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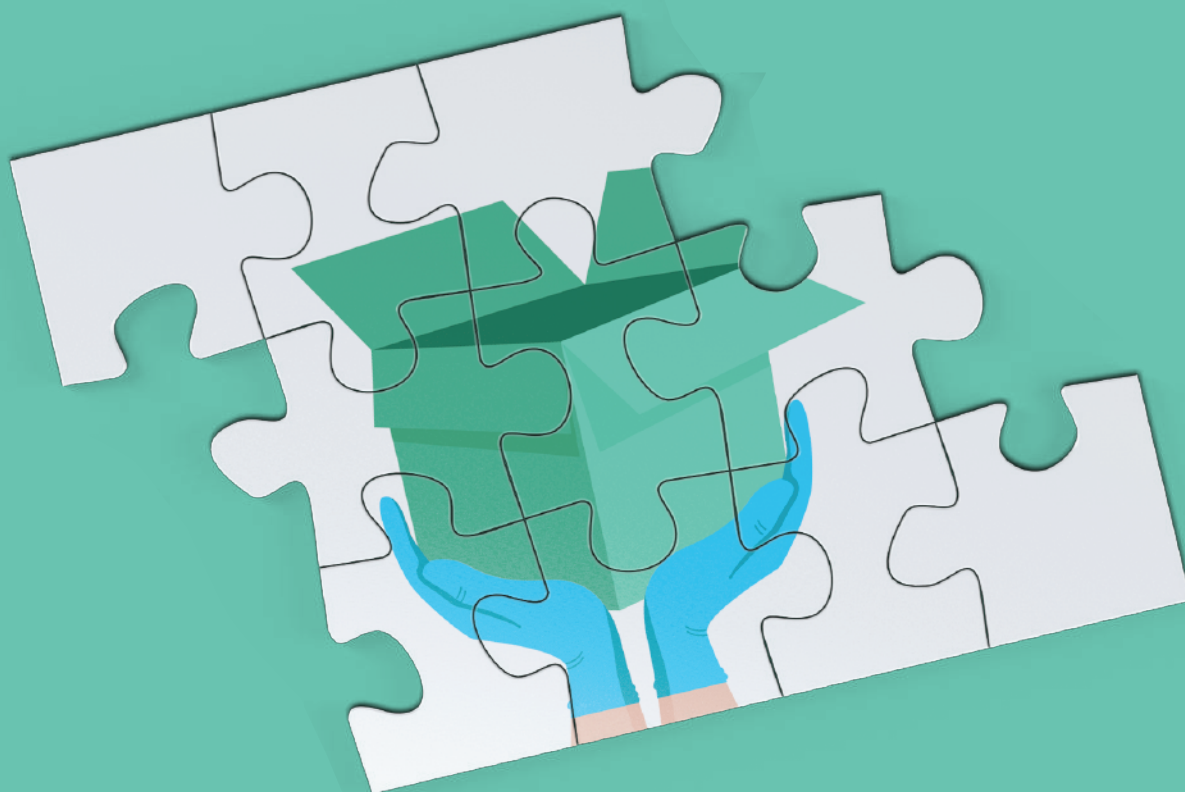


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SOCIAL SERVICES IN PANDEMIC TIMES

MONITORING REPORT ON THE PROCESS
OF DECENTRALIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES



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- Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare in Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Ferizaj, Fushë Kosova, Lipjan and Kamenica
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare – Department of Social and Family Policies
- Ministry of Finance – Department of Budget
- Non – Governmental Organizations

ABBREVIATIONS

Covid-19	Coronavirus Disease
DSW	Municipal Directorate of Social Welfare
DSFP	Department of Social and Family Policies
MDHSW	Municipal Directorate of Health and Social Welfare
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
KOMF	Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection
LLGF	Law on Local Government Finance
LSFS	Law on Social and Family Services
LLSG	Law on Local Self-Government
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
MF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSW	Center for Social Work
SOS	SOS Children's Villages Kosovo
AI	Administrative Instruction

INTRODUCTION

The decentralization process of social services commenced in 2009, with the transfer of competencies from the central level (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare) to the municipalities of Kosovo. The transfer of competencies was based on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Local Government Administration, the Ministry of Finance and the municipalities, signed in 2009.

The purpose of decentralization of social services was to bring these services as close as possible to the citizens.

Social services in Kosovo are regulated by Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services, Law No. 04/L-081 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services and Law No. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government.

According to the LSFS, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is the institution responsible for all policies, licensing, monitoring, inspection and regulatory issues related to operation and social welfare. Meanwhile, according to the LLSG, municipalities have full and exclusive competencies for the provision of social and family services within their territory. Regarding the financing of social services, according to the Law on Local Government Finance, they are financed by the General Grant and municipal own-source revenues.

Based on the applicable legislation, social and family services include the protection and provision of services to citizens in need of social services. Whereas public institutions and non-governmental organizations, are the social services providers.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the Monitoring Report on the Decentralization Process of Social Services for 2020, is the reflection of the current situation on the full implementation of this process. In addition, through this report, it is aimed to measure the progress of the decentralization process compared to 2019.

The report provides concrete findings and recommendations for improving the situation where deficiencies are observed. All recommendations are based on documents, research, international and domestic practices, as well as recommendations of the stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the decentralization process.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of drafting the report relies on data collection based on the qualitative method that includes theoretical analysis and field research. Specifically, this monitoring report is based on:

- Analysis of legislation;
- Analysis of relevant publications;
- Interviews with relevant representatives in the area of social and family services.

Specifically, a total of 28 interviews were conducted in seven municipalities of Kosovo. Interviews were conducted with representatives of central and municipal level:

- Two (2) interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Department of Social and Family Policies;
- One (1) interview with representative of the Ministry of Finance, Department of Budget;
- Six (6) interviews with representatives of the Directorates of Health and Social Welfare in six (6) municipalities of Kosovo;
- Seven (7) interviews with representatives of the Centers for Social Work in seven (7) municipalities of Kosovo;
- Twelve (12) interviews with representatives of civil society organizations.

Covid-19 pandemic affected the way interviews were conducted and made contacts with respondents more difficult. However, KOMF has considered alternative communication options by adhering to measures to prevent the Covid-19 virus and has managed to conduct 28 interviews out of 29 requests for interviews with relevant stakeholders. Six (6) of them were physically conducted in certain municipalities and 22 of them were conducted in a virtual form.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The monitoring process was conducted with representatives coming from seven municipalities of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Ferizaj, Fushë Kosova, Lipjan and Kamenica.¹

The selection of municipalities was made to:

- Provide geographical coverage of Kosovo;
- Include municipalities with a larger number of inhabitants and consequently with a larger number of social cases such as the municipalities of Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Ferizaj;
- Include small municipalities but with a larger number of social problems such as the Municipality of Fushë Kosova;
- Include municipalities with the largest number of ethnic minority communities in Kosovo, such as the municipalities of Lipjan and Kamenica.

¹ Complying with the measures for prevention of COVID-19 virus, physical interviews were conducted only in the Municipality of Peja and Ferizaj, while other interviews were conducted in a virtual form.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This monitoring report proves that the decentralization process of social services was not completed even during 2020. Out of a total of seven municipalities in which the monitoring of the social services decentralization process was conducted, it results that this process has not been fully implemented in any of them.

Based on the monitoring findings, in 2020 social services were in an even worse situation compared to 2019, due to the damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the political situation in the country. Throughout this year, the focus of both central and municipal governments has been on preventing and managing the pandemic, leaving aside social services.

The pandemic has increased the number of cases in need of social services, while the vast majority of services provided by the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo and non-governmental organizations to vulnerable groups were suspended or extremely limited during 2020, due to measures taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Also, during this year, the biggest part of social services was modified and was provided in a virtual form to the beneficiaries.

In addition to the pandemic, the unstable political situation in the country during 2020 had an impact on the deterioration of social welfare and the decentralization of social and family services. Procrastination of the previously imitated processes, in addition to the pandemic, also came as a result of the political changes that took place during this period. The two main draft laws expected to affect the decentralization and advancement of social services, namely the Law on Social and Family Services and the Law on Local Government Finance, failed to be adopted.

In 2020, there was no progress regarding the decentralization of the budget for social services. The Draft Law on Local Government Finance, although drafted in 2019, failed to be submitted for approval to the Government and the Assembly and consequently the Specific Grant for Social Services which would enable sustainable financing of social services was not established. The financing formula for social services, which began to be drafted in 2019, failed to be finalized. The same thing happened with the Draft Law on Social and Family Services, which despite the anticipations and the work of the working group to finalize it during 2020, still remains in the drafting process.



The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the municipalities failed again this year to establish a sustainable scheme for the purchase of social services. They continued to support social service providers through subsidizing, which is not considered a sustainable form of financing. Most of the licensed organizations in the area of social services remained without financing throughout 2020 from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. This is due to the delayed announcement of the regular annual call of MLSW for subsidizing social service providers. Regarding the financing of social services by municipalities in 2020, it is to be appreciated that three of the monitored municipalities have significantly increased the budget for subsidizing NGOs for the provision of social services compared to 2019. However, for social service providers from the non-governmental sector, in terms of finances, 2020 is considered to be the most difficult year in the last 20 years.

Municipal capacities to manage social services remain deficient. Even in 2020, the monitored municipalities did not make a proper assessment of needs, proper budget planning or monitoring the quality of social services. Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare keep lagging behind in developing professional staff of social services profile within these directorates.

Centers for Social Work during 2020 were in an even worse situation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the measures taken by the Government to prevent Covid-19, the capacities of CSWs were reduced and at the same time, they were charged with implementing the measures of the Fiscal Emergency Package without being focused in the provision of social services.

Stakeholders involved in the provision of social services continue to face uncertainty in the division of responsibilities between the central and municipal level, lack of sustainable financing, limited capacities, low accountability from all sectors and lack of cooperation and communication in horizontal and vertical level.

Given the extremely aggravated situation of social services and citizens from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government must urgently proceed with the adoption of the Law on Local Government Finance and the Specific Grant for Social Services to provide sustainable financing, and come to the aid of social service providers and citizens of Kosovo. Developing a sustainable scheme and increasing the funding threshold during 2021 by the Government

and the municipalities for contracting social services, is another urgent step that will affect the improvement of the situation of social services.

The Government should also proceed with the adoption of the Law on Social and Family Services for the division of responsibilities of central and municipal level institutions as well as the development of an in-depth reform in the area of social services.

Municipalities should prioritize social services and invest in building their capacities to manage social services.

Lastly, decentralization means a change in the institutional culture, by creating a socio-political context that leads to the transfer of authority and the transfer of financing from the central government to the local government to ensure quality and effective service provision. This monitoring report shows that decentralization is not yet part of the institutional culture and continues to be treated only as a technical process.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS

The World Health Organization declared the Coronavirus - Covid-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. This pandemic affected all countries of the world, including Kosovo. As a result, all countries took the necessary measures to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic. On the 13th of March 2020, when the first cases were confirmed in Kosovo, the Government of Kosovo decided to suspend almost all activities and restrict movement until the 18th of May 2020. The vast majority of social service providers were faced with a total lockdown and provided virtual services or extremely limited individual services almost during the whole year.

Based on the monitoring data, the situation created by Covid-19 has seriously aggravated especially the vulnerable groups and this has increased the number of cases in need of social services. Many services provided by the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo and non-governmental organizations to vulnerable groups have been limited during this period due to the measures imposed to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This year, central and municipal governments have focused on managing the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving aside social services.

Covid-19 pandemic blocked very important legislative processes initiated earlier, which aim to regulate the entire area of social services provision. Due to the stagnation of activities throughout this year, the two main draft laws that are expected to affect the decentralization and improvement of social services, the Draft Law on Social and Family Services and the Draft Law on Local Government Finance, have not been adopted.

On the 14th of April 2020, the Ministry of Finance and Transfers published the Emergency Fiscal Package approved by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. In this package, 15 measures were envisaged aiming to overcome the emergency situation in the country. Centers for Social Work were charged with the emergency measures taken by the Government at the time, thus changing the pace and focus of their work. Measure no.15 included monthly assistance in the amount of 130 Euro for families with severe social conditions for the period of April, May and June 2020. Centers for Social Work were charged

with the application of this measure for the beneficiaries, by receiving physical applications in the respective municipalities. According to the Director of the Center for Social Work in Prishtina, measure no.15 has slowed down the processes started earlier in the CSW and has increased the workload with new obligations.² A high workload was also found in the CSW in Prizren, where 8,700 applications were received electronically for measure no.15, while about 300 individuals interested in applying, waited in queue physically at the CSW facility. In addition, social workers were involved in distributing hygienic packages to families in need on the field and addressing domestic violence cases to Kosovo Police. According to the Director of CSW in Prizren, many of these obligations do not pertain to the work of a social worker, and social workers are not even included in Measure no.6, which includes providing a salary allowance under the Emergency Fiscal Package for workload and hazardous work during the pandemic.³

Capacities of CSWs were further reduced by other decisions taken by the Government of Kosovo, such as the release from work of persons with chronic diseases and persons who were over 60 years old. In CSW in Prizren, out of 9 social workers, 7 of them are over 60 years old. Meanwhile, the average age of social workers in CSW in Prishtina is about 54 years old. Another difficulty was the infection of staff with Covid-19, leading to a reduction in effective staff during this period.

Only institutions and non-governmental organizations providing residential services, including shelters and community-based homes, have continued to provide uninterrupted 24-hour services to the most vulnerable categories, foster care for children without parental care, victims of domestic violence, victims of abuse and victims of trafficking, people with disabilities and the elderly. The rest of the organizations providing direct social services through day-care centers or providing family and community services for children with disabilities, children involved in labour or children in street situation, suspended direct services in March 2020, respecting the recommendations of the National Institute of Public Health and transforming them a month later into virtual services for children and citizens in need. Based on the findings of the report, in cases when children have not been able to receive social services as a result of the measures, there has been a regression in their development.⁴ Even at the end of the year, not all services have managed to reopen in

² Virtual interview with Blerim Shabani, Director of CSW in Prishtina, 11.12.2020

³ Virtual interview with Kumrije Bytyqi, Director of CSW in Prizren, 11.11.2020

⁴ Virtual interview with Aida Topanica, Head of Therapeutic Work, NGO Autism, Prishtina, 29.10.2020

physical form, especially the services provided within day care centers, family services and those in the community. All interviewees stated that they are providing combined services, depending on the progress of the epidemiological situation in the country, despite the fact that they did not have the necessary support and instructions to reopen services. Guidelines approved by the Ministry of Health during 2020 did not contain recommendations or instructions for reopening and providing direct social services.



Despite the difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the lack of financing, social service providers claimed that they have tried to respond to all the requirements of people in need during this period, and many of the providers have even added new virtual services such as virtual services for parents.⁵ During the pandemic period, respectively from March to October 2020, the organization Autism reached a record number of beneficiaries in virtual form with over 700 beneficiaries, which is also due to the growing need for social services.⁶

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has also stated that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the decentralization process of social services because the focus of MLSW has been on the implementation of the Emergency Fiscal Package and support of certain categories.⁷

However, regarding the impact of the pandemic on processes initiated earlier for the full implementation of the decentralization process of social services, many interviewees responded that the pandemic is not the main cause for non-completion of this process. According to them, the main cause is considered the lack of political will. Representative from CSW in Ferizaj stated that even in the previous 11 years, governments did not take any step to complete decentralization, therefore the pandemic is not the main cause for non-implementation of this process.⁸ The Director of CSW in Kamenica, has the same opinion, and according to him, nothing has been done in this direction all these years.⁹

2020 was also characterized by major political changes in the country which impacted the deterioration of the social welfare situation and the decentralization process of social and family services. Procrastination of the previously initiated processes, in addition to the

⁵ Virtual interview with Sebahate Beqiri, Executive Director of Down Syndrome Kosovo, Prishtina, 24.11.2020

⁶ Virtual interview with Aida Topanica, Head of Therapeutic Work, NGO Autism, Prishtina, 29.10.2020

⁷ Virtual interview with Mentor Morina, Director of Social and Family Policies, MLSW, Prishtina, 16.11.2020

⁸ Interview with Adelina Rexhepi, CSW in Ferizaj, 23.09.2020

⁹ Virtual interview with Rifat Hajdari, Director of CSW in Kamenica, 24.11.2020

pandemic, also came as a result of the political changes that took place during this period. With the constitution of the new Government in January 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was dissolved and divided into several ministries. Social transfers were transferred to the Ministry of Finance, while the employment sector was transferred to the Ministry of Economy, Employment, Trade, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Strategic Investments. Meanwhile, for a while it was unclear where the social services were moved to, however then it became known that the social services moved under the Ministry of Health. Just four months after the constitution of the Government, the Government was overthrown by a motion of no confidence. The new Government which was constituted on 3 June 2020 reinstated the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with the mandate for social services. This Government lasted six months and on 21 December 2020, the Constitutional Court¹⁰ declared invalid the vote of the Assembly of Kosovo for the Election of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on 3 June 2020. In just one year, Kosovo had two different Governments and neither of them focused on improving social services. These political movements in the country created confusion and procrastination of processes in social services.

¹⁰ Decision of the Constitutional Court, <https://gjk-ks.org/vendimet-nga-seanca-shqyrtuese-e-mbajtur-me-21-dhjetor-2020/>



LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

Based on the analysis of the legal framework, numerous shortcomings which hinder completion of the decentralization process but also improvement of the situation of social services, have been identified under Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services, Law No. 04/L-081 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services and Law No. 03/L-049 on Local Government Finance.¹¹

Both of these laws (Law on Social and Family Services and Law on Local Government Finance) have been in the drafting process since 2018. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the political situation in the country, these two laws failed to be adopted during 2020.

Below, main shortcomings and recommendations for regulating the legal framework for the implementation of the decentralization process are presented.

Draft Law on Social and Family Services

Based on the findings of KOMF monitoring report on the decentralization of social services in 2019, the roles and responsibilities of central and municipal level institutions in Kosovo are not clearly defined. Institutions at both levels continue to have ambiguities in their responsibilities regarding social services. Specifically, the major uncertainties about decentralization are related to the establishment of new social service institutions, management, contracting, reporting, monitoring and communication. It is therefore recommended that these shortcomings be addressed within the Draft Law on Social and Family Services.

The Government Action Plan and the Legislative Plan for 2020 has foreseen the drafting and approval of the new Law on Social and Family Services by the Government until November 2020, aiming at developing an in-depth social services reform. Despite the circumstances created by Covid-19, measures of lockdown and prohibition of activities, during 2020 the Working Group appointed to draft the new Law on Social and Family Services has continued to work on the drafting the law, for about two months in the second half of 2020. In this regard, KOMF together with UNICEF have supported the working group with legal expertise in order to draft the law. Furthermore, KOMF has supported eight thematic workshops in order to address professional issues between member organizations, experts, and representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Centers for Social Work, Association of Kosovo Municipalities, etc. To help this process, KOMF in partnership with the

¹¹ Law on Local Government Finance, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2525>

Ombudsperson Institution, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities and the Association of Centers for Social Work of Kosovo, have published during 2020 "The joint position paper with the proposals for drafting the Law for Social and Family Services"¹². The proposals within the Position address the deep reform of social services, the establishment of an open scheme of social services between the public, non-governmental and private sector, integration of social services with other sectors, division of mandates and strengthening of inspection and monitoring sectors, regulation of licensing of services provided by public institutions in addition to licensing of non-governmental organizations, accreditation, etc.

Despite the circumstances created by the pandemic, in 2020 the working group achieved to have a first draft of the Law, which in addition to being a reform of social services, also addresses the shortcomings and recommendations for regulating issues affecting decentralization. However, aiming at a profound reform of social services in Kosovo, it is considered that the working group still needs to engage and develop the content of the draft Law in accordance with the goals and expectations for its drafting.

Due to the measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on 1 November 2020, to prohibit meetings of working groups and the organization of workshops, the work of the working group for the Draft Law on Social and Family Services has been suspended. Consequently, the Draft Law on Social and Family Services has not been finalized or submitted to the Government for approval.

Draft Law on Local Government Finance

Social services are municipal own competencies and based on the Law on Local Government Finance are financed by municipalities through two funding sources, which are the general grant and municipal own-source revenues. The general grant is a closed-type grant with 10% of the projected revenue to be collected centrally during a calendar year. But the problem for social services starts right here, because this form does not guarantee that there will be enough allocation in order to ensure the minimum financing for social services. This is because from this point there is no specific mechanism or formula for financing the allocation for social services, given that all municipal departments use the budget from the same grant for operating and capital expenditures. In order that the budget for social services not to depend from the will of municipalities, (considering the insufficient financing in the recent years), it has been suggested to find a sustainable and fair financing solution within the Law on Local Government Finance, through the establishment of the Specific Grant for Social Services. same as the Specific Grant for Education and Health.

¹² Position paper on the Law on Social and Family Services, KOMF, July 2020

To this end, the approval of the Concept Paper on Local Government Finance in 2018 has been a very important step towards solving the problem of ensuring sustainable financing of social services. Based on the approved Concept Paper, the new Law on Local Government Finance was drafted during 2019 where for the first time after many efforts and continuous advocacy, the Specific Grant for Social Services is foreseen and included in the draft law. The draft Law has passed the phase of public consultations, however due to the fall of the Government, the dissolution of the Assembly of Kosovo and the circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the draft Law was not sent to be approved by the Government during 2020. This Draft Law has been pending for almost a year now, and no steps have been taken towards its adoption.

On the 19th of November 2020, KOMF addressed an official request to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo and the Minister of Finance, requesting a faster processing of the approval process of the Draft Law on Local Government Finance, which foresees the establishment of a Specific Grant for Social Services, in order to solve the problem of long-term and sustainable financing of social services. Following the requests addressed to the Government of Kosovo for the long-term solution of financing services in November 2020, KOMF published the "Position paper for the Specific Grant for Social Services"¹³ requesting the approval of the Draft Law on Local Government Finance in order to establish this Grant. With the entry into force of the Draft Law on Local Government Finance, the implementation of the Specific Grant for Social Services is expected to begin, which will ensure a sustainable minimum financing of social services. Despite the constant requests of KOMF, the Draft Law on Local Government Finance was not submitted to the Government for approval during 2020.

Financing formula for social services

In 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare established by a special decision, a working group to draft the financing formula for social services, a formula on which the amount of budget allocated under the Specific Grant for Social Services will be based. Mainly due to the circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, during 2020 the working group did not work on extracting unit costs related to social services, including day and residential services. The Director of the Social Policies Department within MLSW indicated that the financial costs have been performed for five services but not for the other services.¹⁴ So far, work has been done on the issuance of social indicators, while there is still a lot of work to be done in regulating and determining the distribution of the Specific Grant by an administrative instruction which will determine the exact manner of distribution of this Grant.

¹³ Position paper for Specific Grant for Social Services, KOMF, November 2020

¹⁴ Virtual interview with Mentor Morina, Director of Social and Family Policies, MLSW, Prishtina, 16.11.2020



FINANCING OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FINANCING OF SOCIAL SERVICES

a) Financing of social services by MLSW during 2020



In 2020, the total budget of MLSW was 530 million Euro, the majority of which is allocated for schemes and transfers, respectively 500 million Euro or 94.4% of the budget of this Ministry. The schemes cover basic social and contributory pensions, pensions of veterans, war invalids, disability pensions, reimbursement for political prisoners, early pensions (Trepça), etc. Within the schemes, MLSW has allocated 3.1 million Euro for the Material Support Scheme for Families of Children with Permanent Disabilities and 807,255.00 Euro for the Foster Care Programme within the biological family and outside the biological family. Meanwhile, 47 million Euro of transfers are dedicated to the Social Assistance Scheme for families in poverty, where the beneficiaries are also children.

Innovations during 2020 in terms of budget within the MLSW, constitute the measures envisaged under the Emergency Fiscal Package which have been implemented by the MLSW. Specifically, with the Fiscal Emergency Package, MLSW supported the beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme under Measure no.1 through double payment for April and May, a measure in the amount of up to seven million six hundred and fifty thousand (7,650,000.00) Euro. MLSW in the Emergency Fiscal Package under Measure no.2 also covered additional payment in the amount of 30 Euro per month for all beneficiaries of social and pension schemes who receive monthly payments in the amount of less than 100 Euro, for the months of April, May and June 2020. However, under this measure, the Material Support Scheme for Families of Children with Permanent Disabilities and Foster Care for Children without Parental Care was not initially envisaged. As a result, on the 6th of April 2020, KOMF addressed a request to the Minister of Finance and Transfers, requesting inclusion of the Material Support Scheme for Families of Children with Permanent Disabilities and the Foster Care Scheme for Children without Parental Care within the Fiscal Emergency Package. As a result, the Government by a decision revised the Fiscal Emergency Package where, among other things, it included within the package the two schemes requested by KOMF.

Based on the above data, it is confirmed that MLSW, similarly to 2019 and also during 2020, oriented social support towards monthly monetary assistance under social schemes.



Although the budget for MLSW increased in 2020, the budget allocated for social services continued to be very low. Specifically, from the total MLSW budget of 530 million Euro, MLSW within social services has allocated 1 million Euro to the Home for the Elderly without Family Care in Prishtina, 1 million Euro to the Special Institute in Shtime and the Community Based Home in Shtime for children with disabilities without parental care and 100,000.00 Euro to the state shelter for victims of trafficking of human beings.

Unlike previous years, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare did not announce a public call for social services subsidies in early 2020.

MLSW did not announce the call for social services subsidy until the second half of 2020. The lack of timely announcement of such a call was impacted by the unstable political situation, the constitution of two governments within six months and the declaration of Covid-19 as a pandemic. On the 10th of April 2020, KOMF addressed a request to the Minister of Health, requesting urgent announcement of the regular annual call for subsidizing non-governmental organizations for the provision of social services by the Ministry of Health, which due to inclusion of social services in April 2020 within the Ministry of Health was responsible for social services. Furthermore, the funds for the provision of social services to subsidize the non-governmental sector had already been approved under the Budget Law for 2020. However, the open call failed to be announced in the first six months of 2020, leaving social service providers from the non-governmental sector in a difficult situation and without financial support.

With the constitution of the new Government in June 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare reinstated the mandate for social services in the Republic of Kosovo. MLSW announced the public call for financing social services in September 2020. The total amount of funds allocated by MLSW for "Financial Support for NGO Projects in the Area of Social Services, Vocational Training, Employment, Pensions and Development of Social Rights Promotion Activities for Vulnerable Groups" for 2020 was 1 million Euro. The minimum amount of financial support that could be allocated for a project was 5,000 Euro, while the maximum amount for a project was 15,000 Euro. The project implementation period was from 3 to a maximum of 6 months. On the 25th of November 2020, MLSW published the decision on approved and rejected NGOs by the public call for financial support for NGO projects. Based on the published decision, 171 organizations were approved to get

financial support for their projects. Although the decision with the approved projects was announced, the non-governmental organizations providing social services did not manage to sign the contracts with MLSW until December 2020, remaining without funds and in a very serious situation throughout 2020. 171 NGOs have benefited from this call, of which:

- 29 NGOs licensed by MLSW in the area of social services. The amount of funds allocated to these NGOs is 275,000.00 Euro.
- 23 NGOs providing social services to vulnerable groups. The amount of funds allocated to these NGOs is 80,000.00 Euro.
- 118 NGOs providing services in the area of vocational training, employment and pensions. The amount allocated to them is 645,000.00 Euro.

Although the amount of this call compared to that of 2019 is twice as high, it should be noted that unlike the 2019 call, this call was not only dedicated to social service providers but also vocational training, employment, pensions and promotion for social rights for vulnerable groups. Based on the data presented above, only 52 NGOs in the area of social services and service providers for vulnerable groups benefited from this call. The amount allocated for NGO projects is considered insufficient and does not meet the needs of beneficiaries. Organizations licensed to provide social services have stated that they are disappointed with the call due to the very short duration of projects and low financial support, especially given the dire situation due to Covid-19 as well as the fact that throughout 2020 they had not received funds from MLSW.

It should be noted that the short duration of published calls and the time gaps between MLSW calls are constantly causing difficulties in the functioning of social service providers. The maximum duration of projects, even of one year, is considered too short and inadequate by social service providers. The latter, during the interview, recommended that the duration of the projects must be 3 years, in order to ensure sustainable operation of the services.



Most licensed organizations in the area of social services remained without financial support throughout 2020 from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. This is due to the delayed announcement of the regular annual call for the provision of social services by MLSW. For social service providers from the non-governmental sector, in terms of financing, 2020 is considered to be the most difficult year in the last 20 years.

Exceptions here are only shelters for children and women in need who had been financed during 2020 as a result of contracts signed before the announcement of the pandemic, specifically in February 2020. MLSW announced in December 2019 the call for subsidizing shelters in the area of social services, where it allocated 495,000.00 Euro to ten shelters.

MLSW should eliminate the time gaps created between calls for financing social services, so that there is no suspension of services. MLSW should increase the minimum funding threshold for social services provided by the non-governmental sector. Contracting should be done through purchasing services and not through subsidies. Calls for financing social services, must be for periods of three year projects.

Due to the impact of the pandemic in the country, the entire focus of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare during 2020 was the implementation of the Emergency Fiscal Package, in order to support certain social categories, leaving aside the financial support for social services, despite the number of cases in need of services had increased as a result of the pandemic.

All interviewees stated for this Monitoring Report that the best solution for financing social services is the application of the Specific Grant for Social Services. The total amount of current expenditures for all categories of expenditures for CSWs and financing of residential institutions is about 10 million Euro. It is recommended that in the first year of implementation of the new Law on Local Government Finance the total amount allocated through the Specific Grant be 15 million Euro, which means to increase the budget for social services by 5 million Euro.

b) Financing of social services by municipalities during 2020

The total financing amount from the General Grant for 2020 for social services was about 6 million Euro. This includes the salary costs of CSW staff and other operating expenditures. Meanwhile, the cost of financing residential houses for the elderly and people with disabilities for 2020 has been about 2 million Euro.

Similarly to 2019, in 2020 the municipalities have mainly covered the monthly salaries and administrative expenses for the Centers for Social Work, by not allocating sufficient budget to CSWs for the provision of social services based on the needs of citizens within the municipalities. All municipalities without distinction have responded that the current budget does not even closely meet the real needs for social services.

Regarding the budget for social services provided by the Centers for Social Work, the data for the seven monitored municipalities, is listed below.

The Municipality of Prishtina, Municipality of Lipjan, Municipality of Peja, Municipality of Ferizaj and Municipality of Kamenica have not allocated any budget for social services for the Centers for Social Work during 2020.

Municipality of Prizren allocated an amount of 400 Euro every three months to CSW, a budget which has been used for the needs of children in foster care as well as for emergencies within the CSW.

The Municipality of Fushë Kosova has allocated a total of 3,600 Euro for 2020 for social services to the Center for Social Work. In addition to this amount, the Municipality has enabled the contracting of a psychologist to provide psychological services within the CSW for a period of one year.

Even during 2020, municipalities have not established a sustainable scheme of contracting/purchasing social services. Municipalities support to social services providers, has continued through subsidizing NGOs, which has not proven to be a sustainable financing form.

However, it is to be appreciated that out of seven monitored municipalities, three municipalities have significantly increased the budget for subsidizing NGOs for the provision of social services, namely, Municipality of Prishtina, Municipality of Prizren and Municipality of Ferizaj.

In general, calls published by municipalities for subsidizing social services provided by the non-governmental sector were announced late in the second half of 2020. Furthermore, representatives from the Municipality of Ferizaj¹⁵ have stated that the Government prohibited them from making any calls due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Below, the amounts allocated for subsidizing NGOs providing social services by municipalities are presented:



The Municipality of Prishtina allocated 155,800 Euro for subsidizing direct services for marginalized communities in 2020. 21 NGOs have benefited from this amount, where the allocated amount for an NGO varies from 2,000 to 24,000 Euro.¹⁶ The Municipality of Prishtina has not announced a public call for this support. Compared to 2019, the Municipality of Prishtina has increased the budget for subsidizing direct social services by 161%, from 59,650 Euro allocated in 2019 to 155,800.00 Euro in 2020.



The Municipality of Prizren announced one public call for NGO subsidies for the provision of social services in 2020. The total amount allocated under this call was 90,520 Euro, where 12 non-governmental organizations have benefited from the subsidy. This year, in addition to 12 NGOs, foster care families and single mothers have also been supported under this category. Compared to 2019, the Municipality of Prizren has tripled the budget for subsidizing NGOs for the provision of social services, namely it increased the budget by 246% and from 26,100 Euro allocated in 2019 to 90,520 Euro in 2020.



The Municipality of Ferizaj announced one public call for NGO subsidies for the provision of social services in 2020. The total amount allocated under this call was 30,000 Euro where nine NGOs have benefited. Budget allocation was done proportionally to all NGOs. Compared to 2019, the Municipality of Ferizaj increased the budget for subsidizing NGOs for the provision of social services by 128%, from 13,125 Euro it allocated in 2019 to 30,000 Euro in 2020.

¹⁵ Interview with Bekim Ademi, Director of DSHW in Ferizaj, 23.09.2020

¹⁶ Data from the Directorate of Social Welfare, Municipality of Prishtina, 05.01.2021



The Municipality of Peja announced one public call for NGO subsidies for the provision of social services in 2020. The total amount allocated under this call was 80,000 Euro where five NGOs have benefited in proportionate amount. Regarding 2019, the Municipality of Peja did not provide information on the amount allocated for subsidizing NGOs for the provision of social services.



The Municipality of Kamenica announced two public calls for supporting the non-governmental sector in 2020. In the official website of this Municipality is published the call for applications for financing projects related to people with special needs and the public call for financial support for NGO projects. In the first call, it is noticed that unlike the title of the call, the content is not related to projects for people with special needs but to sports projects, while the second call is more focused on projects related to cultural activities. KOMF requested clarification from the Municipality of Kamenica regarding these calls, but did not receive any response.



The Municipality of Lipjan did not announce any public call for subsidy of social services by NGOs in 2020. In 2019, the Municipality of Lipjan opened a public call and allocated 5,000 Euro.



The Municipality of Fushë Kosova did not announce any public call for subsidy of social services by NGOs in 2020. In 2019, the Municipality of Fushë Kosova opened one public call, but it did not provide data on the amount of the allocated budget.

c) The need to create a sustainable scheme for contracting social services by municipalities

Law on Social and Family Services in Kosovo defines the role of NGOs in providing social services through contracting by municipalities and MLSW. Similar to 2019, in 2020 municipalities have failed to establish a sustainable and long-term purchasing/contracting scheme for NGOs providing social services, thus damaging the quality and sustainability of social services.

In 2020, out of the seven monitored municipalities, five of them announced calls for support of social service providers from the non-governmental sector, while two municipalities did not announce any calls.

Municipalities that announced calls, have allocated budget for social service providers in the form of subsidies and not in the form of service purchases, which would be a much more appropriate and sustainable way of providing social services. Moreover, the calls for the provision of social services were general and were not based on the real needs of the municipality, as none of the municipalities has made a preliminary assessment of the needs of citizens and priorities for intervention within the territory of their municipality. The announcements did not contain the criterion that NGOs must be licensed by MLSW to provide social services, as a result of which the budget was allocated to organizations that were not licensed by the MLSW.

The total amount allocated by a municipality to subsidize all NGOs for the provision of social services varies from 10,000 - 155,800.00 Euro per year. With the exception of the Municipality of Prishtina, municipalities have mainly allocated the budget proportionally to almost all organizations that have applied, regardless of the type, cost of service or beneficiaries. This financing form from municipalities looks more like a symbolic support for NGOs and is not based on the needs of the municipality, needs of beneficiaries, criteria, requirements and standards. Such financing form undermines the fair competition market and values between NGOs by impairing the quality of social services. NGO representatives consider that municipalities do not assess real needs on the field, do not plan addressing these needs through the purchase of services and consequently have not developed any sustainable scheme for financing social services. On the other hand, the lack of licensing criteria for the provision of social services in municipal calls has created confusion and dissatisfaction among licensed providers who have rigorously adhered to the systematic licensing process. It is considered that such thing reduces the quality of services provided and affects the monitoring and inspection process which also aims at maintaining quality standards in the provision of social services.

Down Syndrome Kosovo - DSK, which provides social services to the community, highlighted financing challenges during 2020. DSK obtains financing from various sources such as international donors, campaigning, product sales, diaspora and public funds. Although DSK has applied to the public call of MLSW, the project was approved in November 2020, but

it did not manage to receive any budget until December 2020. On the other hand, projects that are well planned and based on needs coming from the field, are never supported by the municipality as such. Institutions neither support in full nor up to 50% of the amount needed for the planned projects. NGOs usually have to design projects based on the amount provided by the municipality and not on the needs of the community. Furthermore, DSK states that institutions do not have a proper supervisory mechanism: "We have a large number of NGOs that claim to work with people with disabilities but are not professional. It is extremely urgent for the institutions to establish a supervisory mechanism." DSK states that the current budget does not cover their needs and that due to lack of funds, they are operating with short-term plans.¹⁷

Terre des hommes opened during 2019 a day care center in the Municipality of Prishtina for the provision of social services to children in street situations. The services of Terre des hommes are funded by 90% of international donors. Terre des hommes has negotiated with the Municipality of Prishtina to co-finance the day care center for children in street situation. Currently, Terre des hommes does not receive financing from the municipality, but the municipality has provided the facility for this center. According to Terre des hommes the current budget does not cover real needs: "At the moment we do not have any budget for children with special needs with asocial behaviour. We also do not have a budget for providing services to children who need mental health services"¹⁸, said the representative of Terre des hommes.

HANDIKOS in Ferizaj emphasized the concern about the public call from the municipality, which had included the licensing criteria. HANDIKOS estimates that "In addition to the licensing criteria, the capacities of organizations, previous projects, annual turnover should be evaluated and based on this, the amount of support should be determined." HANDIKOS also indicates that the call published by the Municipality had shortcomings, namely the application forms were unclear.¹⁹

POLIS organization emphasized that the Municipality of Lipjan did not announce calls for support of social services during 2020, although the budget for this purpose existed. POLIS representative stated that the best financing form for purchasing services by municipalities is through contracting services.²⁰

¹⁷ Virtual interview with Sebahate Beqiri, Executive Director of Down Syndrome Kosovo, Prishtina, 24.11.2020

¹⁸ Virtual interview with Marije Vuksani, Project Manager, Terre des hommes, Prishtina, 30.10.2020

¹⁹ Interview with Xhemile Murseli, Executive Director, HANDIKOS in Ferizaj, 23.09.2020

²⁰ Interview with Fitim Sadiku, Executive Director, NGO POLIS, Lipjan, 01.10.2020

In contrast to the financing difficulties faced by the 12 interviewed organizations providing services within day care centers, family and community services, shelters for children without parental care, victims of domestic violence, victims of abuse and trafficking were in a better situation during 2020. Since the call from MLSW for financing shelter services was published separately in December 2019, the shelters managed to sign contracts with MLSW before the declaration of the pandemic, namely in February 2020, for a period of ten months, ensuring their operation throughout 2020. The shelter for the protection of women and children victims of domestic violence in Peja "Safe House", during 2020 received financial support in the amount of 50,000 thousand Euro from MLSW and 10,000 Euro from the Municipality of Peja. However, the current budget does not cover the needs for all services, as well as the needs for psychological services for victims. The shelter building also needs repairing.²¹

The Center for the Protection of Victims and Prevention of Trafficking (PVPT) is licensed to provide shelter and services at the national level and to handle cases from all over Kosovo. Although PVPT obtained the budget from MLSW for 2020, the representative of this organization stated that in addition to MLSW, each municipality that has children accommodated in this center, should provide budget based on the respective cases.²²

It is more than necessary for the municipalities to create a sustainable contracting scheme. Contracting services from the non-governmental sector has proven to be more cost-effective for municipalities and guarantees higher quality of services.

All respondents to this Monitoring Report have stated that it is more than necessary to create a sustainable scheme by municipalities for contracting social and family services from the non-governmental sector. Contracting should be done through purchasing services for the provision of social services for periods of three years, in order to ensure sustainable and long-term financing. Providing support through subsidies is not sustainable.

²¹ Interview with Ardita Bala, Executive Director, Safe House, Peja, 18.11.2020

²² Interview with Gresa Kelmendi, Project Manager, PVPT, Prishtina, 19.11.2020



CAPACITIES OF MUNICIPALITIES IN MANAGING SOCIAL SERVICES

CAPACITIES OF MUNICIPALITIES IN MANAGING SOCIAL SERVICES

Based on the Law on Local Self-Government²³ and the Law on Social and Family Services, municipalities are responsible for providing social services within their territory, according to the standards and policies of the Government or relevant ministries. Thus, municipalities are obliged to identify the needs for the provision of social services to the citizens of the municipality, to provide financing and to manage social services within the municipality. The Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare are responsible for municipal social welfare issues and manage the Centers for Social Work. CSWs have a responsibility to provide social and family services to citizens in need. All municipalities in Kosovo (38) have Centers for Social Work.

The data from this monitoring report shows that despite the mandate of municipalities and CSWs for management and provision of social services, the capacities of municipalities continue to be deficient. The Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare keep lagging behind in developing professional, multidisciplinary and effective staff within these directorates. During the monitoring process, it was found that all municipal directorates are lacking professional staff for social services. Centers for Social Work are also facing a serious difficulties due to lack of human and financial capacities. All monitored municipalities stated that the number of social workers is small compared to the number of inhabitants and the number of cases, thus they are not able to identify and provide services to all citizens in need of social services.

Capacities for provision and management of social services

Capacities for management and provision of social services during 2020 have been even more limited in all monitored municipalities. Compared to 2019, municipalities and CSWs during 2020 faced higher workload and staff limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Except for the Municipality of Prishtina and the Municipality of Prizren, in all other monitored municipalities, the Directorates of Social Welfare function as the Directorate of Health and Social Welfare. This was considered by respondents as one of the reasons

²³ Law on Local Self-Government, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530>

for the lack of financial and human capacities in these directorates. Respondents claim that in all municipalities, the greatest importance is given to the health sector, and in this case the budget is dedicated to this sector, leaving aside the area of social welfare. In all Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare, there is lack of necessary staff for the management of social services and their main focus especially in 2020 has been on managing the situation with pandemic. In the Municipality of Peja, under the Directorate of Health and Social Welfare out of 6 officers in total, there is no qualified officer in social issues.²⁴ Even in the Municipality of Kamenica, the situation is the same where out of 4 officers in total, none of them is qualified in social issues.²⁵



In the Centers for Social Work, the impact of the pandemic has been extremely evident, as they were burden this year with new obligations related to the Emergency Package as well as new cases of citizens in need.

Namely, out of a total of 190 social workers in 34 CSWs in Kosovo, 63 of them belong to the age group of 30-40 years.²⁶ This year, due to the pandemic, many CSWs have been left with limited staff due to advanced age, specifically due to the government decision to release from work persons over the age of 60, health problems or infection with Covid-19. For this reason, the caseload has increased and CSWs have been forced to provide only emergency services.

Social workers continue to be overloaded with a large number of cases, compared to the limited capacities of CSWs. In CSW in Prishtina, there was a case when 230 active cases were managed by only one social worker, which is contrary to the minimum standards. According to the Director of CSW in Prishtina, this is a very significant indicator of the situation in which CSWs operate.²⁷

Due to human and financial resource limitations, social services are focused on providing emergency protection services and there is lack of prevention and reintegration services, which are essential for the well-being of children and persons in need. The applicable legislation, as well as limited financial and human capacities, have made the social service system in Kosovo to deal with and manage only serious emergency cases, whose life, safety or well-being is endangered, or cases of victims of some form of abuse. As a result, only a small proportion of citizens in need have the opportunity to benefit from social

²⁴ Interview with Petrit Loci, Director of DHSW in Peja, 06.11.2020

²⁵ Virtual interview with Suna Zajmi Krasniqi, Director of DHSW in Kamenica, 13.11.2020

²⁶ Analysis of Needs for Capacities of Centers for Social Work in Kosovo in the Field of Child's Rights Promotion and Protection, SOS Children's Villages Kosovo, Handikos, October 2020

²⁷ Virtual interview with Blerim Shabani, Director of CSW in Prishtina, 11.12.2020

services and programmes. Furthermore, for some of the children or persons in need of social services, the system does not provide any services, such as for children or persons victims of drug abuse, children involved in hazardous forms of labour, etc.

Based on this monitoring process, even during 2020, CSWs have continued to have a reactive approach in terms of measuring vulnerability in the municipalities where they operate. Insufficient staff in CSW prevents them from having a pro-active approach to identifying clients in the community, thus not recognizing social problems within the municipality. CSWs do not perceive this measurement as a process that can take place gradually over the medium or long term period. No CSW in the monitored municipalities had the opportunity and capacity to go out in the field and assess citizens in need. The Director of CSW in Fushë Kosova considers as very necessary the officers' outreach in the field because due to the problems that this municipality has, it is necessary to know the number of people in street situation and the cases of violence that are continuously increasing. However, according to him, identifying cases in the field would require at least two more social workers and additional financial resources, which currently turns out to be impossible.²⁸

Municipalities do not take into account the fact that CSWs should be composed of professionals from various areas required by law such as psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists and lawyers. In some of the CSWs it happens that the staff is composed with a high number of lawyers and no other profile. This contradicts the principle of multidisciplinary work, which for CSWs is one of the basic principles. Social workers are not profiled and consequently work with all cases and categories in need.

KOMF through the Position Paper published in 2020 regarding the new Law on Social and Family Services, recommended that this Law should foresee a reform in terms of providing social services, defining prevention, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services, as well as classifying services into three categories/levels; primary, secondary and tertiary ones. Given the enormous workload of the Centers for Social Work, the large number of categories and services as well as based on the models and practices of other countries, KOMF recommended the establishment of an open scheme of providing social services among the public, non-governmental and private sectors.

The open and sustainable scheme of providing social services among public institutions, non-governmental and private sector, provides opportunities for a wider range of social

²⁸ Virtual interview with Abaz Xhigoli, Director of CSW in Fushë Kosova, 27.10.2020

services, specialized and better services and lower budget costs for the State of Kosovo. Also, Centers for Social Work would be discharged from some of the services, being profiled in certain services, this way increasing the quality of provision of these services.

In addition to the needs for financial and human capacities, CSW staff and other social service providers need professional development. Similar to 2019, even in 2020, there was no annual training plan designed by MLSW, despite the fact that the requirement of minimum standards is to organize regular annual training for each category of services. In addition, there are no accredited training programmes for social services. The current Law on Social and Family Services does not foresee the accreditation of social services programmes. Trainings are mostly provided unplanned, on an ad hoc basis and depend on the support of donors or non-governmental organizations.

Capacities for planning and managing the budget for social services

Municipalities and CSWs do not make proper budget planning on an annual basis for social services. Currently, the budget planning and management for social services in municipalities is done by the Directorates of Health and Social Welfare.

Municipal budget planning tends to repeat preliminary budget planning, without any realistic assessment of citizens' needs for social services. Furthermore, this planning does not take into account the needs of CSWs and NGOs providing social services in municipalities.

In all monitored municipalities, all DHSWs have a financial officer within their staff, while regarding CSWs, only the CSW in Fushë Kosova does not have a financial officer. CSW budget requirements are usually drafted by financial officers in cooperation with CSW Directors. These requirements, in almost all cases, are never approved by municipalities as required by the CSWs. Municipalities usually change the requirements of CSWs, cutting down the budget for the Centers for Social Work.

However, during the interviews it was noticed that CSWs already know that municipalities do not allocate budget to CSWs or social services, therefore their requirements are not related to social services but they are mainly ad hoc and are more related to administrative issues, facility maintenance, staff needs and so on.

To date, no municipality has identified needs and planned the budget based on these needs. On the other hand, even in cases when CSWs make any requirement, the budget allocated to these centers is managed by DHSW and is not transferred to CSW.

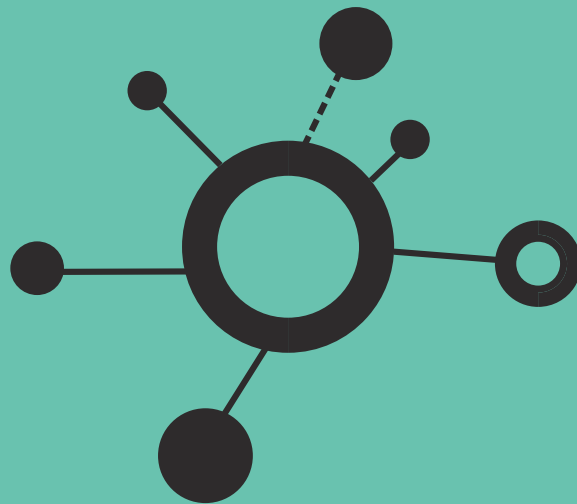
Out of seven interviews conducted with Directors of Centers for Social Work, 4 of them responded that CSWs should have their own bank account and manage the budget independently. Whereas, 3 of them think that CSWs should have their own bank account but be managed by DHSW or at least be under their supervision.

As a result of the non-implementation of decentralization of the budget for social services, CSWs are also facing the lack of an emergency fund that would be managed by them and which is considered necessary for the nature of the work of CSWs. There are cases when social workers have to pay from their personal incomes for the needs of beneficiaries in CSW. From out of seven monitored municipalities, only the Municipality of Prizren has access to the “petty cash” in the amount of 1,600 Euro per year, an amount which is mainly used for the needs of children in foster care or other instant services.²⁹

All representatives from the Centers for Social Work stated that the best solution for sustainable financing of social services is the Specific Grant for Social Services. According to them, this Grant would be oriented only for social services and the municipality would not be able to allocate it for expenditures in other areas. However, they have expressed concerns about the fact that not all CSWs have the capacity to manage such Grant. According to them, not everything ends with the establishment of the Specific Grant, but it is important that within the Grant the budget for social services is increased and the staff of DHSW and CSW is trained for the management of the Specific Grant.

This monitoring report shows that CSWs are not prepared for budget planning and management for social services and in all municipalities there is lack of capacity building activities for budget planning and management, there is a lack of need assessments in each municipality and proper cooperation between CSW and DHSW for drafting a joint budget planning in accordance with these needs. Given that after the implementation of the Specific Grant for Social Services, the budget is expected to be transferred to the CSWs, they should be prepared to assume competencies for budget planning and management for the provision of social services.

²⁹ Virtual interview with Kumrije Bytyqi, Director of CSW in Prizren, 11.11.2020



COMPETENCIES OF INSTITUTIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

COMPETENCIES OF INSTITUTIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

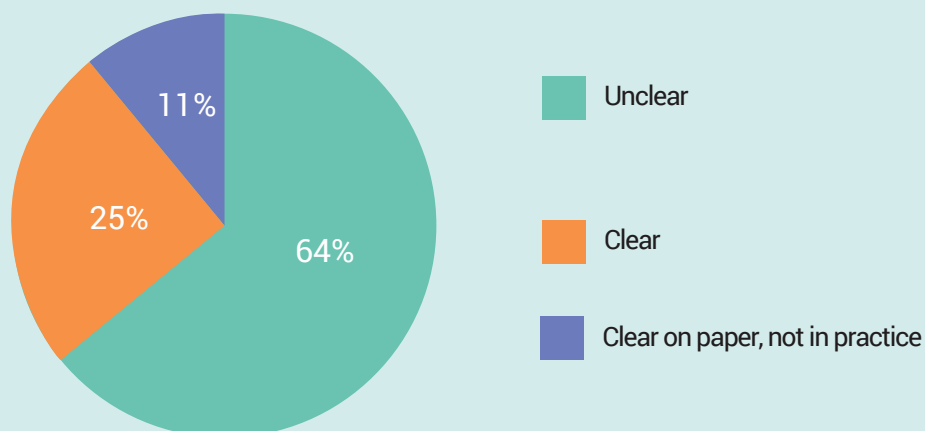
The current legal framework does not foresee a clear division of responsibilities between the central and municipal level, monitoring and inspection of the quality of social services, thus affecting the non-implementation of the decentralization process of social and family services in Kosovo.

Municipal level institutions continue to have ambiguities in their responsibilities regarding social services. 17 of the respondents answered that the competencies between the central and local level are not clear, six of them responded that the competencies are clear and four of the respondents answered that these competencies remain clear only on paper but not in practice. During the monitoring, it was noticed that the uncertainties about the competencies between the two levels have mostly affected the social service providers.



Based on the monitoring process, uncertainties are mainly related to reporting, monitoring and communication. Interviewed officials stated that there are still uncertainties in the division of tasks, competencies, responsibilities, reporting and monitoring between the central and municipal level.

Competencies between the central and municipal level



According to the respondents, the initiated decentralization process has not been well thought out and planned, therefore it has caused even more confusion in relation to the competencies of the institutions.

The new Law on Social and Family Services should clearly define the division of responsibilities of central and municipal level institutions, in order to avoid uncertainties about social services.

REPORTING

Based on the monitoring data, reporting of social service providers has not yet been defined and remains unclear for both municipalities and CSWs. The line and form of reporting of social service providers continue to be done without any protocol, without certain reporting forms and the type of reporting varies from municipality to municipality. This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, reporting was done mainly in electronic form, while reporting through meetings was low, thus avoiding physical contact.

Similar to 2019, in 2020, respondents stated that they report at two levels, central and municipal, thus sending different reports to MLSW and DHSW. Regular periodic reporting is done to DHSW and these reports contain mainly more general information related to the types of clients, services, challenges of CSWs, etc.

Also, CSWs continue to send detailed data on handled cases on a monthly basis to MLSW. The database for social services managed by MLSW in 2020 continues to be non-digitized and the data are sent physically via USB or electronically via email. According to the representatives of CSWs, reporting to MLSW is obliged to be done for social assistance cases³⁰, foster care, custody, adoption cases³¹ etc., because these services are financed by MLSW.

During the monitoring process, officials from DHSW stated that there are no specific and unified protocols or formats for all DHSWs, but there is regular reporting through periodic reports, as well as through regular meetings.³² They also stated that the same reports with detailed data on cases that are sent to MLSW, should be sent to DHSW. Municipalities even recommended that the reporting of CSWs to MLSW should be done through DHSW. However, this recommendation has been opposed by the representatives of the CSWs, who think that due to the preservation of confidentiality of social cases information, they should not be forwarded to MLSW through DHSW. Even after 11 years after the beginning of the decentralization process, the reporting process by the CSWs continues to remain centralized as they are reluctant to share data with the municipality, which is already

³⁰ Virtual interview with Blerim Shabani, Director of CSW in Prishtina, 11.12.2020

³¹ Virtual interview with Drita Kelmendi Kukaj, Director of CSW in Peja, 06.11.2020

³² Virtual interview with Islam Thaqi, Director of CSW in Prizren, 11.11.2020

directly responsible for providing services within its territory, while they report in details to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.



In most of the monitored municipalities, respondents stated that there is a large communication gap between the central and the municipal levels (MLSW - DHSW). The lack of communication has faded out even more in 2020, where due to the pandemic regular meetings and other joint activities were not held. Even from the central level, they think that the reporting form has not been regulated yet and this process continues to cause confusion in institutions.

The Director of the Department for Social and Family Policies under MLSW stated that municipalities (DHSW) have an obligation to draft reports on social services along with action plans and send them to MLSW. However, according to him, this is applied to a small extent in practice. He thinks that the reporting issue should be clarified with the new legal framework or even through administrative instructions.³³

It is more than necessary to regulate reporting horizontally and vertically, standardize reporting forms and report about data/cases by always taking into account the issue of confidentiality.

Regarding the reporting of providers by the non-governmental sector, NGOs stated that there is no reporting line at either the central or municipal level in cases where they are not financed by public institutions. In most cases, representatives of NGOs providing social services, during the monitoring process stated that they are mainly financed by non-governmental donors, therefore reporting is done only to donors.

Monitoring and Inspection

The mandate for monitoring and inspection of social services remains the competency of the Department for Social and Family Policies (DSFP) under MLSW³⁴. Based on the monitoring data, this practice turns out to be inappropriate and ineffective. International practices show that monitoring and inspection of social service providers should be separated and done by two different bodies. According to the Senior Monitoring and Inspection Officer

³³ Virtual interview with Mentor Morina, Director of DSFP, MLSW, Prishtina, 16.11.2020

³⁴ Law on Social and Family Services, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2447>

under MLSW, the Monitoring and Inspection Unit of Social and Family Services should be separated and independent from the current Divisions and should be established as an independent inspection body (at least as a Division). Also the executive mandate of inspection should be determined by the new Law on Social and Family Services. Whereas monitoring, is the competency of the respective Divisions under DSFP and is carried out by the competent officials for the respective services. Also, the monitoring process should be conducted by the municipal level as a decentralized service. According to her, the regulation of the Monitoring and Inspection Unit currently represents a conflict of interest because in many cases the Unit inspects its own divisions. The Director of the Department for Social and Family Policies under MLSW agrees with the same opinion, according to whom with the new structuring of MLSW, the Inspection Unit will be separated, as an independent division within the Office of the Minister and will report to this office.³⁵

Also, the current Inspection Unit operating under MLSW does not have executive powers and consequently does not have the opportunity to impose measures, fines and sanctions. Consequently, the recommendations given by this Unit remain unimplemented. This is due to the non-definition of the inspection role in the Law on Social and Family Services, where the Inspection Unit has no executive mandate.

Through the Position Paper published in 2020 for the new Law on Social and Family Services, KOMF strongly recommended the separation of inspection and monitoring functions, specifically monitoring to be done by the municipal level, while inspection with executive powers to be done by the central level. Furthermore, KOMF recommended the transformation of the internal Inspection Unit into a unit or agency outside the Ministry, which would enable an independent inspection to assess the quality of provision of services and administer licensing.

During 2020, the Monitoring and Inspection Unit under MLSW, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, had problems in implementing the annual inspection plan. Due to the impossibility of going out on the field for inspection during the pandemic, this Unit managed to carry out the field inspection process at the time when the number of cases with Covid-19 was reduced. Priority during this inspection was given to NGOs which had applied for licensing of social services in order to complete the licensing process and as a result this Unit inspected only

³⁵ Virtual interview with Mentor Morina, Director of DSFP, MLSW, Prishtina, 16.11.2020

these organizations. Meanwhile, the inspection of public institutions has been completely suspended this year.³⁶

In addition, the Monitoring and Inspection Unit faces other operational problems, such as the small number of inspection officers, the poor operating conditions and the lack of professional staff training. Currently, the Monitoring and Inspection Unit consists of three officers, who are responsible for inspecting about 40 CSWs in 38 municipalities, Special Institute in Shtime, Community Based Home for Children in Shtime, Home for the Elderly in Prishtina, Shelter for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Lipjan, Community Based Homes for People with Disabilities in 12 municipalities, Community Based Homes for the Elderly in 4 municipalities and 45 licensed NGOs that provide social services.

It is worth mentioning that currently in Kosovo the services provided by the Centers for Social Work are not licensed. KOMF considers that in addition to the licensing of officers within CSW, the social services provided by CSW should also be licensed, based on the minimum standards. This would increase the quality of social services provided by CSWs and increase accountability.

In terms of monitoring by municipalities, the report shows poor results in this regard. All representatives of social service providers have stated that there is no proper monitoring system for social services by municipal directorates. According to them, monitoring is usually done through work reports or regular meetings. This year, also due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of joint meetings or activities with the municipality has decreased even more, as well as the visits of the municipality representatives to these institutions.



Out of 12 interviewed social service providers from non-governmental organizations, 10 of them stated that during 2020 there has never been any monitoring process by the municipality, while two of them stated that the municipality has conducted monitoring process. According to them, there is lack of a regular line of communication with public institutions.

The municipal directorates stated that field monitoring cannot be done due to lack of monitoring tools and lack of capacities within DHSW, especially human capacities. According to them, monitoring is done mainly through reports that social service providers

³⁶ Virtual interview with Fitore Rexhaj, Senior Monitoring and Inspection Officer, MLSW, Prishtina, 20.11.2020

send to DHSW. The Director of Health and Social Welfare in the Municipality of Peja said that there is no proper monitoring in this municipality. This is due to the lack of capacities where in this case DHSW in Peja does not have any qualified officer among its staff for social services, much lesser for monitoring.³⁷

Apart from the lack of monitoring by public institutions, in none of the interviewed institutions, an external monitoring process has been carried out by the non-governmental sector. In general, there is no consistent mechanism with executive powers that would ensure transparency and accountability regarding the provision of social services in Kosovo.

³⁷ Interview w oci, Director of Health and Social Welfare in Peja, 06.11.2020



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

This monitoring report confirms that the decentralization process of social services, which has already started 11 years ago, has not been completed even in 2020. Out of a total of seven municipalities in which the decentralization of social services was monitored, it results that in none of them the decentralization process of social services has been fully implemented. The situation regarding the decentralization of social services has not undergone any progress compared to 2019. Moreover, as a result of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the process of decentralization of social services was not a priority either at the central or municipal level.

Covid-19 pandemic has worsened even more social welfare in Kosovo, causing a shutdown of many social services. The state of social service providers this year was even worse due to the lack of financing. Because of the pandemic, municipalities and MLSW have failed to announce calls for financing the social services in a timely manner, leaving service providers from the non-governmental sector without financing for most of the year.

In 2020, in addition to the pandemic, social welfare was also affected by the political scene movements in the country, where two governments were changed within the year. This had major consequences in interrupting previously initiated processes, including those related to social services.

Covid-19 pandemic and the political scene movements have also had an impact on legislative processes, which aim at regulating the provision of social services. Due to the stagnation of activities during this year, the two main draft laws (LSFS and LLGF) that are expected to complete the decentralization of social services were not adopted even in 2020.

Based on the monitoring findings, social services are in a very serious situation and are facing many challenges, including lack of sustainable financing for social services, poor quality of services, limited capacities, lack of infrastructure, low accountability, ambiguities in the division of responsibilities between the central and municipal level, ambiguities in the separation of monitoring and inspection functions, lack of data, as well as lack of cooperation and communication between the central and municipal levels.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adoption of the Law on Social and Family Services to regulate the issues presented below which have a direct impact on the implementation of the decentralization process:
 - Division of responsibilities of central and municipal level institutions, to avoid uncertainties about the establishment or opening of social services, management and monitoring.
 - Establish an open scheme for the provision of social services among the public, non-governmental and private sectors. The open and sustainable scheme of providing social services among public institutions, non-governmental and private sector, provides opportunities for a wider range of social services, specialized and better services and lower budget costs for the State of Kosovo. Also, Centers for Social Work would be discharged from some of the services, being profiled in certain services, this way increasing the quality of provision of such services.
 - Separation of inspection and monitoring functions. It is strongly recommended to define responsibilities between the central and municipal level regarding inspection and monitoring. Inspection should be done from the central level, while monitoring should be done from the municipal level. It is also recommended to strengthen the Inspection Unit by providing executive powers and providing the necessary capacities to perform the required functions. KOMF's medium-term recommendation is to transform the internal inspection Unit into a unit or agency outside the Ministry, which would enable independent inspection to assess the quality of the provision of services and administer licensing.
 - Licensing of social services provided by the public and private sector. Licensing of services provided by public institutions would ensure accountability and monitoring of all public service providers, thus increasing the quality of social services.
 - Regulation of reporting forms horizontally and vertically, standardize reporting forms and report data by taking into consideration confidentiality.
- Adoption of the Law on Local Government Finance and the Specific Grant for Social Services to ensure sustainable and equitable financing for social and family services. The Specific Grant for Social Services should be based on the minimum standards of MLSW, the financing formula of social services as well as social criteria and indicators in municipalities. The total amount of current expenditures for all categories of expenditures for CSWs and financing of residential institutions is about 10 million Euro. It is recommended that in the first year of implementation of the new Law on Local Government Finance (after its approval), the total amount allocated through the Specific

Grant be 15 million Euro, which means to increase the budget for social services by 5 million Euro.

- Drafting the financing formula for social services by MLSW. The financing formula should derive the unit cost for each client for social services and should take into account the criteria in the territory of a municipality: number of CSWs, number of residential centers, number of day care centers, number of social workers in proportion to the number of inhabitants and number of cases, number of children based on age groups and vulnerable or endangered adults, number of victims of domestic violence, trafficking and abuse, number of persons with special needs, number of elderly persons over the age of 65 and number of families on social assistance in relation to the municipal territory.
- Establishment of a sustainable scheme by municipalities and MLSW for contracting social and family services from the non-governmental sector.
 - MLSW and municipalities should increase the minimum financing threshold for social services provided by the non-governmental sector, in order to enable the continuation of services for citizens in need.
 - MLSW and municipalities should regulate contracting through purchasing services for the provision of social services, in order to ensure sustainable and long-term financing. Providing support through subsidies is not sustainable and is not considered the most appropriate form of financing the services for the non-governmental sector.
 - Open calls for financing social services should be for three years periods.
 - MLSW and municipalities should eliminate the time gaps created between calls for financing the services so that there is no suspension of services.
 - Municipalities should take all measures to ensure financing of direct social services within their territory through the financial support of CSWs and the purchase of services from the non-governmental sector.
 - Municipalities should draft specifications for the purchase/contracting of social services by the non-governmental sector.
 - Municipalities must adhere to the minimum standards of MLSW when contracting services.
 - Municipalities should enter into contracts with licensed non-governmental organizations proven by their experience and professionalism in providing social and family services.
- Capacity building of the Directorates of Social Welfare for planning, management and monitoring of social services. It is recommended that the Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare should develop and profile the professional staff in the area

of social services. In each Municipality, it is recommended that within this Directorate there should be at least one person profiled for the management of social services.

- Strengthening DHSWs and CSWs in budget planning and management. Given that after the implementation of the Specific Grant for Social Services, the budget is expected to be transferred to the CSWs, they should be prepared to assume competencies for budget planning and management for the provision of social services. Budget planning should be based on the needs of citizens within the municipality, the need for quality social services, as well as the professional development of service providers.
- Capacity building of social workers under CSWs for the provision of social services. It is recommended to increase their number in order to comply with minimum standards of MLSW for the number of officials in relation to the number of beneficiaries. It is also recommended that CSWs be staffed by professionals in the areas required by law such as social worker, psychologist, pedagogue, sociologist and lawyer. Also, it is recommended to profile the social workers under CSWs according to the categories of service beneficiaries. Given the limited human resources, it is recommended that this process be developed gradually in a progressive way. As a first stage, it is recommended to profile social workers for work with children and adults.
- Monitoring and evaluation by the non-governmental/private sector. In addition to monitoring and inspection by public institutions to increase accountability and quality of services, an external monitoring and evaluation, independent of the non-governmental/private sector, is recommended.
- Establishment of a training unit under MLSW, which will deal with ongoing training and retraining of social workers. It is recommended that programmes developed by the training unit for social services be accredited and compatible with minimum standards and licensing requirements. Also, it is more than necessary to create an annual training plan designed by MLSW and based on accredited programmes and requirements of standards approved by MLSW.
- Change in institutional culture and practice, creating a socio-political context that leads to responsibilities, authority and transfers financing from central government to local government to ensure quality and effective service provision.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - List of respondents

1. Mentor Morina Department of Social and Family Policies, MLSW Director of Department of Social and Family Policies	7. Bekim Ademi DHSW, Municipality of Ferizaj Director	13. Kumrije Bytyqi CSW, Municipality of Prizren Director
2. Fitore Rexhaj Department of Social and Family Policies, MLSW Senior Monitoring and Inspection Officer for Social and Family Services	8. Suna Zajmi Krasniqi DHSW, Municipality of Kamenica Director	14. Adelina Rexhepi CSW, Municipality of Ferizaj Head of Social Services
3. Salvador Elmazi Department of Budget, MoF Director of Budget	9. Jakup Dumani DHSW, Municipality of Fushë Kosova Director	15. Rifat Hajdari CSW, Municipality of Kamenica Director
4. Merita Bytyqi DHSW, Municipality of Lipjan Director	10. Blerim Shabani CSW, Municipality of Prishtina Director	16. Abaz Xhigoli CSW, Municipality of Fushë Kosova Director
5. Petrit Loci DHSW, Municipality of Peja Director	11. Makfirete Shamolli CSW, Municipality of Lipjan Director	17. Marije Vuksani Terre des hommes (NGO), Municipality of Prishtina Project Manager
6. Islam Thaqi DHSW, Municipality of Prizren Director	12. Drita Kukaj CSW, Municipality of Peja Director	18. Sebahate Beqiri Down Syndrome Kosovo (NGO), Municipality of Prishtina Executive Director

<p>19.</p> <p>Aida Topaninca</p> <p>Autism (NGO), Municipality of Prishtina</p> <p>Head of Therapeutic Work</p>	<p>23.</p> <p>Ardita Bala</p> <p>Safe House (NGO), Municipality of Peja</p> <p>Executive Director</p>	<p>26.</p> <p>Besime Tusha</p> <p>NOPM (NGO), Municipality of Kamenica</p> <p>Executive Director</p>
<p>20.</p> <p>Gresa Kelmendi</p> <p>PVPT (NGO), Municipality of Prishtina</p> <p>Project Manager</p>	<p>24.</p> <p>Blerta Kastrati</p> <p>PEMA (NGO), Municipality of Prizren</p> <p>Coordinator</p>	<p>27.</p> <p>Rexhep Gojnovci</p> <p>Akti Ora (NGO), Municipality of Fushë Kosova</p> <p>Executive Director</p>
<p>21.</p> <p>Fitim Sadiku</p> <p>POLIS (NGO), Municipality of Lipjan</p> <p>Executive Director</p>	<p>25.</p> <p>Xhemile Murseli</p> <p>Handikos (NGO), Municipality of Ferizaj</p> <p>Executive Director</p>	<p>28.</p> <p>Mevlude Murtezi</p> <p>CIPOF (NGO), Municipality of Fushë Kosova</p> <p>Executive Director</p>
<p>22.</p> <p>Naser Lajqi</p> <p>Syri i Vizionit (NGO), Municipality of Peja</p> <p>Program Manager in the area of Child Protection</p>		

Appendix 2 - Questionnaires for monitoring of the decentralization process:

a) Questionnaire 1 for the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare:

1. What is meant by the decentralization process of social services?
2. Have preliminary preparations been made by central and local institutions for the transfer of competencies from the central to the local level?
3. What stage has the decentralization process of social services in Kosovo reached?
4. In general, have there been any changes or progress regarding the implementation of the decentralization process, compared to 2019?
5. How much has Covid-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the decentralization process, including legislative initiatives, processes or projects launched earlier?
6. Has there been an increase in demand for social services as a result of the pandemic, and if so how has MLSW responded to such needs?
7. Are the competencies clearly defined between the central level and the local level, regarding the decentralization process? (clarify)
8. Has there been political will on the part of the Ministry to implement the decentralization process? (clarify)
9. Has the budget for social services been decentralized in 2020?
10. What is the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
11. Do you think that this process will be resolved through the Specific Grant?
 - 1.1 If yes, explain how this Grant would help solve the problem of budget decentralization for social services?
 - 1.2 If not, what would be the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
12. Is the financing formula or the costing of services per unit drafted?
13. How is the licensing of social service providers done and what are the licensing criteria?
14. How many social service providers are licensed in Kosovo?
15. Are there social service providers that provide services without a license?
16. Should CSWs be licensed to provide social services in the future? If yes, explain why.
17. How is the budget allocated to CSWs and NGOs that provide social services?
 - 17.1 Are there clear criteria and if yes, what are they?
18. Does the Ministry have a monitoring role in relation to social services?
 - 18.1 If yes, how is monitoring done?
 - 18.2 If not, should there be a monitoring role?

19. Has the Ministry established a programme for the professional development of social workers?
 - 19.1 If yes, what are those programmes and how many times a year have they been conducted?
 - 19.2 What were the topics covered in these programmes (trainings)?
 - 19.3 Who and how many people have benefited from holding these trainings?
- 20 Has the decentralization of foster care been done?
 - 20.1 If not, why not?
 - 20.2 If yes, explain how?
21. Does the Ministry have the necessary data to assess risk factors through the Household Budget Survey?
 - 21.1 Are social indicators defined?
22. What is the way of communication or internal reporting between the Ministry, DHSW, CSWs and other NGOs that provide social services?
23. Is there a plan by MoH to solve the identified reporting and communication problem between the central and municipal level (including reporting by NGOs) and is it expected that MLSW will draft an Administrative Instruction or reporting protocol?
24. How is the cooperation between the central, local level and NGOs?

b) Questionnaire 2 for the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare:

1. Have preliminary preparations been made by central and local institutions for the transfer of competencies from the central to the local level?
2. What stage has the decentralization process of social services in Kosovo reached?
3. In general, have there been any changes or progress regarding the implementation of the decentralization process, compared to 2019?
4. How much did the Covid-19 pandemic affect the inspection process and were there any difficulties during the inspection?
5. Are the competencies clearly defined between the central level and the local level, regarding the decentralization process? (clarify)
6. How is the licensing of social service providers done and what are the licensing criteria?
7. How many social service providers are licensed in Kosovo?
8. Are there social service providers that provide services without a license?
9. Should CSWs be licensed to provide social services in the future? If yes, explain why.
10. Does the Ministry have a monitoring role in relation to social services?
 - 10.1 If yes, how is monitoring done?
 - 10.2 If not, should there be a monitoring role?

11. What are the needs of the Social and Family Services Inspection Department?
12. What is the number of social service inspectors for the whole of Kosovo?
13. How many times a year is the regular inspection process carried out in the municipalities of Kosovo?
14. What is the mode of internal communication between the Ministry, DHSWS, CSWs and other NGOs providing social services?
 - 14.1 Are there reporting forms (protocols) in place?
 - 14.2 In what time periods is the reporting done?
 - 14.3 If there are protocols, are they complied with?
15. How is the cooperation between the central, local level and NGOs?

c) Questionnaire 3 for the Ministry of Finance

1. Has the budget for social services been decentralized and what is the current form of financing social services?
2. For 2020, what is the amount of the budget allocated for social services within the budget of the Republic of Kosovo?
3. Was there a political will from the Ministry to solve the problem of financing social services, and establish the Specific Grant for Social Services? (clarify)
4. What stage has the process of drafting the Law on Local Government Finance reached?
5. How much did the Covid-19 pandemic and the national elections affect the approval of the Law on Local Government Finance?
6. What is the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
 - 6.1.1 Should the Specific Grant be included in the new Law on Local Government Finance and do you think that this process will be resolved through the Specific Grant?
 - a) If yes, explain how this Grant would help solve the problem of budget decentralization for social services?
 - b) What will be the amount of budget that will be allocated under the Specific Grant for social services?
 - c) Do you have any comments about the financing formula?
 - d) When is the Grants Commission expected to approve the Specific Grant, so that it can enter into force?
 - e) If not, what would be the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
7. What is the way of internal communication or reporting between the Ministry of Finance, MLSW and Municipalities?

8. How is the cooperation between the central, local level and NGOs?

c) Questionnaire 4 for the local level (municipalities/DHSW):

1. What is meant by the decentralization process of social services?
2. Have preliminary preparations been made by central and local institutions for the transfer of competencies from the central to the local level?
3. What stage has the decentralization process of social services in Kosovo reached?
4. In general, have there been any changes or progress regarding the implementation of the decentralization process, compared to 2019?
5. How much has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the decentralization process, including legislative initiatives, processes or projects launched earlier?
6. Has there been an increase in demand for social services as a result of the pandemic, and if so how has DHSW responded to such needs?
7. Are the competencies clearly defined between the central level and the local level, regarding the decentralization process? (clarify)
8. Has there been political will on the part of the Municipality to implement the decentralization process? (clarify)
9. Has the budget for social services been decentralized?
 - 9.1 What is the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
 - 9.2 Do you think that this process will be resolved through the Specific Grant?
 - a) If yes, explain how this Grant would help solve the problem of budget decentralization for social services?
 - b) If not, what would be the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
10. What is the amount allocated by the Municipality for 2020 for social services (for CSWs and NGOs providing social services)?
 10. How is the budget allocated to CSWs providing social services?
 - 10.1 How are social services contracted by municipalities?
 - 10.2 Are there clear criteria and if yes, what are they (list)?
 - 10.3 How are the priorities and criteria for their contracting determined?
 - 10.4 Does the municipality regularly announce calls for NGOs to contract social services?
11. Do you as a municipality have accurate information about the number of people in need?
 - 11.1 How is this information obtained?
12. Does DHSW have the human capacities, qualified and experienced human resources for social services?

- 12.1 What is the number of staff within DHSW?
- 12.2 What are their profiles (professions)?
- 13. Does DHSW monitor institutions providing social services (including CSWs and NGOs)?
 - 13.1 If yes, how is monitoring done?
- 14. Has the Municipality conducted any awareness campaign regarding raising public awareness of their right to benefit from social services?
- 15. Do DHSWS and CSW have the capacity to draft budget planning (demand) for social services?
 - 15.1 Who makes the budget requests to the Municipality?
 - 15.2 Do the Directorate and CSW have capacities regarding procurement procedures for contracting social services?
 - 15.3 Does CSW have the capacities to manage the budget?
- 16 Has the decentralization of foster care been done?
 - 16.1 If not, why not?
 - 16.2 If yes, explain how?
- 17 What is the way of internal communication between the Ministry, DHSW, CSWs and other NGOs providing social services?
 - 17.1 Are there reporting forms (protocols) in place?
 - 17.2 In what time periods is the reporting done?
 - 17.3 If there are protocols, are they complied with?
- 18 Do you think that CSWs should send the same case reports to MLSW and DSMS?
- 19 Is there an operation manual for social services in the municipality based on the Law on Local Self-Government and the European Charter on Local Government, focusing on social services?
- 20 How is the cooperation between the central, local level and NGOs?

d) Questionnaire 5 for CSWs:

- 1. What is meant by the decentralization process of social services?
- 2. Have preliminary preparations been made by central and local institutions for the transfer of competencies from the central to the local level?
- 3. What stage has the decentralization process of social services in Kosovo reached?
- 4. In general, have there been any changes or progress regarding the implementation of the decentralization process, compared to 2019?

5. How much has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the decentralization process, including legislative initiatives, processes or projects launched earlier?
6. Has there been an increase in demand for social services as a result of the pandemic, and if so how has CSW responded to such needs?
7. Are the competencies clearly defined between the central level and the local level, regarding the decentralization process? (clarify)
8. Has there been political will on the part of the Ministry and Municipality to implement the decentralization process? (clarify)
9. Has the budget for social services been decentralized?
 - 9.1 What is the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
 - 9.2 Do you think that this process will be resolved through the Specific Grant?
 - a) If yes, explain how this Grant would help solve the problem of budget decentralization for social services?
 - b) If not, what would be the right solution for decentralizing the social services budget?
10. What was the amount allocated for 2020 for social services in this CSW?
11. What was the amount allocated for 2019 for social services in this CSW?
12. Does the current budget cover the needs of social services?
 - 12.1 For which of the services do you have a sufficient budget (list)?
13. Does CSW have the capacity to draft budget planning for social services?
 - 13.1 Who makes the budget requests to the Municipality?
14. Does CSW have the capacities to manage the budget for social services?
 - 14.1 Do you think the CSW should have its own bank account and manage the budget, or should the budget be managed by the municipality (DSMS)?
 - 14.2 Is there a CSW finance officer?
15. What is the way of internal communication between the Ministry, DHSWs, CSWs and other NGOs providing social services?
 - 15.1 Are there reporting forms (protocols) in place?
 - 15.2 In what time periods is the reporting done?
 - 15.3 If there are protocols, are they complied with?
 - 15.4 What reports are submitted to DHSW and what to MLSW (explain)?
16. Do you think that the same case reports should be sent to MLSW and DHSW?
17. Do CSWs/NGOs have statistical data on people in need?
 - 17.1 Do you see it as an opportunity for the CSW/NGO to go out on the field to collect accurate data on the number and situation of people in need?
18. How is the cooperation between the central, local level and NGOs?

e) Questionnaire 6 for NGOs providing social services:

1. How do you see the decentralization process? Are the competencies clearly defined between the central level and the local level, regarding the decentralization process? (clarify)
2. Has there been political will on the part of the Ministry and Municipality to implement the decentralization process? (clarify)
3. What services does the NGO where you currently operate offer?
4. In general, has there been any changes or progress regarding the implementation of the decentralization process, compared to 2019?
5. How much has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the implementation of the decentralization process, including legislative initiatives, processes or projects launched earlier?
6. Has there been an increase in demand for social services as a result of the pandemic, and if so how has NGO responded to such needs?
7. How are social services financed in the NGO where you operate?
 - 7.1. Currently, from what sources (donors) are your organization's social services covered?
8. Does the municipality announce calls for financing the social services?
 - 8.1. If yes, are you informed in time and are the financing criteria clear?
9. What was the amount allocated for social services by the central level and by the municipal level for 2019 and 2020?
10. Does the current budget cover the needs of social services?
11. In your opinion, what would be the right way to finance social services for the non-governmental sector?
12. What is the way of communication between you (NGO), Municipality, DHSW, CSW and MoH?
13. What is the way you report to the Municipality, DHSW, CSW and MLSW? (if reporting is done)
14. Have you had monitoring/inspection by the Municipality?
15. What are the challenges and needs faced by NGO in providing social services?
16. How is the cooperation between NGO, municipality and MLSW

Appendix 3 - Documents reviewed

Legal Framework:

Law No. 03/L-049 on Local Government Finance

Law No. 05/L-108 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 03/L-049 on Local Government Finance

Law No. 07/L-001 on Budget Appropriations for the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo for the Year 2020

Law No. 2003/15 on the Social Assistance Scheme in Kosovo.

Law No. 04/L-096 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 2003/15 on the Social Assistance Scheme in Kosovo.

Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services;

Law No. 04/L-081 Amending and Supplementing Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services;

Law No. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government

MLSW Sector Strategy 2014 - 2020

Statutes of the Centers for Social Work

Concept Paper on Local Government Finance, Ministry of Finance

Concept Paper on Social Services, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

REPORTS:

Analysis on Needs for Capacities of Centers for Social Work in Kosovo in the Field of Child's Rights Promotion and Protection, SOS Children's Villages Kosovo, Handikos, October 2020
Financing of Social Services, KOMF 2017
Mapping of child protection systems in EU, European Union Agency for Human Rights
Legal and Fiscal Context as well as the Capacities of Social Service Providers in Kosovo, Situation analysis, Save the Children 2018
Child Protection Index, KOMF 2017 and 2018
Budget Platform, GAP Institute
Kosovo Progress Report 2019, EU Office in Kosovo

KOMF member organizations:

Association for Social Training, Research and Advocacy-ASTRA, Action for Mothers and Children, Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo, Childproof/CIPOF, Education Comes First - ECF, Initiative 6, Youth Organization Akti - Ora, Organization for Children without Parental Care - OFAP, OPFAKKOS, Civil Rights Program - CRP/K, PL4Y International, Kosovo Education Center - KEC, PEMA Day Care Center, Center for Victim Protection and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings - MVPT, Center for Advanced Studies - FIT, Kosovo Center for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors - QKRMT, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages Kosovo, Hope and Children's Home Kosovo - SDSF, Kosovo Patients' Rights Association - PRAK Kosova, Association of Paraplegics and Paralysis of the Children of Kosovo - HANDIKOS, Terre des hommes, The Ideas Partnership, VoRAE, World Vision, Public Organization for Local Initiatives and Supports - POLIS, Network of Peace Movement - NOPM, Social Center - Educational SOS Kindergarten, Nevo Koncepti, Labyrinth Center and Peer Educators Network (PEN).

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