranteed equal treatment and non-discrimination (Art. 7) before the law.[94] The Constitution is implemented through a series of laws and policies. While the legal and policy framework on child rights remains broadly consistent with international norms and standards, gaps remain, and implementation and enforcement capacity is insufficient to ensure protection of the rights enshrined in them.[95] Despite an ongoing process of legislative action, including the recent passage of the Child Protection Law, Kosovo's legal framework on child rights needs further adjustment in order to be fully compliant with the country's commitments to the CRC and EU requirements. However, the most critical issue at this stage is the large gap between policy and implementation. Sufficient human and financial resources are needed to ensure that the rights of all of Kosovo's children are protected, in line with international best practices.

National planning is underpinned by the NDS 2016-2020 which provides overall strategic direction. The NDS is divided into four thematic pillars: human capital, good governance and rule of law, development of competitive industries, and development of infrastructure. It is complemented by 58 other sectoral strategies. The recently passed Law on Child Protection which consolidates a series of laws regulating actors and defining policies for children, is expected to give a significant boost to child rights. Among others, this law forbids the use of corporal punishment, one important element in violence against children. A Strategy and Action Plan on Child Rights (2019-2023) was approved and published in January 2019. However, the usual practice is that no block funding is allocated for specific strategies and action plans. Instead, financing relies on the availability of funding at the ministry level. Consequently, almost all strategies are underfunded which hinders their full implementation. Also, NDS has does not include important social aspects as reflected in the first progress report which calls for adding measures for employment, health, and social welfare (under the human capital pillar) during the mid-term review process.[96] The Kosovo Assembly took measures to align national systems and policies with the SDGs. It adopted an SDG resolution at the beginning of 2018, followed by the establishment of an SDG Council to monitor SDG implementation in October of the same year. The Office of Good Governance and Strategic Planning Office in the Office of the Prime Minister have been working to align important strategic documents, including the National Development Strategy and the Strategy and National Action Plan for Child Rights 2019-2023 with the SDGs.

[94] The Constitution was proclaimed in 2008 and amended in 2016.
[95] *EC Country Report 2019* for Kosovo, page 28.
[96] Office of the Prime Minister, *First Report on the Implementation of the National Development Strategy*, Pristina, October 2018.

Public finances for children

The Government budget and its distribution is one of the most important policy instruments for addressing the economic and social challenges facing residents of Kosovo. Over time, the budget has steadily increased in size with the 2019 budget raising public sector wages and pensions by 20 per cent - further widening the gap between public and private sector earnings (520 EUR vs 370 EUR per month, respectively).[97] The fiscal environment is even more challenging for potential business owners and investors who face additional hurdles in access to start-up capital.

Overall public expenditure on social services has increased over time but remains relatively low and is insufficient to ensure universal access and coverage. Public spending on health does not meet the global recommendations for funding the health sector. Spending on health care is projected to be 3.8 per cent of GDP in 2019, compared to an EU average of 7.1 per cent.[98] The budget allocated is spent largely on curative and hospital care, leaving less for preventative and primary health care. According to a 2016 assessment, the overall annual healthcare needs were only 40 per cent fulfilled. Personal out of pocket expenditure was found to be 40 per cent of total healthcare expenditure in the country, around double that of those living in the European Union.[99]

Per capita public spending on education is low compared to other countries in the region. In 2016, on average, EU countries spent 4.7 per cent of their GDP in the education sector. In Kosovo the education-related expenditure will reach around 4.1 per cent of GDP in 2019,[100] with spending dominated by the wage bill and construction of facilities. However, problems in education, as underlined by the EC Report for 2018, remain: overall poor quality, failure to adopt education programs to market demand, failure to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and lack of programs in vocational schools, with special focus on practical work and applied subjects. This is reflected in the poor performance of Kosovar students in the PISA and a high unemployment rate among higher education graduates (26.7 per cent in Q3 2017).[101]

Since 2009, delivery of social services formerly under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) has been decentralized. Decentralization has been considered as a way to guarantee social protection for all

[97] *2019 Draft Budget: An analysis of income and expenditure*, Gap Institute, Stockholm, November 2018.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] From the *EU Annual Kosovo Progress Report*, 2018.

vulnerable groups in Kosovo and as a way to avoid potential tensions, in particular with ethnic minorities.[102] Social services, according to the law, include care for the vulnerable, foster care, child care, elderly care, including registration and licensing of these care centres, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of social welfare professionals. However, since then other social services including health and education have been partially decentralized as well. However, this responsibility has not been systematically linked to allocation of resources.

There are no parameters in place for establishing a specific financial formula on social service delivery to be allocated to the municipalities by the central government. As a result, limited financial resources and human capacities, as well as a lack of proper planning, result in poor provision of social services to the most vulnerable people in Kosovo. Municipalities also do not have accurate data on the population disaggregated by gender, age groups, ethnicity, ability or vulnerability, negatively impacting the planning and implementation of activities.[103]

Inflow of ODA and remittances

Inflow of ODA to Kosovo peaked at around US$286.04 million in 2012 and has been on a steady downtrend since, reaching US$ 174.2 million in 2017. Remittances going to households (around 12 per cent of GDP in 2019) have consistently dwarfed inflows of ODA and likely been a factor in reducing poverty. There is, however, a significant gap between ODA commitments and ODA received with commitments more than twice actual receipts.

A set of donor profiles issued in 2016 by the Ministry of European Integration listed 17 donor agencies, with the EU by far the largest in terms of funds disbursed and scope of activities. There are also 12 European countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), along with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UN Kosovo Team (UNKT), USAID and World Bank. The EU, Norway and Switzerland are key providers of aid to social welfare and

[102] *Kahlert, R. & Danaj, S. (2018). Decentralization of Social Services in Kosovo – Policy Challenges and Recommendations. Policy Brief 2018/5. Vienna: European Centre.*

[103] *Legal and Fiscal Context as well as the Capacities of Social Service Providers in Kosovo*, Save the Children in Kosovo and the European Centre for Social Welfare, Pristina, January 2018.

services in Kosovo; Switzerland to health, water and sanitation; the EU and the US to education; and Germany, Switzerland and the EU to water, sanitation and hygiene.

Figure 4: *ODA and other official flows received (US$ million)*[104]

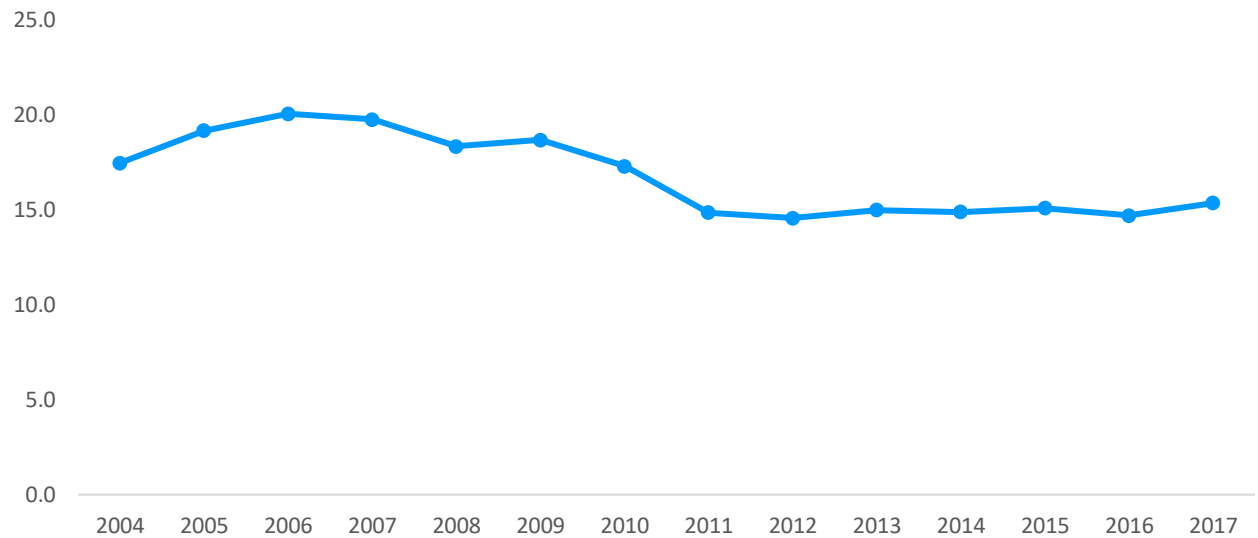
Year	ODA Received	Remittances Received
2012	286.04	946
2013	259.18	1,058
2014	254.63	1,099
2015	189.9	971
2016	181.03	986
2017	174.2	1,111

[104] Source: OECD Website extracted for ODA; World Bank Remittances Data from World Bank website, accessed May 2019.

Remittances

Remittances of immigrants living in the diaspora provide a significant source of finance for Kosovo's economy and a means for contributing to poverty reduction. Its impact is reflected at both macro and micro (household) levels. While remittances are not generally sent for investment purposes, they have contributed to growth in Kosovo through increasing consumption and reducing macroeconomic imbalances.[105] In 2011, 2014 and 2015 Kosovo was ranked among the top 10 per cent of countries with the highest share of migrant remittances as a percentage of GDP.[106] According to a 2018 survey, it was estimated that one in five households received remittances; these are largely used for consumption needs (61 per cent) with a small share supporting existing businesses (2 per cent).[107]

Figure 5: *Personal remittances received (% of GDP), Kosovo 2004-2017*



Source: Government of Kosovo - Private Sector Development Strategy (2018-2022)

[105] Group for Legal and Political Studies, *Remittances in Kosovo: Primarily an economic survival tool?*, 2017.
[106] World Bank Group, *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016, Third Edition*, 2016.
[107] Millennium Challenge Corporation, *Kosovo Labour Force and Time Use Study Research Report*, 2018.

Approximately four per cent of children aged 0-17 have at least one parent living abroad. Parents leaving their families behind to gain employment abroad could have negative impacts on the development of their children.[108]

Technology for development

The Kosovo government has recognized the strategic importance of the IT industry for economic development and structural transformation towards a knowledge-based economy. Consequently, in 2013 the government of Kosovo officially declared the IT industry a high priority economic sector. The Kosovo IT strategy was developed in 2016 and foresees that by 2020, IT is to become the main driver for economic growth, employment and innovation. The digital economy holds great potential as a sector to drive Kosovo's economic development. It also represents a promising field for generating jobs and increasing exports and income for Kosovars. More than half of the Information Technology companies in Kosovo are exporting their services. Computer science and IT related subjects are taught in six universities and approximately 350 students graduate each year.[109] Relatively sophisticated software and information technologies are being used in Kosovo.

Mobile phone and computer ownership and internet usage are at high levels in both urban and rural areas. Internet coverage in Kosovo was estimated at 93 per cent in 2018 while 553 per 1000 people had mobile phone subscriptions and 61 per cent had access to a personal computer.[110] A significant proportion of government services including vehicle registration, vital registration and taxation and credit registries are online and available throughout Kosovo.

There are risks which need to be mitigated and opportunities for the sector. Children may be exposed to digital risks such as cyber bullying, video game addiction and online grooming. Most children are not equipped with digital skills to counter the potentially harmful side effects and maximize the opportunity of technology. To address risks, MEST has developed a booklet for use in schools which provides information on the safe use of internet and to prevent online bullying. There is an opportunity to work with the ICT industry to raise the digital IQ of young users. There is also a great opportunity for more widespread and effective use of technology as a teaching and learning aid in the classroom, for telemedicine to counter the migration of medical staff and for the dissemination of public service information.

[108] Data from: The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings,* Prishtina, 2014.
[109] Much of the material for this section was derived from *Country Outlook: ICT Sector in Kosovo*, Embassy of Finland, 2019.
[110] Enlargement countries information and communication technology statistics, data from Eurostat statistics explained, online presentation, February 2019.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FIRST DECADE OF LIFE

The challenge

Education and health are building blocks for the development of human capital; they are essential for maximizing the potential of individuals to live a prosperous and happy life. In Kosovo there are significant breakdowns in the provision and quality of education and health affecting Kosovars' ability to participate in the labour market and live a long, prosperous and healthy life. According to the Human Capital Index prepared by the World Bank,[111] a child born in Kosovo today will only be 56 per cent as productive when he or she grows up than would be the case if they enjoyed a complete education and full health. This is a clear indication of wasted potential.

Data from the same source indicates that a Kosovar child who starts school at age four can expect to complete 12.8 years of school by his or her 18th birthday but when what children actually learn is factored in, expected years of school is only 7.7 years. Students in Kosovo score 375 on a scale where 300 represents the minimum and 625 represents the highest possible attainment.[112] This shortfall in human capital, reflecting a mismatch between the outputs of the education system and the demands of the labour market, is a challenge which Kosovo must meet. Getting a good start to life is an essential first step in this direction.

The early years – conception to age five

The appropriate and early care of young children is of primary importance to their future development. Early childhood is the period of most rapid development in the human life cycle. It is when the foundations of physical growth, mental development and socialization are laid. Early childhood is also a time of heightened vulnerability. The health of the child is intimately linked with the health, social status and wellbeing of its mother; her education, income, ethnic background and age determine access to appropriate economic opportunities, information and services.

As an infant grows, early childhood education (ECE) can facilitate the reduction of social and economic disparities by offering children from disadvantaged backgrounds a better transition to primary school alongside improved learning outcomes. This helps to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty through

[111] *Human Capital Index Report for Kosovo*, part of a global series prepared by the World Bank.
[112] Ibid.

increased productivity and income of individuals later in life. ECE can also aid the internal efficiency of investment in education by ensuring that children who enter primary school are well prepared, thereby reducing the likelihood of repetitions and early dropout.

A healthy start to life - enabled by access to quality health care, adequate nutrition, a nurturing environment, safe water, sanitation and good hygiene - yields significant returns to the individual child in terms of better health, sociability, improved capacity for learning and enhanced future earnings as an adult. Social returns include greater productivity of workers, economic growth, equity and lower rates of delinquency and risky behaviours. Thus, healthier babies become healthier adults who can lead the transformation of Kosovo into a thriving country in which social and economic opportunities are available for all.

The early childhood period encompasses several quite distinct phases: from 'conception to birth' and from 'birth to 3 years', with emphasis on the first 1,000 days (from conception to 24 months), followed by the pre-primary years (3 years to 5 or 6 years, or the age of school entry). Early childhood development is the continuous process of acquiring skills and abilities from conception to the age of school entry across the domains of cognition, language, motor, social and emotional development which help individuals to think, solve problems, communicate, express emotions and form relationships. It is also considered the foundation of health, learning, productivity, well-being and the foundation for future human capital formation.[113]

The individual and societal benefits from participation in early childhood learning are by now quite widely known in Kosovo. Early childhood education is prioritized in the Human Capital pillar of the National Development Strategy and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and included in SDG Goal 4, target 4.2: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education."

[113] See for example *Putting science into practice for early child development*, Anthony Lake and Margaret Chan online by the Lancet, September 20, 2014.

Figure 6: *Early Childhood Development framework*[114]

The potential benefits from supporting early childhood development (ECD) include improved cognitive development, better schooling outcomes and increased productivity in life. A growing body of literature demonstrates that the returns to investments in children's early years are substantial. The benefits to such investments can contribute to expanding female labour participation, reaching marginalized populations and reducing the intergenerational transfer of poverty.[115] The framework above on the enabling environment for

[114] Ibid.

[115] *What matters most for Early Childhood Development: A Framework Approach*, World Bank SABER Working Paper Series #5, January 2013.

nurturing care, prepared by WHO, UNICEF, World Bank and other partners, provides a useful tool for assessing the situation of ECD in Kosovo.

The brain develops most rapidly in the first few years of a child's life.[116] If children fail to get what they need during the most critical years of early childhood – health care, adequate nutrition, nurturing, stimulation and a sense of security – it impacts their lives and futures enormously. The quality of parenting is an essential element in fostering child survival, growth and development process and outcomes.[117] The Nurturing Care framework addresses the health and wellbeing not only of children but also of their caregivers and endorses the position that diverse sectors need to work together to support families. The components of nurturing care reflected in the framework must interact in mutually supportive ways to effectively and equitably improve ECD, and this in turn means creating a stimulating, nurturing and protective environment essential for optimal child development requires a range of services and preconditions that cut across different sectors and age groups.

Current situation

Child health and survival[118]

The Ministry of Health has overall responsibility for the provision of health care in Kosovo. A Health Strategic Plan (2017-2021) supplemented by an array of strategies and policies spell out key priorities, strategies and targets for the sector. At the PHC level, Family Health Centres are the primary locations for delivery of services. There are approximately 167 such centres with 258 outreach centres in the 38 municipalities. A growing network of private outpatient practices also provides first contact care.[119] At the secondary level, there are seven Regional Hospitals which provide more advanced services, while at the tertiary level in Pristina, in addition to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Institute for Public Health (IPH), there is a national hospital known as the University Clinic Centre, the University Training Centre, Blood transfusion centre and a University Clinic Centre for Stomatology which deals with dentistry[120] Data regarding the Serbian minority is not available as the health system in Serbian majority municipalities is under the administration of the Serbian Government. Those statistics are not reflected on any official site or in any official report.

[116] See for example: *Putting science into practice for early child development*, Anthony Lake and Margaret Chan online by the Lancet, September 20, 2014.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Data regarding the Serbian minority is not available as the health system in Serbian majority municipalities is under the administration of the Serbian Government. Those statistics are not reflected on the official sites and reports of the Ministry of Health in Serbia.
[119] WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care, *Primary Health Care in Kosovo: Rapid Assessment*, Copenhagen, 2018.
[120] Data provided through key informant interviews with MOH.

Key achievements

There have been significant advances in health care provision in Kosovo in recent years, with resulting improvements in the health outcomes of mothers and infants. Infant mortality has fallen sharply over the last 15 years, largely as a result of better access to facilities and better training for health care professionals. Based on the MICS 2014, the Neonatal, Infant and Under-5 Mortality Rates in Kosovo were estimated at 9, 12 and 15 per 1,000 live births respectively, signalling a decreasing trend.[121]

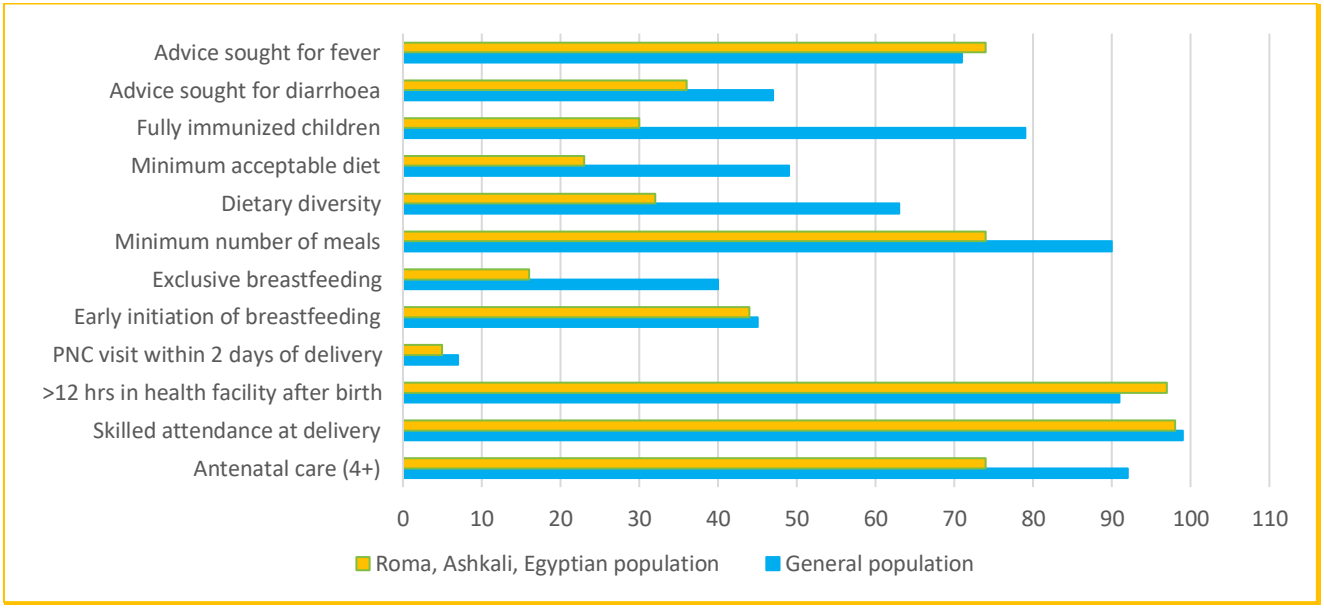
Data reported from health facilities to the IPH suggests that there has also been a steep decline in perinatal mortality rates from 29.1 per 1000 live births in 2000 to 12 per 1000 live births in 2014, increasing to 12.4 in 2017.[122] Most pregnant women receive the recommended four antenatal care visits, and births are generally attended by skilled health care personnel. The maternal mortality ratio rose from 21.6 in 2000 to 43.2 per 100,000 births in 2009 and slowed down to 10.5 in 2012. Since then, no calculations have been undertaken and by default zero deaths reported.[123] In the area of young child survival, success factors included strengthening and extending health services using cost effective means such as the family health centres, home visiting and strong performance in immunization coverage and other elements of primary health care.

Continuum of care

In Kosovo one in twenty babies is born with low birthweight while child poverty, one of the greatest risks for child development, is estimated at 23 per cent; this already puts these children at a disadvantage. Newborn infants in Kosovo are increasingly surviving, but they are not always developing and reaching their full potential because of a number of risks in their environments. While most children are born healthy, many face breakdowns in the continuum of care as demonstrated in Figure 7 below which is based on data from the 2013/14 MICS for the general population and for the Roma Ashkali and Egyptian populations respectively. Looking at the chart below, it is clear that there are some significant breakdowns in continuum of care, starting with red flags at postnatal care visits within two days of birth. The significantly worse performance relating to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children could also contribute to their lower nutritional outcomes when compared to the general population.[124]

[121] Data from: The Kosovo Agency of Statistics. *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Prishtina, 2014.
[122] Institute of Public Health, *Perinatal Report 2018*, Pristina, 2018.
[123] Reported in *Final Stocktaking Report on Home Visiting in Kosovo*, MOH/UNICEF compiled by Lusine Aydinyan, December 2017.
[124] See analysis of inequity in following paragraphs.

Figure 7: *Continuum of care*[125]



In order to improve access to PHC for parents, pregnant women and children under age three in vulnerable households suffering from poverty or inequality, MOH with UNICEF support established a home visiting (HV) programme in 16 municipalities. The specific objectives of the HV programme are: 1) to assess the health and wellbeing of mothers and their children including child development status; 2) assess the health and nutrition needs of the family; 3) provide family education and support and referral to and coordination with community support schemes notably for health, social welfare and education. The visits provide an opportunity to share information and knowledge on good parenting skills including on infant and young child feeding, the prevention of abuse and accidents and to facilitate the early identification and prevention of disability. This is a relatively low cost but effective approach to delivery of PHC services. Overall satisfaction with the HV services is high among the beneficiary families, an important marker of the quality of assistance received. Home visits are contributing to building trust between health facilities and the community. The impact is positive in improving

[125] Data from KAS *Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 2013/14* for the general population and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations, respectively.

breastfeeding and nutrition practices, preventing and addressing postpartum depression and getting fathers more involved in ECD.[126]

Challenges

Despite the positive achievements, Kosovo's children face many challenges and health care indicators remain amongst the lowest in the region, pointing to gaps in access to and quality of care.

Utilization: In Kosovo, fewer people are satisfied with their PHC visits than in other European countries. There is a mismatch between PHC capacity in terms of team composition, competencies, available equipment and the health needs and expectations of the population, which leads to decreasing prestige and bypassing of PHC services.[127] As a result, there is relatively low utilization of PHC services. Analysis of outpatient visits in public facilities data show an average of 1.99 visits per inhabitant per year in 2016, of which 1.94 visits per inhabitant are to PHC physicians. The rate is less than one third of the average of countries in the WHO European Region which amounted to 7.4 in 2014.[128] With regard to preventive health care, a study undertaken by the Balkan Sunflowers Kosova revealed that more than 60 per cent of Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian women did not visit a gynecologist during their pregnancy, while only 3 per cent of other women in Kosovo did the same.[129]

Human resources for health in Kosovo the availability of doctors and nurses is constrained, leading to shortages particularly in the public sector and especially in rural areas. One family doctor and two nurses are expected to provide services to 2,000 people. As salary scales for doctors and nurses in Kosovo are much lower than in the EU, there is a shortage due to migration; there are 552 family doctors employed in Primary Health Care while another 410 are required to meet the target under the policy[130] Coupled with insufficient municipal finances, demand is outstripping supply of services. At the same time, there is no national strategy on human resources for health that could address challenges related to migration, to the distribution of medical specialties among graduates, to education, to the specialization and professional development of family medicine nurses and to achieving a more equal geographical distribution of PHC professionals.[131]

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[126] Ibid.
[127] WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care, *Primary Health Care in Kosovo: Rapid Assessment*, Copenhagen, 2018.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Civil Rights Defenders, The Wall of Anti-Gypsism, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo, Pristina, November 2017.
[130] Data obtained from Ministry of Health.
[131] WHO European Centre for Primary Health Care, *Primary Health Care in Kosovo: Rapid Assessment*, Copenhagen, 2018.

Inequity: There are striking disparities based on ethnic or socio-economic background, geographic location and parental education level for most health, nutrition and ECD/ECE indicators. For example, mortality rates show remarkable inequities. Neonatal, infant and child mortality rates are about twice as high in the poorest quintiles (9, 13 and 19 per 1,000 respectively) than in the richest (4, 7 and 9 per 1,000).[132] The mortality trend among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians stayed almost level for the 15 years prior to the survey with the infant mortality rate at 41 per thousand live births during the five prior years, while the under-5 mortality rate is 49 per thousand live births. These values are about three times higher than the rest of the population; they match the rates of the main population a decade ago[133] - indicating that there has been no improvement in the mortality status of infants from these communities. Disaggregated data indicate higher mortality rates in rural than in urban areas with 18 deaths per 1,000 live births versus 11, respectively. The relatively high proportion of neonatal deaths suggests challenges with the quality of neonatal and maternal care. The MICS show similar trends in immunization coverage - satisfactory on the whole, but gaps and inequities remain. Coverage for DPT3 is 91 per cent for the poorest and 99 per cent for the richest quintile. While 79 per cent of Kosovan children 24-35 months old are fully immunized and protected from vaccine preventable diseases, only 30 per cent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are fully immunized.

Inequities are also striking in key nutrition indicators: the proportion of children who are stunted under age five is just 1 per cent of the children from the richest households and 9 per cent from the poorest, while 15 per cent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children under five years are stunted and 3 per cent severely so.[134] The overall exclusive breastfeeding rate is 40 per cent and about 61 per cent of children age 0-23 months were fed with a bottle during the previous day. Low birth weight was estimated at 5 per cent among the general population and 10 per cent among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The MICS also estimated the rate of full immunization to be 79 per cent among the general population but only 30 per cent among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.[135] The data regarding reproductive health is mixed. Access to skilled attendance at birth is estimated at 99 per cent although there are quality issues in obstetric and neonatal care, as shown by recent reports and assessments. According to MICS, about 8 per cent of pregnant women do not receive the recommended four antenatal visits (23 per cent among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population); 19 per cent did not have their blood pressure measured and blood and urine samples taken; and 9 per cent of newborns did not receive a timely neonatal post-natal visit (23 per cent among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population). The proportion of

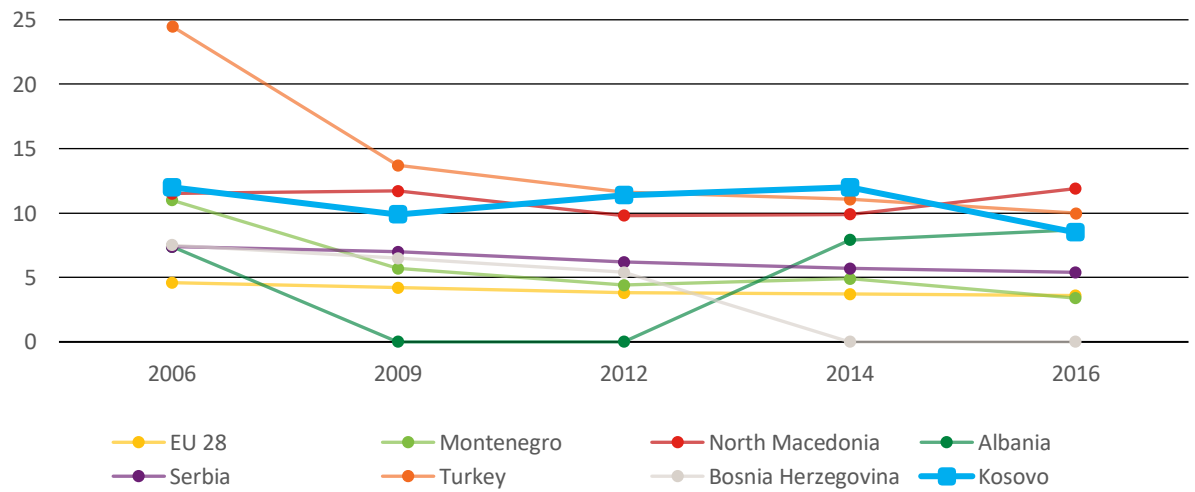
[132] Data from: The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, Pristina, 2014.
[133] Data from: The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities*, Prishtina, 2014.
[134] Data from: The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Prishtina, 2014.
[135] Ibid.

pregnant women receiving caesarean section is steadily increasing, from 7.5 per cent in 2000 to 26.9 per cent in 2014, which is too high from a public health perspective.[136]

Figure 8: *Statistics on infant mortality rates for EU enlargement countries (2006-2016)*

	2006	2009	2012	2014	2016
EU 28	4.6	4.2	3.8	3.7	3.6
Montenegro	11	5.7	4.4	4.9	3.4
North Macedonia	11.5	11.7	9.8	9.9	11.9
Albania	7.4	N/A	N/A	7.9	8.7
Serbia	7.4	7	6.2	5.7	5.4
Turkey	24.5	13.7	11.6	11.1	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7.5	6.5	5.4	N/A	N/A
Kosovo	12	9.9	11.4	12*	8.5

Figure 9: *Infant mortality rates for EU enlargement countries (2006-2016)*



*Data from EUROSTAT online population tables except * from MICS 2013*

[136] Reported in: *A Policy Brief on MICS 2014 Findings*, WHO/UNICEF, 2015.

In terms of achievement and subject to the limitations described in footnote 134, Kosovo is far below the EU 28, Montenegro and Serbia, in a similar range as Albania and better off than Turkey and North Macedonia.

Systems Issues[137] - Despite the good achievements in infant and child mortality there is a need for greater attention to maternal, neonatal and child health, thanks to a relatively high rate of premature and still births alongside insufficient attention to antenatal and postnatal care. To address these issues, a new policy is being finalized but much will depend on implementation capacity.

Lack of maintenance means that waiting lists for access to more sophisticated medical equipment such as MRI and radiotherapy may be quite long. Decentralization is another potential source of inequality in service delivery – each municipality may prioritize differently or have varying availability of resources. Limited access to services by poor and ethnic minorities result in different health outcomes.[138]

Private sector health care, for those who don't wish to wait for services, is available and in demand. Private health expenditure, almost entirely in the form of out-of-pocket payments at the point of service, contributes an estimated 40 per cent of total spending in the sector, with drugs accounting for 85 per cent.[139] Even in the public sector there is a high rate of out-of-pocket expenses for transport, injections, supplies, tests and labs.[140] It is estimated that 18 per cent of the population do not access health services when they are ill due to the costs involved.[141] Furthermore, there is a chronic lack of essential drugs in public hospitals, forcing patients to buy them on the open market. Thus, high rates of poverty limit access to care.

[137] Much of the material in this section is based on interviews in MOH including with IPH.
[138] Thus far home visits are only taking place in parts of 16 municipalities.
[139] World Bank Europe and Central Asia Region, Kosovo, *Systematic Country Diagnostic*, January 2017.
[140] Data obtained from interviews with MOH officials.
[141] European Commission, Kosovo 2019 Report: 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, May 2019.

Figure 10: *Capacity gaps of key duty bearers and rights holders in the health system*[142]

Level	Duty Bearers Rights Holders	Duties and Rights	Capacity Gaps
National	Ministry of Health Institute of Public Health University of Pristina	Overall policy and strategic direction for health sector Research and data Reporting Formal training of doctors and provision of tertiary care	Lack of systems in place Lack of reporting capacity due to incomplete HIS Poor implementation capacity Inadequate financing of health system and its components
Regional	Regional Health Centre	Secondary health care Maternity services	Challenges with maintenance of equipment
Municipal	Family Health Centres	Primary health care	Shortages of staff, equipment and supplies. Limited capacity to report on causes of death by age group
Community	Family Health Centres	Extension of PHC	Shortages of staff, equipment and supplies
Households	Parents	Health seeking behaviour for women and children Good practices in IYCF Taking children for immunization Maintaining a conducive environment for ECD	Lack of information on good practices and available services Insufficient incomes to meet high level of out of pocket expenses Lack of demand for health services for children Poverty makes it difficult to meet required out of pocket expenses

[142] Based on interviews with relevant officials.

A Health Information System (HIS) is currently being revitalized although the number of patients in each catchment area is not yet available, there is no information on causes of death by age group and only limited information is available on maternal mortality. There is also a breakdown in the referral system. Patients choose the level they wish to attend - without being referred - despite having to pay more.[143] The home visiting programme likewise suffers, with incomplete coverage largely related to staffing issues, lack of transport and incentive structure. Implementation is uneven, though plans are in place for a rollout to an additional five municipalities during 2019. In addition, reports on home visiting are generated manually thereby increasing the recording and reporting burden on health care facilities.[144]

Health sector financing is a challenge with the authorities of Kosovo paying less than 10 per cent of the total. World Bank is the biggest donor financing health care with additional partners Luxembourg, SDC and UN agencies. Health consumes 10 per cent of the national budget but a high proportion of it is for salaries (80-90 per cent) followed by capital investment, primarily benefitting the tertiary level.

A law on health insurance is currently under discussion; the Ministry of Health is working on defining the benefits package while the World Bank is providing support for PHC system capacity building and strengthening. Until that law is passed and operationalized many Kosovars will suffer from incomplete access to health.

[143] Based on information provided in interviews with MOH.

[144] *Final Stocktaking Report on Home Visiting in Kosovo*, MOH/UNICEF compiled by Lusine Aydinyan.

Early childhood development

Early childhood care, protection and stimulation can strengthen a child's ability to learn, help them develop psychological resilience and allow them to adapt to change. A baby who is hugged, comforted and stimulated has a great advantage over those who are not, as that baby is more likely to fully develop their learning, language, emotional and social skills. In this context, adult activities with children, presence of children's books in the home and the conditions of care are important indicators of quality of home care.

Development-focused family practices are poor, leading to low child development indexes particularly for the cognitive dimension. MICS data suggests that young children are provided with very little support for learning at home. Only 66 per cent of children age 36 – 59 months were engaged in four or more activities at home with adult members of the household. Engagement of fathers is an area of particular concern: in Kosovo this was estimated at only 6 per cent.[145]

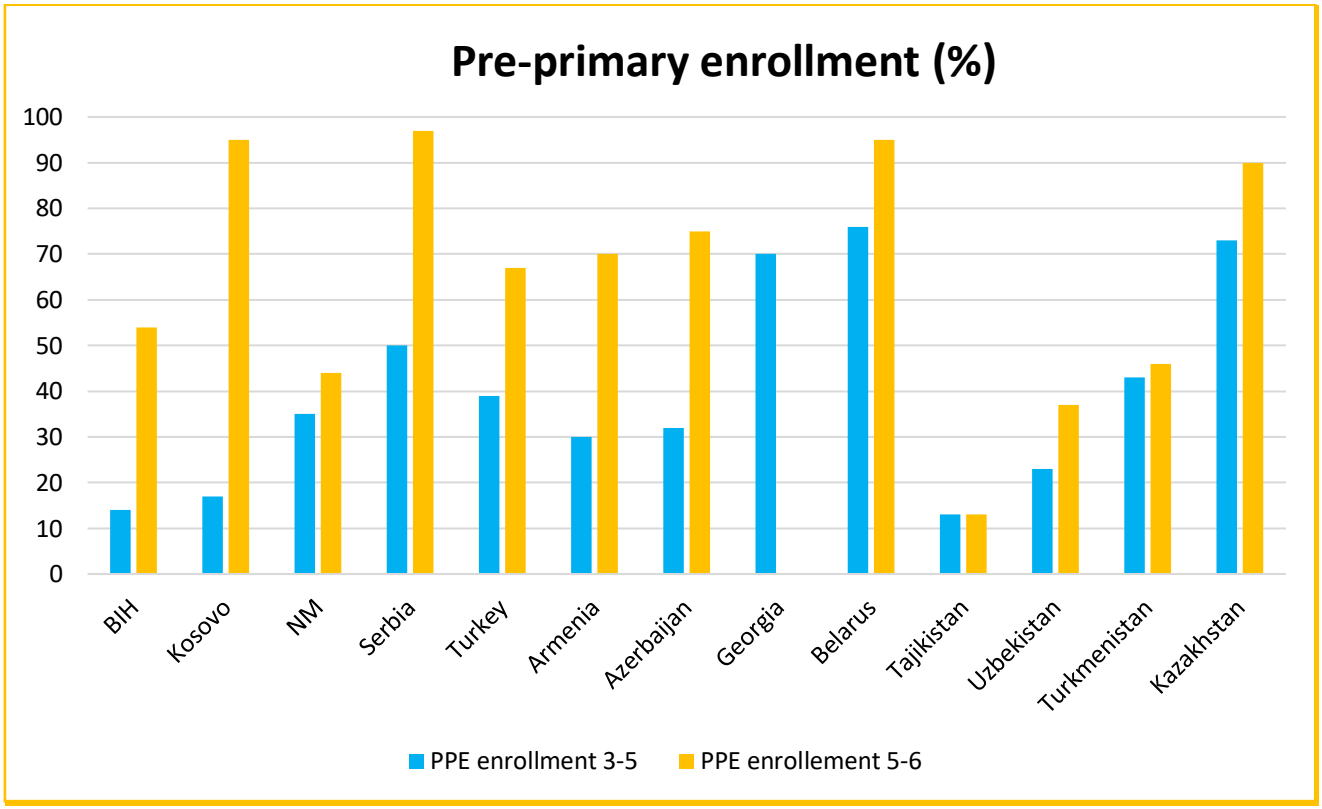
Outside the home, school readiness is a proven strategy to improve socio-economic development and education quality and efficiency. Various studies show its benefits and returns on investment in terms of reduced education costs and disparities and increased human productivity and income. Early childhood education programmes include those that have organized learning components as opposed to babysitting and day care, which do not typically have structured learning.

The Constitution of Kosovo guarantees the Right to Education for all residents and school attendance is compulsory from pre-primary to lower secondary school (age 6-15). As an infant grows, early childhood education (ECE) can facilitate the reduction of social and economic disparities by offering children from disadvantaged backgrounds a better transition to primary school alongside improved learning outcomes. This helps to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty through increased productivity and income of individuals later in life. ECE can also aid the internal efficiency of investment in education by ensuring that children who enter primary school are better able to cope with the challenges and less likely to drop out.

The preschool education system in Kosovo is divided into three levels: kindergarten (for children of 1–2 years of age), preschool (for children of 3–4 years of age) and pre-primary class (for children of 5-6 years of age). However, it should be noted that this data does not reflect the situation of Serbian children in Kosovo who follow the Serbian education curriculum, which MEST does not have data for. At present, MEST is revising the preschool curricula based on Early Learning Development Standards for ages 0-6.

[145] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Prishtina, 2014.

Figure 11: *Pre-primary enrolment (%)*



Source: UNICEF ECARO, Early Childhood Education in Europe and Central Asia, Geneva, 2018

MICS 2014 indicated preschool enrolment at 14 per cent. In the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2020, early childhood education is recognized as a critical starting point for the improvement of human capital. Between 2015 and 2017, nine kindergartens were built and 660 teachers of a planned 3,750 were trained. Enrolment of children aged 3-5 years of age in preschool increased from 30.9 per cent in 2015[146] to 36 per cent

[146] This data of 36 per cent is based on a different methodology and includes children aged 3-5 as opposed to 3-4 in the MICS and other sources.

in 2017 while pre-primary enrolment increased from 81.3 per cent to 92.4 per cent during the same period.[147] It can be noted from the chart above that Kosovo's preschool enrolment is below a number of other countries in the region whereas its pre-primary enrolment is among the best.

Challenges

Enrolment in early childhood education programs are low compared to both the needs of Kosovo and neighbouring countries. A limited supply drives up the price of private preschool education and, in the public schools, children with two working parents are favoured, severely hindering ECD access for children from poor households.[148] According to MICS 2014, access to education programmes for children aged 36-59 months is 13.9 per cent compared to an EU average of over 80 per cent. The lowest rate of attendance is amongst children in the second poorest quintile at 6 per cent and the highest amongst the richest quintile at 37 per cent. This compares to 16 per cent for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. Attendance in urban areas is 23 per cent versus 9 per cent in rural ones.[149]

Why is this the case?

The most immediate factor causing these inequities and overall low enrolment is the limited availability of pre-school and primary education facilities which result from a combination of lack of a policy for systematic expansion of ECE on an equitable basis, low investment by Government in ECE and insufficient integration of the private sector in the system through licensing, training and monitoring. All in all, this can be seen as low priority given to ECD and ECE at national and municipal levels. This is reinforced by the priority given to the children of employed parents on the assumption that they would require help with childcare. There is also insufficient emphasis on parenting programmes which could help to fill the gap.

[147] *First Report on the Implementation and Results of the National Development Strategy (2016-2021)*, Office of the Prime Minister, October 2018.

[148] Only seven per cent of children age 3-4 years from the poorest wealth quintile compared to more than 37 per cent of children from the richest wealth quintile attended a preschool education program in 2013-14 (KAS, 2014) and UNICEF (October 2016): *The Cost of Introducing Universal Childhood Education in Kosovo**.

[149] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics*, 2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Finding*, Prishtina, 2014.

A second group of factors relates to low demand of parents for enrolment in ECD/ECE services due to relatively low education of parents and limited awareness of the benefits, the high costs of engagement in a context of high levels of unemployment and poverty making it appear as an unaffordable extra, social norms which suggest that children at age 5 are too young to be outside the home and should be kept home until they reach the stage of compulsory education and a lack of widely available information about the benefits of preschool education. Irrespective of residence, only 6 per cent of children whose mothers have lower secondary education level are attending ECE programmes compared to 37 per cent of the richest households and 7 per cent of the poorest, pointing to obstacles that are at the same time socioeconomic and cultural.[150]

A third group of factors relate to the poor quality of services provided. Services are not necessarily adjusted to the local environment leading to a one-size-fits-all approach. In addition, teachers have limited capacities for student-centred and inclusive approaches as a result of the absence of a continuous professional development system for preschool teachers. Due to a lack of systematic monitoring and quality assurance by the MEST, quality standards are not enforced.

The MICS provide some very interesting information on engagement of adults (especially fathers) in activities with children, as a prerequisite for optimal early development. Among these, the MICS describe the availability of children's books, which is an internationally well recognized indicator of an enabling family environment for emergent literacy, and consequently of later literacy skills. Among the general population, 56 per cent of children under age 5 have no children's books or picture books at home. This figure reaches 80 per cent among the poorest households and 88 per cent among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian households. Among the richest households, 25 per cent of children under five did not have children's books or picture books.[151]

The most recent available data from MEST shows that approximately 8,335 children were enrolled in preschool (kindergarten) of which roughly 53 per cent were males and 47 per cent females. This increased to 23,749 in pre-primary (52 per cent male and 48 per cent female). In addition, there were 5,934 students enrolled in private preschool and pre-primary education (53 per cent male and 47 per cent female). A further 61 students were enrolled in early education in special schools.[152]

Child development indexes are worryingly low, particularly for literacy and numeracy, the cognitive dimension: only 18 per cent of children in Kosovo have a sufficient level of literacy and numeracy. Indexes are even lower

[150] Ibid.

[151] *English Equity Publication* derived from MICS 2014.

[152] *Statistical Notes 2018/2019 – Pre-University Education*, website of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations (9 per cent), with clear differences among those attending early childhood education (30 per cent) and those not (5 per cent).[153]

Overall, 17 per cent of Kosovo's children aged 36-59 months are not developmentally on track in at least three of the child development dimensions (cognitive, physical, social-emotional and learning). The percentage is even higher (23 per cent) among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. Mother's education and engagement in early childhood education are the main factors influencing child development indexes. These data point to poor family practices with respect to an enabling cognitive environment and a critical lack in both availability and quality of early childhood education, with implications for both school readiness and school performance.[154]

[153] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Prishtina, 2014.
[154] Ibid.

THE MIDDLE YEARS

(Ages 6-10) – Primary education

Introduction

Middle childhood brings many changes in a child's life, including starting school, bringing children into regular contact with the outside world. Independence from family and the development of friendships becomes more important. Physical, social, emotional and mental skills develop quickly. This is a critical time for children to develop confidence in all areas of life, through channels such as friends, schoolwork, and sports.[155] In most countries, middle childhood is when intense socialization through formal institutions begins. In every culture, socialized differences between girls and boys are rooted in early childhood. These are reinforced and furthered by both formal and informal means in middle childhood and adolescence when children learn to behave according to customary gender roles.

Primary education

Primary education is normally the most prominent feature of middle childhood. The right to a quality education, starting with pre-primary, is well recognized and institutionalized in Kosovo and schooling is compulsory to age 15.

Traditionally, Kosovo has enjoyed relatively high rat1es of school **enrolment**. Official statistics note that there is near universal primary school enrolment for the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities (97.5 per cent and 99 per cent respectively). However, enrolment rates for children from non-Serb minority communities (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish, Bosniak and others) remain comparatively low with only 77 per cent of children between the ages of six and 14 enrolled in school. Gender disparities are even more alarming with only 69 per cent of girls from minority groups enrolled.[156] School dropouts remain at a low level, except amongst

[155] Website for Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/index.html
[156] Data provided through UNICEF.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Equally concerning is the fact that 7.3 per cent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children never enter the school system.[157]

The network of primary schools in Kosovo was particularly hard hit by the conflict and decade of neglect that preceded it: more than half of the schools in Kosovo were either destroyed or damaged. Only 17 per cent of schools emerged unscathed. UNICEF and numerous donors have engaged in the successful **rehabilitation of school** buildings all over Kosovo. Education facilities have been improved, but given the recent massive population shift from rural to urban areas, there is surplus primary school capacity in rural areas and not enough in towns and cities. A number of rural schools have had to close, which means that for some children the distance to school is now greater. In urban areas, overcrowding causes most schools to operate at least two shifts per day. This clearly has a negative impact on the child, given the reduced hours in the classroom. Serious problems persist with sanitary facilities and water quality, especially in rural areas.

The MEST, supported by a number of partners, has undertaken taken a series of **reforms** which include development of education policies, changes in the curriculum for preschool, primary and secondary education, and the introduction of modern teaching methods and a human rights perspective. Another priority of the government is to create a space for all children who still remain out of primary schools, such as children with disabilities and children from minority communities. Access to basic qualitative services for **children with disabilities** remains as the main obstacle. Currently it appears that only around 5,294 students with special needs are included in regular classrooms and 271 are included in special schools in the 2016/17 school year. However, accuracy of this data is in question as all children with special needs attending regular classes have not yet been assessed.[158]

The school dropout rate in compulsory education in the school year 2016/17 was 0.07 per cent, while among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities it was 26 times higher at 1.85 per cent. In school year 2016/17, 57.5 per cent of school dropouts were from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and their rate of dropout from primary and lower secondary education was 3.88 per cent.[159] The main causes of school dropouts among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are: poor economic conditions, repetition of the school year, low level of education of parents and lack parental awareness on the importance of schooling, discrimination

[157] Taken from pathway analysis contained in the *Equity Analysis Publication* by UNICEF.
[158] Data from *Monitoring Report for Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Education Plan (2017-2021)*.
[159] Ibid.

in schools, lack of transport, the phenomenon of early marriages among girls and the migration of families for economic reasons.[160]

Indicators of quality in education

When assessing the quality of education there are a number of variables and indicators to take into account, from the input level through process, output and outcome. In summary it would be fair to say that despite the major effort to rebuild, repair and build new schools, a number of challenges remain.

According to the Monitoring Report for KESP 2017-2021, implementation of the new curriculum commenced despite a lack of text books and materials in line with curriculum requirements. During 2017, schools reported considerable difficulties resulting from insufficient preparations and lack of ongoing professional support. At that point, the process of drafting new school text books had not been determined. There were disagreements on whether the school text books would be written by local publishers, translated from foreign languages or taken from Albania. At the same time, the process of teachers' performance assessment had not started and there was no clear action plan to carry out this process in the future. Administration of national tests continued to be a weakness in terms of effective implementation.[161] MICS 2019, data collection for which was underway at the time of writing, is expected to provide data on foundational learning skills for children aged 7-14. This will offer an important indication of the success of the education system in equipping children with fundamental learning skills.

Significant variations in quality exist between municipalities due to varying priorities and resources. There is still inadequate use of student-centred teaching and learning methodologies, contributing to a lack of focus on specific outcomes such as capacity for critical thinking. Despite being qualified, teachers are not always equipped with the necessary skills and exposure to best practices to adapt to reform processes. This is reflected in low and sub-optimal usage of digital tools in the classroom. The computer/student ratio is estimated at 270/1 compared to EU target of 20/1. Tele-education is not widely used. According to data from MEST, 44 per cent of

[160] Kushtrim Bajrami and Kujtim Koci, Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Children in Education, Pristina, November 2018.

[161] *Implementation of Kosovo Strategic Education Plan in 2017 Evaluation Report*, EU and Kosovo Education and Employment Network, December 2017.

schools have access to computers although the extent to which they are used as teaching or learning tools is unclear.[162]

There is still poor integration of children with disabilities in the educational system. Facilities are inadequate to meet their needs in terms of toilets, accessibility to upper floors and the availability of professional skills. As a result, comparative learning achievement, as reflected in the PISA exams and human capital formation, is well below potential. Children with disabilities and those with special talents remain the most marginalized categories in pre-university education, although the 2019 budget has set aside a special allocation for children with special talents[163].

Overall assessment of challenges in ECD and Primary Education

While child health indicators are improving over time, significant challenges remain in terms of access and health outcomes particularly for ethnic minorities and those from rural areas, especially the poorest households. Challenges also persist regarding quality of services and the capacity to plan, monitor and report on health-related issues. Attempts have been made to narrow the accessibility gap between health services and the at-risk population through efforts such as home visiting, but these reach only a small proportion of the population in need and quality issues remain for PHC as a whole.

At the level of early childhood education, low enrolment, absence of quality standards and poor oversight mean that a high proportion of young children are not adequately prepared for the rigors of primary education. Increased attention to this area has meant that enrolment has increased but still remains amongst the lowest in the region and when compared to countries in the EU. An analysis of the cost of pre-primary education suggested that the existing education budget would be sufficient to provide 15 hours per week of preschool education for every child aged 3-5 by retraining surplus primary school teachers as preschool educators and specialists, and by utilizing more cost-efficient forms of pre-primary education, such as community-based kindergartens[164].

[162] *Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021*, MEST, Pristina, 2016.
[163] The Gap Institute, 2019 Draft Budget: An analysis of income and expenditures, Pristina, November 2018.
[164] Fiscus Public Finance Consultants, The Cost of Introducing Universal Early Childhood Education in Kosovo, Oxford, February 2017.

Regarding primary school, quality remains an issue with significant scope for increasing the use of technology in the classroom, bringing teaching methodologies and the objective content of education into line with global standards. Despite the ongoing construction of new disability friendly educational facilities, a significant backlog of facilities without proper toilets, labs on the second floor and a lack of ramps remain as obstacles to achieving the right to education of children with disabilities.

Across all areas difficulties include systems for the generation, reporting and use of data; a focus on facilities rather than people; and limited budgets for investment in achieving the rights of children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Direction

- It is essential that the **Health Insurance Law** be passed urgently to ensure that all residents of Kosovo have access to affordable care in line with best practices of other countries in the region and the EU.
- Strengthen **maternal and neonatal health** with a strong focus on the first 1,000 days, including strengthening of relevant services particularly for pre-term births, parenting skills in the areas of infant and young child feeding, stimulation and hygienic practices.
- Support development of **national ECD law, strategy and action plan** including development of national policies and increased investment for home visiting.
- Prioritize and expedite enrolment of young children and improve the quality of early childhood education including recruitment and training of additional teachers in line with the NDS.
- Improve the school environment and quality of learning – extend the Child Friendly Schools Approach to reduce the number of out of school children and improve learning outcomes.
- Given the projected decline in school-aged population the focus should shift from construction of additional primary school facilities towards improving quality, relevance and accessibility for children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities. This should also include specialized training of teachers and assistants.
- Basic education reforms towards a competence-based curriculum need to be continued along with an adequate supply of teaching and learning materials and intensified teacher training.
- Ensure that ECD and quality education are well reflected in the next Kosovo Education Strategic Plan.
- Place a strong focus on broadening the availability and quality of education and health services to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop alternative funding models and innovative funding proposals to harness available resources from traditional and non-traditional donors, including foundations and public-private partnerships.

Demonstration in municipalities

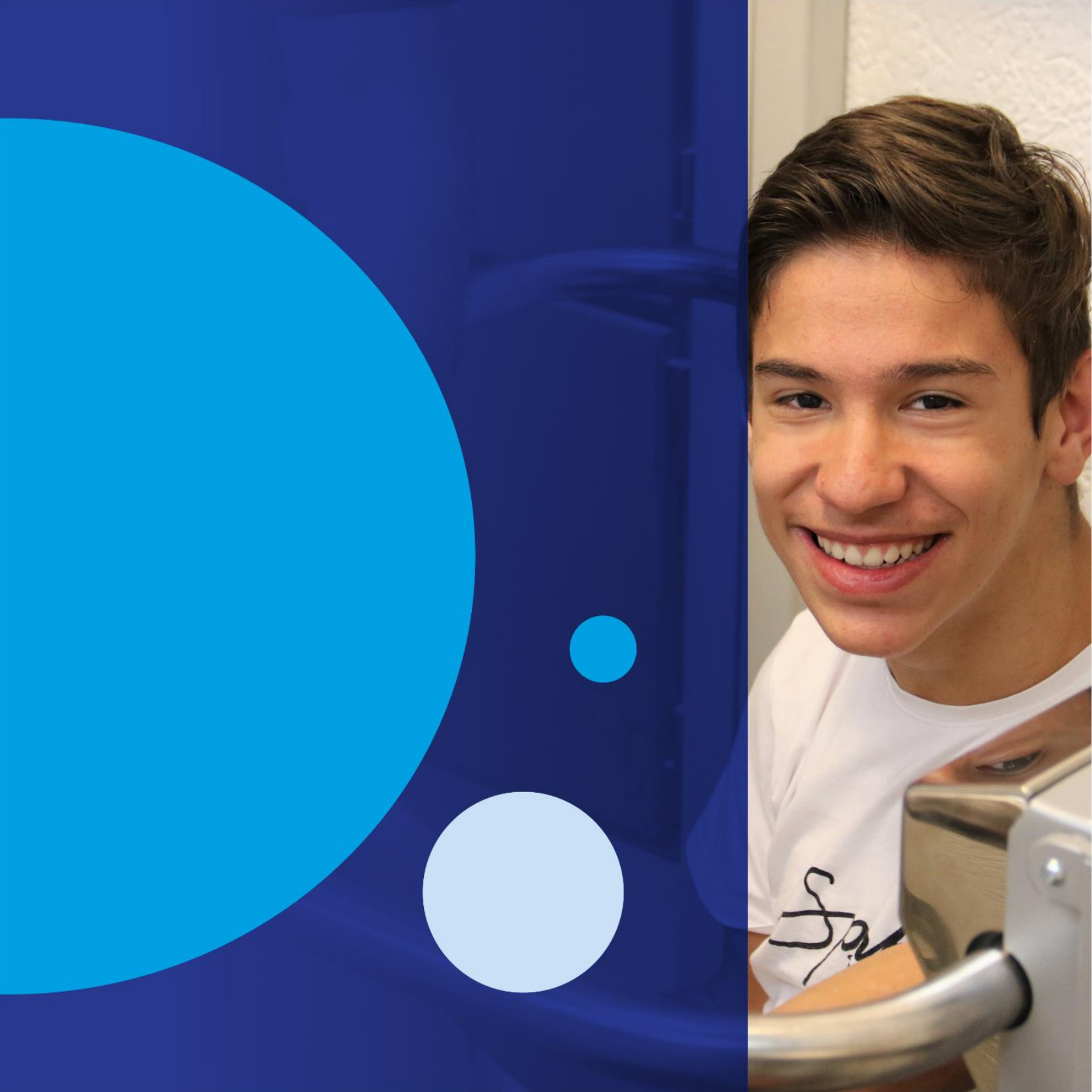
- **Model** cost-effective and quality approaches to ECD expansion and home visiting in selected municipalities.
- **Pilot early detection and intervention model in a few selected municipalities.** In particular, train and deploy a cadre of special assistants in a few municipalities equipped with the capacity to use the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a tool for this purpose.

Taking to scale

- Based on evaluation, build partnerships with donors and the private sector for expansion of the ECE, home visiting and ECI models, **take the most promising ones to scale.**

Knowledge management/Innovation/Monitoring and evaluation

- Undertake feasibility studies for expansion of ECE, ECI and home visiting.
- Undertake a situation analysis of ECI.
- Document good practices towards achieving child rights in the first decade of life.
- Undertake a systematic assessment of whether or not introduction of PCV 13 vaccine would help young children better resist the effects of air pollution.



CHAPTER FOUR: THE SECOND DECADE OF LIFE – ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTHS

Introduction

Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe which is potentially a great advantage as their numbers, exuberance and creativity could be a strong force for development. There are roughly 486,000 adolescents and youths in the country. However, the combination of limited opportunities for quality education, employment and participation in social and political life along with inadequate support services make it difficult for them to play their role. The result is wasted potential and pressure to emigrate to find better opportunities elsewhere.

The de facto segregation of communities along ethnic lines and mother tongue education also makes it difficult for adolescent and young people to communicate and interact with each other. For example, the vast majority of Kosovo Albanian and Serbian youth do not interact with each other in their daily life, let alone with youth from ethnic minorities, and can only communicate using a foreign language (usually English or German) as intermediary.[165]

Policies and programmes for youth in Kosovo

The Law on the Empowerment and Participation of Youth aims to promote and reaffirm continued participation of youth in decision making processes without any difference and exclusion and in the development of a democratic society, in order to improve the quality of life of youth and their social status. In addition, there is a Kosovo Youth Strategy (2018-2023) and a Youth Action Plan (2018-2021). Youth concerns are also well represented in the SDGs and Sustainable Development Agenda and in Generation Unlimited, a United Nations Global Initiative which aims to link secondary age education and training to entrepreneurship and employment.[166]

Kosovo as a post-conflict territory hosts many efforts that target young people in different thematic areas, with OSCE, UNMIK, GIZ, USAID, Helvetas and UNICEF being amongst the main actors. The majority of projects are oriented on skills development and foster inter-ethnic cooperation through sports, cultural and other activities.

[165] *Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019.
[166] In the literature on this subject, youth are viewed both as change agents and beneficiaries.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo focuses its support on increasing and improving young people's participation and contribution to policy design and decision-making in public life.

UNMIK focuses its support on youth, peace and security primarily aimed at improving inter-ethnic relations through a variety of strategies. GIZ focuses on programmes that increase the employability of young people between ages 15-35. USAID is supporting an after-school programme for teens aimed at developing employment and entrepreneurial skills to help youth make the transition from students to the workforce.167 Helvetas brings together private sector employers with schools in Kosovo to create practical vocational education opportunities. Helvetas is also using infotainment to prepare young people for career choices and job seeking.

UNICEF is supporting an Innovation Lab utilizing non-traditional educational methods and human-centred design to impart professional, transferrable skills to youths and adolescents, enabling them to realize their potential as social change agents. This is reflected in a trio of programmes known as UPSHIFT, PODIUM and PONDER. UPSHIFT combines some of the leading approaches to youth and adolescent development, social innovation, and entrepreneurship. It aims to empower marginalized youth and adolescents to become social innovators and entrepreneurs by providing experiential learning in understanding community challenges and designing and building impactful solutions in the form of products or services. PODIUM teaches adolescents and youth of the most marginalized groups in Kosovo how to advocate for the needs and rights of their communities. Designed to improve the resilience of adolescents and youth by increasing the knowledge of their rights, improving their awareness on the power of social change and advocacy and cultivating campaign management and advocacy tactics, it also improves confidence and empowerment.

PONDER strengthens adolescent life skills by fostering media literacy and critical approaches to information, empowering adolescents to approach information critically, to identify and examine bias, and to judge the value, authenticity, and authority of the information they encounter. Following the workshop, the Lab provides professional experiences in the form of internships in media for participants to apply the attained critical media literacy skills in practice.

The Youth Department within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has responsibility for youth affairs and policy in Kosovo. The department is mandated to implement the Youth Strategy & Action Plan, conduct analysis of the youth sector, develop programs for identified groups of youth, coordinate with departments, municipalities and organizations to develop and implement policies, support the formation of clubs and

[167] Information for this section have been derived from the websites of the respective agencies and downloaded during July 2019.

associations for youth, encourage financial and other support for the youth sector, and provide information for youth about services and programs. In addition, there is a Central Youth Council which was established to represent and reflect the collective voice of youth. Youth Action Councils and Youth Centres engage in activities at the municipal level.

Challenges

Adolescents and young people in Kosovo face a number of challenges contributing to a high emigration rate or desire to emigrate. The primary concerns are the high rate of unemployment, quality of education and a lack of opportunities for youth engagement in society. Other issues include insufficient availability of information and access to youth friendly mental health services and sexual and reproductive health services, along with lack of inclusion of ethnic minorities. Although there has been notable progress in each of these areas, challenges remain.

Challenges were also discussed with a Youth Reference Group.[168] Among the issues raised were their concerns related to quality education, the feeling that they were insufficiently prioritized on the national agenda, the feeling that there is a lot of talk and no action and that youth should be seen in the present and not just as the future of Kosovo. The issue of limited access for children with disability, lack of understanding of the nature of disability and challenges faced by them was also raised.

Youth unemployment

The apparent misalignment between education outcomes and labour market needs results in a high degree of unemployment among university and vocational education graduates.[169] The highest unemployment rate in Kosovo is among youth aged 15-24 (55.3 per cent in 2018), well above the Western Balkans average of 38.6 per cent. Among unemployed youth, 63.5 per cent were female and 48.4 per cent male.[170] The 2018-2023 strategy and action plan to address youth unemployment has yielded minimal results thus far. Unemployment among youth who have completed vocational education has also seen limited progress, with only a slight decrease

[168] See Annex Two.

[169] See for example *EU 2018 Annual Progress Report*, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan among others.

[170] *Human Capital Development in Kosovo: Policies, Challenges, Solutions*, European Training Foundation, May 2019.

from 35.9 per cent in 2015 to 33 per cent in 2017.[171] Young people with disabilities and those from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, who continue to face structural barriers to education, skills for decent work and employability, have even higher unemployment rates.[172] Youth unemployment among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian has been estimated at 75 per cent[173].

In addition, respondents in the 2018 Public Pulse Survey indicated that employment status is an issue of concern: 56 per cent of female and 40 per cent of male respondents are unemployed and only 33 per cent, many of whom are older than 18, report having any work experience. Almost all respondents have confirmed that they receive financial support from parents (55 per cent) and other family members (46 per cent). Respondents explained the lack of available jobs (43 per cent), corruption (42 per cent), and the lack of required professional qualifications (41 per cent) makes it difficult to find a job in Kosovo.[174]

There appears to be a considerable mismatch between young people's expectations of the job market and existing needs regarding the labour force: the majority of young people that participate in the job market do not work in their occupation. In general, there is a lack of arrangements with businesses for company internships for VET students which hinder the development of relevant practical skills and employability of graduates. There are a few exceptions to this including in particular through Swiss and German companies.[175] On the positive side, young people that have performed internships and practical positions during their studies appear to have greater chances of finding an occupation-related job.[176]

Inability to find a job is compounded by the problem of highly limited opportunities to engage in further education and skill training. A large number of youth are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), accounting for 27.4 per cent of the young population in 2017, in contrast with the regional Western Balkan average of 22.3 per cent. However, the 2017 NEET rate is an improvement over 2016, at 30.1 per cent. Young women remain more exposed to such risk, with almost one in three female youths neither in employment, education or training compared to one in four male youth.[177]

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[171] *First Report on Implementation and Results of NDS*, Office of the Prime Minister, October 2018.
[172] *EU 2018 Annual Progress Report*.
[173] Civil Rights Defenders, The Wall of Anti-Gypsyism: Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo, Pristina, November 2017.
[174] *Public Pulse Survey 2018*, UNDP, 2018.
[175] *Human Capital Development in Kosovo: Policies, Challenges, Solutions*, European Training Foundation, May 2019.
[176] *Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019.
[177] Ibid.

Why is this the Case?

There are a range of supply and demand side factors contributing to this situation. First and foremost, the education system both academic and vocational does not adequately prepare students for participation in the labour market. As a result, there is a low level of relevant skills and limited experience in the workplace. Insufficient career guidance and work ethic are also thought to be the prominent issues while on the demand side the limited investment in and absorption capacity of the labour market is seen as the key factor.[178]

Another challenge identified is the issue of equity in employment given that political affiliation and family status can play a role in whether or not a student is hired. From an early age, girls are oriented towards occupations that pay less, are considered less mentally or physically demanding and/or have a nurturing component that keeps them linked to the family domain. Women are usually highly concentrated in the sectors that require lesser skills (e.g. agriculture), that promise little chance for career advancements (e.g. services) and that are related to care-giving (e.g. Nursing), which often coincide also with lower wages.
Furthermore, there is still room for education of students on their labour rights as many are unsure about the implications of contracts they sign and/or the expectations and tasks that employers demand of them.[179]

Quality of education

Secondary education is divided between lower secondary - which is compulsory - and upper secondary, which is not. Upper secondary has two branches: academic, which can lead to university; and vocational, which leads to gaining qualifications in a professional trade. Quality of education is recognized as a challenge by all actors in the sector and is a top priority for the government of Kosovo, with development of human capital as one of the five strategic objectives in Kosovo's National Development Strategy (2016–2021). Education in Kosovo is governed by the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017-2021) with implementation overseen by MEST.

Around half of all students in upper secondary education choose vocational education. Vocational education and training (VET) programmes lack practical and applied courses, with only a few being accredited by the National Qualifications Authority. Overall, the link to the labour market remains weak. It is estimated that at

[178] *Human Capital Development in Kosovo: Policies, Challenges, Solutions*, European Training Foundation, May 2019.
[179] Based on feedback to the draft situation analysis from the Youth Reference Group.

least 30 per cent of vocational schools offer programmes for which there is little demand in the market. For instance, around 47 per cent of VET students attend programmes in business and law or health care, for which there is little labour demand.[180] The role and future of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education remains unclear.[181]

While the primary school net attendance ratio reaches 98 per cent, the lower secondary education net attendance ratio is 96 per cent and the upper secondary school net attendance ratio decreases to 83 per cent. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children have the highest dropout rates (from primary school net attendance ratio at 85 per cent, decreasing significantly in lower secondary to 67 per cent and dropping precipitously in upper-secondary to 34 per cent).[182] Females in non-Serbian minority communities are additionally disadvantaged for reasons that include the cultural preference for girls to stay home and the continued prevalence of early marriage.[183]

Data provided by MEST in 2016 shows a decline in the dropout rate from 2011 to 2014, from 0.48 to 0.12 per cent. There is a significant difference between male and female students who dropout: 26.7 per cent are female and 73.3 per cent male. MEST explains this as related to the deterioration of the economic situation and family living standards, as young male students are often seen as a precious labour force to increase family incomes.[184]

During the 2017/18 school year a total of 1870 dropouts were recommended with significant differences between municipalities. Those with the highest number of dropouts included Peja (337), Pristina (310) and Prizren (208). Between them they accounted for 46 per cent of the total. Understanding why these particular municipalities have such high dropouts will be important to designing a strategy for retention. Most of the dropouts occur in grades 10-12, though there are 10 municipalities without any dropouts.

The role of education in national development is to promote critical thinking, instil relevant values, knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in society and have an informed understanding of the world. To accomplish this there are four critical requirements: teachers who are knowledgeable, well trained and inspiring; availability of appropriate teaching and learning resources including updated textbooks, computers, healthy school meals and availability of health workers and guidance counsellors; a conducive, accessible and inclusive learning environment including special provisions for integration of children with disabilities and those

[180] *Human Capital Development in Kosovo: Policies, Challenges, Solutions. European Training Foundation, 2019.*
[181] *EU Annual Progress Report on Kosovo*, 2018.
[182] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, Priština, 2014.
[183] *Kosovo Constraints Analysis*, Millennium Challenge Kosovo, Pristina, 2016.
[184] *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*, MEST, Pristina, 2016.

from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; and extra-curricular activities that link schools with the rest of society including sports, volunteering and field visits.

One indicator signalling the low quality of the education system is the relatively poor performance of Kosovar students in international assessments such as PISA 2015, which placed Kosovo pupils at the bottom of the developing countries and in last place in the region. Student performance is amongst the strongest predictors of future income and life opportunities. There are two broad sets of reasons why educational performance may suffer: background factors such as socioeconomic status, parents' educational status and nutrition, etc.; and school-based factors including quality of teachers, relevance of curriculum, quality of facilities, teaching/learning methodologies, and availability of textbooks and teaching/ learning materials. Availability of resources for education in general and at the school level in particular and the efficiency of their use underpin all efforts at improving quality.[185]

Young people are dissatisfied with the quality of education in Kosovo. In a recent Youth Survey only 23 per cent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of education, one of the lowest percentages in the region. Moreover, Kosovo is the only country that has seen a decline in the level of satisfaction with the quality of education over time.[186]

On the other hand, participants in a 2018 Public Pulse Survey felt somewhat differently. Almost 75 per cent of respondents are *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied* with the education they received or are receiving. However, 25 per cent of them consider that their education is not useful to getting a job. The lack of professionalism by teachers and professors (38 per cent) is identified as the main obstacle in the educational system, followed by poor school infrastructure (28.5 per cent) and inferior quality of the curriculum (28 per cent). Results show that 69 per cent of Kosovo Roma respondents are not attending schools or universities, which is significantly higher than the number of respondents from other ethnic communities.[187]

Public spending on education remained unchanged at 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2016, which is broadly in line with middle income countries with similar age profiles. There are relatively high enrolment rates in primary and secondary education, 96 per cent and 88.1 per cent, respectively, and enrolment at tertiary level is very high with 120,000 students in both public and private higher education institutions. On a per capita basis, this is nearly double the EU average, but the completion rate is low.[188] However, low PISA scores and an elevated

[185] *The Impact of Teacher Quality and In-School Resources on Student's Performance*, Kosovo Education and Employment Network.
[186] *Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019.
[187] *Public Pulse Survey 2018*, UNDP, 2018.
[188] From *EU Annual Progress Report 2018*.

unemployment rate among higher education graduates (26.7 per cent in Q3 2017) indicate the poor quality of education in general and its misalignment with labour market needs, a key challenge to achieving the objectives of the Economic Reform Programme.[189]

Building quality, lack of books, availability of funds to teachers and class size are factors that influence the performance of Kosovar students in reading scores. In schools where principals point at inadequacy or poor quality of physical infrastructure hindering school instruction, students perform 7.111 points worse than who attend schools where the principal reported that instruction is not hindered by inadequate or poor physical infrastructure, after controlling for student backgrounds, individual characteristics and school characteristics.[190]

Deeper analysis of the findings from PISA suggest that investing in the professional development of teachers and improving teaching and learning methodologies can improve performance. Results indicate a highly significant relationship between the lack of educational materials, e.g., textbooks, IT equipment, library or laboratory material, and lower student performance.[191]

Other aspects that hinder the quality of education in Kosovo is the lack of career counselling starting in primary school to help students make the right academic choices consistent with their interests and availability of employment opportunities. Without this, there is a risk that students may lose interest in what they are studying and drop out. In addition, a lack of extracurricular activities points to a missed opportunity for constructive engagement. Extracurricular activities help students to become more engaged with their schools, their communities and their classmates. There also appears to be a gap between the elective courses that are available and what students are interested in taking and more could be done to inform students and their parents of the power they have to influence course offerings instead of taking courses which they don't find interesting and thus, don't engage with.[192]

[189] Ibid.
[190] Kosovo Education and Employment Network, *The Impact of Teacher Quality and In-school resources on Kosovar Students' Performance*, Pristina, 2016.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Based on review of the draft situation analysis by members of the Youth Reference Group.

Participation and representation

Opportunities for the political participation of children and young people are limited. Despite the legal provisions of the Kosovo Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2009), young people are largely excluded from local and central governance processes. This core child rights issue is made more challenging by social norms limiting child participation in decision-making within the family, at school and in the community. Little has been done to ensure that there is space to amplify young people's voices and ensure their opinions are heard and acted upon. There has been a dramatic decrease in young people's interest in political events compared to 2012, and only 10 per cent of young Kosovars are of the opinion that their interests are "well" represented in national politics.[193]There is significant distrust and apathy among Kosovar youth towards all political institutions, and especially political parties and national government. Moreover, there is pronounced scepticism among youth regarding civil society organizations and media outlets. On the other side of the equation, there is greater trust in religious institutions and international organizations like the OSCE.[194]

Livelihoods and perspectives of young people

Results of the Public Pulse Survey of challenges and perspectives of youth in Kosovo undertaken in 2018 show that a high number of respondents (48 per cent) are pessimistic about the future of Kosovo. Most respondents consider the lack of job opportunities (60 per cent), poverty (49.3 per cent), nepotism, and corruption (43 per cent) as the main challenges. However, those aged 25-35 years consider the main problem in Kosovo to be the general political situation. Overall, almost 60 per cent of respondents reported that it is likely they will consider leaving Kosovo in the next 3 years.[195]

According to the Youth Survey, nearly half of young Kosovo Albanians have a moderate to very strong intention to leave Kosovo; economic reasons are most often cited as a reason for emigration. On the other hand, just one-quarter of young people from Kosovo who are willing to migrate have a good working knowledge of the language spoken in their planned destination country, indicating that they are not well prepared for migration.[196]

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193 *Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019.

194 Ibid.

195 *Public Pulse Analysis: Challenges and perspectives of youths in Kosovo.* UNDP Kosovo, Pristina, August 2018.

196 *Youth Study Kosovo 2018/2019*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2019.

Together with the high level of unemployment, the level of pessimism is also sizeable: only 22.3 per cent of respondents in the Public Pulse Survey are "very confident" or "somewhat confident" they will find a job within the next six months. Forty-six per cent female and 36 per cent male respondents consider that the difficulty of finding a job is due to a lack of professional qualifications. However, more than 80 per cent of employed respondents are satisfied with what they do. When asked about work-related challenges, 30 per cent of respondents reported that low income is the key challenge in their current job.[197] This is supported by data on average monthly wages, estimated at around 360 Euro.

Adolescent and youth health concerns

One hazard particular to adolescent women is the high proportion who are married or live in union before their 18th birthday; early marriage increases the likelihood of early pregnancy with its attendant physical and mental health risks. According to MICS the percentage of women aged 20-49 who were first married before age 18 was 10 per cent compared to 1 per cent of adolescent boys. Three per cent of young women aged 15-19 and 0.4 per cent of young men of the same age were either married or living in union at the time of the survey. Among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian the issue is even more worrying, with 11 per cent of young women married before age 15.[198]

Other issues affecting young people include a scarcity of information on available sexual and reproductive health services and how to access them; a lack of outreach and peer-to-peer youth services; a dearth of adolescent involvement in designing health care services; and a failure to use evidence-based guidance and protocols to inform health care. Similarly, the EU progress report emphasizes weaknesses in health promotion regarding non-communicable diseases and mental health legislation, which is not aligned with the EU agreement, and the absence of laws or policies in place to support nutrition or physical activity.[199] Sex education is constrained by cultural and religious factors, potentially reducing awareness of the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among adolescents. MICS data indicates that girls from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are more likely to give birth before the age of 18 than girls in the general population.[200]

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[197] *Public Pulse Analysis: Challenges and perspectives of youths in Kosovo*, UNDP Kosovo, Pristina, August 2018.
[198] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings,* Prishtina, 2014.
[199] *EU Progress Report 2018*.
[200] *Analysis of the situation of children and women in Kosovo*, UNICEF, Pristina, October 2017.

Interethnic relations were also explored in the Public Pulse Survey. While 28 per cent of respondents admit there have been some improvements between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb relations during the recent years, 27 per cent think that interethnic relations are still tense and will remain tense for a long time. Slightly over 10 per cent of respondents think that interethnic relations are not as tense whereas around 7 per cent of respondents claim that interethnic relations are not tense at all.[201] A UNFPA survey of high school and university students in Northern Kosovo provides some valuable insights into availability of information on, as well as on attitudes and perceptions of, sexual and reproductive health. The survey showed that preferred sources of information included internet, peers and parents while normally more reliable sources such as medical staff, teachers and seminars on the subject were less favoured. Fifty-nine per cent of those interviewed engaged in unprotected sex by not using contraceptive means during their first sexual encounters, yet 92 per cent understood that it was possible to get infections through this approach. The survey also showed some significant gaps in knowledge of HIV. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents agreed that it would be good to have sexual and reproductive health in schools.[202]

The survey also provided information on different types of violence experienced by youths. Most of the violence was experienced either on the street or in schools and much less often at home. Sexual harassment is also an issue with female students usually being on the receiving end of said conduct. There is also the issue of perceptions of violence from students as the response to the question of whether or not a husband has the right to beat his wife was overwhelmingly negative, ranging from 82 to 91 per cent, depending on the reason. Although this is encouraging, the fact that there is still a significant number who feel it is justified implies much more education is needed on the subject.[203]

Mental health issues

All of the above challenges along with the legacy of the conflict is reflected in stress and other markers of mental health experienced by adolescents and young people. They are at high risk of developing emotional difficulties and behavioural problems. The results from the national survey on emotional and behaviour problems among children aged 6-18 years old revealed relatively high levels of emotional difficulties especially in mid-adolescence, suggesting that low self-esteem and hopelessness are partially the reason for such high prevalence

[201] Ibid.
[202] *Survey on adolescents and youth knowledge, attitudes and behaviors on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender- Based Violence, UNFPA, May 2017.*
[203] Ibid.

of emotional difficulties.[204] Indeed, about 52.7 per cent of study participants reported low self-esteem and 16.3 per cent reported abnormal levels of emotional difficulties. Adolescents' self-reported emotional and behavioural problems are considered to be high in relation to international norms, with 25–40 per cent of Kosovar adolescents scoring in the deviant range. There are few services or resources available to address issues of mental health and stigma attached to experiencing mental health difficulties merely serves to make things worse.[205]

Drug use

Developing brains can make adolescents more vulnerable to peer pressure or manipulation, exploitation or abuse by older people. This is especially true for those who lack stable and supportive family environments.[206] It is often a time of experimentation involving alcohol, drugs and risky sexual activity. Reflecting the desire to be accepted, many young people engage in casual drug use with only a limited number becoming addicted. There is no comprehensive data available on drug usage by type, age of user or location. Current estimates of the drug using population are 10-15,000 of which 4-5,000 consume heroin.[207] The number of qualified service providers relative to the number of use or inject drugs remains low. Drug treatment facilities are only available in a limited number of areas and only a small proportion of the estimated number of people who inject drugs and use opiates have access to treatment services. Two agencies, the Psychiatric Clinic of the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo in Pristina and the NGO Labyrinth, provide most of the drug treatment in the form of detoxification services, psychosocial treatment and OST with methadone. Outpatient psychosocial drug treatment is primarily provided by Labyrinth, which has units in Prizren, Gjilan and Pristina. The implementation of methadone maintenance treatment was initiated in April 2012, as part of a Global Fund- supported project at Labyrinth, and it was subsequently introduced in the Psychiatric Clinic of the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo and in regional hospitals in Gjilan and Gjakova. Two methadone programmes are operating in custodial settings (prisons) in Kosovo. Harm Reduction Programmes are operating in Pristina, Prizren and Gjilan.

[204] Naim Fanaja; Erika Melonashia; Fleura Shkëmbia, *Self-esteem and Hopelessness as Predictors of Emotional Difficulties: A Cross-sectional Study among Adolescents in Kosovo*, 2014.
[205] Mimoza Shahini and Leslie Rescorla; Johannes Wancata; Adelina Ahmeti, *Mental health problems in Kosovar adolescents: results from a national mental health survey*, 2015.
[206] *Technical Brief of Young People Selling Sex*, UNAIDS 2014.
[207] *Technical Brief of Young People Selling Sex*, UNAIDS 2014.

Recommendations

Influencing Policy Direction

- Support amendment of the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation.
- Strengthen cross sectorial coordination and partnership with line ministries (MECT, MCYS, Ministry of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MIE), Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.
- Support the revision of the Law on Persons with Disabilities.
- Kosovo should increase the quality of VET programmes and qualifications to encourage employers to hire a greater number of graduates through linking schools to internship opportunities; teacher training and improving the curricula.
- Increase the proportion of state budgetary expenditure on health and education while improving efficiency in implementation.
- Embed skills-based education and experiential learning such as contained in UPSHIFT into the formal education system.
- Strengthen linkages with business enterprises to provide greater opportunities for work experience during schooling for children in secondary school.
- Continue the process of refining curricula in academic and vocational schools to improve employability of graduates.
- Continue and strengthen the education reform process to focus on strengthening professional development of teachers, broadening the application of child-centred teaching and learning methodologies and better align the education system to global standards and best practices.

Municipal demonstration

- Contribute to “Leave no Adolescent Behind” by reaching 100 per cent of 10th grade students of selected municipalities through local innovation hubs, by equipping adolescents with skills on social entrepreneurship, financial literacy, advocacy and lobbying and critical media literacy. Increase the capacities of the existing youth centres and youth action councils to deploy existing ADAP programmes such as UPSHIFT, PODIUM and PONDER.
- Develop and test Kosovo relevant models on Adolescent Health based on global best practices using the existing Health System. In particular, improve the quality, relevance and sympathetic nature of health services for adolescents and young people focusing on increasing availability of information and services in areas such as mental health, reproductive health and the promotion of optimal health and nutrition behaviours.

Scaling up

- Accelerate the process of **integration of children with disabilities** in the regular school system in line with the benchmarks of the CRPD.
- In the case of adolescents, there is a clear need to **focus more effort on programmes for children out of school**, notably the NEETs, to improve opportunities for youth.
- **Strengthen the focus on life skills, civic education and the promotion of clubs** in primary and secondary schools to keep adolescents and youths constructively engaged. As part of this, continue the process of integrating skills for life and skills for work into **refining curricula** in academic and vocational schools to improve teaching and learning outcomes, including employability of graduates.
- Implement **already existing commitments** to ensure that all children, including those from ethnic minorities, realize the right to education.

Knowledge management/Innovation/Monitoring and evaluation

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of adolescent and youth programmes to learn lessons for future strengthening impact.
- Document qualitative aspects of the adolescent and youth programming through human interest stories, journeys of participants, case studies and peer-review journal articles.
- Consider turning key initiatives such as UPSHIFT and Ponder into open source Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) or e-learning modules for wider scale and diffusion.

CHAPTER FIVE: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN OF ALL AGE GROUPS

Introduction

In addition to age and sector specific issues, there are a number of challenges which cut across the life cycle and need to be better understood and addressed. These include child protection, social protection, children with disability and knowledge generation to inform policy making and targeted interventions.

Child protection

All children have the right to protection. They have the right to survive, to be safe, to belong, to be heard, to receive adequate care and to grow up in a protective environment. The family is the first line of protection for children, with parents or other caregivers responsible for building a protective and loving home environment. Schools and communities are also responsible for building a safe and child-friendly environment outside the child's home. In the family, school and community, children must be fully protected so they can survive, grow, learn and develop to their fullest potential.[208] This imperative is reflected in SDG Target 16.2, to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children."

The challenge

While much has been done to ensure the protection of children in Kosovo, a number of issues remain. The latest data show a 23.0 per cent rate of child poverty[209], 10.7 per cent of children involved in work - including in hazardous conditions - and 61.4 per cent of children up to age 14 having suffered from psychological and physical violence. Only 10 per cent of children with disabilities benefit from health, education and social services. Reports from governmental and non-governmental institutions speak about children increasingly involved in behaviours that are in violation of the law, including violence.[210]

[208] From the global website of *Facts for Life,* section on Child Protection, captured on 24 June 2019.
[209] World Bank/KAS, Consumption Poverty in Kosovo, May 2019
[210] *Kosovo 2017 Child Protection Index 2.0*, KOMF, Child Pact and World Vision, Pristina, December 2017.

The situation

The process of aligning legislation and policies with global standards is continuing. In June 2019, the draft Law on Child Protection was approved by the Kosovo Assembly. The Law consolidates a series of 14 laws that regulate actors and set policies for children[211] and provides an opportunity to strengthen the child protection system at central and local levels. It can further contribute to making institutions more responsive to issues affecting children, including the integration of quality services delivery into existing local government systems.[212] However, there is a major gap in all areas of governance between laws and policies and implementation. What is required for success is an adequate budget and institutional ownership.[213] The law will become operational in one year to allow relevant stakeholders to prepare for implementation.

There were barriers to full birth registration of all children, particularly in rural areas, but over the past five years significant improvements among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities appear to have been achieved.[214] Around 88 per cent of children in Kosovo were reported as **registered at birth**, with 74 per cent possessing a birth certificate. The birth registration rate among children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities was reported at 93 per cent, with 80 per cent of children possessing birth certificates.[215] Nevertheless, birth registration rates are still amongst the lowest in the Europe and Central Asia region and, since birth registration is a prerequisite for being counted as a household member for purposes of social assistance, it is essential to take a more proactive approach to recording unregistered children expeditiously.

Efforts to prevent all forms of **violence against children** are insufficient. According to Kosovo Index 2.0, there is a wide discrepancy between Kosovo's development of services (0,611) and its capacity to implement them effectively (0,400). The government's actions to prevent all forms of violence against children are more evident in its law and policy (0,823) and coordination protocols (0,757). Accountability to beneficiaries, families and other stakeholders is low with a score of 0,474. The wide gap between Kosovo's laws and policy and the implementation of these commitments is evident in its score of 0.336.[216] The new Child Protection Law, passed in June 2019, explicitly prohibits corporal punishment in all settings. The Law also mandates activities to raise

[211] Ibid.
[212] *UNICEF Kosovo Contextual Analysis*, UNICEF, Pristina, December 2018.
[213] *EU Annual Progress Report on Kosovo*, 2018.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS, 2014), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-14 with general population and 2013-14 MICS with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities.
[216] Kosovo 2017 Child Protection Index 2.0 – KOMF, Child Pact and World Vision, Pristina, December 2017.

awareness about the negative effects of corporal punishment among teachers, other officials who work with children and parents.[217]

Respondents in MICS 2014 indicated 61 per cent of children aged 1-14 years old have been victims of at least one psychological or physical punishment from family members. Of that number, 24 per cent experienced physical punishment, while 6 per cent were victims of severe beatings (getting hit on the head, ear or face, or receiving severe repeated hits). However, based on police reports it would appear that the majority of victims never reported their attackers. Children interviewed in a 2016 study on social norms confirmed that boys are disciplined differently from girls with parents being more tolerant towards boys218. Children also perceived peer violence including bullying and fights as being a normal occurrence in school lives219.

More resources, including social workers, are needed to engage in preventative activities. Stronger efforts are required to increase awareness of the negative effects of violence against children among the general public, parents and school staff; personnel from educational institutions, social care centres, social service providers, police forces and the judicial system need to be trained to approach this topic with sensitivity and fight its negative effects. Inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination mechanisms should be activated to enable smooth and synchronised intervention from relevant actors.[220]

Child trafficking remains an issue of serious concern in Kosovo. Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Kosovo, and Kosovars abroad. Most internally trafficked victims are subjected to sexual exploitation. Many sex trafficking victims in Kosovo are girls, although Kosovo criminal groups also force women from Albania, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and other European countries into sex trafficking, which takes place in private homes and apartments, nightclubs and massage parlours. Marginalized Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are vulnerable to forced begging and sex trafficking. Children from Kosovo, Albania and other neighbouring countries are forced to beg within the country. Real or perceived Government corruption creates an environment that enables some trafficking crimes.[221]

[217] Kosovo Assembly, Child Protection Law, article 24.
[218] UNICEF Kosovo, Qualitative Research on Social Norms around Gender Based Violence and the Physical Punishment of children in Kosovo, Pristina, June 2016.
[219] See for example the article by Armen Mustafa in the Journal of Family, Counselling and Education entitled: Investigation of Violence against Children in Schools with Types and Related Variables, July 2018.
[220] *Child Pact* written submission to EU Enlargement Package 2019 on Child Protection and Children's Rights in the Western Balkans.
[221] *2019 Trafficking in Persons Report*, US State Department, Washington, June 2019.

Children involved in hazardous work are vulnerable to child rights violations including neglect, maltreatment, physical and emotional abuse, and in some case a lack of registration and access to education. Children are exposed to a number of risks to their health and their life from begging in low temperatures during late hours of the night. Based on the Child Protection Index, Kosovo scores 0,158 out of a possible score of 1.0 on its general actions to protect children working on the streets. This is by far the lowest score that Kosovo has reached among all other fields/categories measured by the Index 2.0. It means that as a country, Kosovo is barely addressing the issue and it is not undertaking any initiative and/or intervention at either the policy or service level to protect these children.[222]

Poverty pushes a high number of children to drop out of school and engage in **child labour** including that which is hazardous and exploitative. This continues to be an area of significant concern. According to MICS 2014, child labour affected around 10.7 per cent of all children in Kosovo, including the 6.6 per cent engaged in hazardous and exploitative forms of labour. Child labour among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian ethnic minorities amounted to 17 per cent. In addition to the draft Law on Child Protection the Government of Kosovo developed the following strategies which are still active:

- **Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities (2016–2020)**: Focuses on employment, social issues, health care and housing for the Ashkali and Roma communities. Aims to strengthen their realization of rights and full integration into society. A special educational component promotes inclusive education for the children of these communities.

- **Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2017–2021)**: Emphasizes the inclusion of vulnerable minorities in the education system, especially preschool children of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The KESP sets targets for inclusion and establishes regulations at the municipality level to facilitate preschool enrolment and raises awareness on school attendance and enrolment.

However, despite these efforts, the US Department of Labour classifies Kosovo as belonging in Tier 2 when it comes to child labour, implying that more needs to be done in order to ensure that child labour - especially the hazardous and exploitative kind - is brought to an end.[223] Unfortunately, the Labour Inspectorate continues to face financial and human resource constraints impeding its ability to conduct the necessary inspections.

[222] Press Release on Children Working on the Streets entitled: *Children working on the streets even in low temperatures, silence is the Institution's answer*, KOMF, March 2018.
[223] Ibid.

Furthermore, human trafficking shelters lack sufficient space to properly accommodate and treat child victims of trafficking.[224]

The Law on Social and Family Services regulates alternative care for children deprived of parental care; Kosovo no longer engages in institutional care. The alternative forms of protection for children without parental care are kinship care, foster care, residential care and adoption. Kosovo developed **foster care** as one alternative care service. However, the range of children in foster care is very limited, consisting mainly of abandoned babies and infants with a few older children, usually from sibling groups.

The state provides 250 Euros per month per child to a foster care family and 350 Euros per month for a child with disability in foster care. However, there is no structured categorization of payments for foster care based on age or the needs of children in terms of the type and/or scale of disability or vulnerability. Foster families do not realize any social or health benefits from their position but often use family resources to provide for their wards, which endangers the stability of the scheme. In addition, a large number of municipalities have not yet started with foster care. In general, flaws in monitoring and oversight, reimbursement of health costs and lack of recruitment have led to a failure to extend the foster care system.

Despite the positive policy intentions and the substantial amount of capacity-building carried out over many years, there is an unmet need for foster care as evidenced by the increased number of children suffering from abuse at the household level. It is recommended that Kosovo offer foster families social or health benefits to help defray costs. Another recommendation is to include foster care as a recognized profession within the tax and pension scheme. Given the financial savings attributed to foster care (foster care is five times cheaper than residential care), it is recommended that Kosovo invest strongly in foster care services, providing further training to foster parents alongside health and social entitlements.

In the area of **juvenile justice**, the Assembly of Kosovo endorsed the Juvenile Justice Code in October 2018 and revised other related legislation in compliance with EU and international standards. The Juvenile Justice Code will reduce the length of pre-trial detention from 12 months to a maximum of 6 months, protect children under the age of criminal responsibility, and introduce free legal aid and psychosocial services for the protection of child victims and witnesses. However, the main challenge of the justice system remains the translation of the existing laws into systems and services for children in conflict or in contact with the law.

[224] *2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Kosovo*, US Department of Labour, Washington, 2018.

Full implementation of this juvenile justice code is set to improve the protection of children and facilitate the integration of education and correctional services for children in contact or conflict with the law. The new Code has increased the number of available diversity measures for juveniles. Kosovo has strong implementation of alternative measures for convicted minors.[225] These alternative approaches are necessitated by the fact that between 2014 and 2017 there were 2,861 juvenile convictions including 2,766 boys and 95 girls.

Kosovo has laws against **child marriage**. The legal age of marriage is 18 but under certain conditions children aged 16 or 17 may also get married. Such early marriage requires a prior assessment by the Centre for Social Welfare of the readiness of the children for marriage including assessment of emotional maturity and economic capacity. Once this has been completed, and agreement of both children's parents and the children themselves secured, they can apply to the court for permission to legally enter into marriage.

Data from the MICS 2014 indicated that 10 per cent of women and 1 per cent of men aged 20-49 were married before age 18. The same source also indicated that 3.0 per cent of girls and 0.4 per cent of boys aged 15-19 are currently married or in a union.[226] Although a lack of reliable data makes it difficult to assess the extent,[227] child marriage remains prevalent among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The practice of paying dowries also continues despite legislation against it.[228] Since children from these ethnic groups tend to discontinue their education earlier than others, they are more vulnerable to early marriage;[229] conversely, early marriage can also contribute to discontinuation of education and increases girls' vulnerability to domestic violence.

[225] *EC Country Report 2019 for Kosovo*, page 29.
[226] The Kosovo Agency of Statistics, *2013-2014 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings*, 2014, Pristina.
[227] Data such as first marriage by age and sex; live births by mother's marital status; pregnancy rate; maternal mortality rate; abortion rate; maternal health complications; and stillbirths by mother's age are not routinely collected.
[228] *Child Marriage in Kosovo (Overview)*, UNFPA Pristina.
[229] Ibid.

The situation of children with disability

In many countries, children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized, excluded and often invisible groups in society. Facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes and lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are effectively barred from realizing their rights to health care, education and even survival.

Key achievements

The rights of all persons with disabilities are guaranteed by domestic legislation as well as by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as reflected in the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2023) .[230] The right to education, for example, is firmly entrenched in the Constitution of Kosovo and through the alignment of its legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNICEF prepared an analysis on the situation of children with disabilities in 2017, highlighting some of the key challenges facing CWD.

Key challenges

Despite, the conducive legal environment, there has been limited implementation and progress. Over time, enrolment in all levels of education in Kosovo have increased, yet the vast majority of children with disabilities do not enjoy this right and challenges remain in the form of limited access to appropriate education, health care and rehabilitation services and barrier free access to public facilities and services.

There is no common understanding of the concept of Inclusive Education and thus no agreement on the way forward; the concept is generally not applied to early childhood development and not taken into account when planning. Other common challenges in the area of education include lack of barrier free access, unavailability of proper toilets, difficulty in accessing the second floor in schools and limited availability of transportation.

[230] See for example, the *2018 Annual Report of the Ombudsman*.

Many health facilities in Kosovo do not have specialist equipment or staff trained to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities. The absence of early identification and prevention through timely intervention is largely absent. Most existing school health programs, parent education and local interventions have been carried out by NGOs, often with international donor funds without government support, quality control or ownership. Rehabilitation in Kosovo is provided by NGOs and generally only to a limited number of children and for a limited number of conditions. Many of the support services required for ensuring independent living are simply not available in Kosovo. At the root of lack of inclusion of children with disabilities are stigma and discrimination and insufficient allocation of resources to facilitate prioritization of inclusive education.

Why is this the case?

The legal framework governing the rights of people with disabilities is fragmented, scattered among many separate pieces of legislation, though the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is in the process of preparing a comprehensive law.[231] A lack of sufficient human and financial resources and supportive programming based on a clear understanding of the needs of children with disabilities has also reduced implementation capacity.

At the time of writing there was no wide-ranging data available on the nature and extent of disability in Kosovo, making it difficult to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities will be met. What data is available is difficult to utilize for decision-making; multiple definitions in use by the many stakeholders and institutions engaged in the area make clear understanding impossible.[232] However, the upcoming MICS survey has a module on disability which should provide important information and data to facilitate planning and programming in the area. This should also be reinforced by information and data from the Census planned for 2021. However, according to recent statistics published by MEST, the total number of students with a certified disability is 5'294, of which 41% of are female and 59% male[233]. Children with disabilities are estimated to be roughly 2.1% of students in school but are estimated to be between 10 and 15% of the population based on global estimates for the prevalence of disability[234]. This gives a rough idea of the extent to which they are excluded. This challenge may be multiplied if they come from poor households particularly living in a remote area or belong to Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities.

[231] Ibid.
[232] *UNICEF Analysis on the Situation of Children with Disabilities in Kosovo*, 2017.
[233] Kosovo Employment and Education Network, Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan in 2017, Pristina, December 2017.
[234] See for example, WHO, World Disability Report, Geneva, 2011.

Children with disabilities from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are particularly vulnerable. When children with disabilities do come to be assessed, a **medical model** is often relied upon, perpetuating the idea that they have problems that need to be fixed by health professionals, rather than addressing how each child can be supported to overcome barriers in society that limit them or how society should adjust to facilitate their lives so they too can enjoy the rights which every child is entitled to. As a result, many disabilities only become evident once children are already in school. Existing practices do not lead to the personalized plans necessary to efficiently and effectively address the needs and rights of these children. Children with disabilities in Kosovo are at high risk of abuse or neglect and most children or their families are unaware of their rights under the law, how to protect themselves or where to report violations.[235]

The existence of social norms which tend to stigmatize people with disabilities makes the decision to want to go to school a tough one for parents and children. Once at school, despite the ongoing construction of new disability friendly educational facilities, a significant backlog of facilities without proper toilets, labs on the second floor and a lack of ramps remain as obstacles to achieving the right to education of children with disabilities. Making matters worse is the shortage of transport for such children and the lack of specialized equipment and trained special assistants and teachers to meet the needs and secure the rights of these children. Children with disabilities need to be in school and have their abilities recognized and developed. This is where they will be able to exercise their right to education and ultimately utilize their capacities for their own benefit as well as that of society.

The Government should ensure that the Strategy on the Rights of People with disabilities is backed with adequate resources for hiring and training of more teachers and assistants while providing additional support for specialized equipment and facilities, both in schools and health centres and ultimately facilitating the entry of those with disabilities into the labour market. In doing so there should be a clear recognition that attending school is their right, an institutional obligation and not a favour or a charitable act.

[235] Ibid.

Social protection

Social protection is concerned with preventing, managing and overcoming situations that adversely affect a person's wellbeing.[236] It consists of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability through enhancing individuals' capacity to manage economic and social risks such as unemployment, exclusion, illness, disability and old age. Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe with a poverty rate of 18 per cent and extreme poverty rate of 5.1 per cent, according to the most recently available data.[237] The poor are overrepresented in households headed by women, in rural areas, in those which the head has not completed secondary education, and in those with more children. Children have higher rates of poverty at 23.0 per cent but households with 3 or more children have a poverty rate of 26.3 per cent and extreme poverty rate of 8.0 per cent.[238] Poverty is linked to deprivation in terms of health, development and education outcomes. According to MICS data, children living in poorer households are more than twice less likely to reach their first and fifth birthday compared to those in the richest 40 per cent of households.

Children living in poorer households are also much less likely (by around 30 percentage points) to receive the minimum acceptable diet and minimum dietary diversity and around 9 times more likely to experience stunting.[239] Stunting is linked not only malnutrition but also other factors such as a lack of drinking water, sanitation and health. For instance, according to Multiple Overlapping Deprivations Analysis (MODA), children who are stunted are 4 times more likely to be deprived in health than children who are not stunted.[240]

Contrary to expectations, poverty is not highest among the unemployed, but among those in occasional employment and low productivity jobs as well as among persons with disability.[241] The Social Assistance Scheme (SAS) is the main social assistance program in Kosovo, absorbing around 88 per cent of the budget for social assistance in 2017. The SAS is the sole program targeted at poverty reduction in Kosovo and, importantly, the only program in which household income and assets are used to identify beneficiaries. In the absence of SAS, the overall poverty gap would have been 1.8 percentage points higher in 2016, and the poverty rate would have been 1.5 percentage points higher.

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[236] Definition from United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
[237] *Consumption Poverty in the Kosovo 2012-2015*, World Bank and KAS, April 2017.
[238] Ibid.
[239] *The Effects of Social Assistance on Children*, UNICEF, May 2017.
[240] *Multiples Overlapping Deprivations Analysis*, 2015.
[241] *Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme Study*, World Bank, Washington, March 2019.

SAS is considered a cost-effective program; its cost-benefit ratio of 0.6 in 2016 is the highest when compared to other benefits in Kosovo, and average when compared to last resort income support programs in other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.[242] While overall spending on social assistance has increased over the past decade, the relative spending on SAS has declined. Spending rose most for pensions for the elderly and war veterans. At the same time, between 2009 and 2016, spending on SAS fell by 12.3 per cent in real terms, from 19 per cent of total social protection spending to 8.13 per cent or from 0.69 to 0.48 per cent of GDP. In parallel, the number of beneficiaries declined from over 40,000 households in 2005 to 26,000 in 2017.

Decreases in spending on targeted social assistance in Kosovo goes against a worldwide trend.[243] A significant proportion of the poor fall through this safety net due to strict eligibility criteria. The share of spending on SAS, which is the only cash transfer with the specific objective of poverty reduction, is small and declining over time.[244] Another significant weakness is the lack of regular and automatic price indexation of SA benefits and the eligibility criterion of having a child under age 5 for Category 2 benefits. Significant reforms to broaden SAS coverage are being discussed.

Among others, it is proposed that MLSW and the Government of Kosovo should consider universal child benefits or means-tested child benefits that can be easily administered (e.g. based on parental income). It is readily apparent that reforms should target children, since they form the major part of the population whose needs are not yet directly addressed in social programs. Unlike pensioners and war veterans, for example, who enjoy large-scale funding for categorical non-contributory benefits, there are no major specific programs targeted to children.[245] Social services in Kosovo were decentralized in 2009 when the mandate of social services was delegated as a function from the MLSW to municipalities.

This mandate delegation included the actual staffing and the actual budget. Decentralization has had a direct impact on social services financing, with social services receiving non-earmarked and inadequate financing over the past decade, a major drawback in improving the quality and increasing the coverage of service delivery.

[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] *A Future for our children: mapping social protection in Kosovo*, Dr Enkeleida Tahiraj, February 2016.

Availability of data on children's rights[246]

In order to track progress towards child rights and the SDGs while addressing inequalities and gaps in achievement, it is necessary to have reliable and timely data and information disaggregated by wealth status, sex, rural and urban areas and municipalities. Using such data one can engage in advocacy on behalf of those left behind and in evidence-based planning and programming. As per the Law on Official Statistics, the Kosovo Agency for Statistics (KAS) has the overall responsibility for collecting, analysing and disseminating national data for statistical purposes. [247] This role is complemented by otherline ministries.

Key challenges facing Kosovo include poor data quality due to lack of standardization of definitions and methodologies, limited availability of disaggregated data, lack of completeness, poor coordination, absence of a central repository for child rights monitoring and insufficient human and financial resources at KAS. Given the importance of data in the process of development, it is essential that these issues be addressed expeditiously. The demand for reliable data has increased tremendously with the arrival of the SDGs in Kosovo. The Kosovo Assembly adopted an SDG resolution at the beginning of 2018, followed by the establishment of an SDG Council to monitor SDG implementation. The Strategic Planning Office in the Office of the Prime Minister has been working to align important strategic documents including the National Development Strategy and the Strategy and National Action Plan on Child Rights with the SDGs.

It should be noted at the outset that there are several data gaps including maternal mortality, the nature and extent of disability and many others noted throughout the document relating to the SDGs and other global compacts notably CRC, CEDAW and CRDP which are integrated into Kosovo's legal and policy frameworks. At present, there is no centralized data collection system in place for child rights and therefore data are scattered and currently being collected on an ad-hoc basis from different actors. During 2018, the UN Team in Kosovo undertook an SDG data mapping exercise which indicated that only 33 per cent of global SDG indicators are monitorable on the basis of administrative data and survey data in Kosovo. For the 16 relevant goals there are 248 indicators. Of these, 33 per cent have "the exact or relevant data available; 37 per cent have no data available; and 33 per cent are not relevant for the Kosovo context. Of the available data, 51 per cent comes from surveys including MICS 5 and 6 (underway at the time of writing), 33 per cent from sources such as the World Bank and ISDR while only 16 per cent come from administrative data. Of all the data, only 51 per cent have at least one disaggregation."[248]

[246] Much of the data and information in this section originates from interviews with key informants in Government and UN Agencies.
[247] Kosovo Assembly, *Law on Official Statistics of the Kosovo*.
[248] This data was collected using the Rapid Integrated Assessment tool.

The lack of age specific population projections at municipal level and disaggregation of data for child populations hinder the monitoring of progress towards children's rights at the local level. Validation and quality of data remain the biggest challenge. Lack of sectoral collaboration and use of different definitions hinders the harmonization and quality of data collection and reporting processes. Line ministries also collect data on social welfare, youth issues and juvenile justice. However, responsibilities for child protection are scattered amongst many, with only limited coordination between them. To respond to these challenges, the Office of Good Governance, KAS and other relevant ministries and actors, supported by UNICEF, worked jointly on the development of the indicators framework on education; health; juvenile justice (already endorsed) and currently working on the framework for child protection indicators with the understanding that eventually a centralized database hosted by KAS could be established to consolidate available information and provide quality assurance. This would also facilitate harmonization of data collected and feed into the national reporting system for child rights initiated by the Office of Good Governance.

In the education sector, MEST operates an Education Management Information System which electronically gathers and publishes information on infrastructure, staff and students from schools and preschools in Kosovo. Although EMIS is amongst the most structured management information systems in Kosovo, it does not provide data at the level of the student or generate and report on availability of school supplies and facilities or provisions being made at the school level for children with disabilities. Two new modules on early warning for children at risk of dropping out and on violence in schools have recently been introduced. However, despite clear guidelines, reporting is erratic. There is a need for enforcing the rules in order to ensure completeness of data. While EMIS doesn't capture data on Serbian school children, KAS does and this helps strengthen the Education Statistics Report which they publish jointly with MEST. KAS has recognized that ministries require further support to be able to provide adequately disaggregated data. Therefore, in 2015 KAS and MEST signed a Memorandum of Understanding for utilization of the EMIS data which has resulted in joint publication of education statistics. There are, however, serious concerns about the reliability of administrative data. Furthermore, much of the available data is not disaggregated by location, social group or age group making it difficult for evidence-based decision making to take place.

The National Institute of Public Health collects, collates and integrates routine data on the access to, utilization and quality of health and nutrition services in order to monitor progress and challenges on the road towards universal health care. It also undertakes assessments, evaluations, research and surveys to facilitate implementing improvements in the system. The Ministry of Health operates a health information system which, despite significant funding, is not fully functional. The Ministry has also been developing some of its own systems including a health survey to be undertaken this year.

Quality and completeness remain issues to be dealt with and there is a lack of information on maternal death including causes. Overall human and financial capacity in KAS is low. There is no statistics department in academia which could provide a steady flow of skilled statisticians, so several international agencies and civil society organizations support KAS and other Kosovo institutions in this area.

At the same time, CSOs such as Handikos monitor and collect data on the situation of children with disabilities, while the NGO Monitor monitors the repatriation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian individuals and families, including children, and publish their findings and reports independently. In this respect MICS 2014 provided disaggregated data for 44 per cent of child relevant SDG indicators. MICS 2019 is expected to increase this to around 80 per cent. MICS additionally provides an opportunity to further strengthen the capacities of KAS and other institutions to implement large scale surveys, collect and analysis complex data based on a rigorous methodology; this round of MICS will increase KAS capacities to collect data using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. The census planned for 2020 will provide a further progress report on key social indicators.

Recommendations

Influencing Policy direction

- The Office of Good Governance and KAS should develop an indicator framework for consolidating, systematically monitoring and reporting on key indicators in child protection and other child relevant programmes at the national level.
- Initiate a national dialogue on violence against children including young children in the home and in the classroom.
- Ministry of Labour sand Social Welfare should strongly support the establishment of social services that aim to address vulnerabilities of families, specifically children and adolescents.
- Institutions should increase financial support to day care rehabilitation centres and make more efforts to effectively integrate children with disabilities into educational institutions.[249]
- The Office of Good Governance in the Prime Minister's Office is working on an overall strategy that would address education, health care, accessibility and social services for individuals with disability. The Government should ensure that this strategy is backed with adequate resources for hiring and training of more teachers and assistants while providing additional support for specialized equipment and facilities and ultimately facilitating the entry of those with disabilities into the labour market.
- Currently, the medical model dominates perceptions of disability; that is, thinking of disability as a problem for the person who has it. Instead, the social model should be adopted, focusing on how it is the imperative of government and society to accommodate those who are disabled, increasing accessibility and, ultimately, consolidating social and equitable rights for the disabled.
- Provide support for integration of a child rights and poverty reduction focus into the next National Development Strategy.
- Reorient social assistance schemes to focus more strongly on poverty reduction through methods such as a Universal Child Benefit.

Demonstration and testing of programmes at the Municipal level

- Additional training and support should be provided for the early identification and prevention of disability using the ICF methodology.

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[249] *EU Annual Progress Report on Kosovo*, 2018.

- In municipalities lagging behind take birth registration to scale.
- Strengthen capacity at the municipal level to address issues of violence against children and women.
- In a limited number of municipalities, test models for cost-effective methods of implementing inclusive education.
- Create sustainable earmarked financing for social services at the local level.

Scaling up

- Partnership to leverage resources for SDG data generation, and utilization (demand, evidence-based planning and monitoring – including capacity development for KAS, line ministries Ombudsperson, civil society) with WB, EU, SIDA, USAID, UN agencies, Kosovo institutions and line ministries.
- Support partnerships for leveraging Government and donor resources to KAS for calculation of child-population estimates at municipal level (joint request of line ministries and other relevant institutions to KAS).

Knowledge management/Innovation/Monitoring and evaluation

- Conduct local operational research and evidence generation activities to support translation of policies into action and understand their impact at the local level.
- Active participation in the UN Common Analysis and UNDAF 2021-2025 to ensure that children's voices and issues are reflected.
- Undertake further analysis of MICS 2019 when it becomes available to generate more detailed information and analysis.
- Gather the views of specific groups including young people, on how best to address their concerns.
- Undertake analysis of Governments budgets at national and municipal levels to understand how resources are being allocated in support of the rights of children and women.
- Strengthen coordination for harmonization of definitions, methodologies and reporting for child rights indicators at national level.
- Increase the availability of data for SDG related indicators and coordinate with the Strategic Planning Office to facilitate the use of the available data for planning and drafting of policies and progress monitoring.

CHAPTER SIX: PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

The full and equitable achievement of child rights in Kosovo will not be possible without a thorough analysis of the impact of business on the lives of children. Traditionally, UNICEF has focused on collaboration with Government, other UN agencies, Development Partners and NGOs in this quest. However, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, progress towards SDGs requires – in addition to strengthening public policies, regulatory frameworks and aid – unlocking the transformative potential of the private sector, and incentivizing changes in financing as well as consumption and production patterns to achieve sustainable development and realize the rights of children.

The private sector intersects with and impacts the lives of children, both directly and indirectly, as consumers, family members of employees, young workers, future employees and business leaders. Children are also part of the communities and environments in which businesses operate. Through products and services, supply chains, manufacturing methods, marketing methods and distribution practices, as well as through the environmental impact and investments in local communities, the footprint businesses leave on the lives of children can either be beneficial or harmful.[250]

Despite poverty remaining a harsh reality for many in Kosovo, the private sector can play an important role in addressing key deprivations affecting children and their families. Despite the small size of the economy and the existence of a fragmented business landscape (mostly composed of small and micro enterprises), fast economic growth, steady levels of remittances and a focus on innovation and information technology provide opportunities to leverage the role, influence and resources of the private sector for the achievement of UNICEF's plan. In addition, the private sector is involved in the delivery of essential social services, such as early childhood education and health, with the private sector accounting for 40 per cent of total health expenditure.[251] There is also the potential to complement the currently low public expenditure in social sectors and low implementation capacity at the local level. The private sector has played an important role in all successful economies, with the business part known for its investments in innovation and advanced technology as well as its potentially wide reach, wealth generation and influence on Government.[252]

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[250] *Working with Business to Deliver Results for Children – Draft Situation Analysis Template*, UNICEF NYHQ 2019.
[251] World Bank Group, East and Central Asia Region, *Kosovo, Systematic Country Diagnosis*, January 2017.
[252] See for example: *New Business: The Private Sector as a new Global Development Player*, Dan Brink and Jason Miklain in Global Policy, November 2017.

With the IT sector set to be the main driver for economic growth, employment and innovation and high degree of mobile phone and computer ownership, engaging this sector is a key enabler for the achievement of all UNICEF programmatic goals. Considerable direct foreign investment is related to the energy sector. For instance, there are two coal-fired power plants in Kosovo (Kosovo A and Kosovo B) with a new one being built by General Electric to replace Kosovo A, one of the worst polluting power plants in all of Europe.[253] Engaging General Electric or related businesses will be crucial to mitigate the impact of ambient air pollution and related diseases affecting children; this engagement can also create incentives for a transition to renewable and clean energy sources.

The EU integration process is set to align regulatory frameworks to child-related standards for products, processes and labour and remains a powerful tool to frame the dialogue with institutions, businesses, consumers and stakeholders across all sectors instrumental to the achievement of child rights.

Figure 12: *PEST Analysis*

Political		
Situation	**Opportunities**	**Risks**
Democratic multiparty system with three elections since 2008	Opportunity to advocate for child rights with political parties	Political and economic uncertainty compromises access to and quality of social services
Evolving legal and policy environment not matched by implementation capacity	Shift focus from enabling environments towards financing, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of health and education at local level	Growth in frustration and potential alienation of youth leading to anti-social behaviours and violence
Volatile domestic political environment	Build consensus on strategic issues that unite, such as investment in young people and opportunities from Demographic Dividend	Spill over into protests that further erode social cohesion
Real or perceived corruption as reflected in EU Progress and Ease of Doing Business Reports is a major challenge	Cost the impact of corruption on social services to raise awareness amongst in public opinion	• Corruption limits availability of resources for the social sectors • Lack of action acts as constraint to foreign and domestic investment

[253] Reuters: Business News.

Low level of trust in institutions and between ethnic groups	Major opportunity to promote peace-building in support of nation building	Growth in frustration and alienation of societal groups leads to anti-social behaviour and violence
Not yet a member of UN and EU	Leverage EU accession process to align relevant regulations to child-related standards	Non-membership of the EU and UN limits the potential for economic growth and social investments
Economic		
Situation	**Opportunities**	**Risks**
Recent growth around 4 per cent per annum is the fastest in the Western Balkans but does not create enough jobs	Promote ECD policies, regulations and standards that facilitate women's participation in job market and optimize present and future labour force	Continued failure to generate decent work and reduce unemployment leads to lost opportunities and frustration while increasing migration and loss of high-quality human capital
Significant negative trade imbalances – highest as per cent of GDP in the Western Balkans	Continue to improve the ease of doing business and direct investment to potential export or import substitution areas	If remittances, ODA and investment slow down significantly balance of payments problems could lead to reduced fiscal space
High inflow of remittances greater than ODA and FDI combined	Ensure part of remittances focus on or contribute to social services and alleviate poverty	Decrease in remittances can have disrupting impact on budget, balance of payments and increase poverty levels
Low levels of labour force participation particularly among women and high rates of unemployment combined with low wage rates reduce market demand	Ensuring that strategies for private sector and export expansion include increased participation of women and contribute to economic growth and children's wellbeing	Low labour force participation along with low wages and low levels of social assistance slows down growth, increases levels of poverty and decreases access to social services
Underdeveloped infrastructures, notably for the energy sector	Raise awareness of impact of carbon-based energy sources on health and children and promote transition to clean/renewable energy sources	High cost of energy, air pollution and increased health risks/costs will disincentive private investment

Relatively small and fragile economy dominated by micro enterprises and vulnerable to domestic and external risk such as slowdown in EU access talks and Pristina-Belgrade dialogue	Use small and micro enterprises as entry points/channels for child friendly messaging and behaviour changes	Growth in the informal sector may supplement family income but also increases pressure on children to drop out of school for work
Social		
Situation	**Opportunities**	**Risks**
Low levels of Government expenditure on social sectors – with high proportion at central level and for wages and salaries	Targeted increases in investment in areas with high rate of return could boost social wellbeing and economic growth	Low investment in the social sectors compromises quality and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality
Relatively poor education outcomes leading to mismatch between supply and demand for labour	Reform the education sector to generate a more effective, inclusive and efficient system. Embed 21st century skills in curricula	Continuation of this trend could lead to more imported labour coexisting with a large unemployed work force
Limited capacity for implementation at local level in social and economic sectors	Significant scope for private sector CSR investments to complement Government action	Growing disconnect between urban/rural areas leading to additional migration and increased inequality
Significant inequalities in access to basic services particularly but not only affecting ethnic minority groups	Investing in programmes to reduce such inequalities would be doing the right thing and bring economic and social benefits	Continued lack of social cohesion and a missed opportunity for capturing at least part of the demographic dividend
Relatively high levels of income poverty including child poverty	Improve effectiveness and efficiency of social assistance; extend access using innovative means and expertise from private sector	Poverty, lack of opportunity and inequality, drive the desire for out migration among youth
Social norms prevent women's full participation in the labour force	Invest in communication for development programming to facilitate behaviour change	Gender based violence and limited empowerment of women has a strong negative impact on children

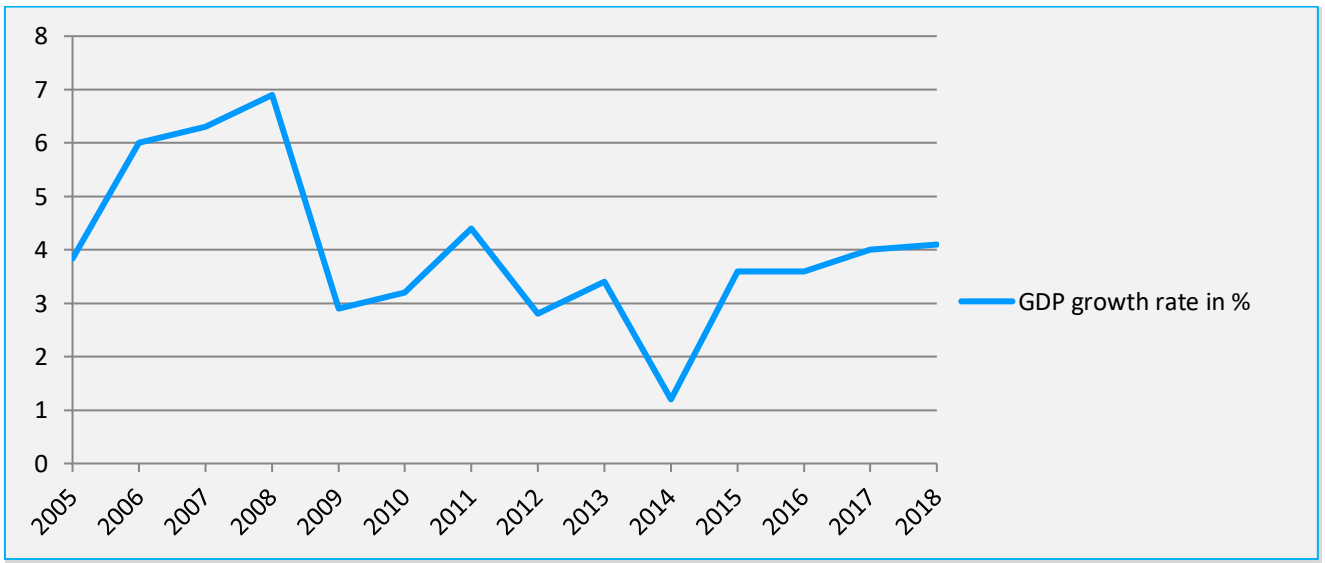
Technological		
Situation	**Opportunities**	**Risks**
Kosovo IT strategy developed in 2016; IT expected to be main driver for economic growth, employment and innovation by 2020	Opportunity to develop a new generation of IT savvy youth, with special focus on girls, and create employment-oriented programmes	Missed opportunity for harnessing the vitality of youth in socially meaningful activities
High degree of mobile phone and computer ownership; high rates of internet usage; significant proportion of public services are online	Opportunity to work with the IT industry to raise the digital IQ of young users	Children ill equipped to counter harmful side effects and maximize technology opportunities, exposing them to risks like cyber bullying, video game addiction, online grooming and sexual behaviour
Relatively sophisticated software/information technologies being used	Use of computer assisted learning in the classroom, telemedicine and distance learning	Relatively low-cost opportunity to improve quality and efficiency of services missed
Outdated energy technologies result in significant health costs	Opportunity to further the adaptation and adoption of renewable energy	Pulmonary disease and mortality among children and youths from ambient air pollution

- *See for example Artificial Intelligence and Child Rights, UNICEF Innovation and Human Rights Centre, UC Berkeley, May 2019.*
- *See for example, Chronic Coal Pollution Report: EU Action on the Balkans will improve health and economies across Europe, Europe Beyond Coal, February 2019.*

Mapping of the private sector stakeholders in Kosovo

There is no comprehensive mapping of the private sector available for Kosovo. However, the average size of enterprises in Kosovo tends to be significantly smaller than in EU countries.[254] Over 90 per cent of Kosovo's formal firms are micro firms with 1–9 employees, and most start-ups are micro. Micro firms tend not to expand; among firms that start as micro enterprises, only four per cent grow beyond nine employees within five years.[255] Both large and micro firms in Kosovo employ the same per cent of the population. Micro firms provide 36 per cent of jobs while large firms (100 or more employees) account for 35 per cent of employment on average, though they represent only 0.5 per cent of firms. In other countries, large firms provide a higher proportion of all jobs because they are not only larger but proportionally more numerous.[256]

Figure 13: *The growth environment*

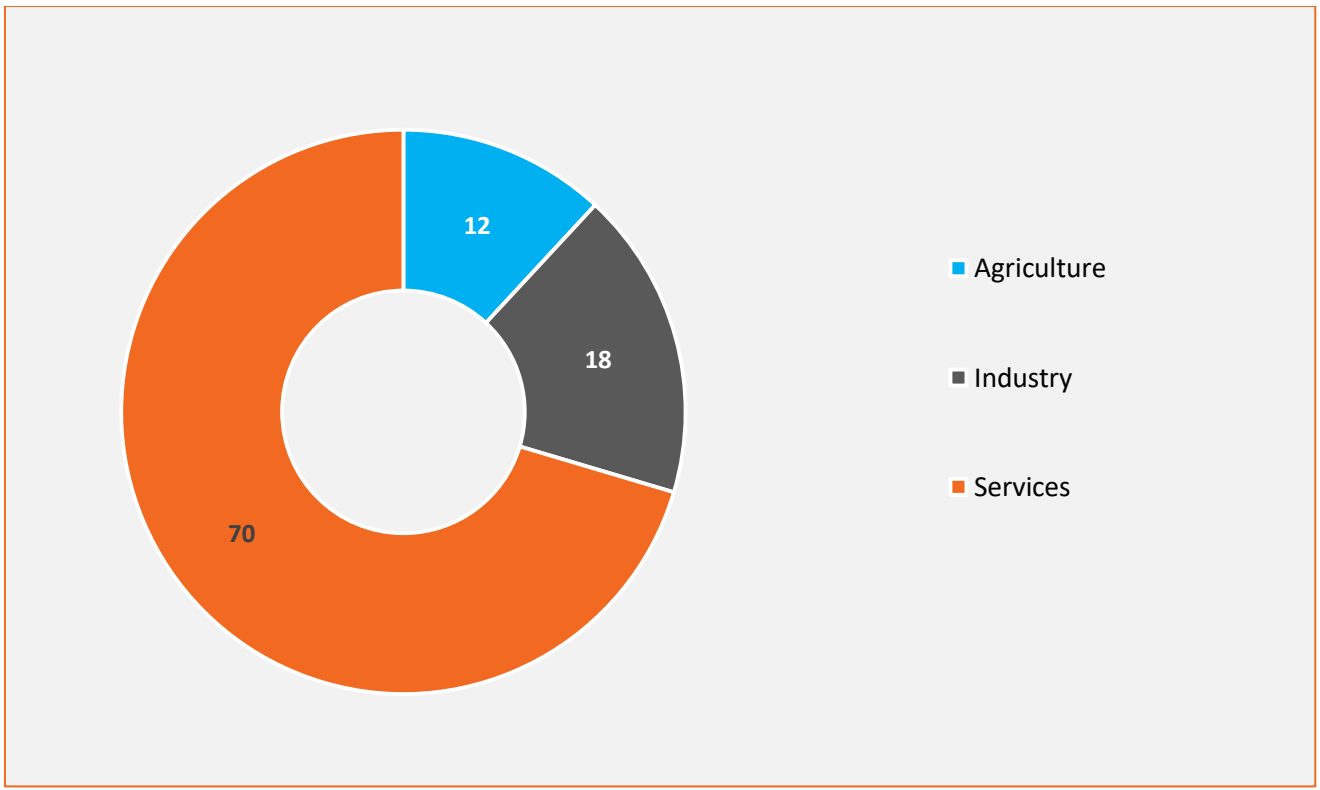


Source: Government of Kosovo - Private Sector Development Strategy (2018-2022)

[254] Ministry of Trade and Industry, *Private Sector Development Strategy 2018-2022*, 2018.
[255] *Jobs Diagnostic Kosovo*, Alexandru Cojocaru, World Bank Group, Washington D.C., 2017.
[256] Ibid.

While the current GDP growth model relies heavily on remittances and foreign aid, growth has remained positive in the post-independence period, reaching 4.2 per cent by 2018. This dependency, together with structural weaknesses of the Kosovo economy, puts pressure on competitiveness and productivity, limiting job creation and business expansion. The service sector contributes to 70 per cent of GDP, compared to 18 per cent for industry and 12 per cent for agriculture. Main areas of operation of the private sector include manufacturing, metal processing, food, ICT, plastic and plastic recycling and alternative energy.[257]

Figure 14: *Percentage of sectoral GDP contribution, 2017*

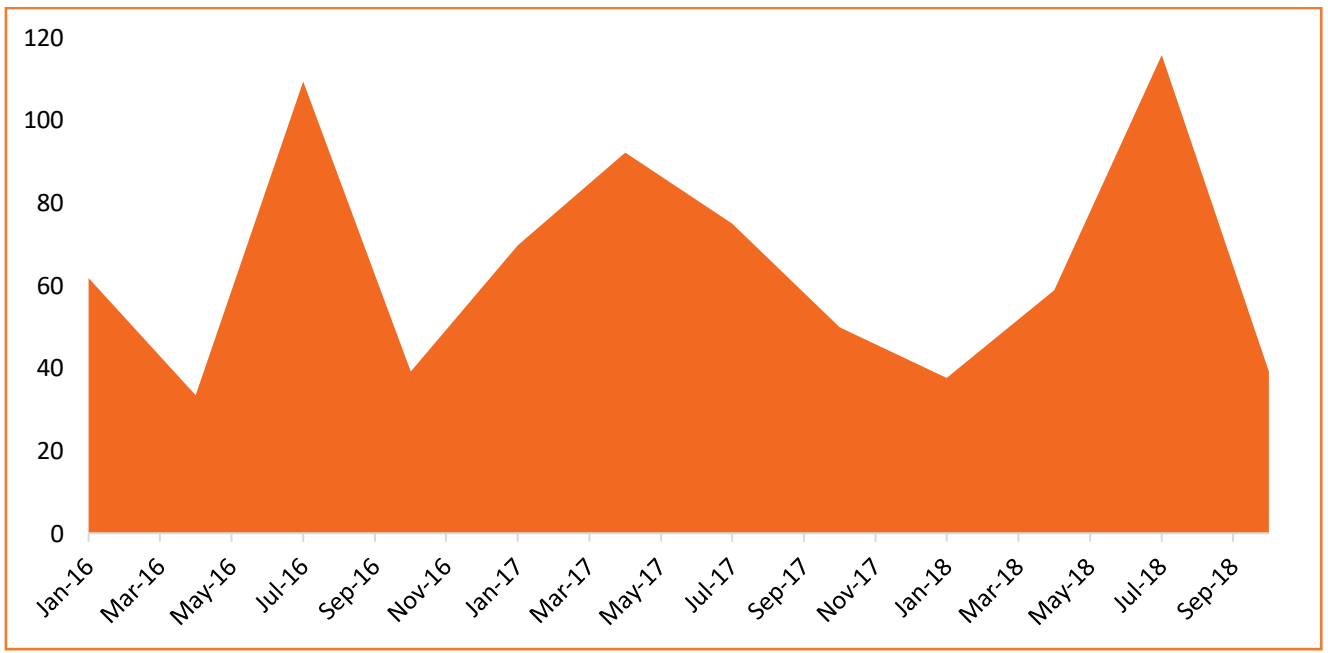


[257] Information provided in meeting with Kosovo Chamber of Commerce.

While the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is considered too low to have a meaningful development impact,[258] there is a general decreasing trend. FDI increased by 39.1 million USD in the last quarter 2018, compared with an increase of 115.8 million USD in the previous quarter.

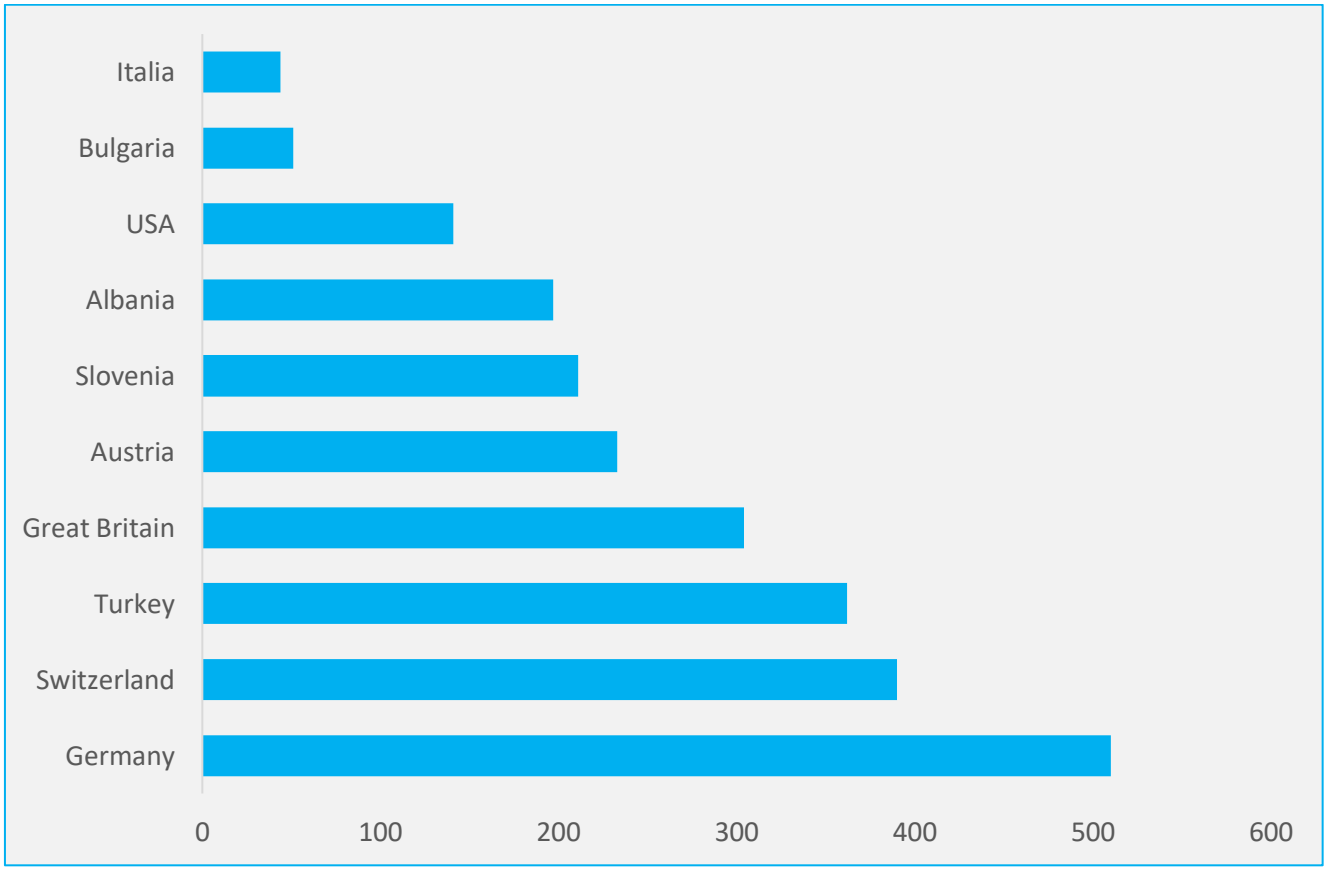
The largest share of FDI comes from Germany, followed by Switzerland, Turkey and Great Britain. These investments are largely focused on real estate and leasing and to a lesser extent on finance services, industries and construction. The largest share of Kosovo's FDI is projected to shift towards the energy sector, a national priority; the most important foreign investments concentrate on energy infrastructure. Preparation for the construction of a new coal-based power plant with an estimated cost of 1.3 billion USD is underway.

Figure 15: *Foreign Direct Investment in Kosovo: values in USD mn – quarterly*



[258] *Country Strategy for Kosovo*, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, October 2016.

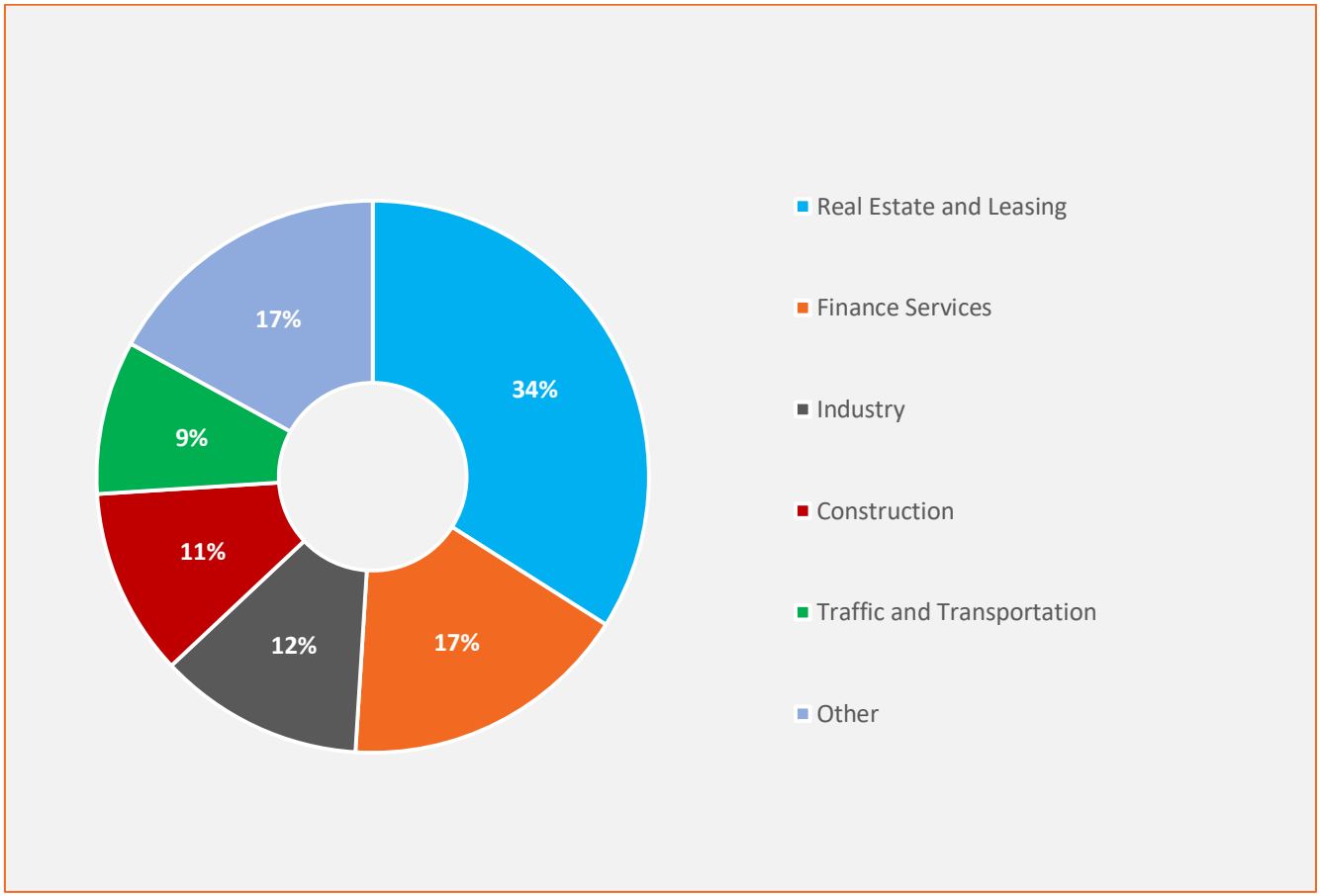
Figure 16: *Top 10 countries that have invested in Kosovo from 2007-2017*



Source: Private Sector Development Strategy 2018-2022, data from Central Bank of Kosovo

As one can observe from the table below, one third of FDI is concentrated in the area of real estate and leasing followed by financial services. The more employment intensive and energy-reliant sectors of industry (12 per cent) and construction (11 per cent) have lower amounts of investment.

Figure 17: *FDI distribution*



Source: Private Sector Development Strategy 2018-2022, data from Central Bank of Kosovo.

Enabling environment and business practices and their impact on children

In 2016, Kosovo ratified a strategic investment law intended to ease market access for investors in key sectors and partnered with international donors to launch the Credit Guarantee Fund, to improve access to credit. Kosovo is also a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and there is a Private Sector Development Strategy in place. Despite challenges, Kosovo's relatively young population, low labour costs and natural resources have attracted some foreign investment, with several international firms and franchises already present in the market. Additionally, a large diaspora in foreign labour markets provides a steady stream of remittances.

Kosovo's location on the Balkan Peninsula offers access to the Balkans and Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA) with a potential market of 28 million. A liberal trade regime offers duty free exports to EU markets for the majority of Kosovo's goods. Roughly 30 per cent of Kosovo's exports enter CEFTA and 40 per cent the EU. Goods exports enter CEFTA countries and the EU tariff-free, but services exports still face barriers. This situation is supported by gradually improving infrastructure and competitive labour markets and tax policies; Kosovo has a flat corporate tax of 10 per cent. Use of the Euro as a currency reduces exchange rate risk for investors and allows for lower transactions costs.

At the macro level, there has been significant improvement in the ease of doing business in Kosovo. In 2018 Kosovo ranked 44th out of 190 countries worldwide, up from 60th place in 2017.[259] This is an impressive improvement in the enabling environment for the private sector, above the Europe and Central Asia average as well as a number of regional comparator countries.[260] Out of 11 broad components assessed, Kosovo scored best in starting a business, trading across borders and getting credit. It also fared well in paying taxes. The country received lower marks in protecting minority investors, resolving insolvencies, accessing electricity and enforcing contracts.[261]

[259] World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2019: Training for Reform*.
[260] These include Croatia (58), Bulgaria (59), Albania (63), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (89).
[261] World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2019: Training for Reform*. The eleven areas assessed include: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvencies.

Despite stalled accession negotiations, the EU integration process is set to align regulatory frameworks to child-related standards for products, processes and labour. It remains a powerful tool to frame the dialogue with institutions, businesses, consumers and stakeholders across all sectors.

CSR in Kosovo

Despite being relatively small, the private sector has a strategic role to play and offers significant promise for enhanced engagement on behalf of children in line with the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While Kosovo does not have a regulatory framework with direct reference to CSR, a number of laws support it, including the Kosovo Constitution. The promotion of CSR as a specific concept by the Government remains limited[262] and the contribution of the private sector regarding social responsibility mostly symbolic. However, there is an increasing awareness among private businesses on CSR issues.[263]

A number of corporations in Kosovo undertake CSR activities on a voluntarily basis and/or are facilitated by the Chamber of Commerce. The Kosovo CSR Network is the first business network established in Kosovo for CSR. Although currently a relatively small organization, the Network seeks to grow and stimulate new businesses in promoting and adopting CSR practices countrywide. It is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization founded for the purpose of supporting overall economic development by enforcing CSR practices in society and by complying with the aforementioned Global Compact Principles.

There is already some engagement with the CSR sector in the area of child rights. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the CSR Network and UNICEF and mutual briefings have been held during which corporations present in Kosovo expressed an interest and willingness to engage in support of child rights.

[262] Bajraktari. I. M, 2015. The Feasibility of Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Welfare: The Case of Kosovo.
[263] Ibid.

Figure 18: *Opportunities and recommendations*

OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Strategic Engagement with Business	
Willingness of the private sector to engage in promotion and support of child rights	- Develop an overall strategy for private sector engagement identifying actions to be taken, expected results and indicators for measurement using the already identified opportunities as starting point - Start with a limited number of direct engagements and campaigns to ensure a steady build up and opportunities to learn from experience
The wide range of private companies on the ground provide opportunities to develop a diversity of 21st century skills-based programs tailored to labour needs	With the assistance of private sector companies consider converting the Innovation Labs into a skill-based program tailored to meeting labour market needs
Innovations for Programme Delivery	
Some companies have expressed a willingness to use staff volunteers in their branches to support child rights initiatives including in more remote areas	In consultation with a few identified companies develop and implement a portfolio of child rights initiatives using volunteers from the companies concerned
Available communication channels could be used for disseminating messaging supportive of women and children's rights both in Kosovo and abroad	Engage with identified companies to agree on the nature, content and logistics for developing and disseminating such public service messages
Experience gained in the area of dual education by German and Swiss Chambers of Commerce	Facilitate connecting schools with the private sector through promotion of a dual education system providing training and internship opportunities to equip young people with the needed labour market skills
Advocate with and through business	

Opportunity to engage diaspora and elevate private sector investment for children through them, by working with Chambers of Commerce from countries with a high concentration of Kosovars	Explore engagement modalities through German-Kosovar Business Association with Kosovar diaspora operating in Germany for strategic investments in children and young people of Kosovo
Resource mobilization	
IFC has unutilized funding available to loan to municipalities for social sector projects	Work with and provide complementary support to municipalities for developing proposals to take loans from IFC for high priority child rights issues
The World Bank has resources available to invest in ECD	Discuss further with World Bank to identify potential partners in the area of ECD and facilitate programming in this area
Influencing impact of business on children	
Opportunity to use data collection tools to understand the opinions and preferences of targeted audiences (parents, young people, private sector, diaspora) around potential investments and interventions in Kosovo	Using the data to plan potential interventions with private sector companies and structures to advance children's rights

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

Based on a careful review and analysis of the available data and reports, studies and evaluations in the bibliography and discussion with key informants from Kosovo Institutions, UN Agencies, Development Partners, Business Partners and NGOs, the following conclusions have been reached:

1) Despite its bitter legacy from the conflict and current challenges including issues of governance and regional instability, Kosovo has great economic and social potential. Translating that potential into a reality of improved quality of life and full and equitable achievement of human rights requires a cross-sectoral approach that prioritizes human development and harnesses the creative potential and energy of young people to drive the transformation towards a more prosperous and inclusive future.

2) National priorities and resource allocation have focused on growing the economy through improving competitiveness, increasing exports, building infrastructure and thereby addressing issues of unemployment. Despite maintaining fiscal balance and a growth rate above its peers in the Western Balkans, the growth pattern driven by public capital investments is vulnerable to internal and external shocks and has been accompanied by minimal job creation and export.

3) There is a relatively supportive policy environment for child rights unfolding and a growing recognition of the critical role that children and youth play in national development. However, that recognition is not yet reflected in the sufficient availability and efficient use of human and financial resources to address the most critical remaining bottlenecks to achievement of their rights. There is thus a need for institutional strengthening particularly at the municipal level to facilitate movement from legislation and policy to equity focused planning, implementation and monitoring.

4) Some of the principal objectives such as creation of institutions, passage of legislation, development of policies and strategies have been achieved. These are reflected in socio-economic gains such as mortality reduction, school enrolment and new social and economic infrastructure. It is now time to tackle the deeper and more difficult issues such as addressing social issues such as stigma and discrimination, improving quality and affordability of services notably in education and health care and doing so equitably.

5) Key actors central to economic and social development - notably women, young people, ethnic communities and children with disabilities - are absent from the development process and need to be incorporated in order to ensure success. They are assets that should be deployed in ways that benefit both themselves and society. This is a task that requires a major and coordinated effort from all actors in society, including the private sector.

6) Based on the interconnectedness of child rights, challenges have been observed at all stages of a child's life. These include poor quality of maternal and neonatal care particularly in more remote areas; low enrolment in preschool education; poor quality and limited relevance to the needs of the economy of primary, secondary and tertiary education; and limited access to adolescent and youth friendly health services. Shortages of essential human resources including doctors, nurses, psychologists and social workers serve to intensify the challenges.

7) Cross-cutting challenges affecting all stages of the cycle include a number of child protection issues that are insufficiently addressed such as child labour, violence against children, child trafficking and child marriage; social assistance schemes that are not focused on removing people from poverty or enhancing equality; weak social services; poor integration of and services for children with disabilities; and in the area of data for development, the key challenges are significant gaps; data quality; lack of completeness; poor coordination; absence of a central repository for child rights monitoring; and insufficient human and financial resources at KAS.

8) Poverty remains a harsh reality for many Kosovars with the proportion of children living in poverty estimated at around 23 per cent, including 7 per cent living in extreme poverty. Poverty status is linked to many negative effects including child labour, child marriage, lower access to services and poorer social outcomes. Poverty in Kosovo is concentrated in rural areas, among female headed households, among people with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities. There is a moral and legal obligation to move reduction of poverty and inequality higher on the national agenda.

9) Persistent gender inequality remains a critical challenge for Kosovo. Despite improvement in some areas, formal equality in legislation has not yet translated into transformative change in gender roles. These roles are perpetuated by patriarchal social norms and values and remain virtually unchallenged by legislation. This situation alone is a major impediment to national development and achievement of the rights of women and children. There is thus a need for culturally sensitive transformation in social norms to eliminate harmful practices, and to ensure respect for the rights of all women, adolescents and children.

10) Some of the longer-term root causes of the challenges that need to be addressed include longstanding and deeply held social beliefs, attitudes and norms, lack of private investment, lack of diversification and dynamism in the economy, insufficient investment in health, education and social protection, the volatile regional situation, climate change and insufficient investment in the key social sectors needed to drive development. At the underlying level these are seen in capacity gaps reflected in poor quality of services, gender discrimination, external dependence, poverty and inequality and external migration among young people.

Recommendations

on the way forward for children's programming

Influencing Policy direction

- There is a clear need for **increased allocation of public budgets** for child-relevant services, notably health, education and social protection, while taking measures to enhance efficiency the use of those resources to improve the enabling environment for child rights and national development.
- Strengthen the national effort to **improve education quality and outcomes** in order to develop a critical mass of knowledge, skills and critical thinking necessary to improve the quality of human capital and drive national economic and social development. In particular, focus on improving teacher skills, strengthening the use of computer aided and student-centred teaching and learning, and ensuring the curriculum is relevant to the needs of society.
- Ensure **inclusion of children with disabilities** in health, education and sports starting from preschool and including adequate specialized training of teachers, provision of rehabilitation facilities and accessible infrastructure. This includes disability friendly toilets and access to all school floors. Develop and implement guidelines for **early detection and interventions for reducing the burden of childhood disability using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)**.
- In order to address the ongoing challenge of poverty the Government should ensure that its social assistance programmes are reaching the most marginalized families, including those from female headed, poor and non-Serbian ethnic minority group households **to reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion.**
- Give greater priority and **focused attention to the issue of mental health** with particular attention to adolescents and young people.

Decentralization

- Municipalities and other implementers at subnational level should make more extensive use of tools and techniques such as **Communication for Development** to reach households with valuable, life-saving information and gain an enhanced understanding of the situation in households and communities.
- Strengthen the capacities of municipal authorities to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for children.

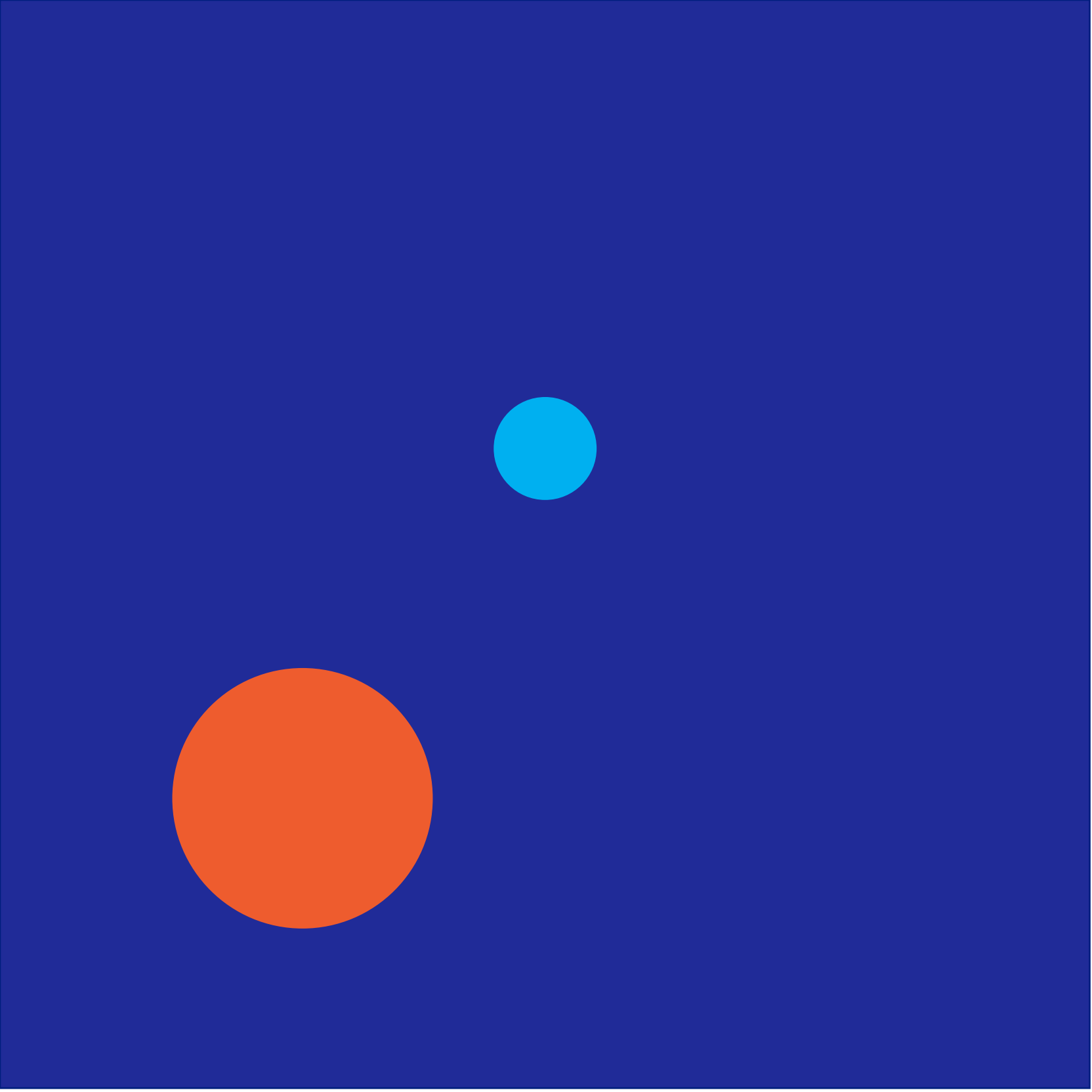
- Test and evaluate models for scaling up ECD, ECI and home visiting in a limited number of municipalities to facilitate replication and scaling up.

Scaling up solutions

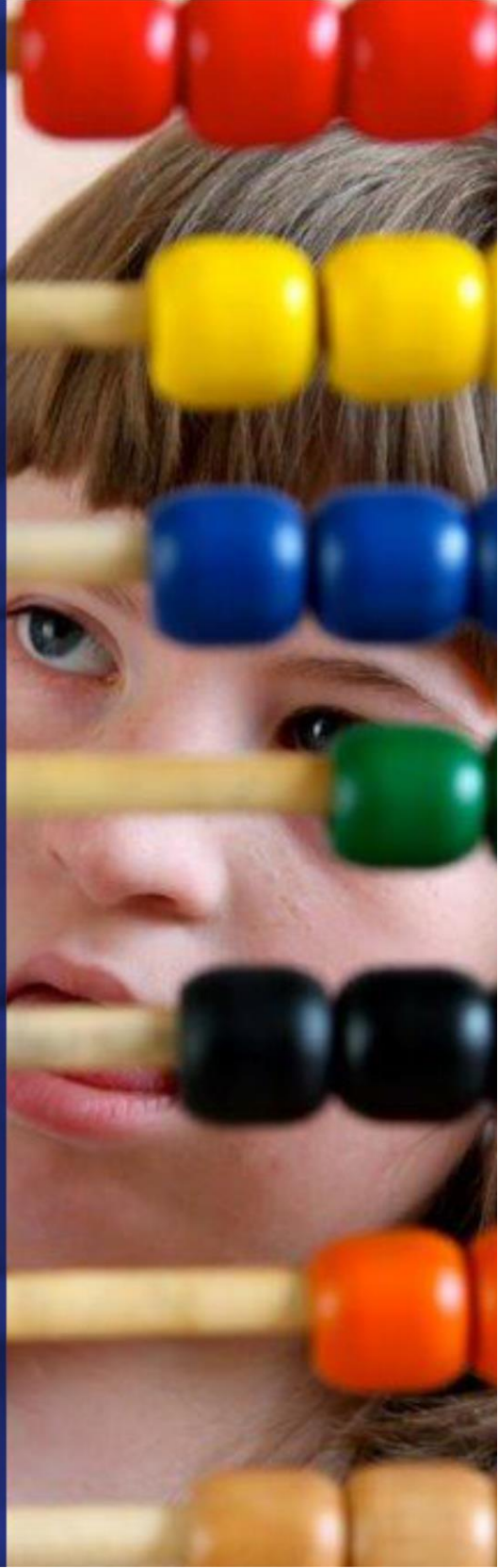
- Scale up the scope and coverage of the **home visiting programme** to ensure that poor and vulnerable households have improved access to affordable Primary Health Care including access to health information and good parenting practices.
- Build on recent progress in coverage of ECE enrolment towards **universal coverage** using a variety of models tested municipal level as the modalities for extension. In the process, implement a system for retraining and certifying teachers from schools that have closed due to demographic shifts.
- **Expand access to adolescent and youth friendly health services**. In particular, improve the quality, relevance and sympathetic nature of health services for adolescents and young people focusing on increasing availability of information and services in areas such as mental health, reproductive health and the promotion of optimal health and nutrition behaviours.
- Given the importance of good nutrition to educational performance, develop and extend a national **school feeding programme** starting with poorer and more remote rural areas to complement efforts at the household level.

Knowledge management/Innovation/Monitoring and evaluation

- **Harness the power of business and markets** for children, adolescents and young people to advance realization of child rights and to strengthen the momentum towards investing in sustainable human development before the opportunity for accessing the demographic dividend passes.
- **In order to facilitate the use of evidence and data to inform policies and programmes KAS should continue its work with partners** to close existing data and information gaps. Of particular importance in this regard is the need to generate population estimates at municipal level by single age and the development of a central repository to facilitate monitoring of child rights and the use of data to inform policies and strategies.
- **Reorient youth empowerment programming** to make it more inclusive and focusing more strongly on entrepreneurship and employment relevant skills and attitudes with a special focus on those NEETs, to facilitate better engagement with the labour market.



ANNEXES



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ANNEX TWO: List of Informants Consulted

Meeting of Situation Analysis Reference Group

- Avni Kastrati, Kosovo Agency of Statistics
- Donjeta Kelmendi, Executive Director, Coalition of NGO's for Child Protection (KOMF)
- Edona Hajrullahu, Ombudsman Institution
- Lorik Pustina, United Nation Kosovo Team (UNKT)
- Linda Tahiri, Executive Director, CSR
- Merita Vuthaj, Ministry of Health
- Merita Jonuzi, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Mentor Morina, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Magbule Kroci, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Naim Bardiqi, Ministry of Health
- Qendresa Ibra Zariqi, Office of Good Governance/Office of Prime Minister
- Vedat Sagonjeva, Strategic Planning Office/Office of Prime Minister

Peer Reviewer

- Oyunsaihan Dendevronov, Representative, UNICEF Philippines

Government Counterparts met separately

- Shqipe Krasniqi, Kosovo Assembly, SDG Council
- Edona Hajrullahu, Ombusperson
- Qendresa Ibra Zariqi, Child Rights Officer, Office of Good Governance
- Vedat Segonyeva, Director of Strategic Planning Office, Strategic Planning Office
- Isa Krasniqi, Chief Executive Director, KAS
- Merita Vuthaj, Ministry of Health

- Merita Jonuzi, Human Rights Coordinator, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Lulavere Behluli, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Feim Hoxha, Director of Youth, Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports
- Mentor Morina, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Lulzim Beqiri, Ministry of Justice
- Naser Ramadani, Institute of Public Health
- Antigona Hajdaraj, Institute of Public Health
- Merita Berisha, Director, Institute of Public Health
- Albana Morina, Director, Division of Primary Health Care
- Selim Mehmeti, OIC, Executive Director, Pedagogical Institute
- Dashamir Berxulli, Rector, University of Pristina

Non-Governmental Organizations

- Donjeta Kelmendi, Executive Director, Coalition of NGO's for Child Protection (KOMF)
- Bujar Fejzullahu, Executive Director, Peer Educators Network
- Abetare Gojani, Executive Director, IPKO Foundation
- Uranik Begu, Executive Director, Innovation Centre Kosovo
- Blerta Thaci, Executive Director, Open Data Kosovo
- Mrika Aliu, Executive Director, Action for Mothers and Children
- Afrim Maliqi, Director, HANDIKOS
- Petrit Tahiri, Education Specialist, Kosovo Education Centre
- Arben Osmani, ECD Specialist, European Centre for Minority Issues
- Makfire Fazliu, Project Coordinator, Red Cross, Kosovo
- Safet Blakai, Executive Director, Labyrinth

Youth Reference Group

- Trina Hoti
- Festina Veselaj
- Blerta Vitija
- Adnit Kamberi
- Malsor Berbatovci
- Flamur Jashari
- Adrian Ibrahimi
- Riad Mehmeti
- Eurisa Rukovci
- Dea Rexhepi

Business Reference Group

- Visar Kelmendi, President, Rugova Company
- Debatik Hoxha, Head of Business Development, Gjirafa.com
- Robert Wright, Chief Executive Officer, Raiffeisen Bank
- Nora Hasani, Managing Director, German-Kosovar Chamber of Commerce
- Shukri Mustafa Management Board, Raiffeisen Bank

Development Partners

- Dario De Benedetto, Team Coordinator, Civil Society and Human Development, EU in Kosovo
- Gunther Zimmer, Head of Office, Austrian Decelopment Agency
- Karin Hernmarck Ahliny, Head of Office, Swedish International Development Agency
- Arber Gorani, USAID
- Berenika Gashi, USAID
- Anne Dostert, Ambassador, Luxembourg Embassy
- Sarah Olmstead, Resident Country Director, MCC
- Petrit Selimi, Chief Executive Officer, MCC
- Alban Zogaj, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, MCC
- Violeta Krasniqi, Rexha, Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist

UN Agencies

- Ulrika Richardson, Development Coordinator, UNKT
- Visare Mujiko Nimano, Assistant Representative, UNFPA (TBC)
- Cornelia Schneider, Senior Adviser to the SRSG, UNMIK
- Ganesh Prasad Chaulagai, Gender Officer, UNMIK
- Susana Gouvea, Political Affairs Officer, UNMIK
- Lana Minochkina, UNMIK
- Lindita Sanaj, UN Women

UNICEF Staff members

- Murat Sahin, Head of Office
- James Mugaju, Deputy Head of Office
- Nicola Dell Arciprete, Regional Partnership Specialist, Nairobi
- Teuta Halimi, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist
- Dafina Mucaj, Health Consultant
- Dafina Zuna, Programme Associate and OIC for C4D
- Afrim Ibrahimi, Child Protection Officer
- Laurat Raca, Adolescent Development Programme Officer
- Dren Rexha, Social Policy Specialist
- Ivana Milosavljevic, Programme Policy and Planning Officer/Head of Zone Office Mitrovica

ANNEX THREE: Portraits of Inequity

Group	Issue	Causal factors/determinants
Roma, Ashkali & Egyptians	Higher rates of mortality and malnutrition Higher dropout and lower completion rates in education Lower access to employment – youth unemployment 75% Victims of violence	Lower rates of health seeking behavior – more than 60% do not visit ANC compared to 3% on aggregate Poorer IYCF practices – lower breastfeeding, minimum acceptable diet etc. Lower rates of vaccination Non-availability of drugs and unaffordability of alternatives – discriminatory practices Poorer than average parenting practices Early marriage or child labour linked to poverty Insufficient support for Learning Centers and Home visiting Discriminatory practices, lower education levels, limited access to employment relevant skills Perceptions or misperceptions of their role during conflict – insufficient efforts at peace-building
Children with disabilities	Poor access to educational and health institutions Limited access to employment opportunities Limited acceptance and integration into schools	Facilities not disability friendly (stairs, toilets) Limited availability of assistants Lack of trained teachers and/or assistants Violence and bullying as a manifestation of power Stigma and discrimination fueled by traditional beliefs Insufficient investment Lack of policy priority Limited visibility on the national agenda
Children living in rural areas	Poorer social outcomes than national averages	Fewer facilities and longer distances Rural-urban and international migration of parents Seeking employment

Children living in poverty	Higher than average levels of child labour Poorer social outcomes	Household poverty puts pressure on children to work Unaffordable early childhood education and health care (in the private sector) – poor quality and accessibility of public services – leads to poor start to life Lack of visibility and priority on the national agenda
Women and girls	Lower participation in secondary education Limited political representation Gender-based violence	Dropouts due to early marriage and housekeeping Unpaid labour in the household to allow parents in poor households to work Lack of role models Women's capacities not fully recognized or appreciated Social norms based on patriarchy
Young people	High rates of unemployment (55%) Limited access to relevant services	Poor quality of education Insufficient prioritization and budgeting Lack of recognition of the importance of youth

Annex Four: Status of Key Child Relevant SDGs

Goal	Available data and source	Comments
Goal 1 – Elimination of poverty *SDG 1 calls for an end to poverty in all its forms including child poverty.*	Consumption poverty is estimated at 18% (extreme poverty is 5.1%) while child poverty is estimated at 23% (extreme poverty is 7%)	Existing data from 2019 Consumption Poverty Study
Goal 2 – Zero hunger *SDG 2 seeks sustainable solutions to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition and achieve food security.*	Stunting – 4.3% (MICS 2014) Dramatic inequality: Richest households: 1% Poorest households: 9% Roma/Ashkali/Egyptian: 14.6% Wasting – 1.4% Underweight – 1.8% Overweight – 4.3% 71.4% children under 6 months of age exclusively breastfed	MICS 2019 underway and should provide updated data and information In the meantime: IYCF an area for concern Excl. Breastfeeding = 39.9% MAD = 47.1% LBW = 5.4%
Goal 3 – Good health and well-being *SDG 3 aims to ensure health and well-being for all at all ages by improving reproductive, maternal and child health; ending epidemics of communicable and non-communicable and environmental diseases; achieving universal health coverage and ensuring access to safe and affordable medicines and vaccines for all.*	99% of births were delivered by skilled health attendants Maternal mortality ratio currently unknown Neonatal mortality rate – 9 per 1,000 live births Infant mortality rate – 12 per 1,000 live births Under-five mortality rate – 15 per 1,000 live births **In past two weeks under-five children** 9.1% had an episode of diarrhoea	All data from MICS 2014. Quality of health services particularly for maternal and neonatal care at question Only limited data available on maternal health and nutrition Health seeking behaviour quite low by global standards Diarrhoea: 46.9% ARI: 73.1%

	7.8% had symptoms of acute respiratory infection 20.8% experienced fever	Fever: 71.2%
Goal 4 – Quality education *SDG 4 aims to ensure that all people have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. This goal focuses on the acquisition of foundational and higher order skills at all stages of life, as well as technical and vocational education and training; and the knowledge and skills needed to function well and contribute to society.*	14% – enrolment of children aged 36-59 months in ECD (MICS 2014) 83.4% – Early Childhood Development Index score Virtually universal enrolment in primary and lower secondary schools Significant disparities emerge at upper secondary and tertiary levels – based on ethnic, geographic, gender and income Attributes	More recent Government data suggests preschool enrolment of 36% and pre-primary enrolment of 92% Challenges with quality of education and human capital development Significant mismatch between outputs of the education system and needs of the labour market
Goal 5 – Gender equality *SDG 5 seeks to empower women and girls to reach their full potential which requires eliminating all forms of and violence against them, including harmful practices.*	High levels of GBV an issue of serious concern with 1600 reported cases in 2018 80% of women are economically inactive although this doesn't take into account unpaid labour Property inheritance and ownership on an improving trend but still low at 20% 32% of parliamentarians but only 8 0f 204 mayoral candidates in 2017 elections	Gender equality is a condition for EU accession Relatively benign legislative and policy environment but implementation challenges Large data gaps, most notably for gender-based violence and other aspects of women's health 2015 Law on Gender Equality and establishment of an Agency for Gender Equality

Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation SDG 6 seeks to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. This includes access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and health facilities.	98.5% of population use an improved drinking water source Only 22% of households not using a safe source use any appropriate treatment method 78.3 % of population use a safely managed sanitation service Only 12.7% of households practiced safe disposal of children's faeces.	No data available on the availability of WASH facilities in schools or health facilities. Only 55% of households in poorest wealth quintile have piped water 7% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians use public toilets while 25% use shared toilets
Goal 7 – Clean energy	71% of the population use solid fuels: MICS 2014	This data not available between surveys.
Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth SDG 8 seeks to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for men and women including protection of children from hazardous or exploitative forms of labour.	10.7% of children aged 5–17 engaged in child labour 17% of children from ethnic minorities engaged in child labour 6.6% of children aged 5–17 engaged in hazardous labour	UNICEF has a monitoring and advocacy role in this.
Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions SDG 16 is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels. This includes protection of children from violence.	61.4% of children experienced physical punishment or psychological aggression during the past month	No data available on proportion of young women aged 18–29 who experienced sexual violence before age 18.

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