A FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN
Mapping Social Protection in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)
A FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN: 
Mapping Social Protection in Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)

by dr. Enkeleida Tahiraj 
(February 2016)

*All references to Kosovo are understood in the context of UNSCR 1244 (1999).
Acknowledgement

To the contributions and information provided by UNICEF Kosovo team, officials of institutions at both at central and local level, representatives of civil society organizations and the international donor community.

Preface

This mapping exercise elaborates and examines the current state of social protection programmes and mechanisms in operation in Kosovo. For the purposes of this report, social protection (SP) is taken to refer to “public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society.”

The report starts by introducing the conceptual background and methodology. It offers a definition and concepts of social protection that is motivated by contemporary child-centred and transformative approaches. The second part examines the socio-economic context, breaking down the demographics of poverty and social exclusion. In the third section, the social protection regime is described in order to subsequently elicit key policy and implementation gaps in section 4. These are summarized and preliminary recommendations are made in the pursuant fifth section.

Note that dual Albanian/Serbian place names are used in the text where possible and without prejudice where not.
### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KAS</td>
<td>Kosovo Agency of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Centre for Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSPF</td>
<td>Department for Social Policy and Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPAP</td>
<td>European Partnership Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAPB</td>
<td>Analysis of Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSDP</td>
<td>Kosovo Strategy and Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTEF</td>
<td>Mid-Term Expenditure Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPAC</td>
<td>National Policy Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDMU</td>
<td>Strategy Development and Monitoring Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDT</td>
<td>Strategy Development Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>South Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>Strategy Steering Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSD</td>
<td>United States State Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 7  
1. Introduction ..........................................................................................................................9  
   1.1 Conceptual Background .................................................................................................10  
   1.2 Methodology ...................................................................................................................14  
2. Socio-economic context ......................................................................................................14  
   2.1 Population and Economy ...............................................................................................14  
   2.2 Poverty and Social Exclusion ..........................................................................................15  
   2.3 Social exclusion and vulnerable groups ..........................................................................16  
3. Overview of Social Protection ............................................................................................19  
   3.1 Legal and Strategic framework .......................................................................................19  
   3.2 Institutional perspectives ...............................................................................................21  
   3.3 Health protection in Kosovo ..........................................................................................23  
   3.4 Social Assistance and Social Care Programmes ...............................................................24  
      3.4.1 Social Assistance ......................................................................................................24  
      3.4.2 Social Care Services .................................................................................................27  
4. Policy Gaps and Implementation Challenges .................................................................. 32  
   4.1 Institutions and stakeholders .......................................................................................32  
   4.2 Policy gaps and Programme Efficacy ............................................................................34  
5. Conclusions and policy implications ................................................................................ 37  
   5.1 Outcome 1: Improving social protection instruments .....................................................38  
   5.2 Outcome 2 - Social Protection Reform .........................................................................39  
   5.3 Governance .....................................................................................................................42  
   5.4 National Consultation on Social Protection ...................................................................43  
References ................................................................................................................................ 44  
Annex I: Stakeholder Meetings .............................................................................................. 48  
Annex II: Internet Resources ................................................................................................ 48  
Annex III: Social Protection Administrative Data .................................................................. 49  
Annex IV: Coverage of Social Protection programmes ........................................................50  
Annex V: Social Protection Matrix ..........................................................................................51
Executive Summary

This report is a forward-looking analysis of the social protection system in Kosovo. The case for reform and modernisation of welfare in Kosovo has long been made, with scheme coverage and efficiency highlighted as issues in the 2013 EU Progress Report among others.

However, Kosovo faces heightened demand for assistance at a time of increasing pressure on resources of central and municipal Institutions. Equally, the challenges are great, yet, little understood beyond the community of stakeholders and donors. Future reforms therefore need to offer the greatest return in social value, by means that complement and build on recent initiatives and investments. They must also address key areas where policy is lacking and demand is widest and deepest.

It is readily apparent that reforms should therefore target children, since they form the major part of the population whose needs are still not 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.

Although crucial to future social and economic development, children issues have not so far been given the prominence they merit in the welfare agenda. It is important to assess the impact of social protection on children since their status as dependents means that they are more vulnerable than others in society. In order to address multiple deprivations that children experience, reforms needs to address cross-cutting concerns and will only be delivered through multi-lateral cooperation and support.

Longstanding policy gaps will only be filled by development of programs not as isolated single-issue vehicles delivering remedial assistance, but a suite of preventive measures that try to break the cycle of poverty and bring wider social benefits. A path for reform needs to be set out that situates social protection more coherently in the wider policy landscape. This is especially important given Kosovo’s European Union Accession goals and international commitments, notably in Human Rights and Children’s Rights. The 2014 EP resolution call to the Kosovan institutions to implement fully the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to review policies on child poverty should be understood in this context. Recommendations therein, including modification of the social assistance scheme and introducing a universal, means-tested child benefit scheme, are echoed across the wider community.

Social Protection has typically been strategised around technical and supply side concerns, such as institutional capacities and operational constraints. However, there is a case to be made for social protection to offer more than policy reactions to lagging indicators of demand, but to exemplify how a society cares for its own people and demonstrate a commitment to a better future. Incorporating both child-centred and transformative approaches to social protection offers great potential for producing social and economic gains, beyond incremental supply side driven reforms. They are particularly relevant for Kosovo given the demographics of a young population, absence of targeted measures for children in social protection and the necessity of maximizing the return on social spending.
Recommendations here constitute a roadmap for reform that are focused on two related goals:

- Improvements to current provision including increasing coverage and impacts of cash assistance; sustainable social services financing and assessment of program impact and efficacy for vulnerable families.
- Consensus on locally defined minimum social security guarantees aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.

These reforms need to be accompanied by strengthened governance, and underpinned by appropriate fiscal commitment. Through this, the potential of social protection as a contributing factor in future equitable social and economic development may begin to be realised.
1. **Introduction**

Kosovo faces profound challenges in developing its market economy in order to improve the standard of living of its population, not least high levels of long-term unemployment and widespread and persistently high levels of poverty. The impacts of these are borne greatly by children and youth, but also manifest across gender and ethnic lines.

Attempts to address these issues were made through institutionalising social protection in 2001 with the support of development partners. Aiming to implement sustainable insurance and transfer programmes that provides assistance to the most vulnerable and in need. The system has been developed and reformed over time to try to best match needs given available resources, providing both cash assistance and developing a suite of social care services. However, multiple parties including the European Parliament have expressed concerns about the high rates of child poverty and mortality, the low level of cover afforded by social protection and the amount of out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare, all of which aggravate existing vulnerabilities. Social assistance has been limited in its poverty impact on a household basis, with an even more uncertain impact for individuals beyond what inference affords.

As a result, private welfare arrangements, typically in the form of informal economy and remittances from overseas, have been an important means of coping and provided a vital income source, smoothing consumption for many families. However, such arrangements also bring undesired impacts on families and communities, diminishing social cohesion and depleting human capital through large-scale migration and brain drain. The impact of a recent surge in emigration since September 2014 demonstrates the need for progress in Kosovo’s development, as it is not sustainable on any level.

With a very young demographic - the average age is about 26 years and almost half (47 %) of the population are younger than 25 years old - Kosovo has been regarded as having a ‘demographic dividend’ in terms of potential human capital. However, it is clear that this dividend will only be realised through appropriate investments in children, health and educational policies.

This report aims to contribute to the debate among stakeholders and partners in the development of social protection in Kosovo and also in the context of strategic documents to 2020 and beyond on:

- Mapping demand through need assessment obtained from administrative data in social assistance and social care services.
- Gaps on the supply side, where policy design and implementation leave important needs and vulnerabilities unmet.
- Recommendations for stakeholders in addressing the key challenges to modernisation of policy and provision.

---

1 As of December 2015, the strategy is yet to be approved.
The report begins with a survey of contemporary international perspectives on social protection, informed by transformative approaches to institutional welfare and the child-sensitive approach developed by UNICEF\textsuperscript{2,3}. Both rights-based, these perspectives are complementary and offer important constructive insights for policy making at both strategic and implementation level.

The ensuing two sections examine the supply and demand side of welfare in Kosovo. Given the residual nature of Kosovo’s welfare regime, macro-economic context and growth expectations remain important determinants of levels of poverty and social exclusion and are explored in section 2. The legacy of this approach to poverty reduction also sets an important boundary condition for social policy going forward, since growth has proven by no means as assured or as inclusive as was once considered to be.

Current welfare arrangements, surveying strategy and policy, stakeholder engagement and programmes are set out in Section 3. The domestic picture is contrasted with a European perspective, since aside from the challenge of delivering social gains, the social protection has a role to play in Kosovo’s political goals, notably demonstrating Kosovo’s commitments to international standards in human rights as well as the comprehensive but fine grained requirements of EU Accession process.

Out of this analysis, key policy and implementation gaps are detailed in Section 4. The review concludes with some recommendations as to how social protection might be better conceived and positioned to meet developing needs and issues going forward.

### 1.1 Conceptual Background

A prerequisite for the development of effective social protection policy is to establish consensus on its aims, concepts and meanings, which can be difficult as concepts evolve and change over time and place. With variations in implementation across regions and countries, we can assert that social protection typically refers to a suite of programs or short-term interventions aimed at overcoming income poverty and other vulnerabilities, as well as insurance that addresses such risks. The main functions of social protection have come to be represented by the three “P”s for resilience and opportunity: (1) prevention against drop in well-being, income, and expenditure shocks; (2) protection from destitution and losses of human capital; and (3) promotion of human capital development, opportunities, livelihoods, and better jobs (World Bank, 2011b).

However, different development agencies utilise terminology idiosyncratically and not necessarily uniformly over time. For example, the World Bank definition also focuses on managing risks and economic vulnerabilities. Meanwhile European institutions typically draw on corporatist perspectives and prioritise social insurance; the International Labour Organization (ILO) operates with minimum standards and labour-market issues in mind; the United Nations Children’s Fund applies a child-sensitive approach to social protection (UNICEF, 2012), encompassing access to services and the provision of unconditional transfers for vulnerable groups. By contrast, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) focuses on chronic poverty and social transfers, typically via cash based assistance.


\textsuperscript{3} As in the draft UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Knowledge and Leadership Area B: A child’s right to social protection
Social assistance is the term usually applied to refer to such cash-based transfers. These not based on prior contributions but instead financed from state revenues, and targeted to low income and vulnerable groups. Social insurance typically refers to schemes that are financed through work, while social services refers to a range of non-cash services such as social work and care services. The terms social protection and social security are often used interchangeably by UN and other agencies. For example, the right to social security is enshrined in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but is loosely defined. It states that

“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization,”

and that

“Everyone through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.”

Two additional contemporary perspectives also inform this review, namely transformative social protection and child-sensitive social protection. These extend the “3 P’s” typology of social protection by incorporating rights-based elements that harmonise well with wider policy. With governments around the world having made commitments to upholding and ensuring specific rights, it is natural that state programs also align with international norms and rights based standards. Transformative approaches to social protection intend not only to deal with the impacts, but to address the causes of poverty and exclusion. It calls for maintaining a focus on desirable outcomes and key performance and quality indicators, over and above the attention normally given to outputs, such as raw administrative data such as the numbers of beneficiaries.

Situating social protection within the framework of rights widens the potential impact of programmes, by incorporating other dimensions of vulnerability and need such as social exclusion. As a consequence, rather than utilising programmes only for their immediate ameliorative purpose, such as to provide care or as an income substitute, protection comes to be seen as also offering further potential in terms of social development. For example, long-term exclusion can be addressed by assistance that also improves beneficiaries’ position in the labour market. Indeed, social protection programs (social insurance and social assistance programs, as well as labor programs) have been found to support better growth outcomes (Alderman, 2012) through:

1. individual level (building and protecting human capital, and other productive assets, empowering poor individuals to invest or to adopt higher return strategies),
2. local economy effects (enhancing community assets and infrastructure, positive spillovers from beneficiaries to non-beneficiaries),
3. overall economy level (acting as stabilisers of aggregate demand, improving social cohesion and making growth enhancing reforms more politically feasible).

---

4 Also referred to as the “Social Safety Net” by the World Bank and others.
The Transformative Framework has academic foundations (for example Devereux et al., 2004), but also underpins Government strategies in many OECD countries and finds strong support from within the international agencies such as the World Bank and the UN. The European Commission also details its goal to support Transformative Social Protection, widening the remit of stakeholders in social protection beyond targeted income and consumption transfers, to include ‘areas such as equity, empowerment and economic, social and cultural rights’ (EC 2012). It classifies approaches to social protection as:

- Protective social protection is intended to protect people from acute poverty and deprivation;
- Preventative social protection is intended to avert deprivation;
- Promotive social protection that enhances income and capabilities so people are less vulnerable to risks;

Transformative social protection aims to increase equity for the disadvantaged and to reduce vulnerability by improving the structural position of disadvantaged groups.

Transformative social protection is inherently cross-cutting across issues and domains, encompassing social services in health, education, and child protection, as well as financial assistance such as micro-finance, inclusive banking (Table 1). This has strategic and operational consequences in the sense that it necessitates more “joined-up government”, calling for an integrated and more cooperative focus across the administration and institutional portfolios.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Policy instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Social Assistance</td>
<td>Cash &amp; food awards, school subsidies, fee waivers for social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive</td>
<td>Social insurance</td>
<td>Health insurance, premium waivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotive</td>
<td>Productive transfers, subsides, gainful work.</td>
<td>Public works programmes, asset transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Social equity measures</td>
<td>Equal rights legislation, affirmative action policy, asset protection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Devereux, 2004

The second perspective that informs this analysis, child-sensitive social protection, arises from the need to integrate issues of child protection with social protection. WB, UNICEF and other agencies (DFID et al., 2009) developed a common approach that focuses on public and private policies and programmes aimed at reducing and eliminating the socio-economic vulnerabilities of children, women and families, while seeking to ensure their rights in terms of living standard and access to essential services (UNICEF, 2011). UNICEF defines social protection as a “set of transfers and services that help individuals and households confront risk and adversity (including emergencies), and ensure a minimum standard of dignity and wellbeing throughout the lifecycle.” UNICEF supports the concept of social protection to be made child sensitive and to focus on systemically protecting and ensuring the rights of all children and women, achieving gender equality, and reducing child poverty. Child-sensitive social protection therefore tasks us to respond to the many different dimensions of children's vulnerability (See Box 1).
Box 1: Principles of child-sensitive social protection

In 2008, UNICEF led an inter-agency effort to build consensus on the importance of child-sensitive social protection. Signed by 11 organizations, the Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection usefully sets out the following principles:

- Avoid adverse impacts on children, and reduce or mitigate social and economic risks that directly affect children’s lives.
- Intervene as early as possible where children are at risk, in order to prevent irreversible impairment or harm.
- Consider the age- and gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities of children throughout the lifecycle.
- Mitigate the effects of shocks, exclusion and poverty on families, recognizing that families raising children need support to ensure equal opportunity.
- Make special provision to reach children who are particularly vulnerable and excluded, including children without parental care, and those who are marginalized within their families or communities due to their gender, ability, ethnicity, HIV and AIDS or other factors.
- Consider the mechanisms and intra-household dynamics that may affect how children are reached, with particular attention paid to the balance of power between men and women within the household and broader community.
- Include the voices and opinions of children, their caregivers and youth in the understanding and design of social protection systems and programmes.

Source: DFID et al. (2009).

Policymaking should seek to effect policies that address ‘the inherent social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities children may be born into, as well as those acquired later in childhood,’ and is intended to tackle the underlying causes as well as the symptoms of vulnerability (UNICEF, 2011). These extend beyond economic, environmental and life-cycle dimensions to include social risks, such as gender-based vulnerabilities. In addition to sharing many of the sources of vulnerability facing their families and communities, children face age-specific vulnerabilities which differ from those of adults or have more serious consequences, such as increased vulnerability to malnutrition, disease and abuse (ibid). Vulnerabilities are likely to be experienced differently depending on individuals’ stage in the life course (infant, child, youth, adult, aged), their social positioning (gender, ethnicity, class) and geographical location (e.g. urban, rural) among other factors. Some of these factors exacerbate the depth of vulnerability.

It can be seen that these two approaches are complementary, indeed overlap to an extent. This report considers that these approaches to social protection are valid if not crucial for the context of Kosovo and its future development, given the demographics of a young population, the absence of targeted measures for children in social protection and the necessity of maximizing the return on social spending as is evidenced later in the text.
1.2 Methodology

This report is based on a literature review and field mission in Kosovo in October 2013 and December 2015. It draws on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources in both Albanian and English languages, from the period since 2001, including academic literature, strategy and policy documents, as well as publications of international agencies.

Information was gained from meetings with stakeholders from institutions within Kosovo that operate at both local and central level, as well as international organisations and local CSO’s in Pristina. Field visits were undertaken between October 10th - 19th, 2013 and November 30th – December 3rd, 2015. Meetings afforded an informal evaluation of strategic documents, as well covering the progress of recent reforms and policy initiatives, multi-stakeholder assessments of main issues faced by social protection policymakers and operational issues that impact service delivery. In the frame of the SESW two workshops focusing on SWOT analysis were held to lay the groundwork for establishing a vision and high level objectives for social protection in the medium term.

The analysis herein aims to provide a general assessment of the situation with a holistic approach to social protection. Limitations pertain to this mapping exercise, notably in the level of completeness that can be attained in the timeframe, but also by issues such as the lack of or limited availability of official data on many issues. Equally, there are few studies providing robust evaluation of the impact, efficacy of social protection programs. Some findings from interviews and data collection were not incorporated into this analysis. No meetings were carried out with direct beneficiaries, a limitation that would it be beneficial to remedy.

2. Socio-economic context

Among other initiatives, social protection continues to have an important role in transforming Kosovo from a post-conflict into a modern functional democratic society. Kosovo’s recent history has left long-standing marks that still show in the social picture through demographics and poverty statistics.

2.1 Population and Economy

With a population of 1,804,944 (2014 estimate, ASK 2015), Kosovo’s demographic is younger in composition than the OECD average and the youngest population in Europe with an average age of 29.5 years in 2010 (EU was 40.9 years). Despite large-scale emigration since the 1990’s, around 47% is below the age of 24 and only 8% is above the age of 64 (ASK 2011 estimates). Such favorable demographics could be expected to underpin a well-developed and cohesive society, however the economy remains beset by high levels of unemployment and informality. The consumer sector is largely dependent on remittance inflows, with 22.4 percent of Kosovo families receiving remittances from their family members. Total inflows\(^5\) amounted to 19.4 per cent of GDP in 2012 (UNDP HDR 2014).

The challenging economic situation in the region and the EU has affected Kosovo’s economy, although less than in other countries of the region. Unlike most of its neighbours, Kosovo has avoided economic contraction although the previous high GDP growth rates have diminished (Table 2).

---

\(^5\) Inclusive of wage inflows
The macro-picture continues to look austere. Kosovo has been tight with fiscal policy and it would appear unlikely that budgets can be loosened, especially with new legally binding fiscal rules implemented in 2014 (EC, 2012).

A major concern is that previous high levels of growth brought only low levels of job creation. Even with low wage levels industry struggles to remain competitive. The low level of human resources and weak labour market mean low value-added operations predominate. The service sector remains under-developed.

Kosovo has one of the weakest employment records in Europe. Kosovo’s 40.5 percent labor force participation rate is substantially below the 70% average estimated for the countries represented in the World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region (WB, 2015). Unemployment remains very high at 35.3% against the backdrop of a very low labor force participation rate of 41.6% (ASK, 2015). Due to methodological changes, this does not allow for direct comparison with previous years. Significant structural weaknesses, skill gaps and lack of opportunities, especially for new young entrants in the labour market would indicate that the problem is unlikely to improve without significant further intervention (EU 2012), even if there were to be a return to higher levels of GDP growth above the low 1.2% growth rate witnessed in 2014 (ASK).

### 2.2 Poverty and Social Exclusion

Poverty remains a profound problem in Kosovo, which has the highest poverty headcount rate in the SEE region, nearly twice as high as its neighbors. Estimates in 2009 of 29.7 per cent of the population below the poverty line and 10.2 percent in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2010) have been surpassed with the more recent indications that 34.5% of the population live in general poverty and 12.1% in extreme poverty (ASK, 2012). The geographic picture is complex: rural areas having on average 5 to 10 per cent higher incidence and depth of poverty than urban, with the regions of Mitrovica and Ferizaj/Uroševac worst affected; the region of Prishtina/Priština has a lower incidence of poverty, but due to population density contributes many of the poor. Three-fifths of the poor live in the three regions of Prishtina/Priština, Prizren and Mitrovica (ibid.).

The poverty profile mirrors the regional picture, with likelihood of being in poverty correlating strongly with gender, ethnicity, educational attainment. These all manifest in the employment picture, where the highest poverty rates are found among the economically inactive in the form of unemployed, retired and people with disabilities. The incidence of poverty of unemployed persons was 50% higher than that of employed persons, and forming nearly 30% of poor adults. Unemployment for youth aged 15-24 continues to be especially problematic, with estimates of 61.0% in 2015 staying well above the 35.1% national average (ASK, 2015).
More than one third of individuals who did not complete primary education live in poor households, compared to 12% of individuals with university degrees. Almost two thirds of the poor did not complete secondary education. Skills deficits and gender biases in the home and work place greatly affect employment prospects for women with 41.6% of women unemployed in 2015 against 33.1% of unemployed men (ASK, 2015). Consequently, female-headed households have a poverty rate 4 per cent above others (LFS, 2012). Large households, such as extended families with many children and other dependents are more likely to live in poverty. The poverty rate for families with more than seven members is 7% higher than that of families with fewer than four members. This is even more markedly true for women and children from ethnic groups such as Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians for whom ethnicity is a further compounding factor in the risk of poverty.

Poverty brings significant risks to children’s lives. Children are more likely than others to experience severe and chronic poverty and deprivation, especially within large families. They also suffer disproportionately compared to the rest of the population, including pensioners (Huby et al. 2011), with an overall poverty rate in 2011 of 32.8% compared to 29.7% for the whole population. The overall extreme poverty rate for children in 2011 was 11.6% compared to 10.2% for the whole population (UNICEF 2011).

Just above the income poverty line sit Kosovo’s ‘precariat’ (Standing, 2011), “the almost 18 per cent of population who are significantly and periodically at risk of poverty including the working poor and underemployed” (Tahiraj, 2016). There are possible risks and rewards in the ‘shallow’ nature of poverty in Kosovo. On one hand many families remain at real risk of poverty should their incomes fall even slightly; on the other hand, many people could be raised from poverty by comparatively small income improvements (ibid.).

### 2.3 Social exclusion and vulnerable groups

Poverty is strongly correlated with social exclusion. Income inequality, severe access and lack of choice in service provision for many poor, minorities and those in rural areas have created a widening urban/rural divide. This especially affects vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, women and children - with the situation much worse for children from the poorer segments of the population, for whom problems are often concentrated and combined.

### Living Standards

Around 42 per cent of poorer families and 36 per cent of richer families lack essential services. Among those who don’t experience exclusion often suffer adverse incorporation, due to the low quality of public services. Equally, the roots of social ills such as trafficking in human beings are specifically related to poverty and exclusion.

For many, living standards in Kosovo fall palpably and dramatically below EU norms, a point reinforced by Kosovo having the lowest Human Development Index rating in the region (0.713, UNDP HDR 2012). Environmental standards are low, and many families live in very bad housing conditions, often as a result of
informal construction. Nearly 8 per cent of the population suffer multiple forms of deprivation: they are materially poor, without running water in their houses or access to sanitary and health services. Many experience additional insecurity due to on-going property restitution. While access to an improved source of drinking water is very high on average (99%), only slightly more than half of the poorest (57%) have access to improved drinking water sources and improved sanitation, most of whom are in urban areas (ASK, 2014: MICS). Inadequate sanitation is an issue, with 13% of children's faeces is disposed of safely with the vast majority (85%) disposed of in the garbage (ibid.).

Lack of access to potable water and sanitation combined with food poverty pose particularly serious short and long-term risks to children's health and their overall development. More than one third of children grow up in a housing situation lacking adequate sanitation facilities, which is associated with high rates of morbidity and when combined with other factors to problematic levels of stunting (UNICEF, 2015: MODA).

**Health**

While health and education offer encouraging progress in some indicators, there remains a significant proportion for whom the equity gap persists. Many children suffer exclusion from these essential services. The impact of poor or patchy social service provision on vulnerable women and children is evident from high maternal and infant mortality rates, which persist despite the fact that most deliveries take place in health facilities with trained birth attendants. These are largely a result of generally inadequate and highly variable quality postnatal care, which also accounts for the under-5 mortality rate (69 per 1000) being at an unacceptable level of twice that of Kosovo's neighbours.

In health, it is remarkable that on one hand skilled birth attendance is nearly universal, but that post-natal care is not sustained. This seems to suggest that regular access to primary health care is not guaranteed for a large group of households. This is especially of concern for children living in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian households do not have full access to the health system, leading to significantly lower immunization rates and more malnourished children under five years of age. A worrying 14% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls 15-19 have begun child-bearing while less than one percent have had a live birth before age 15 years.

Problems especially pertain to the financial accessibility of the health services with very high out-of-pocket expenditures for households. This limits the access to health care services to those who can pay; in turns this results in lower life expectancy at birth and relatively high rates of infant mortality. This emphasises that the availability of health services is not sufficient to ensure utilisation; in both rural and urban areas, health deprivation rates for young children are often more than double the size for the poorest quintiles than for the most wealthy quintiles according to the adjusted wealth index.

7 Perinatal mortality rates 23 per 1,000 live births in 2006; infant mortality 13.4 percent 49 per 1000 live births; maternal mortality is 10.73 in 100,000 cases.
Education

Educational disadvantages are in place from early years. About 17 percent of children age 36-59 months are not developing adequately, reflecting the lack of investment early childhood education programmes, where uptake is only 9% in rural areas and 7% among children from the poorest households (UNICEF, 2015: MODA). Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children dropout from school in higher numbers and participate less in lower and upper secondary education. Consequently, the illiteracy rate (in any language) is higher among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.

Although the majority of children of mandatory age are attending school (98%) yet only 92% of primary school entry age children (age 6) attend first grade. Two percent of primary school age children are out of school and one-tenth (10%) of male children age 6 are out of school. Similarly, 4% of children do not attend lower secondary school (ASK, 2014: MICS).

Inequities remain gendered and also persist through generations with a positive correlation between educational attainments of the mother. While the gender parity for primary school is close to 1.00, indicating no difference in the attendance of girls and boys to primary school, the indicator drops to 0.99 for lower secondary education and even lower to 0.96 for upper secondary education (ASK, 2014: MICS). Girls disadvantage is particularly pronounced in rural areas at the upper secondary level as well as among children living in the poorest households.

Of course attendance is only the first step and enormous challenges remain in achieving better outcomes. While nearly all children are attending primary school, a notable percentage leave without a qualification. Moreover, participation in secondary education is far from complete and is diminished by high dropout rates at higher grades. This is especially true for girls, for young people from ethnic minorities and for children from poorer families. School attainment is therefore problematic for a number of children between 5 and 14 years and even more striking for young people older than 14 years. Despite the lack of accurate data, it is considered that children with disabilities fall within the group of the most excluded children due to their low level of access and quality of education services.

Focus on Children

Almost one out of four children experience multiple deprivations, with younger children more likely to suffer. Children in all age and ethnic groups face severe deprivations, with differences more in type rather than extent. Most affected are the lowest two quintiles of the wealth distribution. However, differences among children of different levels of deprivation are not solely explainable by wealth as other social characteristics also impact.

Children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities fare worse in a lot of the dimensions and indicators than the children in the entire population. However, they form a minority of all children experiencing deprivation and exclusion. Indeed, children living in the poorest 20% of the rural population can fare as badly or worse in many cases as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (UNICEF, MODA). They have considerably higher rates of deprivation than the average of the total population, indicating that many child deprivations are concentrated in the poorer part of the population, indicating a need to better target this demographic.
3. Overview of Social Protection

This section describes the supply side issues of the system of social protection in Kosovo, which is operationalised as a residual safety net regime. This is composed of cash transfers in the form of targeted social assistance, social insurance and other smaller categorical programs and as assistance in kind in the form of social care services.

3.1 Legal and Strategic framework

A clear legal framework for Social Protection (Table 3) was established after 2008. It was developed by Kosovan institutions with the support of international donors, and designed to align and be in accordance with international criteria. The policies set out clear roles and responsibilities for institutions engaged in administration and provision at central and local levels, and outline the rights of specific groups to social welfare services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Social Protection Legal Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law on family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on Social Assistance Scheme (SAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on Social and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment to the Law on Social and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Law of Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on Disability Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on pensions for members of KPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law for Kosovo Pension Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendments to the Law No.04-L-101 for Kosovo Pension Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment of the Law No.2003/15 for Social Assistance Scheme (SAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on Local Governance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MLSW, 2013

The legislation on social welfare in Kosovo initially expresses a rights based perspective, something along the lines of what Adam Smith called necessities for human dignity. Yet, further examination of the legislation introduces selective criteria that make the eligibility criteria for benefitting from services provided by Kosovo Institutions rather narrow.

Law No.02/L17 on social and family services, Article 1, point 1.2 specifies that when a family has no support, or this support is insufficient for guaranteeing wellbeing of an individual, the Institutions of Kosovo have an obligation to offer social and family services for all those that would not otherwise be supported. This must be done in a way that would respect their dignity as a human being and their fundamental rights based in Kosovo legislation and international conventions on human rights.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) are guaranteed by the Kosovo Constitution. They are directly applicable in Kosovo, in the case of conflict, have priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions (Article 22).
The Law NO. 05/L-021 on the protection from discrimination of 2015 and Kosovo’s Constitution uphold principles of equality and non-discrimination. Yet, discrimination against especially persons with disability and women still persist. Human rights violations persist also, such as child labour and trafficking (USSD, 2012).

The Strategy and Action Plan on Children’s Rights 2009-2013 states that it is based on the principles of the CRC: namely non-discrimination, child participation and development of full potential and highest interest of the child.

In September 2001, the Social Welfare Department (DSW) was established within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW). The DMS was tasked with designing comprehensive policies and strategies for the social protection system, which consists of social assistance and social and family services, established within the framework of the legislation. Benefits for war invalids are determined under a separate law.

The design of the social protection system was driven by the issue of immediate affordability and long-term sustainability. It was rational that Kosovo would adopt a residual social assistance scheme, in common with many transition countries including neighbouring Albania. The prospects for developing this type of policy regime are greatly determined by the macro-economic picture: expansion of social protection provision generally going hand in hand with the development of social insurance instruments, which ultimately relies on real economic growth supporting a strengthened fiscal base.

In 2010, MLSW endorsed the Sector Strategy 2009-2013, which contained strategic objectives for addressing issues of the organisation, functioning, and administrative capacity of the Ministry. The vision set out in the strategy was “to ensure better employment opportunities and to provide social welfare...to become a model institution in providing effective services, by developing a culture of clients’ care and satisfaction and by maintaining the quality over the time.”

Following reforms were set out in the Action Plan 2011-2013 for implementation of the sectorial strategy. Further institutional reforms were set out in the 2013–2017 Strategy for Decentralisation of the management of Social Services. These reforms mostly concentrate on improving delivery mechanisms and at reducing administrative frictions. The policy landscape has seen important developments in related areas, the adoption of the Strategy for the Rights of People with Disabilities (2013-2023) and an action plan (2013-2015) in August 2012.

Legislative changes as of December 2015 reflect reductions of VAT for a number of food products, electric and water, which all should have an impact, albeit indirect, on the poor people’s affordability to pay for these. However, it is yet too early to assess such impact.
3.2 Institutional perspectives

Institutional organisation

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) is the mandated institution responsible for development of the social protection system. The Department for Social Policy and Family (former department of Social Welfare DSW) is a key body within MLSW on social welfare issues, being the main institution for the design and implementation of social policies. This department proposes, designs and ensures the implementation of policy documents/strategies and legislation related to social policy, it deals with licensing of social and family services providers, develops and monitors the implementation of the social services standards, administers the social benefit schemes for families and vulnerable groups. This department consists of and monitors the performance of the following units:

- Division of Social Policy;
- Division of Social Planning and Inclusion;
- Division of Social Services;
- Division of Social Assistance;
- Division for Disability and Elderly people.

In the 2012 - 2014 based on strategic development DSW merged with the Institute of Social Policy and established the Department for Social and Family Policies. Social care services have been shaped by institutional reforms delivered as part of the Kosovo Social Services Decentralisation Project. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2009 between the MLSW, MLGA, MEF and the Municipalities for the transfer the competences and responsibilities of social services and social assistance to the local level. Policy on social protection remains in the hands of the MLSW in the evolving decentralised social services administration, while social protection delivery is the remit of municipalities. MLSW is reconsidering taking all SA staff from municipalities back to central level.

The process of decentralisation delegated social service management to municipal level in 2009. There are 40 Municipal Centres for Social Work (CSW) in 35 Municipalities that are responsible for service delivery. Located in and managed by each municipality, CSW's operate care services including short term shelters for children, homes for single mothers, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the homeless and child care centres.

In addition, they provide counselling and guidance services for individuals and households at risk such as juvenile offenders, orphans and victims of domestic violence.

Private sector involvement in service provision has also increased, in an effort to widen provision. In the face of budgetary pressures and many competing calls on public resources, MLSW together with the Centre for Social Welfare has increased cooperation with licensed social services providers from both private sector and civil society, focused especially on their capacity to design and implement preventive measures.
Fiscal capacity

In 2014 public spending in the social sector was significantly lower than the region, with 2% of GDP allocated to Health and 7% to Social Protection all told (EUROSTAT, 2015). Examination of prior social protection expenditure from 2004 - 2012 (Figure 1) shows a declining trend in real terms in the social assistance budget. The social welfare budget as a whole accounted for 3.38% per cent of GDP in 2011, or 9.5 per cent of total spending.

MLSW budget was €159m for 2009, of which 90 per cent was spent on social security and pension payments, with the latter taking the lions share. As of 2014, Kosovo (7.0 %; 2014 data) it was around one quarter of the EU-28 level (EUROSTAT, 2015).

Expenditure on social assistance and social services stood at €35 million in 2012 (Table 4) at 0.7 per cent of GDP.8 With exception of Montenegro and Macedonia, Kosovo spends much less in social assistance compared to other Western Balkan countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia (World Bank, 2010).

Figure 1: Social Expenditure Budget Priorities 2004-2012. Source: ASK 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social protection 2012 Budget for Central Services and Social Assistance</th>
<th>Personnel (Number)</th>
<th>Personnel Costs</th>
<th>Operating Costs</th>
<th>Subsidies &amp; Transfers</th>
<th>Capital investment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance scheme</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>55,570</td>
<td>112,704</td>
<td>28,000,999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28,169,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61,492</td>
<td>138,432</td>
<td>4,326,233</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,526,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>844,979</td>
<td>675,137</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>995,066</td>
<td>2,545,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres for Social Work</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>140,135</td>
<td>62,636</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>202,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Social Policy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70,338</td>
<td>82,137</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>152,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>1,172,514</td>
<td>1,071,046</td>
<td>32,357,232</td>
<td>995,066</td>
<td>35,595,858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MLSW 2013

---

8 Not inclusive of war veterans benefit scheme.
A common theme among various stakeholders during this review that institutions are not doing enough to explain the rather complicated schemes of benefits to the population. This has not helped the case for social protection. Trends in social expenditure 2004-2012 show that the biggest, indeed increasing, share is taken by various categories of pensions, while social assistance remains on a plateau. Given increasing allocations for other schemes (Figure 1), this is a clear indication of political priorities.

The call has often been made before by Kosovo's development partners for protection to be considered as an institutional priority, moving towards a fuller framework of social development rather than post-conflict compensation. This dichotomy of outlook of the institutions and international partners informs joint initiatives and is a stumbling block for policy development and implementation.

Within this, donors are trying via respective programs of partnership to push for a social welfare agenda based on rights. For example the EU via the European Partnership Action Plan, remarks that “There is also a considerable number of challenges in terms of implementation of legislation on working relationships and social schemes...Further, this plan provides for improvement of policy implementation in the field of human rights, by measures in implementing the Human Rights Strategy, the Strategy for Disabilities and Strategy for the Rights of the Child....and other measures to enable strengthening of institutional capacities in observing gender equality, observation of rights of the child, and in implementation of social schemes.”

However, because of the wide range of issues reported and monitored in documents such as EPAP and the EC Opinion presented in the annual progress report, issues of concern in the fields of rights are often overlooked in favour of those more directly addressed in the acquis communitaire. The message about social protection consequently becomes attenuated.

Other in the donor community, including UNICEF and various CSO's, have also been working and similarly calling for modernisation of social protection in line with established rights.

3.3 Health protection in Kosovo

Despite increased real term public health expenditures in recent years, the share of public sector resources allocated to health sector is below average. Public health spending is tax-funded with the largest share used by tertiary care. Donor support in the health sector is not reflected in the general budget.

Social protection mechanisms such as health and social insurance are extended in the field of health policies via the creation of Health Insurance Fund (HIF). Yet they fall short of protecting the poor from the risk of exclusion from access to health services. Based on mandatory payroll tax and flat-rate premiums, poor families are exempt from such contributions. However, a family on the poverty line has to subsidize up to 6.8% of the household budget to fund obligatory insurance premium payments (World Bank, 2014). Out of pocket expenses reportedly being in excess of 15-20% of total health spending force families at risk of poverty into further ‘impoverishment’ (WHO).

Recent data highlight health issues affecting children in particular. One in twenty
five children (four percent) under age five are moderately or severely stunted or too short for their age reflecting chronic malnutrition as a result of failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period and recurrent or chronic illness (UNICEF, 2015b).

### 3.4 Social Assistance and Social Care Programmes

The system of social protection is a residual welfare regime comprised of schemes for social assistance, benefits for war veterans, a disability allowance, pensions, and basic social services. The system lacks schemes of unemployment benefit, universal child allowances, health insurance and many social services found in the SEE region, reflecting something of institutional as well as electorate priorities as well as more severe resource limitations experienced in Kosovo.

An important innovation has been the specific assistance of €100 per month for families of children with permanent disability (0-18) introduced in 2009. MLSW has struggled to finance this scheme even with only 3020 families currently eligible. Some allowances come with additional benefits such as free healthcare, reduced electricity prices, and compensation for fees paid for higher education. Apart from social assistance, emergency aid (€100-300) is available for families in exceptional circumstances.

#### 3.4.1 Social Assistance

The social safety net in Kosovo is a public and means-tested categorical social assistance scheme, established in 2003. Social assistance is administered through the 35 Centres for Social Work, which fall under the supervision of MLSW, but are managed by local Institutions.

Receipt of social assistance is subject to strict eligibility criteria, requiring documentary evidence, and each claim is assessed on a household rather than an individual basis. Ability to work is used to sort claims into two categories\(^9\). Any claim falling outside these criteria is refused. In the first category, all household members must be either incapable of work or be dependents. In the second category are families who have one member able to work\(^10\), with at least one child under the age of 5 years or who have permanent guardianship of an orphan under the age of 15 years. The member of the family who is capable of working must register and obtain a certificate from the Employment Office certifying their unemployment and that they are both capable of and seeking work. In 2012 amendments proposed to the law on social assistance remove of the upper age bound (currently at 5 years old), as a criterion for a households exclusion from the scheme specifically suggesting: 4.5(‘with at least one (1) child under the age of five (5); shall be modified in time, in order that the limit of the age of the child is to be increased gradually with the purpose that this criteria is to be changed, which shall depend on necessary budgetary funds available and shall be subject of fiscal restrictions’.

---

\(^9\) The first category includes low income families with no members who are able to work. This category of family consists of: (i) persons above 65 years of age and unemployed; (ii) children under 15 years of age; (iii) children who are in school and under 18 years of age; (iv) adults permanently unable to work; (v) single parents with a child under 10 years of age and with no other adult capable of earning; (vi) persons providing care for family members over 65 years of age or members permanently unable to work; (vii) in rural areas, the family owns less than half a hectare of land. Once the application is submitted, QPS officials will visit and interview the family to verify their living conditions. The second category includes families which have members who are able to work, all of whom are unemployed. The conditions for this category of families are: (i) the unemployed family members are seeking a job; (ii) the family has at least one child under 5 years of age or an orphan; (iii) the family receives no other public assistance; (iv) the family does not own more than half a hectare of land; (v) the family does not own a vehicle, including a tractor or any other agricultural machinery.

\(^10\) Since May 2012 a new criteria was introduced that a second person able to work in the household excludes the family from SA.
The benefit is income-exclusive, that is the household must be resident, without income, and not in receipt of family assistance, remittances and some other benefits. Household members who receive payments from the Basic Pension Scheme, Disability Pension Scheme are not considered in the application. Restrictions are placed on assets, limiting the allowable size of land ownership to exclude those who might benefit from agricultural production and ensuring the household owns neither a car nor tractor.

The cost of required documentation to support an application is about €27. To reduce administrative burden, the application renewal was recently made annual instead of bi-annual for category one beneficiaries. Families in the second category can receive financial assistance for six months and if the conditions of the family do not change after six months, they are eligible to reapply.

**Beneficiaries and award levels**

The amount of monthly social assistance depends on the number of family members, as determined by the MEF and the MLSW. More than 50,000 families have benefited from SA at some point since it was established. However, both the number of families and the average number of family members has been decreasing as a result of reforms focused on targeting and leakage reduction. As of 2012 there were 161,863 individuals in 37,392 families were beneficiaries of the program, a number that has fallen to 115,000 individuals in 27,605 families as of 2015 (Table 5). Recent benefit increases, delivered in November 2015, have seen the amount of social assistance rise to €50 for a family with one member, and €68 for a family with two members\(^\text{11}\). The amount of cash assistance increases on a rating scale for each additional family member, rising to a maximum of triple the individual award for a family with fifteen members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,099</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,506</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6,190</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>81.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5,817</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,742</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>93.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>106.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>112.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>118.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>131.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>137.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>143.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total families</td>
<td>27,605</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total beneficiaries</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children 0-18</td>
<td>57,778</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfers</th>
<th>Goods and Services</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26,000,000</td>
<td>74,441</td>
<td>64,244</td>
<td>26,138,685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) For comparison, the average monthly wage in Kosovo is estimated at €360 (ASK, 2015)
At previous higher levels of uptake, the scheme was seriously underfunded and up to 20 per cent of eligible cases were reported to receive no benefit at all in months of peak demand. This was also affected by funding constraints. Spending on targeted social assistance competes with the more generous and politically sensitive veterans’ benefits. Awards for the latter are not means-tested, and begin at €55 which is high large relative to other social benefits and in some cases reaches up to a maximum of €351, a figure that is well above the average wage. These benefits continue for the life of the 9,500 beneficiaries. In contrast, Disability Allowance, of which there are 17,675 recipients, is paid at a flat rate of €40 per month per claimant. Work disable €100 per person. The disability benefit provision is considered “anomalous, as up to 18 years old, a child with disability receives €100, but upon turning 19 the benefit is reduced to €50.” Disability is assessed by a commission whereby the person unable to work should not be less than 80% unable to work for category one. Commissions asses the letters delivered by medical staff as they do not carry out assessments.

There is no variation in the amount of SA by geographical location for same condition families i.e an eligible family of 4 members in Prishtina/Priština receives the same amount as an eligible family of 4 in rural remote area. Social assistance is reduced if the family receives any other income, such as remittances or pensions from abroad. It is suspended if the income of the beneficiary family exceeds the minimum subsistence level (the “Gross Monthly Standard Ranking”). It should be noted that the administrative data also indicates that nearly 50% of beneficiaries are children under 18 years of age (Table 5).

**Recent Reforms and Initiatives**

In response to lobbying to remove the ceiling that was set on larger families with 7 members\(^{12}\), a decision was made in November 2015 to increase the monthly social assistance benefit and recalibrate the family size. This was accompanied by a €2 million increase in budget. The beneficial impacts of these measures may however remain limited because very large families comprise only a small proportion of beneficiaries.

As of December 2015 the strategy document SESW has not yet received approval. Reasons include bureaucratic delays, elections and subsequent new priority agenda under the current direction of the Ministry. However, its activities are becoming operational\(^{13}\). In addition to 25% increase in SA being rolled out only recently, increases in pensions are expected and work for a comprehensive system for categorizing pensions is on the way. €23 million euros are proposed to be added to the pension budget for contributors. The office for the strategic planning has set out a list of 36 priorities. Otherwise, decisions on immediate reforms have not been published and there has been no meaningful follow up.

---

\(^{12}\) Decision of the Republic of Kosovo, No.04/59, 17.11.2015

\(^{13}\) Meeting notes 2015: Application before approval.
Poverty Impact

Social assistance is considered to be relatively well targeted towards the poor, but having low coverage and a weak impact on poverty reduction (World Bank, 2007:30), being insufficient to effectively close the poverty gap. About 45 per cent of benefits are estimated to be reaching the poorest quintile of the population, with only 6 per cent going to the richest quintile.

Historically, benefit levels have not matched changes in price levels (ibid: 28), composition of the minimum basket of food consumption, average wages and especially the scale of global price inflation since 2007. Levels of social assistance are legally indexed to inflation, but this has not always been upheld. Even though it is the only benefit that is specifically targeted to poverty alleviation, the Monthly Gross Standard Rates of Social Assistance were not set even at Kosovo’s extreme (food) poverty line - €47 per month for a single-member household - when the scheme was established in 2003. In other words, the monthly amount of Social Assistance has been insufficient to cover even the minimum daily nutritional intake of 2,100 kcal per adult since 2003.

In this context, the monthly benefit has not reflected adequately household needs based on family size and structure. Families with more than seven members received only €75 (2003 – 2009) and then €80 (as of January 2009) until legislative amendments in 2012 removed the payment ceiling adding another €5 per each additional member. A comparison of monthly Social Assistance (including the child allowance of €5 for each child aged 0-18 years that the beneficiaries have been receiving since October 2012) with the extreme poverty line of 2003 shows that its present level is not only inadequate for different sizes of families but diminishes in value and becomes almost negligible as a source of income for the larger ones. For instance, a family of two adults and three children received €85 (€70 per family of five, plus €5 per each child) per month even though the extreme (food) poverty line for such a family was €140 as long as ten years ago. An increase to SA proposed as of November 2015 needs to be assessed for its poverty impact against rising costs of living since the last change in 2012 (Table 5).

3.4.2 Social Care Services

Administration

Social Care Services is a program that provides professional services and protection for Kosovoars, ranging from child protection to protection of adults and the elderly. It directly supervises the professional work of the civil service and social service providers towards the population in need, without distinction of persons by ethnic group. Services care and protection services focus among others on:

- The protection of abandoned children without parental care,
- Family reunification; housing,
- Temporary accommodation and protection of abandoned children awaiting adoption,
- Guardianship and foster care (without compensation) for children without both parents; those that have fled to their relatives, children that are in danger,
- Protection of children with antisocial behaviour.
- Help for families following marriage breakdown,
- Mental health care, protection from domestic violence and trafficking being that domestic or foreign,
- Long –term Care for the elderly and persons with mental and physical disabilities.
Competences at the CSW level are in indirect proportion with capacities, in number of staff, quality of training provided, and especially versus no of families in community (1 social worker for an average of 500 families), and they are not specialised by domain but deal with all issues. As a result prevention is not even part of the agenda. CSW usually sign agreements with CSO to do prevention work, which the former don’t monitor due to limited capacities. Social workers tend to only deal with the families that have biggest problems, that are two groups: abandoned children and domestic violence.

235 staff work in residential centres, 50% of €2 million budgeted for salaries, €6-700.000 for services and purchases, €150.000 for capital services (maintenance), and €100.000 for municipal services. All expenses that go directly for 24hrs care of clients are covered by the MLSW. This is a separate budget line code. It hasn’t changed over the years, with light increase in 2013 to reflect inflation and pay for night shift services.

MLSW manages the licensing of social workers, as well as CSOs that provide social services with a renewal time requirement of three years. Currently MLSW has contracts with only 10 CSO’s throughout Kosovo. The CSO’s also provide training for CSW’s. As the budget line for social services and operational costs is the same, municipalities prefer not to spend money buying services directly from CSOs. This has been noticed to affect fostering as municipalities have no interest to develop the service when it can be covered by existing services elsewhere. In real terms, budget allocated to each municipality is unfavourable to big municipalities whose community needs are higher in number and type.

Considerable failings in provision of social care services have been partly attributed to deficiencies in specific professional training of staff employed at SWCs. The de jure licensing relevant to their job profiles is de facto only a formality rather than a competence barrier to employment. As such, there is limited culture of direct accountability or professional development underpinning service delivery.

**Service Provision**

The General Council of Social and Family Services was established to manage and supervise social and family service staff. These services are provided by social and family service staff, who are qualified professionals in the fields of social work, psychology, sociology, law or pedagogy.

As of December 2015, 22 standards for social services were approved but they do not cover all categories of children. Six standards for institutions have not been approved (MLSW).

The scope of social and family services covers direct social care, counseling and, in special cases, material aid for people in need. The target groups of these services include: (i) children lacking parental care, (ii) children exhibiting anti-social behavior due to disturbed relations in their families, (iii) elderly people who are unable to look after themselves, (iv) persons living with disability or with limited physical capacities, (v) people with limited mental capacities, (vi) people exposed to risks such as exploitation or abuse, domestic violence and trafficking and (vii) people addicted to alcohol or drugs.
Care can be provided in the person’s own home, in another family, in a specialised centre or day care in a residential facility. The momentum of reform is towards providing community mental health services and a deinstitutionalisation of care. Old people’s homes are provided in Mitrovica, Skenderaj/Serbica, Gjakova/Dakovica, while in the capital the available shelter for the elderly is the “House for Elderly People without Family Care” in Prishtina/Priština, with a capacity to provide for 130 individuals. Within the institutional care service there are also 24-hour services for persons with mental disabilities and long term care for the elderly. Funded from donor support, there is sporadic provision of assistance through home help. The MLSW runs special institutions that provide accommodation or provides emergency shelter for persons in need. A special institution in Shtime/Štimlje treats adults suffering from mental illness. In 2008, it had 127 residents.

The House of the Elderly in Prishtina/Priština accommodates 110 persons. There are also residential institutions which provide temporary shelter for orphans or abandoned children. Residential centres include people that fulfill criteria for 2 categories: old people with no families that need support 24 hrs/day; and persons with intellectual disability without family (23 persons).

Women victims of violence are partially covered under programs of MLSW and other organisations. By law social orphans can’t be adopted, and there are about 70 children whose families are unable to keep them. Policy favors fostering over institutionalisation, so care is aimed to find appropriate arrangements for children so their stay in transitional homes is less than a year. There remains, however, a small category of children in family and blood feud conflict that are very difficult to find fostering arrangements for.

The MLSW and the Ministry of Health hold joint responsibility for the operation of the institutional care facility in Shtime/Štimlje, which was operational under the previous regime, and which now provides services to about 70 patients with psychiatric care needs. One social worker usually divides time - 4 days spread across mental health and residential centres managed by MoH (elderly and PwD), and 1 day at CSW. The current trend in psychiatric care is based on the “substitution of institutionalised care with the provision of protected apartments and the promotion of semi-independent living” (interviews) for which the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning is implementing housing construction projects throughout Kosovo to build facilities for social care cases, albeit with uncertain completion dates.

Prisons are administered by MoJ. There are social workers in prison confinements providing social care protection as well as there is separate health services component. However, there is no inspection by MLSW.
**Assistance for vulnerable groups**

Currently very few institutions are able to provide housing assistance and dedicated categorical social care for vulnerable persons, such as women’s refuges or orphans. As it is, social care in Kosovo typically places vulnerable groups in temporary community shelters, which provide neither an adequate nor a stable basis for long-term care.

For victims of trafficking, services include the provision of material aid, money, temporary shelter, food, medical fees, wearing apparel or any other materials necessary for the individual or family emergency, who do not have other source available. Also the services offered through alternative forms such as; support to NGO shelters with 50% of direct services to protect victims of domestic violence and shelter for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking under the contract and cooperation agreement.

The integration and protection of the estimated 40,000 people with disabilities is not ensured in daily life, and persons living with disability face severe hardship in Kosovo in many respects, with no allowance made for disability in schools or hospitals. There is little direct help to assist people with disabilities to access employment opportunities through skills training or placements. Concerning access to school, it is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure transportation of children with disabilities to schools and provide them with educational support based on their individual needs in the mainstream schools and the resource centers. There is little institutional support for persons living with disability and the Council for Persons with Disabilities is not operational. There is a need for capacity development among local NGOs to promote awareness and increase knowledge on disability issues, to identify areas in which adaptations have to be made, to enable access to rights for people with disabilities, and to monitor the protection and violation of such rights.  

Child protection in Kosovo is weak, not integrated at both local and central level and impaired by low budget allocations for education and social protection, coupled with a lack of institutional awareness in central and local Institutions, the judiciary, the police, and medical and educational staff. Statistical data about child labour are lacking, but the phenomenon is visible and widespread, and sometimes in types of work and conditions classified by ILO as the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Hazardous Child Labour, and is widely tolerated and accepted. The phrase ‘It is not a problem in Kosovo’, which was often repeated in interviews that were carried out for this report, highlights the fact that the situation of children in Kosovo will not be secured without increased awareness and determined enforcement.

The social and family service in Kosovo pays special attention to children without parental care due to death, disappearance, abandonment, temporary or permanent lack of knowledge of who their parents are for various reasons. Although an initial effort is made to ensure that children grow up in their biological families, where it is suspected that children are suffering serious physical or mental abuse or are in danger in their own family, a standard court procedure may be initiated to remove the children from the parental or caretaker’s home and accommodate them under more secure conditions. In response to the growing number of children who need care, many centres have been opened in collaboration with various non-governmental organisations to provide short-term and long-term accommodation for

---

children. The children’s situation is constantly monitored by the DSW to guarantee adequate protection. For this purpose, the necessary financial assistance is provided to foster parents to cover the living, educational and medical expenses of the child.

An issue that has been presented as problematic is the time frame from identifying the child, to the court deciding the legal status of the child as police have to find next of kin who sometime are abroad and that takes up to 2-3 years.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

There are many issues that affect monitoring and evaluation of the social services. Standards for Elderly in Long Term Care are being drafted. For PwD in residential services, standards have not been developed.

CSW work is overseen by the Division of Social Services within the DSW, which has four coordinators each of which monitors a particular area. Care through adoption or foster care; Protection of child; Domestic violence, trafficking and sexual crimes and Family Services and legislation. Coordinators monitor and advise the CSW staff on the implementation of policies and regulations, monitor the number of cases and the status of customers using a database of social services and providing guidance and training if needed for CSW staff in their respective scope.

Decentralisation of the management of services is perceived to have affected communication and reporting links between the MLSW and CSW. Current reporting is done mainly on quantitative outputs for example: number of beneficiaries, type of service received, when they joined the scheme and time they left the scheme. There is no analysis neither at the local level nor between them and the central level in terms of understanding community dynamics, needs complexities and local based solutions. “Social workers have neither time, nor resources to go out in the community and do preventive work. They only deal with crisis after it happens”. Equally so, there is lack of communication between SA staff and those working on social services which impairs the overall social protection outcomes at the municipal level.

Municipal leadership is political, and as they are changed every 4 years, human capital is lost. This has shown to have a considerable impact on the CSW - “quite often the fate of CSW depends on the social understanding of the head of the municipality” The social work centres usually have 1-2 employees who are mainly health workers, sociologists or lawyers by training. Prishtina/Priština with 200-300.000 inhabitants has 3 centres.

Other social service providers from the CSOs are licensed by MLSW for 3 years. They are required to have at least 2 licensed staff social worker and/or a lawyer. Licensing of individuals is conducted by a council that consists of 21 members including representatives from the ministry, municipality, social work centers, other line ministries, CSO’s and university. They have a 4 year mandate and are also responsible for the code of ethics.

A success story from the municipality of Prizren offers an example that good will and a minority of committed individuals can bring about major changes in society, even where plans and strategies are failing. The commune of Prizren allocated an increase of €150 per foster family which has resulted increase of four more foster families. The commune of Prishtina took similar steps that resulted in an increase of 5 families.
4. Policy Gaps and Implementation Challenges

Social development in Kosovo is chiefly at risk from the deep financial, institutional and social capital resource constraints it bears. Overcoming institutional constraints will be critical in specifically enabling social development in relation to key issues such as education for Kosovo’s young population, health care (health indicators in Kosovo are among the worst in SEE) and in reducing poverty alleviation. A common challenge for governments in provision of social welfare is in building capacity to achieve necessary coverage while ensuring sustainable financing for programs (EC 2012). Social protection in Kosovo has been defined by resource constraints since its inception, and the system still lacks programs for issues such as unemployment and disability, which are considered core programs elsewhere.

4.1 Institutions and stakeholders

Legal and Strategic framework

The legal framework is considered clear and reasonably complete, yet policy makers need to be mindful of related developments outside their portfolio that impact at policy and administrative level e.g. child protection for reasons of coherence. Policy reform and innovation should focus on closing these gaps.

The 2009 - 2013 strategy represented an important milestone in domestic policy development with valid aims and objectives. However, as the vision showed, the strategy was an essentially inward facing document, that focused heavily on institutional issues and supply side reforms. Some reason for this may be found in the extensive budgetary constraints policy makers face: costing and implementation considerations mean new large-scale initiatives are difficult to implement, and therefore don’t pass into policy.

The larger aims of the strategy, such as active labour market measures didn’t find political backing that translated into budgeting and were heavily contingent on donor support. Another contributing factor was a lack of data on poverty and other vulnerabilities, even for data that might be thought to be available from program administration, which caused policy making to centre on administrative concerns rather than be informed by beneficiary perspectives. Even though the document was consulted on and the process was nominally participatory, its rationale and importance were not extensively communicated. Consultation should be incorporated at the earliest opportunity, if only for information gathering in the first instance, not only at the point at which strategy has been effectively formulated and detailed.

Social welfare policies in Kosovo need to develop the foundations for a robust evidence-based approach to policy making, from analysis to implementation. While it has been planned that the Institute for Social Policy (ISP) joins the DSW, it should nevertheless focus on carrying out research and design social policies that reflect real needs using data generated by all existing social protection programmes. Its role in the past was nothing like it should be. Challenged by limited expertise, little knowledge of social policy cycle, inability to use data for policy making and undermined by systems of benefits that lack integration. This institute has been in real need of assistance to enable it to become the core unit that can influence policy changes affecting the population in need.
None of the departments in the MLSW carry out qualitative analysis of the data they possess, leading as a result to an institutional memory loss. It seems the vast amount of effort in training the staff, failed to set the basis for developing the practice of evidence based policy making. Furthermore, policy making and administrative capacity is also severely undermined by a lack of adequate data needed for effective public administration. There is also a lack of evaluative studies of policy initiatives and sectoral strategies. The Kosovo Agency for Statistics (KAS) is under-resourced to carry out its role as the main information provider for institutions. It has a limited and insufficient number of statisticians and other qualified staff, while the budget does not enable the organisation to develop its website, or to publish enough printed copies of its publications. The result is that ASK cannot provide adequate information to either the institutions or to the public.

Administration and Financing

There is need for greater coordination vertically within administrative lines and horizontally between portfolios. A Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare functional and organisational review (MLSW 2008) found MLSW efficiency to be diminished because of institutional fragmentation. This results in little or no policy coordination between divisions, disenabling beneficial policy linkages that could be established on the back of MTEF, IPA, MLSW/DSPFW systems and data (KAS). Equally, this impacts administrative efficiencies, so a great deal of redundancy and functional overlap exists between separate departments, especially on services such as claim processing and IT (that could be outsourced or turned into profit centres). Of greatest concern is that there is no unit within the Ministry in charge of monitoring strategies and M&E is distributed to different MLSW portfolios.

There is a need for reorganisation of current MLSW structures, human capacity building and strengthening of communication in the area of social welfare. All these issues contain relevant measures and actions as part of this plan. Local administrations, are under equipped to carry out many of the new tasks which they find themselves responsible for. Capacity deficits are even greater at this level of the public administration than they are at the central level.

There are clear concerns over the decentralisation process with a lack of decentralisation of social service support mechanisms and effective regulatory structures at local or municipal level. Municipalities are not fully implementing responsibilities for social service decentralisation and the budget formula for decentralisation, developed in 2012, is still barely yet operational. The EU found that “On social protection, the first round of licensing of individual social and family service providers has been completed and the second phase of licensing legal entities/organisations has started. In 2014, four new minimum standards for social and family services were adopted, increasing the number to 16. However, the decentralisation of social services has still not been implemented by municipalities and allocation of funding from the central budget is still needed to ensure effective decentralisation. Budget constraints have delayed the introduction of the new pension scheme” (EU, 2015).

Dedicated grants earmarked for all social services in municipal budgets need to be allocated to ensure effective decentralisation. Refusals to set a separate budget line for financing of social serves at the municipal level are unfounded. Furthermore, such refusal is having a long term impact on development of social services
and the people in need. Current tensions between MLSW’s agency function and municipal autonomy arise from this and worries about weak capacities at the local level diminishing confidence in the quality of social service delivery. Better inter-ministerial coordination of actions and allocation of resources is required to provide effective services (EU 2012). There is need to improve CSW reporting and meeting with DSW.

The MLSW has analysed and evidenced a number of issues that needs to be addressed. Institutional capacities remain weak and their functions lack coordination, and these will be difficult political issues to address. The social assistance system demonstrates the risks inherent in a process of decentralization which lacks sufficient accountability. Decentralisation has also not brought great improvements. Moreover, there is insufficient administrative capacity for dealing with what are generally routine caseloads. Equally, with little visibility from the centre into the local level and little information sharing across municipalities, the result has been deficient tracking mechanisms and a lack of follow up on policy initiatives.

Regarding social welfare and family services, there is sufficient quantitative capacity comparable to smaller EU Member States. However, there is a need to improve the performance of current resources with the aim of developing and providing advanced services in line with international standards. Internal communication, reporting and administration processes need restructuring. Also there is a number of units in each department dealing with claims, IT, archives and payments. This is considered as an issue which generates inefficiencies and hampers the provision of quality administrative and financial services. For addressing restructuring needs, improvement of staff performance, reduction of certain units, a number of measures are set as part of this plan. With the aim of strengthening social welfare system for poor and vulnerable households, through various transfers of public income, the objective is oriented in setting minimal income and tackling the poverty, development and provision of quality community-based services, cooperation and strengthening of partnerships at all civil society levels and responsible institutions for developing a communication and data exchange network. (MLSW Strategic Development Plan 2012-2014)

4.2 Policy gaps and Programme Efficacy

Equity and Coverage

Despite the aim for social protection to offer support through the life course, real assistance is not in place for many issues, and otherwise often not accessible, and typically inadequate and of variable quality. Support is often not based on identified real needs but determined by constraints on the supply-side. Social schemes are not able to cover all social categories in need of social assistance. Social assistance benefits are not enough to meet accepted nutritional standards.

An outstanding issue in social protection is the limited budget allocated to social assistance from the social welfare budget. In the period covered by the previous strategy, spending on pensions and war veterans doubled, while SA declined marginally. In the context of monetary inflation and rising general prices we should note that this represents a decline in SA spending in real terms (that is adjusted for inflation) and represents a fall in real terms of the purchasing power of beneficiaries. It can be expected that the program will experience growing demand for the foreseeable future. Social assistance is likely to continue to be heavily oversubscribed, even with many of the poor (especially Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians) out of reach of the system.
Unlike social services, social assistance has no set service standards. There is need for a global in-depth analysis of the scheme, beneficiaries and impacts. Little administrative use is made of beneficiary data either for poverty assessment or to determine program efficacy. This would enable proper assessment of prior issues such as uniform benefit ratings in which payments don’t reflect variations in local cost of living. For instance, the level of social assistance is the same for people in the capital Pristina/Priština as everywhere else, however general price levels will not be uniform.

There has been limited improvement to social services in terms of either quality, quantity or variety of provision. There is a need to regulate a complete social and family service administration at central and local levels, introduction of high standards for quality services, registration of organisations, community-based initiatives and professionals in the area of social services.

Access to social services provided by Kosovo institutions is often difficult. Vulnerable groups especially have limited alternatives to care and even essential services. Institutions are poorly equipped to deal with emergency cases, such as in trafficking or domestic violence. In these cases coordination between Kosovo Institutions and CSOs is poor.

An obstacle to improvement here is the passive and remedial nature of the social protection system, which offers little to lift beneficiaries out of poverty or to orient beneficiaries towards the labour market. This is especially pertinent to the situation for youth. Inclusion of all youth from the most marginalised and rural areas, with a focus on minorities and youth as well needs to be incorporated into social protection.

**Child Sensitive Perspective**

It is important to assess the impact of social protection on children since their status as dependents means that they are more vulnerable than others in society. In the absence of specific programs targeted to children, unlike pensioners and war veterans for example, it becomes crucial that existing policies and programs are examined for how well they incorporate elements or linkages that directly address children’s needs. Child sensitivity can be analysed by the means in which programme design ensures that benefits reach children Marcus and Pereznieto (2011). Kosovo’s social assistance has a limited poverty impact, but the benefit to children can only be guessed as the benefit is paid on a household basis. Still, benefit levels remain low for families with large numbers of children. The necessity for improving the coverage and efficiency of the social protection system, particularly in respect of the needs of children, persons with disabilities, and elderly persons, has been highlighted in the EC Progress Report 2010: “Overall, child protection remains weak. Tangible efforts are needed to guarantee and enforce children’s right. The needs of the socially vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities require more commitments”.

This issue is likely to be of increasing political importance to Kosovo in light of current EU initiatives and calls for greater action on children in line with UNICEF’s vision and agenda (“Reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty,” European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 (2014/2237(INI)).
Table 6: Social protection in Kosovo assessed: a Child-Sensitive analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child-sensitive Issue</th>
<th>Impacts of the issue on children</th>
<th>Responsive program</th>
<th>Program Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income poverty</td>
<td>Material poverty and deprivation</td>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>limited poverty reduction and coverage of poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to essential services</td>
<td>• variable quality of health services;</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>free health care &amp; maternity services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• variation in outcomes, length of school career, and attainments</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>free education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rights - Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are excluded from both health and education services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• out of pocket expenses affect children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &amp; maternal nutrition</td>
<td>food poverty still persisting with increasing numbers of social orphans</td>
<td>no systematic provision</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour</td>
<td>exclusion from education; health, safety and social risks, violates children's rights</td>
<td>social services</td>
<td>limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of abuse and neglect</td>
<td>negative impacts on child development and wellbeing and violates children's rights</td>
<td>social services</td>
<td>limited because it’s not preventive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equity</td>
<td>impacts girls’ life chances by discriminating by gender and undermining children’s rights</td>
<td>protecting women in domestic violence situations</td>
<td>positive, yet limited, with limited resources available and not focused on prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Rights</td>
<td>essential to child development and wellbeing as exclusion starts from birth;</td>
<td>various schemes of benefits make fragmented provisions for children</td>
<td>very little, as children policies are not embedded in all policy making; policies are not cohesive, do not prioritise children’s rights; need to educate that investing in children is cost-effective to future social protection expenditure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Conclusions and policy implications

It is clear that the widespread and chronic nature of poverty in Kosovo poses an enormous challenge for the Kosovo and its social partners. Indeed, stakeholders are tasked with addressing one of the most pressing and so far intractable of social issues with very limited resources at their disposal.

The residual system of social protection currently in place has struggled to deliver on its expectations even during a period of consistently strong economic growth. Given diminished growth expectations in the medium term and typically increased pressures on social budgets from both supply and demand side, present arrangements certainly can not be expected to produce more favourable outcomes than before.

Low growth periods in the economic cycle have often been periods in which policy makers are asked to innovate in the pursuit of better outcomes alongside greater efficiencies. The question then remains as to how Kosovo can best prepare for the road ahead. This report suggests that needs to refine and develop its programs beyond being single-issues vehicles that deliver remedial assistance, into a suite of preventive measures that try to break the cycle of poverty and bring wider social benefits. It posits that a path for reform should be set out that situates social protection more coherently in the wider policy landscape. This is especially important given Kosovo’s European Union Accession goals and international commitments, notably in Human Rights and Children’s Rights. Notably, poverty and deprivation levels among children are counter to institutions economic and political aims. Mainstreaming children’s issues will be an important step for political, social and economic development, as well as for securing the children’s rights.

Countries which spend higher proportions of their GDP on social protection (excluding pensions), tend to have the lowest poverty rates (CEC, 2008). This would imply that governments should aim for a higher proportional spend, should treat this as social investment and seek to capitalise on social gains that arise. Reforms therefore need to be underpinned by strengthening of governance, and crucially to be coupled with more appropriate commitment to what should rightly be seen as social investments, putting to one side political expediency and short-termism. Global evidence has demonstrated that investment in child-sensitive, integrated social protection systems can help to secure children’s rights, increase human capital and enhance countries’ economic and social achievements (UNICEF 2105b). From this perspective, it follows that social protection systems should directly or indirectly address children’s specific needs and vulnerabilities in order to reap the maximum benefits of social protection (UNICEF, 2015b).

Naturally, cash assistance has more direct impact on family poverty (Bradshaw, 2012), but there are a range of vulnerabilities and needs that can only be met through developing quality services. Policies that address childhood poverty and disadvantage have been found to bring better outcomes, not least in that they are more likely to reduce the chance that beneficiaries will experience poverty in adulthood. They can also bring wider benefits to families. For instance, childcare programs enable parents to enter the labour market, which brings with it potentially strong poverty reduction impacts.
To deliver on this would require planning and development of a systems approach that “highlights the different structures and mechanisms that enable social protection to address multiple vulnerabilities in an integrated manner” (UNICEF, 2011). This entails a process and path of reform at all levels of governance, policy, programs and systems aiming towards an integrated system of social protection, that utilises linkages between social protection and outcomes in different sectors, such as education and health and brings measurable improvements to service quality.

Recommendations of this report constitute a roadmap for reform that are focused on two related goals:

- **Outcome 1**: Improvements to current provision including increasing coverage and impacts of cash assistance; sustainable social services financing and assessment of program impact and efficacy for vulnerable families.
- **Outcome 2**: Consensus on locally defined minimum social security guarantees aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.

Reforms also need to be accompanied by strengthened governance, and underpinned by appropriate fiscal commitment. It is envisaged that an extensive and ongoing process of consultation with all stakeholders will be required to support the reform path. Through this, the potential of social protection as a contributing factor in future equitable social and economic development may begin to be realised.

### 5.1 Outcome 1: Improving social protection instruments

To effectively address poverty and deprivation across multiple, interlinked dimensions protection systems need to be integrated into broader economic and social policies. This may take the form of cash benefits and services being linked and coordinated with care, early learning, education, health, and other services that benefit children and families.

Programs need to be strengthened and improved in terms of policy design and legislation, aiming towards a basic income security for all children at a universally defined minimum level for Kosovo. Capacities need to be built to enable effective implementation that ensure equitable, inclusive access to quality supporting services.

Cash assistance – expansion of coverage (revision of criteria etc.) combined with continued improvement of adequacy (such as the recent increase) linked to supporting families in need under the poverty line.

- Here, criteria could be weighted rather than a binary model relying on categorical exclusion. i.e. in the current system, not meeting on criteria causes ineligibility.
- Sustainable financing for social services (e.g. specific grant) that can allow exploring possibilities for Social and family support services that can help strengthen families’ resilience and capacity to cope with risks, while linking families to basic social and other (protection, legal) services.
- The need for assessing the existing social protection instruments and their effectiveness and impact on vulnerable families.
• Undertake prioritised needs assessments utilising findings from new and recent studies to enable better resource allocation. Currently, outside of these studies, administrative data provides gross estimates of service demand that serve as a proxy for need in policy making. However, such data can be neither comprehensive nor nuanced to situation.

• Conduct impact assessments of social protection programmes, incorporating a rights and equity perspective.

• Work to integrate an equity focus into the implementation of existing programmes at the earliest opportunity.

• Ally this to an outcome based approach for cash and service based programs, facilitated by an evolving indicator framework to be developed. To develop a more complete picture of poverty dynamics as well as across dimensions of deprivation/need, including health and educational outcomes.

• Conduct a potential cost benefit analysis of rebalancing social investments against continuing with current short-term categorical priorities.

• Examine the relative potential costs and poverty impacts of a targeted/supplemental allowance against conditional cash transfers for children.

• Engage an ancillary supporting study into the potential for development of a role for remittance inflows, impacts of brain drain and migration, examining also the coping strategies of “those left behind” and the opportunity cost of informal welfare. This becomes imperative in the context of recent mass emigration.

• Gain political support for scaling up and/or out social protection programmes on a ROI using the basis of assessed needs and capacities at central (Kosovo-wide) and local level.

• Develop an adaptive, realistic multi-year plan for operationally adopting international standards (where established) and for utilising essential indicators that will support the reform process.

• Data and information – and the importance of them, not only for adding the numbers in the database, but for having a functional database that will be serve as basis to inform policy and programs at all levels.

5.2 Outcome 2 - Social Protection Reform

A call for a consensus for a well defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all those in need have access to essential health care and basic income security, be it in the form a Social Protection Floor or a PRSP.

A result of years of focus on program efficiency over efficacy has been that social assistance has become an increasingly residual scheme. Most of the beneficiaries of social assistance are poor, but most of the poor aren’t beneficiaries of social assistance. Its poverty impact has naturally declined compared to other benefits such as pensions. We should also recognise this means that pensioners are more often utilising their benefits to support the wider family rather than for themselves - pension benefits are being repurposed into family benefits.
In terms of overall aims, programming could focus on three aspects:

1. Local leadership needs to be developed in the context of further decentralisation and transfer of powers to local level. Local actors should be the main driver for increased access to services, widened service portfolio and provision, and the development of more plural markets. Civil society and the social partners should be empowered and encouraged to partner in developing and implementing social protection programs. Their participation can help promote efficiency in provision as well as wider consultation and inclusion. They can play a key role as advocates for social protection as well as empowering communities and individuals, in particular the disadvantaged and excluded, through raising awareness and improving information. In some instances, they can also assist in monitoring and evaluating social protection schemes.

2. To ensure that men and women benefit equally, social protection systems must address women’s life-cycle risks and the burden of care that they bear, as well as the impediments to women’s access to work. Kosovo should ensure that gender-related concerns are addressed in social protection policy and programme design. [EU 2012]

3. Gathering evidence about the specificities of child poverty and vulnerability is “crucial to inform better child-sensitive responses, particularly through detailed country-level studies, rigorously evaluated pilot projects and the promotion of information sharing” (EU 2012)

The protective functions of social protection are intended to mitigate the effects of shocks, exclusion and poverty on families, recognising that families raising children need support to ensure equal opportunity. In a child-sensitive context, policy might aim to:

- Avoid adverse impacts on children, and reduce or mitigate social and economic risks that directly affect children’s lives. Special provisions should be made for children who are particularly vulnerable and excluded, including children without parental care, and those who are marginalised within their families or communities, through establishment of the children’s fund.
- Achieve better needs matching in the social assistance programme: examine rebalancing payments at regional and individual level to reflect regional variations in cost of living.
- To this end, explore the potential for changes to the general grant mechanism to better match variations in local need and more effectively achieve social goals.
- Begin working towards EU standards in social care (EU Voluntary Framework for Social Care). In that context, strengthen the professionalisation of Social Work as a safeguarding measure and to promote better outcomes.
- Design of social protection should more systematically build on synergies and complementarities with basic social services and child protection. This includes, for example, greater data sharing between agencies in order to pick up abuse or neglect.
- Future development of the preventive potential of social protection should focus on strengthening systems and current provision as well as seeking widening access to information and services. UNICEF has a systems approach to SP reforms that “highlights the different structures and mechanisms that enable social protection to address multiple vulnerabilities in an integrated manner” (UNICEF, 2011). This calls for reforms at all level of governance, policy, programs and systems to achieve an integrated social protection system. This also necessitates a multi-sector approach that utilises linkages between social protec-
tion and outcomes in different sectors, such as education and health. Reforms should aim to avoid adverse incorporation, wherein a system that promises protection but fails to deliver or delivers inadequately or ineffectively, particularly important in child-cases, which can lead to abandonment and trafficking. The idea of adverse incorporation actually presents a strong argument for improving quality and ensuring standards in care service delivery before attempting to widen coverage and accessibility.

Other opportunities for reform include:

- Policy makers should consider age- and gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities of children throughout the lifecycle. They should work from both supply and demand side perspectives. Could incorporate a different approach based on the re-assessment of target groups, regional targeting, lifecycle approach, or an approach that institutions develop in consultation with social partners.
- Multilateral agencies, including UNICEF, the EU office, the World Bank and the ILO, can play a key role in helping develop capacity for more tailored and effective social protection programmes. Pilot projects and local poverty assessments could aid in definition, identification and policy covering vulnerable groups and those in need.
- Kosovo needs to embark on establishing indicators that will make them comparable with other EU countries. The EU is developing EU-SILC to measure social indicators in member countries and to assess progress. Kosovo needs to show commitment to building a solid base for social statistics.
- Gender- and age-disaggregated data should be generated systematically to enable better identification of vulnerable and their needs through evidence.
- Reform Social Assistance to be more responsive to real needs and especially to have measurably better impacts on children
- Child protection is lacking, especially in terms of child monitoring. Systems need to be established to enable intervention as early as possible where children are at risk. Achieving child-sensitive social protection requires a closer analysis of how a protective environment for children and access to child protection interventions can be enhanced through social protection.
- The promotive potential for social protection should focus on target groups of the most vulnerable and excluded in Kosovo, including women, PwD, RAE and Children.
- Consideration should be given to a work incentive schemes for members of households in receipt of social assistance who are able to work.
- Ensure that the forthcoming Strategy for Employment and Social Welfare 2014-2020 has an inclusive, rights based approach, especially regarding children’s, women’s and minorities pathways through Social Care Services.

Finally, towards a more transformative impact for social protection.

- MLSW and other institutions should recast their view of children as individuals with full rights, to realign its priorities and policies accordingly and to communicate this through all its institutions and to the general public.
- MLSW should seek to include the voices and opinions of children, their care givers and youth in the understanding and design of social protection systems and programmes in order to make policy more responsive to real needs. Initiatives may include service level agreements and client care, inclusion in aspects of the policy making planning cycle and participatory budgeting at the local and regional level.
5.3 Governance

Social protection has important linkages with social inclusion that need developing at strategic level and in the Social Protection Action Plan. MLSW consider social protection as a way to achieve better social inclusion and have already completed a DFID project on decentralisation through which they have established an inter-ministerial group for social inclusion and poverty reduction. Led by MLSW, with 11 members from various line ministries and the Office of the Prime Minister, this group should become the driver on inclusion in the context of greater harmonisation with the EU approach.

Political commitments need to be re-established and proven through allocation of sufficient financial resources to social protection. This idea will inspire little in the way of political motivation if social protection is not understood as a form of investment and marker for Kosovo’s values, rather than merely an inconvenient sunk cost. It is important that international donor organisations operating in Kosovo demonstrate the value of continuing to invest in well-designed social protection, to guarantee the availability of fiscal space to meet the goals of poverty reduction and inclusion. Planned/foreseen budget ceilings are already well established through the MTEF, but need to take place in consultation with MLSW and partners at the earliest stages.

Poverty reduction will be achieved through an increase in total fund and higher award levels from improved reach to the poor and extreme poor in the context of other sectorial reforms that bring economic growth. MLSW itself needs to be the standard bearer that makes the case for social protections role in Kosovo’s development.

A financial-based sector review should be undertaken. As a first move, MLSW should aim for cost-containment in pensions and war veteran benefits to cope with increasing demand across the benefits system. Also, a separate budget line should be established for Social Care services.

Donor coordination and Donor support is important to raise knowledge and skills of staff in MLSW to the level of social policy making in other EU countries. UN agencies – particularly UNICEF - which have multiple points of contact and engagement with public bodies can play an important role strengthening interagency communication to better support initiatives.

Other policy issues include the need to:

- Redefine the role of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with regard to identifying the vulnerable, setting standards for social protection such as a minimum package, aligning these with other strategies, and monitoring and reporting on implementation of the strategy activities. However, this report emphasises that direct and extensive consultations should be carried out with direct beneficiaries of social protection schemes as well as random sample of various at risk of poverty groups. Local stakeholders should be involved from early stages of the consultation process.
- The EU should play a stronger role in encouraging Kosovo to better prepare for requirements of achieving membership. Lessons and expertise can be learned from member countries in how they prioritise social budgets. Partners can demonstrate that the social agenda should not be overlooked in the pursuit of adoption of the acquis, but be at the forefront of policy making. A refreshed EU and civil society framework, that includes focus on improving child protection...
should give an impetus for institutions to call on civil society and all partners to develop a social agenda that fits with its long terms European goals to 2020.

- MLSW needs to encourage inter-municipal communication, in particular for CSW, to facilitate learning and best practice. This should also benefit MLSW as the policy making institution. The transfer of powers from central institutions to local administration requires adequate capacity building to ensure effective implementation.

- Participation and accountability structures need strengthening, with focus and development on outcomes as well as outputs. There are profound issues with current monitoring and evaluation systems, wherein service providers are effectively self-regulating and there is little or no independent assessment. Objectives and respective indicators need to be established at the local level within the context of guidelines such as quality standards and outcomes framework.

- Better vertical and horizontal integration of systems to address information asymmetries between MLSW and branches that have resulted from decentralisation. Information management systems and institutional coordination need to be modernised and bolstered to support these.

5.4 National Consultation on Social Protection

Supporting these reforms and initiatives, an ongoing process of National Consultation on Social Protection with stakeholders led by MLSW and supported by partners should be commenced upon at the earliest opportunity. Consulting institutions and partners should work to:

- Articulate a vision and goals for social protection in Kosovo, informed by the transformative and child-centred approaches outlined in this report and engage stakeholders in the process.

- Develop a standalone vision document for social protection that will effectively guide future reform pathways in the context of increasing EU harmonization.

- Gather support and parliament-wide political commitment to the vision for social protection at the central and local level.

- Elaborate a conceptual framework for social protection that will facilitate policy making, mapping and gap analysis. (This will be an evolving document, not once-for-all time)

- Achieve institutional buy in and establish protocols for inter-portfolio collaboration on Social Protection issues, with negotiated defined horizontal and vertical accountability structures in line with data protection standards.

- Enhance institutional capacities for M&E, on the basis that if it “isn’t being measured, it isn’t being managed”.

- Develop a communications strategy that sets out clear messaging and establishes appropriate expectations for the reform process of social protection reform.

- Engage all stakeholders and the public in an inclusive debate on the potential role of social protection in reinvigorating the social compact and supporting Kosovo in its maturation from a post-conflict context into a modern forward-looking European democracy. “What kind of Kosovo do we want for our children?”

Beneficial Linkages should be developed with the framework of the UN Common Development Plan (UNCDP) 2016-2020 (http://Kosovo.unkt.org/public-launching-of-the-un-common-development-plan-2016-2020-in-kosovo/ )
References

- CEC (2008), Commission of the European Communities.
- DFID Technical Briefing Paper: Framing Professional Practice Development Group (PPDG) for the Promotion of Ideas, Knowledge and Best Practice in Social Services.
- DFID Economic Assessment of Social Services in Kosovo: Unit Costs for Social Services, 2011.
- DFID Designing a financing Mechanism for Inter-Municipal Allocation of Resources for Social Services in Kosovo: New Notional Transfer Formula within the General Grant.
- DFID Development of a Social Services Data Reporting Service: In the MLSW.
- DFID Budget and Financial Management Systems for Social Services in Prishtinë, Prizren, Skenderaj, Mitrovica and Raniluge.
- DFID Social Services in Kosovo: Preliminary design of a Financing Mechanism for the Inter-Municipal Allocation of Financial Resources.
- DFID Governance and Funding Arrangements for Social Services in SEE: An Overview.
- DFID Kosovo Social Services Decentralisation Project: Decentralisation of Social Services Data Reporting Service: In the MLSW.


• UNICEF (2015b) Social Monitor 2015: Social Protection for Child Rights and Well-being in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. UNICEF Regional Office For Central And Eastern Europe And Commonwealth Of Independent States


• UNICEF Maternal and Child Health in Kosovo: A Way Forward.


• Williams, P.; Larrison, J.; Stroko, V.; Lindert, K. 2012. Social Safety Nets in Europe and Central Asia: Preparing for Crisis, Adapting to Demographic Change, and Promoting Employability. WB.


• Publications of Kosovo Institutions

• Decisions of the 59th government of Kosovo meetings, November 2015

• Declaration of the mid-term priority policies 2014-2016.


• Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011 - 2016.

• Raport on basic study on out of school children 2013.

• Regulation QRK - NO.21/2013 on control of prevention and referral of violence in pre-university education institutions.

• Action plan on implementing the strategy integration of Roma, Ashkali dhe Egyptian communities in Republic of Kosovo, 2009 - 2015.


ASK

• Kosovo Statistical Yearbook 2015, Accessed at https://ask.rksgov.net/ENG/dmdocuments/Statistical%20Yearbook%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Kosovo%202015.pdf

MLSW

• Sector strategy 2009-2013.


• Strategy and Action plan on prevention and elimination of child labor in Kosovo 2010 - 2016.

• Strategic development Plan 2012 -2014.


• Action plan on prevention and elimination of worst forms of child labour 2011-2013.


MoH
• Analysis of the Health Status of the Population 2012.
• Performance Study on the Health Sector 2012.
• Opinion Survey on Health Care 2013.

Laws
• Law on Family, No. 2004.32.
• Law Nr. 04/L-096 on amending and supplementing the law No 2003/15 on Social Assistance Scheme in Kosovo
• Law Nr.04/L-081 on amending and supplementing the law No 02/L-17 on Social and Family services.
• Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family services.
• Law No.2003/15 on Social Assistance Scheme in Kosovo.
• Draft law on health insurance 2011.
• Kosovo Health Law 2004.
Annex I: Stakeholder Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nenad Rashiq</td>
<td>Former Minister of LSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhamet Gjocaj</td>
<td>Department of social welfare, MLSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fehmi Ibrahimii</td>
<td>SA department, MLSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albulena Grajqevci</td>
<td>PM office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajram Kelmendi</td>
<td>SS department, MLSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qazim Gashi</td>
<td>Residential services, MLSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Morina</td>
<td>MLSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donjeta Kelmendi</td>
<td>KOMF (22 CSOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gani Lluga</td>
<td>SWC Fushe Kosove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Suleman</td>
<td>IMF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selim Thaci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laila Omar Gad, Head of Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Mugaju, Deputy head of office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dren Rexha, Social Protection Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aferdita Spahiu, Education Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozeta Imami, ECD officer,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agron Gashi, Health and Nutrition Officer,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrim Ibrahimii, Child Protection Officer,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Fragiacomo, Child Protection Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardian Xerxa, Youth Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie Baumont</td>
<td>EU office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rrezarta Jashari</td>
<td>GIZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aferdita Tahiri</td>
<td>EU Office Kosovo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex II: Internet Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of Republic of Kosovo</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.kuvendikosoves.org/">http://Kosovo.kuvendikosoves.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.masht.gov/advCms/">http://Kosovo.masht.gov/advCms/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.mshgov-ks.org/">http://Kosovo.mshgov-ks.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance and Economy</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.mfe-ks.org">http://Kosovo.mfe-ks.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry for Community and Returns</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.ks-gov.net/mkk/">http://Kosovo.ks-gov.net/mkk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Office of Kosovo</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.ks-gov.net/esk/">http://Kosovo.ks-gov.net/esk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td><a href="http://Kosovo.unicef.org/kosovo/">http://Kosovo.unicef.org/kosovo/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex III: Social Protection Administrative Data

### Table 1: Social Assistance Spending 2004-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>32,479,078</td>
<td>31,064,949</td>
<td>30,362,418</td>
<td>28,030,083</td>
<td>26,118,831</td>
<td>30,412,081</td>
<td>28,577,179</td>
<td>28,257,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners</td>
<td>54,912,559</td>
<td>59,313,333</td>
<td>61,984,790</td>
<td>63,477,840</td>
<td>66,196,720</td>
<td>67,075,225</td>
<td>92,188,237</td>
<td>104,005,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War invalids</td>
<td>4,552,818</td>
<td>4,960,962</td>
<td>5,333,259</td>
<td>9,173,104</td>
<td>17,877,712</td>
<td>19,374,722</td>
<td>23,509,062</td>
<td>29,249,970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KAS, “Social Welfare in Kosovo”

### Table 2: Numbers of Social Assistance Beneficiaries 2003-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pristina</td>
<td>14,445</td>
<td>12,802</td>
<td>12,111</td>
<td>11,457</td>
<td>10,427</td>
<td>9,166</td>
<td>9,261</td>
<td>9,865</td>
<td>9,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjilan</td>
<td>6,734</td>
<td>6,139</td>
<td>6,101</td>
<td>6,092</td>
<td>5,904</td>
<td>5,368</td>
<td>6,189</td>
<td>6,047</td>
<td>5,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>7,005</td>
<td>6,077</td>
<td>5,680</td>
<td>5,199</td>
<td>4,542</td>
<td>4,106</td>
<td>3,745</td>
<td>4,690</td>
<td>4,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peja</td>
<td>7,535</td>
<td>6,439</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>6,445</td>
<td>6,062</td>
<td>5,988</td>
<td>6,737</td>
<td>6,093</td>
<td>5,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrovica</td>
<td>16,072</td>
<td>13,454</td>
<td>11,910</td>
<td>11,376</td>
<td>10,427</td>
<td>9,679</td>
<td>9,722</td>
<td>9,096</td>
<td>8,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>51,791</td>
<td>44,911</td>
<td>42,052</td>
<td>40,569</td>
<td>37,170</td>
<td>35,654</td>
<td>35,791</td>
<td>34,867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KAS, “Social Welfare in Kosovo”

### Table 3: Social Assistance Scheme 2014 / 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period/year</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>27,389</td>
<td>113,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25,943</td>
<td>107,451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 4: Number Of Members Receiving Social Assistance Benefits By Region 2003-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gjilan</td>
<td>26,428</td>
<td>25,803</td>
<td>25,952</td>
<td>26,178</td>
<td>25,693</td>
<td>23,372</td>
<td>24,191</td>
<td>27,574</td>
<td>26,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>28,991</td>
<td>27,029</td>
<td>27,320</td>
<td>23,523</td>
<td>21,977</td>
<td>18,572</td>
<td>16,951</td>
<td>18,225</td>
<td>17,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peja</td>
<td>29,047</td>
<td>27,176</td>
<td>25,784</td>
<td>28,472</td>
<td>27,130</td>
<td>27,025</td>
<td>30,212</td>
<td>30,161</td>
<td>29,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrovica</td>
<td>52,818</td>
<td>49,775</td>
<td>45,659</td>
<td>44,621</td>
<td>41,182</td>
<td>38,257</td>
<td>39,027</td>
<td>37,992</td>
<td>35,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>192,271</td>
<td>184,974</td>
<td>178,121</td>
<td>174,131</td>
<td>162,443</td>
<td>149,227</td>
<td>152,508</td>
<td>157,329</td>
<td>151,767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KAS, “Social Welfare in Kosovo”
# Annex IV: Coverage of Social Protection programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Type of intervention</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social assistance • social services • sickness benefit • maternity benefit • benefit for families that have children of 1-18 years old permanently disabled • persons living with disability benefit • health and safety • work related illness • Long term care • social housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Kosovo-wide • Kosovo-wide by need assessment • 3060 children • 575 cared at home • 70 children in foster care • categorical • Kosovo-wide and by need assessment, in two main residential care centres Pristina, Shtime and 9 community centers(?) • by local community initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Income poverty alleviation for means-tested households • care services for categories in need • employment related statutory? benefit for all eligible families • persons 18-65 that are unable to work • residential care for the elderly • housing for categories in need, as defined by local authorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>Contributory Pensions</td>
<td>Kosovo-wide coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td>• active labour, public works, war veterans pensions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• pilot or local • category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td></td>
<td>• International conventions including: • Human Rights; • Children’s rights (CRC); • Women’s rights (CEDAW); • Enabling Legal framework: • Employment law • Law for persons with disability • Law on pensions • Law 03/L-022 Law on material support for families of children with permanent disabilities • Law no.2004/32 on Family • Law no. 02/L-17 on social and family services • Law no. 2003/15 on the scheme of social assistance in Kosovo</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Status: • Signatory. • Ratified. • Extent to which implemented/mainstreamed in policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary to anti-poverty measures</td>
<td></td>
<td>health, education, child protection, provisions on reducing GBV</td>
<td>Various programs by multi-agency, inter-ministerial etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Strategy and global objectives</td>
<td>Applicable law</td>
<td>Stakeholders &amp; partners</td>
<td>Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Law on Social Assistance 2003/15</td>
<td>MLSW Regional CSW</td>
<td>Social assistance Asset and income means-tested cash benefit to support residential households to without income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local CSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployment is a major cause of poverty. No program for the newly unemployed. The scheme is quite well targeted with minor levels of leakage. It does however fail to reach many families in severe poverty, notably among minorities. Children with disabilities receive conditional support. Poor and other children do not benefit from any specific support and are missed out by all programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strategy and global objectives</th>
<th>Applicable law</th>
<th>Stakeholders &amp; partners</th>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Action plan</th>
<th>Policy gaps</th>
<th>Implementation gaps</th>
<th>Priority Actions/Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Benefit for all eligible families that have children of 1-18 years old permanently disabled</td>
<td>Average benefit award: €60/month</td>
<td>Poverty Gap</td>
<td>Cost of living index</td>
<td>€150/month</td>
<td>3060 children, €100/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action plan</td>
<td>Policy gaps</td>
<td>Implementa- tion gaps</td>
<td>Priority Actions/Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing to generate evidence about the specificities of child poverty and vulnerability is &quot;crucial to inform better child-sensitive responses, particularly through detailed Kosovo-wide level studies, rigorously evaluated pilot projects and the promotion of information sharing. With support of partners, conduct small area poverty assessments (<a href="https://Kosovo.census.gov/did/Kosovo/">https://Kosovo.census.gov/did/Kosovo/</a> saipe/index.html) in order to ascertain if uniform kosovo-wide benefit rates are appropriate for cost of living variations across regions. This should also incorporate gender-related concerns are addressed in social protection policy and programme design. [EC 2012] Better links between SA and SCS - also link with child protection - severe poverty, abuse or neglect, - also social orphans. Achieve better needs matching in the social assistance programme: examine rebalancing payments at regional and individual level to reflect regional variations in cost of living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Strategy and global objectives</td>
<td>Applicable law</td>
<td>Stakeholders &amp; partners</td>
<td>Provision Employment related: Persons 18-65 that are unable to work Maternity benefit - 12 months Sickness benefit: 20 working days Health and safety: Work related illness Social housing: housing for categories in need, as defined by local authorities</td>
<td>Indicators by local community initiative</td>
<td>Action plan</td>
<td>Policy gaps</td>
<td>Implementation gaps</td>
<td>Priority Actions/Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN: Mapping Social Protection In Kosovo
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strategy and global objectives</th>
<th>Applicable law</th>
<th>Stakeholders &amp; partners</th>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Action plan</th>
<th>Policy gaps</th>
<th>Implementation gaps</th>
<th>Priority Actions/Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social vulnerabilities</td>
<td>Law on Social and Family Services 02/L -17</td>
<td>MLSW Regional CSW Local CSW NGO’s Private sector partners</td>
<td>Social Care services including: Long term care for the elderly Fostering services Children’s homes</td>
<td>Care services for categories in need Residential care for the elderly 575 cared at home 70 children in foster care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roles: decentralisation</td>
<td>Children policies are not embedded in all policy making; policies are not cohesive, do not prioritise children’s rights; need to educate that investing in children is cost-effective to future social protection expenditure. Develop local leadership: suggest strengthening of inter-communal or regional structures to facilitate learning and best practice. Institutional frameworks and mechanisms for facilitating vertical and horizontal integration; Tackle the information asymmetries between centre and branches caused by decentralisation, and use metrics to facilitate comparative evaluation between branches. Participation and accountability structures: outcomes as well as outputs. Monitoring and evaluation: Service providers also do monitoring, no evaluation. Objectives and respective indicators. Information management systems. Structures and process of monitoring and institutional coordination. Local actors should be the main driver for increased access to services, widened provision, and the development of more plural markets. Civil society and the social partners should be empowered and encouraged to partner with the central and municipal level Institutions in developing and implementing social protection systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Strategy and global objectives</td>
<td>Applicable law</td>
<td>Stakeholders &amp; partners</td>
<td>Provision</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Action plan</td>
<td>Policy gaps</td>
<td>Implementation gaps</td>
<td>Priority Actions/Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment to the Law on Social and Family Services 04/L-081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision by needs assessment, in two main residential care centres Prishtina, Shtime and 9 community centres.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Services in kind are free at the point of delivery. However out of pocket expenses can impact the poor. Kosovo-wide availability, however quality and number of service provision is variable, with some areas underserved or not served at all.</td>
<td>Multilateral agencies, including UNICEF, the EU office, the World Bank and the ILO, can play a key role in helping develop capacity for more tailored and effective social protection programmes for vulnerable urban children. Pilot projects could make a particular contribution here Early warning system, child protection - domestic violence &amp; trafficking. Quality standards. Conduct a desk review inside MLSW and municipalities offices, to feed into the design and implementation of an administrative quality assurance program with error and motivational linkages to financial stakes of actors. Focus on outcomes. Strengthen the professionalisation of SW, Strengthen safeguards for children and vulnerable (orphans) Better case management and child monitoring. Gender- and age-disaggregated data should be generated systematically to enable better identification of vulnerable and their needs through evidence. Kosovo needs to embark on establishing indicators that will make them comparable with other EU countries. The EU has built EU-SILC to measure social indicators in member countries and to assess progress. Kosovo needs to show commitment to building a solid base for statistics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface: f. 4

1. Tahiraj, Enkeleida
