

BEST PRACTICES MODEL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the resulting best practices that have been established as the result of the work of Save the Children International in Kosovo with the support of the IKEA Foundation through Save the Children Sweden. The support of IKEA Foundation was provided for the period a three-years from 2013 to 2015. The support has been provided under the project titled ‘Realizing the rights of minority and disabled children in Kosovo’ in 9 target municipalities: in 9 preschool institutions and 9 primary schools. The aim of this report is to assess the success of the projects and present the best practices derived as a result of the project that could be replicated in other non-project targeted municipalities and educational institutions.

The good practices that are presented are:

- The adoption and implementation of the Index for Inclusion
- Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Non – formal education for children with disabilities
- Child-led Municipal Assemblies
- Didactic Manual for Prevention of Violence in Schools

All projects have been piloted and implemented in targeted municipalities as planned. Targeted schools are familiar and use the Index for Inclusion, which due to the advocacy work of Save the Children has been included in the Strategy of Pre-University Education 2011-2016. The inclusion of children with disabilities and children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities has increased during the implementation of the project. Relevant stakeholders have been trained in relevant skills for ensuring that the targeted schools are reforming into inclusive educational environments. Similarly, Individual Education Plans for children with disabilities have been adopted and are being used by targeted schools.

The relentless support to non-formal education for children with disabilities implemented by the local partner Handikos¹ has been pivotal in supporting

¹ “Handikos” (Association of Paraplegics and Child Paralysis of Kosovo) is a local NGO, a leading agency in Kosovo in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, established in 1983. The Handikos network consists of 13 local offices in different municipalities of Kosovo where peer counselling and other activities are organized and 14 Community Based Rehabilitation centres (CBR) running providing primary physical rehabilitation and game development activities.

children with disabilities, parents, educators and teachers in transitioning students with disabilities to mainstream education.

The Child-led Municipal Assemblies have been established for the first time in some municipalities and have been re-activated in others. The support provided to local institutions in functionalizing the Assemblies has resulted in dynamic and active participation of children in matters related to them. The implications of supporting the Child-led Municipal Assemblies and empowering children are manifold, most notably in ensuring that they act as important agents in stopping corporal punishment still prevalent in most schools.

In the same vein Save the Children has distributed the Didactic Manual for Prevention of Violence designed for teachers to use as a tool for raising awareness among children about different forms of violence through interactive in class sessions.

In addition to good practices that have been established the challenges that have been encountered have been presented. The aim of taking stock of challenges in the process is to help the relevant institutions help to mitigate and overcome them. Lack of financial support to ensure the longevity of the good work established by the projects is one of the challenges that needs to be tackled at the institutional level especially concerning the work of local rehabilitation centers who do the bulk of the work with children with disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

For the compilation of the report a desk review of project reports for each of the good practices presented has been consulted. In addition, all the manuals, publications, brochures, and handouts pertaining to the projects has been reviewed. The corresponding legislation has also been reviewed.

In addition to the desk review interviews have been conducted with the following stakeholders: Head of Division for Special Needs within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on the Index for Inclusion and Individual Education Plans; Project Coordinator for the Save the Children project at Handikos on their work on non-formal education; Child Rights coordinators from Municipal Education Directorates in Gjakova/Djakovica and Mitrovica South; Non-formal Educator at the Handikos Community Based Rehabilitation Centre in Gjakova/Djakovica. In addition, the staff of Save the Children responsible for each project has been interviewed and provided their insights and comments throughout the process. Finally, members of the Child-led Municipal Assembly in Gjakova/Djakovica were interviewed on their work to date as well as the President of the Municipal Child-led Assembly in Mitrovica South.

INTRODUCTION: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To date the inclusion of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities in formal education has been a challenge for the Kosovar institutions. Similarly, children with disabilities were also largely left out of the formal educational system. The obstacles for deprived children to enroll into pre-primary and primary education are manifold and Save the Children has been working on lessening the obstacles and ensuring that the children from minority communities and children with disabilities have access to education by promoting inclusive and participatory approach to education.

The project “Realizing the rights of minority and disabled children in Kosovo” specifically promotes the right to education for marginalized children in Kosovo. The projects’ main focus is to establish an environment for inclusive education principally at the pre-primary and primary level, a safe and secure school environment, awareness among authorities and civil society on children’s rights and the importance of children participation in decision making related to them. Save the Children together with its local civil-society partners in Kosovo has been working on promoting and establishing inclusive educational institutions as well as providing assistance to children.

The “Realizing the rights of minority and disabled children in Kosovo” project with the financial support of IKEA Foundation through Save the Children Sweden has been implemented in 18 preschool and primary educational institutions in 9 target municipalities in Kosovo (Prishtina, Peja/Pec, Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovica North, Mitrovica South, Gracanica, and Ferizaj). The direct beneficiaries of the project were:

- Children with disabilities
- Children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

Other beneficiaries of the project include teachers, school administrators, school children, municipal staff responsible for working with children, and local CSOs.

The specific objectives of the project were the following:

- By 2015, 1,000 children from deprived groups out of which 600 children with disabilities and 400 children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities aged 5-8 years old have access to participatory and inclusive quality pre-primary and primary education.

- By 2015, 12,000 children from project locations have access to a safe and secure school environment with functioning protection mechanisms.
- By 2015, duty bearers at municipal and central level and Civil-Society Organizations promote children's rights and have involved children systematically.

The project's focus on pre-primary and primary schooling has proved to be a strategic starting point for ensuring marginalized children's right to education and to other rights beyond education, building on the links that early education can build between families, schools and communities to ensure that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and children with disabilities are included in different sectors of society. Moreover, Save the Children anticipates that the focus on creating a safe and secure school environment and on promoting children's direct participation and children's rights perspectives among duty-bearers and civil-society organizations will have a wider positive impact on children in the schools, families and communities in the project locations, during and beyond the project's term.

The project interventions were implemented in partnership with local civil-society organizations, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and respective Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs). Through the collaboration and partnership with the respective institutions Save the Children continues to contribute to the strengthening of local ownership and most importantly investing in ensuring the sustainability beyond the project's term.

The specific projects that have been implemented and supported over the past five years and are under review in this report are the following:

- The adoption and implementation of the Index for Inclusion
- Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Non – formal education for children with disabilities
- Child-led Municipal Assemblies
- Didactic Manual for Prevention of Violence in Schools

The aim of the report is to take stock of the above mentioned projects, assess the best practices that have been established as a result and serve as a guide for future scaling of the successful components in schools Kosovo wide as well as present the challenges that have been encountered during the process with the hope of mitigating and responding accordingly.



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INDEX FOR INCLUSION

The Index for Inclusion is a set of indicators designed to help and guide schools towards becoming inclusive learning environments by building supportive communities and promoting high achievement among school children, educators and staff. The Index for Inclusion, translated by Save the Children in 2010 was distributed to schools, Municipal Education Directorates and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Through the advocacy work of Save the Children, the Index for Inclusion has been included in the Strategy of Pre-University Education 2011-2016 (excluding Northern Kosovo since it operates under the Serbian curriculum) and since been used to promote inclusive education. Through the support of Save the Children, targeted schools in Kosovo had an opportunity to undergo a process of training to learn how to use the Index for Inclusion and adapt it in their yearly development plans.

The Index for Inclusion provides a set of indicators that help the school staff to conduct a process of self-assessment with the aim of identifying barriers to learning and participation and how they can be overcome to provide a harmonious, safe, inclusive and supportive environment of children with different learning styles.

It is worth noting that the importance of the Index for Inclusion and its usage lies in its attempt to reform the school by changing the practices of how teaching is conducted, increasing the participation of children, empowering parents and children to be active participants of the learning process and policies that affect them, forging ties between the community and schools, and creating a safe space for all children.

Save the Children has provided training for the implementation of the Index for Inclusion to teachers and staff of 16 pre-primary and primary educational institutions. In addition to trainings two experts were engaged by Save the Children to monitor the activities of each phase.

As a result of the support of Save the Children in this process the following practices are in place:

- Coordinating teams in schools have been established. The work of the coordinating teams consists of implementing the Index for Inclusion and seeing it through the 5 phases and developing plans accordingly.
- Teachers, educators, and school staff have been trained in research skills and feel comfortable to implement the Index for Inclusion in the future. The know-how gained through the trainings will be disseminated to the school personnel by the teachers that have undergone the trainings by Save the Children, thus ensuring that the project is sustainable beyond the pilot trainings.
- Teachers, educators, and staff feel that their contribution in the development of a school development plan based on their research is valued. Moreover, through interviews teachers report that they are more open and better prepared to provide support to their students, especially children with disabilities.
- Through the trainings the schools have built their capacities to identify the problems and challenges themselves.
- Through the trainings the schools are more knowledgeable in managing and using their internal human and financial resources to respond to the problems and challenges that have been identified in the research phase.

- The involvement and participation of parents has been improved and parents feel that their input is important.
- Individual Education Plans are in place and used by teachers to provide support to children with disabilities. In turn, teachers feel that they are better prepared and supported by the school and institutions to implement the Individual Education Plan and support children with disabilities.
- Educators and teachers of 8 pre-primary institutions and 9 primary schools, in the 8 focal municipalities, have increased understanding, skills and tools on how to implement an inclusive curriculum, contributing to improving the quality of education and avoiding barriers for inclusion of marginalized children in education.
- Improved collaboration through consultative meetings between the Handikos staff, Professional Resource Team² members and support/inclusive educators and teachers were held with the intention of sharing the information and knowledge towards integration of children with disabilities in preschool, pre-primary and primary education.
- The Municipal Education Directorates of the municipalities of Gjakova/Djakovica and Mitrovica South have taken over the payment of the salaries for the Inclusive Educators from September 2013 onwards.
- The Municipal Education Directorates in 7 targeted municipalities have included financial and staffing resources in their working plan for 2014 for covering the salaries of Inclusive Educators - starting from January 2014 onwards.
- In an effort to transfer knowledge, Handikos staff has supported the pre-school and pre-primary institutions and primary schools on how to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream education, using its long experience of working with children with disabilities.
- The cooperation between representatives of educational institutions, civil society organizations and parents/community towards integration of marginalized children in education has been improved.

2 Professional Resource Teams at the municipal level composed of professionals from different fields (education, health, social welfare) in 7 targeted municipalities have actively monitored the project, met regularly with parents and Inclusive Educators, advising on how to enrol children with disabilities in mainstream education and following up on the individual education plans and development of these children.

- As a result of joint awareness raising activities implemented by Save the Children and its implementing partners, the link between schools, parents and municipal education authorities has been strengthened.
- An increased involvement and communication of parents in the process of registering marginalized children in schools has been recorded.
- Schools, parents and local professionals are closely cooperating through developing and reviewing Individual Education Plans and designing school development plans based on the school priorities identified.
- A network of pre-primary and primary institutions that have been trained and have used the Index for Inclusion has been created with the objective of supporting each other, exchanging experience, and identifying methods for further development.

Challenges

The relative novelty of the Index for Inclusion as a tool for the educational institutions in Kosovo despite being embraced by MEST, MEDs and schools that have undergone training carries with it beginner's challenges that need to be addressed prior to scaling the Index for Inclusion Kosovo wide. Some challenges that have been put forth in interviews with the relevant stakeholders include:

- Commitment by the school principals to support the coordinating team throughout the different phases of the implementing the Index for Inclusion. While the majority of the piloted schools have been supportive during the process, some schools have faced internal obstacles to concluding the work.
- Potential abandonment of the work on the Index after the project has been completed. In order to ensure that the Index becomes truly part of the school strategy the Index should become an integral part of MEST policies and should be a requirement from MEST for it to be implemented. Monitoring teams should be dispatched to schools to ensure that they are complying with the implementation of inclusive policies.

- Lack of in-school human resource capacity. While this varies from school to school, it came up in interviews that more training should be made available to familiarize the teaching staff on the importance of the Index for Inclusion and the ways that they can implement it themselves. This in turn would lead to overall capacity building and further dissemination of knowledge at the school level.
- In order to ensure long term success advocacy efforts should be devoted to make the Index for Inclusion part of the curriculum in the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina.



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INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is an official pedagogical document aimed at developing a study programme for the children with special educational needs. Its strength lies in the design that is based on the unique needs of every child put in place in order to overcome barriers in education. IEPs are designed to systematically analyze a child's development by breaking the learning in parts and components that can continuously provide insights into a child's knowledge and life skills.

IEPs, prepared based on a child's diagnosis, can be initiated by the child's parents and/or educators and are developed through a collaborative process including the parents, schools, educators of community based resource centers, the Evaluating Team at the municipal level and whenever possible the participation of the child him/herself.

The implementation of the IEPs began in 2011 through Save the Children's project "Inclusion of children with special education needs in preschool institution and primary schools in Kosovo" in 7 target municipalities that were chosen for piloting the project. School administrators, teachers, inclusive educators, parents, and members of support teams from each municipality were trained on IEP design and adoption, integration of the regular curriculum into the IEPs, empowering of parents to seek an active role in the design process, building professional skills of Evaluation Teams³, teachers, educators and school administrators. As a result of the project the implementation and application of the Individual Education Plans has been put in place and the number of children with disabilities benefitting from the programme has increased.

Since the start of the project implementation of the IEPs in the assigned municipalities the following practices have been put in place:

- IEPs for the students with disabilities are in place and are being used in pre-primary and primary educational institutions. Monitoring visits have confirmed that the IEPs are used by all educational institutions.
- An additional form designed by Save the Children and Professional Resource Teams members is used to develop more detailed and concrete weekly action plans to further strengthen the support for the development of each child.
- IEPs have been developed through a collaborative process that has been put in place to engage all the relevant stakeholders including the school, parents, children, educators of community based rehabilitation centres and other relevant personnel.
- As a result of the accredited training modules on qualitative inclusive education by MEST including the Index for Inclusion and IEP provided by Save the Children educators of pre-primary and primary institutions have improved their skills and tools to implement inclusive teaching techniques.
- Teachers and educators of the targeted preschool institutions and primary schools have improved their professional skills in working with children with disabilities through the support of Professional Resource Team members who have regularly reviewed children's progress through IEPs.

3 Evaluation Teams at the municipal level composed of professionals from the fields of education, health and social welfare are responsible for identification and evaluation of children with special needs to be enrolled into mainstream education.

- Teachers, educators and parents have established a collaborative partnership amongst each other and provide continuous support to children with disabilities and monitor the progress of the child as the child moves from pre-primary to primary education.
- The parents of children with disabilities have increased their awareness on the benefits of the IEPs and their participation in preschools schools. They have become more vocal, communicative and supportive to the school personnel.
- The parents of children with disabilities have become much more knowledgeable on the resources available for their children and participate and have become more active participants in the process of IEP design.
- The parents of children with disabilities through the provided trainings have become more empowered in voicing their concerns and advocating on behalf of their children to local institutions. In addition, the IEPs broken into weekly action plans have allowed parents to target their work with the children at home and monitor his/her development and closely work with the educators and teachers to provide the support needed.
- Inclusive teachers have developed weekly reporting templates for parents in order to encourage them to monitor and report their child's development, ailments, and progress. It has been reported that when the reporting templates are used by the parents at home the child shows further signs of improvement as opposed to parents who do not regularly monitor and report their child's behavior on a daily basis.
- Regular consultative meetings with the municipal support team, parents, and inclusive teachers have been established and have proven to contribute considerably to the development of children with disabilities by allowing the relevant stakeholders to discuss, exchange experiences and amend according to needs throughout the process.
- A significant contribution of the project has been the data collection process whereby progress reports and portfolio evidence are in place for each child and have been shared during the reviewing process. This process has allowed for improvement of the IEPs continuously to reflect the changes that the child has undergone, what works and what doesn't and respond to the arisen situations accordingly.

- Compared to the past years, as a result of the continued efforts and engagement of Save the Children and the local partners perceptions on the abilities of children with disabilities to learn and improve have changed drastically.
- The prejudice and stigma associated with children with disabilities has been significantly altered. The educational staff and personnel in pre-primary and primary education has become increasingly supportive, aware and more open towards children with disabilities. Similarly, the response of the community towards inclusion has changed and become more positive.

Challenges

The achievements of the project and the establishment of good practices in the educational institutions have been vast over the past years a couple of challenges that need to be addressed institutionally remain.

- Continuous training for the educational personnel that works with children with disabilities needs to be provided on an institutional level. Long term planning on staffing relevant positions with professionally prepared educators needs to be developed to ensure long term sustainability and transfer of know-how.
- To ensure the successful transition of children with disabilities from non-formal education to formal education a teaching assistant/second teacher needs to be provided by the school. To date, the teachers in the majority of the cases are left unsupported in dealing with children with disabilities in their classroom which in the long run might jeopardize the successful transition and integration in formal education.
- Access to school infrastructure for children with disabilities still remains a challenge Kosovo wide and should be addressed by the institutions to facilitate the integration children with disabilities in the formal public spaces.



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NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Since 2011, Save the Children has supported the work of community rehabilitation/resource centers that provide physical rehabilitation care to children with disabilities, organize educational activities and provide a meeting place for families of children with disabilities.

The work of Handikos has been paramount in identifying and registering children with disabilities. The dedicated staff of Handikos has conducted field visits and employed the door-to-door method to identify families that have members with special needs. In addition, their work contributed immensely in lessening the prejudice and stigma that the families and the children with disabilities face.

The continuous support to Handikos by Save the Children has contributed to the establishment of the following practices:

- Handikos organized meetings with parents of children with disabilities, Professional Resource Team members, school and pre-school principals, Inclusive Educators in 8 municipalities to discuss and exchange information related to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in formal educational institutions.
- As a result of the work of Handikos parents of children with disabilities are aware of the rights that their children have to an inclusive and qualitative education.
- Handikos provides inclusive cultural and art activities on a weekly basis in their premises. The activities attended have encouraged children with disabilities to socialize and participate in a learning environment.
- Handikos organized school visits to the rehabilitation centres. The visits played an important role in decreasing stigma and prejudices among other school children towards children with disabilities. This is an activity that is particularly important in lieu of transitioning children with disabilities to mainstream education. The non-formal education that Handikos provides to children with disabilities plays an important role in preparing the children and parents for an easier transition in formal educational institutions. The non-formal education curriculum is based on the curriculum used in formal education thus enabling the children to get prepared following the formal curriculum. In addition, educators at the pre-school are supported by the educators and staff of Handikos when the children leave the rehabilitation center and move to mainstream education.
- The utilization of Individual Education Plans by educators at Handikos establishes a holistic assessment of the child's needs and unique abilities. The transfer of the Individual Education Plan from the Handikos educators to teachers in mainstream schools eases the transition as well as provides added support teachers in mainstream schools in equipping them with knowledge to better handle individual cases.
- The Handikos staff has a pivotal role in supporting the pre-school and pre-primary institutions and primary schools on how to integrate children with disabilities into formal education, using its long experience of working with children with disabilities.
- Parental advocacy groups have been established in 7 municipalities and empowered to raise their concerns, issues and lobby more effectively with the local and national institutions.
- Continuous contact between the parental advocacy groups and local government has been established. As a result of this collaboration the parents have succeeded to secure financial support for the Community Based Rehabilitation centres in their municipalities which will be used for delivering activities for children with disabilities within the centres.

- The parental advocacy groups meet on weekly bases and discuss the challenges that they are facing to integrate their children in education and sharing experiences in overcoming them. The parental advocacy groups have been very important in lessening the stigma and providing parents with a space where they can share their stories and build a support group.
- Through the awareness-raising meetings organised by Handikos, 944 parents of children with disabilities and 32 parents of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children have gained knowledge on children's rights, the importance of inclusive education for all, and the importance of pre-primary education for marginalised children.
- Educators and staff of Handikos centres have been trained on inclusive education training modules (including Index for Inclusion and Individual Education Plan) to build their capacities in providing non-formal education for children with disabilities.
- Financial support has been ensured by the Municipal Assemblies of 7 project targeted municipalities for the Handikos rehabilitation centres for covering transportation costs (fuel), centres' utilities, communication costs and organisation of a summer camp for children with disabilities.

Challenges

- Institutional financial support for the rehabilitation centres of Handikos remains a continuous challenge. The support differs by municipality but the majority of the Handikos centres struggles for financial sustainability. An egregious example is the Handikos centre in the municipality of Gjakova/Djakovica where the physical rehabilitation care taker has not been paid since January of this year. This lack of support might endanger the ability of the centres to provide services in the future.
- Another challenge as derived from the interviews is the preparation of educators in using the Individual Education Plan. While progress has been made over the past four years, the inadequate preparation and training to prepare and use the Individual Education Plans poses challenges in responding to the needs of the children.
- Financial support for the transportation of the children to the Handikos centres, especially from rural areas remains an obstacle to service provision. The support differs based on the municipality with some municipalities having sufficient support and some having none. Keeping in mind that many families rely on the provided transportation to send their children to Handikos centres, the issue needs to be made a priority.
- Continuous financial support for local rehabilitation centers needs to be put in place to ensure sustainability beyond the Save the Children support. Local rehabilitation centers play a paramount role in identifying and registering children with disabilities, providing physical rehabilitation therapy and playing an important role as non-formal educational institutions.



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CHILD - LED MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES (CLMA)

The promotion of the rights of children and raising awareness on the importance of child participation as full citizens with equal rights is one of the main pillars of Save the Children's work. In the field of Child Rights Governance (CRG) Save the Children works to ensure that duty bearers for child rights at the local level are aware of the rights codified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and work continuously to improve the lives of children in Kosovo. Article 12 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that every child has the right to be heard on issues that affect him or her and in all arenas where decisions are made that affect children.

This right to be heard should be met in regard to individual children and children as a group. Thus, during 2015 Save the Children has dedicated its work on strengthening child – led groups at the local and national level.

The aim of the project has been to organize child-led groups and give them a voice to advocate on their behalf and present the most pressing issues that affect them. The CRG program overall is being implemented in several primary schools in 7 municipalities in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Pejë/Pec, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Prizren, Gjakovë/Djakovica, Prishtinë/Pristina and Ferizaj/Urosevac municipalities.

Save the Children continues to work closely with municipal Child Rights Coordinators to advocate and build support for the establishment of Child-led Municipal Assemblies (CLMA) in 4 municipalities - and activating strengthening the Assemblies that have already been formed in 3 municipalities. The CLMAs will advocate for children's rights and raise concerns that are pressing to children. The CLMAs consist of children from grades 6 - 9 of every primary school in the municipality and serve as a representative body of all the children living in one municipality, including children from minority communities and children with disabilities

As a result of the work on the CLMAs the following practices have been put in place:

- To date, the CLMAs in 6 municipalities have been established and successfully operate under the supervision and support of the Child Rights Coordinators.
- Awareness on the Convention of the Rights of Child has been raised among school children, municipal duty bearers, teachers, parents and school staff.
- The CLMAs have held monthly (in some municipalities bi-monthly) meetings and each of the 6 Assemblies has drafted an individual 2-year action plan of the Assembly outlining the issues and the needs that they will focus on.
- Children expressed that they have regained the trust, that their voices are being heard and that they are able to affect changes. During the interview with the members of the CLMA in Gjakova/Djakovica they shared a success story of their advocacy initiative concerning a teacher who used corporal punishment in class. As the result of the work of the CLMA that raised the issue with the Child Rights Coordinator to the Municipal Education Directorate the teacher has been suspended for 6 months. The reaction and support of the local institutions has strengthened the belief that the CLMA is heard and actions are being taken to respond to their complaints.
- Collaboration and trust between CLMA and local institutions, namely the Child Rights Coordinator, have been established.
- Designated locations have been placed at the disposal of the CLMAs within the premises of the local institutions for meetings.

- For International Children’s Day the CLMA members travelled to Prishtina/Pristina and met with the Minister of Education. The CLMA members that were interviewed mentioned the promises that the Minister has made to them regarding computer and science labs and that they intend to remind him of the made promise when the time comes. Overall, children in the CLMAs were very active in voicing their opinions and possess a sense of empowerment and agency which was the aim of the project.
- Another important contribution of the CLMAs lies in the effort that the members of the CLMAs will continue to invest in raising awareness and advocate for Child Rights in their respective schools. Moreover, they directly represent the importance of participating and advocating for the improvement of their day-to-day school environment to their peers.
- SCL is working in creating groups of children from different ethnicities, ability, socio-economic background, family structures and other vulnerable groups in order to ensure that the specific problems of this groups are addressed through the CLMA.

Challenges

- A challenge to the work and empowerment of CLMAs in organizing activities beyond the formal scheduled events such as the International Children’s Day is the lack of budget allocated at the municipal level for their work.
- All Child Rights coordinators working at the municipal level perform this duty in addition to their other official duties. Ensuring that the coordinators who have been assigned Child Rights supervision perform their duties and dedicate the necessary time and resources might prove to be difficult, unless Child Rights are recognized as a priority from all the municipal departments that affect children’s lives, directly or indirectly.
- Insufficient knowledge at the institutional level on the importance of child participation in decision making might pose a challenge to the work of CLMAs, especially in the beginning stages of their work.
- Currently, the CLMA members serving the 2-year mandate have been nominated by the school principals. In order to make the CLMAs representative of their constituencies, voting in each school needs to be organized after the current 2-year mandate ends. Otherwise, in the current form it fails to meet the goal of the establishment of CLMAs in the first place.

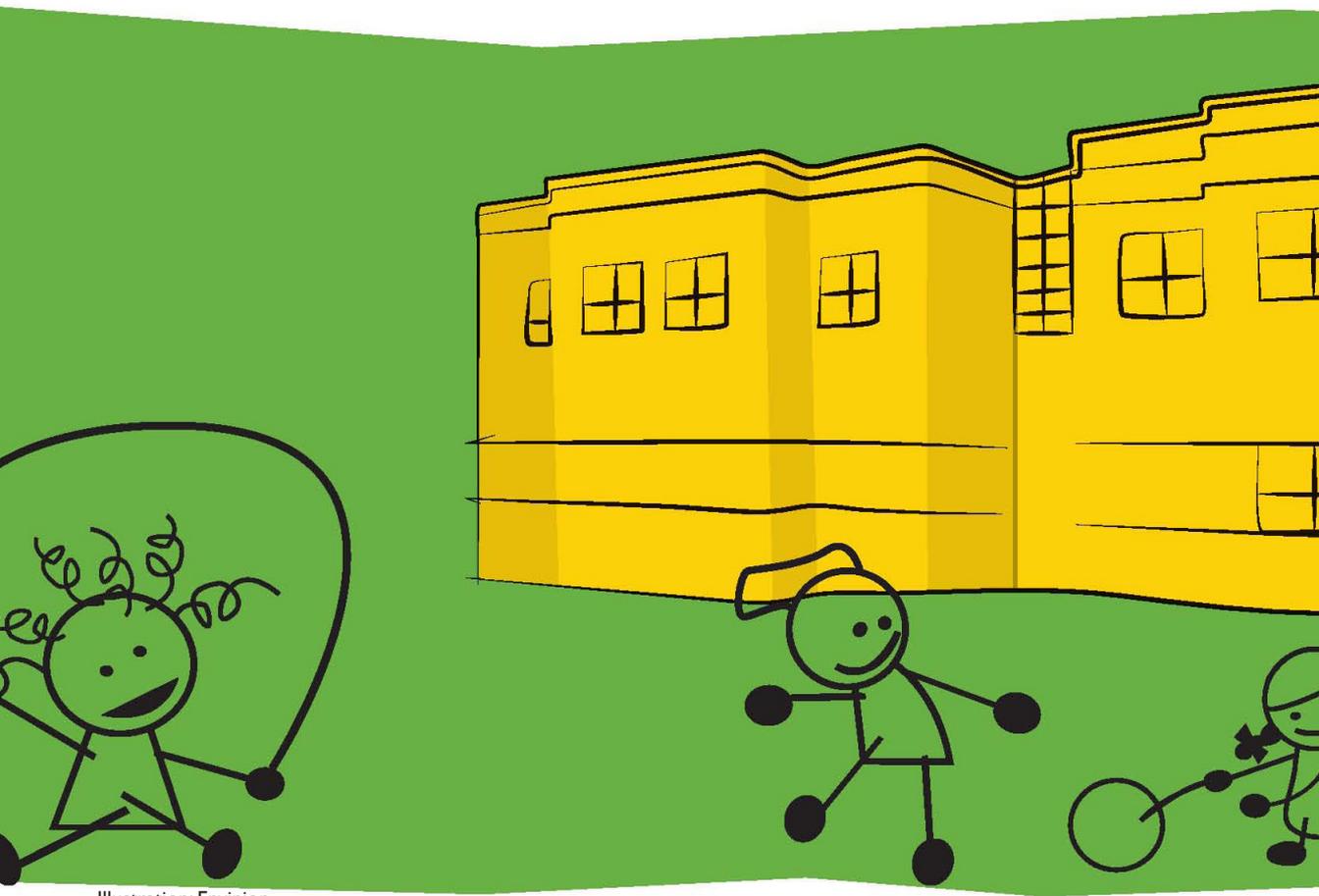


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DIDACTIC MANUAL FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLE

Corporal punishment still remains widely used in Pre-University institutions in Kosovo and Save the Children, together with other local and international partners has been advocating for its prohibition and elimination. As part of their advocating campaign Save the Children in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and experts appointed by the Ministry developed a user-friendly didactic manual on the prevention of violence in schools for teachers at pre-primary and primary institutions.

The manual will also serve as an implementation tool of the Protocol for the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Educational Institutions approved by the Office of Good Governance within the Office of Prime Minister. The Manual, a promotional brochure and a poster has been distributed to Municipal Education Directorates in 23 different municipalities of Kosovo.

The following practices have been established:

- Positive Discipline materials have been introduced and translated to facilitate the work in the field on promoting positive practices towards ending corporal punishment. The translated manual of Positive Discipline for Parents and Teachers will enable schools and professionals to address corporal punishment.
- Save the Children together with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has promoted the Didactic Manual on Prevention of Violence, which was prepared to support primary school teachers (from pre-primary class up to ninth grade) to deliver interactive sessions and teaching units with their pupils, aiming to enhance children's knowledge regarding different issues related to violence against children.
- Save the Children developed a Facilitators' manual for teachers of primary and lower secondary schools to serve as an aid tool for the use of the Manual for Prevention of Violence. This Facilitators' manual will be used to train and support teachers on how to use the techniques and present activities foreseen to be delivered in the Manual.
- The Facilitators' manual has been accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and has been piloted in the targeted schools.
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will take over the distribution of the Manuals to other non-project targeted municipalities.
- Codes of conduct containing information about the rights and obligations of students and teachers were established and published in visible places (usually in the hallways where they can be seen by everyone) in schools of 5 focal municipalities.
- Local partner civil society organizations have been active in promoting the Protocol for the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Educational Institutions, Code of Conduct, and the Convention on the Rights of Child. Numerous in-school trainings have been provided and brochures have been distributed to children.

- Anonymous complaint boxes have been developed and placed in school hallways with the intent to provide an additional mechanism for referral of violence to children as well as help the school management to get a better understanding on the safety of children in their school premises.

Challenges

- Currently, the Manual is piloted and distributed only in schools that are targeted by the project which limits the availability of the Manual to all schools in Kosovo.
- The Manual is still not part of the curriculum of pre-university education which impacts its actual usage. In order to ensure that the Manual is used by teachers Save the Children will continue to advocate for its inclusion in the curriculum of pre-university education.
- The number of lessons that is dedicated to covering the material in the Manual is set at the mandatory one lesson per year which provides little time to cover such an important subject. Since the instruction of the Manual is left at the discretion of the schools this poses limitations to the impact of the Manual on violence prevention.

ANNEX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

- Ms. Lulavere Behluli – Head of Division for Special Needs, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. lulavere.behluli@rks-gov.net
- Mr. Behxhet Binaku – Project Coordinator, Community Based Rehabilitation Centre -Handikos, Prishtina/Pristina. behxhet.binaku@handi-kos.org
- Mr. Urim Fazlija – Child Rights Coordinator, Municipal Education Directorate, Gjakova/Djakovica. urim.fazlija@rks-gov.net
- Mr. Fitim Rama – Child Rights Coordinator, Municipal Education Directorate, Mitrovica South. fitim.rama@rks-gov.net
- Ms. Iliriana Luzha – Special Needs Educator, Community Based Rehabilitation Centre – Handikos, Gjakova/Djakovica
- Ms. Rebeka Qena - Thematic Manager in Child Rights Governance, Save the Children. rebeka.qena@savethechildren.org
- Ms. Emira Pruthi – Project Officer for Programme Implementation, Save the Children. emira.pruthi@savethechildren.org
- Ms. Linda Hoxha – Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Save the Children. linda.hoxha@savethechildren.org
- Mr. Valid Zhubi – Thematic Manager in Education, Save the Children. valid.zhubi@savethechildren.org
- Members of the Child-led Municipal Assembly, Gjakova/Djakovica
- President of the Child-led Municipal Assembly, Mitrovica South

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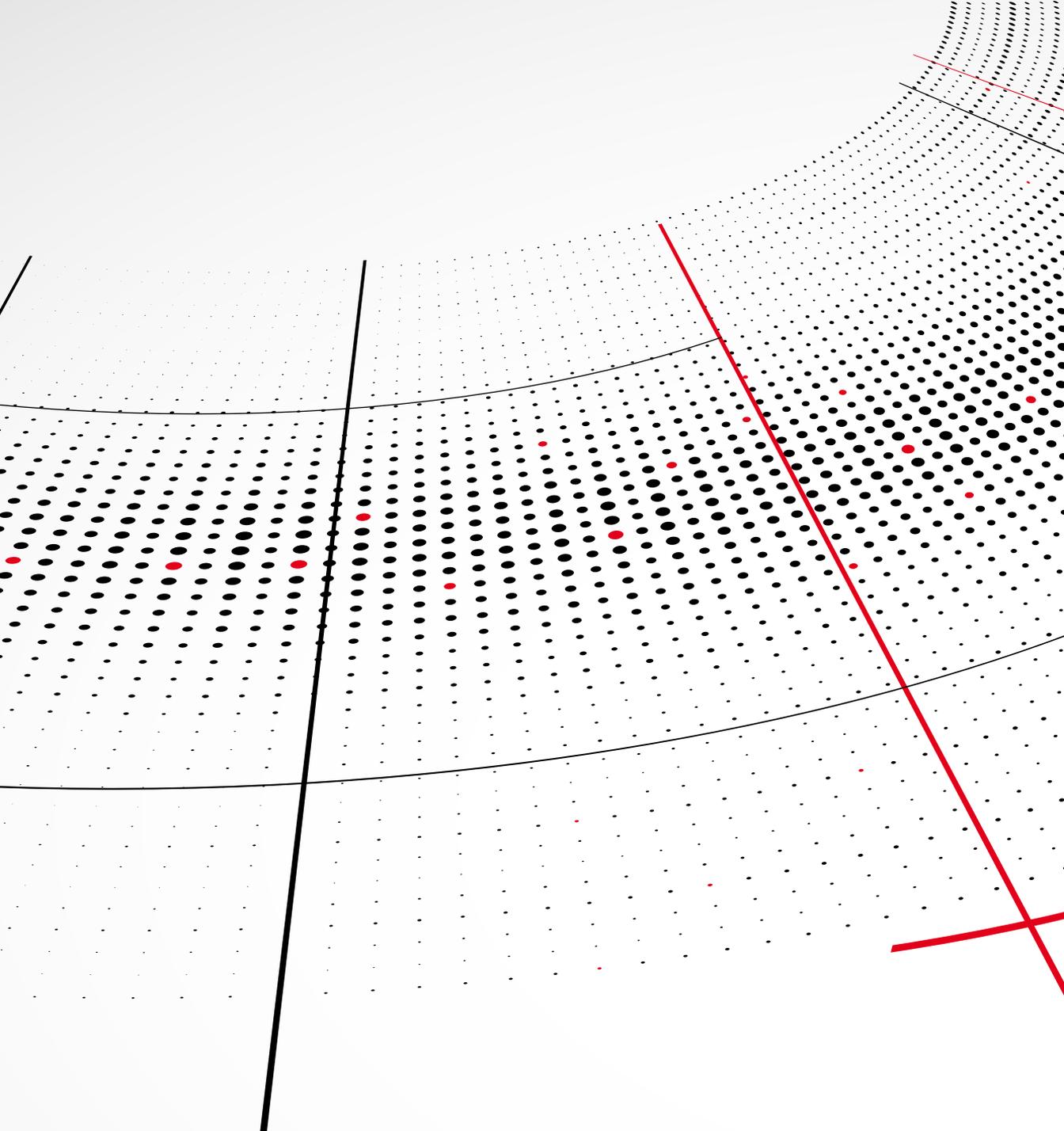
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