



# REPORT ON CHILD RIGHTS BASED ON THE MUNICIPAL MONITORING FRAMEWORK



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# Report on Child Rights based on the Municipal Monitoring Framework

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report was produced with reference to the Child Rights Monitoring Framework in Municipalities, which NGO Domovik developed in 2022/2023. It refers to municipalities Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, with some data cross cutting for North Mitrovica, which is a regional hub for the health, education and social protection services supported by Serbian government for all four municipalities. The monitoring tool contains set of indicators contextualised for the local level, covering 5 domains relevant for child rights based on UNICEF Europe Central Asia (ECA) monitoring framework. These domains include Health and nutrition, Family environment and protection, Education, Participation and civil rights, and Poverty. Each domain is consisting of several subdomains, with relevant set of indicators defined for assessment of the situation in each specific field. In total, data were collected for 85 indicators set for the respective subdomains of all 5 main domains.

The key challenge for the reporting remains access to systematized data and information in specific child rights sectors, mainly due to underdeveloped institutional practice in data and knowledge management. Therefore, this report largely relies on the observations, estimates, and interviews with stakeholders. However, despite all challenges in data collection, it provides sufficient level of accuracy of information utilised for drawing conclusions on the state of the child rights in municipalities covered by the assessment. Lessons learned and recommendations from this report can serve as a good baseline for future monitoring reports with reference to this framework.

In the domain Health and Nutrition, children have good access to basic services in primary and partially secondary health care, while tertiary health care services are mainly used out of these municipalities, in clinical centres in Serbia. Access to immunization is granted to every child, however, the awareness raising is needed with parents for HPV and MMR vaccines, due to low turnout of children in the respective vaccination cycles caused by negative attitudes towards vaccination and misinformation circulated in the public. Low percentage of breastfeeding infants and children require reinforced efforts in promotion and awareness raising with mothers on great benefits it brings for both child's and maternal health.

In the domain Family environment and protection, violence against women and children remains one of the most serious concerns in all municipalities as well as in other municipalities in Kosovo. Inexistence of protection and reintegration services and no effective prevention programs and actions result with underreporting of cases, leaving women and children victims of domestic violence without access to justice, and in many cases contributing to their remain in the vicious circle of violence and discrimination. Increase of alternative care services for children without parental care in the community should lead towards changing the practice of placement of children in foster care with families in Serbia, what decrease chances for potential reunion with their biological families. In the area of justice for children there is no juvenile delinquency prevention programs, or aftercare services for juvenile released from detention. Lack of reintegration services for children in conflict with law is associated with insufficient cooperation between correctional

service, probation service and local centres for social welfare, and underdeveloped resources for application of alternative sanctions and diversionary measures on local level. Child friendly interview rooms and premises in the courts and centers for social welfare need to be reactivated and established in places where missing. There are no affirmative actions on the protection of children from forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and online sexual abuse.

In the Education domain, children's access to early childhood education programs and facilities remains the challenge in rural areas of all three municipalities, while the quality of education provided at primary and secondary level, must be improved through further advancing teaching methodologies and capacity building of teachers. The scores of the most recent PISA tests should be taken seriously in consideration and result with concrete actions for addressing the challenges and shortcomings that lead towards unsatisfactory learning outcomes of schoolchildren. The improved access to and diversification of opportunities for nonformal education will have catalytic effect in these efforts.

In the domain of child participation and civil rights, efforts should be made for voice of children to be better heard in local policy planning and implementation, in particular for policies and programs directly concerning children and their wellbeing. Their participation in decision making bodies in education must move from the formal representation to active membership and impact on decision making processes and their outcomes. Child friendly complaint procedures and child targeted feedback mechanisms must be established with all child services providers. There must be no restrictions in the provision of the right to be heard on grounds of age, disability, or any other vulnerability. Their participation must be secured in all child protection, child care and adoption procedures, health issues, family proceedings and family decision-making.

In the Poverty domain, the report reaffirms the critical role of the social protection services and highlights the need for their more pro-active approach in outreach to the most vulnerable families with children. In socio-economically underdeveloped municipalities with limited employment opportunities, social assistance scheme is the main income generation source for these families. This assistance must reach all families and children in need and must be increased to better respond to latest economic crises which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable population. The food support program facilitated by Red Cross is acknowledged as a good practice, however the high percentages of families and children living in relative and absolute poverty raises concerns for malnutrition and deteriorating other conditions for psychophysical development of children.

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## 2. Background information

Every human rights report which is based on qualitative and quantitative indicators for assessment of accountability of duty bearers in respect, protection, and fulfilment of child rights, is largely dependent on access to robust data on their performance and results. In the context of municipalities which are covered in this report, beyond other subjective factors, data collection process was heavily affected with the most recent political and security situation in northern part of Kosovo. The series of interrelated developments almost paralysed institutional functioning in this area and created serious obstacles for data collection, in addition to already inexistent institutional culture in this field. A temporary institutional vacuum was created in all four municipalities which lasted until the local elections were organized in April 2023. Despite being boycotted by vast majority of local communities in Zvecan, Zubin Potok, Leposavic and North Mitrovica, the newly elected municipal authorities took over the duties, and declared availability for service provision to all residents. However, they are not fully staffed and equipped with all necessary technical and human resources for service provision.



### 3. Methodology

The methodology for development of this monitoring report is described in detail in the Domovik's publication Child Rights Monitoring Framework in Municipalities. It is based on data collection on structural, process and outcome indicators contextualised for local level with reference to international standards and practice, contained in the Human Rights Indicators published by OHCHR.

The issues with data collection are already described in the policy brief "Advancing evidence based local policies for children"<sup>1</sup> prepared by Domovik in 2020, which found that in the field of health care, there are no systematized and regularly updated data available for implementation of policies for the protection and improvement of child's health. It is relevant for data on neonatal mortality rate, infant and under 5 mortality rate, children covered with vaccination, utilisation of primary health care and hospitalization of children during the year (disaggregated by socio-economic status and area of residence). For this report, some data were obtained through bilateral communication with staff of the family medicine center. The above-mentioned policy brief also identified lack of systematized data in all municipalities on different aspects of social protection, underlining inexistence of data on the number of children with disabilities using social protection services in the community or number of children with disabilities using support services at home, placed with relatives, foster care institution or foster family. The same applies for inexistence of disaggregated data on the number of abused and neglected children registered in centres for social work.

One of the enablers for future data collection in the category Health and nutrition, is the new 3-year action plans developed by family medicine centres in Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić (2022-2024), which foresee investments in development of electronic databases for mother and child health, with training of staff on its usage and maintaining data and records. In this regard, specific areas of intervention include immunization and community nursing. This should support data collection process of the Team for the Rights of the Child, expected to be established in target municipalities. Despite some progress observed in the framework of policy planning on data collection, its practical implementation is still not integrated as working method in practice of key institutional stakeholders.

In such circumstances, data collection for this assessment was organized combining qualitative and quantitative methods including surveys and structured interviews, semi-structured and unstructured interviews with available key stakeholders and beneficiaries, focus groups meetings with sectoral professionals, observations, and desk analyses. The focus group meetings served for cross checking and validation of data obtained through other data collection methods.

The project team identified all relevant sources for data collection and developed sector-specific questionnaires, however, it was not possible to obtain the most accurate data due to their unavailability or inability of data sources to provide precise information, mainly due to non-systematized data collection and storage with relevant institutions. In this situation,

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<sup>1</sup> [https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Policy-Paper\\_-Unapredjenje-lokalnih-politika-za-decu\\_2020\\_compressed.pdf](https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Policy-Paper_-Unapredjenje-lokalnih-politika-za-decu_2020_compressed.pdf)

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project team made maximal efforts to provide the most accurate estimates. References to MICS data from 2020 serve as a sort of baseline to estimate state of the child rights on local level, even though MICS survey obtained data using the sampling methods and size for the national level. The comparison of MICS data was made with data available from two Data Collection Reports prepared by Domovik in 2021<sup>2</sup> and 2022<sup>3</sup>, and datasets available with Kosovo Agency for Statistics, and sectoral assessments made by UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, and other international organizations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Polozaj-dece-na-teritoriji-3-opstine-severnog-dela-Kosova.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Data-collection-report\\_2022.pdf](https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Data-collection-report_2022.pdf)

## 4. Monitoring findings

In this chapter, the analyses were made for all 5 domains of child rights and their respective subdomains, based on available data on indicators set and collected through the sources specified in the tool developed by Domovik. For this first report, findings will be mostly based on qualitative aspects assessed based on observations, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, given that access to statistical information was extremely limited. However, despite all disadvantages in data collection, the assessment will provide very relevant insights into the state of the child health, education, social protection and participation, and hopefully serve as a valuable reference to all child rights stakeholders in their future endeavours to improve quality of life of children and their parents.

### 4.1 Health and Nutrition

Under the domain Health and nutrition, 5 subdomains were defined including Nutrition, Immunization, Maternal, newborn and reproductive health, Health system, and Adolescents physical, mental and reproductive health. The complex datasets under each subdomain are yet to be established and maintained by the institutional stakeholders to support future evidence-based evaluations in the health sector.

#### 4.1.1 Nutrition

Adequate nutrition is an important aspect of the child development, whereas uptake of sufficient amounts of key nutrients impacts child growth and psychophysical development. In line with WHO standards, assessment was made on the indicator *percentage of underweight children 0-5 years old (taking in consideration deviation from median weight of children of respective age)*. Given that data on children weight are not systematically collected and stored in any of target municipalities, the reference is made to MICS data for Kosovo obtained in 2020. This MICS survey found that 5% of children 0-5 are assessed as stunting, 2% wasting, 2% assessed underweight, and 2% overweight. Based on the information from the Health Center in North Mitrovica, the estimation is that percents of stunting, wasting, underweight and overweight children in municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic in the age 0-5 correspond with Kosovo wide data obtained through MICS.

The breastfeeding is very important nutrition practice, and WHO and UNICEF recommend *early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, and introduction of nutritionally-adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months together with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond*. Globally, about 44% of infants 0–6 months old are exclusively breastfed. In Kosovo, based on MICS data from 2020, only 29% of infants 0-6 months receive exclusive breastfeeding, and 1 in 3 children of age 6-23 months receive minimum acceptable diet. For the reference, in 2019, 24% of children aged 0-5 months were exclusively breastfed in Serbia. Unfortunately, such statistics is not available for individual municipalities in Kosovo, but the estimation is that percents in municipalities Zubin Potok, Zvecan and Leposavic corresponds to the Kosovo wide and Serbia findings. It is estimated that less than 30% of infants' mothers

applies exclusive breastfeeding in municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic.

In 2023, no affirmative actions for promoting breastfeeding were undertaken by any health care facility or health care directorate in target municipalities. Nevertheless, such actions are strongly recommended, and health care institutions are encouraged to engage in cooperation with civil society organizations and UNICEF in awareness raising activities with mothers of newborn babies and infants on the long-term benefits of the breastfeeding for mother and child's health.

In respect of key process indicators, the food support program for the most vulnerable families with children is facilitated through cooperation between the local Red Cross branches and Centers for Social Welfare. The food packages are distributed on monthly basis to 680 families in North Mitrovica, 500 families in Zvecan, 550 families in Leposavic and 376 families in Zubin Potok. The exact number of children in these families was not possible to obtain, but the estimation is that at least 1,000 children benefit for this assistance.

#### 4.1.2 Immunization

Immunization saves millions of lives every year, while vaccines currently in use prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases. Immunization prevents millions of deaths every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza and measles. Participation of all children in regular immunization cycles is the key to protect them against preventable diseases and improve overall health status and life expectancy of children. In this respect, it's very important to reach out to all children of relevant age and continuously raise awareness of parents on importance of regular immunization cycles. The cooperation between health care institutions and schools is very important in awareness raising and implementation of immunization cycles.

The vaccination calendar applied by the health institutions is regulated by the Institute for Public Health<sup>4</sup>, and includes all vaccines at designated age of children including BCG (against tuberculosis), vaccine against hepatitis B, DTP vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), polio vaccine, Hib vaccine and MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, and rubella).

In Kosovo, Based on MICS data, 73% of children 24-35 months old are fully immunized, marking decrease compared with 79% in 2014. Based on the information from the relevant medical practitioners, the immunization rate of infants and children in municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic is higher than average in Kosovo, almost 100% for most vaccines, with only exception for MMR vaccine, which some parents tend to avoid in the period when children are 1 year old, despite being mandatory pre-condition for enrolment in kindergarten. The most recent situation with extremely low turnout for vaccination against human papilloma virus (HPV) raises serious concerns and calls for action

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.zjz.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Kalendar-vakcinacije-2023.docx>

to fight against stereotypes and misinformation against HPV vaccination, having in mind its life saving effect by providing 100% protection for women against cervical cancer.

On this aspect, it is worth noting that UNICEF carried out USAID supported campaign on immunization which included billboard posts and information sessions, while UNICEF also held vaccination week and HALLO campaign focussing on awareness raising on the importance of HPV and MMR vaccines. This was particularly important following the extremely low vaccination rate and turnout of children to receive HPV vaccine, which was available with Health Center in North Mitrovica. The anti-vaccine attitudes with parents of children in the age of vaccination has grown after the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to very low number of children vaccinated against HPV and high rate of avoidance of MMR after infants get one year old.

#### 4.1.3 Maternal, newborn and child health

There is interrelation between the breastfeeding and maternal health based on WHO/UNICEF experience in this area. It found that longer durations of breastfeeding also contribute to the health and well-being of mothers by reducing the risk of ovarian and breast cancer and helps space pregnancies. Exclusive breastfeeding of babies under 6 months has a hormonal effect on mothers which often induces a lack of menstruation. This is a natural (though not fail-safe) method of birth control known as the Lactation Amenorrhoea Method.

For the reference, based on MICS data for Kosovo in 2020, neonatal mortality rate was 11 deaths per 1,000 live births, infant mortality rate was 15 deaths per 1,000 live births, and children under 5-mortality rate was 16 deaths per 1000 live births. 100% of births were delivered by skilled health standards.

Based on data from paediatric and gynaecological units of the Health Center in Mitrovica, the under 5 mortality rate, maternal mortality rate (number of mothers died from pregnancy related issues per 100 live births) and neonatal mortality rate (number of newborn deaths per 100 births) were 0 in target municipalities in 2023.

In total, 600 children were hospitalised in 2023 mainly for respiratory and digestive diseases, and 1 child was diagnosed with rare diseases, which require specialised treatment.

#### 4.1.4 Health system

For the assessment of the health system, the tool set contextualised structural indicators on the number of primary health facilities per 10,000 population, number of secondary health care facilities per 10,000 population, and number of tertiary health care facilities per 100,000 population.

Based on estimation, municipalities Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, have approximately between 14,000 and 17,000 inhabitants each, while population in North Mitrovica goes beyond 25,000. In all four municipalities negative migrations trends are noticed, which are

intensified in last couple of years. In the most recent years individuals and entire families increasingly change place of residence moving towards larger urban centers in Serbia. Therefore, the figures on population estimates should be taken with reserve. These estimated demographic data are given only to support assessment on the number of health facilities per 10,000 population in specific municipalities below, and should not be considered as official data.

In Zvecan, there is family Medicine Center located in the urban part of municipality, and 6 ambulances in surrounding villages. **The number of primary health care facilities per 10,000 population is 4.66**, however it needs to be taken with reserve give that some ambulances have no permanent staff but only visiting doctors and nurses, and the range of services provided is limited compared with family medicine center. There are no secondary and tertiary health care facilities in the territory of the municipality as well as in municipalities Zubin Potok and Leposavic. Secondary health care services are utilised in the Health Center in North Mitrovica which recently got the status of clinical centre, considered as tertiary health care provider, but still without sufficient technical and human capacities/expertise to effectively respond to all requirements of tertiary health care.

In Zubin Potok there is family medicine center and 8 ambulances in surrounding villages, out of them one in Albanian village Cabra. The number of primary health care facilities per 10,000 population is 6.43. In Leposavic, there is 1 family medicine center, and 9 village ambulances (out of them one in the Albanian majority village Bistrica). Based on this data, **number of primary health care facilities per 10,000 population is 5.88**. In North Mitrovica, there is one family medicine center, and one village ambulance in nearby Suvi Do village operating under the Serbian Ministry of Health, while Kosovo Albanians of the mixed community neighbourhood of Mikronaselje have access to the ambulance in this neighbourhood, which operates under the South Mitrovica hospital. Based on the information provided, **number of primary health care facilities per 10,000 population in North Mitrovica is 1.2**. The same as in Zvecan, consideration of village ambulances in Zubin Potok and Leposavic should be taken with reserve regarding the range of services provided.

Data on current number of staff in North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic was not available. Consequently, further breakdown of data based on number of physicians, pharmacists, dentists, and nurses per 1,000 population at the primary level as well as paediatricians, gynaecologists, neonatologists, and nurses at the secondary level could not be made.

Overall, the access to primary health care services is assessed as satisfactory, however, the good access to secondary and tertiary services is rather questionable having in mind that patients need to travel between 30 and 70 km to North Mitrovica, and to Serbia for most of tertiary health care services. Health facilities are not pro-active in prevention and health education activities in the community. Most of affirmative actions are supported by international organizations and NGOs.

#### 4.1.5 Adolescents physical, mental and reproductive health

Based on observations and information from health care facilities, target adolescent population is covered with essential mental, physical, and reproductive health services. These services are critically important in the very sensitive stage of child psychophysical and emotional development.

There is no health counselling facility purposed specifically for adolescents and young people in the critical age of development in any of four assessed municipalities. They receive information mainly from the online resources, friends, parents, or relatives. There are school psychologists and few private psychologists who provide counselling services, but there is no pro-active approach from relevant units of the health care institutions.

Systematic health care examinations are not conducted on regular basis in upper grade of primary and secondary education levels. The institutionalisation of reproductive health counselling services, education on sexually transmitted diseases and access to safe abortion services for girls in adolescent age remains challenge in all four municipalities.

There is no pro-active approach of the health care stakeholders in awareness raising with adolescents on different aspects of health protection important for this sensitive age especially on substance abuse, HIV, safe sex/family planning, reproductive health, breast cancer, cervical cancer, and others.

There is no exact data on adolescents birth rate, but there are some cases based on observations and information from doctors. In terms of diagnostics, they have access to CT scan, mammograph, ultrasound equipment, and other services.

The positive development of the institutional pro-active approach to health prevention is the public call for all women for preventive screening/check-ups on the breast cancer. This practice was observed at least twice in 2023 in the premisses of Health Center in North Mitrovica. The information on turnout of adolescent girls for screening is not available.

### 4.2 Family Environment and Protection

The domain Family Environment and Protection is comprised of five (5) subdomains including Violence against women and Children, Children Without Parental Care, Justice for Children, Child marriage and other harmful practices and Child Exploitation. Availability and accuracy of data for all subdomains is weak point of the entire child protection system. Children from target municipalities receive some services in Serbia, more specifically placement with foster families or foster care institutions.

#### 4.2.1 Violence against children and women

One structural indicator in this area measures commitment of institutional stakeholders to support victims of violence against women and children, which is *number of shelters per 50,000 population*. At the time of drafting this report, the only shelter for this purpose

located in Zubin Potok serving all four municipalities, has problem in functioning due to well-known political developments in 2022 and 2023. In such situation, women and children victims of domestic violence have no access to shelter and other protection services provided in this facility such as psychosocial counselling, legal aid, food and clothes supply, etc.

The information on percentage of cases effectively processed by the criminal justice system (out of all cases reported) was not possible to obtain from the prosecution, courts, and police, but based on observations, the flow of such cases in the criminal justice system is slow. Access to justice for victims, and criminal prosecution and conviction of perpetrators remains poor in this region as well as in other parts of Kosovo. Ineffectiveness in processing of such cases leads towards lack of trust in the system and further restraint of victims to report cases to police. The estimation is that less than 50 cases is reported to police and very small number of protection orders issued by the courts.

In 2023, no such cases of violence against women were reported with fatal consequences. However, the experience from the past does not exclude such an outcome of the violent behavior of perpetrators of domestic violence in the future, and preventive actions are of utmost importance. No systematized data exist with health care institution on the number of injured women and children in cases of violence against them, given that victims often do not report injuries and ask help in hospitals. Extremely low number of women and children survivors of violence received support services (psychosocial counselling, legal aid, economic empowerment).

Based on MICS data, in Kosovo, 1 in 7 caretakers of children aged 1 - 14 years reported that physical punishment is necessary to bring up, raise, or educate a child properly. While 24 percent of children age 1 - 14 years are disciplined with only non-violent methods, a large proportion of children (72 percent) are reported to be violently disciplined (psychological aggression and/or physical punishment). For the reference, in Serbia, 45% of children at age 1 to 14 years experiences violent disciplining at home.

No statistical data is available specifically for target municipalities, but the estimate is that they correspond with Kosovo wide statistics.

#### 4.2.2 Children without parental care

Children without parental care are specifically vulnerable and extremely sensitive to become victims of exploitation and abuse. The existing foster care services in target municipalities support placement of children without parental care in family based care (kinship), while some children in need are placed with foster families and residential care in Serbia. In total, 18 children without parental care are in placed the foster care, out of them 9 with family based care (with relatives) in target municipalities, and these families are registered with and supported by centers for social welfare. Based on the Law on Child Protection in Kosovo, each municipality should have at least three (3) foster families for children without parental



care, who are evaluated, trained, and approved according to the standards set forth by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

Based on the practice so far, apart from kinship, children without parental care from municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic were sent for placement with foster families or foster care institutions in Serbia. Affirmative action known so far was made by UNICEF which carried out needs assessment on foster care families for municipality Zubin Potok, however there is no information on follow up action initiated by local duty bearers. It is also noteworthy that series of training were organized for foster care families and relevant professionals of centers for social welfare on providing urgent care for children without parental care and alternative care for children with disabilities. For the reference, in 2023 center for social welfare in Gracanica municipality requested support for establishment of foster care services (kinship or with other family) given that there 18 children without parental in need for alternative care.

#### 4.2.3 Justice for Children

Juvenile justice is an important aspect of child protection and requires quality and effective services in place for children in contact with law in different situations. These services are not fully introduced and accessible for children in contact with law in target municipalities of this report. In Kosovo, legal and institutional frameworks for juvenile justice are mainly in place, while pre-trial detention of juveniles is used only as a last resort. The improvement is needed for access to specialized services for children under criminal responsibility including counselling, delinquency prevention programs, education, vocational and life skills programs, and rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders. Other challenges include the limited capacity and lack of coordination between correctional and probation services and the centers for social work, which must be advanced for more effective social reintegration and prevention of recidivism.

The Basic Court in Mitrovica which covers municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, has department for juveniles, and process cases involving juveniles between 14 and 18 years old based on the Kosovo Juvenile Justice Code, with references to the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Law on Execution of Penal Sanctions.

Based on available statistics of Kosovo Statistical Agency (KAS) and desk research of the caselaw of the Basic Court in Mitrovica, academic papers and other sources, latest statistical update is found for 2019, which indicates that 69 juveniles were convicted in Kosovo. Juveniles were mostly convicted for the criminal offences involving light bodily injury and aggravated theft. Over 50% of minor bodily injury offenses are committed near primary and secondary schools, while the offense of aggravated theft is mostly committed due to poor economic conditions and for the purchase of narcotics. The similar statistical breakdown and explanation of push factors is estimated for target municipalities, with very few cases known that juveniles from North Mitrovica, Leposavic, Zubin Potok and Zvecan are sent in the Lipjan juvenile correctional center. Detention Center in Mitrovica does not have any facility for minors. Information on percentage of sentenced children receiving a custodial sentence, and

children diverted or sentenced who enter a pre-sentence diversion scheme are not available for target municipalities, but the estimation is that there is no or extremely low number of such cases. On the other side, no children released from detention receive aftercare, due to poor cooperation between probation service and centers for social welfare.

No local affirmative actions for the prevention of child involvement in crime were undertaken by any rule of law, social protection or educational institution. In terms of support of international organizations, UNICEF assist the Kosovo institutions on the implementation of juvenile justice programmes in the field of prevention of juvenile delinquency, alternatives to detention, improved vocational and life skills training and the reintegration of youth in conflict with the law into their communities.

#### 4.2.4 Child marriage and other harmful practices

Early marriages practices are still applied in some communities, and despite being publicly perceived as tradition, it is considered as a grievous child rights violation. It disproportionately affects girls and boys, whereas in most cases girls are underaged for marriage, and often involves violence against women and girls. Several international human rights instruments protect against child marriage including the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. These international instruments cover the abolishment of harmful customs and traditions, violence against the girl child, marriage consent, marriageable age, registration of marriage, and the freedom to choose a spouse. Forced marriage is also forbidden and punishable by the Kosovo Criminal Code.

In Kosovo nowadays child marriage is relatively rare, but it continues to be practice in some communities and/or ethnic groups. The most vulnerable notably, but not exclusively, are Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian children, but it happens also with other communities at smaller scale. No available data on the number of underage children married could be found for municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, but the assumption is that almost no or very few cases are observed on annual basis. Also, due to traditional social norms families tend not to declare publicly such cases.

#### 4.2.5 Child exploitation

Child exploitation is manifested in different forms, starting from unlawful/forced labor, child trafficking for sexual exploitation and servitude, child begging, and others. The UNICEF MICS survey found that about 5.3 percent of children in Kosovo and 7 percent of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are involved in child labor. They are involved in farming, forestry, mining, construction, street work including vending small items, manual transport of goods, and begging, garbage scavenging at dumpsites, forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, and used in illicit activities. The latter two are sometimes results of human trafficking.

In terms of work intensity, children in child labor spend an average of 10.3 hours working per week in Kosovo. The situation is worse for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children who work 18.6 hours per week. Time-intensity of child labor and involvement in household chores becomes worse as children get older, while girls are significantly more likely to be engaged in household chores than boys, and for longer hours. Some children are involved in hazardous work that risks their health, safety and intellectual development, more precisely 2.7 per cent of children is exposed to workplace hazardous conditions overall in Kosovo.

Based on ILO/UNICEF data on Child activity status for the municipalities in Mitrovica region (disaggregated by sex, region, and residence, for 5-14 age group), there are 0.2% of children only working, 82.4% of children only schooling, 12.4% of children working and schooling, 3.3% not involved in either activity, 12.6% of total number of children working, 96.6% of total number of children in school, and 3.4% out of school. In the 15-17 age group, 0.9% of children are only working, 78.6% of children are only schooling, 16.8% of children are working and schooling, 3.7% of children are neither working nor schooling, with 17.7 % of total number of children working, 95.4% of total number of children in school, and 4.6% of total number of children out of school.

Based on observations and comparison of results between Kosovo wide and Mitrovica region, the conclusion is drawn that these practices are applied at relatively smaller scales in target municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Leposavic and Zubin Potok, with percentage of children involved in child labor or forced labor activities slightly lower than on the Kosovo level. However, such statistics is not taken by the relevant institutions in the field of social protection, and there is a need to advocate with them for introducing relevant data collection methods on this important aspect.

With rapid technological development in last decades, online child sexual exploitation is constantly growing. Mobile connectivity, expansion of internet coverage and the development of pay-as-you-go streaming solutions, which provide a high degree of anonymity to the viewer, are furthering the trend in the commercial live-streaming of child sexual abuse. Therefore, one of the measures that must be undertaken is awareness raising of children and parents on critical media literacy and dangers of sexual exploitation existing on the internet.

No data is available on the child victims of trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation for the target municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic. Based on available information, no such cases were reported to police or prosecution in 2023.

### 4.3 Education

Access to quality education is the most decisive for overall child psychological and physical development, equally important at all levels including early childhood education, preparatory pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. All target municipalities provide education services starting from nurseries, over kindergartens, and primary schools up to secondary schools and higher education, applying the curricula developed by Serbian

Ministry of Education, with exception of schools in Albanian majority villages and settlements in all four municipalities which apply curricula of the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In the domain of Education, the assessment was made for four subdomains including Education system, Education access and participation, Learning and quality skills, and Leisure and culture.

#### 4.3.1 Education System

All schools in North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Leposavic and Zubin Potok satisfy basic standards in terms of infrastructure, equipment, number of qualified teachers and support staff, and adherence to programmatic requirements of line ministries. The access to and quality of education is disproportionate for children in rural areas of target municipalities in comparison to urban settlements.

Based on Domovik's Data Collection Report, in 2022, the total number of children attending primary education in Leposavic was 1215, while total number of children enrolled in secondary schools was 367. Number of children with disabilities with access to pre-school education was 13 (2.8% of all children enrolled). The number of children with disabilities included in primary education programs was 12, while 8 children with disabilities were enrolled in secondary education (2.1% of all enrolled children). In Leposavic, number of teachers<sup>5</sup> per 100 pupils in the primary education is 13.27, while in secondary education there are 23.27 teachers per 100 students.

In Zubin Potok, based on Data Collection Report published by Domovik for 2021 which contain data on number of children in different education levels including 95 children in nursery (53 boys, 42 girls), 149 in kindergarten (85 boys, 64 girls), 67 children in preparatory pre-school program (30 boys and 37 girls), 316 children in lower grades of primary school (the gender breakdown was known for 2 out of 3 schools -133 boys and 133 girls), 342 children in upper grades of primary school (166 boys and 176 girls), and 217 children in secondary school (119 boys and 98 girls). There are 16.91 teachers per 100 children in primary and secondary schools in Zubin Potok municipality.

Based on Domovik Data Collection Report in 2022, in Zvecan municipality 185 children were enrolled in early childhood pre-school education (83 girls and 102 boys), while number of children in preparatory pre-school program was 80 (44 girls and 36 boys). Number of children enrolled in primary education was 621 (269 boys and 352 girls). Number of children attending secondary school was 250, while 3 children with disabilities had access to primary education (2 boys and 1 girl), and 1 in secondary education. In Zvecan municipality, there are 13.31 teachers per 100 children attending primary schools, and 19.46 teachers per 100 students of secondary school.

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<sup>5</sup> Data on number of teachers provided in OSCE municipal profiles for municipalities Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, the variation could be up to 10%, given that current numbers are not available

### 4.3.2 Education Access and Participation

Universal access to and completion of primary and secondary education should be subsidized with the same approach to early and pre-school education programs. It is estimated that up to 50% of children in target municipalities don't have access to early education programs due to lack of space in kindergartens in urban areas, and inexistence of kindergartens in rural areas. For the reference, based on the MICS 2020 data for Kosovo, only 15% of children age 35-69 months are attending any early childhood programmes (8% of children living in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities). Net attendance ratio in primary education is 96%, lower secondary 94%, and upper secondary school 87%, while for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children the ratio is 84% for primary school, 64% for lower secondary and 31% for upper secondary school. 3,645 students with disabilities enrolled in regular school based on data of Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2018/19). Only 10% of children with disabilities benefit from education and social services based on data of NGO Coalition for Child Protection (KOMF). Based on MICS Kosovo 2020, 8% of children reported functional difficulty in at least one domain.

Based on Domovik's publication on early childhood education<sup>6</sup> there is considerable disparity and inequalities in access to early childhood education services between children residing in urban and rural areas in target municipalities of this assessment including North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić. Children in communities living in remote villages have no access to early childhood education programs, and consequently do not have equal start with children living in urban settlements. Children in remote villages need to travel to primary and secondary schools which are located in larger villages or urban parts of municipalities. School attendance rates are high for both primary and secondary level (95% and higher). Completion rates for primary and secondary education are also high (100% primary schools, 98% secondary schools).

### 4.3.3 Learning and Quality Skills

This subdomain is fully referent for the outcomes of the education process, reflecting quality of teaching and effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching methods applied at different education levels. The results of the most recent OECD PISA tests, carried out in 2022 and published in December 2023, show very low ranking of Kosovo children, which are third from the bottom, out of 87 participating countries. On the other side, children in Serbia were ranked at 40<sup>th</sup> place for reading skills, and 42<sup>nd</sup> place in mathematics. It's not known for the score of the children in target municipalities and whether they were involved in the sample of children tested either for Kosovo or Serbia.

The MICS 2020 showed that 41% of children in Kosovo have foundational level of literacy skills and 42% of numeracy skills, while these proportions among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are 18% and 13% respectively. High unemployment among higher education graduates was recorded in the EU research in 2018, with 26.7% in the third

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<sup>6</sup> <https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Early-childhood-education-equality-starts-at-the-community-level.pdf>

quarter of 2017 unemployed, what could be linked with insufficient quality of education in all levels.

In municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić, there is no systematised data that could be utilised for assessment of proportion of children at age of 24-59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being. The exact number of children with disabilities which are out of school is not known, while effective introduction of inclusive education remains challenge for all schools.

#### 4.3.4 Leisure and Culture

In most schools and pre-school facilities children have access to extracurricular activities including excursions, folklore, music and theatre sections, sport competitions, workshops, and research activities, however most of interviewed teachers and educators pointed out the need for additional and more contemporary activities and additional physical space to accommodate workshops and equipment. There are local sport associations in all four municipalities including football, basketball, volleyball and handball clubs offering opportunities for boys and girls, and most of them have training for different age groups.

Primary and secondary music school operate in North Mitrovica as well as one rock school, while amateur folklore groups exist in all four municipalities. All target municipalities have cultural centers which organize theatre plays, visual arts exhibitions and cinema. There is also local museum in North Mitrovica and Faculty of Arts with sections for visual arts, drama and music. One private gallery in North Mitrovica runs sections for different age groups of children in painting, sculpture and installations. Several music festivals in different genres are organized in target municipalities including jazz&blues festival in Zvečan/North Mitrovica, rock festivals in North Mitrovica and Leposavić, folk music festival in Lesak (Leposavić municipality), eco-art festival in North Mitrovica and others. However, there is significant disparity in access to cultural programs for children residing in rural areas and children living in urban centers.

Exact percentage of children attending some cultural programme/training, extracurricular activities and sport programs is not available, but the overall assessment is that all children have access to leisure and cultural activities, while their quality corresponds with children needs, and resources and capacities of target municipalities.

#### 4.4 Participation and Civil Rights

In line with CRC, children's civil rights and freedoms include the right to an identity, respect for views of the child, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and freedom of association and peaceful assembly. In this respect, the views of children should be taken in consideration both in the family and society, and in all local policy planning initiatives that concerns children. In this domain, the monitoring framework includes four subdomains including Birth registration and identity, Child participation, Civil and political rights, and Information, internet, and protection of privacy.

#### 4.4.1 Birth Registration and Identity

Birth registration is the first recognition of children before the law, which protects their rights, and ensures that any violation of these rights is prohibited. The latest MICS survey in Kosovo has shown that 98% of children under age 5 in Kosovo are registered, the same percentage of girls and boys, while the variation exists with regard to maternal education level and income quintile.

Based on information from the hospital and all four municipalities, all newborn children are registered in the civil registry, which is run by the Serbian system. The problem remains for the Kosovo civil registry given that health institutions operate within the Serbian system, and do not have direct cooperation with Kosovo civil registry. This is practical issue which require more efforts from all sides if children of these parents need to have access to all rights and entitlements in Kosovo social protection system. The information on how many children are not registered in Kosovo civil registry system could be obtained with comparative review of civil registry books in two systems, what is not possible in current situation. There are no affirmative actions on promoting birth registration implemented by authorities in neither system.

#### 4.4.2 Child participation

There are no effective child-targeted feedback mechanisms on services provided with local authority institutions. The Team for the Right of the Child which is foreseen to be such a mechanism according to the Law on Child Protection is yet to be established in each municipality. No educational, social care and protection, and health institutions have child-friendly and easily accessible complaints procedures mandated by law. Some establishments that could serve as such mechanism were existing before the most recent political developments with municipal human rights units, however no pro-active approach was applied in initiating child-friendly feedback mechanisms.

All primary and secondary schools have established school parliaments and parents' councils, but children are not represented in the school boards. The real impact of children in decision making is not measurable, but the observations indicate that mechanisms are rather formally in place than influential to the level to advance child rights situation. No schoolchildren are participating in the work of the school managerial bodies and parents' councils. There are no children assemblies in any of target municipalities, and their establishment and functionalisation could be an important contribution towards increased child participation in decision making processes.

Most justice institutions are applying child friendly approach with children in contact with law in criminal proceedings and family law proceedings. However, it is not known to which extent children participate in legal procedures on family related issues and adoption.

#### 4.4.3 Civil and Political Freedoms

Commitment to children's right to participate in decisions affecting them is enshrined in the Child Rights Convention (CRC), and legislation in Kosovo. Based on Article 12 of the CRC, children's views should be taken in consideration in accordance with their age and capacity,

and in the best interest of the child. However, local authorities do not engage in outreach to children when adopting policy documents, and don't organize any consultations with children in the framework of policy development and decision making. This approach was largely promoted in municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok, and Leposavic by international organizations UNICEF and Save the Children, in cooperation with local NGOs, however it is yet to be adopted in integrated in local institutional culture.

In this respect, it is important to note that child civic participation is substantively supported by international organisations and civil society. Their activities with youth and adolescents promote education for active citizenship together with acquiring life skills. The approach always matches the needs of young people with the educational process, while activities have impact on participants' personal development and wider communities, by teaching beneficiaries on how their activities can make change in local context. The UPSHIFT, Podium: Advocacy for Change, PONDER - Critical Media Literacy Programme and Generation Unlimited are the most recently implemented programs with children in primary and secondary schools as non-formal education<sup>7</sup> concepts.

Regarding the freedom of assembly, children and adolescents in all four target municipalities have the opportunities for volunteering and other activities with local NGOs Domovik, Santa Marija and others. Children have opportunities to exercise the right to freedom of expression through arts and using social networks, online and offline tools and mediums.

#### 4.4.4 Information, Internet and Protection of Privacy

Kosovo has one of the highest Internet coverage in Europe, with more than 90% of households with access to high-speed broadband internet. In municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, internet is provided through mobile telephony operators, cable TV operators and wireless internet operators. The quality of signal varies in urban and rural areas and could be weak or have interferences in the mountain areas due to terrain configuration. This created inequalities in access to education for children in rural areas for the online classes applied during the pandemic. Children of school age and adolescents mainly use internet through smart phones.

Cable TV operators provide access to TV programs in all four municipalities, but predominantly in urban areas, neighbourhoods and larger villages, while in remote villages inhabitants use digital receivers or receive terrestrial signals with home antennas/setup boxes. There are many programs in Serbian and Albanian languages available, including with educational and child and adolescents entertainment content.

Regarding the protection of privacy, there is no institutionalised training for protection of privacy in online domain, and critical media literacy for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents are exposed to risk of violation of the right to privacy and may easily become

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<sup>7</sup> [https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Policy-paper\\_2022.pdf](https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Policy-paper_2022.pdf)



victims of abuse. At least one case of revenge pornography involving children was registered by police, in which the perpetrator was sent in correctional institution.

## 4.5 Poverty

In the domain of Poverty, the monitoring framework focus on three subdomains including Social protection system, Child poverty and material deprivation, and Water and sanitation. The access to data for the first two subdomains was limited due to unavailability of all data sources with centres for social welfare and municipal departments dealing with social protection. Unlike health and education institutions which operate only under the auspices of Serbian line ministries, centers for social welfare operate in both Kosovo and Serbian social protection system, and there is no clear distinction between the services provided by each and their respective beneficiaries.

### 4.5.1 Social Protection System

Social protection systems help individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable, to overcome crises and support health and education of their children. Based on data from World Bank report in 2019, more than 26,000 households were receiving social assistance in 2017, and the assumption is that this number has increased following the economic crises caused with COVID-19 and inflation boosted with rise of energy prices.

Regarding the target municipalities for this assessment, based on data from Kosovo Agency for Statistics (KAS)<sup>8</sup>, 217 families (523 individuals) in Leposavic were recipients of the social assistance in December 2018, in Zvecan 301 families with 699 individuals, and Zubin Potok 434 families with 983 individuals. The exact number of children in these families is not available with KAS datasets. Regarding the social assistance for children with disabilities, in December 2018, there were 16 beneficiaries in Leposavic, 13 in Zubin Potok and 11 in Zvecan.

The above indicated data largely correspond with current situation, with estimated less than 5% of variation based on desk research and observations. Partial cross checking of data could be done based on Domovik's data collection report published in 2021, which found that in 2020, in Zvecan, there were 62 children at 0-14 age in the families which were recipients of the social assistance scheme. In Zubin Potok, there were 819 children recipients of the child allowance in rural areas, 342 families recipients of the social assistance scheme, and 16 families of children with disabilities recipients of the financial allowance for assistance and care of another person. In Leposavic, there were 166 beneficiaries of the assistance purposed for 0-5 age children of unemployed parents, 50 beneficiaries in the category children of single parents, and 13 families with children with disabilities recipients of the allowance for assistance and care of another person.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://askdata.rks-gov.net/pxweb/en/ASKdata/>

### 4.5.2 Child Poverty and Material Deprivation

Based on the available data from UNICEF report<sup>9</sup> for 2022, 23% of children in Kosovo are living in poverty, while 7% children living in extreme poverty. The unemployment rate among 15–24-year-olds is at 49 per cent, while in the same age group, 29.8 percent are “Neither in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)” meaning one in three young people find themselves without an opportunity to study or work (UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, 2022)<sup>10</sup>. There were no available data on the proportion of children in low-income families or share of children living in very low work intensity households and workless households, or percentage of children (aged 0-17) living under multidimensional poverty in target municipalities North Mitrovica, Leposavic, Zvecan and Zubin Potok. However, based on estimation, the percentages of children living in relative and absolute poverty correspond to the Kosovo wide data.

### 4.5.3 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Decent living conditions and healthy environment are critical for the wellbeing of all children and adolescents. Based on MICS data, in Kosovo, up to 25% of children under 5 years of age live in the poorest households and only 7 percent of women and 12 percent of men aged 15 - 49 years are covered by health insurance. While the majority of the household population in Kosovo has basic drinking water services and basic sanitation services (about 90 percent), about 23 percent of the population consumes contaminated water with *Escherichia coli*.

In municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan Zubin Potok and Leposavic, almost all residents are covered with public health insurance from Serbia. Residents living predominantly in urban parts of municipalities North Mitrovica (more than 95% of households), Zvecan and Zubin Potok (less than 50% of households) are connected to the regional water supply system. Less than 50% of residents of Leposavic (families living in the urban part of municipality) are connected to the local water supply system. The quality of water utilised by residents through the water supply system is regularly tested by the Institute for Public Health. The quality of drinking water is assessed as very good.

Rural areas in all municipalities rely on the water springs near the villages with catchments and wells built, wherefrom the water pipelines bring water to individual or grouped households. There are no available data on the quality testing of drinking water in surrounding villages of target municipalities.

More than 80% of households in North Mitrovica are connected to the sanitation system, however fully functional wastewater disposal system is not in place, what seriously jeopardise river Ibar. Less than 50% of households in Zvecan municipality are connected to the sewage system, while village households mainly use septic tanks for the sewerage. The same proportions of connections to the sanitation are estimated for Leposavic municipality, where the town center and two larger settlements Socanica and Lesak are connected to the sanitation system. Only households in the urban part of the settlement are connected to the

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/reports/annual-report-2022#>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/kosovo-generation-unlimited#>

sanitation system in Zubin Potok municipality, while in most villages septic tanks are in use. There is no wastewater disposal system in place, and the wastewater from the sewerage system is disposed directly to Ibar river.

## 5. Cross cutting issues

### 5.1 Early childhood education

Access to early childhood education remains one of the key challenges in all four municipalities due to insufficient infrastructure to accommodate all children in need in urban areas, and no capacities for early education in most of rural areas. Low percentage of children with access to kindergartens in villages raises serious concerns on unequal start in regular education between children in urban and rural areas. The non-attendance in early childhood education has critical impact on the learning outcomes of these children in further levels of education, and achievement of their full potential. All municipalities need to multiply efforts and investment in early childhood education infrastructure, and employ additional human resources, to ensure that every child has access to kindergarten and quality early education programs.

### 5.2 Gender

Girls in all four municipalities have equal access to all levels of education, social protection services and most primary and secondary health care services. However, more attention and support must be given to improved access to adolescent girls' reproductive health counselling services. Access to appropriate contraceptive methods is critical to prevent adolescent pregnancy and its related consequences. Women and girls are more vulnerable to and not effectively protected against gender based violence and domestic violence in all four municipalities. They are also to larger extent involved in child labour compared with boys and more vulnerable to become victims of commercial sexual exploitation, revenge pornography and online sexual abuse.

### 5.3 Disability

Children with disabilities in all four municipalities continue to face discrimination in access to inclusive education at all levels, while their families lack comprehensive support from the society and institutions. The introduction of services of personal assistant and pedagogic assistant for children with disabilities attending inclusive education is only in early stage of implementation owing to support of international organisations, however their institutionalisation is yet to be achieved with municipalities, while the number of assistants is insufficient to cover all children in need. The social assistance for families of children with disabilities is insufficient to cover basic needs of these children. Many children with disabilities attend the school for special education and receive support from NGOs, however, the systematic and strategic approach to their effective integration in education, employment, and society, is missing.

### 5.4 Adolescents

Children need more comprehensive support in the sensitive age of adolescence to better overcome challenges of transition to adults, and protect their physical, mental and reproductive health. Regular systematic health examinations in upper grades of primary and secondary schools, and physical and mental health counselling services, must be introduced

and accessible to adolescents in all four municipalities. Apart from improvement of quality of secondary education, non-formal education programs should be offered as complementary learning and skills development opportunities.

## 5.5 Environment and climate change

Children and adolescents in all four municipalities show proficient understanding on the importance of environmental protection and climate action. In the survey<sup>11</sup> conducted by NGO Domovik in 2023 with children and youth from municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Gracanica and Pristina, more than 45% of respondents considers that climate change is serious threat, and 41% declared ready to accept change of personal lifestyle to alleviate negative impact on the environment. More than 70% of respondents consider that economic development needs to be aligned with environmental protection.

Regional waste disposal landfill for municipalities in northern part of Mitrovica region was constructed, however not yet functionalised and in use. While there is no major initiative from institutional stakeholders, there are NGOs in all four municipalities which advocate for protection of nature, and preservation of air, water and soil from pollution. Some of them organize cleaning actions and awareness raising activities with public, and children and adolescents often takes part in them.

## 5.6 Risks and humanitarian action

In January 2023, Mitrovica region was heavily affected with floods, and many households in North and south Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic were severely flooded. Many families with children were evacuated and temporary relocated from their houses and flats. The assistance was provided by the government, municipalities, international organizations and civil society organizations. However, despite involvement of multiple actors, many families were not reached out with adequate assistance for refurbish damages of their housing and income generation facilities, and agricultural land.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://domovik.org/publikacije/>

## 6. Conclusions

The first assessments of child rights in municipalities North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Leposavic, Zvecan and Zubin Potok, successfully tested the framework developed by Domovik last year. Expectedly, it has confirmed the importance of systematic data collection in all domains indicated in the tool including Health and nutrition, Family environment and protection, Education, Participation and civil rights, and Poverty. In this regard, one of the priority actions needs to be establishment of data and knowledge management units with relevant institutions including family medicine centers and paediatric unit of the hospital, municipal departments of health, education and social protection, centers for social welfare and schools. This assessment and the monitoring framework tool could serve as guideline for more comprehensive sectoral situation analyses and setting up the baselines for the future child rights assessments.

In line with baseline evaluation, each institution relevant for child development and wellbeing needs to define short and mi-term priorities for children, and integrate them in planning and programming, always involving children and integrating their views and proposals to the maximal possible extent. Awareness raising on immunization, supporting adequate nutrition, increased investments in early childhood education and protection of children from violence and abuse, are priority areas for improvement and intervention. There is a need for advancing interinstitutional cooperation through cross sectorial approach to program implementation and integrated child services delivery.



