



# DATA COLLECTION REPORT 2023

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The position of children  
in northern Kosovo



Funded by  
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# **Data Collection Report 2023**

## **The position of children in northern Kosovo**

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## 1. Executive Summary

This year's data collection process was adjusted to the political and security circumstances which were absolutely dominating above all other issues in every-day life children as well as of the entire population in the covered municipalities Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok. The overall environment for child rights was extremely challenging and unfavourable for child development and wellbeing. Access to all critical services for children was seriously affected with latest political crises in northern Kosovo, leading to serious violations of child rights and deterioration of situation in many areas important for psychophysical development of children.

Inevitably, negative political developments and security incidents affected both, access and qualitative aspects of the right to education and health care, and to large extent to social protection services. Non-attendance of schools and pre-school education classes, movement to online domain and early finish of school year in June 2023, caused serious concerns of children and parents for their equal start and achieving desired baseline before enrolling further education levels.

Despite all obstacles, the team managed to collect data for education, social services and partially policy and regulations in the field of health care and disability, making extraordinary efforts in unconducive conditions for execution of data collection exercises.

The main findings in education sector indicate declining number of children in pre-school and primary education, especially in rural areas, but also in some urban settlements in all assessed municipalities, what is the continuation of trend reported for 2022. The migrations from rural to urban areas internally within one municipality, and from municipalities in northern Kosovo to larger urban centers in Serbia, got a new accelerated dynamic, in the context of serious security incidents occurred consecutively in a short period of time. Many families decided to move from northern Kosovo motivated exclusively with the best interest of their children to live and attend school in a peaceful environment.

On the qualitative aspects, number of newly introduced services in education that led towards improvement of quality of education was rather symbolic than comprehensive. Without functioning municipal administrations, no policy and regulatory documents were adopted in any field of child rights, while budgetary resources remained non-utilised. Funds were secured through the budget lines supported by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, covering salaries of teachers and support staff, and running costs in educational facilities. There was no room for development and advancing the quality of teaching and school infrastructure. In such circumstances, the existing equity gaps and disparities in access to and quality of education for children residing in urban and rural areas and wealthy and poor settlements further deepened and produced catalytic effect for migrations. Children with disabilities remain without sufficient support in access to education, while their families struggle to survive and provide them any additional assistance. All schools and pre-school facilities reported lack of sufficient space, inventory,



equipment, teaching cabinets, didactic materials, opportunities for training of teachers, contemporary teaching tools and other services that impact both access and quality of education process and creation of stimulative learning environment for children. Slight progress could be observed in the number and diversity of extracurricular activities offered to children, but without tangible innovation in comparison with previous years.

In the field of social protection, unlike in 2022, access to data sources in this exercise enabled in-depth overview of all services available to children in need and provided opportunity for analyses of their effect on beneficiaries. The field of social protection was not clearly regulated in the framework of Brussels dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. In practice these services are supported both through Kosovo social protection system, and through the Serbian line ministries. This situation creates obstacles for the service providers when the coordination and cooperation is needed with police and judiciary, given that systems don't recognize each other. The progress is acknowledged in the establishment of the foster care services in municipalities Lepsavić and Zubin Potok, and introduction of the service personal assistant for children with disabilities in all three municipalities. Yet, the capacity of this service is not sufficient to cover all children in need, and more efforts are needed for its reinforcement, institutionalisation and securing long-term sustainability. In the context of global economic crises and inflation caused with external geopolitical factors, the social assistance scheme is very important aspect for economic survival of children in poor families. In this respect, the amount allocated for children allowance and financial assistance to their families in Kosovo must be increased in line with rise of living costs. Economic crises have disproportionately bigger negative effect on the socio-economically most vulnerable families, and therefore they need reinforced support for protection of their minimal living standard to remain above the poverty line.

This year, the efforts of the family medicine centers in developing strategic vision for the 3-year period must be acknowledged in the data collection report. They set strategic priorities in prevention and protection of child health in municipalities Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Lepsavić, with focus on immunization, community nursing (patronage) and effective data for children collection, processing and management. This is the major shift in the area of child health care, from reactive to proactive approach, given that 3-year action plans contain concrete measures and activities for their implementation with assigned responsibilities of key actors.

The stagnation and decreased level of respect and fulfilment of child rights in these three municipalities must be understood as serious warning for all relevant stakeholder to multiply efforts and resources for improvement of quality of services for children in education, health care and social protection. Increased investment is required in infrastructure, human and technical resources to advance situation in all three critical sectors. The findings of this assessment should be utilised as a baseline for planning of urgent interventions, short-term and mid-term programming towards achieving immediate and longer-term effects on the state of child rights in target municipalities and Kosovo wide.

## 2. Methodology

Methodology designed by Domovik for data collection report 2021<sup>1</sup>, which has been updated and applied for data collection report 2022, was utilised for the assessment made in this report covering 2023. Few years ago, Domovik developed tool for systematic data collection and analyses of child rights including areas of child policies and regulations, education, health care, social protection, juvenile justice and child-responsive governance. The tool identified indicators contextualized for all fields of evaluation. In this respect, the indicators for policies and regulations (strategies, action plans, laws, bylaws) include priority sub-areas, adopted public policy documents under the jurisdiction of local self-government, missing documents, and the need for amendments to relevant public policy documents. For the areas of education, health care, social protection and juvenile justice indicators cover current services and measures, availability and application of services and measures, lack of services and measures and lack of resources for the implementation of services and measures. For the area of "responsible (local) governance", the indicators applied are key factors for responsible local governance, description/assessment of the existence or functionality of factors for responsible local management, identification and description of deficiencies of factors for responsible local governance, as well as identification of the need to improve these factors. Specific questionnaires were developed for representatives of different institutional stakeholders to support data collection process. Subsequently, the matrix was filled in based on data obtained from the questionnaires with reference to specific indicators.

Meanwhile, in the first half of 2023, Domovik organized training for data collectors to better prepare them for this challenging exercise, and use tools developed in previous assessment cycles. The methodology which was in detailed described in previous assessments<sup>2</sup> provided key references to the approach in this exercise, with questionnaires slightly updated to add some new questions, and surveys introduced to better capture feedback of beneficiaries on qualitative aspects of service provision.

Desk review of legislative and policy developments enabled follow up on the steps that institutional stakeholders have undertaken to improve legal framework and include children in major socio-economic strategic visions.

Focus groups meetings with stakeholders in education and social protection as well as with groups of children beneficiaries, parents and civil society organizations active in the field of child rights were organized in support of data collection process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://domovik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Polozaj-dece-na-teritoriji-3-opstine-severnog-dela-Kosova.pdf>

<sup>2</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)

### 3. Overview of standards, norms, and amendments of policy and legislative framework

In previous data collection reports, international standards and norms deriving from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>3</sup>, Child Rights Convention (CRC)<sup>4</sup>, Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>5</sup>, European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>6</sup> and EU Charter on Fundamental Rights<sup>7</sup> were presented in detail, and therefore they will be only listed in this report. As it is in-depth elaborated in reports 2021 and 2022, legal framework applied in education, health and social services in municipalities with Serb majority population includes both Kosovo and Serbian laws regulating respective sectors.

The legislative framework relevant for this assessment in education sector includes Law on Local Self-governance<sup>8</sup>, Law on Pre-school Education<sup>9</sup>, Law on Pre-university Education<sup>10</sup>, and the Law on Pre-university Education in Municipalities in Kosovo<sup>11</sup>. Social protection in Kosovo is regulated through several laws, while the key piece of legislation relevant for access to social assistance benefits is the Law on Social Assistance Scheme<sup>12</sup>. In addition, the Law on Social and Family Services<sup>13</sup> sets out and regulates provision of social and family services to persons and families in need. Finally, the Law on Child Protection<sup>14</sup> promulgated in 2019, integrates most important standards of the CRC under the right to life, survival and development, best interest of the child, gradual development of skills, observing child's point of view and non-discrimination as cross cuttings human rights principle for all child rights. It further regulates the roles and responsibilities of various institutional stakeholders for child protection on central level including the Ombudsperson Institution, relevant ministries, Office for Good Governance within the Office of the Prime Minister, Inter-ministerial Committee on the Rights of the Child and Council for the Rights of the Child. In addition, the institutional structures and mechanisms at the local level have their roles and responsibilities based on their scope covering the rights of the child including relevant municipal departments, Centre for Social Work and multisectoral Team for the Rights of the Child.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/...](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.coe.int/cs/web/echr-toolkit/protocole-1>

<sup>7</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

<sup>8</sup> <https://mapl.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Law-On-Local-Self-Government.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/en/law-on-preschool-education-no-02-l-52/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2770&langid=2>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2543&langid=2>

<sup>12</sup> <https://mpms.rks-gov.net/en/wpdm-package/law-no-2003-15-on-the-social..>

<sup>13</sup> [https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/369\\_430\\_EN\\_original.pdf](https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/369_430_EN_original.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=20844>

In Serbia, the Law on Fundamentals of Education System<sup>15</sup> regulates the fields of preschool, elementary and secondary education, while social protection services are regulated by the Law on Social Protection<sup>16</sup>.

Both in Kosovo and Serbia, on the level of legislation, in the time frame between the current and previous data collection reports, no specific law was adopted that directly impacts the critical sectors in monitored municipalities.

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon\\_o\\_osnovama\\_sistema\\_obrazovanja\\_i..](https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_osnovama_sistema_obrazovanja_i..)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon\\_o\\_socijalnoj\\_zastiti.html](https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_socijalnoj_zastiti.html)

## 4. Findings of qualitative/quantitative data collection exercise

As per usual practice in data collection reports, findings will be presented separately for each municipality Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zvečan. It is important to highlight that this year data were available for education and social protection for all three municipalities, unlike in previous report, what will enable holistic analyses and comparative review of situation in designated sectors in all three municipalities. This report brings the most comprehensive data on social protection services, while containing at same time robust data on all non-tertiary levels of education in all three municipalities. The resignation of municipal employees, police officers, judges and prosecutors, resulted with no access to data on policy and regulations, child responsive governance and juvenile justice.

### 4.1 Education

#### 4.1.1 Leposavić

- **Early childhood education**

In Leposavić, early childhood education continues in 3 nurseries, for children of age 6 months to 3 years, and 3 kindergartens for children of age 3- 5 years. Nursery and kindergarten services are available in settlements Lešak, in the pre-school facility “Veselo detinjstvo”, Sočanica, in the pre-school facility “Bambi”, and Leposavić town, in the pre-school facility “Naša radost”.

All nurseries prepare annual learning plan and program with children beneficiaries, in accordance with applicable standards and legislation. This year, 84 children attend nurseries, out of them 28 boys and 56 girls. Due to age of children beneficiaries, nurseries in Leposavić don't organize extracurricular activities. All facilities need medical and hygienic staff as well as equipment and additional space for laundry.

The kindergartens in Leposavić, Lešak and Sočanica use the same facilities as nurseries, and apply learning plans in accordance with Serbian Law on Pre-school Education and statutes of these pre-school facilities. They provide services for 112 children, 3 to 5 and a half years old, out of them 64 boys and 58 girls. The facilities need additional educators and support staff, additional premisses to accommodate children and activities, bathrooms, tables, chairs and toys. The same as nurseries, kindergartens don't organize extracurricular activities separately, but they are included in regular program implemented with children.

Preparatory pre-school program is organized in the same facilities as early childhood education in Lešak, Sočanica and Leposavić town, for children of age 5.5 to 6.5 years. All preparatory pre-school programs prepare learning plans and programs regularly, in accordance with applicable legislation and internal regulations, and based on annual report for the previous year. This year, 98 children enrolled the program, out of them 57 girls and 41 boys. Pre-school facilities need additional space for classrooms as well as boards,

shelves, and wardrobes. The pre-schools don't organize extracurricular activities separately, they are integrated with regular learning program.

Children in Leposavić municipality attend lower grades of primary education (1-4 grade) in three schools including Primary school "Leposavić", Primary school "Stana Bačanin", and Primary school "Vuk Karadžić". All schools prepare and implement regular plan and programs, in accordance with applicable legislation in Serbia. This year, 354 children attend lower grades of primary education, out of them 152 boys and 202 girls. The schools need training of teachers and their continuous professional capacity development. There is lack of English language teachers and personal and pedagogic assistants for inclusive education.

The institution realizes extracurricular activities including drama section, excursions, mountaineering and scouting section, humanitarian actions, sports events, sports section, festivals, competitions, choir and orchestra and workshops. Children show great interest and enthusiasm for extracurricular activities, with 198 children involved in different sections, out of them 101 boys and 97 girls.

The abovementioned 3 primary schools also host children who attend upper grades of primary education (5-8 grade). The schools apply curricula (teaching plan and program) prepared by Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. This year 278 children (age 11-14 years) attend schools in Leposavić town, Lešak and Sočanica, out of them 130 boys and 148 girls. The schools lack teaching cabinets for chemistry, physics, and biology as well as equipment for labs and cabinets, and sports hall.

The schools implement extracurricular activities including drama section, folklore, excursions, mountaineering and scouting section, humanitarian actions, sports events, sports section, festivals, competitions, choir and orchestra, workshops, mathematics, and practical activities. Children in these grades participate in activities despite shortcomings in space and equipment. 198 children attend some of the activities, out of them 104 boys and 94 girls. Schools need additional space for drama section, choir and visual arts as well as computers, costumes and music instruments for other extracurricular activities.

Children in Leposavić municipality attend secondary education in the technical School "Nikola Tesla" in Leposavić downtown, and Agriculture School in Lešak. Both schools apply curricula of the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. This year, 367 children attend secondary education (1-4 grade, children age 15-18 years) in Leposavić, out of them 204 boys and 163 girls.

Schools need longer term action plans, additional teachers and teaching associates along with training of teachers and additional space for labs, kitchen and sports hall.

Secondary schools implement extracurricular activities including folklore, fairs, IT sections, humanitarian actions, sport events, sport sections, excursions, and practical activities. Children show great interest and talent for out-of-school engagement and actions. 198 children attend extracurricular activities, out of them 75 boys and 123 girls. Schools need

additional plans and financial resources for introduction of new extracurricular activities as well as teaching cabinets, additional space for sections, dormitories for students and sport hall.

### **INDICATORS - Education - Municipality Leposavić**

<i>Number of children included in preschool education</i>	
Number of children included in preschool education (total)	196
Number of children (boys)	92
Number of children (girls)	104
<i>Number of children with disabilities included in preschool education</i>	5
<i>Number of children covered by the preparatory preschool program for children one year before primary school</i>	
Number of children covered by the preparatory preschool program for children one year before primary school (total)	98
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	6
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	12
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	32
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	58
<i>Number of education facilities that include children in the preparatory preschool program one year before the primary school</i>	
Number of education facilities that include children in the preparatory preschool program one year before the primary school (total)	7
Number of institutions rural area	4
Number of institutions urban areas	3
Type of institution (who is the service provider)	Primary school Leposavić, Lešak and Sočanica

*Number of children included in primary education*

Number of children included in primary education (total)	<b>632</b>
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	30
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	82
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	216
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	304

<i>Number of children with disabilities in special schools or departments of primary education, based on data from the Interdepartmental Commission</i>	11 (2 boys and 9 girls)
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<i>Number of children with disabilities continuing education after primary school</i>	4
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*Number of children included in secondary education*

Number of children included in secondary education (total)	367
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	

*Number of children with disabilities included in secondary education*

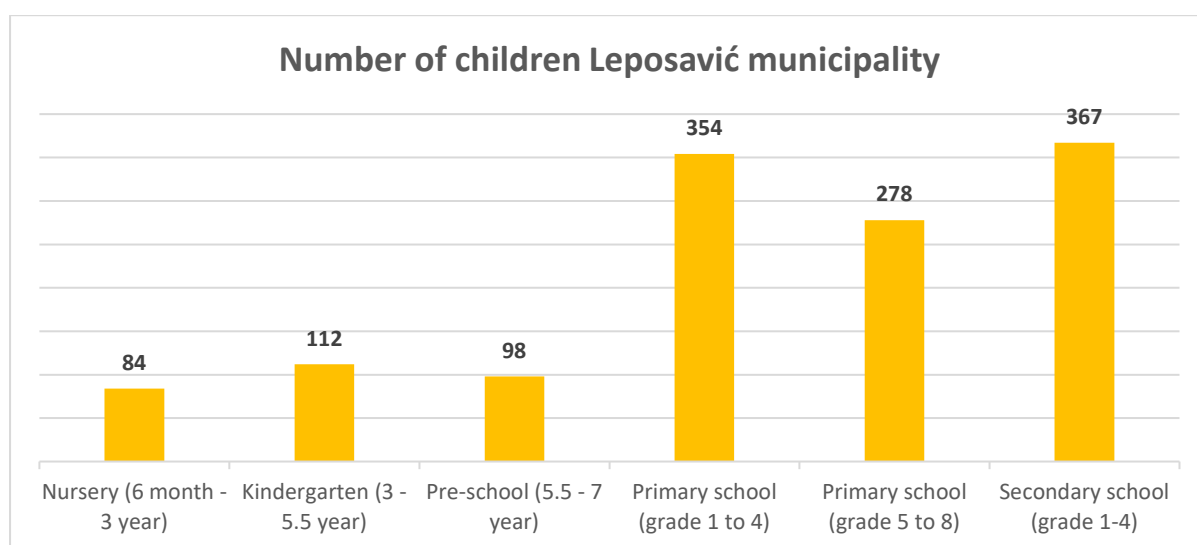
Number of children with disabilities included in secondary education (total)	3
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	1
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	0
Number of children in urban areas(boys)	1
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	1

<i>Number of children who leave high school prematurely</i>	6 (4 in rural areas, 2 in urban areas)
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The table and graph below show number of children for education levels in Leposavić municipality

Category	Leposavić
Nursery (6 month - 3 year)	84
Kindergarten (3 - 5.5 year)	112
Pre-school (5.5 - 7 year)	98
Primary school (grade 1 to 4)	354
Primary school (grade 5 to 8)	278
Secondary school (grade 1-4)	367



#### 4.1.2 Zubin Potok

- **Early childhood education**

**Pre-school facility in Zubin Potok - Nursery** (children from 6 months to 3 years old) possesses annual work plan and program and other internal policy and planning documents foreseen by the applicable legislation. Based on data collected for this facility, 65 children are enrolled in the nursery, out of them 46 boys and 19 girls. However, it does not have sufficient capacity for all children in need, what results with longer waiting lists of children. Exact number of children who remained without access to nursery is not known. The nursery needs additional staff, space to accommodate all enrolled children and implement activities, digital equipment (computers and others), additional financial means, furniture, and materials for work with children. Extracurricular activities are integrated with regular program in the nursery including arts, sports, English language classes, picnics, and others.

**Pre-school facility in Zubin Potok – Kindergarten** (for children from 3 to 5 and a half years old) possesses all annual planning and internal policy documents in accordance applicable law. The number of enrolled children per each group exceeds the foreseen capacity by 30%. There are 197 children attending kindergarten, out of them 121 boys and 76 girls. The kindergarten needs additional space and equipment, financial assistance as well as

additional educators and support staff. The same as nursery, the facility does not organize extracurricular activities separately but integrates them with regular education program. They include arts, sports, English language classes, picnics and other outdoor activities.

- ***Preparatory pre-school program***

Preparatory pre-school program facility (for children 5.5 – 6.5 years old) – the learning plan for preparatory pre-school program is adopted together with plans and programs for other grades of regular education. This year, 57 children enrolled the program, out of them 40 boys and 17 girls. The facility needs additional teaching and support staff, financial assistance, additional space, and equipment. Based on the feedback information from the pre-school facility, extracurricular activities are integrated with regular activities including arts' sections, sports, English language classes, picnics and other outdoor activities.

- ***Lower grades primary education***

Primary school Jovan Cvijić in Zubin Potok, Primary school “Blagoje Radić” in Zupče and Primary school “Petar Kočić” in Brnjak realise lower grades of primary education (1-4 grade, 6-10 years of age). They possess annual school work plans and programs, and annual operational work plans of employees. This year, 223 pupils attend school “Jovan Cvijić”, out of them 115 boys and 108 girls, while 29 children enrolled Primary school “Blagoje Radić” in Zupče, out of them 20 boys and 9 girls, and 21 pupils attend Primary school “Petar Kočić”, out of them 12 boys and 9 girls. All schools need support for professional capacity building of teachers, financial assistance, additional classrooms and teaching cabinets, digital equipment and teaching tools. Regarding the extracurricular activities, all three school have drama sections, folklore, music sections (school choir and orchestra), they organize debates, picnics, fairs, run IT sections, artistic events, sport competitions, sport sections, excursions, English language classes, researches, workshops, sales exhibitions, math classes, humanitarian actions and festivals.

- ***Upper grades of primary education***

All three schools including Primary school “Jovan Cvijić” in Zubin Potok, Primary school “Blagoje Radić” in Zupče, Primary school “Petar Kočić” realise upper grades of primary education (5-8 grade, children of age 10-14 years) and have all planning and internal policy documents prescribed by law. This year, 266 pupils attend upper grades of primary school “Jovan Cvijić”, out of them 123 boys and 143 girls, 34 pupils attend upper grades of primary school “Blagoje Radić”, out of them 24 boys and 10 girls, and 33 pupils attend upper grades of primary school “Petar Kočić”, 18 boys and 15 girls. All schools lack financial resources and need support for professional capacity development of teachers. The support is needed for additional classrooms, teaching cabinets, and digital teaching tools. Schools organize variety of extracurricular activities including drama section, folklore, debates, picnics, fairs, IT section, artistic events, sport competitions, sport sections, excursions, English language classes, festivals, research, humanitarian actions, music sections, etc.

- ***Secondary education***

Secondary school “Grigorije Božović” in Zubin Potok (secondary education 1-4 grade) possesses all planning documents including learning plan and teachers’ plan, action plan, development plan, plan of curricular and extracurricular activities, and individual education plans (IOP). This year 196 children attend school (14-18 years old), out of them 115 boys and 81 girls. All planning and policy documents required by the line ministry are adopted. The school lacks financial resources for different activities and inventory/equipment for better quality teaching. In accordance with existing capacities and resources, teaching staff makes maximal efforts to fulfil educational needs of children towards reaching full potential and achieving objectives and ambitions. Regarding the extracurricular activities, school maintains drama section, folklore, quizzes, debates, picnics, fairs, IT training, humanitarian actions, artistic events, sport competitions, knowledge competitions, clubs, math classes, music sections and practical activities.

**INDICATORS - Education – municipality Zubin Potok***Number of children involved in preschool education*

Number of children involved in preschool education (total)	262
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	32
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	18
Number of children in the urban environment (boys)	167
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	45

<i>Number of children with disabilities included in preschool education</i>	3 (2 boys and 1 girl)
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*Number of children attending the preparatory preschool program (one year before starting regular school)*

Number of children attending the preparatory preschool program (one year before starting regular school - total)	57
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	12
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	4
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	28
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	13

*Number of education facilities that enroll children in the preparatory preschool program one year before primary school*

Number of facilities enrolling children in the preparatory preschool program one year before starting school (total)	4
Number of facilities in rural areas	3
Number of facilities in urban areas	1
Type of facility (who is the service provider)	PU Naše Dete

*Number of children included in primary school education*

Number of children included in primary education (total)	606
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	238
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	251
Number of children in the urban areas (boys)	74
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	43

*Number of children with disabilities in inclusive primary education, based on data from the Intersectoral Commission (total)*

Number of children with disabilities in inclusive primary education, based on data from the Intersectoral Commission (total)	IOP 1	IOP 2	IOP 3
	1	2	2
Number of children in rural areas (boys)			
Number of children in rural areas (girls)			
Number of children in the urban environment (boys)	1	1	1
Number of children in urban areas (girls)		1	1

*Number of children attending secondary education*

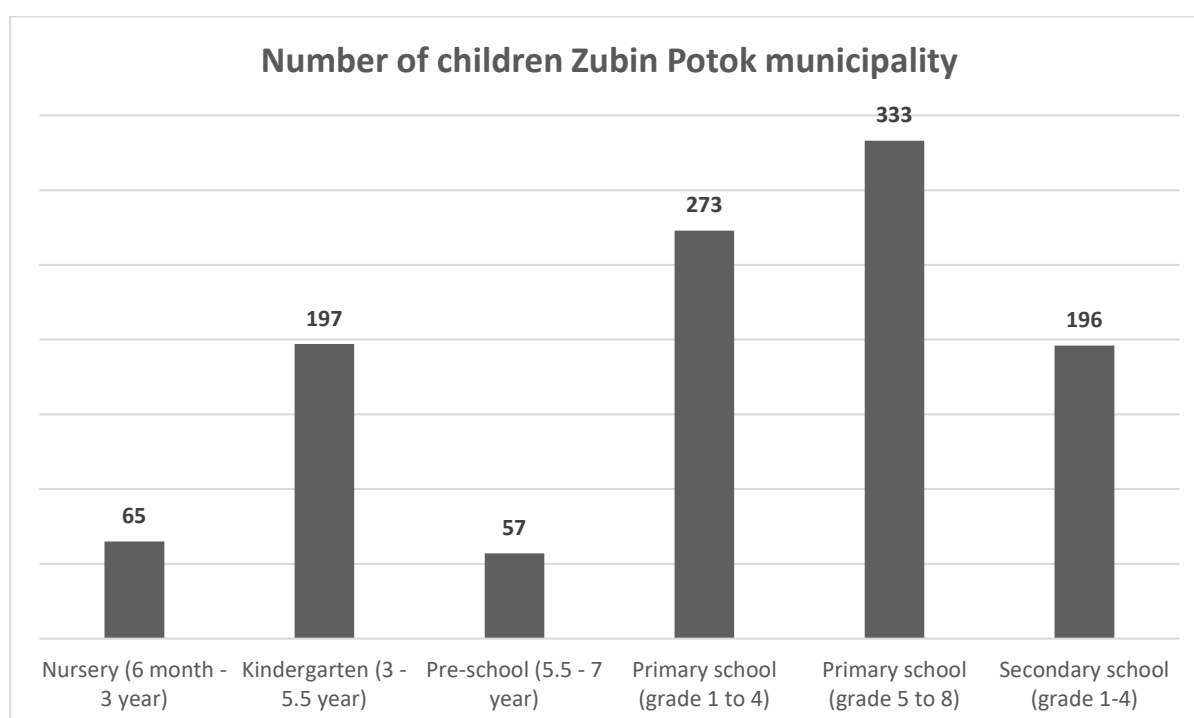
Number of children in secondary education (total)	196
Number of children in the urban areas (boys)	115
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	81

*Number of children with disabilities in secondary education*

Number of children with disabilities in secondary education (total)	1
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	0
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	0
Number of children in the urban environment (boys)	1
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	0

The table and graph below show number of children for each educational level in municipality Zubin Potok

Category	Zubin Potok
Nursery (6 month - 3 year)	65
Kindergarten (3 - 5.5 year)	197
Pre-school (5.5 - 7 year)	57
Primary school (grade 1 to 4)	273
Primary school (grade 5 to 8)	333
Secondary school (grade 1-4)	196



#### 4.1.3 Zvečan

- **Early childhood education**

Pre-school facility “Lane” in Zvečan runs nursery for children 6 months to 3 years old and kindergarten for children 3 to 5 and half years old. It operates in accordance with applicable legislation on pre-school education in Serbia. The nursery and kindergarten prepare annual learning plans and programs in accordance with relevant rulebooks and quality standards that apply for pre-school programs regulated by the line ministry in Serbia.

This year, 55 children use nursery service, out of them 28 boys and 27 girls. The service is not available for children in rural areas, what put those children and their parents in unequal position compared with their peers in urban areas. The facility needs additional space capacity to receive all children in need before all in rural areas. It also lacks didactic tools for

children with disabilities and needs web site for better communication with public. The nursery realises extracurricular activities including drama section and folklore. 10 children are included in these activities, out of them 6 boys and 4 girls. The facility lacks outdoor space for implementation of extracurricular activities.

Pre-school “Lane” runs kindergarten for children from 3 to 5 and half years old with 149 beneficiaries in 2023, out of them 78 boys and 71 girls. The same as nursery, it doesn’t have capacity to expand services in rural areas. The kindergarten needs support to organize health care workshops adjusted for the age of children to contribute to better health awareness and prevention of diseases. The facility realises extracurricular activities including theatre section and folklore. Currently, 33 children are engaged in these activities, out of them 10 boys and 23 girls.

- ***Preparatory pre-school program***

Pre-school facility “Lane” also realises preparatory pre-school program for children 5.5 – 6.5 years old, which lasts for 9 months as a first mandatory education program. It applies relevant legislative and regulatory framework and quality standards prescribed by the line ministry in Serbia. Preparatory pre-school program is implemented in rural areas, as well, in the premises of primary schools in villages Žerovnica, Grabovac and Banjska. This year, 86 children were enrolled in the program, out them 38 boys and 48 girls. The facilities lack sufficient space, didactic materials, and financial resources for engagement of external experts. They realise extracurricular activities including drama section and folklore, with 25 children involved in these activities, out of them 10 boys and 15 girls.

- ***Lower grades primary education***

Children in Zvečan municipality attend lower grades of primary education (1-4 grade) in Primary school “Vuk Karadžić” in Zvečan, Primary school “Banović Strahinja” in settlement Banjska, and Primary school “Sveti Sava” in village Žerovnica. The schools apply plan and program prepared by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and operate in line with applicable legal and regulatory framework for primary education in Serbia. School program provides basis for teachers and professional associates to plan and implement their work. It serves as a key document that defines the goals, standards and content of teaching. Currently, 230 children (age 7-11) attend lower grades of primary education in the municipality, out of them 109 boys and 121 girls. The school needs web site to improve communication with public and transparency of its work as well as copy machine, geographical maps, and didactic materials for work with children with disabilities. Schools realise extracurricular activities including drama section, folklore, sports, choir and orchestra, and organizing humanitarian actions, with 69 children engaged in these activities, out of them 20 boys and 49 girls. There is a need for additional space for out of school activities, purchase of sound system and LCD projector.

- **Upper grades of primary education**

Children in Zvečan municipality attend upper grades of primary education (5-8 grade) also in Primary school Vuk Karadžić” in Zvečan and Primary school “Sveti Sava” in Žerovnica. The schools apply plan and program developed by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and operate in accordance with legislative and regulatory framework for primary education in Serbia. This year, 243 children (11-15 years old) attend upper grades of primary education in Zvečan municipality, out of them 110 boys and 133 girls. The schools need geometry accessories, geographical maps, and didactic materials for children with disabilities. Schools organize extracurricular activities including drama section, folklore, humanitarian actions, choir and orchestra, with 72 children attending these activities, out of them 26 boys and 46 girls. Schools need additional space for extracurricular activities as well as sound system with microphones and LCD projector.

- **Secondary education**

Secondary school Zvečan (secondary education 1-4 grade) operates in line with applicable legislation and quality standards for this level of education in Serbia, and possesses teaching plan and program and school development plan. Currently 175 children (15-18 years old) attend school, out of them 52 boys and 123 girls. The main challenge is that school does not have its own building with adequate premises and teaching cabinets. This is the reason why the school does not realise extracurricular activities.

### **INDICATORS Education Municipality Zvečan**

*Number of children included in preschool education*

Number of children included in preschool education (total)	86
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	10
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	12
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	26
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	38



*Number of children covered by the preparatory preschool program for children one year before primary school*

Number of children covered by the preparatory preschool program for children one year before primary school (total)	86
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	9
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	10
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	29
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	38

*Number of pre-school facilities enrolling children in the preparatory preschool program one year before primary school*

Number of pre-school facilities enrolling children in the preparatory preschool program one year before primary school (total)	1
Number of facilities in rural areas	3 field units
Number of institutions in urban areas	1
Type of institution (who is a service provider)	Pre-school facility Lane

*Number of children included in primary education*

Number of children involved in primary education (total)	590
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	54
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	63
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	219
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	254

*Number of involvement of children with disabilities in inclusive primary education, based on data from the Intersectoral Commission (total)*

Number of children with disabilities in inclusive primary education, based on data from the Intersectoral Commission (total)	6
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	0
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	0
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	4
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	2

*Number of children with disabilities continuing education after primary school*

Number of children with disabilities continuing their education after primary education (total)	4
The number of children who completed the 8th grade	4
Number of children who enrolled in 1 <sup>st</sup> grade of secondary school	4

*Children included in secondary education*

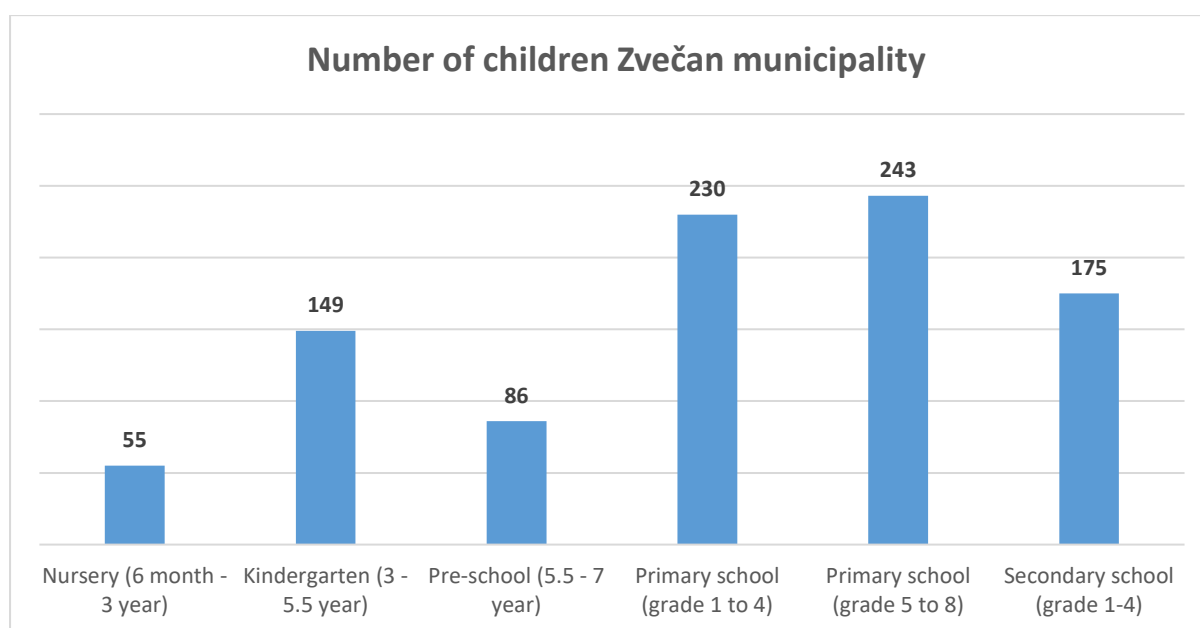
Number of children included in secondary education (total)	175
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	13
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	14
Number of children in urban areas (boys)	39
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	109

*Number of children with disabilities included in secondary education*

Number of children with disabilities included in secondary education (total)	4
Number of children in rural areas (boys)	1
Number of children in rural areas (girls)	1
Number of children in the urban areas (boys)	1
Number of children in urban areas (girls)	1

**The table and graph below show number of children enrolled in all education levels for municipality Zvečan.**

Category	Zvečan
Nursery (6 month - 3 year)	55
Kindergarten (3 - 5.5 year)	149
Pre-school (5.5 - 7 year)	86
Primary school (grade 1 to 4)	230
Primary school (grade 5 to 8)	243
Secondary school (grade 1-4)	175



#### 4.1.4 School “Vlada Ćetković” in North Mitrovica

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children living predominantly in Roma Mahala in South Mitrovica attend Primary school “Vlada Ćetković” in North Mitrovica. The curriculum is in Serbian language with some subjects in Roma language. In total, 215 children from these

communities attend primary school “Vlada Četković”, out of them 95 boys and 120 girls. The table below shows number of children in each grade of the primary school:

Grade	Number of children (total)	Number of boys	Number of girls
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	31	14	17
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	32	18	15
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	30	12	18
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	40	21	19
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	17	5	12
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	32	12	20
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	16	5	11
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	17	8	9

School attendance is almost 100% regular with children from lower grades (7-10 years old, 1st - 4th grade), while absence from school is more frequent with children from higher grades (11-15 years old, 5th – 8th grade). According to the information from the school, 95% of children complete primary school. The school drop out at the level of primary education is 5%. All children attending this primary school are included in regular vaccination cycles and systemic health examinations, depending on the age and vaccination schedule.

## 4.2 Social Protection

### 4.2.1 Leposavić

Due to political developments, municipality was not in the position to adopt any policy or planning documents. However, despite challenges, all existing social protection services were provided to families and children in need. Here is the overview of the services provided under the category **Planning and evaluation services**:

The service *Assessment of the situation, needs, strengths and risks of beneficiaries (and other important persons in their environment)*, exists and is available to beneficiaries this year. Currently 7 children, 8-12 years old, out of them 4 boys and 3 girls, are covered with this service. The center for social welfare as service provider needs additional office space, classrooms, computers and other office equipment.

The service of *Evaluation of caregivers, foster parents or adoptive parents* is in place and available for beneficiaries. The center for social welfare understands importance of foster care services and considers that more incentives must be provided for its further development. Currently 5 children (3 boys and 2 girls), at age between 10 and 16, are placed with foster families. Center for social welfare as service provider needs SOS line and more families to be included in foster care program.

The service *Development of an individual or family service delivery plan and legal protection measures (and other assessments and plans)* is in not place and not available to beneficiaries. The center for social welfare informed that this service was never implemented so far by this institution.

The service *Daily stay (daily care center or living room)* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Currently, 25 children at age of 3-14 use this service, out of them 13 boys and 12 girls. The service provider, center for social welfare, needs additional therapists, additional health care services for beneficiary children, additional space for educational activities and appropriate tools for work with children adapted to their abilities.

The service *Assistance at home* is in place and available to beneficiaries and provided by the center for social welfare, but mainly for elderly and adult persons in need (gerontological/house assistant).

The service *Shelter and other services that support placement of beneficiaries with the family or in their direct environment* is not introduced and not in place.

- ***Independent living support services***

The service *Supported housing* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Currently 8 children (9-13 years old) use this service, out of them 3 boys and 5 girls. Service provider, center for social welfare, needs additional human resources including speech and occupational therapists as well as additional accommodation capacities and services for daily educational work with children and development of their problem-solving skills.

The service *Personal assistant* is introduced and available to children beneficiaries. Currently 10 children, at age of 7-14, use the services of the personal assistants, out of them 8 boys and 2 girls. However, the service is not provided directly by the center for social welfare, but by the center for provision of community based social protection services "Jelena Anžuska". Service providers need capacity building of staff, school materials, didactic tools and vehicle for transport of children with disabilities.

The service *Training for independent living* is established and in place, but last 8 months it is not available for beneficiaries because the staff working on provision of the service does not have office premises. There are 10 children (5-15 years old) beneficiaries of the service, out of them 5 boys and 5 girls. Center for social welfare, as a service provider, needs space for training and counselling as well as computers.

- ***Counselling-therapeutic and social-educational services***

The service *Intensive support to family in crises* is not in place and available to beneficiaries.

The service *Counselling and support of caregivers, foster parents and adoptive parents*, is in place and available for beneficiaries. However, the budget used for provision of this service does not have sustainable funding. Currently, there are 20 children (8-14 years) beneficiaries of this service, out of them 9 boys and 11 girls. Center for social welfare, as a service provider, lacks human resources including counselling staff and therapists, and needs daily community-based services, space for counselling, inventory (tables and chairs), computers and other electronic equipment.

The service *Support to the family which provides care for child or adult person with disabilities* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Center for social welfare makes maximal efforts to provide comprehensive support to families in need. Currently, there are 9 children with disabilities (3-11 years old) whose families receive this support, out of them 5 boys and 4 girls. Most of these families are socio-economically vulnerable and beneficiaries of social assistance scheme. The center for social welfare, as a service provider, needs SOS helpline, daily and weekly visits of doctors, computers and electronic equipment.

The service *Maintaining family relations and family reunion*, is in not in place and available to beneficiaries.

The service *Counselling and support to children in the cases of violence* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Currently, there are 7 children beneficiaries of the service (5-14 years old), out of them 4 boys and 3 girls. The center for social welfare is service provider and needs SOS helpline, shelter for victims, workshops for training, additional office space, income generation opportunities for mothers of child victims, telephone, tables, chairs and computers.

The *Family therapy service* is in not place and available to beneficiaries.

*Mediation service* is not in place and available to beneficiaries.

*SOS helpline service* is not in place.

The *Activation service and other counselling and education services and activities* is in place and available for beneficiaries. Currently 8 children, 5-10 years old, are beneficiaries of the service, out of them 5 boys and 3 girls. The center for social welfare is service provider and needs training for occupational therapists, employment of educators and special educators, phonenumber, classrooms, computers and other electronic equipment.

- ***Housing/accommodation services***

The service *Placement in kinship, foster or other family* for adults and elderly is in place, and available for beneficiaries. Currently 7 children, from 8 to 14 years old, are placed through this service, out of them 4 boys and 3 girls. The center for social welfare, which is the service provider, needs additional occupational therapists, more families registered for foster care, beds, winter clothes and telephone line.

The service of *Accommodation in dormitories (residential care facilities)* is available, but beneficiaries are sent to residential care facilities in Serbia. The service is provided by the center for social welfare, which shared data from few years ago, when 28 children from Leposavić (10-16 years old) were placed with residential care dormitories in Serbia, out of them 11 boys and 17 girls. The facilities need classrooms, living rooms, additional educators, beds, tables, chairs and clothes.

The service *Shelter and other types of residence (accommodation)* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Currently 17 children, of age between 6 and 14 years, use this service, out of them 10 boys and 7 girls. The service provider, center for social welfare, needs occupational therapists and educators, space for classrooms and living rooms, beds, tables, chairs, and clothes.

### INDICATORS - Social Protection Leposavić Municipality

<b>Number of children receiving child allowance in rural areas (total)</b>	238 children (115 boys and 125 girls) Rural areas
	411 children (209 boys and 212 girls) Urban areas
<b>The number of households where at least one child receives child support allowance</b>	194 households
<b>Number of families of children with disabilities using financial allowance for assistance and care of another person (TPN)</b>	11
<b>Number of children with disabilities who use social protection services in the community:</b>	
The child's personal assistant (total)	11
number of children – boys	9
number of children – girls	2
number of children – age	From 8 to 18 years and older
Personal assistant of the child (total)	28
<b>Number of children with disabilities using social protection services:</b>	11 (9 boys and 2 girls of age 8 to 18)

**The number of children who use social protection services in the community:**

<b>Daily stay (total)</b>	25
number of children – boys	13
number of children – girls	12
number of children – age	From 3 to 14 years

<b>Supported housing (total)</b>	8
number of children – boys	3
number of children – girls	5
number of children (supported housing) – age	From 9 to 13 years

<b>Child's personal assistant (total)</b>	10
number of children – boys	8
number of children – girls	2
number of children – age	From 7 to 14 years

<b>Counselling -therapeutic services (total)</b>	7
number of children – boys	4
number of children – girls	3
number of children – age	From 5 to 14 years

**Number of children using social protection services: placement in kinship, foster or other family**

Number of children placed in kinship, foster or other family (total)	5
Number of children - boys	3



Number of children - girls	2
Number of children - age	From 6 to 10 years old

<b>Number of children in the local community who use residential care (placed in dormitories for children without parental care)</b>	28
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#### 4.2.2 Zvečan

The data collection process revealed that most of the services under the categories planning and evaluation, independent living support, counselling-therapeutic and social-educational services are not introduced in the practice of local social protection institutions. The most recent political developments resulted with additional challenges and created obstacles to service providers to reach out the most vulnerable children and their families with assistance and care programs. Unlike Zubin Potok and Leposavić, the access to social protection service and enjoyment of social rights of children in this municipality marks significant deterioration and negative trends in 2023. It applies for both social assistance scheme and long term support programs. Without fully functional municipal bodies, adoption of policy and planning documents was not possible, as well. The social protection infrastructure in the municipality now depends on other levels of governance and NGOs that can intervene in the given circumstances. Non-functioning local governance bodies creates a gap in the coordination of social services and hinders prompt and efficient response to the needs of the community.

- **Planning and evaluation services**

The service *Assessment of the situation, needs, strengths and risks of beneficiaries (and other important persons in their environment)*, is not in place.

The service of *Evaluation of caregivers, foster parents or adoptive parents* is not in place and beneficiaries don't have access to it.

The service *Development of an individual or family service delivery plan and legal protection measures (and other assessments and plans)* is in not place and available to beneficiaries. Even though it is included in the list of services, its practical implementation face challenges due to limited functioning of judiciary. Based on information from sectorial professional of the local center for social welfare, this area of social protection needs to be comprehensively reformed, while judicial component plays critical role in this process.

The service *Daily stay (daily care center or living room)* is not in place and available to beneficiaries. Center for social welfare does not have neither financial and material resources nor human capacities to introduce and maintain this service. In the assessment in 2021, this service was not in place, as well.

The service *Assistance at home* is in place and available to beneficiaries and provided by the center for social welfare but mainly for elderly adult persons in need (gerontological/house assistant). The same as in the case of Leposavić municipality, the service is outsourced to the center for provision of community based social protection services “Jelena Anžujaska”. This synergy and cooperation is assessed as a good practice of partnership between the institutions and civil society aimed at better outreach to beneficiaries and provision of holistic social protection services. Currently 10 gerontological assistants operate in Zvečan municipality, while the need significantly exceeds existing financial, technical, and human capacities. Based on available information, 6 children (7-14 years old) live in the households covered with this service, out of them 4 boys and 2 girls. There is a need for financial assistance, provision of hygienic materials and computers for more effective service provision.

The service *Shelter and other services that support placement of beneficiaries with the family or in direct environment* is not in place.

- ***Independent living support services***

The service *Supported housing* is not in place.

The service *Personal assistant* is available to children beneficiaries through cooperation with center for provision of community based social protection services “Jelena Anžujaska”. Currently, 10 children (7 - 14 years old) use this service, out of them 6 boys and 4 girls. Additional space, equipment and didactic tools as well as financial and human resources are needed for more effective service provision and outreach to all children in need.

The service *Training for independent living* is not introduced for beneficiaries in this municipality.

- ***Counselling-therapeutic and social-educational services***

The service *Intensive support to family in crises* is not available to beneficiaries.

The service *Counselling and support of caregivers, foster parents and adoptive parents*, is not in place and is unavailable for beneficiaries.

The service *Support to the family which provides care for child or adult person with disabilities* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Center for social welfare provides psychosocial counselling services and support to families in need to. Currently, 10 children with disabilities (7-14 years old) in these families are supported through this assistance, out of them, 6 boys and 4 girls.

The service *Maintaining family relations and family reunion*, is not available to beneficiaries.

The service *Counselling and support to children in the cases of violence* is in place and available to beneficiaries. It is comprehensive and includes range of protection and

reintegration services for victims. In 2023, 4 victims received psychosocial counselling and psychotherapeutic services through center for social welfare. However, some cases remain unreported to center for social welfare and other relevant institutions, and there is a need for continuous awareness raising with communities and victims to report violence and requests assistance and protection.

The *Family therapy service* is in place and available to beneficiaries, both with mental health institutions and with private psychologists and psychotherapists. This year, 2 cases of counselling in maintaining family relations were processed by the center for social welfare. The counselling sessions enable family members to explore challenges they face with in family dynamics. Through structured and carefully moderated dialogue, family members are supported to better understand their roles facilitating communication and conflict resolution. There is a need for development of protocols for managing stressful situations, and conflict resolution in formal and in-formal way. There is a need for financial assistance and additional human resources.

*Mediation service* is in not place and not available to beneficiaries in the center for social welfare in Zvečan.

*SOS helpline service* is in place and available to residents in Zvečan free of charge, but not with all mobile operators, what may be an issue in its practical use by beneficiaries due to language barrier. There is a need for more coordinated approach to make this service fully accessible for all residents in need, given that it is provided through the line ministry, but without effective coordination with local center for social welfare.

The *Activation service and other counselling and education services and activities* are not in place and available for beneficiaries in center for social welfare in Zvečan.

- ***Residential/housing services***

The service *Placement in kinship, foster or other family* for children is in place, and available for beneficiaries. Currently 1 boy, 18-year old, is placed in kinship through this service. The service was available in 2021 through the center for social welfare, which is the service provider,

The service of *Accommodation in dormitories (residential care facilities for children without parental care)* is not introduced and provided by the center for social welfare.

The service *Shelter and other types of residence (accommodation)* is not in place and available to beneficiaries.

**INDICATORS Social Protection Zvečan Municipality**

*The number of households where at least one child receives child allowance*

The number of households where at least one child receives child support	930, this service is provided through municipality
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*Number of families who use social security benefits (NSP)*

Number of families using social assistance scheme (NSP)	296
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*Number of children up to 14 years of age in families beneficiaries of social assistance*

Number of children up to 14 years of age in families beneficiaries of social assistance	53
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*Number of families of children with disabilities who use financial allowance for assistance and care of another person (TPN)*

Number of families of children with disabilities who use financial allowance for assistance and care of another person	10
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*Number of children with disabilities who use social protection services in the community:*

<b>Home support (total)</b>	10
Number of children – boys	6
Number of children – girls	4
Children – age	7-14
<b>Personal assistant (total)</b>	10
Number of children – boys	6
Number of children – girls	4
Children age	7-14

*Number of children using accommodation in kinship, foster or other family (total):*

<b>Number of children using accommodation in kinship, foster or other family (total)</b>	1
Number of children - boys	1
Number of children - girls	0
Children age	18

#### 4.2.3 Zubin Potok

Under the category of the **Planning and evaluation services**, the following types of services are provided:

The service *assessment of the situation, needs, strengths and risks of beneficiaries (and other important persons in their environment)*, is in place and available to beneficiaries. Currently 138 children use this service (gender disaggregated data are not available). The team in the center for social welfare works on adoption of strategies and action plans. However, there is lack of financial and material resources in the center, and continuous education of all staff in the institution is needed. The center needs additional space for daily care of children, dormitory accommodation, and stationary space, along with laptops, computers, and other supporting equipment.

The service of *Evaluation of caregivers, foster parents or adoptive parents*, is established and available for beneficiaries. Currently 30 children of age 0-18 are using this service, however the number of children varies. Gender disaggregated data were not available except that there are more boys than girls among beneficiary children. There is a lack of financial and material resources with service provider, center for social welfare, for more effective delivery of this service.

The service *Development of an individual or family service delivery plan and legal protection measures (and other assessments and plans)* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Based on the evaluation done by the center for social welfare, the team of the center develops the plan and program of support. The number of beneficiary children (age 0-18) is between 15 and 20, out of them 10 – 15 boys, and 5- 10 girls, and it varies over the year. The service provider, center for social welfare in Zubin Potok, needs material resources, additional space, and equipment.

The service *Daily stay (daily care center or living room)* is not available due to insufficient space in the center for social welfare, which is assigned as service provider.

The service *Assistance at home* is in place and available to beneficiaries and provided by the municipality. There is no precise information on the number of beneficiaries, however it is known that it is higher than existing service provision capacity. More funds are needed for employment of additional home care assistants. There is lack of space, equipment, and digital tools with service provider which is municipal department for social issues.

The service *Shelter and other services that support placement of beneficiaries with the family or in direct environment* does not exist. Based on the applicable legislation, it's not foreseen for smaller centers for social welfare, which are assigned as service providers.

- ***Independent living support services***

The service *Supported housing* is not in place, while the housing was provided for shorter term beneficiaries. For establishment and functioning of this service, the permission must be granted from the court, police and other relevant institutions.

The service *Personal assistant* was established and functioning, and personal assistants are available for children beneficiaries. The intersectoral commission within the municipal administration is assigned with needs assessment of beneficiaries. Currently, 11 children (7 - 18 years old) use this service, out of them 7 boys and 4 girls. Certainly, this number is not sufficient to support all children in need, and therefore financial resources are needed for employment of additional assistants. The service provider, center for social welfare, also needs additional space and digital equipment.

The service *Training for independent living* is not established and available for beneficiaries. The center for social welfare informed that it's not included in the applicable legislation and its area of responsibility.

- ***Counselling-therapeutic and social-educational services***

The service *Intensive support to family in crises* is available to beneficiaries and includes financial social assistance and counselling work with family. Approximately 100 children, 0-18 years old, are covered with this type of assistance. The service provider, center for social work, needs additional financial resources, space, and equipment.

The service *Counselling and support of caregivers, foster parents and adoptive parents*, is in place and available for beneficiaries. Currently, there are 23 children (0-18 years) beneficiaries of this service, out of them 15 in kinship and 8 with foster families (13 boys and 10 girls). Center for social welfare, as a service provider, lacks material resources and needs additional space and equipment.

The service *Support to the family which provides care for child or adult person with disabilities* is available to beneficiaries. Center for social welfare makes maximal efforts to provide comprehensive support to families in need. Currently, 40 families of adult persons with disabilities and 20 with children with disabilities are supported through this assistance. Out of 20 children with disabilities, 14 are boys and 6 girls. The center for social welfare, as a service provider, needs additional financial resources, space, and equipment.

The service *Maintaining family relations and family reunion*, is in place and available to beneficiaries. This service is mainly provided for the children of divorced parents and include counselling for reconciliation and visiting children under the controlled conditions. Currently,

35 children (0-18 years old) are covered with this service, out of them 21 boys and 14 girls. Center for social welfare, as service provider, needs additional material and financial resources, space and equipment.

The service *Counselling and support to children in the cases of violence* is in place and available to beneficiaries. The number of children beneficiaries is between 15 and 25, out of them 10-15 boys, and 5-10 girls. The center for social welfare is service provider.

The *Family therapy service* is in place and available to beneficiaries and includes in most of the cases work with psychotherapist. Between 15 and 25 children are beneficiaries of this service provided by the center for social welfare, out of them 10-15 boys and 5-10 girls.

*Mediation service* is in place and available to beneficiaries. Between 15 and 25 children are supported with this service provided by the center for social welfare, out of them 10-15 boys and 5-10 girls.

*SOS helpline service* is not in place, but there are official phonelines available to beneficiaries 24 hours per day. There is a need for employment of new operators and establishment of new helplines as well as additional space and equipment for service provider, center for social welfare.

The *Activation service and other counselling and education services and activities* are not in place and available for beneficiaries with center for social welfare.

- ***Housing/accommodation services***

The service *Placement in kinship, foster or other family* for adults and elderly is in place, and available for beneficiaries. This service is foreseen for adults 18-28 years old, while elderly persons are protected by the law which foresees that they should be supported by successors. Currently 5 adult persons are placed through this service. The center for social welfare, which is the service provider, needs additional financial resources and equipment for effective delivery of the service.

The service of *Accommodation in dormitories (residential care facilities)* is in place, and available to beneficiaries. The service is regularly provided by the center for social welfare. The center needs additional financial resources and expansion of the accommodation capacity of the dormitory, inventory and equipment for the facility.

The service *Shelter and other types of residence (accommodation)* is not foreseen in the applicable legislation and consequently not in place and available to beneficiaries.

**INDICATORS - Social Protection Zubin Potok Municipality**

Number of children receiving child benefit in rural areas (total)	1123
Number of households where at least one child receives child support	467
Number of families using social assistance (cash)	232 at the moment, but the number varies
Number of children up to 14 years of age in families beneficiaries of social assistance	80 at the moment, but the number varies
Number of families of children with disabilities using financial allowance for assistance and care of another person (TPN)	15 annually
Number of children with disabilities using social protection services in the community:	
Child's personal assistant (total)	11
number of children – boys	7
number of children – girls	4
number of children – age	7 – 18 years old
The number of children who use social protection services in the community:	<p>11 children (personal assistant) 7 boys 4 girls From 7 to 18 years</p> <p>23 children (advisory therapeutic services) 13 boys 10 girls From 0 to 18 years</p>



Number of children using social protection services: placement with relative (kinship), foster or other family:

Number of children using accommodation in kinship, foster or other family (total)	5 adults
Number of children - boys	5
Number of children - girls	0
Number of children - age	From 18 to 26 years

Number of abused and neglected children registered in social work centers (total)	It was in the past, but the Center for Social Work solved the problem.
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### 4.3 Policies and regulations

In the domain of policies and regulations, positive developments this year include design of three-year local action plans 2022-2024 on advancing health care services for children and parents in municipalities Laposavić, Zvečan and Zubin Potok deigned by family medicine centers focussing on immunization and community nursing (patronage). This is major shift towards adopting strategic approach to child health protection and improved policies and practices aimed at fulfilment of child rights on the health care. The key areas of interventions for all municipalities include access to and quality of services, data collection, human resources development, and infrastructure and equipment.

Another important step forward is development of the Action plan for improvement of status of children with disabilities in Zubin Potok.

#### 4.3.1 Action plan on Advancing Health Care Services for Children and Parents produced by family medicine centers

- **Municipality Laposavić**

The overall goal of the action plan for municipality Laposavić is to improve access to quality health care services for all children residing in the area. Specific objectives include improved effectiveness, access to, and quality of community nursing services and immunization, better access to data for planning and delivery of immunization, community nursing services and budget allocations, increased knowledge, and skills of relevant staff in the fields of immunization and community nursing, and availability of infrastructure and equipment for service delivery in the entire territory of the municipality.

The measures for delivery of projected results under specific objectives include diverse awareness raising activities implemented through educational workshops, parents counselling, production and dissemination of promotional materials on immunization and follow up and support to the most vulnerable families and those at risk. In addition, they include development of electronic database for immunization, training of staff, establishment of the system for tracking and reporting on home visits, preparation of relevant statistical reports and training of staff on early detection of developmental issues and early intervention with children in need. Moreover, they foresee procurement of specific equipment for the community nursing service, equipment for follow up of specific parameters of child growth and development, purchase of mobile refrigerators for vaccines, medical waste storage, vehicles for field operations, sterilization equipment, inventory for storage of medicines and documentation, furniture, etc.

- ***Municipality Zvečan***

The overall objective of the action plan in Zvečan is that health services in the field of immunization and community nursing for children better respond to the needs of service users. Specific objectives include improving the availability and quality of immunization and community nursing services for children and parents, establishment of electronic system for improved access and analysis of data within the Health Center Zvečan, strengthening the capacity of employees in the health center for proactive provision of medical services, and more effective response of health care providers to the needs of users with contemporary equipment and infrastructure.

The measures for achieving expected results include creating multisectoral groups/teams for improving children's health, establishment of ultrasound hip screening service, counselling sessions with parents on the role of immunisation and vaccination calendar, counselling sessions with mothers in the prenatal period, children and adolescents, advisory services on care, hygiene and nutrition of newborns and introduction of a Call Center. Furthermore, key measures include introduction of a new electronic data management system, transfer of data in electronic forms, introduction of electronic vaccine records, introduction of electronic community nursing forms and procurement of computers. Moreover, they foresee education of physicians for paediatric ultrasound screening of infants, continuing education of nurses and technicians, training of nurses to use blood count ingestions, training on use of information technology and digital tools in monitoring child development and parental counselling, and training on communication skills of managerial staff. Finally, they include procurement of diagnostic equipment, purchase of equipment for monitoring growth and development and vital parameters, procurement of digital equipment for community nursing service, purchase of medical and technical equipment for field work and purchase of a terrain vehicle for community nursing (patronage) service.

- ***Municipality Zubin Potok***

The overall objective of the action plan for Zubin Potok is to improve availability of primary health care services in rural areas of municipality. Specifically, the objectives are improving the availability and quality of health services for children and parents in rural areas,

improving the performance of health care providers through the establishment of a system for electronic data collection and analysis, strengthening the professional capacities of employees and improving the quality of primary health services with modern medical and technical equipment.

The key measures for delivery of expected results include counselling sessions with mothers in the prenatal period, advisory services on care, hygiene and nutrition of newborns, increased coverage of rural areas with home visits, advisory services and brochures on the role of vaccination and prevention of infectious diseases, and advisory services on the introduction of post breastfeeding nutrition of children. In addition, they include creating an electronic database of users of community nursing services, introduction of electronic vaccine files, development of electronic database of systematic examinations of children, capacity building of medical personnel to use electronic data entry and utilisation systems, and empowering community nursing service with digital tools for monitoring and reporting on home visits. Furthermore, they contain training for ultrasound examination of child hips, specialized trainings for paediatricians, development of individual education plans in the field of community nursing, immunization and paediatrics, exchange of experience and knowledge with community nursing associations in the region, advanced training for IT unit on the use of digital tools and electronic systems for the exchange of information, and recruitment and orientation of new (deficient) personnel. Other key measures comprehend procurement of medical equipment and technical equipment for field work, equipment for monitoring and reporting, equipment for monitoring child growth and development and vital parameters, dental equipment, diagnostic equipment (ECG, haematology analyser, ergo-chemistry tape, ultrasound probe, etc) and technical equipment (LCD projector, laptop, multifunctional printer, etc).

- ***Municipal Action Plan for Improvement of Status of Children with Disabilities in Zubin Potok***

This is another positive development in the field of policy and regulations in this municipality. The overall objective of this action plan is to improve the quality of life of children with disabilities, with specific objectives to improve the availability and quality of services in the education system, health care, and social protection, respectively. The key measures for improvement of education include creating conditions for establishment of new early childhood development centers, introduction and advancing of the service of pedagogical assistants, and improving the functionality of the Intersectoral Commission (IRK). The key measure under the health care includes development of capacities of health care staff and health care associates. The measures foreseen for improved social protection services of children with disabilities include support to their families, capacity building of relevant professionals supporting their parents, and introduction of daily care services and services of personal assistants for children with disabilities.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1 Education

This year's data collection exercise again showed negative trends of declining numbers of children in almost all levels of education and in all municipalities. The most affected are municipalities Leposavić and Zubin Potok, which are composed predominantly of rural areas, without sufficiently developed road infrastructure and services in remote villages, which face rapid depopulation over the many years. To illustrate these conclusions, the comparative review of the number of children in nursery in last two years indicates decreased number of children in 2023 compared with 2022. Number of children in kindergarten have also declined in this year's assessment for considerable percentage as well as in the preparatory pre-school program. Similar trends are noticed on the level of lower and upper grades of primary education and secondary education.

In Zubin Potok municipality, the most affected are schools "Blagoje Radić" in village Zupče, and "Petar Kočić" in village Brnjak, but also early education facilities, primary and secondary schools in Zubin Potok town. Number of children in nursery in Zubin Potok significantly decreased in 2023 compared with 2021 (data for 2022 were not available). The same declining trend was registered in the kindergarten. In lower grades of primary education, school "Blagoje Radić" in village Zupče reported decrease in number of children in 2023 compared with 2021. The same applies for the school "Petar Kočić" in village Brnjak. In upper grades of primary education, school "Jovan Cvijić" in Zubin Potok reported slight decrease in number of children in comparison with 2021. Similar trend was found in school "Blagoje Radić" in Zupče. Secondary school in Zubin Potok also marked considerable decrease in number of schoolchildren attending in 2023 compared with 2021.

In Zvečan, declining number of children in 2023 compared with 2022 was reported for nurseries and secondary school.

All schools need support for additional space, equipment, contemporary teaching tools investment in teaching cabinets and continuous capacity building of teachers. Children show great interest for extracurricular activities and non-formal education, and efforts should be made to assist schools with investment in these fields. The cooperation with civil society and international organizations in this respect will bring additional opportunities.

It is very difficult to alleviate negative trends caused with migration of population given that it is linked with many factors including economic opportunities for people, access to services and infrastructure. In the case of northern Kosovo, political situation is another push factor for migrations, affecting also overall socio-economic development. Additional investment in school infrastructure and improved quality of education is absolutely recommended along with more strategic approach to education in the framework of integrated service delivery for children.

## 5.2 Social Protection

This year's data collection report marks progress made by relevant service providers in the field of social protection. The introduction of services of personal assistant and foster care for children in need must be acknowledged as a positive development.

Overall, the progress in access to social protection services noticed in this year's edition of data collection report could be associated with more pro-active approach of centers for social welfare, but also with much better access to data sources during the data collection process. However, it is noteworthy that number of available services for children beneficiaries in 2023 is remarkably higher despite all difficulties for functioning of service providers in target municipalities, especially after the COVID-19 restrictions, and follow up political crises. Tangible progress in service provision was registered particularly in Zubin Potok and Leposavić municipalities, in all four categories of services including evaluation and planning, independent living support, counselling-therapeutic and social-education services and housing/accommodation services. Situation in Zvečan remained relatively unchanged, with some improvements on the level of individual services. The indicators that 1123 children receive allowance through social protection system, and 11 children with disabilities have personal assistant in Zubin Potok are encouraging. In Leposavić, 638 children receive child allowance, while 11 children with disabilities use the service of personal assistant and 5 children were placed with foster care families.

The lack of funding, adequate infrastructure, equipment and professional staff remain the key challenges for more effective service provision. Political situation creates additional obstacles and consequently many social services lack appropriate legal framework and supervision. The unclear division of labour between the service providers in two systems results in ambiguities in the application of prescribed measures and rings uncertainty regarding the rights of citizens and obligations of institutions.

## 5.3 Policy and regulations

The beginning of strategic planning in the health care services for children is valuable and noteworthy progress in municipalities Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić, and good example of concrete benefits that cooperation with civil society and other partners may bring for local health facilities. It is expected to contribute to better needs assessment and more effective service delivery, and open new channels of cooperation, fund-raising and resource mobilisation for implementation of children and adolescents' health preventive programs. An important aspect is that municipal action plan for health care services for children plans were developed with strong local ownership given that representatives of service providers were directly involved in the process and provided comprehensive input based on the practical experience.





