

# REPORT CARD

WHAT IS  
KOSOVO'S OVERALL  
SCORE FOR  
CHILD CARE





The Report Card was developed by the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection – KOMF, in frame of the regional project: “SMART Balkans – Civil Society for Shared Society in the Western Balkans”, implemented by the Centar za promociju civilnog društva (CPCD), Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) and Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) and financially supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA).

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# CHILDREN IN KOSOVO<sup>1</sup>



**30%**

of population in Kosovo are children

The amount of the social assistance varies from **70** to **250** euros per month<sup>2</sup>



**36,633**

children beneficiaries of the social assistance<sup>3</sup>

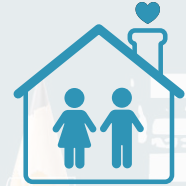


**46,000**

children benefited 20 euros per month and around **344,000** children benefited 10 euros per month<sup>4</sup>



The average number of cases for a social services official was around **250** cases per year<sup>5</sup>



The only shelter for children at the national level was closed due to lack of funding<sup>6</sup>



**634**

children without parental care<sup>7</sup>



**564**

cases of incidents in schools and around it<sup>8</sup>

**ONLY 45**

cases of violence in schools reported by schools to SMIA<sup>9</sup>

**335**

children victims of domestic violence, received services from shelters during 2023<sup>10</sup>

**194**

cases of minors in conflict with the law under 14 years old<sup>11</sup>

**1,867**

criminal charges of juvenile perpetrators of criminal offences<sup>12</sup>



The pass rate in the achievement test for 2023 was only **52.1%**<sup>16</sup>

□ One school psychologist or pedagogue works with around **1,400** children<sup>15</sup>

□ Only **54** preschool/kindergarten institutions in the public sector

□ **10** municipalities have no preschool public institution

**124**

cases of death of newborns<sup>12</sup>

**Only 7**

psychiatrists for children in public institutions<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Latest data for children in Kosovo

<sup>2</sup> Data from the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>3</sup> Data from the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>4</sup> Data from the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>5</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>6</sup> Announcement from the shelter Shpresa and Home for Children

<sup>7</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>8</sup> Data from Kosovo Police Report, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Data from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

<sup>10</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>11</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>12</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>13</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>14</sup> Annual work report of the State Prosecutor, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Data from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

<sup>16</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/publikohen-rezultatet-e-testit-te-arritshmerise-arritshmeria-e-pergjithshme-52-1-perqind/>



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# METHODOLOGY

What is the overall score of Kosovo regarding child care? This is the second edition of the annual monitoring report by the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection - KOMF on the situation of children. The monitoring methodology for the Kosovo's context through the 'Report Card' was developed by the international expert on child protection, George Bogdanov. George is also the leader of the Coalition for Child Protection in Bulgaria, which has been monitoring the situation of child rights for more than 10 years through the 'Report Card' and has been a motivating factor for KOMF to initiate this process. This instrument is also used by many other civil society organizations in various countries around the world, such as in Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Canada, California, etc.

The main objective of KOMF through this report is the independent civil society monitoring of the field of children rights on an annual basis, based on facts and evidence. The report provides data on the status of child rights, and offers recommendations expected to support the improvement of policies and services for the protection of children's rights in Kosovo. The areas in which progress has been analyzed for policies, legislation for the protection of children rights, and their implementation, are: Social Welfare; Child Protection; Child Health; Early Childhood Development; Education; and Juvenile Justice.

The report includes facts and data on the situation of children's rights in Kosovo for the above mentioned areas. The analysis is based on official data and sources and is not a subjective assessment by KOMF.

The data sources are cited in the relevant references. In addition to constructive criticism, the report also focuses on achievements, as well as areas where there have been shortcomings or regression. Aiming for a transparent and impartial assessment, support has been sought from ministries, agencies, and public institutions in collecting data and information on the progress achieved and the challenges in the relevant fields. Afterwards, this detailed information has been used as the basis for the analysis in each area. Other sources include data from reports of non-governmental organizations, state agencies, public institutions, and media publications. The authors of this report have provided an assessment of the areas. The assessment is based on a grading system similar to the grading of students in Kosovo schools, from a score of one to five, as follows: score "1 = Insufficient", score "2 = Sufficient", score "3 = Good", score "4 = Very Good", and score "5 = Excellent". The authors have provided concrete arguments supporting the score. Since one area may have more than one author (meaning co-authors of the areas), the method of arithmetic average has been used; thus, the evaluations of the authors have been utilized to arrive at the final assessment and the overall average of the area. The process also includes external evaluators who have also provided their assessment through grading. The agreed report within KOMF (excluding the grades assigned by the authors) has been sent to external evaluators along with the assessment criteria. The external evaluation group consists of experts and professionals with experience in the areas addressed in the report. At the end of this evaluation, a joint meeting has been organized with the external evaluators to discuss and validate the final assessment.

# REPORT CARD: GRADING

The grading scale for the areas addressed in the report is from **1 to 5**, with the respective guidelines for assessment and grading. The evaluation has been carried out according to detailed assessment guidelines, from the review of the

situation in the country, children's rights, policies for children and families, decisions and actions taken by institutions to address issues, the implementation of these decisions, and their impact on children and families.

*As a basis for the assessment, the following guidelines have been used:*

Assessment/Grade	Progress
<b>5</b>	State institutions have successfully implemented actions by effectively undertaking measures, which have shown efficiency. This success has brought an important, positive, lasting and visible change in lives of children and families in Kosovo. This grade is given for continued efforts of institutions to successfully implement actions, ensuring a continuous positive impact for children and families.
<b>4</b>	There is commitment, planning and concrete steps have been undertaken. This commitment has an impact on a wide range of children. Institutions show commitment by following structured plans and taking actions to address challenges. Results are documented for a specific group of children. This evaluation is valid also in case when institutions have expressed political willingness to solve problems and have prepared plans for the implementation of actions, however, results have not yet been achieved for all the groups of children involved in these plans.
<b>3</b>	Institutions declare that they will engage in addressing problems and are ready to develop plans, however, planned steps are being delayed, postponed, and do not bring needed final results. In their commitment to solve issues, institutions have shown a political willingness and have prepared structured plans, however, results have not yet been achieved for all groups of children for which plans have been prepared.
<b>2</b>	Institutions declare that they are committed to solve problems, however, they do not provide necessary financial and human resources, and there is a lack of real and sustainable actions. Although institutions have expressed the will to address the issues, however, undertaken steps are minimal, sporadic, and/or inconsistent, without bringing visible results. (This can be attributed to lack of competence of main state institutions to solve problems).
<b>1</b>	Institutions do not undertake concrete actions to address problems and do not recognize recommendations on solving issues (they are not in the focus of the priorities of responsible institution). Actions taken are wrong and there are no results. In general, although the institutions have a supportive position, the actions have not brought the desired effect.

FUSHA	2022	2023
<b>1. SOCIAL WELFARE</b>	2.6	2.68
<b>2. CHILD PROTECTION</b>	2.5	2.52
<b>3. CHILD HEALTH</b>	2.25	2.6
<b>4. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT</b>	2.25	2.5
<b>5. EDUCATION</b>	2.5	2.33
<b>6. JUVENILE JUSTICE</b>	2	2

# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM GRADING IN THE REPORT CARD?

## SOCIAL WELFARE

**Grade: 2.68**

The current focus of the social protection system, composed of social schemes and services, represents a fragile, primarily reactive system of a remedial nature and not a preventive system for empowering families and citizens. Kosovo has prioritized social schemes aimed at ensuring the social welfare of children and families, where benefit programs from all schemes and services cover over 15% of the population in Kosovo. However, investments have not been sufficient to make a difference in the overall population, in reducing poverty, and in decreasing disparities among children. The greatest disparities continue to happen among children living in poverty, children from marginalized communities, such as the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, and children with disabilities. Financial sustainability of social services remains among the main challenges risking the closure of services for children and thereby denying the fundamental rights to protection and welfare of children guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Although the budget for social services have increased, social services for children largely continue to depend on funding from international organizations. There has been no progress in drafting the funding formula for social services and in the adoption of the Law on Local Government Finances to create a Specific Grant for Social Services. Additionally, the Draft Law on the rights, assessment, treatment, and recognition of the status, services, and benefits for persons with disabilities did not manage to be approved. The approval of the new Law on Social and Family Services is considered an achievement, as it opens the process of social services reform, as well as the starting of the pilot process for reforming the Social Assistance Scheme, which addresses discrimination in the current scheme.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Grade: 2.52**

The Law on Child Protection, which came into force in 2020, has not been fully implemented yet. Preventive services and programs foreseen in this law, such as parenting programs, child protection houses, and the free telephone helpline for children, have not yet been established. The child protection system continues to remain fragmented, and services across the education, welfare, and health sectors are not integrated. Limited financial and human capacities have created a child protection system that deals with and manages only severe emergency cases where a child's safety or welfare is at risk, or cases of children who are victims to some form of abuse. There is a significant lack of preventive and reintegration services, which are essential for the well-being of children. As a result, only a part of children in need have access to child protection services and programs. Moreover, for some of the children in need of protection, the system offers very limited services, such as for children involved in hard labor, children in conflict with the law without criminal responsibility, or children who are victims of substance abuse. The identification and reporting or self-reporting of children in violent situations remains low, and there are still challenges in handling cases of violence in terms of their protection and rehabilitation. A positive step is considered the establishment of

municipal mechanisms for child protection in most municipalities of Kosovo, as foreseen by the Law on Child Protection, as well as the approval of 16 administrative instructions deriving from this Law.

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH

### Grade: 2.6

In the field of healthcare, there is a significant lack of data for children, including data on healthcare services provided to children in the private sector. The infant and child mortality rate in Kosovo is three times higher than the average of the European Union and the highest in the region. Child immunization coverage with regular vaccines has not yet returned to pre-COVID-19 levels. Currently, there is no available data from public institutions on satisfaction with healthcare services, specifically satisfaction with healthcare services for children. In terms of healthcare provision, there is a significant discrepancy between children from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities and children from the general population. A notable achievement was the considerable increase in the healthcare budget and the essential medicine list. However, in 2023, a shortage of medicines in primary healthcare, regional hospitals, and the University Clinical Center of Kosovo was evident. The Draft Law on Health Insurance failed to pass, as a result, expenses of parents out of their pocket, for their children's healthcare and medications, remained high. Our country continues to lack sustainable preventive and rehabilitative services and programs for children and adolescents who use narcotic substances. Available resources for the mental health of children in public healthcare institutions, remained very limited. The draft law banning energy drinks for children was not approved. The status of non-governmental organizations in providing healthcare services for children, especially vulnerable children, remains unregulated. Regulating the status of NGOs as healthcare service providers would increase access to specialized care for the vulnerable population and would enhance the sustainability of services and improve accountability.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

### Grade: 2.5

Although in recent years the Government of Kosovo has made Early Childhood Development one of its key priorities, investments for expanding and improving the quality of early childhood development services remain insufficient. Kosovo continues to have the lowest rate of children's enrollment in preschool education compared to other countries in the region. A positive development in terms of the legal framework was the approval of the Law on Early Childhood Education, which is expected to begin integrating services among the sectors of education, health, and social welfare. However, the administrative instruction deriving from this law have not yet been approved. Statistics show that many children in Kosovo are deprived of their rights to early childhood development and face discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and residence. Inequality in access to early childhood services is a serious problem in Kosovo, with rural areas being completely deprived of these services. Education and care in early years are particularly important for young children with disabilities, but they face serious barriers to accessing necessary services. Currently, no policy document provides a legal basis for Early Childhood Intervention services. There is a lack of programs for early identification and intervention, which negatively impacts the development of these children and their families. The concept of early childhood development remains unclear to many professionals, implying that the concept only pertains to education, leaving out

the health and protection aspects. The curriculum for Early Childhood Education was developed during 2023 and is currently in the pilot phase.

## EDUCATION

### Grade: 2.33

The education system faces numerous challenges and problems, which are reflected in the poor performance of students as well as in international assessments. The pass rate in the 2023 Achievement Test was only 52.1%. Meanwhile, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked Kosovo 76th out of 80 participating countries, marking low results in the quality of education. The factors contributing to the low quality of education in Kosovo include: an overloaded curriculum; the quality of teaching; overcrowded classrooms, especially in cities; schools and classrooms with very few students, including combined classes in rural areas; short time spent in schools; Books quality and shortages of digitization; lack of adequate infrastructure; lack of extracurricular activities; poor school management; politicization of educational staff; lack of cooperation between parents, teachers, and students; low accountability; frequent interruptions in the teaching process, etc. Despite significant efforts to improve infrastructure, Kosovo has not met the necessary standards for access to educational institutions. Schools still operate in shifts, there is a lack of sufficient space for students, and there is a shortage of equipment for laboratories and workshops. On the other hand, the condition and quality of teaching in small schools and satellite classes in Kosovo is very poor. The adoption of the Child Protection Policy by the Ministry of Education was a positive step, but so far, information sessions for this policy have been held in only four municipalities. Inclusive education in Kosovo is still in a development phase, with ongoing efforts to create an education system that offers equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their background or abilities. The inclusion of children with disabilities remains at a low level, and teaching is still not adapted to the individual needs of these children. Schools lack support staff such as psychologists, pedagogues, and assistants for children with disabilities. Even that the financial support for Community learning centers has been increased, they are facing great difficulties due to lack of proper funding and institutional neglect, which threatens their closure.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

### Grade: 2

In Kosovo, services for the prevention and protection of juveniles in conflict with the law, without criminal responsibility, remain almost entirely absent. The Centers for Social Work continue to have very limited capacity to work with these children, and the non-governmental sector also faces a significant shortage in providing these services. Establishing specialized centers or homes for the treatment and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, under the age of criminal responsibility, is extremely necessary. Institutions should consider the possibility of allocating two Child Protection Homes for the needs of this category, from the seven homes provided under the Law on Child Protection. Diversity measures, which are essential in promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles, continue to be minimally implemented, despite being doubled in the Juvenile Justice Code.



The Open-Type Educational Center still does not accept direct admissions based on court decisions, only transfers from the Juvenile Correctional Center. As a result, juveniles under educational measures are placed in a closed-type institution, which constitutes a violation of the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Code and a serious breach of children's fundamental rights. The professional staff in both centers remains insufficient to provide the necessary services for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles. Particularly concerning is the fact that in 2023, the staff at the Educational Center reverted to wearing police uniforms instead of the civilian clothing previously worn. Vocational training workshops at the Educational Center are not functional due to lack of materials, which hinders the provision of necessary services for the professional development and skills training of juveniles.



**SOCIAL WELFARE**



# SOCIAL WELFARE

## Grade: 2.68

- ▶ A reactive social protection system, focused on corrective rather than preventive measures
- ▶ Lack of an inclusive social protection system for all children, without distinction
- ▶ Social transfers have a very limited impact in reducing child and family poverty
- ▶ Unsustainable funding that threatens the closure of social services for children and families



## GENERAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

According to the preliminary results of the population census, the number of resident population in Kosovo is 1,586,65 inhabitants. The average age is 34.82 years (an increase of 4.85 years) compared to 2011, when the last census was conducted, where the average age was 29.97 years. The average number of members in a household in 2024 is 4.5 residents, compared to 5.9 residents per household in 2011 (a decrease of 1.4 residents). Changes are also observed in the reduction of the population aged 0 to 15 years and the increase in those over 65 years old.<sup>17</sup> These data should serve as a basis for creating policies aimed at increasing birth rates and supporting families. The unemployment rate in 2023 was 10.7%, while the inflation rate stood at 2.2%. The real growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Kosovo was 3.96%.<sup>18</sup>

Kosovo aimed to advance social policies and programs, prioritizing financial support schemes to ensure the social well-being of children, families, and citizens. The Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers has continued to implement schemes and programs aimed at empowering families and children, such as: the social assistance scheme for families in poverty, child benefits, the support scheme for new mothers, and the support scheme for children with disabilities.<sup>19</sup> These policies are part of strategic documents such as the Government Program, the National Development Plan, Strategic Objectives, and Measures for the implementation of the Government Program, as well as the medium-term and annual work plans.

<sup>17</sup> Data from Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2024

<sup>18</sup> Data from Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2024

<sup>19</sup> Data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>20</sup> Data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

The benefit programs from all schemes and services cover over 15% of the population in Kosovo. Social protection and benefit programs in Kosovo (pensions and social assistance) cover approximately 350,000 individuals, meaning over 15% of the population has access to one of the social payment schemes managed by the Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers.



# 15%

**OF THE POPULATION HAS ACCESS TO ONE OF THE SOCIAL PAYMENT SCHEMES**

Based on the current schemes, the budget allocations for covering payments in 2023 amount to over 800 million Euros, which accounts for over 20% of the 2023 Budget of the Republic of Kosovo. Compared to the previous year, there is an increase in the budget for social schemes, as in 2022, the budget for these schemes was over 600 million Euros.<sup>20</sup>

Social support continues to be primarily focused on monthly monetary assistance within social schemes. However, there is a notable lack of programs aimed at supporting and empowering families through the provision of necessary services.

## CHILD POVERTY AND PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

Kosovo continues to have a high rate of children living in poverty. A concerning issue is the lack of data on the poverty rate at the national level, particularly regarding child poverty. The latest statistic dates back to 2019, which indicates that 22.7% of children live in poverty, while 7% live in extreme poverty.



**22.7%**

**OF CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY, WHILE 7% LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY**

A significant number of children in Kosovo experience malnutrition and poor living conditions, which hinder their well-being and development. The greatest inequalities continue to affect the poorest children, children from marginalized communities such as the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as children with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

The Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers has continued to implement schemes aimed at reducing poverty and empowering families in Kosovo. The main programs or schemes for supporting families include the Social Assistance Scheme, Child Benefits, the supportive program for unemployed and employed new mothers, and the scheme for supporting families with children with disabilities.<sup>22</sup> Regarding the program for supporting new mothers, approximately 8,000 unemployed mothers received support in the amount of 170 Euros for 6 months, while around 1,800 employed mothers were supported with 170 Euros for 3 months.<sup>23</sup>

The Government of Kosovo, with support from various donors, has been committed to implement measures aimed at employing at least one family member from families that do not have any employed individuals, engaging persons with disabilities in the workforce, and including

youth in employment initiatives. These measures have been implemented through the economic revitalization program and other programs. However, there is no data available on the number of beneficiaries engaged from the category of social assistance scheme recipients in relation to the implementation of these measures.<sup>24</sup>

Investments have not been sufficient to make a significant change in the overall population, to reduce poverty, and to decrease inequalities among children. Expanding programs aimed at reducing poverty and empowering families, ensuring equal access to services, and securing sustainable funding, are essential steps for improving the well-being of children and vulnerable families in Kosovo.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME



**36,633**

**CHILDREN BENEFITED FROM SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The main program for supporting families in 2023 was the social assistance program, from which 20,364 families, with 79,925 members of which 36,633 were children, benefited on a monthly basis. The amount of social assistance ranged from 70 to 250 Euros per month, which is insufficient to meet the basic living conditions for a family, especially given the inflation experienced in 2023.<sup>25</sup>

A number of families and children living in severe socio-economic conditions are not included in the benefits from the social assistance scheme due to the criteria set forth in the Law on Social Assistance.<sup>26</sup> This indicates that the social assistance scheme is not well-adapted and does not cover all children and families living in poverty. Currently, there is no data available on the number of families living in poverty that do not benefit from social assistance.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Data from Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, Down Syndrome Kosova, Autism, 2023

<sup>22</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>23</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>25</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>26</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>27</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

As a result of certain criteria in the Law on Social Assistance, a number of households are unable to benefit from the social assistance scheme. The exclusionary and discriminatory criteria include the age of children for Category II, the requirement for members of the household to undergo assessments by medical commissions for work capacity, and the lack of identification of income and accurate revenue to measure the level of well-being of households, among others.<sup>28</sup> The criterion in Category II, Article 4, which requires a family to have at least one child under the age of 5, is discriminatory and completely unacceptable by all actors involved in the scheme, including the beneficiaries themselves. According to this criterion, families living in poverty without a child under the age of 5 are put at a disadvantage. This criterion also excludes families that have received social assistance up until their child turns 5 years, at a time when the child is about to start school, which inevitably leads to even greater expenses for the family.<sup>29</sup>

These shortcomings are expected to be addressed with the new legislation for the Social Assistance Scheme, which is planned to be approved in 2024. It is important to note that the drafting process for the Social Assistance Law began five years ago and has yet to be finalized. The discriminatory criteria affecting children are expected to be removed, and opportunities will be created for low-income households, below the determined threshold, to benefit from the support provided by the social assistance scheme. A positive development is the start of the implementation of the social assistance scheme reform project, funded by the World Bank loan, and the preparation of the Draft Law on Social Assistance and Social Protection. This draft law also plans to include the legal regulation of child benefits and allowances for unemployed mothers. Under the current Social Assistance Law, 50% of families benefiting from the scheme are families with children, who receive an additional 10 euros as part of the household income.<sup>30</sup>

Another form of support for families has been provided through the Economic Recovery Program and the implementation of Measure 3.4 - Financial support for NGOs

and other entities that offer social services to vulnerable groups of society, specifically through public kitchens.<sup>31</sup>

The current focus of social schemes and services in Kosovo reveals a fragile system of social services and welfare, which is predominantly reactive rather than preventive in its nature. It provides remedial care rather than focusing on empowering families proactively. The system needs to be strengthened to create a proactive and responsive framework. Although the social protection system in Kosovo provides financial assistance, it does not sufficiently address the various needs of vulnerable families and children. It is essential to adopt a more comprehensive approach to ensure equal access to support services and fully empower families. Furthermore, the integration of the social assistance scheme with social services, employment offices, healthcare services, and educational services is crucial to provide holistic support to families and effectively address their diverse needs.

## CHILD BENEFITS



# 46,000

**CHILDREN BENEFITED 20 EUROS PER MONTH, AND  
OVER 344,000 THOUSAND CHILDREN BENEFITED  
10 EUROS PER MONTH**

Based on the data through the integrated online system of the E-Kosova platform, during 2023, over 46,000 children benefited 20 euros per month, and over 344,000 thousand children benefited 10 euros per month from child benefits.<sup>32</sup> Allocated monthly amount is very low, and is not sufficient to afford children needs.

<sup>28</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>29</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

<sup>30</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>31</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>32</sup> Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

## Data on Child Benefits for 2023

Child Benefits Measure 3.5 – Year 2023		
Month	No. of children (0- 24 months)	No. of children (under 16 years)
January	43,709	271,064
February	44,210	286,738
March	44,472	295,573
April	44,439	300,298
May	44,585	304,315
June	44,477	307,404
July	44,463	310,353
August	44,735	315,011
September	44,513	325,154
October	45,161	328,882
November	45,355	331,388
December	46,320	344,680

The child benefit scheme is not comprehensive, as it only includes children up to the age of 16. Legislation in Kosovo, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, defines a child as being up to 18 years old. Including all children is necessary, especially considering that there is currently no applicable scheme for supporting children aged 16–18.

It is concerning that children without parental care in foster families do not enjoy the right to child benefits. Since 2021, when child allowances were introduced, children without parental care have not benefited because the legal guardians of children within the Centers for Social Work have been unable to apply due to the lack of official bank accounts and the status of the Centers for Social Work.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, child benefits do not have a sound legal basis; they are provided based on a decision made as part of the emergency package from the Covid-19 period in 2021.

## SUPPORT OF THE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Law on Material Support for Families of Children with Permanent Disabilities provides a monetary assistance of 100 Euros per month for families of children with permanent disabilities. However, this law does not guarantee comprehensive protection for all families with children with disabilities. It only recognizes the right to material compensation for families of children with permanent physical, mental, and sensory disabilities who are entirely disabled to perform daily life activities without the care of another person.<sup>34</sup> This Law provides a support for only about 3,000 children with disabilities.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, as such, it discriminates and does not cover all children with disabilities. Furthermore, the financial support of 100 Euros is insufficient for the needs of families and children with disabilities. The monthly amount of 100 Euros has remained the same for a decade, not considering the needs and high inflation in recent years. Within the support scheme for paraplegic and tetraplegic individuals, 711 children benefited, while under the support scheme for visually impaired individuals, 124 children benefited.

Children with disabilities and their parents are in a very difficult situation regarding financial support and access to necessary services. It should be emphasized that for a significant part of these children, one of the parents, primarily mothers, is forced to leave work to dedicate 24 hours a day to caring for their children with disabilities. In these cases, there is a decrease in the family's monthly income, which implies a decline in the economic and social well-being of the family.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, considering the unstable nature of the services for children with disabilities provided by non-governmental organizations, due to lack of sustainable funding from the state of Kosovo, parents are compelled to seek these services from the private sector, which implies greater costs for parents of children with disabilities and increases the impoverishment of their families.

<sup>33</sup>Data from Organization for Children without Parental Care, 2023

<sup>34</sup>Law on Material Support for Families of Children with Permanent Disability

<sup>35</sup>Official data from Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>36</sup>Data from member Organizations Autism, Down Syndrome Kosovo, Handikos, Qendra e Kujdesit Ditor PEMA

## Data on beneficiary children from the support scheme for families with children with disabilities for the 2023

Month	Number of children beneficiaries
January	2,894
February	2,869
March	3,088
April	3,054
May	3,034
June	3,228
July	3,228
August	3,205
September	3,190
October	3,333
November	3,323
December	3,303

## URGENCY FOR THE APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The initiative for drafting a comprehensive law undertaken in 2018, aimed at supporting children and persons with disabilities, marked an important step toward improving legislation for children with disabilities. For this purpose, the Draft Law on Rights, Assessment, Treatment, and Recognition of Status, Services, and Benefits for Persons with Disabilities was drafted. Among other things, this draft law aims to change the approach to the assessment and treatment of children with disabilities by transitioning to a bio-psycho-social model based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health, known as ICF.

However, despite the advocacy of civil society for the adoption of this draft law, it has been excessively delayed for six years and has yet to be approved. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo must demonstrate its commitment to children with disabilities by urgently adopting this law, considering the severe conditions faced by children with disabilities in the Republic of Kosovo.

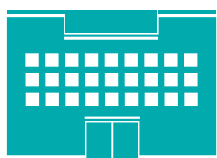


## SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN



**AVERAGE OF CASES FOR AN OFFICIAL IN THE CENTERS FOR SOCIAL WORK WAS ABOUT 250 CASES PER YEAR**

Social services are provided by the Centers for Social Work, other public providers, and non-governmental organizations licensed for the provision of social services. In the territory of Kosovo, there are 38 Centers for Social Work in 38 municipalities. The Centers for Social Work lacked the necessary human and financial resources to provide social services and were overwhelmed with responses to emergency cases, sidelining preventive and reintegration services. The high caseload in relation to social service officials has continued throughout 2023, especially in the larger municipalities, where average of cases for an official was about 250 cases per year. Centers for Social Work continued to work under difficult infrastructure conditions, where only 28% of Centers for Social Work had relatively good infrastructure conditions, whereas the other part of Centers for Social Work provided services in inadequate physical spaces.<sup>37</sup>



**ONLY  
28%**

**OF CENTERS FOR SOCIAL WORK HAD RELATIVELY GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS**

Significant challenges have emerged in the functioning of the Guardianship Body within the Centers for Social Work. Due to lack of staff and professional profiles at these centers, particularly psychologists and social workers, it is impossible for many Centers for Social Work to meet the requirements for the proper functioning of the Guardianship Body as

stipulated by the Law on Family.<sup>38</sup> Also, there is a fundamental misunderstanding and misinterpretation regarding the Guardianship Body and how this body is organized within the Centers for Social Work. This misunderstanding negatively impacts the protection of the rights of certain categories of vulnerable clients who are in need of assistance.<sup>39</sup>

50 non-governmental organizations provided specialized services during 2023 for various categories of children.<sup>40</sup> The services provided included residential services for children victims of domestic violence, abuse, neglect, and trafficking, specialized day services for children and adults with disabilities, support services for alternative care for children without parental care; services aimed at family empowerment and preventing child abandonment, support for youth, services for children who are substance abusers; and services for children in the street and those involved in hazardous work.

A major challenge for non-governmental social service providers remains the unstable funding for delivering social services from the Ministry of Justice and municipalities. The Ministry and municipalities have not established a sustainable contracting scheme for purchasing social services from the non-governmental sector. Support for NGOs was provided on an ad hoc basis through subsidies in 2023. The amount allocated for services provided by NGOs was insufficient and only covered a small portion of the overall service costs. The budget was mainly distributed equally among service providers, without considering the specific needs of the beneficiaries.<sup>41</sup>

Although 2023 was a more favorable year for social service providers in terms of funding compared to previous years, warnings of service closures began in November 2023. This was due to the fact that in December 2023, for the majority of non-governmental service providers, projects funded by international donors in support of social services ended, leaving significant gaps in the financing of these services. It should be noted that social services for children continue to heavily rely on funding from international organizations.

Municipalities, which hold full responsibility for ensuring, managing, and financing social services for children and residents, still, after 15 years since social services were transferred under their jurisdiction, lack the willingness and readiness to support and finance social services for children. An exception is a small number of municipalities, such as

<sup>37</sup> Data from the Association of Centers for Social Work, 2023

<sup>38</sup> Data from the Association of Centers for Social Work, 2023

<sup>39</sup> Analysis of Centers for Social Work, KOMF and Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>40</sup> Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>41</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations social service providers, 2023

the Municipality of Prishtina, which has provided greater support compared to other municipalities.<sup>42</sup>

Residential and daily services for children are partially funded by the Ministry of Justice through annual public calls. Since 2016, there have been time gaps between calls/contracts for supporting these services, leaving them without financial support at the beginning of each year. The Ministry of Justice gave 1.5 million euros for around 50 non-governmental organizations, covering the period from April 2023 to December 2024.<sup>43</sup> Specifically, according to data from KOMF member organizations, the support received from the Ministry of Justice, covers on average about 66% of residential services and around 21% of daily social services.<sup>44</sup>



**THE ONLY SHELTER FOR CHILDREN IN NATIONAL LEVEL WAS CLOSED IN JANUARY 2024 DUE TO THE LACK OF FUNDING.**

About 30 service providers from the non-governmental sector, including residential services for victims, daily services to children with disabilities, children in street situation, children victims of substance abuse, have reduced services and endangers to be closed.

Due to the lack of sustainable funding from public institutions, the only national shelter for children, victims of domestic violence, abuse, trafficking, and neglect, was closed in January 2024.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, the majority of service providers have reduced their services and the number of children beneficiaries. If this situation continues, it will lead to a collapse in child protection and an unprecedented situation in Kosovo. Among the priority issues that the state of Kosovo must address is the development of a sustainable scheme for purchasing services from the non-governmental sector.<sup>46</sup>

There has been no progress in drafting the funding formula for social services and in the approval of the Law on Local Government Finances aimed at creating a Specific Grant for Social Services. The costing and drafting process of the funding formula, although initiated five years ago, has not been finalized.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, there has been no mapping of services and the needs of the population for services that would inform both municipal and central policymaking in the development of programs and the planning of services according to needs.<sup>48</sup>

There was a progress during 2023 on advancement of legislation on social services. Important step was the approval of Law on Social and Family Services, a process initiated five years ago, which is expected to develop the Social Services reform. 22 Administrative Instructions derives from this Law which will enable the implementation of the Law.<sup>49</sup>

A very important process is the drafting of the Administrative Instruction for social services contracting from non-governmental organizations, which will include the costs per unit for each social service. Establishing unit costs for social services will be a prerequisite for developing procedures for contracting and purchasing social services from the non-governmental sector, influencing a fair allocation of funding for social services and increasing the sustainability of services.

Municipalities doesn't have the necessary instruments and capacities to monitor social services. Structured data management processes have continued to be partially functional. Access to this database is only available to the Centers for Social Work, and it does not include data on beneficiaries from non-governmental and private social service providers.<sup>50</sup>

There has been progress regarding the capacity building of social service providers. The accredited training program within the General Council for Social and Family Services was completed with 24 modules for social services.<sup>51</sup> 312 Providers of social services, including 174 from the public sector and 139 from non-governmental organizations, have enhanced their capacities to deliver quality social services for vulnerable children and families.

<sup>42</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations social service providers, 2023

<sup>43</sup> Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>44</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations social service providers, 2023

<sup>45</sup> Notification from Hope and Homes for Children, 2023

<sup>46</sup> Data from Data from KOMF Member Organizations social service providers, 2023

<sup>47</sup> Official data from the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, 2023

<sup>48</sup> Analysis of Centers for Social Work, KOMF and Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>49</sup> Official Gazette of Republic of Kosovo

<sup>50</sup> Analysis of Centers for Social Work, KOMF and Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>51</sup> Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

## Recommendation:

- ▶▶ Drafting and implementing policies and programs for supporting and empowering families, enhancing their economic strength, and improving social welfare;
- ▶▶ Adoption of the new Social Assistance Law, eliminating discriminatory criteria for children. Increasing the monthly amount of social assistance to cope with the inflation that has occurred in recent years;
- ▶▶ Ensuring the sustainability of child benefits through the development of a legal framework for child benefits; reforming child benefits to include ages 17 to 18 years within the child benefit scheme and increasing the monthly amount; regulating the provision of benefits for children without parental care and marginalized children;
- ▶▶ Integration or connection of social assistance services with social and family services, employment offices, healthcare, and educational services;
- ▶▶ Adoption of the Draft Law on the Rights, Assessment, Treatment, and Recognition of Status, Services, and Benefits for Persons with Disabilities;
- ▶▶ Development and approval of 22 Administrative Instructions deriving from the new Law on Social and Family Services;
- ▶▶ Development of minimum structural and functional standards for each social service based on the Law on Social and Family Services;
- ▶▶ Promotion of the new Law on Social and Family Services to municipalities and social service providers to raise awareness of the reforms and innovations brought by this Law;
- ▶▶ Identification of current needs in each municipality and determination of social services that can be offered by the Center for Social Work. Services that cannot be provided by the Center for Social Work should be included in the annual plan for purchasing those services from the non-governmental sector;
- ▶▶ Redesigning public calls for support of social services, regulating the contracting of social and family services from the non-governmental sector. The Ministry and municipalities should raise the funding threshold for social services, eliminate time gaps between calls, finance services for three-year periods, and enter into contracts with licensed organizations;
- ▶▶ Completion and approval of minimum standards for each social service; creation of minimum standards by the Ministry to determine staff load and the average number of cases;
- ▶▶ Establishing costs per unit for each social service as a prerequisite for developing procurement procedures for purchasing social services from the non-governmental sector;
- ▶▶ Adoption of the Law on Local Government Finance to establish a Specific Grant for Social Services. This grant should include clear criteria to ensure fair distribution and adequate funding for social services;
- ▶▶ Increasing the number of social service officials within Centers for Social Work, especially those with profiles of “social workers” and “psychologists” to cope with caseloads and enable the functioning of the Guardianship Authority;
- ▶▶ Improving working conditions at Centers for Social Work, ensuring necessary space and equipment, and providing access for children with disabilities to the facilities of Centers for Social Work;
- ▶▶ Creation of a digitized and integrated database within Centers for Social Work, which would also include data on beneficiaries from non-governmental and private providers;
- ▶▶ Establishing a monitoring system by municipalities to oversee social services;
- ▶▶ Increasing the number of officials for inspecting public, non-governmental, and private social service providers.





**CHILD PROTECTION**



# CHILD PROTECTION

Grade: 2.52

- ▶ Lack of programs to support parents in raising children without violence;
- ▶ Lack of reintegration and prevention services for children;
- ▶ Low identification, reporting, and self-reporting of children in violence situations;
- ▶ Fragmented child protection system



**634**

children without parental care

**555**

children without parental care in kinship care

**79**

children without parental care in foster families

**10**

completed adoptions, including nine domestic and one international.

## CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE

During 2023, a total of 634 children without parental care were reported.<sup>52</sup> Compared to 2022, where 579 children were without parental care, this reflects an increase of 55 children, or 9.5% of the children placed in parental care. Meanwhile, the number of abandoned children continues to decline, with 10 children abandoned in 2023 compared to 12 abandoned children in the previous year. The number of children fostered in family care within the extended family in 2023 was 555 children, while the number of children fostered in family care outside the extended family or in foster families during the same year, was 79 children.<sup>53</sup>

In 2023, a total of 10 adoption requests were approved. Among them, nine children were adopted domestically (national adoption), and one child was adopted internationally (international adoption). Additionally, out of the 10 abandoned children, three of whom were born in 2023, were reunited with their biological families.<sup>54</sup>

The number of children without parental care has increased compared to the previous year, reaching 634 children, which is 9.5% more than last year

Number of foster families during 2023 was 37.<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting that the number of foster families has been declining in recent years, putting this form of protection at risk, especially in light of the increasing number of children without parental care who require shelter. Institutions must make immediate efforts to maintain these service providers to ensure the sustainability of this essential mechanism, which is one of the fundamental forms of legal and family protection for children without parental care. The Law on Social and Family Services recognizes foster families as providers of social services; therefore, there is an urgent need to proceed with the issuance of subordinate legislation to regulate foster care, recognize the status of foster families as service providers, and license them. Along with licensing, the Law on Social Services also provides for compensating foster families as service providers for children without parental care. Thus, there needs to be a revision of the contracting

<sup>52</sup>Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>53</sup>Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>54</sup>Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

<sup>55</sup>Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023

and compensation scheme for foster families. Currently, foster families are compensated for the monthly expenses of food and clothing for children without parental care, but they are not compensated for providing foster services.<sup>56</sup>

KOMF has continuously addressed challenges related to foster care in Kosovo. A major challenge remains the lack of foster families in all municipalities of Kosovo, as stipulated in the Law on Child Protection, which requires each municipality to have at least three evaluated, trained, and approved foster families according to the standards set by the relevant Ministry of Social Welfare. Despite the legal framework, foster families are absent in several municipalities, with availability in only 17 municipalities, making it difficult to find immediate solutions for child shelter. It is noteworthy that even larger municipalities, such as the Municipality of Peja, the Municipality of Mitrovica, the Municipality of Podujeva, Kamenica, and the Municipality of Klina, have no foster families, despite consistently having cases of children in need of shelter.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is essential to develop action plans in each municipality to raise awareness about foster care with the aim of recruiting new foster families. This proactive approach would help address the increasing need for foster care and ensure that more children without parental care receive the support and protection they require in a nurturing family environment.

A significant challenge remains the lack of specialization among current foster families to work with specific categories of children. Specifically, there has been a notable issue with the absence of specialized foster families for the accommodation of children in conflict with the law who are under the age of criminal responsibility (under 14 years old), as well as for the sheltering of children who are victims of trafficking during the long-term reintegration process.<sup>58</sup> It is crucial to approve the Administrative Instruction for regulating family fostering, which is expected to profile foster families based on the needs of children. Additionally, it aims to support children in family care even after they turn 18, extending this support up to the age of 26, according to the assessment of the Guardianship Body. In addition to foster care, the Child Protection Law, which entered into force in 2020, provides a new form of protection for children without parental care known as supervised independent living. This provision has also been incorporated into the Law on Social and Family Services, which was approved in December 2023. The new Law recognizes the

right to protection for children without parental care even after reaching the age of 18, specifically extending this support until the age of 26. However, it has not yet been implemented as it awaits the approval of the Administrative Instruction for regulating family fostering. Throughout 2023, the previous practice continued, whereby institutions ceased services and care once individuals reached 18 years of age, even though children and young people need this support until they are fully empowered and independent.<sup>59</sup>

The Administrative Instruction regulating supervised independent living, which derives from the Law on Social and Family Services, must be approved as soon as possible to operationalize this protective measure for children without parental care after they turn 18.

Preventive services that should be provided by the Centers for Social Work according to their mandate continue to lack implementation. These services are primarily offered by the non-governmental sector, which simultaneously provides the majority of other services related to protection, rehabilitation, reintegration, empowerment, and independence.<sup>60</sup>

The nearly total lack of preventive services aimed at reducing risks for children's harm can be attributed to the insufficient resources available to the Centers for Social Work. This includes a shortage of social workers who are currently overwhelmed with cases, a lack of necessary financial resources, and the absence of essential assets required to provide these services.<sup>61</sup> Considering that the Law on Social and Family Services categorizes services into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary services, Kosovo must invest especially in primary services which are mainly prevention services, services for family empowerment, prevention of the separation of children from their parents, including good parenting.

Another challenge is the lack of opportunities for adoption for children without parental care over the age of 3 years who have been placed in family or residential care for a very long time and are not considered for adoption. Kosovo is one of the few countries in Southeast Europe with the lowest number of adoption cases for children over the age of 3 years relative to its population. Additionally, the hesitation of potential adoptive families plays a role in the

<sup>56</sup> Data from shelter families and Organization for Children without Parental Care, 2023

<sup>57</sup> Data from Organization for Children without Parental Care, 2023

<sup>58</sup> Data from Member Organizations of KOMF, 2023

<sup>59</sup> Data from SOS Villages of Children in Kosovo, 2023

<sup>60</sup> Data from Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

<sup>61</sup> Analysis of Centers for Social Work, KOMF and Ministry of Justice, 2023

lack of adoption for this age group due to their preferences for adopting children under the age of 3 years.

During 2023, the capacity of service providers for children without parental care has continued to be strengthened based on the standard program for family care and the international PRIDE program, which is dedicated to enhancing the capacities of shelter families, training potential foster families, and prospective adoptive parents.<sup>62</sup>

## CHILDREN INVOLVED IN HARD LABOR

In Kosovo, the exact number of children involved in hard work is unknown. Considering the long list of hazardous forms of work for children, institutions lack the capacity to reach all areas to identify children engaged in hard work.

During 2023, the lack of specialized services provided by municipalities to identify and offer necessary protection services for children involved in hard work has continued. There is a shortage of daycare centers, and no social, educational, or psychological support services are provided to these children. Mobile teams, now operational in some municipalities, which serve for early identification and response to cases of children involved in hard work, have a noticeable lack of capacity to identify and report cases in a timely manner. At the same time, effective mechanisms for early identification of cases of children involved in hard work are completely absent, preventing them from accessing the necessary services.<sup>63</sup>



**130**

**ACTIVE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN STREET SITUATION, IN 8 REGIONS OF KOSOVO**

Children begging on the streets are among the most vulnerable children involved in hard labor. In total, 130 active children have been identified in street situation, in 8 regions of Kosovo. Almost 90% of children in street situations belong to ethnic communities, such as Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian.<sup>64</sup> This shows that structural discrimination and marginalization are factors that increase their vulnerability. Children in street situations have mostly reported that poverty is the main reason they have become involved in street life.<sup>65</sup> During 2023, there have been no strategies or actions from public institutions to address this issue sustainably. There is an urgent need to draft and implement a unified national strategy for the issue of children in the street, which addresses both the prevention of children and parents becoming involved in street life and the intervention when children find themselves in street situations.



**EVEN IN 2023 THERE ARE ONLY TWO SPECIALIZED CENTERS FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN HARD LABOR, IN PRISTINA AND PRIZREN**

The only two-day care centers for the treatment and reintegration of children involved in hard labor, have been established and are managed by the organization Terre des hommes, which reports that during 2023, it provided services to 124 children at the Day Center in Pristina and to 43 children at the Day Center in Prizren.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Data from SOS Villages of Children in Kosovo and Organization for Children without Parental Care, 2023

<sup>63</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

<sup>64</sup> Study of children in street situation in Kosovo, UNICEF Kosovo 2023

<sup>65</sup> Study of children in street situation in Kosovo, UNICEF Kosovo, 2023

<sup>66</sup> Data from report of Terre des hommes, 2023



## CHILD TRAFFICKING

During 2023, 17 trafficking victims were identified, of which six were children. Compared to 2022, there is a significant decrease in the number of trafficking victims. Similar to 2023, the main forms of human trafficking were sexual exploitation and forced labor.<sup>67</sup> Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian children continue to be the most vulnerable group to forced begging, where often those who exploit them, are their parents or relatives.

Kosovo does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but has made efforts in this direction. Kosovo has increased its overall prevention efforts, including fundraising for awareness campaigns and distributing manuals for teachers on preventing child trafficking. The Human Trafficking Directorate conducted more actions and created pamphlets to inform victims about their rights and available services.

Centers for Social Work have continued to provide services for victims of trafficking. However, due to lack of necessary resources, these services have not been comprehensive, and the reintegration programs aimed at the long-term

reintegration of these children, have not been effective. Early identification of child trafficking victims remains a challenge, and there is a need to strengthen mechanisms that encourage reporting and self-reporting.

Centers for Social Work need to have the necessary resources available to provide quality and effective services.

During 2023, forced begging of children by their parents continued to be classified as neglect or abuse, rather than trafficking. As a result, it is believed that in some cases, authorities have deported some unidentified trafficking victims without referring them as potential trafficking cases in order to access the necessary services.

It is essential to continue working on improving institutional coordination in the prevention and combating of human trafficking. Therefore, ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy Against Human Trafficking in Kosovo (2022-2026) and the Action Plan (2022-2024) is necessary.

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<sup>67</sup> Data from United States State Department on Trafficking of Human Being; TIP Report, 2023

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

Article 38 of the Law on Child Protection prohibits physical punishment and disciplinary measures that undermine and weaken the child’s human dignity, including forms of physical and mental violence, as well as behaviors that degrade, disgrace and put the child into a difficult situation are prohibited in any environment at home and families, educational institutions, care institutions, law enforcement and justice systems, working environments and community.<sup>68</sup> The same article obliges the relevant ministries to create awareness programs regarding the harmful effects of physical punishment and to develop parenting programs that promote non-violent methods of discipline in families, educational institutions, and care institutions.

However, even in 2023, no parenting programs have been developed in Kosovo to ensure the necessary support for parents to raise their children without violence. Additionally, no actions or activities have been undertaken by institutions to support parents in the proper upbringing of children.

Meanwhile, the new Law on Social and Family Services, in Article 54, provides the establishment of preventive services and the opening of family counseling centers in each municipality, which among others, offer services in the psychosocial field for families, with a special focus on strengthening and enhancing family relationships.<sup>69</sup>

It is essential to begin the establishment and operation of these family counseling centers as a form of preventive service for families in need of psychosocial services as soon as possible, in order to reduce the risk and harm that may be caused to children in these families.

During 2023, Kosovo Police reported a total of 106 cases of children as victims of domestic violence <sup>70</sup>. However, based on the high reporting figures in the previous years, it is still unclear whether there has been a decrease in domestic violence incidents or if the number of reports of domestic violence has simply declined. Further observation is necessary from the institutions to ensure that cases and episodes of domestic violence are reported, while also

reducing any potential hesitance to report such incidents. Additionally, it is essential to continue awareness campaigns to encourage reporting and self-reporting of domestic violence cases.



106

## CASES OF CHILDREN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN 2023

During 2023, shelters for protection from violence, operated by the non-governmental sector, provided services for 621 cases of domestic violence victims, including 286 women and 335 children.<sup>71</sup> The main services provided by these shelters were rehabilitation services for victims of violence. However, the shelters faced significant challenges in terms of financial sustainability due to lack of stable and necessary funding for the continuation of quality services. As a result, in January 2024, the only national shelter for the protection of children victims of violence and abuse was permanently closed. Therefore, it is crucial to increase financial support for shelters run by NGOs to ensure they can continue providing essential assistance to victims.

The Administrative Instruction for the establishment of Child Protection Homes, derived from the Law on Child Protection, has been approved. However, its implementation has not yet begun, and the establishment of these homes has not started either.

The sub-legal act that sets the rules and procedures for maintaining the DNA database of individuals convicted of criminal offenses against sexual integrity, which derives from the Law on Child Protection, has not yet been approved.

Violence in schools continues to be a highly concerning phenomenon, which, similar to the previous year, has marked a high number of reported incidents. During 2023, the Kosovo Police reported a total of 564 incidents that occurred in and around schools.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Law on Child Protection  
<sup>69</sup> Law on Social and Family Services  
<sup>70</sup> Data from Kosovo Police Report, 2023  
<sup>71</sup> Data from Ministry of Justice, 2023  
<sup>72</sup> Data from Kosovo Police Report, 2023



**564**

**CASES OF INCIDENTS  
IN SCHOOLS AND  
AROUND IT**

**ONLY 45**

**CASES WERE REPORTED  
BY SCHOOLS, IN THE  
2022-2024 YEAR**



**ONLY**

**148**

**PSYCHOLOGISTS AND 77 PEDAGOGUES, HIRED IN  
1,044 EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Meanwhile, the data reported in the Education Management Information System (SMIA) remains very low, and incidents of violence continue to go unreported. Specifically, in the 2022–2023 school year, only 45 cases were reported, and in the 2023–2024 school year, only 27 cases of violence have been reported in the SMIA system.<sup>73</sup>

The reasons for the lack of reporting are similar to those in previous years, where schools tend to hide and isolate cases of violence in order to maintain a positive image. These data, provided by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, demonstrate that not all cases of violence are reported by the respective schools into the SMIA system. As a result, there are still questions about the proper and effective functioning of the system for preventing and addressing violence within schools, as well as the successful implementation of the Protocol for the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Educational Institutions.

.....  
• **Lack of effective implementation of the Protocol for the**  
• **Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University**  
• **Education Institutions.**  
.....

Lack of supportive services from psychologists or pedagogues, remains problematic. During 2023, there were only 225 support professionals, specifically 148 psychologists and 77 pedagogues, hired in 1,044 education institutions. If we analyze the ratio of the number of children one professional works with, it turns out that a pedagogue or psychologist is engaged with around 1,400 children, which is far from the standard of work for a professional with children. Which in this case, makes it impossible to ensure early identification in time and proper handling of situations of violence in schools.

The primary mechanisms for addressing cases of violence in schools are the school authorities and staff themselves. After the initial identification and intervention by teachers, these cases, if necessary, can be referred for specialized services to the pedagogue or psychologist, or even to external services at the municipal level.

An important mechanism for addressing cases of violence in schools is the peer mediation program. From 2015 to 2023, around 150 schools have participated in the training, and approximately 480 teachers have been certified through this training program. It is crucial to continue efforts in this direction by involving all schools in the training and certification of teachers so that peer mediation can be applied in all schools.<sup>74</sup> The Instruction for peer mediation, which aims to prevent children’s involvement in criminal acts by avoiding violence and conflicts, and improving social relationships within the school, was approved by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, as well as the Ministry of Justice.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Education has taken actions by organizing training for teachers in eight municipalities of Kosovo, focusing on sexual education and the prevention of sexual violence through the educational process. Additionally, Ministry of Education has developed a modular package on child protection, including topics on the prevention of sexual harassment, and has created an informational guide for educational staff, addressing the implementation of the Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.<sup>75</sup>

In Kosovo, the child protection system continues to be fragmented. As a result, services among the education, welfare, and health sectors are not integrated. The interventions and services of the institutions are isolated, uncoordinated, and do not fulfill one of the basic principles for addressing violence, which is a multidisciplinary approach.

<sup>73</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023  
<sup>74</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023  
<sup>75</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

## Recommendation:

- ▶▶ Creation and strengthening of preventive programs and services for child protection, positive parenting, and family empowerment;
- ▶▶ Establishment of family counseling centers in municipalities as stipulated in the Law on Social and Family Services, to provide psychosocial services for families, with a particular focus on enhancing and strengthening family relationships.
- ▶▶ Development of foster care for those over 18 through the introduction of the new protective measure, "Supervised Independent Living".
- ▶▶ Increase the number of foster families and extend their reach to all municipalities as outlined in the Law on Child Protection, with at least three foster families per municipality.
- ▶▶ Specialization of foster families according to child categories and enhancement of the capacities of foster families and potential adoptive parents.
- ▶▶ Recognition of the status of foster families as providers of social services, as stipulated in the Law on Social and Family Services.
- ▶▶ Establishment and operationalization of mobile teams in all municipalities for the identification of children in the street and children involved in child labor.
- ▶▶ Expansion of services for children engaged in child labor, ensuring housing as needed, along with food and clothing, and providing social services for the children and their parents.
- ▶▶ Opening of specialized day centers for children involved in child labor.
- ▶▶ Provision of vocational training and employment for the parents of children involved in child labor.
- ▶▶ Drafting of a unified national plan for children in street situations.
- ▶▶ Strengthening mechanisms for identifying and reporting trafficking cases.
- ▶▶ Development and implementation of long-term reintegration programs for children who are victims of trafficking.
- ▶▶ Establishment of sustainable funding for shelters that shelter and protect children victims of trafficking.
- ▶▶ Continuous implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy Against Human Trafficking in Kosovo (2022-2026) and the Action Plan (2022-2024);
- ▶▶ Establishment and provision of programs and services for positive parenting, family empowerment, and prevention of domestic violence;
- ▶▶ Implementation of activities to enhance the capacities and raise awareness of teachers and educational staff regarding the prevention of violence and handling of related cases.
- ▶▶ Establishment of a free phone line for child protection, as stipulated in the Law on Child Protection, to increase the reporting of cases of violence, abuse, neglect, and child trafficking.
- ▶▶ Establishment of child protection houses.
- ▶▶ Approval of the sub-legal act that defines the rules and procedures for maintaining a database of DNA for individuals convicted of crimes against sexual integrity, as derived from the Law on Child Protection.
- ▶▶ Immediate intervention and investment among ministries for the establishment and strengthening of integrated educational, psychological, and social services aimed at preventing violence against children.
- ▶▶ Increase in the inspection of service providers to enhance accountability and improve quality.





**HEALTH**



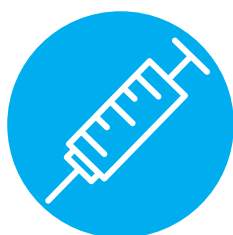
# SHËNDETI

## Grade: 2.6

- ▶ Significant lack of data in the healthcare sector
- ▶ Shortage of essential medicaments from the Essential Medicaments List
- ▶ Lack of mental health services to children



**31,110**  
births



Coverage rate with vaccines is **92%**

**124**  
**CASES**

of infant death

Even in 2023, significant lack of data was marked in the field of health. Data on breastfeeding levels, the number of children with disabilities, children using drugs, and healthcare services provided by the private sector were not available. The lack of functionality of the Health Information System significantly hinders the collection of data for health reporting and intervention planning based on accurate information. Therefore, the operationalization of the Health Information System is essential to enable the collection of precise data on children health and needs.

Currently, there is no available data from public institutions regarding patient satisfaction with healthcare services, specifically satisfaction with children's healthcare services. Public institutions do not conduct research or monitoring to measure patient satisfaction with healthcare services.

It is noteworthy that the healthcare budget saw a significant increase in 2023, rising from 198 million euros in 2022 to 296 million euros for 2023. The budget was increased by over 27% for the Ministry of Health and the essential medicines list and specific programs, from 11.2 million euros in 2022 to 21.2 million euros for 2023. The budget increase for medicines in 2023 compared to 2022 was 89%.<sup>76</sup>

A considerable part of citizens lack adequate access to healthcare due to high payments for medication. This issue is even more problematic, considering that 22% of children in Kosovo live in poverty, and 7% of them live in extreme poverty. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the percentage of children covered by health insurance was 5.6% for children under five and 3.6% for children over five. Over the past four years, efforts have been made to draft the Law on Amending and Supplementing Law No. 04/L-249 on Health Insurance, but the draft law has been repeatedly delayed in the legislative agenda and remains unapproved.

<sup>76</sup>Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

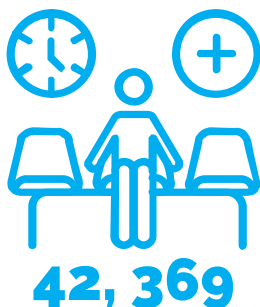
## INFANT MORTALITY

In 2023, a total of 31,110 births were registered (both inside and outside Kosovo). Of these, 21,654 occurred in Kosovo, with 11,207 male births, representing 51.8%, and 10,447 female births, accounting for 48.2%.<sup>77</sup> Compared to the data from 2022, there is a conclusion on a decline in births in Kosovo.<sup>78</sup>

In 2023, there were 124 infant deaths recorded in Kosovo only. The infant and child mortality rate in Kosovo is three times the average of the European Union and is the highest in the region.<sup>79</sup>

The causes of infant deaths in Kosovo include perinatal factors, complications from prematurity, congenital anomalies, and infections. However, generally, the high infant and child mortality rates in Kosovo, are influenced by deficiencies in the healthcare system, from diagnosis to lack of capacity to address the underlying causes. Ethnicity also plays a role in the mortality rate, as Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian infants and children face greater barriers in accessing healthcare services.

In healthcare institutions in Kosovo, there is lack of early and comprehensive postnatal screening for infants. In countries with developed healthcare systems, newborns undergo screening tests immediately after birth, allowing for the diagnosis of health conditions. This includes blood tests for various hereditary diseases and disorders, as well as assessments for hearing and heart issues. The National Neonatal Screening Program has been budgeted with 140,000 euros for the next two years. This program is one of the actions aimed at reducing illnesses and infant mortality according to the Strategic Plan for Maternal, Child, and Reproductive Health.<sup>80</sup>



### MEDICAL CHECK-UPS FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

<sup>77</sup> Data from the Civil Registration Agency of Kosovo, respectively Civil Registration Offices, 2023

<sup>78</sup> Data from Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2023

<sup>79</sup> Country Report of European Commission for Kosovo for 2023

<sup>80</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>81</sup> Të dhënat nga Ministria e Shëndetësisë, 2023

<sup>82</sup> Data from Action for Mothers and Children, 2023

During 2023, 42,369 medical check-ups for mothers and children were conducted.<sup>81</sup> A newborn child is expected to have five regular check-ups by the age of three. But not all children have received this service. The situation is more severe for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian children regarding access to medical services. Children from these communities continue to suffer from poor health due to limited access to healthcare services, poverty, the inability to pay for treatment and medication, as well as the lack of medical personnel and mobile teams, among other factors.

## BREASTFEEDING

UNICEF and WHO recommend that infants should be breastfed within the first hour of birth and exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life. In the past four years, there have been no officially published or available data on the breastfeeding rate in Kosovo.



### OF NEWBORN BREASTFED WITHIN THE FIRST HOUR AFTER THE BIRTH

According to the MICS report by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics 2020 and UNICEF, 32% of newborn breastfed within the first hour after the birth, whereas exclusive breastfeeding is prevalent for only 29% of children under six months old. This indicates that many mothers in Kosovo do not initiate breastfeeding early enough, do not exclusively breastfeed their children for the recommended six months, or stop breastfeeding much earlier. It is worth noting that according to MICS, the rate of breastfeeding has declined compared to the results of the 2017 MICS.

Classes for Mothers and Children within the Main family Medicine Centers in 18 municipalities and the Obstetric-Gynecological Clinic in Pristina, have continued to support mothers through health education from pre-birth to post-birth processes and child care, positively influencing early childhood development.<sup>82</sup>



## IMMUNIZATION

Based on data published by the World Health Organization, there has been a decline in the regular immunization rate globally in recent years due to COVID-19. This decline has also been evident in Kosovo, and it is reported that Kosovo has not yet returned to the pre-COVID-19 vaccination coverage levels.<sup>83</sup>

Considering the serious public health burden of cervical cancer, invasive pneumococcal diseases, and rotavirus diarrhea, as well as the availability of safe and effective vaccines, in April 2023, the Minister of Health approved the recommendations of the Professional Advisory Committee for Immunization (KPKI) for the inclusion of three new vaccines and the update of the regular vaccination calendar: the pneumococcal vaccine (PCV), the rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix), and the vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV).<sup>84</sup>

Compared to 2022, there has been an increase in vaccination coverage of about 2% (DTP1 at 95%, MMR1 at 92%). However, regarding DTP2 and DTP3, children have not completed the vaccine series within the 2023 calendar year because the interval between doses based on the new vaccination calendar, is two months. Consequently, these children have been carried over to 2024 to continue vaccination with the next doses.

Regarding vaccination with the pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines, from October until December 31, the same number has been reported for the vaccines given at the same time, and there has been no hesitation from parents in vaccinating their children with these additional vaccines. For the 2022/2023 school year, the planned number for first-grade classes was 23,921, while 22,631 children were vaccinated (bOPV, DT, MMR), representing a coverage of 95% at the national level. For the sixth grade, a total of 24,016 children were planned, and 22,659 received vaccines (bOPV, DT), achieving a coverage of 94%.<sup>85</sup>

During 2023, a total of 232 cases of Meningeal Syndrome were reported (13.01 per 100,000 inhabitants), of which 161 cases were viral meningitis, 65 were bacterial meningitis, and 6 were cases of TB meningoencephalitis. This number of reported cases represents an increase of 1.1 times higher compared to the same period in 2022, when 112 cases were reported. Regarding age groups, during this period, the

highest number of cases was among the 0-9 age group, counting 40.9% (95 cases), while the 10-19 age group represented 23.7% (55 cases).

## SUPPLY OF MEDICAMENTS FROM THE ESSENTIAL MEDICAMENTS LIST

The Ministry of Health has allocated 60 million Euros for the medicaments for 2023, which is more than a twofold increase in the budget compared to the previous year.<sup>86</sup> However, throughout 2023, there has been a shortage of medicaments and consumable material at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo. It has even been reported that some clinics lack surgical sutures. Additionally, the Primary Health Care Centers have continued to face shortages of essential medicaments. It has been reported that most medicaments from the essential list are missing in these Family Medicine Centers, and patients receiving treatment at these centers must purchase their own medicines and materials to receive an injection or infusion, as these are lacking in the centers. The lack of necessary therapy for children in need of appropriate treatment can have consequences for their health. Regarding the medicine shortage, parents are forced to pay out of pocket for essential medicaments.

Regarding the supply of medicines from the Essential List in primary health care, the average supply of medicines from the essential list in 2022 was 45%, while the average supply of consumable material for the year 2022 was 71.71%.<sup>87</sup> However, despite the ongoing reports of shortages of medicines at the primary level, there is no available data on the supply levels for 2023.

Even during 2023, the shortage of essential medicines without which children cannot survive remained extremely concerning. There are intermittent issues with the regular supply of surfactant medication, which is crucial for premature infants, as its absence can lead to their death. For years, KOMF member NGO, Action for Mothers and Children, has been supplying the surfactant medication for the Neonatology Clinic. However, there are certain periods when the supply of this medication remains uncovered, resulting in the Neonatology Clinic being without it, seriously jeopardizing the lives of premature infants.

<sup>83</sup> Data from the Report of Kosovo Public Health Institute, 2023

<sup>84</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>85</sup> Data from National Public Health Institute, 2023

<sup>86</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>87</sup> Data from Kosovo Municipalities Association, 2023

## HOSPITAL CARE AT THE PEDIATRIC CLINIC IN THE UNIVERSITY CLINICAL CENTER OF KOSOVO

Based on data from the University Hospital and Clinical Service of Kosovo, the pediatric clinic has reported that in 2023 the number of hospitalized children was 7,141 children. Health services offered were 21,256 specialist visits and 35,540 emergency outpatient visits. In this clinic there are 151 beds. It is reported that most of the time there is currently an overload in the pediatric clinic. The number of medical staff at the pediatric clinic is 47 doctors, 136 nurses, 1 clinical psychologist and two social workers. This number is insufficient to meet all the needs of children in the pediatric clinic. Due to limitations in human resources, health personnel are very busy in providing health services for children. The operationalization of the new surgical-pediatric hospital has improved children's health care at the tertiary level. The hospital has integrated services of emergency pediatric medicine, trauma services, recovery services, specialistic, pediatric and surgical ambulances, etc. However, looking at the workload and the small number of staff, increased human resources and reorganization of work is necessary. Also, it is necessary to arrange the dairy kitchen with European standards.<sup>88</sup>

## SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH SERVICES

Currently, there is no available data from public institutions regarding patient satisfaction with healthcare services, specifically satisfaction with pediatric healthcare services. Public institutions do not conduct research or monitoring to measure patient satisfaction with healthcare services. However, according to data from the Patient Rights Association, based on a survey conducted in the General Hospital of Prizren and the General Hospital of Gjilan regarding the measurement of patient satisfaction and experiences, many deficiencies are evident, especially in healthcare services for children.

The data shows that 66% of patients in the General Hospital of Prizren expressed satisfaction with healthcare services,

while 26% were dissatisfied, and 8% were moderately satisfied. Patients in the Pediatric Ward, reported the lowest satisfaction levels, compared to patients in other wards. Several factors have influenced these results, such as access, medical and nursing services, diagnostic services, infrastructure conditions and hygiene, supply of medicines, food quality, and more. For the purposes of this report, it is worth mentioning that the data also indicate a low level of hygiene in the Pediatric Ward compared to other wards. Approximately 41% of respondents stated that they purchased some of the medicines needed for their treatment, while 32% reported buying all their medicines from private pharmacies. Regarding the condition of the beds, the Pediatric Ward was rated as average. The level of patients' awareness of their rights in healthcare is low. Healthcare personnel do not inform patients about their rights and responsibilities in 95% of cases.<sup>89</sup>

Regarding patient satisfaction levels in the General Hospital of Gjilan, the data indicates below-average satisfaction, with 42% of patients being dissatisfied with healthcare services, 40% being satisfied, and 18% being moderately satisfied. The level of patients' awareness of their rights in healthcare is low, with healthcare personnel failing to inform patients about their rights and responsibilities in 98% of cases.<sup>90</sup>

The complaint line operates within the Ministry of Health as part of the Division for the Rights of Citizens in Healthcare. In 2023, the number of accepted and addressed complaints was 214; this number pertains to complaints that met the criteria for further processing, excluding calls from citizens who contacted the line for information, advice, or expressing various concerns regarding the provision of healthcare services, licensing of healthcare professionals, licensing of private healthcare institutions, medical treatment abroad, etc. The majority of complaints were directed at secondary healthcare, followed by primary healthcare, private healthcare institutions, and tertiary healthcare. The complaints directed to the line were as follows: 38 complaints regarding staff shortages at the workplace; 71 complaints about unprofessional ethical behavior of healthcare staff; 12 complaints about the lack of medications; and 93 miscellaneous complaints. Meanwhile, measures were taken in only 5 cases: a punitive fine for two cases; a suspension of promotion for one case, and a verbal warning for two cases.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Data from Pediatric Clinic, University and Clinical Center of Kosovo, 2023

<sup>89</sup> Data from the Patients' Rights Association in Kosovo – PRAK, 2023

<sup>90</sup> Data from the Patients' Rights Association in Kosovo – PRAK, 2023

<sup>91</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

## REGULATION OF THE STATUS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PROVIDING HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

For over 20 years, the majority of services for children and persons with disabilities have been provided by non-governmental organizations at no cost, primarily supported by international donors. These services are offered through specialized day centers managed by non-governmental organizations, which provide daily rehabilitative health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and individual or group psychological sessions for children and adults with disabilities.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, a range of healthcare services is provided by non-governmental organizations for children and adults who use narcotic substances, children in street situation, children from marginalized communities, and others. These services are provided by non-governmental organizations with extensive experience, appropriate infrastructure, and qualified professionals in the field of healthcare.<sup>93</sup>

It is estimated that around 50 non-governmental organizations provide integrated health and social services. However, these organizations are not licensed as healthcare service providers due to perceived legal deficiencies in frame of the Law on Health Law. Within the Law on Health, there are considered to be contradictory provisions regarding

the provision of healthcare services by non-governmental organizations and their licensing. Article 15, paragraph 2, of the Health Law states that “Healthcare services are provided by public, private, and public-private health institutions.” Meanwhile, Article 38 “Health Institutions within Civil Society” specifies that “Healthcare services in humanitarian health institutions and other forms of civil society organization in the health field are regulated by a sub-legal act issued by the Ministry.” It is noteworthy that this sub-legal act has not been issued by the Ministry of Health, and so far, no non-governmental organization has been licensed to provide healthcare services.

Articles 15 and 38 are considered to have created confusion and legal uncertainty for the law enforcement agencies. This situation is damaging the status and sustainability of health services provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and can even be seen as discriminatory towards the non-governmental sector. There are numerous cases where NGOs, in addition to their status as non-governmental organizations, have been forced to license themselves as private health institutions to enable the provision of health services, even though all the services provided are free of charge.<sup>94</sup>

Regulating the status of NGOs as providers of health services will increase access to specialized care for vulnerable populations, will impact the sustainability of services and enhance accountability.

<sup>92</sup>Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

<sup>93</sup>Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

<sup>94</sup>Data from KOMF Member Organizations, 2023

## USE OF NARCOTIC SUBSTANCES BY CHILDREN

The use of narcotic substances by children is one of the biggest issues in child protection. It is particularly alarming that the average age of starting drug use is declining, from 18 years in 2018, to 16 years in the recent period. While public institutions lack national data on the number of children and individuals using narcotic substances, according to Labyrinth, it is estimated that the total number of users has surpassed 30,000, while children and adolescents who use these substances continue to be increasingly included in this number, each year.<sup>95</sup>



### THE AVERAGE AGE OF STARTING DRUG USE IS DECLINING

Positive steps have been taken regarding the legal framework, as in 2023 the Government approved Administrative Instruction No. 05/2023 for measures to prevent and protect children from narcotic abuse, as well as Administrative Instruction No. 04/2023 for the medical and psychological treatment of children who are victims of abuse, aimed at assisting them in rehabilitation and reintegration into society.<sup>96</sup>

Similar to the previous year, in 2023, marijuana continued to be the most commonly used substance in Kosovo. While there was a decline in heroin use among the general population until 2018, a slight increase in heroin users has been observed in the last four years, particularly among the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. Meanwhile, there has been a rapid and significant increase in cocaine use among the general population. Stimulant drugs such as ecstasy, mdma, amphetamines, ghb, lsd, etc., are also present, but there is no noticeable trend in the increase of use or circulation of new psychoactive substances (NPS)

in the market. The reasons for substance use remain the same, including the availability of drugs in the market, early childhood trauma, lack of information about the risks of drug use, social pressure, and curiosity to try new things.<sup>97</sup>

There has been no progress in 2023, in providing sustainable preventive services and programs that are urgently needed given the rising trends of drug use among children and adolescents. An exception is the Kosovo Police, that has an annual program of lectures on prevention and awareness of various issues, including topics related to preventing substance abuse.

It is essential for the Government to prioritize the protection of children who use narcotics and to take immediate steps to raise awareness and develop programs for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse in Kosovo. Kosovo does not offer sufficient accessible services for identifying children who are victims of drug abuse. There is lack of community-based services and mobile teams that would enable testing and identification of possible cases of children using narcotic substances.

Kosovo does not provide specialized rehabilitation services for children who are victims of drug abuse. Existing services are offered within the framework of treatment for adult drug users. The Psychiatric Clinic of the University Clinical Center of Kosovo has improvised a special unit for treating addiction, but this unit is dedicated to adult patients, even though it also treats children due to the lack of any other available facilities or special wards for children. This unit is not suitable for children and does not provide a friendly and safe environment for them. Health treatment at the UCKK is based on detoxification programs that use medications from the Essential Medicaments.

Professionals face significant challenges in treating children who are victims of drug abuse. They lack the necessary resources, including multidisciplinary teams and specialized wards for children, to implement specialized rehabilitation plans and programs. Professionals do not have the required resources to support parents or guardians in the treatment and care of children who are victims of drug abuse. This lack of resources and services leaves parents and guardians unprepared in the fight against children's drug abuse.

<sup>95</sup> Data from Organization Labyrinth, 2023

<sup>96</sup> Official Gazette of Republic of Kosovo, 2023

<sup>97</sup> Data from Organization Labyrinth, 2023

## MENTAL HEALTH

The number of requests from children for mental health services has increased, while the number of mental health professionals is extremely limited to meet the demand and provide quality services.<sup>98</sup> Within mental health services in Kosovo, the following clinics operate: the Psychiatry Clinic at the University Clinical Service of Kosovo, the Psychiatry Ward at the General Hospital in Gjakova, the Psychiatry Ward at the General Hospital in Peja, the Psychiatry Ward at the General Hospital in Gjilan, the Psychiatry Ward in Prizren, and Mental Health Centers in Prishtina, Mitrovica, Prizren, Peja, Gjilan, Ferizaj, and Gjakova. Regarding human resources, there are 52 psychiatrists employed in public health institutions across the country, of which 45 are psychiatrists for adults, and only 7 are psychiatrists for children and adolescents nationwide. Additionally, there are 10 specialists of clinical psychology, 2 clinical psychologists, 7 social workers, and 2 psychosocial counselors working in secondary and tertiary healthcare levels, along with 217 nurses.

Within the private healthcare sector, there is a considerable number of psychiatric and psychological services available. However, there is no data on the number of children treated in these private sector services.



**ONLY 10 SPECIALISTS OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND 2 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, WORKING IN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY HEALTHCARE LEVELS**

## SMOKING, ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION, ENERGY DRINKS, HOOKAH, AND ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES (VAPE)

Kosovo continues to lack data on the number of children who use tobacco, energy drinks, and electronic cigarettes. The Law on Tobacco Control is not being effectively enforced, and it is not even respected in venues near schools that are frequently visited by children. The consumption of energy drinks is another significant health concern for children in Kosovo. The market for these products is vast, and they are sold everywhere, regardless of the buyer's age. Energy drinks contain caffeine and heart stimulants, which are not only unnecessary for children but harmful and can affect heart rhythm and cause other health issues. Furthermore, the draft law to ban energy drinks for children, including those with high sugar content, has not yet been finalized and approved. Despite steps taken in this direction, including the formation of a working group by the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Food, Agriculture, Planning, and Development to draft this law, a draft has yet to be completed and approved.

Additionally, there is no legal framework regulating the consumption of hookah (nargile) and electronic cigarettes, commonly known as "vape". So far, no steps have been taken to regulate this issue or to ban the sale of these products to children. Another concern is the lack of legal regulation within the Criminal Code of Kosovo that punishes the sale and serving of alcoholic beverages to persons under 16 years of age. In Kosovo's legislation, children are defined as persons up to 18 years, which contradicts this regulation and undermines the protection of children's health from harmful substances.

<sup>98</sup>Data from Mental Health Centers



## Recommendation:

- ▶▶ Research and Data Collection on breastfeeding, number of children with disabilities, services offered for children in the private sector, and number of child victims of drug abuse.
- ▶▶ Implementation of Screening or “screening tests” for newborns in public and private healthcare institutions for early diagnosis of potential diseases;
- ▶▶ Strengthening the home health visit program across all municipalities in Kosovo to enable home vaccinations, support for breastfeeding practices, promotion of healthy nutrition, and early identification of health issues in children;
- ▶▶ Replicating the model of Women’s Health Information Centers (Mother Classes) to provide health education, covering maternal health during pregnancy, breastfeeding, vaccination, and promoting the healthy growth of children;
- ▶▶ Ensuring neonatal transport from regional hospitals to the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK), as well as strengthening the capacities of healthcare personnel for neonatal transport;
- ▶▶ Health education to improve health practices, family planning, reproductive health, and access to healthcare services;
- ▶▶ Ensuring a stable supply of medicaments at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK), regional hospitals, and primary healthcare, to guarantee that essential medicines for children are always available;
- ▶▶ Legal regulation for the recognition of NGOs status in providing healthcare services for children;
- ▶▶ Issuance of a sub-legal act for the licensing of NGOs to provide healthcare services for children based on the Law on Health;
- ▶▶ Establishment of services and programs for the prevention of drug use among children;
- ▶▶ Organization of mobile teams in the community for the identification, testing, and support of cases involving children who are victims of drug abuse;
- ▶▶ Establishment of services to empower parents to enhance their capacities for the care and support of children during rehabilitation and reintegration;
- ▶▶ Increasing human resources within public health institutions for mental health, increase in the number of psychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists, and social workers for children.
- ▶▶ Amendment and supplement of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol for persons under the age of 18;
- ▶▶ Approval of the Draft Law on prohibition of sale and consumption of energy drinks to children;
- ▶▶ Increasing the monitoring and inspection of smoking in all legally prohibited areas;
- ▶▶ Contracting non-governmental organizations to provide healthcare services for children that are not provided by public institutions.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT**



# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

## Grade: 2.5

- ▶▶ Low enrollment of children in preschool education, small capacity of the preschool institutions network
- ▶▶ Lack of investment for the expansion and improvement of the quality of early childhood development services
- ▶▶ Significant disparity in access to early childhood services
- ▶▶ Lack of programs for identification and intervention in early childhood



Even though in the recent years the Government of Kosovo has prioritized Early Childhood Development as one of its main priorities, investments for expanding and improving the quality of early childhood development, services remain insufficient. Kosovo continues to have the lowest level of enrollment of children in preschool education compared to other countries in the region. The main reason for such a low participation is the capacity of small absorbing network of preschool institutions with affordable costs and general awareness of traditional forms of education within the family.

new kindergartens contracted with investments from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation is ongoing. Additionally, six more kindergartens are being built with investments from the European Union under the IPA 2016 project, and six new kindergartens have also been contracted for construction.



ONLY

**54**

**PRESCHOOLS/KINDERGARTEN INSTITUTIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND 164 PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS LICENSED**

In Kosovo there are 54 preschool/kindergarten institutions in public sector. Preschool institutions are focused in urban areas, whereas 10 municipalities don't have any public preschool institution. Rural areas are almost excluded from access to early childhood development services. In 2023, the construction of kindergartens in Suharekë and Prizren was completed, while the construction of twelve



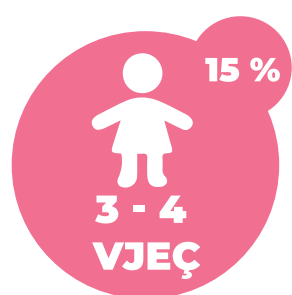
**10**

**MUNICIPALITIES DO NOT HAVE ANY PUBLIC PRESCHOOL INSTITUTION**

Meanwhile, 164 private kindergartens operate with a license from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation.<sup>99</sup> It is considered that a significant number of private kindergartens operate without a license, and there is lack of a monitoring and inspection system for them. Daycare institutions include children of preschool age; however, inspections are conducted periodically only in kindergartens. Additionally, if kindergartens are registered as non-governmental organizations, they do not fall under the jurisdiction of the inspectorate of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation. This poses a major concern, as it implies that a portion of service providers in early childhood do not have any oversight or accountability from the state.

<sup>99</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

In Kosovo, there is a lack of alternative programs to support parents, early intervention services in the family environment, and a deficiency of daycare centers, learning centers, community centers, and parent support groups, among others. According to the National Education Strategy 2022 - 2026, the Government of Kosovo has committed to improving access to and the quality of services for early childhood development.<sup>100</sup> Currently, only 15% of children aged 3 - 4 years participates in early education programs<sup>101</sup>, most of whom come from families with better economic status. Statistics show that many children in Kosovo remain deprived of their right to early childhood development and face discrimination based on disabilities, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and residence.<sup>102</sup> Only 1 in 3 children aged 2 to 4, benefits from early stimulation by adult family members through activities such as storytelling, singing, reading, or simple games.<sup>103</sup>



**ONLY 15%**

**OF CHILDREN AGED 3-4 PARTICIPATE IN EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The total number of children enrolled in preschool education in the 2022-2023 school year is 32,397, out of which, 24,366 children are enrolled in public preschool education and 6,630 in private preschool education. 5,420 children are enrolled in public preschool institutions (ages 0-4), whereas 18,946 children are enrolled in public pre-primary education (age 6). In terms of private educational institutions licensed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI), currently, 4,280 children are enrolled in preschool education (ages 0-4), and 2,350 children are enrolled in pre-primary education (age 5).<sup>104</sup>

Children from marginalized groups, despite being exempt from fees, often do not participate due to restrictions on the number of children. Only 1 in 10 children from the

Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as those from rural areas, continue to participate in early education programs. Out of a total of 24,366 children in public preschool education, only 884 children belong to other non-majority communities, while 23,482 are Albanians. From the total number of children in pre-primary education, 95.8% are Albanian, while 4.2% belong to other ethnic groups.<sup>105</sup> This issue is concerning, as quality education in the early stages of life reduces disparities in development and learning among children from needy families. The limitation of opportunities and the lack of demand for early care and education means that many children do not engage in the educational system until shortly before starting school, resulting in delays in their social and educational development. Furthermore, women often remain the primary caregivers for children without any support in family environments, as well as being excluded from the labor market.

A positive development in terms of the legal framework is the adoption of the Law on Early Childhood Education. This law is expected to create a legal basis for intersectoral coordination and to initiate the integration of early childhood services among education, health, and social welfare sectors. Following the entry into force of this law, the Ministry of Education has begun drafting administrative guidelines. However, so far, no administrative instructions have been approved.

Early education and care are particularly important for young children with disabilities, but they face significant barriers in accessing the necessary services. There is lack of early identification and intervention programs, which negatively impact the development of these children and their families. In 2022–2023, 52 children with disabilities aged 1 to 6 were enrolled in resource centers/special schools. A total of 620 children with disabilities aged 1 to 6 were included in regular classes. The few services that exist are offered by the non-governmental sector, whose main challenge is lack of service sustainability. These services operate separately across education, health, and social welfare sectors. There is no coordination or integration between them, forcing families to navigate from one institution to another to access the necessary services. The services are mostly treatment-focused, with a lack of preventive services. In Kosovo, there

<sup>100</sup> Education Strategy 2022-2026, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/strategjia-e-arsimit2022-2026/>

<sup>101</sup> Multiple Indicators Survey MICS 2020, Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF, <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/08eb3166-e575-407aa383-d959ead4088e.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> Support for Improving Quality Education and Care in Early Childhood (ECEC), World Bank Group, 2022

<sup>103</sup> Multiple Indicators Survey MICS 2020, Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNICEF, <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/08eb3166-e575-407aa383-d959ead4088e.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> Education Statistics in Kosovo 2022-2023, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/ep-content/uploads/2023/07/Statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-Kosove-2022-2023.pdf>

<sup>105</sup> Education Statistics in Kosovo 2022-2023, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/ep-content/uploads/2023/07/Statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-Kosove-2022-2023.pdf>



is no assessment of the number of children from birth to five years at risk, with developmental delays, or disabilities. No population study has been conducted to identify the prevalence of young children with these conditions.<sup>106</sup>

Currently, no policy document provides a legal basis for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services or their organization and coordination. Other existing frameworks for early childhood services could help in developing and/or integrating specific policies and mechanisms for early childhood intervention.<sup>107</sup>

The development of an Early Childhood Intervention system across Kosovo is essential for improving the lives of all families with children from birth to six years old who face risk situations, developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral disorders, and mental health needs.

An initiative towards early childhood intervention and service integration is the model of systematic home visits, carried out by primary healthcare professionals within the framework of Family Medicine Centers.<sup>108</sup>

The Home Visit Program services, established in 2013, have now achieved coverage throughout Kosovo. The personnel of Family Medicine Centers (QMF) has received training based on a community health model rather than a purely medical one. Moreover, the same training is offered to educators and social service providers, aiming to ensure better

coordination and integrated service delivery. These home visit services focus on child development using a holistic approach, including nutrition, responsible parenting, father involvement, early stimulation and education, and, to some extent, the early identification of developmental delays. They can be further developed to conduct developmental monitoring and screenings for the early identification of children at risk situations, those with developmental delays, and disabilities.

Another very important aspect of early childhood is healthy nutrition. A positive initiative related to nutrition was the adoption of the Instruction for Planning Nutrition in Preschool Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo, approved by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.<sup>109</sup> Although the planning is considered to be good, this instruction is not being implemented.

The Curriculum for Early Childhood Education was developed throughout 2023 and is currently in the pilot phase. The Ministry of Education has initiated the process of training of trainers for the pilot implementation of the Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, a process expected to be carried out in 10 municipalities, 12 preschool institutions, and 20 pre-primary classes.<sup>110</sup> The new curriculum brings a reformed perspective to early education, with a comprehensive child-centered approach while considering developmental trends both in the country and at the international level.

<sup>106</sup> Analysis of the Early Childhood Intervention Situation in Kosovo, University of Psychology, 2023

<sup>107</sup> Analysis of the Early Childhood Intervention Situation in Kosovo, University of Psychology, 2023

<sup>108</sup> Data from Ministry of Health, 2023

<sup>109</sup> [https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Udhezuesi-dhe-menute\\_July\\_2022\\_E-lektoruar-1.pdf?fs=e&s=cl](https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Udhezuesi-dhe-menute_July_2022_E-lektoruar-1.pdf?fs=e&s=cl)

<sup>110</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/mashti-ka-filluar-trajnimin-e-trajnerëve-per-pilotimin-e-kurrikules-per-efh/>

## Recommendation:

- ▶▶ Approval of the curriculum for Early Childhood Education;
- ▶▶ Drafting and approval of administrative instructions deriving from the Law on Early Childhood Education;
- ▶▶ Increasing the number of preschool institutions and expanding children's enrollment at the preschool level;
- ▶▶ Greater inclusion of vulnerable children, such as children with disabilities, children without parental care, children living in poverty, children from minority communities, etc., within preschool institutions;
- ▶▶ Developing alternative programs for early childhood development, such as parent support programs, community centers, day care centers, home-based child care, early childhood intervention, parent groups, systematic home visits, mobile teams for early childhood, and online platforms for early childhood;
- ▶▶ Advocacy and awareness-raising for early childhood intervention systems to foster a shared understanding of their importance among stakeholders and civil society;
- ▶▶ Creating the legal basis and planning process for the nationwide Early Childhood Intervention system;
- ▶▶ Establishing a referral system for Early Childhood Intervention and guidelines that ensure effective referrals, developmental assessments, and regular screenings for children;
- ▶▶ Conducting systematic home visits with healthcare, educational, and social professionals to enable early identification, case management, and providing support to parents and caregivers for early childhood development;
- ▶▶ Increasing subsidies amounts for Learning Centers that provide support to children at the preschool level, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation;
- ▶▶ Implementing the Child Protection Policy in preschool institutions as a key tool to ensure a safe and protective environment for children, along with enhancing the capacity of professionals to enforce it;
- ▶▶ Monitoring the implementation of the Instruction for Planning Nutrition in Preschool Institutions;
- ▶▶ Integration of early childhood development services across education, health, and social welfare sectors;
- ▶▶ Improving the assessment and inspection of the quality of preschool services;
- ▶▶ Establishing a legal framework and standards for daycare centers serving pre-primary-aged children, which operate either independently or within private preschools;
- ▶▶ Connecting with the Department for Non-Governmental Organizations within the relevant Ministry (Ministry of Local Government Administration or Ministry of Internal Affairs) in cases where private preschools are registered as non-governmental organizations.





**EDUCATION**



# EDUCATION

## Grade: 2.33

- ▶▶ Low quality of education in Kosovo;
- ▶▶ Lack of infrastructure in schools;
- ▶▶ Inclusion of children with disabilities in schools is neither meaningful, nor based on their individual needs;
- ▶▶ Lack of professional and support staff such as psychologists, pedagogues, and assistants for children with disabilities in schools.



In pre-university education, there are a total of 300,362 students (153,796 boys and 146,566 girls). In primary and lower secondary education, there are 212,967 students, while 63,029 students attend upper secondary education. According to the data from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation for the year 2022-2023, the total number of educational personnel is 27,747, of which 22,893 are teachers, 1,592 are administrative staff, and 3,262 are support staff. There is a total of 1,044 public educational institutions operating in Kosovo.<sup>111</sup> The pre-university education system faces numerous challenges and issues that negatively affect the overall quality of education. These challenges are reflected in the poor performance of students, as well as in international assessments.



### THE PASSING RATE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR 2023 WAS ONLY 52.1%

The passing rate in the achievement test for 2023 was only 52.1%.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked Kosovo 76th out of 80 participating countries, indicating low results in the quality of education. Kosovar students have fallen behind compared to the average of OECD countries and the states of the Western Balkans. Compared to 2018, they recorded

a decrease of 11 points in reading and mathematics and 8 points in science.

The challenges faced by the education system in Kosovo include a lack of adequate school infrastructure, the quality of teaching, the quality of textbooks, insufficient budgets for training, inappropriate teaching materials for the new curriculum, and a lack of mechanisms to ensure quality. Additionally, short school hours, an excessively high number of students in classes, an overloaded curriculum, schools with very few students in rural areas (including combined classes), lack of extracurricular activities, poor school management, the politicization of educational professionals, lack of cooperation among parents, teachers, and students, low accountability and frequent interruptions in the educational process (including strikes in education), are also serious issues affecting the education system.

Despite significant efforts to improve infrastructure, Kosovo has still not reached the necessary standards for access to educational institutions. Schools continue to operate in shifts, there is insufficient space for students according to international standards, and there is lack of equipment for laboratories and workshops.

On the other hand, the condition and quality of teaching in small schools and separate classes in Kosovo are severely strained, characterized by lack of infrastructure, resources, and qualified personnel. Many of these schools do not meet the minimum criteria for education quality, and combined teaching continues to be implemented. Meanwhile, at the municipal level, there is lack of needed expertise or

<sup>111</sup> Education statistics in Kosovo 2022-2023, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/statistikat-e-arsimitne-kosove-2022-2023/>

<sup>112</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/publikohen-rezultatet-e-testit-te-arritshmerise-arritshmeria-e-pergjithshme-52-1-perqind/>



systematic and planned approach to address the problem of small schools and separate classes. Usually, the approach is fragmented, and interventions occur only when they become imperative. Generally, municipalities show commitment but also await assistance from the Ministry of Education to address issues related to the school network and schools before closure due to decline of the number of students.<sup>113</sup>

The quality of textbooks remains problematic. In this regard, a positive action undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation was the initiation of the review of textbooks for the Albanian language and mathematics for grades 1 to 9. With the support of the European Union, the first phase of the review of the textbooks for the Albanian language and mathematics has been completed, and a report on 38 textbooks has been presented. Additionally, the Ministry of Education has announced that the process of reviewing science textbooks is about to begin.

To create a system for the prevention, response, and protection of children, the Ministry of Education has approved the Child Protection Policy. This policy has been integrated into the regulations for the employment of directors, deputy directors, and school staff, although this regulation has not yet been approved. Currently, the Ministry of Education is holding informative sessions in various municipalities to mobilize the implementation of this policy. So far, these sessions have taken place in only four municipalities. Workshops have also been conducted with education inspectors, but monitoring is expected to begin after the completion of sessions in all municipalities. Schools have not yet designated a person responsible for cases of violations of the child protection policy, but these appointments will occur after the sessions are completed and will be followed by further training.<sup>114</sup>

The Ministry of Education has organized training for teachers in eight municipalities in Kosovo, focusing on sexual education and the prevention of sexual violence through the educational process. Additionally, a modular package on child protection has been developed, which includes topics on the prevention of sexual harassment.

Inclusive education in Kosovo is still in the developmental stage, with ongoing efforts to create an educational system that provides equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their background or abilities. Although significant steps have been taken in formulating policies aimed at integrating the concept of inclusiveness into educational policies, their implementation remains challenging due to limited resources and lack of appropriate infrastructure. One of the biggest challenges is the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. Their inclusion continues to be low, and teaching methods do not yet cater to the individual needs of these children. Of the 1,044 educational institutions, only 609 have access for children with disabilities, including 53 schools built between 2016 and 2023.<sup>115</sup> Even though it is reported that these schools have access to restrooms, specific data regarding accessibility to toilets is not available. During the 2022/2023 school year, only 3,903 children with disabilities were included into regular classes, whereas 313 children with disabilities continues learning process in resource centers or special schools.<sup>116</sup>



**ONLY 3,903**

**CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INCLUDED IN REGULAR CLASSES**

Concerns have also been raised regarding the quality of teaching in resource centers. The reading skills test revealed that none of the 14 students tested from grades 4 to 12 at the Resource Center in Prizren could read or understand even simple sentences. The main reasons for this include the lack of sign language and pedagogical skills among teachers, the absence of teaching materials, the unavailability of sign language interpreters, and the lack of sign language as a subject for deaf students and those with hearing difficulties.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup>The State and Quality of Education in Small Schools and Separate Classes in the Context of the Current Organization of the School Network in Kosovo, Kosovo Education Center, 2023

<sup>114</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

<sup>115</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

<sup>116</sup>Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

<sup>117</sup>Study on the achievement levels of students with hearing impairments at the Mother Teresa Resource Center in Prizren, Council of Europe, 2023 <https://rm.coe.int/alb-study-on-the-level-of-academic-achievements/1680ad53ed>

Due to lack of official statistics on the number of children with disabilities in Kosovo, it is impossible to accurately determine their inclusion in education. The lack of data poses a significant barrier to planning and meeting the needs of these children.

The data collection is further complicated by the lack of coordination among ministries and existing mechanisms. Additionally, parents of children with disabilities often face lack of information and support. Support for these parents remains limited and fragmented, primarily relying on initiatives from civil society organizations. Without local services, many parents feel unable to support their children in psychosocial development, home rehabilitation, and their inclusion in school and community.<sup>118</sup>

Even though legislation requires that each municipality have teams for assessing children with disabilities, these children are often identified only when they reach school age, leading to late enrollment in school, which impacts their development. Most municipalities have established teams for assessing children with disabilities, but not all are functional. There are small municipalities that have not formed such teams due to financial difficulties or lack of necessary staff.



From 2021 to the present, the Ministry of Education has taken positive steps to address the need for support assistants in pre-university educational institutions by hiring about 330 assistants for children with disabilities in municipalities. However, the number of support assistants remains insufficient to meet the growing demands for professional support. Schools also lack supporting staff such as psychologists and pedagogues. Currently, there are 225 pedagogues and psychologists in schools, but the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation emphasizes that there may be more, as the new hires in the system have not been updated. Further expansion of the support staff in

schools remains necessary in order to meet the needs of all children.

In addition to the lack of school-based psychological services, the absence of data on the mental health status of students at the national level is another fundamental issue that significantly hinders the policy-making process and evidence-based interventions. On the other hand, from the limited existing data we have, the results indicate a concerning presence of psychological violence in Kosovo's schools and clearly demonstrate the need for research and interventions in this area.

Other challenges that negatively impact inclusive education include inadequate training of teachers, lack of adapted teaching methods for inclusive education, absence of supportive technological equipment, social norms and prejudices, the curriculum, and socio-economic factors.

In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation has taken concrete steps to monitor and reduce the school dropout rate across Kosovo. Data categorized by communities is collected at the school level and further organized at the municipal level. Additionally, legal frameworks for preventive teams have been approved, and every year, a week against school dropout is organized. However, issues such as school dropout, early leaving, irregular attendance, and non-enrollment in compulsory education continue to pose a concern for children from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, especially for girls and children from low socio-economic backgrounds. Between 2020 and 2023, OSCE field teams identified over 150 individual and group cases of school dropout affecting more than 400 children (from grades 1-9 across all regions of Kosovo), who either dropped out or were at risk of doing so.<sup>119</sup>

One of the main challenges in preventing dropout is the low reporting from schools within the Early Warning System (EWS). In the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 81 cases at risk of dropping out were reported.<sup>120</sup> Teams for preventing and responding to school dropout and non-enrollment in compulsory education have been established in most schools and municipalities. However, not all are fully functional, and not all recruit new members after the expiration of the current members' mandates.

In this context, it is important to emphasize the role of learning centers, which, according to Administrative Instruction A19/2018, are places where supplementary

<sup>118</sup> Data from KOMF Member Organizations

<sup>119</sup> Report on school dropout, Beyond the numbers of compulsory education dropout in the Kosovo system 2020-2023, OSCE

<sup>120</sup> Data from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2023

teaching and educational-educational activities are offered for children who need support in learning. These learning centers, organized by non-governmental organizations, are seen as a key support for preventing school dropout, especially for children from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. Although there has been an increase in the budget for Learning Centers compared to previous years, this funding continues to be insufficient for their operation, which threatens their closure. Delays and uncertainties in implementing Administrative Instruction 19/2018 have created difficult conditions for learning centers, presenting significant challenges for their managers. The learning centers are caught between legal obligations and a clear lack of procedural guidance. The expectations of the learning centers and donors regarding what would be achieved with the new legal framework, have not been met. Delays from the Ministry of Education in providing appropriate guidelines for registration and allocation of funds from the government and local budgets, have impacted this situation.<sup>121</sup> The slow implementation of Administrative Instruction 19/2018 has weakened institutional trust, as non-governmental organizations and community representatives continue to be concerned about the sustainability of learning centers, a problem that their institutionalization was supposed to address. They are still compelled to seek support from a limited number of international donors to continue their services or, alternatively, are forced to completely suspend their activities.<sup>122</sup>

Regarding the inclusion of children from low socio-economic status in education, for the 2022-2023 school year, 13,774 children from families receiving social assistance, 4,002 children from single-parent families, and 133 children without parents, have been included. However, there is no accurate data on whether institutions have taken measures to address the needs of these children in education.<sup>123</sup>

Public schools in Kosovo still do not fully meet the concept of child-friendly schools due to an unsafe and unfriendly environment, inadequate infrastructure, limited accessibility

by teachers, and lack of professional staff such as pedagogues and psychologists. Additionally, cooperation with parents is insufficient, and some schools lack sports halls and equipment, which negatively impacts the development of sports activities for students.<sup>124</sup> Sport activities are essential for improving physical and mental health, building social and emotional skills, as well as for concentration and discipline, creating a healthier and more positive environment in schools.

Regarding the legislation related to education, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation has approved Administrative Instructions, such as: the Administrative Instruction for the Licensing System and Career in Teaching; the Administrative Instruction for the State Council for the Licensing of Teachers; the Administrative Instruction for the Professional Development of Teachers; the Administrative Instruction for the Criteria and Procedures for the Approval of Professional Development Programs for Teachers and Educational Staff; and the Administrative Instruction for the Evaluation of Teacher Performance. The approval of these instructions is expected to pave the way for new reform processes aimed at improving the quality of teaching in pre-university education institutions. In this regard, the Ministry of Education should prioritize monitoring the implementation of the already approved legal framework.

The education system in Kosovo needs a more inclusive approach that focuses on improving the quality of teaching, infrastructure, and support for educators. Educational policies should be more aligned with the needs of students, and there should be an increase in accountability as well as collaboration among parents, teachers and the community.

<sup>121</sup> General Overview of Learning Centers in Kosovo and the Implementation of Administrative Instruction No. 19/2018, OSCE 2023

<sup>122</sup> General Overview of Learning Centers in Kosovo and the Implementation of Administrative Instruction No. 19/2018, OSCE 2023

<sup>123</sup> Education statistics in Kosovo 2022-2023, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/statistikat-e-arsimitne-kosove-2022-2023/>

<sup>124</sup> Data from member Organization Play International Kosovo, 2023

## Recommendation:

- » Investment in improving the quality of education;
- » Review of the curriculum, revision of curricula, and revision of textbooks;
- » Assessment of teacher performance and ongoing professional support and development for educators;
- » Organization and implementation of full-day schooling;
- » Networking of schools;
- » Creation of school autonomy from political influences;
- » Digitalization of education, applying teaching methods that promote the use of technology in teaching;
- » Equipping schools with teaching tools, materials, and digital technology to ensure effective teaching and learning support;
- » Providing friendly, healthy, and safe environments where students find support from teachers and have active participation;
- » Implementation of the Protocol for the prevention and referral of violence in pre-university educational institutions;
- » Implementation of the Child Protection Policy in educational institutions as a key tool to ensure a safe and protective environment for children;
- » Integration of sports and recreational activities in schools to improve the physical and mental health of children and increase inclusivity;
- » Establishment or operationalization of assessment committees for children with disabilities;
- » Increasing the number of support teachers and support assistants for children with disabilities as stipulated in the legislation;
- » Ensuring integrated rehabilitation services for children with disabilities;
- » Removal of physical barriers to ensure access for children with disabilities in schools;
- » Adequate training for teachers on inclusive teaching methods;
- » Institutionalization of educational programs/ centers that provide support in learning.





**JUVENILE  
JUSTICE**

# JUVENILE JUSTICE

## Grade: 2

- ▶▶ Lack of preventive and rehabilitative services for juveniles in conflict with the law without criminal responsibility
- ▶▶ Violation of the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Code by professionals in the Correctional Center
- ▶▶ Lack of professionals for the rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles in the educational and correctional system



## CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW UNDER THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY



**DURING 2023 CENTERS FOR SOCIAL WORK HAVE WORKED WITH A TOTAL OF 194 CASES OF JUVENILES IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW UNDER THE AGE OF 14**

During 2023, the Centers for Social Work have worked with a total of 194 cases of juveniles in conflict with the law below the age of criminal responsibility, that is, under the age of 14.<sup>125</sup> Compared to 2022, there has been a significant decrease in the number of children in conflict with the law without criminal responsibility, according to data from the Ministry of Justice. Data from the Kosovo Police and the Centers for Social Work indicate a pronounced lack of rehabilitative

services for these children. Services for this group of children are also lacking from the non-governmental sector. In 2023, there were no specialized day centers to work individually on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law under the age of criminal responsibility. On the other hand, foster families are not specialized or trained to accommodate this category of children.

Therefore, it is indispensable for institutions to prioritize the establishment of specialized services for children in conflict with the law under the age of criminal responsibility, as well as for their parents or legal guardians. Additionally, institutions should take steps to establish centers or homes specialized in the treatment and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law who are below the age of criminal responsibility. One possibility is to adapt two Child Protection Houses to meet the needs of this category, out of the seven Child Protection Houses that are planned to be built under the Law on Child Protection.

**Institutions should undertake immediate measures to strengthen preventive services and increase the number of supporting professionals in schools and Centers for Social Work, for children under the age of criminal responsibility.**

<sup>125</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice Report, 2023

## CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW WITH CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY



1,867

### CRIMINAL CHARGES OF JUVENILE PERPETRATORS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES

In 2023, the number of children in conflict with the law reported by the Kosovo Police was 2,175 children.<sup>126</sup> Whereas, during 2023, Basic Prosecution Offices in total have accepted 1,867 criminal charges of juvenile perpetrators of criminal offences with 2,755 persons. Meanwhile, 680 criminal charges involving 1,167 individuals have been carried over from 2022. The cases received in 2023 have been filed in 98.1% of them, by Kosovo Police. In total, during 2023, 2,547 cases of criminal charges involving juvenile perpetrators have been handled, involving 3,922 individuals. The Juvenile Justice Prosecutors resolved 1,390 cases involving 2,123 individuals and have carried over 1,157 cases to 2024.<sup>127</sup>

Number of criminal charges of juvenile perpetrators received during 2023, has been increased by 285 criminal charges more, or by 18.00%, compared to 2022.



18%

### MORE CRIMINAL CHARGES OF JUVENILE PERPETRATORS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES, COMPARED TO 2022

Out of 1,390 cases resolved in 2023, for 402 or 18.93% of juveniles, no preparatory procedure has been initiated (principle of opportunity); for 124 or 5.84% of juveniles,

<sup>126</sup> Data from Kosovo Police, 2023

<sup>127</sup> State's Prosecutor annual work report, 2023

<sup>128</sup> State's Prosecutor annual work report, 2023

<sup>129</sup> Data from State's Prosecutor annual work report, 2023

<sup>130</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice report on juveniles in conflict with the Law, 2023

<sup>131</sup> Data from the Ministry of Justice report on juveniles in conflict with the Law, 2023

mediation has been proposed; for 109 or 5.13% of juveniles, the preparatory procedure has been terminated; for 239 or 11.25%, the criminal complaint has been dismissed; for 197 or 9.27%, it has been proposed to impose a diversity measure; for 150 or 7.06%, a disciplinary measure has been proposed; for 609 or 28.68%, an increased supervision measure has been proposed; for 163 or 7.67%, an institutional measure has been proposed; for 8 or 0.37%, a fine has been proposed; for 11 or 0.51%, community service has been proposed; for 8 or 0.37%, imprisonment for juveniles has been proposed; for 8 or 0.37%, mandatory treatment has been proposed; and for 95 or 4.47%, cases involving juveniles have been resolved in another manner.<sup>128</sup>

Meanwhile, the Basic Courts, based on the prosecutors' proposals, have made the following decisions regarding 824 individuals: Sentencing for juveniles have been issued against 76 or 9.22% of the individuals; educational measures have been imposed on 670 or 81.31% of the individuals; diversity measures have been imposed on 3 or 0.36% of the individuals, and rulings for the termination of proceedings for juveniles have been issued against 75 or 9.10% of the individuals.<sup>129</sup>

In 2023, the total number of Juvenile Justice Prosecutors was 12, distributed across seven Basic Prosecutors' Offices. The departments for juveniles within the Basic Prosecution Offices received an average of 175.63 criminal charges - cases during 2023, which amounts to about 15.96 criminal charges - cases per prosecutor. Given that the monthly quota for a prosecutor is 5.96 criminal charges - cases, it is evident that Juvenile Justice Prosecutors are also overloaded with the cases they handle.

During 2023, Kosovo Probation Service processed a total of 778 cases involving juveniles in conflict with the law<sup>130</sup>, out of which, 739 are boys and 39 are girls. Among them, 307 are aged 14-16 years and 440 are aged 16-18 years, indicating that the age of juveniles in conflict with the law continues to decrease, as 39.5% of them are under 16 years old. This year has seen an 11.4% increase in the number of juveniles in conflict with the law compared to the previous year, during which a total of 700 cases were accepted.

Out of the total offenses committed, 449 are minor offences and 329 are criminal offenses, which constitute 42.3% of the offenses committed.<sup>131</sup> This indicator reflects an increase in

the number of criminal offenses committed by juveniles. Out of the total of 778 juveniles, only 26 of them are recidivists, whereas the rest have committed the offense for the first time.

In the cases of offenses, the main actions reported are public order disturbances, traffic violations, and property damage. For these cases, the court has ordered increased supervision by the parent in 440 cases, or 98% of all cases handled. Meanwhile, among criminal acts, the overwhelming majority, about 69%, are unspecified acts, while the other prevalent offenses include possession of weapons, theft, assault, and drug dealing. Regarding the possession and sale of narcotics, data from the Kosovo Police report 80 cases and 102 juveniles arrested during 2023 for the purchase, possession, distribution, and unauthorized sale of narcotic substances. Additionally, in 2023, the total number of juveniles categorized as having committed drug abuse offenses was 74, with the youngest being 13 years old.<sup>132</sup>

For these cases, the court has predominantly imposed the same decision for increased parental supervision in 249 cases, or 76% of them. Judicial reprimands were issued for 39 juveniles, accounting for 11.9% of the cases, while diversity measures were only granted to 14 juveniles. The issuance of diversity measures continues to remain very low, reducing the opportunities for juveniles to benefit from rehabilitative and reintegration programs.

During 2023, the Probation Service received 181 new cases with diversity measures<sup>133</sup> which were imposed by the basic prosecution offices. Compared to the previous year, where 387 cases were received for the implementation of these measures, there is a noticeable decline in these measures. One of the biggest challenges for the Probation Service of Kosovo in implementing diversity measures remains the lack of professional expertise, specifically the shortage of psychologists from the institutions responsible for implementing this measure, such as the Primary Health Care Centers or regional hospitals. This has created difficulties in applying the diversity measure “Psychological Counseling”. Additionally, the economic difficulties faced by the families of these juveniles have hindered the implementation of certain measures that require the juveniles to travel to probation centers for contact and counseling.<sup>134</sup>

The Probation Service faces challenges in effectively implementing diversity measures for juveniles. In addition

to the challenges in implementing the “Psychological Counseling” measure, there is a complete lack of specialized programs dedicated to treating juveniles who are victims of abuse involving psychoactive substances, as well as economic support for educational processes, that would create the opportunity of participation of juveniles in free activities and various supplementary courses.<sup>135</sup>

The Probation Service of Kosovo collaborates with various institutions such as Centers for Social Work, Mental Health Centers, Vocational Training Centers, and non-governmental organizations. However, despite specialized training for probation officials, regional discussion forums with community participation, collaboration with stakeholders and partner organizations, and awareness campaigns about the role and importance of alternative measures, their implementation according to the existing legislation, remains a challenge. Necessary programs for prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration for these juveniles continue to be lacking.

•••••  
• Increase of collaboration with local institutions and community-based organizations that can support or provide specialized services remains essential for the success of the rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles.  
•••••

During 2023, there were a total of 33 probation officers across the seven regional offices of the Probation Service. Consequently, this has led to a caseload overload for each probation officer, where in 2023, number of cases for an official was in average 105 cases,<sup>136</sup> including supervision and the preparatory phase, such as drafting social surveys. This overload in casework has significantly impacted the overall quality of service delivery for juveniles, reducing their chances for successful rehabilitation and reintegration.



**NUMBER OF CASES FOR ONE PROBATION OFFICER IS 105 CASES**

<sup>132</sup> Data from Kosovo Police Report, 2023

<sup>133</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023

<sup>134</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023

<sup>135</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023

<sup>136</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023



The Kosovo Correctional Service, during the year 2023, accepted a total of 123 cases of children in conflict with the law, above the age of criminal responsibility. The main measures imposed for juveniles in conflict with the law with criminal responsibility during 2023, included 19 cases with educational correctional institutional measures and one case of a convicted minor. The number of juveniles in the Juvenile Correctional Center in Lipjan and the Educational Correctional Center in Lipjan during 2023 was 123 juveniles, of whom 103 were in pre-trial detention, 1 juvenile was sentenced to imprisonment, and 19 juveniles were subjected to educational correctional measure.<sup>137</sup> Meanwhile, the dominant offenses committed by juveniles were murder, serious injury, and rape, which are more severe compared to the dominant offenses of previous years.

This change in the nature of criminal offenses committed by juveniles raises concerns about violence and aggression within this age group. This data may suggest a normalization of violence as a mean of resolving conflicts among adolescents and youth, and that the increase in exposure to violent content may have facilitated the normalization of such behaviors.

The Juvenile Correctional Center in Lipjan and the Educational Correctional Center in Lipjan operate with rehabilitation programs and services designed for the rehabilitation of juveniles. Specifically, the programs implemented in these institutions during 2023 included: educational programs (classroom instruction, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, and the possibility of university programs); the Top-5 program; the “Measures for Treating Dependency” program; the “Conversation for Change” program; vocational skills programs; and physical activity programs.

Compared to the previous year, when only two rehabilitation programs were applied in these centers, there is a noticeable establishment of new programs aimed at empowering and supporting juveniles toward their rehabilitation and successful reintegration.

Additionally, within the framework of vocational training, these centers offer training in plumbing, electrical work, hairdressing, tailoring, while the Educational Center also provides courses in culinary arts, print design, as well as

an IT course. However, despite the excellent conditions for developing juveniles skills in these workshops, they remain out of operation due to a lack of work materials.<sup>138</sup>

**Institutions must take immediate action to secure the necessary work materials to equip the vocational training workshops of the Educational Center with essential resources. This is crucial for operationalizing these facilities and for the development and professional training of juveniles.**

In both centers, there is an insufficient number of professional staff, which is essential for carrying out the rehabilitation of juveniles. This shortfall is recognized by the Correctional Service as a major challenge to achieving the objectives of these institutions and the provision of measures. With such a small number of professional staff, it is impossible to offer the necessary assistance and support to juveniles to help interrupt recidivist behaviors and to ensure their protection and skill development.



**ONLY ONE SOCIAL WORKER  
AND ONE PSYCHOLOGIST IN  
THE EDUCATIONAL CENTER  
AND CORRECTIONAL CENTER**

Kosovo Correctional Service has reported that during 2023, there was only one social officer and one psychologist to cover both institutions. In the Educational Center, there was one education official, one instructor for physical activities, and three instructors for professional trainings.<sup>139</sup> Meanwhile, there are no educators employed in the Educational Center and the Correctional Center, as stipulated by the Juvenile Justice Code.

<sup>137</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023

<sup>138</sup> Data from the “Monitoring Report on Human Rights in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo” KRCT, 2023

<sup>139</sup> Data from Kosovo Probation Service, 2023

During the 2023/24 school year, both centers have started organizing special education for grades 1 to 4 for juveniles who are illiterate. For some juveniles, attendance in public schools has been allowed, and the program “Measures for Treating Addiction” has begun to be implemented for the treatment of juveniles.

As in the previous year, the placement of juveniles under educational measures continues to occur in the Correctional Center instead of their placement in the Educational Center, contrary to the court’s decision. In the annual monitoring report on Human Rights in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo 2023, published by the Kosovo Center for the Rehabilitation of Survivors of Torture (KRCT), it is noted that based on the criteria for placement in this institution, the multi-disciplinary panel recommends which juveniles meet the criteria for placement in the Educational Center, regardless of the court decision. Meanwhile, juveniles who violate rules during their stay in the Educational Center are returned to the Correctional Center for Juveniles.<sup>140</sup>

The Correctional Service must rigorously adhere to the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Code and amend the current procedure for placing juveniles in the Correctional and Educational Centers. Juveniles under educational measures should be placed from the beginning in the Educational Center, specifically established for the purpose of their rehabilitation.

The Juvenile Correctional Center continues to lack separate spaces for juvenile girls, leaving them to stay with adult female convicts. Meanwhile, the Educational Center has a pavilion for female juveniles that has never been occupied by any female juvenile.

The staff of the Educational Center, who until 2023 worked in civilian clothes, have replaced them with uniforms. The Correctional Service should revert to the previous decision, ensuring that the staff engaged in this center, which aims to rehabilitate juveniles, returns to wearing civilian clothing.<sup>141</sup>

The Educational Correctional Center and the Correctional Center for Juveniles are currently managed by the same team, which is physically located within the premises of the Correctional Center. To enable better functioning in both centers, it is recommended to separate the management and have each center led by a dedicated management team.

<sup>140</sup> Data from the “Monitoring Report on Human Rights in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo” KRCT, 2023

<sup>141</sup> Data from the “Monitoring Report on Human Rights in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo” KRCT, 2023

## Recommendation:

- ▶▶ Establishment of centers or specialized homes for the treatment and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law, below the age of criminal responsibility, by adapting two of the Child Protection Homes to the needs of this category, from the seven homes foreseen under the Law on Child Protection;
- ▶▶ Strengthening preventive services and increasing the number of supportive professionals in schools and Centers for Social Work for children under the age of criminal responsibility;
- ▶▶ Placement of juveniles with educational measures in the Educational Correctional Center, instead of their placement in the Correctional Center, in accordance with the court decision.
- ▶▶ Restoration of civilian clothing for the staff employed at the Educational Correctional Center.
- ▶▶ Employment of professional staff such as social workers, psychologists, educators, and vocational instructors, etc., to implement individual programs, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs for juveniles.
- ▶▶ Equipping the vocational training workshops of the Educational Center with necessary work materials to ensure their functionality for the development and vocational training of juveniles.
- ▶▶ Separation of the management of the Educational Correctional Center and the Correctional Center for Juveniles, with each center being led by a dedicated management team.
- ▶▶ Creation of forms by the Kosovo Police and unification of practices for the imposition of the diversity measure "Police Warning."
- ▶▶ Organization of regular training for capacity building of justice system professionals for working with children and the new diversity measures, according to the Juveniles Justice Code.
- ▶▶ Development of a new curriculum program for children at the Academy of Justice, covering both criminal and civil aspects.

## KOMF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Action for Mothers and Children
- Association for Social Trainings, Researches and Advocacy
- Balkan Sunflowers Kosova
- Childproof/CIPOF
- CONCORDIA Social projects
- Down Syndrome Kosova
- Education Comes First
- Handikos Ferizaj
- Handikos Gjakova
- Hareja
- Network of Peace Movement
- Nevo Koncepti
- OPFAKKOS
- Organization "Autism"
- Organization AKTI
- Organization for Children without Parental Care - OFAP
- Organization Zë
- PL4Y International
- Civil Rights Program
- Public Organization for Local Initiatives and Supports – POLIS
- Day care center PEMA
- Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims – KRCT
- Labyrinth
- Kosovo Education Center - KEC
- Center for the Protection of Victims and Prevention of Human Trafficking
- Center for Advanced Studies - FIT
- Education Social Center SOS Kindergarten
- Peer Educators Network
- Save the Children Kosovo
- SOS villages of Children in Kosovo
- Association of Paraplegics and Children Paralysis of Kosovo - HANDIKOS
- Association for the Rights of Patients in Kosovo - PRAK Kosova
- Terre des hommes Kosovo
- The Ideas Partnership
- Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians – VoRAE







