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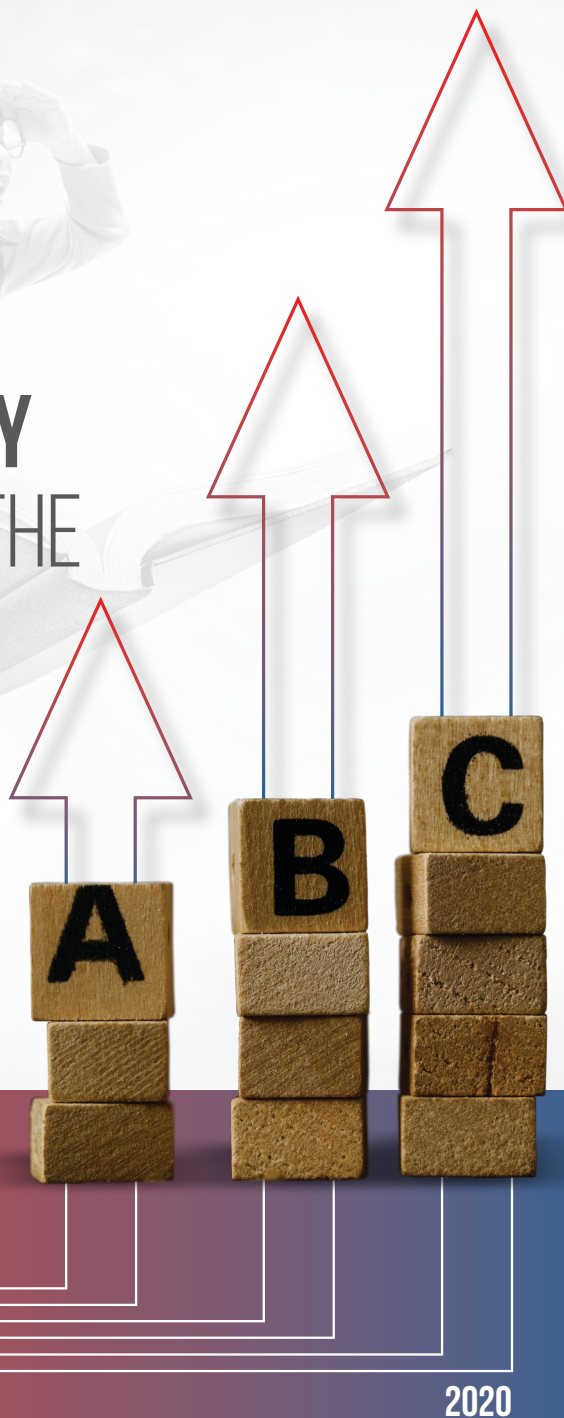
WHY IS **EARLY EDUCATION** THE **SOLUTION?**

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KOSOVO

we want





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ABBREVIATIONS

MDE	Municipal Directorate of Education
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
PI	Preschool Institutions
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KBKSAF	Curriculum for Preparatory Classes and Primary Education
KEC	Kosova Education Center
KEPK	Preschool education Curriculum in Kosovo
KKAKP	Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education
KSNA	International Standard Education Classification
KWW	Kosovo We Want
LAK	Law on Education in Municipalities
LAP	Law no. 04 / L-032 on Pre-University Education in Kosovo
LEP	Law on Preschool Education
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
PSAK	Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo
SKZH	National Development Strategy
SMIA	Education Information Management System
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SZHMFH	Development and Learning Standards in Early Childhood 0-6 years
AI	Administrative Instructions
UP	University of Prishtina

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research aims to identify the importance of early education in children and preschool institutions (PI), the organizing method of preschool institutions in the municipality of Prishtina and how increasing the number of PI's would help the position of women in society. Through the results of this research it will be advocated for raising public awareness about the importance of early education, especially for parents and relevant institutions. The results of this research will serve for the parents, municipalities and for the relevant institutions so that early education services is a priority in their agendas.

Early education is the most important period being crucial to a child's life development. Healthy development in the first years enables the constructions of brain blocks for academic achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, healthy living and successful parenting for the next generation. Prominent economists point out that investing in early childhood will provide the country a greater value in return. Also early education has a great importance in forming of personality, the foundations of which are formed in the first 6 years of life. Therefore, investing in preschool institutions and early education is vital for a healthy development of the society.

Preschool education is the first level of education, more specifically the age of 0-6 years, throughout which children are educated in their family and / or in a pre-school institution. Preschool education is organized in two age groups: the age group 9 months-3 years and the age group 3-6 years old, while both groups operate within the pre-school institutions.¹ This level of education is regulated by the law on Preschool education drafted in 2006, which regulates the rules of pre-school education that refer to the early education of children as well as the early education for children in special needs. This law has undergone in a reviewing process in 2019, but it has not been yet approved by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo. The reviewing process of the law promises for children a change for the better, as the status recognition for other PI's organization forms like community forms of organization, but unfortunately early education will not be compulsory even with these changes. Findings of this research point out that there is no preschool curriculum for children 9m - 3 years old, but the work frame functions based on the "Developmental and Learning Standards in Early Childhood 0-6 years old". The process of drafting a curriculum it has proved to be a lengthy process, since 2011, which has through several working groups. These working groups have changed with the change of governments. Upon taking power in the office, the government officials may reject the previous group's draft curriculum. The latest curriculum in the assessment of early education provided by education experts was intended not only for the benefits of

¹In some parts of the report, we have referred to Preschool Institutions (PI's) as kindergartens and nurseries, although the latter two differ from each other. This is because while reading the sentence is understandable to everyone.

children but for the educators, also for the parents and caregivers. This curriculum was set to be implemented in September of the previous year, with the start of 2019/2020, but according to MASHT it was unacceptable by the community of preschool education and it has not been implemented. As such, preschool education, the age group 0-3 years old, continues to work without a curriculum, the consequences of which are being felt mostly by children.

This research has included only the municipality of Prishtina, due to the different forms of organization of preschool education institutions. Thus, the same can be applied by other municipalities. Preschool education in Kosovo, including the municipality of Prishtina, lacks preschool institutions and access to early childhood education. The fact that in the municipality of Prishtina are involved less than 10%, specifically only 9.40% of children in preschool education, should be given the alarm for immediate and systematic intervention in this area. In the Municipality of Prishtina there are various forms of organization of Preschool Institutions, including public, private, community-based and public-private partnerships. From discussions with parents, the most preferred are community-based PIs with 46.48% of parents surveyed. This is because while these PI's are functionalized and managed by the parents themselves, they see participation in decision making as one of their strongest points. Being part of the process of recruiting educators and part of other operating processes of the kindergarten, they constantly influence the increase of quality, the provision of appropriate didactic, entertainment, logistical, household, food quality, etc. These community-initiated kindergartens are provided for in Article 7.1 of the Law on Early Education. According to this article, when there are no preschool institutions nearby the district of residence for children, the community has the right to self-organize in accordance with this law, to provide pre-school education services. Another example of a collaboration between public and private institutions are public-private partnership kindergartens. Parents express satisfaction with these kindergartens as long as there is not only one management body, but the responsibility is shared between the municipality and the other private entity. While the municipality subsidizes half of the amount for the payment of kindergarten for children, the private preschool institution has a greater responsibility, which then affects the quality increase. When it comes to public PIs, parents see them as the safest, and most of them are comfortable with the location. However, they are not happy with the old facilities, the insufficient toys and some of them with the old age of the educators. While private kindergartens from the perspective of parents who send their children to these PI's, are the right choice because of the proximity to the home and because they afford such a thing financially. However, most of these facilities where these PI's operate are not dedicated to PI's but are existing facilities, which according to parents are not very suitable for children.

Increasing the number of kindergartens would also strengthen the position of women in society, knowing that in our society, the burden of caring for children and the elderly falls on women. This would give them the opportunity to enter the job market, as a result of which they do unpaid work at home. Even according to parents and interviews with psychologists, the inclusion of women in the labor market, in addition to increasing the level of their well-being and the family in general, would positively affect their emotional, psychological and interpersonal state.

Methodology

This section examines in depth the methodology used to extract information about this research. Due to the concentration of various PI forms of organizations in the municipality of Prishtina, this research is focused only on this municipality. This research, more specifically, it is aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. How important is early childhood education?
2. How does the legal framework in Kosovo provide for early institutionalized education?
3. What are the forms of organizing preschool education in the municipality of Prishtina?

a. Which preschool institutions (PI) are most appropriate and most affordable from a parental perspective?

4. Would the increase in the number of kindergartens affect the improvement and in the strengthening of the position of women in society?

In this research conducted in 2019 mixed methods were used. Initially, the research team reviewed existing literature on relevant concepts and theories, especially those related to early education. The legal framework and administrative instructions in force were also reviewed, as well as other credible reports regarding early education and the organization of pre-school institutions, both locally and centrally. Secondly, 7 focus groups were conducted with 70 parents of Public, Private Preschool Institutions, with public-private partnership and community-based in the municipality of Prishtina. These focus groups have been comprehensive, with an equal representation of women and men with 10-12 participants per group. It is envisaged that half of them will be realized in urban areas and half in rural areas, but since there has been a lack of public PI in rural areas and there is only one PI with public-private partnership, it has made it impossible to represent this sample as is planned. Such discussions have taken place focusing on different neighborhoods of the capital, in order to achieve a more comprehensive representation. A questionnaire with concrete questions about the topic in question was part of the focus groups conducted with parents, which can be found in Appendix 2. The data from this questionnaire was analyzed through software for data analysis in social sciences SPSS which are presented in the form of graphs and you can find them commented in the report.

Furthermore, in order to obtain more information about early education and how to organize preschool institutions, the research team conducted 9 long interviews with competent persons in the fields such as: psychologists, early education experts in children, officials of the preschool department of the Ministry of Education,

representatives of organizations for the protection and advocacy of children's rights as well as representatives of organizations advocating for equality and women's rights and their integration into society.

EARLY CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT; INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION, INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Early child development includes physical, socio-emotional, cognitive development from the age of 0-8 years. The first years of life are critical because this is the time during which the brain develops at a very high speed having a high capacity for change.² At this age, the foundations are laid for the creation of personality, of the person / individual, then the creation of one's personal identity, the establishment of self-confidence, the beginning of the development of knowledge and skills. The more we work with young children, the more benefits we have when they start school or when they continue their education. Referring to the latest PISA report, 15-year-old children who have successfully passed this test have participated in early institutionalized education.³

The development of the child's brain

Healthy development in the first years enables the construction of brain blocks for academic achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, healthy living and successful parenting for the next generation.⁴

Science states: the child's brain is not born but it is created.⁵ In the first years of life more than 1 million nerve connections are formed every second. The process of creating neurons begins before birth, then decreases through a process called "pruning". This rapid process occurs in the first years of birth, beginning with the establishment of very simple neural connections, followed by more complex networks. The time at which this creation occurs is genetic, but early experiences determine whether these neural networks are strong or weak.⁶ At this time, it is considered that at least synapses (which are the communication spaces between two neurons) receive developmental impulses, 90% of brain development ends in terms of morphological development but also in terms of the functions it performs. So only 10% of brain development remains after the age of 5 which makes this early stage of development crucial in every aspect.⁷

Brain capacity for change decreases with age. The brain is more flexible or "plastic like" in the first years of life to recognize and accept a wide range of environments and interactions. As the brain becomes mature it also becomes more specialized in more complex functions, it is less able to reorganize and adapt to new or unexpected challenges.⁸

²Early Child Development : A Powerful Equalizer – World Health Organization

³Interview with Prof. Ass. Dr. Arlinda Beka, professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", 2019

⁴Three Core Concepts in Early Development, Harvard Center on the Developing Child

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-core-concepts-in-early-development/>

⁵UNICEF Report, Early moments matter for every child

https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Early_Moments_Matter_for_Every_Child.pdf

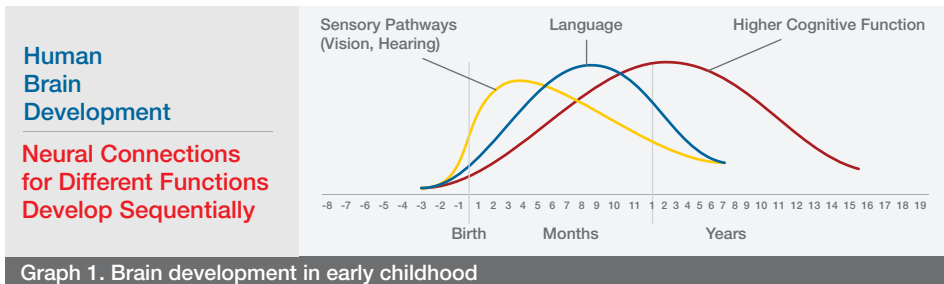
⁶Three Core Concepts in Early Development, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.

<https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/InBrief-The-Science-of-Early-Childhood-Development2.pdf>

⁷Interview with psychologist Dr. Ass. Fitim Uka, Prishtina, 2019

⁸The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/>



Also, early education plays a key role in the development and shaping of children's personality. During the first years, ie at the age of 3-6 years, the child undergoes a complete transformation in his personality, from the discovery of himself as a subject to the formation of his identity.⁹

The interviewed psychologists also highlighted the importance of the early years, during which the foundations for personality creation were laid. According to them, this idea is not something new, since it has existed since Freud's psychoanalytic approach, according to which the first years are crucial in creating personality.¹⁰

Socialization of children, the impact of kindergartens

The component from which the child benefits most from early education is undoubtedly socialization. Early education enables children to engage in pro-social behavior, active listening, they learn to wait in line, which leads to the development of self-regulatory skills, and later academic success is guaranteed.¹¹



Since kindergartens accept children from the age of 0, it is preferable for children to attend kindergartens because in addition to emotional and social development, the child learns to become independent and begins to build self-confidence in order to cope more easily with any changes in his/her life.¹²

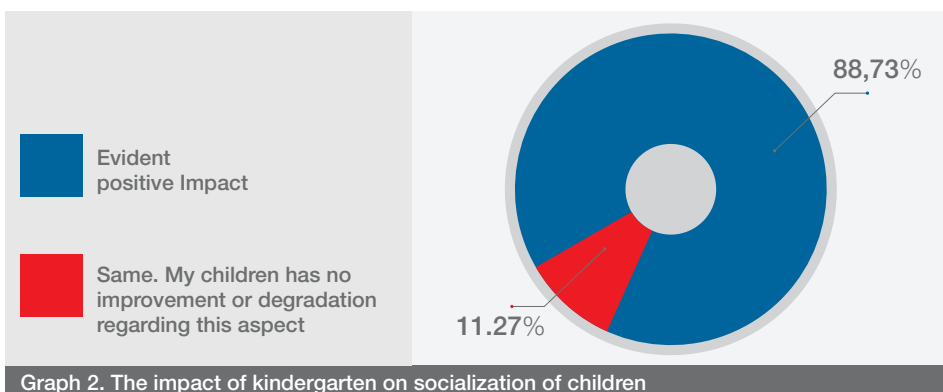
Parents participating in focus groups have shared the same opinion, with 88.73% agreeing that IP engagement has had a significant positive impact on children's socialization. While 11.27% of them have stated that their children have not changed in this regard.

⁹Bissoli, M. D. F. (2014). Development of Children's Personality: The role of early childhood education. *Psicologia em Estudo*, 19(4), 587-597.

¹⁰Interview with psychologists Dr. Ass. Nature Agani and with Dr. Ass. Fitim Uka, Prishtina, 2019

¹¹Interview with Dr. Ass. Fitim Uka, Psychologist, 2019

¹²Interview with Prof. Ass. Dr. Arlinda Beka, professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", 2019



While discussing in focus groups with parents, one of the most common reasons parents send their children to kindergarten, apart from having no other choice, is socialization. According to them, no matter how intelligent the child is when he does not feel part of the group, it negatively affects their emotional state. In this way, according to them, the kindergarten would help the children not to be passive and withdrawn.¹⁴

¹³Focus group with parents of private PI, Prishtina, 2019

¹⁴Focus group with parents of private PI, Hajvali, Prishtina, 2019

The importance of play in children's development

Play is essential for the early development of the child because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children and young people. Through play, children at a very early age are involved and interact with the world around them. Games enable children to create and explore a world they can own, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in collaboration with other children or adult caregivers.¹⁵ In Kosovo, although the inclusion of children aged 5-6 in preschool institutions has increased, the program offered to children in PI has been schooled, not offering learning through play but the obligation of a 5-year-old child to sit and complete books for a long time. This leads to the creation of a negative approach or feeling of the child to school.¹⁶



**Play is essential
for a child's early development
because it enables children to use
their creativity as they develop
their imagination, skills, and physical,
cognitive, and emotional strength while
being important to healthy brain development.¹⁷**

¹⁵Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 182-191.

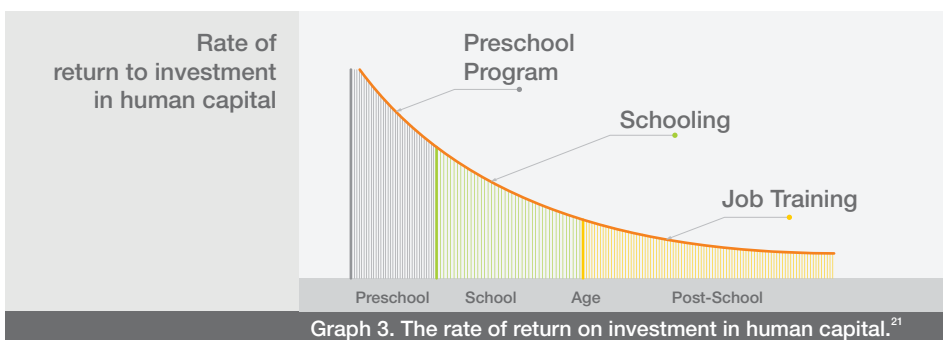
¹⁶Interview with Prof. Ass. Dr. Arlinda Beka, professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", 2019

¹⁷Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 182-191.

Investing in education, investing in the future

"The most appropriate investment a country's government can make is to invest in early childhood education, the value of which will be many times greater in return that it was invested," he said.¹⁸

Economist James Heckman, winner of the Nobel Prize: "A dollar spent on preschool programs generates a greater return on investment than the same investment in school curricula."¹⁹ (Graph no. 3) This graph emphasizes the importance of investment at the level of early education, ie in kindergartens and nurseries, where the return on investment in human capital appears to be the highest. With age, the rate of return on investment in human capital declines. Kosovo needs deep reform of the education system, restoring the investment curve towards early education and not higher education. This is because a proper foundation in early education guarantees success in higher education and never the opposite.²⁰



Graph 3. The rate of return on investment in human capital.²¹

¹⁸Early Child Development : A Powerful Equalizer – World Health Organization, March 2007

¹⁹Investing in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) - OECD

²⁰Interview with psychologist Dr. Ass. Fitim Uka, Prishtina, 2019

²¹Rates of return to human capital investment. Source: J. Heckman, "Policies to Foster Human Capital," Research in Economics 54, no. 1 (2000): 3-56.

KOSOVO LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND EARLY EDUCATION

This chapter examines how early institutionalized education is regulated by applicable laws and regulations in Kosovo.

The documents and laws that regulate preschool education in the country are:

- ♦ Law no. 02 / L-52 on Preschool Education²²
- ♦ Law no. 03 / L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo²³
- ♦ Law no. 04 / L-032 on Pre-University Education in Kosovo²⁴
- ♦ Administrative Instruction 12/2006 Implementation of General Standards of Preschool Education in Kosovo (3-6 years old)²⁵ aimed at the implementation of General Standards of Preschool Education in 3-6 years, as a result of restructuring the education system.²⁶
- ♦ Administrative Instruction 19/2016 which aims to include all children in preschool education. Determines ages and divides preschool institutions into nurseries and kindergartens.²⁷
- ♦ National Development Strategy 2016-2021 (NSD)²⁸
- ♦ Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo, 2017-2021²⁹
- ♦ Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education³⁰
- ♦ Preschool education curriculum in Kosovo 3-6 years old³¹
- ♦ Core curricula for preparatory classes and primary education³²
- ♦ Developmental and Learning Standards in Early Childhood 0-6 years³³

Preschool education is an integral part of the unique education system. Preschool education represents the first level of education, more specifically age 0-6 during which children are educated in their families and/or in preschool institutions. According to the administrative guideline on the inclusion of children in PI's, preschool education is organized in two age groups: the 9-month-3 age group that includes kindergarten and the 3-6 age group that includes kindergarten³⁶. Part of this level is the preparatory class (age of children 5-6 years) that can be organized in preschool institutions and / or in preparatory classes³⁷. The conditions, criteria and standards for the scope of preschool institutions are provided by the Law on Preschool Education. Drafted in 2006, the Law on Preschool Education regulates the system of preschool education that refers to the early education of children as well as the education of children with special needs.³⁸

²² Law no. 02 / L-52 on Preschool Education, 2006; <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/7-lep-ligji-mbi-eukimin-parashkollor.pdf>

²³ Law no. 03 / L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo; <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/9-ligji-i-arsimit-nekomuna2008-03-1068-al-ar-se-kom.pdf>

²⁴ Law no. 04 / L-032 on Pre-University Education in Kosovo, 2011. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2770>

²⁵ MEST, AI 12/2006 Implementation of General Standards of Preschool Education in Kosovo (3-6 years old);

<https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/05/ua-standardet.pdf>

²⁶ Article 1, AI-Implementation of General Standards of Preschool Education in Kosovo (3-6 years old)

²⁷ MEST, AI 19/2016 Inclusion of children in preschool institutions in Kosovo

<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15178>

²⁸ Government of Kosovo, National Development Strategy 2016-2021; http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_Kombetare_per_Zhvillim_2016-2021_Shqip.pdf

²⁹ Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo 2017 - 2021; https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/20161006-psak-2017-2021_1.pdf

³⁰ MEST, Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education, 2016, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/03/k-frameiza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>

³¹ MEST, Curriculum of preschool education in Kosovo 3-6 years old, https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/05/kurrikula-e-education-preschool-ne-kosove-3-6-vjec_1.pdf

³² MEST, Core Curriculum for the preparatory class and primary education in Kosovo, 2016, <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/03/kurrikula-berthame-1-finale-2.pdf>

³³ MEST, Standards for development and learning in early childhood, 0 to 6 people, 2011, https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/05/elds-report-alb-for-web_1.pdf

³⁴ Preschool education standards; Article 2, paragraph 2.1, Law on Preschool Education

³⁵ MEST, Curriculum Framework, 2017 (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/krimiza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>)

³⁶ MEST, AI 19/2016 Inclusion of children in preschool institutions in Kosovo <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15178>

³⁷ MEST, Curriculum Framework, 2017 (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/krimiza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>)

³⁸ Law on Preschool Education No. 02 / L-52

The law provides for the continuation of pre-school education as a volunteer.³⁹ Even with the new law, early education will not be compulsory.⁴⁰

In Kosovo Law no. 02 / L-52 on Preschool Education regulates preschool education through institutional norms.⁴¹ This law provides for the appropriate programs for preschool education in accordance with the curricula of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), standards of preschool education, the way of financing public institutions, private and other institutions, educational staff, etc.⁴²

In the strategies for the development of education in Kosovo, preschool education is treated in a special way, including the National Development Strategy (NSD) 2016-2021 and the Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo (PSAK) 2017-2021. However, despite the inclusion of preschool education in development policies, investments in the development of this level continue to be quite limited.⁴³

The NSD aims to increase the involvement of children in pre-school and pre-primary education. More specifically, it aims to achieve universal inclusion in pre-primary education by increasing the number of children attending preschool education per 5,000 children per year by 2021. This will be done by increasing the number of public kindergartens and increasing inclusion through private institutions⁴⁴. Objectives expected to be met by 2021 include:

- ◆ Increasing the number of public kindergartens, with priority in municipalities that do not have public kindergartens at all.
- ◆ Increasing the involvement of private institutions, through the licensing of new institutions and the re-licensing of existing institutions (about 124 kindergartens).
- ◆ Investment in capacity building for teaching staff at the preschool and pre-primary level.⁴⁵

In 2014, in order to increase the number of public preschool institutions (PI), MASHT also won a 5,000,000-euro fund from IPA European Union projects for the construction of public preschool institutions. With the funds of IPA and MEST, a total of 14 new public kindergartens are expected to be built in Kosovo within two years.⁴⁶

Improving student success enables the development of workforce skills, which for a long period of time will affect the country's economic growth. Despite the planned measures, until 2018, no concrete results have been recorded by the authorities at the central or local level. Involvement of children in pre-school education

³⁹ Law no. 02 / L-52 on early education, Article 2, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2401>

⁴⁰ Interview with a woman, integral part of the working group for drafting the new law on early education, Prishtina, 2019

⁴¹ Law no. 02 / L-52 on early education, Purposes of preschool education; Article 3, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2401>

⁴² Law no. 02 / L-52 on early education, Basic tasks, article 9, Plan and program, article 10, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2401>

⁴³ Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN - Preschool education in Kosovo, research

http://keen-ks.net/site/assets/files/1445/edukimi_parashkollor_ne_kosove_alb.pdf

⁴⁴ National Development Strategy 2016-2021 http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_Kombetare_per_Zhvillim_2016-2021_Shqip.pdf

⁴⁵ National Development Strategy 2016-2021 http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_Kombetare_per_Zhvillim_2016-2021_Shqip.pdf

⁴⁶ Interview with Laberi Luzha, head of the preschool education division at MEST, Prishtina, 2019

institutionalized in Kosovo continues to be a challenge when it is known that until 2017⁴⁷, according to data from the Education Information Management System (SMIA) there are only 42 public kindergartens and 88 licensed private institutions, 5 of which are community-based⁴⁸.

Preschool education is also included in the Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo, which aims to determine the directions of development of the education system in the period 2017-2021, so that education is in function of economic and social development of the country. Among the objectives that are expected to be achieved by 2021 is the inclusion of 20% of children aged 0-5 in preschool education and the inclusion of all children aged 5 years in quality pre-primary education.⁴⁹

Preschool education

Preschool education represents the first level of education, during which children are educated in their families and / or in preschool institutions from (age 0 - 3 and age 3-5 years). Part of this level is the preparatory class (age of children 5-6 years) that can be organized in preschool institutions and / or in preparatory classes.⁵⁰

Special attention during this phase is paid to physical development through physical activities and experiences that raise children's awareness for the need to protect their physical well-being as well as health and safety.



⁴⁷Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN - Preschool education in Kosovo, research http://keen-ks.net/site/assets/files/1445/edukimi_parashkollor_ne_kosove_alb.pdf

⁴⁸Public school institutions: separate classes, Education Statistics 2017/2018 <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4145/stat-e-arsimit-2017-2018-shqip.pdf>

⁴⁹Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo 2017 - 2021; https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/20161006-psak-2017-2021_1.pdf

⁵⁰MEST, Curriculum Framework (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/korniza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>)



Pre-primary education - preparatory classes

Children in the preparatory class at schools and in preschool institutions are helped to create an educational experience for the environment / adaptation in a systematic form of learning through play-work-learning.

In the preparatory class (age 5-6), children, in addition to social skills and abilities, get the basics of learning, which represent the basic elements of reading, writing and number operations, which increases their readiness for primary education and for life.⁵¹

⁵¹ MEST, Curriculum Framework <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/korniza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>

Curriculum for preschool education

According to the curricular framework of Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo, pre-school education represents the first level of education, which includes the age group 0-5 years. While the preparatory class or pre-primary education includes the age group 5-6 years.⁵²

"Preschool education still faces a lack of a curriculum, a process that has been developed since 2011 by various working groups but has not yet been completed."

The first educational project developed at preschool levels in Kosovo is "Step by Step", a methodology for preschool education that deals mainly with the professional development of educators, with a special focus on preschool level⁵³. Kosovo's formal pre-university education levels are in line with UNESCO's Standard International Education Classification (KSNA). There are differences in the structure of the Core Curriculum structure of KSNA 1, within which the preparatory class enters, although it is an integral part of education KSNA. All formal levels of pre-university education are divided into formal sub-levels, with the name - Stairs Leading Curriculum and have certain goals and functions. Core Curricula is designed for all formal levels of pre-university education including the core curriculum for early childhood education (birth-5 years) and the Core Curriculum for the preparatory class and primary education.⁵⁴

As a basis for preschool education, since 2006 the general standards of preschool education in Kosovo have served 3-6 years and the curriculum of preschool education in Kosovo 3-6 years (2006). Since 2011, the document "Development Standards and Learning in Early Childhood 0-6 years old" has been drafted and is being implemented.⁵⁶ Standards are created to increase the overall quality of educational activity with children by being used to develop or revise the preschool curriculum but do not replace the curriculum. They are also used to improve and prepare educators and preschool educators.⁵⁷

latest curriculum composed of early education experts is intended to be practical not only for educators but also for parents and caregivers.⁵⁸ This curriculum was planned to be implemented in September with the start of the 2019/2020 school year, but after, according to the MEST, it was considered unacceptable by the preschool education community and it was rejected.⁵⁹

⁵²Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/korniza-kurrikulare-finale.pdf>)

⁵³Interview with Hana Zyfliu-Gashi, Program Manager at KEC, Prishtina, 2019

⁵⁴Core Curriculum for the preparatory class and primary education <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/02/kurrikula-berthame-1-finale-2.pdf>

⁵⁵MEST, Standards of development and learning in early childhood 0-6 years https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/05/elds-report-alb-for-web_1.pdf

⁵⁶Interview with Laberi Luzha, head of the preschool education division at MEST, 2019

⁵⁷MEST, Standards of development and learning in early childhood 0-6 years https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/05/elds-report-alb-for-web_1.pdf

⁵⁸Interview with Prof. Ass. Dr. Arlinda Beka, professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", 2019

⁵⁹Interview with Laberi Luzha, head of the preschool education division at MEST, 2019

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRISHTINA

This chapter presents the different forms of organization of early institutionalized education in the municipality of Prishtina as well as the results derived from the focus groups organized with parents about their preferences for certain PI's.

According to statistical data of pre-university education published by MEST, in the school year 2017/2018⁶⁰ in Kosovo part of pre-primary education were 24002 children (age 5-6), while in 2018/2019 this number has decreased to 23749 children. In pre-school education, there has been an increase in the number of children from 6636 in 2017/2018 to 8335 in 2018/2019.⁶¹

The Municipality of Prishtina as the capital of Kosovo is the largest municipality in the Republic of Kosovo and the most important administrative center of the country. According to the 2011 census in Kosovo, the municipality of Prishtina has 198,897 inhabitants⁶². According to the report "Education Statistics 2018/2019" published by MEST and KAS, in the municipality of Prishtina are a total of 1197 children involved in preschool education⁶³. While at the pre-primary level are included 2587 children. The pre-primary level is organized in preschool institutions or in primary and lower secondary schools. However, involvement at the preschool level remains particularly worrying, particularly at the 0-3 level, which is far from meeting European standards of participation⁶⁴.

The main challenges identified in the Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 are:

- ♦ Lack of infrastructure capacity and materials.
- ♦ Insufficient funds to increase inclusion and quality in EPSH for children 2-5 years.
- ♦ Lack of training programs in the field of preschool education.
- ♦ Lack of implementation of pedagogical methodologies for preschool education.
- ♦ Lack of health-psychopedagogical services.
- ♦ Lack of implementation of standards of organization of educational work in PI's⁶⁵

Preschool education in Kosovo, including the municipality of Prishtina, lacks preschool institutions and access to early childhood education. The fact that in the municipality of Prishtina are involved less than 10%, specifically only 9.40% of children in preschool education, should be given the alarm for immediate and systematic intervention in this area⁶⁶.

⁶⁰MEST, Statistical Notes Pre-university education 2017/2018 <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/03/shenime-statistikore-2017-18-arsimi-parauniversitar.pdf>

⁶¹MEST, Statistical notes Pre-university education 2018/2019 <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2019/02/shenime-statistikore-2018-19-arsimi-parauniversitar.pdf>

⁶²Kosovo Agency of Statistics - Population Registration in Kosovo 2011 (<http://ask.rks-gov.net/>).

⁶³MEST and KAS, "Education Statistics in Kosovo 2018/2019" <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5055/statistikat-e-arsimit-2018-2019.pdf>

⁶⁴MEST, Strategic Education Plan 2017-2021

<https://kk-arkiva.rks-gov.net/kacanik/getattachment/82795cf5-3b62-48b1-9355-7c32e1e03187/PLANI-STRATEGJIK-I-ARSIMIT-NE-KOSOVE-2017-2021.aspx>

⁶⁵Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 <http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>

⁶⁶Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 (<http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>)

Sustainable education financing in the Municipality of Prishtina is done through a joint annual review where all possible funds for financing education in the municipality are mobilized and consolidated. These include municipal grants from the national budget (subsidies), municipal own funds, internal and external donations, projects, community contributions, public-private partnerships, community-based initiatives, and more.⁶⁷

Means of organization of preschool education

Public preschool institutions are funded by the Municipality, under the supervision of the Municipal Directorate of Education (MED) and operate according to the curricula and guidelines of MEST⁶⁸. From the municipal budget, funds are provided for the maintenance and investment in the equipment of the institution⁶⁹. Public nursery staff are considered part of the civil servants⁷⁰. Law no. 03 / L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo regulates the organization of public educational institutions and the provision of public education at preschool, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education in the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo⁷¹. This law clearly defines the competencies of the Municipalities in the construction of school facilities, registration and admission of students, admission of teachers, etc⁷². In the municipality of Prishtina, there are 8 public pre-school institutions, where 1619 children attend pre-school and pre-primary education.⁷³

Private preschool institutions can be established by legal entities and are licensed based on the administrative instruction for licensing and registration of private preschool educational institutions⁷⁴. These institutions should provide sufficient educational facilities (2 m² / 1 children), necessary educational equipment, escort premises, yard and healthy and safe environment for children, indoor facilities dedicated to activities. They enable activities that take place individually, in a small group and with the whole group of children, in accordance with the variety of educational activities contained in the preschool education curriculum. In the municipality of Prishtina there are 40 private preschool institutions licensed with a total of 1702 children.⁷⁵

Community-based centers are forms of organizing preschool education, which were built mainly in rural areas through the project "Community-based centers" since 2001. These centers have included in their programs children living in rural areas that they cannot be part of full-time programs.⁷⁶ Such centers in the Law on Preschool Education are known as other Preschool Institutions.⁷⁷

⁶⁷Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022, p. 15 <http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>

⁶⁸Assembly of Kosovo, Law no. 02 / L-52 ON PRESCHOOL EDUCATION, Article 41, 46 http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L52_al.pdf

⁶⁹The same Law, article 18

⁷⁰The same law, article 28, paragraph 28.1

⁷¹Law no. 03 / L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 1 <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2543>

⁷²Law no. 03 / L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 2. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2543>

⁷³Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 <http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>

⁷⁴Administrative Instruction on Licensing and Registration of Preschool Educational Institutions, 2011 <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8054>

⁷⁵MEST, Licensed Educational Institutions Preschool Institutions, 2018 <https://masht.rks-gov.net/divizioni-per-arsim-privat-parauniversitar>

⁷⁶Rozafa Shala, Alternatives to preschool education methodologies and their application in Kosovo, Doctoral dissertation, Tirana, 2017.

⁷⁷<http://www.doktoratura.unitir.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rozafa-Shala-Disertacioni-Finale-25.12.2017.pdf>

⁷⁸Law no. 02 / L-52 on Preschool Education, Article 1, paragraph 4

Preschool institutions with public-private partnerships are regulated by law on public-private partnerships⁷⁸. In the municipality of Prishtina operates the Preschool Institution "Fillesa", as the only IP with Public-Private Partnership with 131 children involved in early education.

Community-based kindergartens are an alternative organization of preschool institutions. The Law on Preschool Education stipulates that when there are no preschool institutions in the district of children's residence, the community has the right to self-organize in accordance with this law, to provide pre-school education services.⁷⁹ However, in the existing law on preschool education, these kindergartens are not considered as other preschool institutions but are known as community-based centers. As such, these kindergartens are licensed by the MEST as private PI, while not operating as such.⁸⁰ But under the new law, after much insistence from community-based kindergarten directors, these kindergartens will be recognized as a community-based PI.⁸¹

There is only one administrative instruction, which regulates the field of organization and activity of community-based kindergartens. This 2007 administrative instruction provides the conditions and opportunities for the support of preschool education by the community and determines the conditions for cooperation between the community and the municipality to ensure conditions for the inclusion of children in preschool institutions and determines the well-being of work in these institutions⁸². This type of organization has started to be implemented for the first time in the Municipality of Prishtina.

Community-based kindergartens are established and operate through a board of parents who select a community leader from the community ranks. The municipality usually provides the space while the parents manage the kindergarten. Such kindergartens present a new opportunity to increase the number of children in preschool education by avoiding the budgetary constraints of central and local authorities on preschool institutions⁸³. These kindergartens are financially independent because they are funded by the community, but on the other hand the leadership of the preschool institution, which in these cases is the director or principal is not a decision-making factor without cooperation with the parents' community. This empowers them, unlike public kindergartens, where the decision-making factor is the MED or the ministry, which sometimes brings implications.⁸⁴

⁷⁸Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 <http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>

⁷⁹Assembly of Kosovo, Law no. 02 / L-52 ON PRESCHOOL EDUCATION, Article 7, Item 7.1 http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/lqjet/2006_02-L52_al.pdf

⁸⁰Law no. 02 / L-52 on early education, Article 2, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2401>

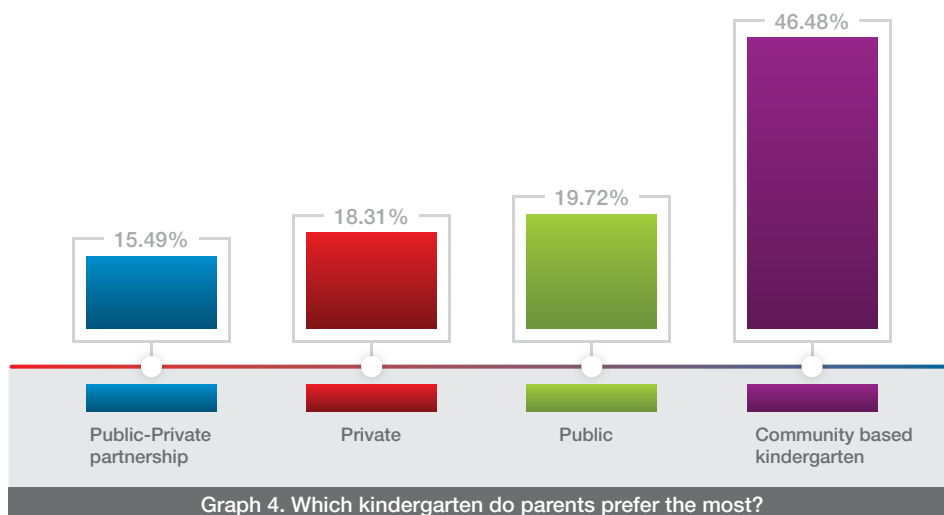
⁸¹Interview with a woman, integral part of the working group for drafting the new law on early education, Prishtina, 2019

⁸²Administrative Instruction 42/2007 - Conditions and opportunities for support of preschool education by the community http://keen-ks.net/site/assets/files/1445/edukimi_parashkollor_ne_kosove_alb.pdf

⁸⁴Interview with Prof. Ass. Dr. Arlinda Beka, professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", 2019

Parents' preferences, why does community engagement make the difference?..

During discussions and surveys conducted with parents in the municipality of Prishtina, 46.48% of them prefer their children to follow a community-based PI. This preference is shared by parents whose children attend community-based kindergartens (57.58%), public PIs (27.27%) and private IPs (15.15%).



Being part of decision making they choose the best for their children and therefore they are happy with their functioning.⁸⁵

A parent from the focus group PI with public-private partnership has stated that he is interested in community-based PI but would not send the child to an PI whose statute is not recognized by law.⁸⁶

Parents who send their children to community-based kindergartens are more satisfied because they feel as an integral part of the functioning of these kindergartens.

"I am interested in community-based kindergartens, but I would not send my child to a kindergarten whose statute is not recognized by law."⁸⁷

⁸⁵Focus group with community-based PI parents, Prishtina, 2019

⁸⁶Focus group with IP parents with public-private partnership, Prishtina, 2019

⁸⁷Parent, man, part of the focus group realized with PI with public-private partnership, Prishtina, 2019

In the municipality of Prishtina so far 10 such kindergartens have been opened: "Botanika" in Mati 1, "Ngjyrat" in Hajvali, "Magic House" in the village Besi, "Shkronjat" in Arbëri, "Zogjtë" in Sofali, "Milingonat" in Kodra e Trimave and "Ketrushët" in the Tophane neighborhood. The SOS Kindergarten in the Velania neighborhood has gone through the same model of operation. In these Community-based Preschool Institutions, 406 children attend early education, not including the "Ants" kindergarten, which started operating in early 2019 and has about 160 children⁸⁸, the "Ketrushët" kindergarten, which opened in November 2019, with a capacity for 80 children in this neighborhood, the kindergarten "Cicërimat" in the neighborhood Kalabria with a capacity for 75 children and the kindergarten "Yllkat" with a capacity of 260 children, thus being the largest kindergarten in Kosovo with 2000m².

The most common reason why parents with whom groups focus has decided to send their children to public PI has been the price, the right location, and the sense of security that these PIs offer. For an unemployed mother, who does not look for work because she cares for the child with autism, while sending the other child to public PI only because of the affordable price⁸⁹. A focus group participant with private PI parents shares her experience saying she applied to seven public IPs in the capital to send the child and was refused on the grounds that they did not meet the conditions.



"You definitely need to know someone to be able to send your child to public kindergarten."⁹⁰

Woman, Parent, from Prishtina.

Parents, especially private PIs think that according to them the conditions are weaker and the facilities are old. Although public PI facilities are intended for kindergartens, compared to private ones which are improvisation of existing ones. Some of them state that they have had experience with public PI and have not shared their satisfaction, among other things, even in cases when the child is ill using antibiotics, it is not accepted by public PI, which costs parents a week off work. For this reason they choose private kindergartens. Another dissatisfaction with public PI is summer vacation, where many parents are forced to send their children to grandparents or private kindergartens during the 2 summer months when public PI does not work.⁹¹

⁸⁸Education Development Plan in Prishtina 2018-2022 <http://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Plani-Zhvillimor-i-Arsimit-PRISHTINE-ALB.pdf>

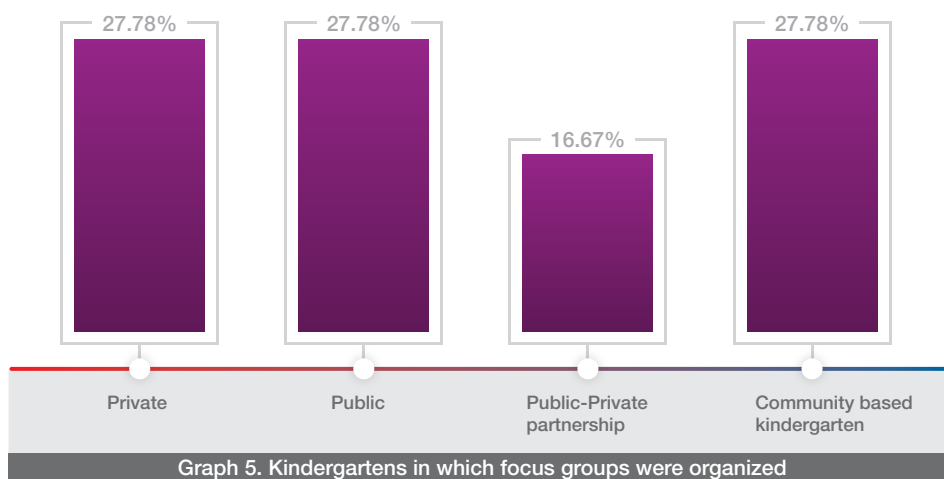
⁸⁹Focus group with community-based PI parents, Prishtina, 2019

⁹⁰Focus group with private PI parents, Prishtina, 2019

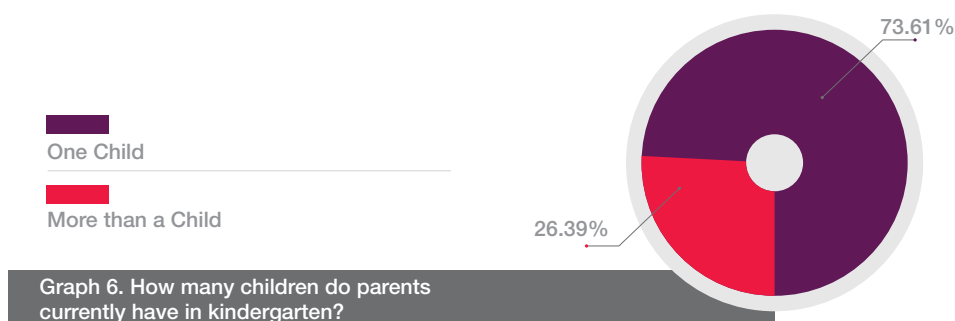
⁹¹Focus group with public PI parents, Prishtina, 2019

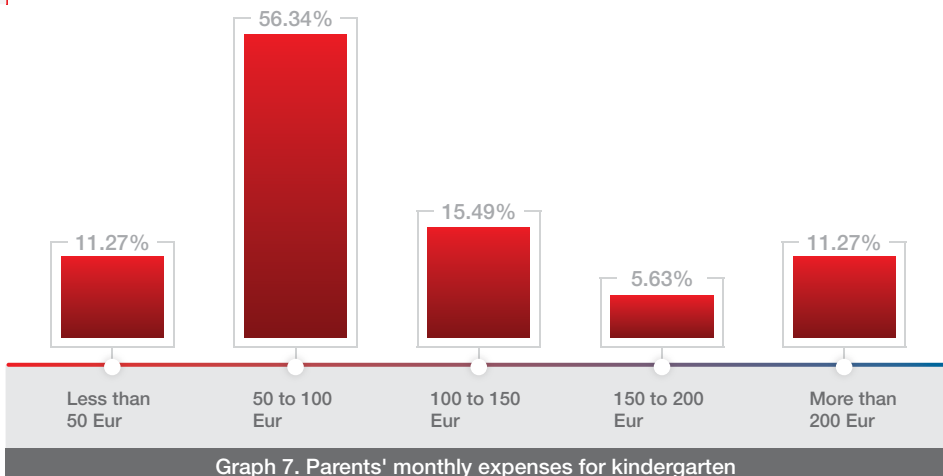
Early education from parents' perspective

In the focus groups organized with parents we have foreseen equal representation of all forms of organizations that exist in the municipality of Prishtina. But, since so far there is only one PI with public-private partnership, it is represented by 16.67% of parents who send their children to this PI. While the rest of the parents are represented equally by 27.78% who send their children to private, public and community-based PI. (Graph 5)



Regarding the number of children attending early institutionalized education, most of them (73.61%) have only one child attending PI, while the rest (26.39%) have 2 children in PI (Graph 2). Most of the children of the parents surveyed during the focus groups are aged 4-5 (45.83%) and 3-4 years old (40.28%). Only 6.94% of them are under 1 year old, 13.89% are 1-2 years old and 18.06% are 2-3 years old.

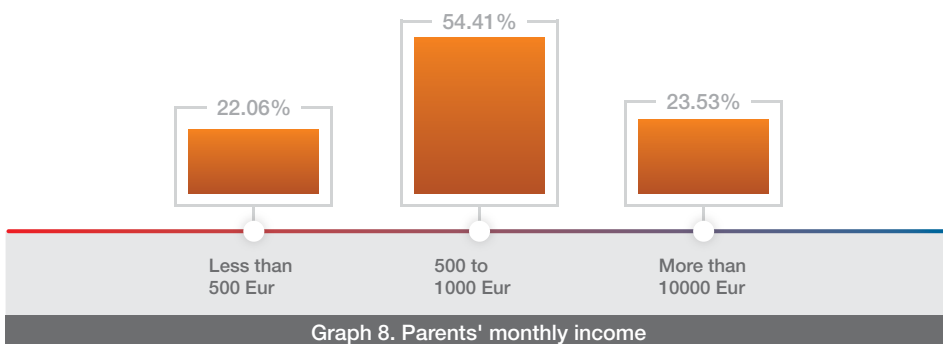




Most parents (56.34%) pay 50-100 euros per month from the overall family budget for PI expenses for the child. This includes only parents who have only one child following an PI. Then, 15.49% of them pay 100-150 euros, while 5.63% of parents who pay 150-200 euros per month, are the parents who send 2 children to PI. While only 11.27% of parents spend less than 50 euros to pay PI and most of them (87.5%) have only one child.



Parents with monthly expenses dedicated to kindergartens worth less than 50 euros have a focus especially on public PI, with public-private partnerships and community-based



The monthly income of most parents surveyed during focus groups (54.41%) was 500-1000 euros, while almost equally were the parents with a monthly income of less than 500 euros and more than 1000 euros.

Affordable price was also one of the reasons parents send their children to public kindergartens, with public-private partnerships and community-based as the most economically affordable kindergartens for the family budget.

Most parents in the municipality of Prishtina (62.50%) are satisfied with the training of teaching staff in PI where they send their children. Only 4.17% of them are dissatisfied with the professional training of the teaching staff in the respective PI.

Parents are not affected by the way preschool organizations organize to send their children to an PI. Of the organized focus groups, the most common reason why parents send their child to a particular PI is the proximity of the PI to the home.

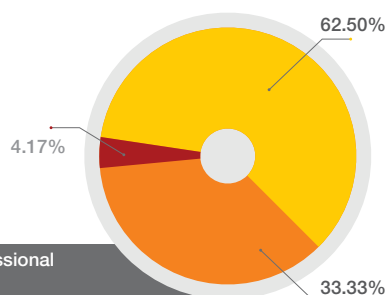


Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Graph 9. How satisfied are the parents with the professional training of the teaching staff?

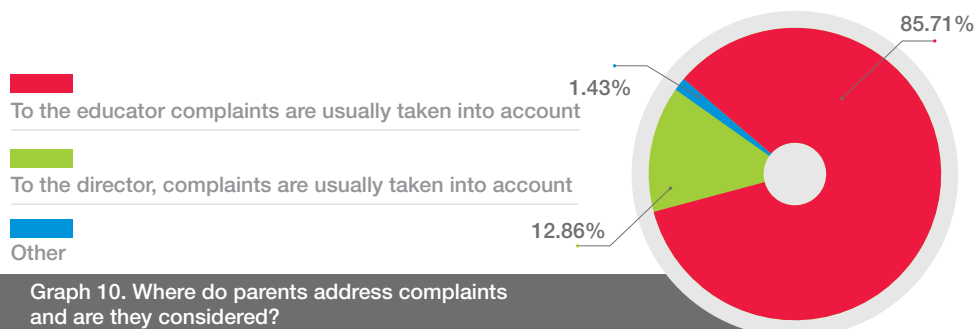


Most parents who have expressed great satisfaction with the professional training of IP teaching staff include parents who send their children to private PI (37.78%), based on comments (31.11%) and public-private partnerships (16.67%). While the biggest dissatisfaction is towards the teaching staff in public PI with 66.67% of dissatisfied parents who send their children to these PIs. The main reason for dissatisfaction with educators in public PI is the age of the educators. This dissatisfaction comes especially from the parents of private PI, but who have had children before in public PI.

"Educators in public PI are older and have nothing more to offer children."⁹²

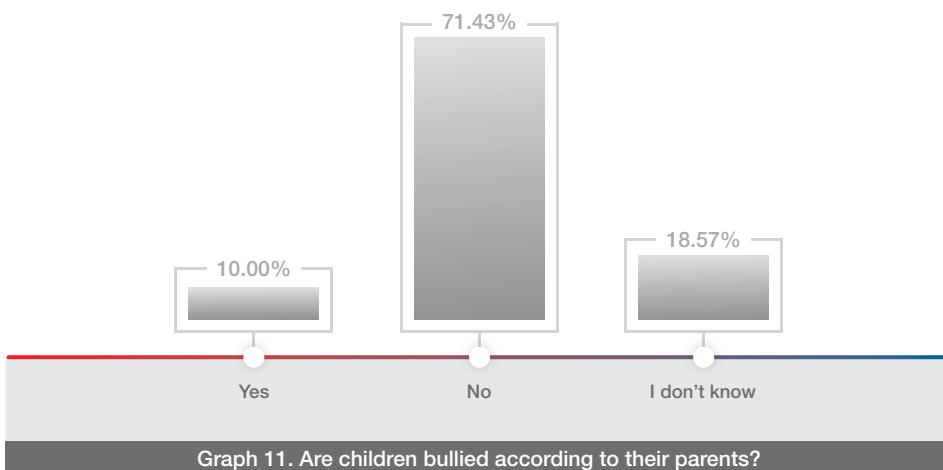
Man parent, Prishtina.

⁹²Focus group with parents of Private PI, Prishtina, 2019



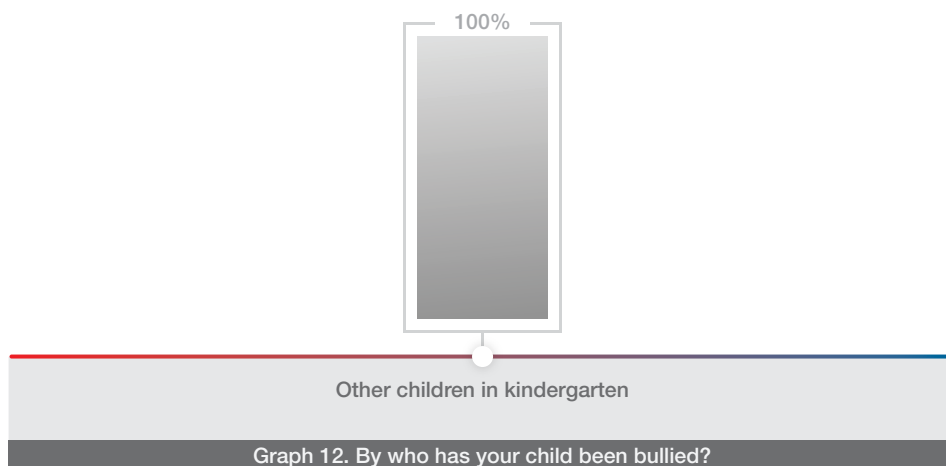
Regarding the addressing of complaints, 85.71% of parents address them to the educator, the complaint is taken into account, while 12.86% of the surveyed parents address the complaints to the principal, the complaint is taken into account. Even during the discussions, there were no remarks regarding the addressing of the complaints. They have pointed out the greatest connection between parents and educators as they are the ones who take care of their child all the time. While only in cases of potential complaints against educators they tend to turn to the principal⁹³.

Most parents (71.43%) have stated that their children have never been bullied inside the kindergarten by other children or teachers. While 18.57% of them have no information whether such a phenomenon has occurred or not. Only 10% of parents have claimed that their children have been bullied in kindergarten. (Graph 11) In 10% of parents who state that their children are bullied in PI, the majority (85.71%) belong to parents whose children follow public PI.

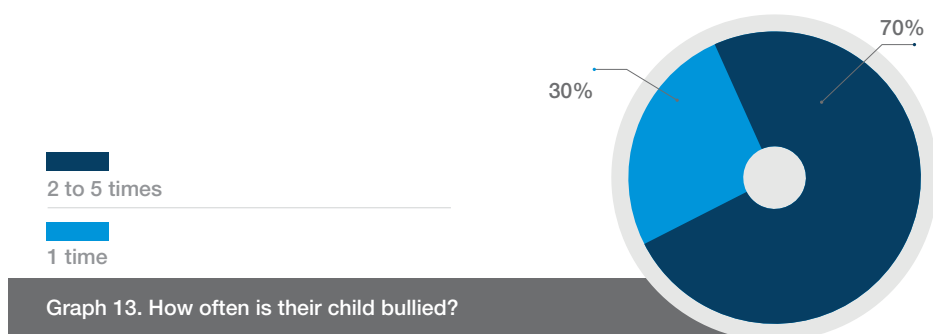


⁹³Focus group with parents, Prishtina, 2019

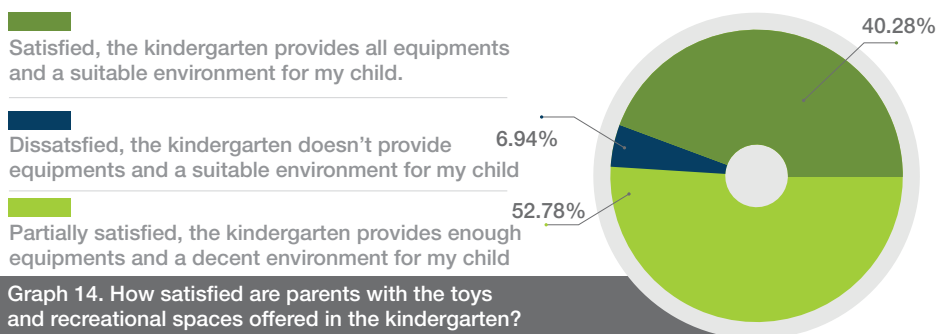
But of the latter, all have expressed that children have been bullied by other children in kindergarten and not by teachers. (Graph no. 12)



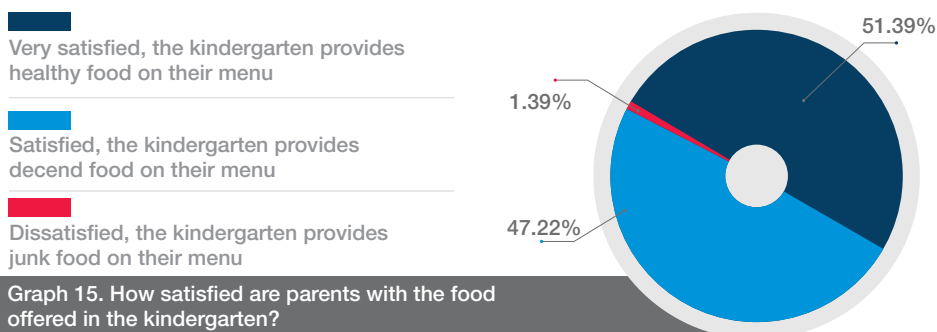
70% of parents think that their children have been bullied only once while 30% state that their children have been bullied 2-5 times. But all cases according to them have been between children and not improper treatment by teachers.



As for the toys offered in the kindergarten and recreational space, most parents are very happy (52.78%) with the entertainment equipment and recreational spaces offered in PI. Meanwhile, 6.94% of parents are dissatisfied with the toys and recreational spaces offered in the respective PI. (Graph 14)



During discussions with parents, most of them expressed great satisfaction with the entertainment equipment and recreational spaces offered in private PI, community-based and public-private partnerships. While the greatest dissatisfaction exists in public PI. According to one mother, whose child attends public PI classes are too small for a large number like the current children's. According to her, they cannot express themselves in this way because they do not have enough time and space⁹⁴. In addition to recreational spaces in the absence of a large number, according to parents, the way the all-day stay in the PI is developed is often quite boring for children. This is because according to one parent of one of the public PIs, even didactic tools such as paints or colored pencils are broken and missing. While children rarely use the outside of the PI.⁹⁵



⁹⁴Focus group with parents of public PI, Prishtina, 2019

⁹⁵Focus group with parents of public PI, Prishtina, 2019

Of the parents surveyed, 51.39% said they were very happy with the food offered by the nursery, while 47.22% were satisfied with the idea that the nursery offered a varied menu. Parents who send their children to community-based kindergartens are 1.39% dissatisfied with the menu offered at these kindergartens. From the focus of the realized groups, food enters into one of the reasons that parents send their children to a specific PI. Thus, a parent says that he has decided to send the child to public PI only because of food because he knows that he is in control.⁹⁶ In general, parents are not interested in seeing what food is offered to their children, but usually know it as information from the children themselves. This also gives the parents a good impression or not about the food.

Investing in early education for women's empowerment

"Increasing the number of kindergartens would make it easier for women who do unpaid work at home to have time to look for work and increase their chances of getting involved in the job market."⁹⁷



In most cultures, women are assigned traditional gender duties and responsibilities of free care work. Even in Kosovo, the rate of unpaid work for women is high. Free care can negatively affect their level of education, their participation in the workforce, their political involvement, and their poverty levels during their lifetime⁹⁸. According to a calculation made by IDRA Research & Consulting Kosova, the unpaid work of women in Kosovo for the time spent on home and family care is 2 billion and 616 million euros.⁹⁹

Given that 13.7% of women are employed, the unemployment rate is alarming at 32.7%¹⁰⁰. In the report "Who cares" conducted by the Kosovo Women's Network, 88% of unemployed women said that they would look for work if that they could take care of their children.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶Focus group with parents of public PI, Prishtina, 2019

⁹⁷Interview with representatives from the Kosovo Women's Network, Prishtina, 2019

⁹⁸The report "Who cares?", offers and options for increasing the possibilities of child care in Kosovo. ", RrGK, Prishtina, 2016

⁹⁹IDRA Research & Consulting - Kosova

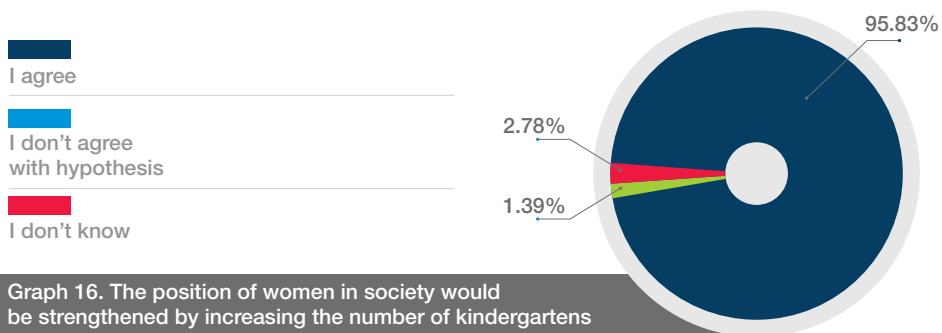
¹⁰⁰Kosovo Statistics Agency <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5060/anketa-e-fugjis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-tm2-2019.pdf>

¹⁰¹The report "Who cares?", offers and options for increasing the possibilities of child care in Kosovo. ", RrGK, Prishtina, 2016

Women and men who were part of the discussions agree with this. They stated that if there were no kindergartens nearby, women would be the ones to sacrifice their careers for their children. A great need has arisen for kindergartens with late development, by a mother who, as a result of the lack of such institutions, is forced to take care of the child at home. As a result, she has stated that she is not looking for a job.¹⁰²

The National Development Strategy (NSDI) 2016-2021 also states that the inclusion of children in preschool activities would have a positive effect on increasing women's participation in the labor market, while the lack of PIs forces them to remain in home.¹⁰³

Part of the questionnaire and discussions in focus groups organized with parents was also the strengthening of the position of women through the provision of conditions for preschool education for children. Most parents (95.83%) think that a woman's position would improve if they were able to send their children to PI. This means that women will be offered the conditions to pursue their careers and live a life with a higher level of well-being.



In addition, it would contribute to the emotional and psychological aspect of women.

*Material non-contribution to the family, giving up work due to childcare often makes women feel useless and prone to depression.*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Focus group with parents of public PI, Prishtina, 2019

¹⁰³ Strategjia Kombëtare për Zhvillim 2016-2021 http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_Kombetare_per_Zhvillim_2016-2021_Shqip.pdf

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Dr. Ass. Natyra Agani, lecturer in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" and Specialist in Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, Prishtina, 2019

Also, the inability to achieve career goals and objectives causes emotional imbalance in women, bringing an increased level of stress and disrupting social and interpersonal relationships with others¹⁰⁵. A man, part of the focus group, has stated that he noticed his wife's condition during the first six months of maternity leave, that she was locked up in herself and isolated¹⁰⁶. Most of them have stated that the employment of women in the family has multidimensional impacts.



"A woman's financial contribution to the family brings stability, affecting her better emotional and mental state."¹⁰⁷

Since the opportunities are not equal depending on the urban or rural area, from the discussions we have noticed a much greater impact of PI opening in rural areas. In the village of Besi, after the opening of the community-based kindergarten, women were given the opportunity to look for work and get a job. Three of them during the focus group claimed that they were employed after the PI was opened in this village, enabling their children to have access to early education and the opportunity to look for work.

However, the difficult economic situation and the high level of poverty in Kosovo (where 18.0% of the population lives below the poverty line and 5.1% below the extreme poverty line¹⁰⁸) makes PI costs unaffordable. The lack of affordable childcare services in Kosovo is also a major contributor to obstructing women's access to the labor market¹⁰⁹. 88.73% of the parents participating in the research agree with this, who think that if the monthly payment dedicated to PI was more affordable, it would affect the inclusion of women in the labor market.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Dr. Ass. Fitim Ukaj, psychologist, Prishtina

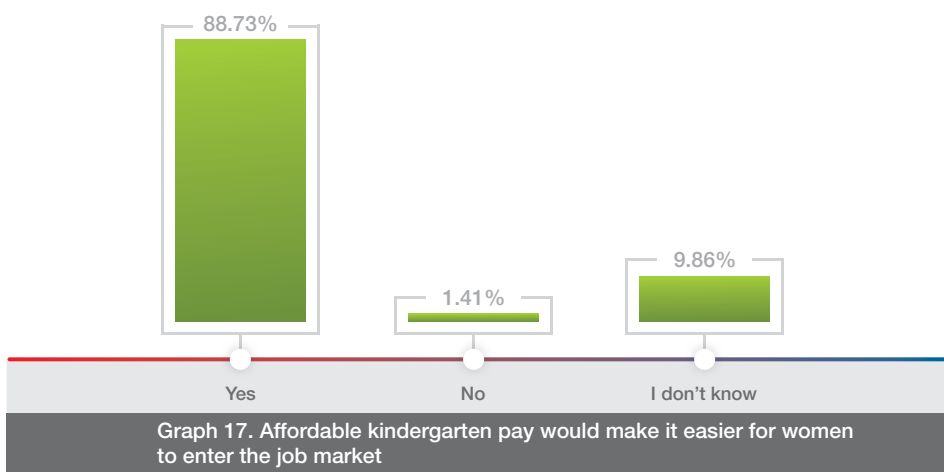
¹⁰⁶ Focus group with parents, Private PI, Prishtina, 2019

¹⁰⁷ Focus group with parents, Public PI, Prishtina, 2019

¹⁰⁸ Consequences of Poverty in Consumption in the Republic of Kosovo in the period 2012-2017

¹⁰⁹ <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/statistikat-e-varferise-2012-2017>

^{109a} The low activity of women in the labor market", D4D https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_SHQ_WEB.pdf



Among the many challenges and sacrifices are the problems faced by women employed in the private sector. During the discussion, a mother stated that she was forced to quit her job because her child was often ill when she started kindergarten. While there is no understanding from the employer in this sector¹¹⁰.



¹¹⁰Focus Group with parents, Prishtina, 2019

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ To orientate the investments of the Government and MEST towards early education. To create the conditions for opening PIs of all organization forms by making early institutionalized education a priority in policy development and budget allocation.
- ◆ To engage the municipalities of Kosovo by activating and informing the community about the possibilities of creating kindergartens as it is proved to be a successful form of organization and affordable for the pockets of citizens.
- ◆ Urgently draft a curricula for preschool education and put an end to interests other than those for the benefit of children. The working group is recommended to be part of the early education experts, so that our children get educated at the level of global scientific research on early childhood.
- ◆ The curriculum should be play-based as an effective way to increase children's creativity.
- ◆ Greater commitment of civil society to accountability by institutions in relation to early education, the laws and regulations they draft.
- ◆ Investing in early education requires immediate action. For this reason, it is recommended that until new PIs are opened, especially in villages, it is invested in community-based centers with a stay of up to 2 hours. This will allow children to adapt more slowly until PIs are built nearby.
- ◆ To approve the law on preschool education, as soon as the conditions for such a thing are created, so that the community-based PI is recognized as such.
- ◆ Invest in research and then implement other forms of organization that would enable children to access preschool education as early as possible.
- ◆ The private sector is recommended to show understanding for women parents in the period of starting to send children to PI.
- ◆ Private companies are also advised to find forms of organization within the company for the children of parents working there, which would be fruitful for them and the employed parents.

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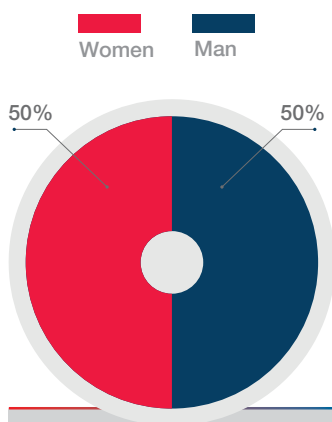
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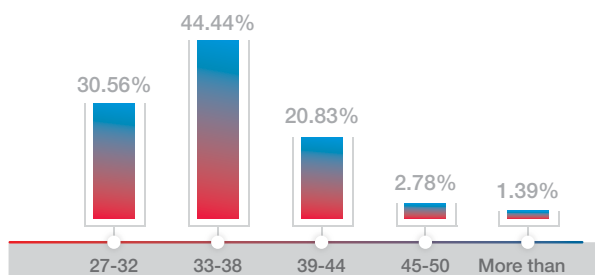
Annexes

Annex 1. Demographic Information

Of the respondents that were part of this research, women and men were equally represented (Graph 18). Most of them, as illustrated in the Graph 19, were ages 33-38 years old (44.44%) and 27-32 (30.56%).

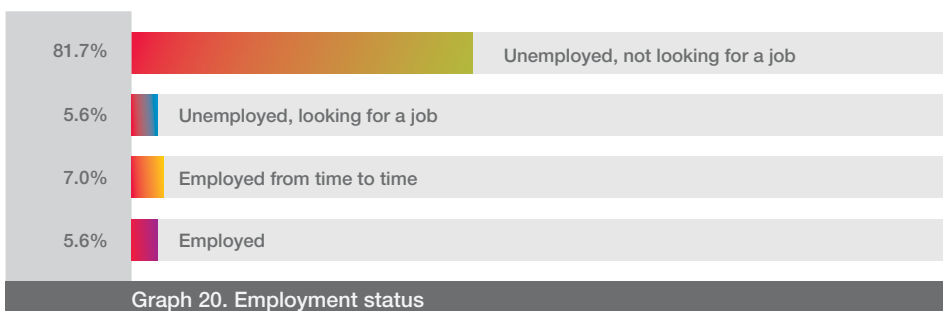


Graph 18. Percentage of respondents by gender



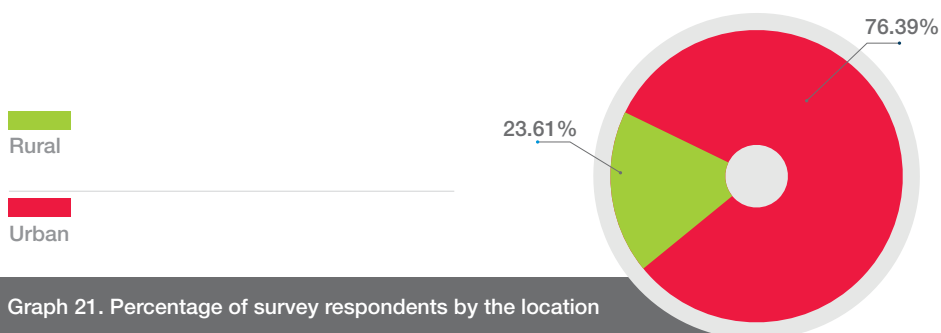
Graph 19. Age of the respondents

Regarding the employment status, 81.69% of women and men were employed, 7.04% were unemployed but looking for a job and 5.63% of the respondents were unemployed not looking for a job. (Graph 20)



Graph 20. Employment status

Graph 21 illustrates the representation of the sample in urban and rural areas which was not equally represented, due to the lack of kindergartens in the rural areas of the municipality of Prishtina. Thus, 76.39% of the respondents were living in urban areas, whereas only 23.61% in rural areas.



Annex 2. Survey

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Name and Surname _____

Telephone number
or email address _____

Gender ✓


Woman
☐


Man
☐

Age

☐ 20 to 26

☐ 27 to 32

☐ 33 to 38

☐ 39 to 44

☐ 45 to 50

☐ > 50

Your employment status:

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Occasionally employed
- ☐ Unemployed, looking for work
- ☐ Unemployed, not looking for work

The location where you live:


Rural


Urban

Children and the kindergarten // In what kindergarten do you send your child / s?

- ☐ Private
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Community based kindergarten _____
- ☐ Public-private partnership

How many children do you currently have in kindergarten??

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ More than 2 (please specify the number): _____

How old is/are the child/children you have in kindergarten??

- ☐ Younger than 1
- ☐ 1 to 2 years old
- ☐ 2 to 3 years old
- ☐ 3 to 4 years old
- ☐ 4 to 5 years old

How much do you spend per month from the general
family budget to pay for kindergarten expenses of your child??

- ☐ Less than 50 EUR
- ☐ 50 to 100 EUR
- ☐ 100 to 150 EUR
- ☐ 150 to 200 EUR
- ☐ <200, please, specify the amount: _____ €

How much is your family's total monthly income??

- ☐ Less than 500 EUR
 - ☐ 500 to 1000 EUR
 - ☐ Above 1000 EUR
-

How satisfied are you with the professional training of the teaching staff in the kindergarten?

- ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Satisfied
 - ☐ Not satisfied
 - ☐ Very unsatisfied
-

How satisfied are you with the entertainment equipment offered in the kindergarten, referring to: children's toys and recreational spaces?

- ☐ Very pleased, the kindergarten offers all the necessary equipment for my child to have fun
 - ☐ Satisfied, the kindergarten has relatively enough equipment for my child to have fun
 - ☐ Dissatisfied, the kindergarten does not have the necessary equipment and space for recreation
 - ☐ Not at all satisfied, the kindergarten does not meet the basic conditions for recreation
If your answer is 2 to 4, please specify exactly what is missing from the kindergarten where you are sending your child:
-

How satisfied are you with the food offered in the kindergarten where you send your child?

- ☐ Very pleased, the kindergarten offers healthy food
- ☐ Satisfied, the kindergarten offers a varied food
- ☐ Dissatisfied, the kindergarten offers unhealthy food
- ☐ Not at all satisfied, the kindergarten offers unhealthy and tasteless food
If your answer is 2 to 4, please specify exactly how the quality of food in the kindergarten where you send your child can be improved:

Please tell us how much it has affected your child to be more socialized from the moment he/she attended education in the respective kindergarten?

- ☐ Positive impact
 - ☐ Same as before, my child has no improvement in this regard
 - ☐ Negative impact
 - ☐ Other _____ (please specify)
-

How much sleep has been arranged for your child / s and the whole routine in general, from the moment you send it to kindergarten?

- ☐ My child has always had regular sleep
 - ☐ My baby's sleep has improved
 - ☐ My baby's sleep is completely disrupted
 - ☐ Other _____ (please specify)
-

Has your child ever been bullied inside kindergarten, including by other children or teachers??

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Clarification: The word harassment means physical abuse and mental abuse. If your answer is YES, please go to the following question number 15, otherwise please go to the 18th question.

Who bullied your child??

- ☐ Other children in the kindergarten
 - ☐ One of the teachers
 - ☐ From the director and other members of the management staff
-

How often your child has been bullied?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ 2 to 5 times
- ☐ 5 to 10 times
- ☐ More than 10 times

Where do you address your complaints and are they taken into account??

- ☐ In the case of an educator, the complaint is considered
- ☐ At the director / s, the complaint is considered
- ☐ In education, the complaint is not considered
- ☐ At the director / s, the complaint is not considered
- ☐ Other, _____ (please specify)

Do you prefer your child
to attend kindergarten?:

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Community based
- ☐ Public and private partnership

KINDERGARTEN NUMBER GROWTH AND WOMEN EMANCIPATION

If monthly kindergarten payments are significantly more affordable, do you think
this aspect would make it easier for women to enter the job market??

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

How much do you think the position of women in society would improve
significantly if all families could send their children to kindergarten??

- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I do not agree with this
- ☐ I do not know

Additional Comments

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