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Social Accountability Tools as Means for Accountability Success:

Two Municipal Case Studies in Kosovo



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is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit public policy organization based in Prishtina, Kosovo.

Our mission is to conduct credible policy research in the fields of politics, law and economics and to push forward policy solutions that address the failures and/or tackle the problems in the said policy fields.

Social Accountability Tools as Means for Accountability Success: Two Municipal Case Studies in Kosovo

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intentions of this social accountability activity were to promote accountability of municipal officials, encourage transparency of local government, increase follow-up to citizens' complaints and improve the quality of services in the targeted municipalities of Pristina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The project also targeted raising awareness about accountability regarding public expenditures and covered four municipal contracts: the implementation of "Blok pas Blloku" project in Pristina, public transportation in Pristina, the construction of schools in the villages of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj), and medical services in healthcare centers of Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality. For each activity, tangible findings and results were achieved. The Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS), as implementer of this project, has long been a leading think-tank based in Pristina which regularly produces innovative policy responses to institutions and the public in view of better reform and development strategies. The group directly and actively collaborates with the government and a global network of partners to tackle issues on Kosovo's state-building.

The implementation of "Blok pas Blloku" project in Prishtina started on 15 April 2017, with an expected completion date within 90 working days.¹ However, it was left incomplete because the contracted company was negligent, and no progress was made until the social audit was conducted. A Social Audit (SA) team was established, consisting of professionals who were familiar with the project. Regular pressure and communication in meetings with the municipality resulted in the appointment of a new coordinator responsible for monitoring the implementation of the contract. Although a new appointed Municipal Project Coordinator attempted to implement the project and demand better quality of service from the contracted company, the company failed to comply with the requirements. It was the SA team who proposed the Municipality improvement plan, for the municipality to terminate the contract with the negligent company and initiate a new procurement process. Furthermore, the SA team understood that the project proposal originally designed by the citizens of the community is not the same as the one the municipality contracted the company for. In parallel to launching a renewed announcement, the team suggested using the services of a company the municipality already had a working contract with, for specific situations and general fixes. As a temporary solution before a new procurement process was concluded, the SA team proposed using this company for some major issues regarding security or other hazardous issues. This suggestion was approved by the Municipality and the implementation process is ongoing. New requests and proposals of the SA to the Municipality included building speed bumps in the city streets close to the park, removing the squares between the skateboard track and putting up a protective green fence around the area. One must acknowledge that through the SA team, the implementation of the "Blok pas Blloku" significantly accelerated, and moreover improved in terms of safety and accessibility conditions, with a present involvement of the municipality as well.

Another SA activity was the construction of schools in three villages of the Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality. The SA team assessed that tender procedures were not properly implemented, as no thorough assessments and feasibility plan were conducted, and the municipality decided to build three schools with the same construction plan. The municipal-appointed commission for this project did not include the direct stakeholders, the directors of the school nor parents and community of that particular village. After establishing the SA teams in the villages of Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj, concrete results were achieved. From the inception of the social audit process, the directors of the three schools were fully involved in the decision-making process with the relevant commission, they were invited to all meetings and provided the chance to flag issues or directly inform the commission on new developments. Pressure exerted by the SA team also directly led to the great success of realizing systematic medical

1 KOHA net, "Ahmeti: Realizohet projekti "Blok pas Blloku" në Kodrën e Diellit", 15 April 2018, <https://www.koha.net/metro/12208/ahmeti-realizohet-projekti-blok-pas-blloku-ne-kodren-e-diellit/>

visits to all village schools – the first dental and health control visit happened at the start of the school year and it is expected to take place every six months.

Conduction of Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys - an essential social accountability tool by means of a public survey - for public transportation system in Pristina determined that, overall, the citizens' satisfaction with the services provided is rated as 'good'. Nonetheless, in order to increase the satisfaction and efficiency, the municipality should purchase new buses and establish new bus lines. Key findings entailed a generalized consensus that there is a lack of compliance with safety and environmental measures, as well as a lack in operating lines even though new buses have recently been introduced. Research shows that users want the municipality's focus to be on providing new vehicles, lines and stations (66%) as well as improving the timetable accuracy (17%) and hygiene standards (13.8%). The advocacy efforts have induced municipality to take concrete measures towards the improvement of public transportation service for citizens.

According to Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) conducted in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, only 3 out of 19 healthcare centers worked seven days a week, all located in the city. Health services provided in the villages are limited. There is a shortage of medical supplies and medications and there are no services during the weekend. In order to improve the current situation, the project engaged doctors and nurses working in village medical centers to be part of the SA requiring from the Municipality reliable medical services for local citizens. As a result, all medical centers have a list of information on the medications they have in stock, in order for citizens to swiftly know if what they need is available. The meetings held also tackled the working hours issue. The Director of Healthcare made clear that all active doctors are fulfilling their full working hours and no more can be done besides hiring doctors from other municipalities. Lastly, the success of the project intervention is also noticeable in the fact that now all the medical centers in Vushtrri/Vučitrn have a new entrance system consisting of ID cards for all workers, thus enhancing accountability of workers and services.

The proposed changes and recommendations might seem small but are very significant for the daily life of Vushtrri/Vučitrn citizens. The quality of the services, in their reliability and transparency, has increased, and shortcomings found in the results from the PETS have been tackled. Considering the achievements of all four projects, it is clear that the USAID TEAM project in collaboration with GLPS had a real impact on the life of citizens in the municipalities of Prishtina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The project proved beneficial also at the level of community mobilization. Often handling negligent projects in the remote areas, the social audit and the surveys mobilized the citizens. The communities felt involved in the decision-making and the implementation phase of the projects which will have long-lasting effects on their lives – this was a principal goal of the team. Considering that such projects are financed by the taxes of the citizens, it should become a common practice to include the direct stakeholders in these community plans and implementation. This practice not only increased participation of all parties involved, but also promoted a higher awareness of citizens' role in seeking accountability and concrete results from their municipal projects and services. This project promoted a methodology that empowers all actors involved. For this reason, wide-ranging results were achieved which had a positive impact on everyday lives of the citizens of Pristina and Vushtrri municipalities, especially in light of the proactive and reactive approach taken on by the latter.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Accountability tools are being increasingly employed by civil society organizations to monitor the use (and misuse) of public funds for quality service provision by local governments. Using the Social Audit and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) methods, GLPS was contracted by the USAID Transparent, Effective, and Accountable Municipalities (USAID TEAM) to disseminate in this report the findings on the procurement activities related to four distinct municipal service provision plans. Kosovo continues to face structural challenges that hinder development and the quality of life of citizens. The country is still engaged in a complex state-building process, erecting its structures and building its services. One of the most pressing challenges is a distinctive lack of transparency and accountability with regards to public expenditures and public service provision of central and local governments. As a self-entitled 'Newborn' country, it is the task of civil society organizations (CSOs) to mobilize all citizens and state actors towards a higher demand for information and results as well as a more active monitoring of service delivery and law implementation.

The nine-month project GLPS conducted with USAID TEAM support took on a bottom-up approach to the process of procurement. It employed two key social accountability tools: Social Audit and PETS. Both tools were employed in the two focus municipalities of USAID TEAM - Pristina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn with the aim of generating higher accountability of local governments relying on civic and social engagement. During this period, the project engaged in a set of activities that tackled the quality of procurement activities related to the implementation of "Bllok pas Blloku" project in Pristina, public transportation services in Pristina, the construction of schools in the villages of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj), and provision of medical services in healthcare centers of Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

The adopted monitoring approach rooted in the use of social accountability tools adheres to the sustainable nature of the project itself. Kosovo being a new and developing country, all projects must satisfy a long-term method which not only consider improving a specific challenge, but most importantly bolsters state development. The Social Audit and PETS tools are therein used to facilitate discussions that engage those who are affected first-hand by local government actions (or inactions), and the most eager to push for change if equipped with the right data and channels. It is noteworthy to mention that the abovementioned accountability tools are being employed for the first time in Kosovo.

Social Auditing is a method to monitor and boost good governance practices. This social accountability tool is a process of overseeing official records and developments to determine whether state expenditures are being appropriately handled and to prevent possible corruption in public services. A carefully selected and representative team is created to examine the target area by requesting relevant documentation and visiting local sites.

Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) is a procurement tool which enables researchers to assess how local and national governments allocate public funds to spot cases of inefficiency, unaccountability and potential corruption. The efficiency of the method also lies in providing citizens and CSOs with a monitoring tool over municipal public funds.

This report is the result of a three-stage project based on three pillars: research, analysis, and advocacy. Following the data-gathering phase, in cooperation with strategic partners, this report disseminates the findings and a set of policy recommendations for the deficiencies in municipal procurement. The main aim of this project is to turn weaknesses into opportunities for improvement by means of employing the right tools and methodologies.

II. METHODOLOGY

Definition of the objectives and study design

In the nine-month timeframe, the project focused on local procurements of goods and services to improve existing, but often inept, policies and to monitor management of services and goods related to recreational spaces, public transportation, construction of schools and healthcare provision in targeted municipalities of Pristina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The social accountability tools were implemented as a pivotal way to enhance accountability, transparency, efficiency and fairness of local government in handling public resources. The objectives under this project were defined to prioritize monitoring of public administration and the assessment of allocation of public funds by focusing on dialogue between citizens and local officials. For this reason, the key social accountability tools of PETS and Social Audit were employed for procurement purposes. In order to define the objectives, the team consulted with stakeholders, including central government agencies, donors and other CSOs, to properly define the objectives of the study to understand socio-political context of the municipality, assess availability of data and establish a plan to evaluate the conditions and needs of the issues at hand in the two target municipalities.

The overall objectives of this project were designed to foster a bottom-up change that is rooted in communication between citizens and policy makers and/or public administrators about the quality and level of municipal public services, which ultimately led to increased accountability. The social accountability tools were used to pinpoint whether the investment of public money was applied for their original purpose as promised to the municipal community, ranging from public transport, medical services, to construction of schools. As a result, the activities conducted foster solutions addressing the challenges identified in municipal administrative procedures, in both Pristina and Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

The project focused on the use of Social Accountability tools to collect and disseminate data on potential corruption of local government. The methodology adopted was based on two tools - Social Audit and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS). Through the usage of these two key social accountability tools, this project has produced the final results on enhancing the quality of procurement activities in the municipalities related to the implementation of "Bllok pas Blloku" project, improvement of public transportation services in the Municipality of Pristina, improving the implementation of the construction of schools project in the villages of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj) and the improvement of medical services in healthcare centers of the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. By identifying each municipality's weaknesses and threats at the procurement level, the project enabled municipal and governmental stakeholders to turn them into opportunities by prompting greater citizen inputs on the efficiency of services.

More focused on the methodology itself, the preliminary phase consisted of gathering qualitative and quantitative data from public documents of the municipality and interviews with both local citizens and municipal administrations. Following the collection of wide-ranging information, the team decided to conduct activities on the four issues identified. A Social Audit team was established following a clear definition of the scope of the audit for the "Bllok pas Blloku" project in Pristina and for the construction of schools in the villages of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn municipality (Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj). In parallel, a PETS survey was designed to track the use of public resources related to public transportation in Pristina and medical and healthcare centers in Vushtrri/Vučitrn. For this purpose, the team designed a questionnaire. This survey instrument was carried out among a strategic sample designed to be representative of the municipality (age, social background, education, ethnicity etc.). The last phase referred to the public dialogue between citizens and responsible municipal authorities, regarding procurement activities and evidence dissemination of the key findings of the social audit and PETS among all stakeholders (local and central government authorities, civil society organizations and media, citizens).

Both social accountability tools require strong and continued government willingness and cooperation to be successfully implemented. As such, during the implementation all relevant government officials in the Pristina and Vushtrri municipalities praised the initiative as one which will help the community to better seek accountability and efficiency for the goods and services provided by their municipalities. The monitoring process therefore brought the intended result of triggering change and as well as a more proactive attitude in the local officials regarding deficient public services, once they were aware they were being monitored.

III. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

For the purpose of fulfilling the objectives set by the project, the project team undertook several activities. In this section we present in detail how the Social Audit and the PETS were implemented and conducted, as well as an in-depth analysis of the research findings. Infographics and narrative interpretations of the collected data will be presented for better understanding.

General findings include the lack of proper municipal monitoring in the "Bllok pas Blloku" project in Pristina, unfinished construction work that proved hazardous in the construction of the schools in villages of Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn, a lack of operating and environment-friendly buses in Pristina and, finally, a deficient supply in medications and on-call doctors in medical centers in Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn.

A. Social Audit (SA)

The activities carried out by the Social Audit teams were key in identifying shortcoming in the public administration of the municipality and in increasing awareness of all stakeholders, namely the citizens, on the issues at hand. The results of the social audit conducted in Pristina and in Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn will be disclosed in this report.

A.1 PRISHTINA – Implementation of the project "Bllok pas Blloku", Sunny Hill

The "Bllok pas Blloku" project in the Sunny Hill neighborhood was designed by the Municipality of Pristina in cooperation with UN Habitat. The project included building a public space which promotes quality of urban life through the creation of a sustainable and eco-friendly environment, in this case a multifunctional public space which combines spaces for socialization (meetings, rallies, walks, relaxation, etc.), recreational areas (jogging, skating, games, exercises, etc.) and the use of greenery. The final goal of the "Bllok pas Blloku" project in the municipality of Pristina was the full functioning of the recreational space. This is to be accomplished by means of changes in the design of the area in all its multiple uses, in order to provide more safety and urban quality of life for the residents of the Sunny Hill.

Establishing the Social Audit team

Social Audit - Prishtina

Implementation of "Blok pas Blloku" Project

Goals of Social Audit

Social Audit Members

- Push forward the implementation of the project
- Increase citizen involvement in decision making process
- Hold local government accountable

Selection Process

Face to face meetings



Up to 8 meetings with more than 3 persons



10 Members

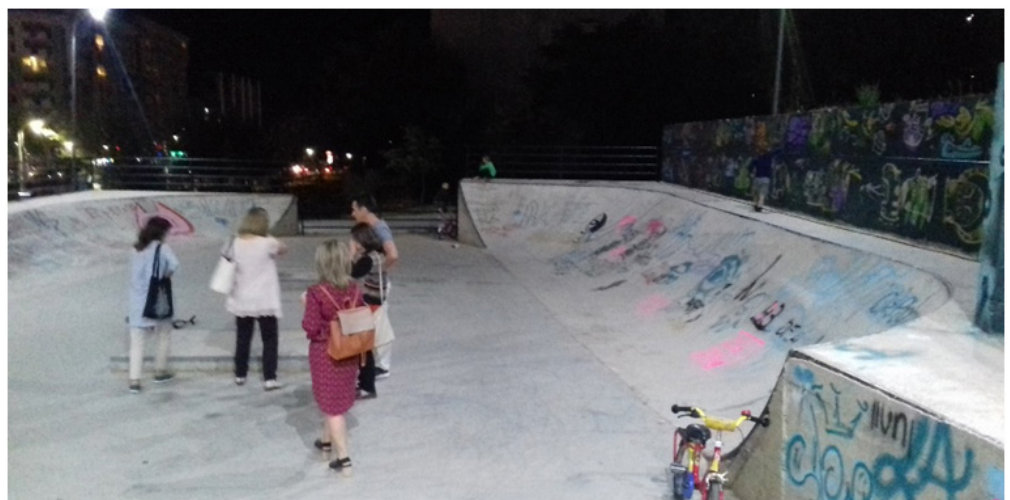
Selected Social Audit team members are users of the "Blok pas Blloku" area



Members of the Social Audit consist of:

The implementation of the "Blok pas Blloku" project in Pristina started on 15 April 2017, with an expected conclusion date in 90 working days². However, in reality, it was left incomplete because the contracted company was negligent, and no progress was being made until the start of the social auditing process. The project contacted residents of the Sunny Hill area, the direct beneficiaries, through the internet. For the purpose of identifying potential members to be represented by the Social Audit, several visits were conducted to the area, in this particular case the team visited the "Blok pas Blloku" park and nearby area in order to identify frequent users of the park. The next step was establishing the Social Audit team consisting of 10 members, all residents who regularly use the area and who are from different ages and professions, which included architects, journalists, youngsters and elder people. The goal of the team was to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the implementation of the project "Blok pas Blloku". The Social Audit (SA) team proved to be very concerned about the state of play of the space, as well as very eager to push forward the full implementation of the project. The team met regularly to develop a strategy and assess the situation - at the beginning of the project the team met twice a month, followed by monthly meetings for the remainder of the project.

Social Audit team visiting "Blok pas Blloku", June 2018



The SA team collected data from the relevant documentation: public documents of the municipality were analyzed (i.e. technical projects, managerial records, cash books) in order to assess the level of transparency, efficiency and accountability of the

² KOHA net, "Ahmeti: Realizohet projekti "Blok pas Blloku" në Kodrën e Diellit", 15 April 2018, <https://www.koha.net/metro/12208/ahmeti-realizohet-projekti-blok-pas-blloku-ne-kodren-e-diellit/>

implementation of the project. This Social Audit team which was set up to handle the 'Blok pas Bbloku' project had the main goal of keeping the municipality accountable on several elements of the project – these pertain to the performance indicators defined at the inception phase of the project for the team's monitoring role of the municipality's work on implementing the target project. The defined indicator-based matrix led the SA team to ensure the budget for the implementation of the project was well-planned and based on real market prices. It also related to monitoring the efficiency and efforts of the Procurement Department within the municipality in coordinating in a communicative way which aided the auditing mission. In this way, the performance indicators also relate to the definition of a feasibility plan, the selection of a construction company responsible for the implementation of the plan and the increase of the dynamic working capacity.

Indicator Matrix for "Blok pas Bbloku" project

Indicator 1	Feasibility plan, completed
Indicator 2	Selection of the tender winner for project implementation based on the criteria as defined by law
Indicator 3	The operating company responsible for the work to be undertaken, selected
Indicator 4	The staff of the construction company responsible for the implementation of the project, selected
Indicator 5	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract
Indicator 6	Budget for the implementation of the project well planned and based on real market prices for this type of project
Indicator 7	Dynamic working capacity increased
Indicator 8	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the Municipality
Indicator 9	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the audit team
Indicator 10	Regular meetings (every six weeks) of members of the audit team regarding the project implementation process
Indicator 11	Regular meetings (4 meetings) of the members of the audit team with the Municipal Assembly regarding the project implementation process starting from June 1st to the end of November 2018
Indicator 12	The efficiency and efforts of the Procurement Department within the municipality in coordinating, communication and improvement of the mission of the Social Audit team.
Indicator 13	At least 500 citizens satisfied with the implementation of the project
Indicator 14	The area "Blok pas Bbloku" fully functional and used by the residents of the area
Indicator 15	The maintenance of the block "Block after block" is carried out regularly

The public procurement processes

a. Lack of municipal monitoring

The amount foreseen for this project was €166,274.11. During the project period, taking a closer and more detailed look at the financing of the project, several irregularities were found. Of the original budget plan, €100,000 had been paid seeing as, after all, close to 70% of the work is done - some areas had been completed (park cantina, stairs, fitness equipment) while others remain undone (the grass, lighting, sports areas). The remaining €66,274,11 had not been paid to the company yet, the reason

being that the works were not completed. UN Habitat committed to co-financing the project and signed a contract for \$ 50,000, however this money had not been paid. The reason given is that the contracted company did not respect deadlines as per the signed contract, which led to the decision of UN Habitat to withdraw funds from this project. In addition to this, a supplementary €10,340 of work had been planned. This work went beyond the original work plan project and had already been paid. Ultimately, the process had stopped because the company did not complete the planned task they were hired to do, despite promising to finish the job after being approached by the new Project Coordinator, a new person who was appointed as a result of the SA team's work. Extra time was given which led to project delays, and still the work plan was not respected – this is unfortunately very common in Kosovo and must be dutifully monitored.

In Kosovo, the Law also allows bids based on the most economically advantageous tender, but the administrative system favors contracting according to lowest price factor. Even this tender was awarded based on the lowest price and not the know-how or experience of the company. During the auditing period, the project also conducted several meetings with the office of the Mayor's office in Pristina. The SA team learned firsthand that the Project Coordinator from the Municipality was retired and no longer working with the municipality. Upon that meeting in which the institution realized there is a monitoring process happening, a new coordinator was speedily appointed, an engineer by profession acting as coordinator for capital investments of the municipality. The new coordinator of "Blok pas Blloku" was very cooperative to discuss the situation and continually put forth suggestions to improve conditions. Nevertheless, the position remained vacant for a long period and consequently there was no person responsible to oversee the work being conducted. This was a major finding and one of the main reasons why the project was stalled and not yet completed.

b. Non-accountable company

Moreover, during interviews and meetings conducted, another major finding came through - due to unforeseen consecutive delays in the final phase of implementation, the contracted company did not finish the job given lack of know-how and delays. The contracted company did not fully commit to implementing activities in a timely manner, mainly due to lack of municipal oversight, as well as lack of serious commitment to the work contracted initially. On this note, the municipality informed us at the time that they will be setting accurate and mandatory deadlines for the contracted company for further finalization of the remaining work, at last playing a strict oversight role over the project. In other words, the contracted company (winner of the tender) to implement this project, proved uncooperative to discuss with the SA, simply explaining that they did not finish the job on time, despite being given additional time besides the deadline, because they did not possess the know-how or experience. It must be noted that the amount foreseen for this project was €168,000 which, as detailed above, has not been fully paid or executed due to unfinished work by the company.

Moving forward

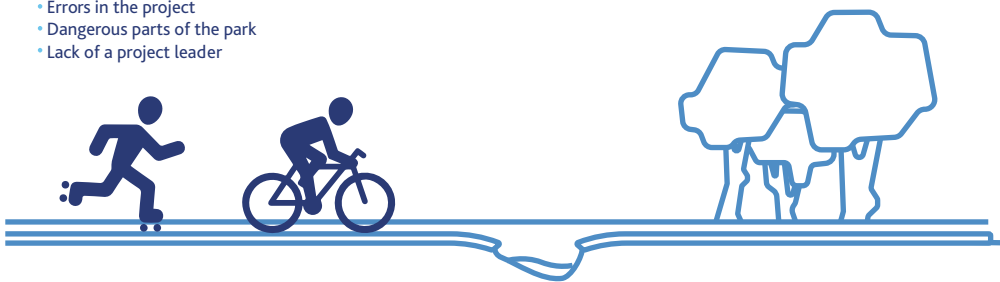
Once a thorough analysis of all the collected data was done, which identified key factors and patterns that undermine the credibility, efficiency and accountability of public procurement activities related to the implementation of the project "Blok pas Blloku", we found that, generally, there was a lack of competence and willingness of the contracted company for implementing works, matched with a lacking municipal monitoring by the relevant department. In addition to this, because the Project Coordinator position was vacant given the previous person's retirement, there was no efficient oversight for a long time. Through a committed Social Audit team which was dedicated to correcting the issue, pressure was put on the Municipality to continue with the full implementation of the project by means of dutiful oversight over the contracted

company in order for the area to be used by the residents, as originally promised. Since the auditing process was triggered, the new official municipal manager has been much more active, and a new procurement process is being planned for contracting a new company to complete remaining works on this project. The final goal of the “Blok pas Blloku” project in the municipality of Prishtina is a full functioning recreational space which offers urban quality of life to the residents of Sunny Hill. Here, the Municipality of Prishtina must increase its efforts and implement its role in overseeing how the construction works are moving along. On this note, the SA team determined that there is a need for developing a specific and detailed technical implementation plan, including estimated value for construction works to be carried out, the timeline for completion of works, the people responsible for monitoring the implementation of works (municipal officials and SA team members) and the measures to ensure proper maintenance of the “Blok pas Blloku” thereafter.

The main findings and developments on this project were:

Findings

- Non-compliance with contract standards
- Errors in the project
- Dangerous parts of the park
- Lack of a project leader



Firstly, the municipality appointed a new coordinator to monitor the completion of the job. The new Project Coordinator attempted to demand more of the contracted company and give them extra days to finish the job - but still no results were realized for the company proved incapable of delivering due to a lack of know-how related to the faulty procurement process. It was the SA team which proposed to the Municipality new ideas for improvement. These included terminating the contract with the negligent company and initiating a new procurement process. In parallel to launching a renewed announcement, the team suggested to use the services of a company the municipality had a working contract with for specific situations and general fixes. As a temporary solution, the SA team proposed using this company for some major issues regarding security or other hazardous issues. This suggestion was approved by the Municipality and the implementation process is ongoing. Other requests of the SA to the Municipality included building speed bumps in the city streets close to the park, removing the squares between the skateboard track and putting up a protective green fence around the area. These new proposals are detailed in the Policy Recommendations section of this report.

A.2 VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN – Construction of schools in the villages of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (Pantine/a, Druar, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj)

The project

The need for new schools had been consecutively pointed out by the residents of the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. As things stood on the ground, the schools in the villages of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn were unable to meet the needs of the students seeking education in primary and lower secondary schools, which constitutes a major social hindrance and human rights problem. In the three villages the project targets – Pantine/a, Druar and Maxhunaj/Madjunaj – the schools did not provide adequate conditions or quality education due to old infrastructure. In the past, these villages

have had several projects supported by international donors to build and renovate schools, yet these efforts have not been enough to address the needs of residents.

In 2015, the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn planned construction of three elementary and lower secondary schools in the villages of Maxhunaj/Madjunaj, Pantine/a and Druar. The implementation of this project happened during 2016-2017 with a total fund of €867,757.11, allocated from the municipal budget. Although the schools are newly built, they still lacked many structural works which were not completed during this period. This hinders the normal process of teaching and learning seeing as there is a lack of sports areas and lack of emergency and fire exits, for instance. Before the project took place, many students and teachers also complained that the outdoor areas were not clean and that there were several safety hazards that had not been solved, despite the schools being newly inaugurated.

Profile of each of the three schools in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn

Social Audit - Vushtrri (Pantine, Druar, Maxhunaj)

Implementation of the project regarding the construction of schools

Project amount: **€400,000**

Status: **Partially completed**

Goals of Social Audit

- Push forward the implementation of the project
- Increase citizen involvement in decision making process
- Hold local government accountable

Maxhunaj/Madjunaj village has approximately 5000 residents. In 2017 the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn built an elementary and second elementary school, "Rilindja", which currently accommodates around 600 students. Here the school works in two shifts given the large number of students. The Pantine/a Village has approximately 2500 residents. In light of the large number of students and growing inability of current older schools to accommodate them, the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn built the new elementary and lower secondary school "Skenderbeu" in 2017. This school is able to accommodate 170 students. The Druare Village holds approximately 1500 residents. The new school, "Sami Frasheri", has been fully functional since 2017 and accommodates around 200 students.

Social Audit Members

34 Members

Selected Social Audit team members are residents from three different villages

Maxhunaj - 12 Members

Druare - 10 Members

Pantine - 12 Members

Members of the Social Audit consist of:

Parents
Students
Teachers
School Officials



Selection Process

Meetings in classrooms



Establishing the Social Audit team

The project brought together a Social Audit (SA) team to carry out the vital role of monitoring the procurement activities regarding the progress and to carefully assess efficiency and possible misuse of funds. Similar to the Social Auditing process in the Municipality of Pristina, only higher in terms of citizens' presence, the SA team in Vushtrri/Vučitrn was composed of citizens from different ages and professional backgrounds, including school directors, students, teachers and parents. This ensured the SA was a good representation of end beneficiaries of the schools recently built by the municipality. The process of selecting the SA team members started by the organization of multiple meetings with the school Directors of Pantine/a, Druare and Maxhunaj/Madjunaj to inform them about the project's aim and to seek advice in identifying potential members for the SA in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, who are more active and willing to contribute towards reaching the goals set with the SA. At end of the process, in each village SA, teams were established. In Maxhunaj/Madjunaj and Pantine/a SA teams had 12 members and the Druare team had 10 members. In order to familiarize the auditing team with the process of social auditing and its purposes, several meetings were held. The SA team members demonstrated a high level of willingness to prompt better service provision by the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

For the duration of the project, the team conducted interviews with the teachers, the parents and with the municipal representatives, particularly the Director of Health and the Director of Education within the Municipality. Moreover, the SA team also met with the team members of the Mayor's office in order to present the project activities. Following such efforts, the results started to manifest – for instance, the Head of the Education Department sent a Commission to identify the situation in the villages of Pantine/a, Druar and Maxhunaj/Madjunaj. The designated meetings took place in each of the three schools, with the last meetings held in the Assembly Hall with the presence of the Director of the Health and the Education department of the municipality.

Meeting with the Social Audit team of Pantine/e, May 2018



The main findings for the duration of the nine-month project are presented below, divided by each of the three villages monitored. Similarly, to the Social Audit process held in Prishtina for the 'Blok pas Blloku' project, an indicator-based matrix was defined for the monitoring phase of the three schools in these three villages. The indicators were developed in close coordination with all the stakeholders involved in this process.

The public procurement processes

After meetings with the municipal representatives, the project team got access to the contract awarded for building the three village schools. The overall budget for this project was € 867,757.11. The financing came solely from the municipality, and each village was to share the total budget. Based on the contract specifications, this was a three-year project with a contract signed on 10th of August 2015. The aim was to conclude works by 2018. After signing the contract and based on its specification, the company initially received an amount of € 170,000.00 for 2015, while the remaining amount was disbursed in the following years of 2016 and 2017. The contracted company "R & Rukolli" LLC, was selected for construction of school buildings and according to municipal representatives the works were delivered in a timely and good manner. Nonetheless, the Social Audit team found that the end results lack in safety conditions and overall quality. Before the Social Auditing process started in the villages of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, things were stalled. Fundamentally, a feasibility plan should have been conducted for all three schools involving all stakeholders before approving the working plans.

Meeting with the Social Audit team of Maxhunaj/Madjunaj, May 2018



Meeting with the Social Audit team of Maxhunaj/Madjunaj, May 2018



Main issues and common findings

Findings

- Dangerous parts in the sports field
- Lack of fire escape
- Non-adequate learning conditions for preschool children
- Risk from stray dogs
- Open sewers pose risks for children



During the auditing process, several common complaints and issues were found through working group meetings in each of the three villages. They are presented below, grouped by issues identified.

a. Safety hazards on school grounds

A major finding from the field research conducted in Maxhunaj/Madjunaj Village was that the school management was very eager to prompt positive change and trigger improvements but was left at a stalemate due to poor oversight. This school's management has since taken on a cooperative approach in working with the SA team's findings. For instance, one of the findings is that the emergency exits and fire escapes, foreseen in project design, were not completed due to a lack of funds. As a positive change was the initiative from the school management to gather donations and, without any support from the Municipality, managed to transform the old school kitchen into a functional space for preparing food for the students. In the village of Pantine/a, even though the project devised a special entrance for pre-school students, this had not been completed. This resulted in all students using the same entrance, inevitably creating safety hazards and delays for the attendance in classrooms on time. On the outside grounds, a part of the school yard still had rocks and the water channel was still open, which posed a security threat for children to accidentally fall. Another security risk that had not been handled was the lack of safety stairs and emergency exits despite these being included in the project design. Lastly, the cabinets were not well equipped, and the physics department still used the old school's equipment. Similar safety and security issues we identified in Druare. For instance, emergency exits, and fire stairs were missing. Additionally, there was a lack of recycle bins which added to the unhealthy environment in the school area. Finally, all three schools lacked fences, security cameras, and overall precautionary measures in terms of ensuring a secure environment for students and staff.

b. Lack of appropriate facilities (i.e. sports fields, medical services, study spaces)

The school in Maxhunaj/Madjunaj lacked available equipment and appropriate study spaces for the students. For instance, the cabinets had been transformed into classrooms due to a structural incapability to accommodate students in regular classrooms. The same deficiency applied to sports areas to practice every day sports activities, a fundamental part of elementary education and students' physical and mental health, and one of the most highlighted by the Maxhunaj/Madjunaj SA team. In terms of school building and level of hygiene, these were found to be respected and well-maintained by the staff of the school. Similar to other villages, in Pantine/a, parents self-financed pre-schooling classes. Each parent donates €10 each month, which is rather high due to the fact that most parents were unemployed. Moreover, the other complaints about the new school in Pantine/a referred to the damaged sports field and

deficient heating inside the school. Additionally, another problem identified by the SA team in Pantine/a was that there is no proper medical access from the school grounds to the medical center of the village. In the case of the Druare village, the parents had requested the school provide systematic dental and medical visits for the students. The SA team therefore prioritized the provision of medical visits in schools, especially given that in the past doctors held medical check-ups and the reason for these services having stopped is unclear. Furthermore, similar to the two cases presented above, this school lacked a proper sports area and the outdoor spaces of the schools were not well-maintained.

c. Need for parental donations to provide services

In view of the inability and unwillingness of the Municipality to provide pre-school/ kindergarten services, the parents of Maxhunaj/Madjunaj village themselves had the initiative to organize pre-school classes. This was accomplished through donations from the parents, by providing €10 payment each month to cover the teaching and classroom expenses. In Druare specifically, the English teacher requested to establish an 'American corner' where the students could learn English, deeming it unfair that students have to pay more to learn in an outside institution. At the start of the new school year in September 2018, all pre-school teachers in all three schools were financed by the Municipality – a great achievement in comparison to the need for parents to finance these teachers' salaries before the social audit process took place.

Indicator for the school Skenderbeu in Pantine

Indicator 1	Feasibility plan, completed
Indicator 2	Selection of the tender winner for project implementation based on the criteria as defined by law.
Indicator 3	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract.
Indicator 4	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract
Indicator 5	Budget for the implementation of the project well planned and based on real market prices for this type of project
Indicator 6	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the Municipality
Indicator 7	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the audit team
Indicator 8	Regular meetings (every six weeks) of members of the audit team regarding the project implementation process
Indicator 9	Regular meetings (4 meetings) of the members of the audit team with the Municipal Assembly regarding the project implementation process starting from June 1st to the end of November 2018
Indicator 10	The school medical centre built and functional
Indicator 11	Physical education hall and open-air sports halls established
Indicator 12	At least 500 residents satisfied with the implementation of the project

Indicators for the school in Druare

Indicator 1	Feasibility plan, completed
Indicator 2	Selection of the tender winner for project implementation based on the criteria as defined by law.
Indicator 3	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract.
Indicator 4	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract
Indicator 5	Budget for the implementation of the project well planned and based on real market prices for this type of project
Indicator 6	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the Municipality
Indicator 7	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the audit team
Indicator 8	Regular meetings (every six weeks) of members of the audit team regarding the project implementation process
Indicator 9	Regular meetings (4 meetings) of the members of the audit team with the Municipal Assembly regarding the project implementation process starting from June 1st to the end of November 2018
Indicator 10	The school medical centre built and functional
Indicator 11	Physical education hall and open-air sports halls established
Indicator 12	At least 700 residents satisfied with the implementation of the project

Indicators for "Rilindja " school in Maxhunaj

Indicator 1	Feasibility plan, completed
Indicator 2	Selection of the tender winner for project implementation based on the criteria as defined by law.
Indicator 3	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract.
Indicator 4	Project implemented according to the dynamic plan and deadlines stipulated in the contract
Indicator 5	Budget for the implementation of the project well planned and based on real market prices for this type of project
Indicator 6	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the Municipality
Indicator 7	Regular monitoring of project implementation by the audit team
Indicator 8	Regular meetings (every six weeks) of members of the audit team regarding the project implementation process
Indicator 9	Regular meetings (4 meetings) of the members of the audit team with the Municipal Assembly regarding the project implementation process starting from June 1st to the end of November 2018
Indicator 10	The school medical centre built and functional
Indicator 11	Physical education hall and open-air sports halls established
Indicator 12	At least 700 residents satisfied with the implementation of the project

*Indicators have been developed in close coordination with all the stakeholders that have been met/consulted

Moving forward

In terms of concrete overall results, certain milestones of this three-year project for three schools were noticed. Through the Social Audit team, we aimed to push forward the full functionality of the three schools undertaken by the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. We have found that the construction project of the new schools in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn had not been done according to the project design - many of the works had not been finished, especially and most importantly the safety measures and the outdoor areas for the children to have a proper and complete education. From the monitoring visits and from the interviews with the school directors, municipal director of Education, teachers, parents and students it was concluded that the performance of this school project had been careless. Given the risk of children playing in an unprotected sports area or school grounds without fences, improving these areas was a high priority for the Social Audit team. On this note, the SA team discussed with the Director of Education Department to garner extra funds to provide the children with appropriate playing fields and outdoor leisure spaces that do not pose security risks or hinder safety. The Director promised more funds would be allocated for this purpose.

Additionally, this project aimed to pressure the local government to improve the pre-school teaching. A call for pre-school teachers should be opened in a transparent manner so as to replace the ad-hoc basis and privately-financed way in which it is happening now, by the hand of the parents of the children seeking pre-school education. Additionally, the pre-school teachers must be listed in the pay-roll list of the municipality with an actual contract. Major successes took place at the start of the new school year, in September 2018. From this point onward, all pre-school teachers in all three schools were financed by the Municipality – a great achievement in comparison to the need for parents to finance these teachers' salaries before the social audit process took place. Pressure exerted by the SA team also directly led to the great success of systematic medical visits to all schools located in villages – the first dental and health control visit happened at the start of the school year and it is expected to take place every six months. Furthermore, also at the start of the new school year, the Director of Education sent the Commission to verify developments on safety hazards, flawed facilities and the aforementioned need for parental donations. Excluding the latter, a lacking budget had prevented the workers to cover all these gaps, which is why the three schools now carry priority in the upcoming new municipal budget.

B. Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS)

PETS are a complex social accountability tool and require a solid research design, strategic sampling and data collection. This tool was employed to monitor the public transportation services in Pristina and the medical services in healthcare centers in Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The surveying included two types of questionnaires in both municipalities: one for the citizens who are directly receiving the services (public transport and healthcare), and another for the representatives of the respective municipalities, including municipal officers and representatives from the institutions that are directly responsible in offering these services. By employing PETS, the project sought to improve the accountability of governments and representatives towards the members of the community, for the latter are those most affected and benefit most from public expenditures. The same applies for improved transparency and increased civic participation in policy making processes.

B.1 Prishtina - Improvement of public transportation services

The public transportation in the Municipality of Pristina had numerous problems. Despite some recent efforts to improve the service, such as the arrival of new buses for the city center lines and the introduction of online maps, the local urban traffic situation was still not ideal and old buses still operate. These old buses are in bad technical condition, from lack of winter tires to a tendency to emit poisonous gases, besides the constant delays. All of this hindered the safety and the quality of living of

the travelers. Furthermore, a generalized lack of bus stations and the active presence of illegal buses and mini vans were other pressing issues affecting the quality of public transportation in this municipality. Therefore, the urban traffic of Pristina had 30 buses yet in parallel more than 100 private buses were allowed to operate in the area, due to the formal lack of urban traffic buses, despite not fulfilling safety and environment compliances. For this purpose, a public expenditure tracking tool was conducted to assess the efficiency and accountability of the service delivery for public transportation in Pristina.

Profile on the target area: Pristina

Pristina is the capital and largest city of Kosovo, located in the north-eastern part of the country close to the Gollak mountains. According to the last official census done in 2011, the city of Pristina has 198,897 inhabitants. The city's urban area has 145,419 inhabitants. Today, Kosovo Albanians amount to a 98% ethnic majority of the total population. Pristina is the economic heart of Kosovo and home to many domestic and international companies operating in the country. Major roads and railways pass through Pristina and connect it to the rest of the country. Based on this socioeconomic and sociopolitical context of the municipality, the team consulted with stakeholders (agencies of the central government, donors, other relevant CSOs) to properly define the objectives of the study in order to establish a plan to evaluate the conditions and needs of the public transportation service. In order to receive first-hand information for a correct conduction of the survey, the project staff met with the representatives of the Municipality of Pristina and with representatives of Bus Station in Pristina. The two final surveys conducted were: one for key officials in the Municipality and one for the citizens, both regarding the lack of progress in the public transportation service.

Representative sampling method

In order for the survey to reflect accurate results, the project used a representative sampling method. The survey targeted citizens in the main neighborhoods of Pristina, selected based on the population density. The representative sample in Pristina consisted of 130 surveys, based on the following standard calculation: according the official data of Kosovo Statistical Agency, Kosovo has 1,815,606 inhabitants and if the error margin is +- 3%, the number of citizens to be surveyed is 1067, in cases when the survey is to be conducted throughout Kosovo. The number of surveys is distributed throughout Kosovo on basis of the population for each municipality. For example, official data shows that the Municipality of Pristina has 198,897 inhabitants, following the sampling formula, the calculation is made as follows: $198,897 \text{ (Pristina's population)} / 1,815,606 \text{ (Kosovo's population)} \times 100 = 10.9\%$ (the percentage that Pristina population represents in total for Kosovo). In this case $10.9\% \times 1067$ (number of surveys to be conducted when including whole Kosovo) consist of 116.3 surveys (for Pristina), this said, a representative sample in Pristina consists of 116 surveys in total, with an error margin of + 3%, and whom are randomly selected (based on alphabetical order). The residents' questionnaire based on the sample strategy representative of the municipality (age, social background, education, ethnicity etc.) determined whether the services matched the conditions.

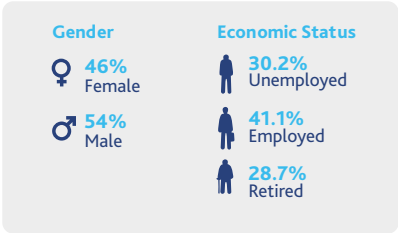
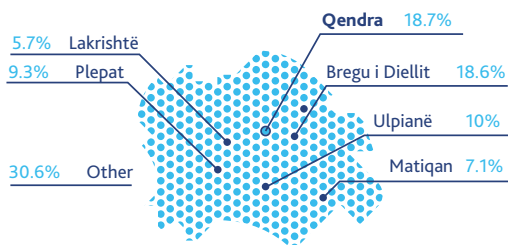
Profile of the respondents

Survey 1. Prishtina (Citizens)
 Survey with citizens to assess the service delivery for public transport in Prishtina

Prishtina Municipality



Neighborhoods



There were 130 questionnaires conducted with the citizens of the Municipality of Pristina in five main neighborhoods: Lakrishte, Plepat, Ulpiane, Matiqaan and city center (including all neighborhoods). To abide by a gender-conscious process, 46% of the respondents were female and 54% were male. Looking at age groups, of the 130 people surveyed, 44 persons belong to the 18-25 age group, 37 persons to the 26-45 age group, 34 persons to the 46-65 age group, and 15 persons were above 65 years old. The sample also sought diversity in economic status, with 30,2% of the respondents were unemployed, 41% employed and 28,6% were retired.

Main issues and common findings

a. Meetings with the municipal stakeholders

The project met with official representatives from the relevant departments of the municipality, including the Director of Public Services, in order to collect primary data. The municipal officials stated their strategic plan for public transport in Pristina, as well as their current and future aims for this service provision. The municipal official said the buses were well-maintained and not experiencing major deficiencies that block their usage, even if most (60%) were not environmentally-friendly and produce a lot of air pollution. Currently, 30 recent new buses are already in function, besides another 100 buses that are privately owned which were also running. The municipality introduced 21 new buses during October 2018, yet this plan was at a standstill because the Mobility Plan has yet to be approved. And, the department would start introducing new buses over the course of the next four years. Moving forward, the strategy was to restructure the service as a whole by replacing all old buses with new ones over the upcoming 3-4 years.



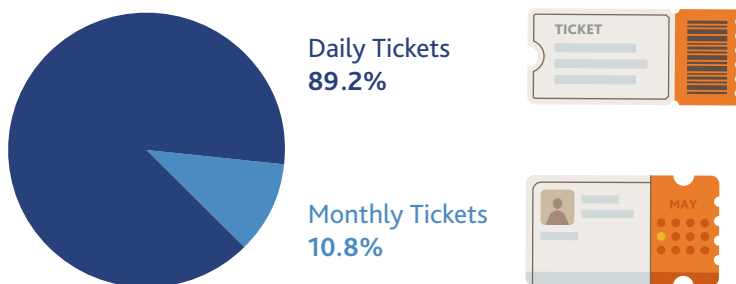
Meeting of the Prishtina Social Audit team with municipal representatives in Prishtina, September 2018

In terms of budget and planning, the project also gathered useful information. The municipality received €800,000 from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to be used for new buses. The municipality had spent €650,000, yet in order to have the 150 operating buses needed to cover all existing lines, an additional €350,000 was necessary – since this surpasses the original budget, the municipality said it will provide the remaining amount to complete the plan. On this note, they are also planning to spend €400,000 on renovating the bus stations in Pristina.

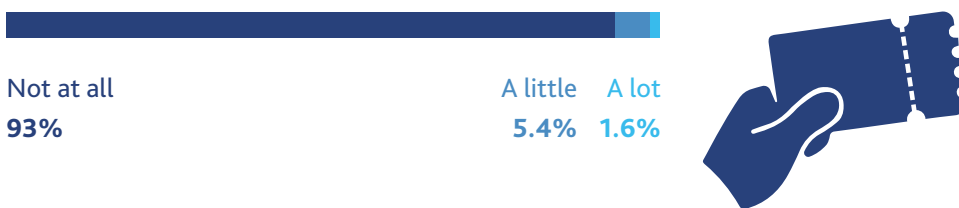
b. Lack of information on public transport

The interviewed citizens come from different economic status, all of which use buses regularly - half of the citizens interviewed use the bus at least once a day. Among this sample, almost 90% used a daily ticket instead of a monthly ticket. This related to a major problem in Prishtina's public transport system - users needed to purchase daily tickets although they used buses very often because monthly tickets are not valid for all lines. This lack of integration of ticket options and overall transport services was a problem. Furthermore, the vast majority said no irregularities existed when paying for the ticket, but this might actually be due to the fact that many still buy a single daily ticket to avoid confusion. For this reason, when asked how informed they are about different aspects of the public transport system in their municipality, while 45% of the regular users well-informed, 55% said to be only "partially" or "not at all" informed.

7. What payment method/tickets do you use?

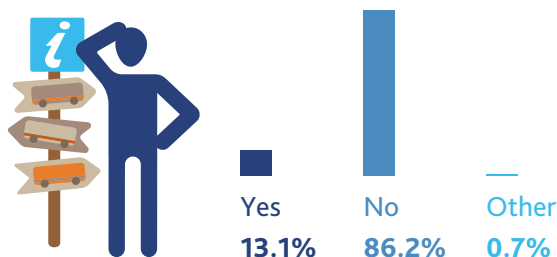


8. Did you ever encounter any irregularities when paying the ticket?

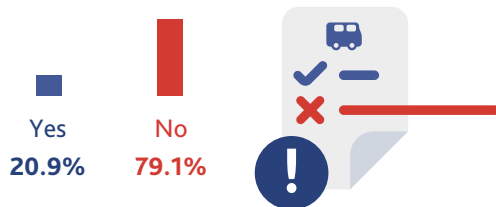


On the topic of new users being provided with enough information, here the answers were overwhelmingly negative (86,2%). A similar lack of information also applied to the availability of channels for presenting complaints, in which 79% said they were not aware or informed on how to demand better services. Overall, in Pristina major problems involved missing information, such as the case of timelines and maps, besides the complaints filing system to hold service providers accountable. These were some problems that must be corrected.

Is there **enough information provided** by the public transport for the new users of the services?



If you have any complaints with regards to the services offered by public transport, are you informed where you can file a complaint?



c. Lack of operating lines

The responses to how the users perceived the running services were generally mixed, with a general satisfaction being matched with desires for improvement. The surveys showed that 28% of the citizens interviewed agree that the urban traffic must purchase new buses which comply with safety and environmental measures, while 35% of the interviewed agreed that there is a need for new lines in many neighborhoods of the municipality. In detail, there is said to be a need for bus lines in the neighborhood of Arberi, Kolovice, Velani, Kodra e Trimave, Hajvali and Veternik. Further, most respondents (55%) believed buses seldom or never arrive according to the mandated time schedule.

What do you think should be **changed in order to provide better public transport services** in Prishtina?

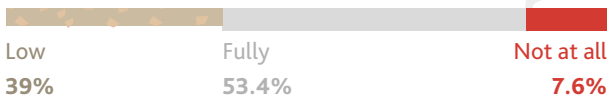


d. Inadequate security and cleanliness conditions

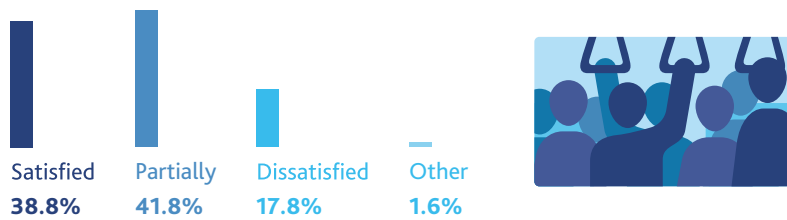
The survey showed that the number of new buses which fulfilled environmental and safety standards must be increased. Half of the citizens interviewed agree that the security measures (smoking restrictions, reserved places for pregnant women and elderly people, level of noise, etc.) were being respected, while the rest of the responders agreed that there must be a better compliance with the schedule and the level of cleanliness must also increase. Here, 46.6% were not satisfied with the implementation of security measures in public transport. Similarly, only 38.7% were satisfied with the conditions offered in the buses, ranging from air-conditioning to number of seats and hangers.

How much do you think the security measures for using public transport are being implemented?

(e.g. non-smoking area, reserved places for pregnant women and elderly people, number of passengers comparing to space offered, etc.)



How much are you satisfied with the conditions offered within buses (cleanness, air-conditioning, number of seats and seat supporters/hangers, level of noise, etc.)?



Moving forward

In general, how much are you **satisfied with the services provided** by the public transport?



Overall the citizen's satisfaction with the services provided by the public transport was rated as 'good'. Nevertheless, changes (i.e. purchasing new buses and establishment of new bus lines) must be done to increase the satisfaction. Research showed that the users wanted the municipality's focus to be on providing new vehicles, lines and stations (66%), as well as respecting the schedules (17%) and the cleanliness standards (13.8%). On the institutional side, also the municipal representatives agreed that promotional materials (i.e. new maps, timetable schedules, etc.) must be disseminated to encourage more citizens to use these services.

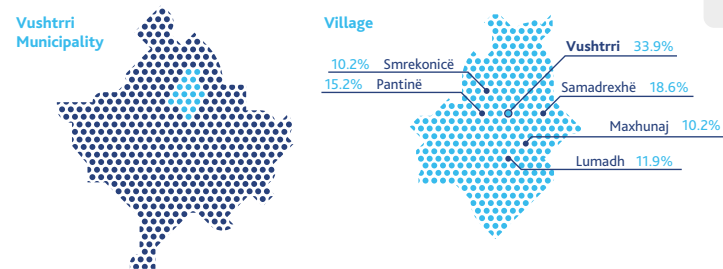
All things considered, 16% of the respondents were very satisfied with the services provided by the public transport, whereas 68% were only satisfied and 15% responded in

a negative light. On this note, key Municipal officials informed our team that a Mobility Plan must be first approved in order to purchase new buses, which is expected to occur within the next three years, under a €1,300,000 public transport budget. A great way to correct many of these things would be to establish a proper, functional system to file complaints – this would not only increase citizens' involvement in the way public transportation operates and is delivered but also increase accountability. For instance, one of the biggest concerns of the elderly, people on social welfare and veterans was the lack of coordination between the Municipality and the Ministry of Infrastructure, regarding the decision that all persons must pay for public services. It is thus of the utmost importance to mobilize citizens and civil society in the monitoring and assessment of the public transportation services in order to develop solutions which best address the challenges identified. The advocacy activities and findings of PETS have induced to the municipality to concretely take measures towards the improvement of public transportation service. The activities undertaken have put pressure on the municipality to take concrete measures on improving the public transportation services. As things stand regarding the improvement of public transportation service for daily use of locals, the Mobility Plan process is still ongoing and further developments await once it is approved.

B.2 Vushtrri – Improvement of medical services in healthcare centers

Survey 2. Vushtrri (Citizens)

Survey to assess the efficiency of healthcare services provided by the healthcare centres in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn



One of the biggest concerns of the residents of the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn was the lack of proper health care. The municipality has 19 healthcare centers, yet only three worked seven days a week and all were located in the city. In the villages, the situation was much worse since healthcare centers operated on a reduced schedule and often in bad conditions, working only until 15:00 and not opening during the weekends. In the villages of Zhilivode and Skrome, healthcare centers worked only for three hours a day and never on weekends. Adding to this, very often these centers lacked medicine and equipment to treat the incoming patients. Due to these circumstances, the residents of these villages are forced to travel to the city center in order to receive a proper form of medical treatment in a working center. The Ministry of Health undertook some initiatives to attempt to improve conditions. These included the establishment of the new Family Health Center III in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, yet it operated with limited staff, a lack of medications and several other problems.

Hence, with the PETS tool the project team aimed to carefully monitor and evaluate the efficiency of the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn in providing proper healthcare services to its residents. A monitoring process was conducted to spot possible cases of corruption or mismanagement of the allocation of public goods. For the case of the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, the methods adopted to conduct the social accountability process were very similar to those described for the case of the 'Improvement of public transportation services in the Municipality of Pristina'. In order to build a survey that tackled the issues at hand, different relevant stakeholders were interviewed to evaluate the conditions and needs of the healthcare centers in the municipality. This enabled the carrying out of a complete and thorough evaluation of procurement services in the focus municipality.

Profile on the target area: Vushtrri/Vučitrn

Vushtrri/Vučitrn is a municipality located in the Mitrovica District in northern Kosovo. According to the 2011 census, the town of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has 26,964 inhabitants, while the municipality has 69,870 inhabitants. The municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has 67 villages. Vushtrri/Vučitrn is an important economic center, mostly known as the biggest producer of potatoes in Kosovo, besides also housing factories and important national companies of Kosovo, such as Vipa, Galva Steel Llamkos, Bini and Berto. Today the Pristina–Mitrovica highway passes through Vushtrri/Vučitrn, and links the north region of Kosovo with the east and central part of the country. The two final surveys conducted were: one for key officials in the Municipality and one for the citizens, both regarding the lack of progress in health care centers.

Representative sampling method

In line with the survey development method of representative sampling used for the Municipality of Pristina, the same calculation formula was utilized for the Municipality of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn. Here, the aforementioned sampling formula set 60 as the appropriate number of surveys to be conducted in order to have a representative sample, also taking elements of age, social background, education, ethnicity, etc. into consideration.

Profile of the respondents

There were 60 questionnaires conducted with the citizens of the Municipality of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn in six main neighborhoods: Srmekonice, Pantine, Samadrexhe, Maxhunaj, Lumadh and city center. To abide by a gender-conscious process, 54% of the respondents were female and 46% were male. Looking at age groups, of the 60 people surveyed, 14 persons belong to the 18-25 age group, 24 persons to the 26-45 age group, 17 persons to the 46-65 age group, and five persons were above 65 years old. The sample also sought diversity in economic status, with 58.3% of the respondents were unemployed, 23.3% employed and 18.3% were retired.

Main issues and common findings

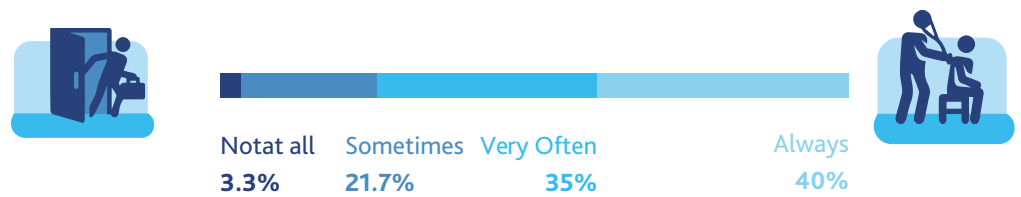
a. Meetings with the municipal stakeholders

The Director of the Health Department in the Municipality of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn informed the project that the total budget for the entire healthcare system in the municipality was €1,200,000 for a year. This included everything ranging from wages to medicine, capital investment, etc. Out of this sum, 226,000 were destined for capital investment which was foreseen to cover expenses for renovating and building up the healthcare centers and medical tools, as well as purchasing one ambulance. All of these services, excluding the latter, were all in the process of procurement. In meetings with the local staff (i.e. nurses) of the healthcare centers, the project gathered that the staff is often monitored by the municipality, through occasional visits.

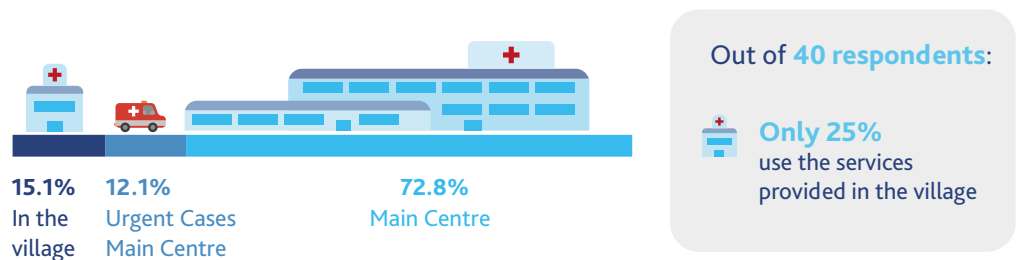
b. Lack of healthcare services

The study showed a discrepancy between the healthcare services provided in the main center and in the villages. A high percentage of people were not satisfied with the number of doctors serving in the villages. For instance, one doctor served in three villages, yet inevitably this type of service provision is not enough to meet needs. Although doctors complied with the mandated working hours, they were not able to provide adequate medical services given the scarce number of days in which they served in the village. Although 40% of the citizens responded positively to the questions whether the working hours are respected, more than half of them responded to the open question by highlighting that the villages absolutely need full-time doctors who serve at least five days a week in two shifts. Otherwise, the precarious access to healthcare would stay the same and many of the village residents must go to the city center to receive the needed services.

Are working hours **respected**?



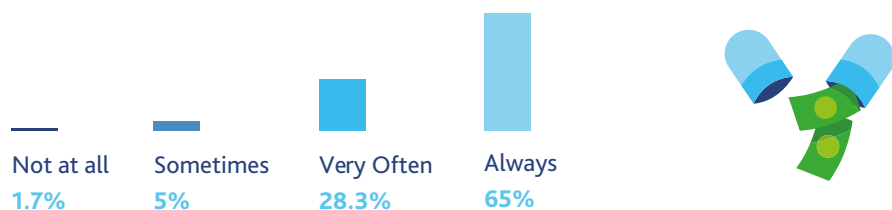
Do you consistently use the healthcare services **provided in your area**?



For this reason, while 72.7% of the respondents regularly used the healthcare services in the main center, the numbers were much lower in the village (15%). This showed that the distribution of services was unfair and unbalanced, marginalizing the village population. Furthermore, the discontent was also manifest in the vast majority (77%) saying there was a need to add new services to the local healthcare center. In this regard, Dentistry was the most demanded field (55.5%), followed by Pediatrics (22.2%) and Gynecologist (19%).

c. Inadequate services (i.e. payment system, supplies, efficiency)

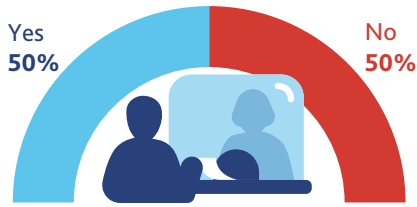
How often are you obliged to **purchase medicine and other supporting materials**?



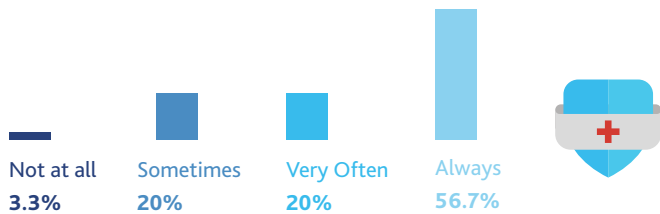
Another set of issues that the survey gathered is that services in general are deficient. Only half of the respondents said they receive invoices for their payments, for instance. Another service lacking as part of the healthcare system in Vushtrri/Vučitrn was that the centers were overwhelmingly not well supplied with medicine or other supporting materials – 93.3% of respondents either always or very often had to resort to purchasing medicine outside of the center. On the topic of efficiency, citizens provided

mixed responses as to how they feel their local healthcare center fulfilled the needs of users by providing efficient services – 73.3% were satisfied and only 5% were "not at all" with, similarly 76,6% answered they felt secure. Overall citizens were more or less satisfied with the services provided, even if clearly noting major gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Do you receive an **invoice** against the services you pay?



How **secure do you feel** with the services you receive by your local healthcare centre?



Despite these responses, there was a generalized satisfaction with the services received in the local healthcare center (56.6% responded always) as well as with the cleanliness and maintenance of said centers (56.6% also responded always).

Moving forward

Through the PETS conducted with the citizens of Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn and with the officials of the Municipality of Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn (including doctors and nurses of medical centers of the villages), we aimed to push forward the supply of these medical centers with essential list medications. Furthermore, common requests of the residents of Pantine/a, Maxhunaj/Madjunaj and Druar were for the family doctor to provide services at least six times a week, and not only three times a week. This way the residents of the villages would not have to go to the Vushtrri/Vuçitrn main health centers to seek proper medical services. The dentist services were also a necessity for the residents given that the dentist office was used for wood storage. Reestablishment of complaint boxes was also a priority for the direct stakeholders of the project, in order for them to have a way to share their opinions with the service providers. In the future, feasibility studies must be conducted by the municipality before designing a plan to build healthcare centers.

Those that have answered **yes**, specified the following services:



53.9% **Dentist**



21.5% **Pediatrician**

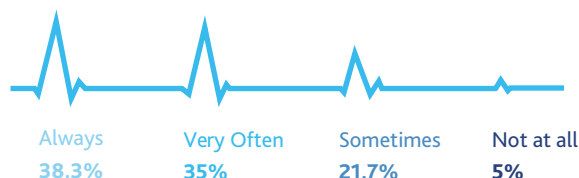


18.5% **Gynecologist**



6.1% **Ophtamologist & Laboratory Technician**

To what level does your local healthcare centre fulfill the needs of its citizens in offering efficient services?



Before the PETS was conducted, medical centers in the city and the villages operated with shortcomings. The project involved doctors and nurses of medical centers of the villages in pushing for more complete and reliable medical services for local citizens. Impressive results were achieved. Firstly, all health facilities vehicles in Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn were fitted with GPS as a means the municipality found to be more efficient and save money for other fields, for it entailed a €300/month decrease in expenses. Secondly, all medical centers had a list of information on the medications they have or have not, in order for citizens to swiftly know if what they need is available. This recommendation touches upon the need for transparency of such services and was prompted by the project team questioning why there are medications lacking in the first place. Thirdly, another recommendation regarded the need for maintenance personnel and a cleaning company among the medical centers. Currently a call for applications is ongoing for each center, albeit having been delayed after candidates questioned the impartiality of the chosen candidates. Finally, the project team meetings also pressed on the working hours issue in search of explanation from the Director of Health. The official authority made clear that all active doctors are fulfilling their full working hours and no more can be done as of now, unless it entails hiring qualified doctors from other municipalities. Lastly, the success of the monitoring project was also noticeable in the fact that now all the medical centers in Vushtrri/Vuçitrn have a new entrance system consisting of ID cards for all workers, which enhances accountability of workers and services.

IV. CONCLUSION

Assessing accountability, transparency, efficiency and performance of local governments is considered vital for a more democratic society. At the same time, it acts as a pressure mechanism for local governments to improve service delivery and usage of public funds. The social accountability tools designed by USAID TEAM and GLPS to employ in the municipalities of Pristina and Vushtrri/Vuçitrn during the nine-month project this report covers, have served as powerful enforcement mechanisms to systematically assess how local government have been using public expenditure funds. Both the Social Audit tool and the Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) tool enabled an in-depth evaluation of how well public resources are being used to deliver on promised plans and to meet the needs of target beneficiaries of both Pristina and Vushtrri/Vuçitrn municipality. The added value also lies in that all relevant stakeholders (i.e. citizens, local government representatives, civil society organizations) are similarly mobilized in this monitoring process. This promoted more sustainable levels of public accountability, participation and transparency in the service delivery and performance of the relevant institutions.

By engaging citizens and the community to scrutinize and monitor public funds by local governments, we managed to conclusively find that there is considerable stagnation in the provision of public services and goods, as well as a lack of proper managing of public funds. This project held the local government accountable for the inability to properly build the schools in the villages of Vushtrri/Vuçitrn, provide a good healthcare system in the medical centers of Vushtrri/Vuçitrn, deliver efficient public transportation and complete the construction of the “Bllok pas Blloku” area. In turn, our team also pushed forward by proposing changes and providing recommendations for the aforementioned issues tackled.

Policy recommendations

Schools in Maxhunaj/Madjunaj, Druare and Pantine/a

- Preparing the feasibility study for further changes and interventions in school areas and future projects is crucial for a successful implementation of a particular project and should be the first step to be undertaken;
- Prior to starting the implementation of a certain project, the municipality and the awarded company/ies should always organize consultative meetings with all relevant stakeholders and the end beneficiaries of a particular project;
- Interventions and changes in finishing new school facilities are mandatory to assure a beneficial educational environment and proper safety conditions;
- Ensure the medical visits for dental and health care for students occur once every six months;
- The municipality and the school managements of these villages should consider approaching multiple donors in an attempt to garner finance opportunities that will further improve the reality on the ground.

Healthcare centers in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn

- Review of healthcare system in villages of Vushtrri/ Vučitrn: setting an appropriate number of doctors with the number of the people living in the village, as well as a full-time shift for doctors and nurses;
- The relevant department of the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn should increase the frequency of their monitoring over local healthcare centers in all villages;
- Full functioning of medical centers are required (full time doctors and nurses, appropriate medications), most urgently in the villages, and/or closing those who do not comply with the standards;
- Conclude the process for hiring of maintenance personnel and a cleaning company for each of the medical centers.

“Blok pas Blloku” area in Pristina

- Gather the community to provide solutions for further usage of “Blok pas Blloku” area;
- Given that the construction of “Blok pas Blloku” has failed, it can be considered that the manager has also failed in properly managing the project. As a result, the social audit groups requests continuation of the project according to the needs of the residents of the area and based on standards set for this type of project;
- As follows below, several new requests were put forth to the Municipality by the Social Audit:
 1. Put up a wall (2 meters, green fence) from the urban parking lot towards the playground, as well as speed bumps on the main surrounding streets;
 2. Remove the squares between the skateboard track, some of the ramp part taking up table-setting space and also remove the unfinished water fountain which can construe a safety hazard;
 3. Replace the natural greenery area with artificial grass in heavy use areas;
 4. Better regulation of all hazardous parts (i.e. removing the skateboard strip angles, strew bolts and all damaged parts);
 5. Review of the size of the premises and terrace (i.e. removal of the ramp and the use of it as a part for the terrace).

Public transport services in the Municipality of Prishtina

- The municipality should increase its efforts towards providing better information on the functioning of the public transport in Prishtina –specifically for new users – and employ a more user-friendly approach towards how the information is being disseminated (tickets, maps, schedules, operating lines, etc.);
- The municipality should establish a system for filing complaints to encourage citizen involvement and improve accountability;
- The municipality should focus on meeting environmental standards and maintaining a proper cleanliness level in all buses (old and new);
- The municipality should prioritize introducing new buses that cover the needs of citizens over the next three years, and gradually restructuring the transportation itself with renewed buses and lines.

Social Accountability Tools as Means for Accountability Success:

Two Municipal Case Studies in Kosovo

