

REPORT BY THE SOCIAL AUDIT GROUP PEJA

MONITORED PROJECT KARAGAÇ PARK REPAIR





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About the **DEMOS** Decentralisation and Municipal Support

The Project for Decentralization and Support to Municipalities (DEMOS), is a project co-financed by the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation-Kosovo.

DEMOS supports all municipalities of Kosovo to bring systemic changes that promote good governance and the provision of better services that positively affect the daily life of citizens.

DEMOS III general objective is the improvement of the performance of municipalities in governance, management and services, to contribute to the increase of citizens' satisfaction.

About the platforma **CIVIKOS**

The CiviKos Platform is an initiative of civil society organizations in Kosovo, established to create and promote an environment suitable for formal and structured cooperation between civil society and state institutions in Kosovo.

Constantly growing and currently with around 300 civil society member organizations, the CiviKos Platform is dedicated to deepening cooperation between member organizations, public authorities and other stakeholders in the development of civil society in Kosovo. With its mission to enable a favourable environment for civil society in Kosovo and its membership in all regions of Kosovo, the CiviKos Platform continues to be actively engaged in supporting its members operating at the local level and promoting democratic participation at the local level.

SOCIAL AUDIT: Why is it Supported by DEMOS and What is its Purpose?

DEMOS supports municipalities based on their performance, using the Performance Grant as its main tool. The better the municipality's performance, the higher the grant amount. Municipal performance is assessed through the Municipal Performance Management System (MPMS) of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA).

By developing positive competition between municipalities, the performance grant consequently promotes positive changes in the behaviour of municipalities for the improvement of democratic governance, financial management and human resources, transparency and integrity.

In addition to the Performance Grant, DEMOS provides technical assistance to municipal staff that empowers them to deliver better results. Technical assistance is provided in areas where performance is considered to be weaker.

DEMOS also supports the central government in systemic policies, for a more favourable framework for decentralized governance.

Under the first component of the project, DEMOS III aims to open the data for wider public review of municipal performance and initiate social audits to monitor the impact of Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects on citizens.

The purpose of this intervention is to involve civil society organizations and citizens in conducting social audits to monitor Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects implemented by municipalities.

To mitigate the reliability risks of Performance Grant funds, and at the same time to monitor the impact of projects on citizens, DEMOS has established social audits within the Municipal Performance Grant (in the system). Social audits will also include performance monitoring and project planning processes at the municipal level. The project will support the development of sampling tools and methodologies, including training to successfully conduct such social audits. The aforementioned social audits will be financed by part of the Municipal Performance Grant funds and will be developed by civil society organizations. For this, DEMOS will partner with key CSOs.

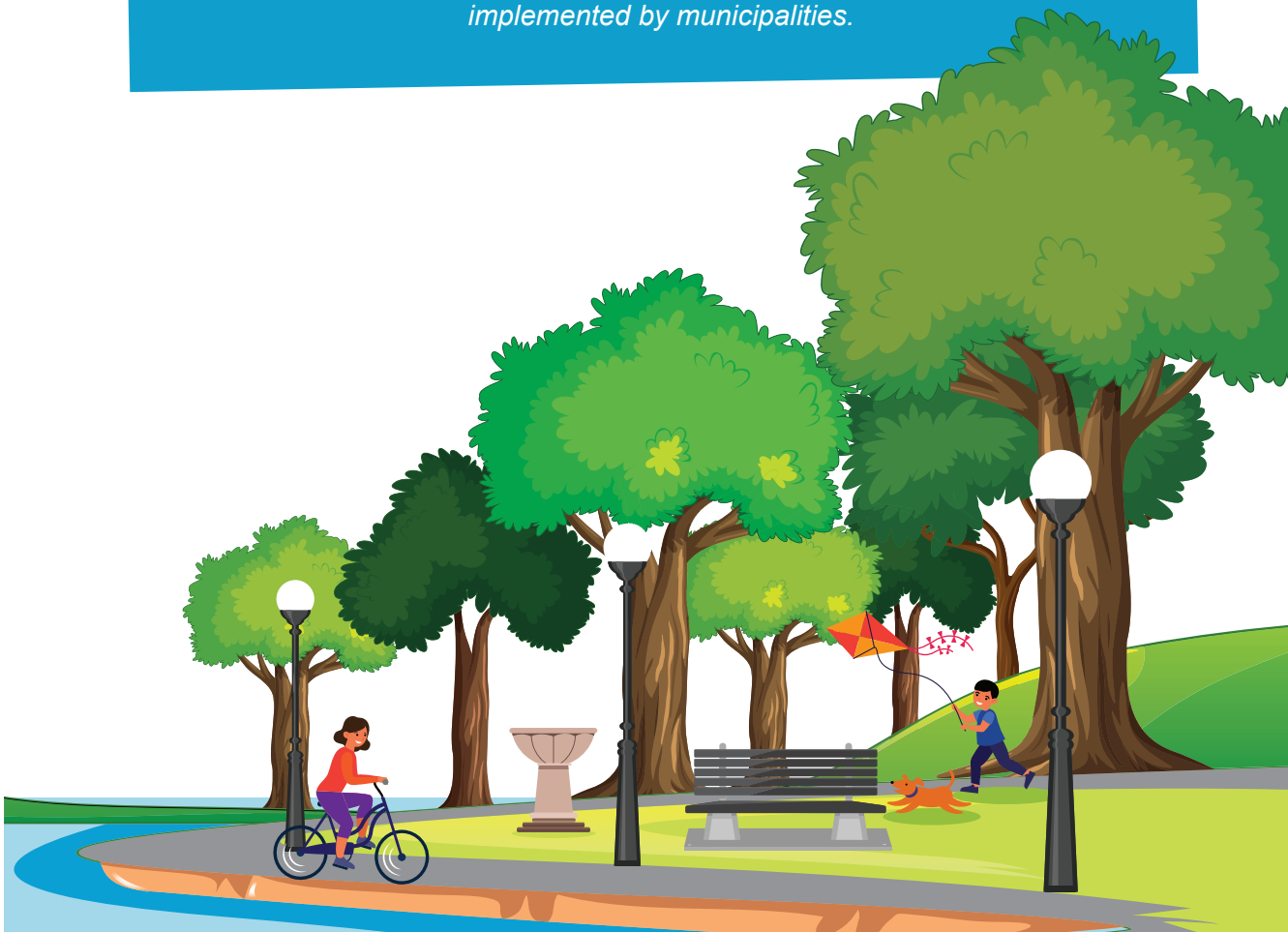
INTRODUCTION

This is a summary report prepared by the Social Audit Group composed of active citizens and members of various organizations from the region of Peja, who have joined the Social Audit to monitor the implementation of the project “Karagaq Park Repair in Peja”.

The report elaborates the methodology followed by the Social Audit Group, the actions for data collection - including field visits and discussions with the Mayor and representatives of the Municipality, and the elaboration of findings and recommendations.

The Social Audit was made possible thanks to the support of the Decentralisation and Municipal Support Project (DEMOS), a project co-financed by the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation-Kosovo.

Through this activity, DEMOS aims to install social audit as part of the citizen monitoring culture for capital projects implemented by municipalities.



EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

During the period October-December 2022, with the support of the DEMOS Project, the CiviKos Platform has identified a group of citizens and representatives of organized groups of citizens to monitor the implementation and progress of the capital investment in the Municipality of Peja, which aims to repair the Karagaq Park.

The investment in question, worth EUR 69,879.24,

foresees the repair of the path around the artificial lake, the installation of seats and the improvement of the lighting of the park.

During this two-month period, 21 citizens participated in a two-day intensive training and in five other meetings, including field meetings, and meetings with the Mayor and other representatives of the Municipality of Peja. The composition of the Social Audit Group is determined based on the impact that the project of the Municipality has on different groups of the population, especially the marginalized ones. More precisely, the CiviKos Platform has invited to participate people who regularly visit the park and groups that may visit the park in the future. A particular emphasis is placed on the participation of underrepresented groups, such as youth, women and girls, and groups from non-majority communities.

The Municipality project, contracted through the open procurement procedure under the name '**LOT 1 - Karagaq Park Repair - Part 1**', according to the Social Audit Group, has not been implemented properly in its entirety, due to the fact that some shortcomings have been identified by citizens. As a result, the investment in question has not managed to fully address the requirements of the citizens. The metal seats already installed are not considered suitable as they do not provide comfort for park visitors in different seasons. It is recommended that in the future they be modified and combined with wood or more comfortable materials. Also, the lighting installed in the park does not work after 11:00 p.m., not providing security for citizens who visit the park after this time, especially for those citizens who live near this area and who have to pass through the park.

During the process, there were indications that the economic operator will fulfil the obligations of this contract, hence it will carry out the interventions foreseen with this investment, despite the fact that these interventions that are foreseen with this investment are not considered the most suitable and important for the citizens. As a result, the main finding of the Social Audit Group is that the project in question does not respond to the priorities and requirements of the citizens, as the Municipality has not consulted them enough during the design of this capital project. The main requirement of the citizens for the Karagaq Park is the repair of the necessary road infrastructure for categories of citizens, such as parents who

have small children and who visit the park with strollers, or even the necessary and suitable infrastructure for people with special needs. Also, according to the citizens, the most important in such investments would be the improvement of security in the park, since such a thing is currently missing.

Regarding the finding of the Social Audit Group that the project in question does not respond to the most urgent priorities and requirements of the citizens, the Mayor informed the Group that public hearings were held. However, the Social Audit Group believes that not enough efforts have been made to consult the citizens, since in the public hearings held by the Municipality, investments like this have not been discussed in detail, but the consultations have been general.

The goal of the Social Audit Group is for the Municipality of Peja to improve these types of projects of great importance for the citizens. For this reason, the Social Audit Group recommends that the concrete part around the seats be worked according to standards and that the seats be suitable for all categories of citizens and during all seasons; To have lighting in the park even after 11:00 p.m., thus increasing the safety of passers-by or park visitors; To look at the possibility of placing cameras in the park, increasing the security for park visitors and eliminating the possibility of damage to the seats. In addition to the cameras in the park, it is recommended to increase the number of guards, who would increase security in the park. Also, the citizens have requested that in the future, beyond the existing contract that has been subject to monitoring, to clean the inert waste in the lake, and to stop illegal fishing in the lake of the park; Increase the number of park maintainers to eliminate waste and keep the park cleaner; Fix the sewage problem so that after the rains, these waters do not flow into the lake; As well as plant trees while maintaining the same structure of the existing trees in the park.

The Municipality has welcomed the civic engagement in the improvement of the capital project for the city park repair, but also as an example of support for the Municipality in the improvement of other similar projects that can be realized in the near future. The Mayor of Peja, together with the Directorate of Public Services and the Directorate of Finance, discussed the findings of the Social Audit Group and offered explanations for some of the findings.

All parties involved were grateful for the help provided by the CiviKos Platform and DEMOS to deepen the cooperation of the municipality with the citizens. Since the project in question has not yet been completed, monitoring at this stage of the project contributes significantly to its successful completion by giving the Municipality the opportunity to make the necessary changes or improvements.

Based on the findings and recommendations from this process, the Social Audit Group will continue to monitor the progress achieved in the realization of the unfinished investment and the implementation of the recommendations that have emerged from this report, keeping the citizens informed with the new developments.

ABOUT SOCIAL AUDIT

According to the guide prepared by DEMOS, social audit is one of several approaches towards achieving social accountability, through a process of constructive engagement between citizens, government, civil society, and in some cases also private sector stakeholders to assess the behaviour and the performance of public officials, elected leaders and service providers who use public resources to deliver services, improve community well-being and protect people's rights.

Social audit is based on the basic principles of democratic and good governance, which means that the process is participatory, comprehensive, transparent, with access to the necessary information and that decision-makers and policy-makers are held accountable.

Social audits should not be confused with formal and financial audits, but they are an essential element with the potential to complement traditional financial audits to help public institutions compare their general performance. Social audit reports, and in particular the results generated from them, can be used to be included in the annual internal audit plans of municipalities.

Social audits are sometimes undertaken as a one-time event, but are most effective when carried out systematically as a process carried out at regular intervals. To enable this, it is essential to build a common understanding and mutual ownership of social audit among relevant stakeholders. When successful, social accountability processes lead to improved management of public resources, project implementation, and the delivery of public services and policies that benefit people, especially marginalized groups of society. If conducted regularly and constructively, the process and its outcomes have been shown to strengthen mutual trust between citizens and government institutions.

The cooperation between DEMOS and the CiviKos Platform aims to create the infrastructure for social audit. Since it is a new form of cooperation between citizens and public authorities, capacity building is necessary. Therefore, this cooperation has started with the piloting of the social audit in four municipalities: Peja, Kamenica, Lipjan and Rahovec. Through the activities in this project, DEMOS and the CiviKos Platform aim to install this methodology to public authorities in Kosovo and civil society, so that it can be further developed as practice in the future for various capital projects.

STEPS OF THE SOCIAL AUDIT PROCESS

The CiviKos platform, based on the steps of the social audit methodology of DEMOS, has worked actively in creating the infrastructure for monitoring four capital projects in the four partner municipalities, namely, in Peja, Kamenica, Lipjan and Rahovec. The methodology and approach were built along a detailed process and discussion between the CiviKos Platform and DEMOS. The following parts will elaborate on each step that shaped this cooperation and established the foundations for the development of the social audit concept in Kosovo.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of projects and Municipalities

An important part of the Social Audit process is the selection of municipalities and projects that will be monitored by the social audit groups. Initially, only the municipalities that benefited from the performance grant were subjected to the selection process. The first step was the listing of municipalities and projects in order to create a solid basis for the development of the social audit.

The initial step has been led by DEMOS, which in cooperation with the CiviKos Platform and the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), have sent to all these municipalities a request for expression of interest/will to pilot the social audit. The municipalities have responded positively to this request to a large extent, and consequently those municipalities that have expressed their willingness to cooperate for the implementation of the social audit have been placed on the list of potential municipalities to pilot the social audit.

After the completion of the first phase, DEMOS together with the CiviKos Platform and MLGA have made the selection of projects based on the following criteria:

Project status (if it is in completion, more than 50% of the works are completed, or it is in the initial stage);

Targeting and high or low impact of projects for marginalized groups such as women, youth, the elderly, persons with special needs and non-majority communities;

The nature of the project and the area of impact with priority in the fields of education, health and environment;

The value of the grant allocated for the realization of the capital project.

As a result, the projects that have received the most points based on the aforementioned criteria are proposed for social audit.

The selected projects are as follows:

- Karagaq Park Repair in the Municipality of Peja;
- The water distribution project for the villages of Hogosht and Lisockë in the Municipality of Kamenica;
- Construction of infrastructure for persons with special needs in the Municipality of Rahovec (Rahovec, Xërxë, Fortesë, Krushë e Madhe, Celinë, Hoqë e Vogël, Opterushë, Malësi e Vogël, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak); and
- Construction of the Water Reservoir and Rehabilitation of the Water Supply Network in Janjevë, Municipality of Lipjan.

The municipalities that have been selected for the social audit have been officially notified and all have expressed their willingness to pilot the social audit for the respective selected projects.

After the selection of the project, the next and most important phase of the project has begun – the establishment of cooperation with the selected municipalities and the establishment of groups for social audit in the field. This phase was also the main and necessary part for a successful social audit.

- **Preparatory meeting with the municipal executive:** DEMOS, together with the CiviKos Platform, have held meetings with the mayors and representatives of the municipalities of Peja, Rahovec, Kamenica and Lipjan to inform them about the social audit process, as well as to exchange the necessary information for the projects in question. These meetings, in addition to informing the institutions, have also served as an opportunity for the development and maintenance of cooperation between citizens and local institutions.

- **Careful selection of social audit groups:** One of the most challenging steps in this process was the selection of social audit groups. The CiviKos platform has developed this step in cooperation with the municipalities and member organizations in each municipality - as CiviKos has a rich network of non-governmental organizations operating at the local level throughout Kosovo.

The social audit groups in the four partner municipalities have been selected with special care. As a criterion during the selection, the interest of the citizens to join the group, as well as the impact that the project has on their lives, was taken into account. Particular importance has been placed on the trust that community members are sincerely convinced that the social audit group represents their interests. Another very important element during the identification of the group has been the representation of marginalized or underrepresented groups, giving you an equal voice during the social audit process. The CiviKos platform, in addition to citizens who are members of the community, has also included civil society organizations operating at the local level. The inclusion of organizations is done in order to benefit from the social audit methodology which can be replicated by them in the future for similar projects.

- **Training of social audit groups:** Since the social audit is a very new concept in Kosovo, DEMOS has recommended that immediately after the selection of the social audit groups, training for the social audit and basic information for the selected project should be started. At this stage, the DEMOS team has been very supportive, providing assistance in the training of the audit groups. In this phase, all the selected projects are broken down and cohesion is created among the group.

- **Regular meetings of social audit groups:** The CiviKos platform has facilitated regular meetings of social audit groups. During the regular meetings, the social audit groups have met in the areas where they operate and have analysed the implementation of the project and also identified specific findings.

In order to confirm the findings, accept additional information and remove misunderstandings or misinterpretations, the social audit groups also met with the representatives of the respective municipalities where the implementation of the social audit was planned. The social audit groups have also held meetings in the field to see closely the realization of the investments that have been made in relation to the projects in question and to analyse the level of project implementation. All this was done in order to record the findings during the monitoring process. In addition to validating the findings, these meetings aimed at building a spirit of cooperation between citizens and institutions.

- **Preparation of social audit questions and indicators:** The social audit groups in the four pilot municipalities have compiled specific questions for the municipality, held meetings with the mayors of the municipalities, and the directors of the relevant departments for the project that was monitored. These questions have been developed with citizen inputs in regular meetings through a process facilitated by the CiviKos Platform and with the support of the DEMOS team.

After the meeting with the municipalities and receiving the information, written requests for providing additional information or documentation related to the project were sent as necessary. After collecting relevant information and documents, the main findings and recommendations for the municipality were compiled.

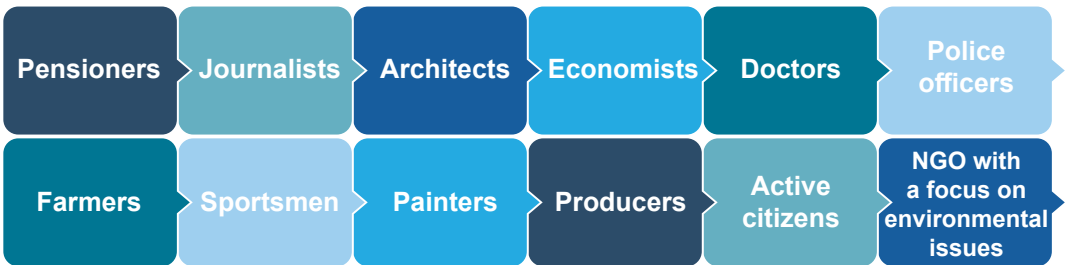
- **Signing of cooperation memorandums with the four partner municipalities:** In order to formalize the cooperation with the pilot municipalities, the CiviKos Platform has signed memorandums of cooperation with the four partner municipalities. The cooperation memorandum formalizes the cooperation between the CiviKos Platform and the partner municipalities. Through the signed memorandums, the municipalities have agreed to compile an action plan 3-6 months after the monitoring process, when the citizen groups have compiled the monitoring report and presented their findings and recommendations. This is in order to ensure follow-up and progress achieved in addressing the findings and recommendations.

SOCIAL AUDIT PROCESS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PEJA

Establishment of the Social Audit Group in Peja

In order to identify the Social Audit Group in Peja, and taking into account the uniqueness of the project, the representatives of the Local Councils of the Karagaq Neighbourhood in Peja were initially identified. After the meeting with the representatives of the Local Council and the presentation of the social audit concept, the representatives of the Local Council have expressed their willingness to be part of the group. During the meeting with representatives of the Municipality of Peja, the Fishermen’s Association in Peja was also identified as a group with an interest in the issues of the park. To bring diversity to the group, the CiviKos Platform has included two local organizations in Peja - Let’s Do it Peja and Era Group. These organizations have environmental protection as their primary focus. Other members who have joined the Social Audit Group in Peja are local journalists, citizens visiting the park and sportsmen.

In total, 21 members of the Social Audit Group were identified and selected in Peja, fifteen of which are men and six are women. The members of the Group, being professionals from different fields, have contributed to the development of nuanced discussions. Namely, the members came from these professions:



Immediately after the consolidation of the Social Audit Group in Peja, on October 1 and 2, 2022, the CiviKos Platform held a two-day training for the Group in Peja. During these two days, the participants learned about the functioning of the local level, the contract monitoring process as active citizens and were informed about the steps of the social audit process.

Regular meetings of the Social Audit Group in Peja

Immediately after the training and consolidation of the Group, the members have started regular meetings. The Social Audit Group in Peja held a total of five meetings, including two meetings with representatives of the Municipality of Peja.

Specific Purpose of the Social Audit Group in Peja

The specific purpose of the Social Audit Group in Peja was to measure the impact of the implementation of the project 'Karagaq Park Repair', with a focus on addressing and including the requirements and needs of different categories of citizens, especially marginalized groups, in the interventions of the project, the efficiency of project implementation, as well as community involvement in decision-making.

The performance indicators prepared by the Social Audit Group for the monitored project are:

- Organization of public consultation with citizens of the Municipality of Peja for the implementation of the project "Karagaq Park Repair";
- Full implementation of the project according to the previous contract;
- Completion of works according to the deadlines set by the contract;
- Realization of works responding to the needs of different categories of society (women, elderly, children, persons with special needs);
- The satisfaction of the Social Audit Group regarding the quality of the works (lighting, seats, etc.).

Requests for information/documents and questions sent by the Social Audit Group in Peja to the Municipality of Peja

Taking into account the nature of the project, the Social Audit Group has requested the following documents and information from the Municipality of Peja in order to collect the necessary information for the process:

- The invitations and minutes that the Municipality has for the participation of citizens during the budget hearings for the project "Karagaq Park Repair";
- Have the 100 light fixtures provided for in the contract been placed, and if so, in which parts of the park are they installed?
- According to information from the Social Audit Group, lighting does not work after 11:00 p.m. Can you explain to us why this happens, as it has been estimated that the lack of lighting after 11pm increases the insecurity in the park at night? Has any action been taken to avoid this?
- Have all the front seats been installed in the park? If not, how many seats have not yet been installed and when are they expected to be installed? Also, provide clarification regarding the causes and factors that have caused this delay?
- What are the reasons for installing metal seats? Is there a decisive factor price or some other criteria?
- During the instalment of the seats and especially the concrete part under the seats, was it intended that these seats will be suitable in different seasons as well as for different categories of citizens?
- Is a maintenance plan included in this contract? If so, provide us with the necessary documents.

- The Municipality to provide an overview of the expenses so far of the project for the Karagaq Park Repair.
- A timeline for the finalization of the project to be provided, and does the Municipality of Peja have planned to carry out any subsequent phases for the further repair of the Karagaq Park? If so, provide the necessary documents that testify to this planning of the Municipality.
- What issues or problems are planned to be fixed through this investment and the needs of which community in particular has the Municipality responded to through this investment?
- Is it intended to clean the inert waste in the lake after the completion of cube paving?

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Project	LOT 1 - Karagaq Park Repair- Part 1', with identification number 635-21-3456-5-2-I and internal number 635/21/046/521
The total price of the works in the contract	EUR 69,879.24
Contract status	Not completed

Contracting Authority: Municipality of Peja

Implementer: O.E "SKY LINE" LLC from Peja, with business number 810089153

This project is co-financed according to the agreement between MLGA, the Municipality of Peja and Helvetas Swiss - represented by the DEMOS project, determined according to the decision of the Municipal Performance Grant Commission (MPG).

KEY FINDINGS



The metal seats located in the park are not comfort - The concrete part around the seats is not suitable and is too high. As a consequence, they do not provide easy access and use for all groups of citizens. Also, fixed metal seats are not suitable for the park, as they do not provide comfort for different seasons. Metal, although a strong material, is not suitable during cold seasons.



Lack of lighting in the park after 23:00 - The lighting installed in the park does not work after 11:00 p.m., not offering security to citizens visiting the park or passers-by. For this finding, the Mayor informed the Group that the lack of lighting operation after 11:00 pm is a consequence of KEDS' request for energy saving. This schedule may change depending on the energy situation in the country.



Lack of lighting in the fountain area - There is not enough lighting in the fountain area. Also, there is not enough lighting from the Karagaq Sports Hall to the football field.

Despite the fact that it is not foreseen by the contract, the Social Audit Group in Peja has also identified these findings that would contribute to improving the experience of citizens in the park:



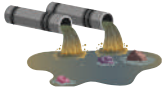
Lack of necessary infrastructure for marginalized groups - The Social Audit Group assesses that with the investment made, the project in question does not respond to the most urgent priorities and requirements of the citizens of the Municipality of Peja, especially the marginalized groups that visit the park. In this regard, Karagaq Park continues to lack the necessary road infrastructure for parents with children visiting the park with strollers, and there is also a lack of infrastructure for people with special needs. Specifically, road infrastructure suitable for them and the presence of curb ramps that enable access and passage more easily. Currently, the vast part of the park that is used for the movement of citizens is paved with gravel.



Uncleaned inert waste in lakes - The inert waste in the lake has not been cleaned, more precisely the old cubes that have been thrown into the lake have not been removed.



Lack of security in the park - The park, despite all the works carried out, does not offer complete safety for visitors. It is also worth noting the lack of cameras in the park, which affects the safety aspect.



Problems with sewage - There have been problems with sewage after the rain.



The park is not protected as it is frequently damaged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Municipality of Peja ensures that the concrete part around the seats is worked with standards, and is suitable for all categories of citizens. It must be ensured that the connection of the seat to the concrete is made in such a way that it is impossible to remove the seat from the concrete;
- To look at the possibility of modifying the iron seats, to make them more comfortable for citizens for all seasons;
- Keep the lighting in the park even after 11:00 p.m., increasing the safety of passers-by or park visitors. Place additional lighting at the park fountain. Also, additional lighting should be placed from the Karagaq Sports Hall to the football field;
- The Social Audit Group recommends that the Municipality increase its efforts to involve citizens during the design of projects, and to involve them as much as possible in budget hearings/public consultations. This can be done using communication tools such as social networks, but also traditional forms such as physical letters that can be distributed through the mail, to increase participation;
- Look into the possibility of placing cameras in the park, thus increasing the safety for park visitors and eliminating the possibility of damage to the seats;
- Look at the possibility of placing a fountain at the lake, which would also supply the lake with water;
- Clean up inert waste in the lake, and stop illegal fishing in the park's lake;
- Increase the number of park maintainers to keep the park cleaner;
- Fix the problem of sewage, so that after the rains these waters do not flow into the lake;
- Plant trees while maintaining the same structure of the trees in the park;
- Recruit more park guards to protect the park from damage.

SOCIAL AUDIT GROUP COMPOSITION LIST

	Name and Surname	Organisation/Profession
1	Eroll Grapci	SHPSR Trofta Peja/ Producer
2	Lulzim Murati	SHPSR Trofta Peja/ Mountain Guide
3	Aurela Gjickolli	Let's Do It Peja
4	Valdrin Daci	Journalist
5	Ilir Osmanaj	Journalist
6	Linda Gjakova	Journalist
7	Fatos Kartallozi	Jurist
8	Mentor Bojku	Economist
9	Mevlyde Popovci	Doctor
10	Zamire Sapungjiu Selimi	Economist
11	Ilirjana Kastrati	NGO ERA/ Jurist
12	Adelina Kastrati	NGO ERA/Jurist
13	Kastriot Blakaj	Professor of Information and Technology
14	Remzi Krasniqi	Professor
15	Besmir Nikqi	Sportsman
16	Bujar Kelmendi	Painter
17	Bejhan Krasniqi	Chairman of the Local Council, Karagaq
18	Nol Krasniqi	Sportsman
19	Gresa Bakraqi	Sportswoman
20	Riza Blaku	KBL Karagaqi/ Biologist

