



IMPACT OF LEARNING CENTRES ON INCLUSION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN CHILDREN IN EDUCATION

Impact of Learning Centres on inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education

Authors:

Kushtrim Bajrami, Kujtim Koci

November 2018

Prishtinë

Published by the “Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 – KOSINT” Project.

For more information: www.kosint2020.net

Design: ***envinion***

This study was designed with the support of the project “Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 - KOSINT”, funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF). The content of this publication will not be considered in any way as a reflection of the views of the European Union or the Open Society Foundation.

Content

LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
2. ROMA, ASHKALIS AND EGYPTIANS IN KOSOVO	8
3. LEGAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	10
4. ROMA, ASHKALIS AND EGYPTIANS IN EDUCATION SYSTEM.....	12
5. LEARNING CENTRES IN KOSOVO	18
6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
7. RESEARCH RESULTS	35
7.1. ATTENDANCE AND SUCCESS IN SCHOOL	35
7.2. FUNCTIONING OF LEARNING CENTRES	39
7.3. LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH LEARNING CENTRES.....	41
8. RECOMMENDATIONS	46

List of Abbreviations

AI	Administrative Instruction
BChS	Bethany Christian Services
BSFK	Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KEC	Kosovo Education Centre
KEEN	Kosovo Education and Employment Network
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021
KFOS	Kosovo Foundation for Open Society
KOSINT	KOSINT Project “Kosovo Integration Initiative 2020 - KOSINT”
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
LC	Learning Centre
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NVK	Nevo Concept
RADC	Roma Ashkali Documentation Center
SHL Kosova	Schüler Helfen Leben Kosovo
SIV	Syri i Vizionit
TDH	Terre Des Hommes
TIP	The Ideas Partnership
VoRAE	Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians

1. Executive summary

In general, an improvement of the position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the education system in Kosovo can be concluded. The enrolment rate at all levels of education is increasing, although still lower than the average in the country. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in the academic year 2017/2018 account for 1.8% of the total number of students in pre-university education in Kosovo.

The aim of this study is to provide easily comprehensible information and analysis of the actual work of the Learning Centres, best practices, challenges and their impact on the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in education. In different municipalities in Kosovo where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live, Learning Centres have been established with a view of including these communities in the education system. Initiatives for the establishment of Learning Centres by local and international nongovernmental organizations took the very low attendance rate and achievement of education by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children into consideration, as well as the unsatisfactory level of their school performance and lack of social inclusion.

Role of the Learning Centres is to provide complementary educational services for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the area that it performs its activity, with a view to inclusion and improvement of their performance in school and their integration into the broader society. Learning Centres operate on a community-based and school-based basis. Currently, around 83 Learning Centres operate in 20 municipalities of Kosovo, mainly in municipalities where most Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live. These centres are led by 10 civil society organizations in Kosovo with financial support from international donors. The largest number of Learning Centres is in the municipalities of Gjakovë, Prizren, Pejë and Lipjan.

According to the data provided by the non-governmental organizations that manage the Learning Centres, there are a total of 5,555 children attending activities at the Learning Centres, where the number of children of both genders is almost equal. The municipalities of Fushë Kosovë, Gjakovë and Shtime have the largest number of children attending the activities at the Learning Centres. Learning Centres mainly operate through financial support from donors, and this support is not sustainable. The annual budget of all Learning Centres is € 1,807,750.40, while the average annual expenditure of all Learning Centres per student is 325.4 EUR or 27.1 EUR a month. Despite the fact that the Roma and Ashkali communities' inclusion strategy foresees support for the work of the Learning Centres, MEST has not allocated funds for this purpose.

Most of the parties confirm that Learning Centres play a very important role in increasing inclusion in education, preventing school drop-outs, and improving the success of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students at school. Support in completion of homework and equipment with school materials are the two biggest needs faced by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students participating in these centres. Despite the important role of the Learning Centres, it is estimated that they face some serious challenges and issues; therefore this study offers some recommendations regarding the measures to be taken in order to strengthen and improve their work.

2. Roma, Ashkalis and Egyptians in Kosovo

The Roma community lives throughout Kosovo, with a focus mainly in the municipalities of Prizren, Pejë, Graçanicë, Gjakovë, Obiliq and Mitrovicë. Official data speak of 8,824 Roma citizens or 0.5 percent of the overall population in Kosovo. Most Roma are Sunni Muslims and speak Romani language, a language that differs from the official languages in Kosovo.¹

The Ashkali community is the largest of these three communities with 15,436 members or 1 percent of Kosovo's overall population. The Ashkali community lives mainly in urban areas, with concentration in the municipalities of Ferizaj, Fushë Kosovë, Lipjan, Prizren and Shtime. They are Sunni Muslims and speak Albanian.²

The Egyptian community is composed of 11,524 members, or less than 1 percent of the overall population of Kosovo. Egyptians live mainly in urban areas with a large concentration in the municipalities of Gjakovë, Pejë, Istog, Deçan and Klinë. They are Sunni Muslims and speak Albanian as a native language.³

The largest communities live in municipalities such as Gjakovë (majority Egyptians), Fushë Kosovë (majority Ashkali), Prizren (majority Roma), Pejë (majority Egyptians), Ferizaj (majority Ashkali), Lipjan (majority Ashkali) and Istog (majority Egyptians).

Before 1998/1999 it is estimated that there were at least 150,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians living in Kosovo. In cities like Prishtinë, Gjilan, Mitrovicë, where they were the largest communities before the war, there is now only a small percentage of the population who lived there because of their deportation in the post-war period and only a few of them have returned.

The table below shows the census data by municipalities where members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live.⁴

1 The European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo: Community Profile: Roma Community. Accessible at: <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/uploads/Romacommunity1.pdf>

2 The European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo: Community Profile: Ashkali Community. Accessible at: <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/uploads/Ashkalicommunity1.pdf>

3 The European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo: Community Profile: Egyptian Community. Accessible at: <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/uploads/Egyptiancommunity1.pdf>

4 KASDATA - <http://askdata.rks-gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/sq/askdata/?rxid=0b4e087e-8b00-47ba-b7cf-1ea158040712/>

Table 1: Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities by municipalities

Municipality		Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian	Total	Overall population of the municipality	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the overall population
1	Deçan	33	42	393	468	40019	1.17%
2	Gjakovë	738	613	5,117	6,468	94556	6.84%
3	Glllogoc	0	0	2	2	58531	0.00%
4	Gjilan	361	15	1	377	90178	0.42%
5	Dragash	3	4	3	10	33997	0.03%
6	Istog	39	111	1,544	1,694	39289	4.31%
7	Kaçanik	5	1	0	6	33409	0.02%
8	Klinë	78	85	934	1,097	38496	2.85%
9	Fushë Kosovë	436	3,230	282	3,948	34827	11.34%
10	Kamenicë	240	0	0	240	36085	0.67%
11	Mitrovicë	528	647	6	1,181	71909	1.64%
12	Lipjan	342	1,812	4	2,158	57605	3.75%
13	Novobërdë	63	3	0	66	6729	0.98%
14	Obiliq	661	578	27	1,266	21549	5.87%
15	Rahovec	84	404	299	787	56208	1.40%
16	Pejë	993	143	2,700	3,836	96450	3.98%
17	Podujevë	74	680	2	756	88499	0.85%
18	Prishtinë	56	557	8	621	198897	0.31%
19	Prizren	2,899	1,350	168	4,417	177781	2.48%
20	Skenderaj	0	10	1	11	50858	0.02%
21	Shtime	23	750	0	773	27324	2.83%
22	Shtërpcë	24	1	0	25	6949	0.36%
23	Suharekë	41	493	5	539	59722	0.90%
24	Ferizaj	204	3,629	24	3,857	108610	3.55%
25	Viti	12	14	0	26	46987	0.06%
26	Vushtrri	68	143	1	212	69870	0.30%
27	Malishevë	26	5	0	31	54613	0.06%
28	Mamushë	39	12	0	51	5507	0.93%
29	Graçanicë	745	104	3	852	10675	7.98%
30	Klllokot	9	0	0	9	2556	0.35%
31	Hani i Elezit	0	0	0	0	9403	0.00%
32	Partesh	0	0	0	0	1787	0.00%
33	Ranillug	0	0	0	0	3866	0.00%
34	Junik	0	0	0	0	6084	0.00%
Total		8824	15436	11524	35784	1739825	2.06%

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics and calculations of the authors

3. Legal and strategic framework

Kosovo has developed an advanced legislative framework that protects and promotes community rights. The Constitution of Kosovo guarantees and protects fundamental rights such as: protection against discrimination, right to life, freedom of expression and association, etc., for all citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or other distinctive characteristics. The third chapter of the Constitution is entirely devoted to the protection and promotion of the rights of communities and their members. Community rights are further defined and protected in some of the following laws:

- Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo (03/L-047);⁵
- Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo. (03/L-068)⁶;
- Anti-Discrimination Law (2004/3)⁷;
- Law on Use of Languages (02/L37)⁸;
- Law on Local Self-Government (03/L-040)⁹;
- Law on Cultural Heritage (02/L-88)¹⁰; and
- Law on Special Protective Zones (03/L-039)¹¹.

This legal framework prohibits discrimination based on national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious or gender identity and provides legal remedies for dealing with cases of discrimination. Kosovo's legislation also guarantees the right of voluntary association with a particular community and prohibition of forced assimilation. Identity rights and the prohibition of assimilation are also supported by a series of articles that guarantee the protection and implementation of self-governance of cultural and religious affairs and community symbol.¹²

5 Kosovo Assembly. 2008. • Law on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo (03/L-047). Accessible at: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L047_en.pdf.

6 Kosovo Assembly. 2008. Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo (03/L-068). Accessible at: <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/09-2008-03-1068-en.pdf>

7 Kosovo Assembly. 2004. • Anti-Discrimination Law. Accessible at http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/2004/re2004_32ale04_03.pdf

8 Kosovo Assembly. 2006. • Law on Use of Languages (02/L37). Accessible at: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L37_en.pdf

9 Kosovo Assembly. 2008. • Law on Local Self-Government (03/L-040). Accessible at: www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L040_en.pdf

10 Kosovo Assembly. 2008. • Law on Cultural Heritage (02/L-88). Accessible at http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L88_en.pdf

11 Kosovo Assembly. 2008. • Law on Special Protective Zones (03/L-039). Accessible at: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L039_en.pdf

12 ILO, Ada Huibregtse, Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on opportunities and challenges for decent work in Kosovo: Gjakovë, Fushë Kosovë and Graçanicë, 2018. Komuna e Gjakovës, Fushë Kosovës dhe Graçanicës, 2018.

Roma language, a language spoken by the Roma community, is not an official language at the country level. However, the Law on the Use of Languages guarantees the official use of Roma language at the municipal level where the Roma community accounts for at least 5 percent of the overall population of that municipality. The Roma language may also be a language in official use if the Roma community accounts for at least 3 percent of the overall population of the municipality where Roma language is traditionally spoken in that municipality.¹³

Strategies and policies for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

The Strategy and Action Plan for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo society 2017-2021, approved in 2017 by the Government of Kosovo, sets out policies and public measures in four areas of special importance for the integration of these communities, including the field of education, employment and social welfare, health and housing. Each of these areas contains measures to achieve specific goals and objectives. Within each strategic objective, the Strategy addresses three interrelated issues, gender equality, security and registration. It sets measurable indicators against the progress made.¹⁴

On the other hand, the Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo (KESP) 2017-2021, among other things, sets out strategic measures to increase participation and inclusion of marginalized children. This plan specifically identifies Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children as one of the target groups considering the gender differences between girls and boys.¹⁵ KESP stipulates specific measures to increase the participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary education by 10% and in lower and higher secondary education by 20% through the harmonization of Learning Centres' programs, teacher training for teaching Roma language, awareness raising activities on the importance of timely enrolment in school, school attendance and other activities related to the creation of facilities for enrolment and attendance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-school and high secondary education .

Local action plans for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

During 2017, many municipalities have drafted their local action plans for inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities¹⁶. Reflecting the national strategy for inclusion of these communities, local action plans in almost all municipalities focus on education, employment, welfare, housing and health.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ ILO, Ada Huijbregtse, Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on opportunities and challenges for decent work in Kosovo: Gjakovë, Fushë Kosovë and Graçanicë, 2018.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan. Accessible at: http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/KOSOVO_EDUCATION_STRATEGIC_PLAN.pdf

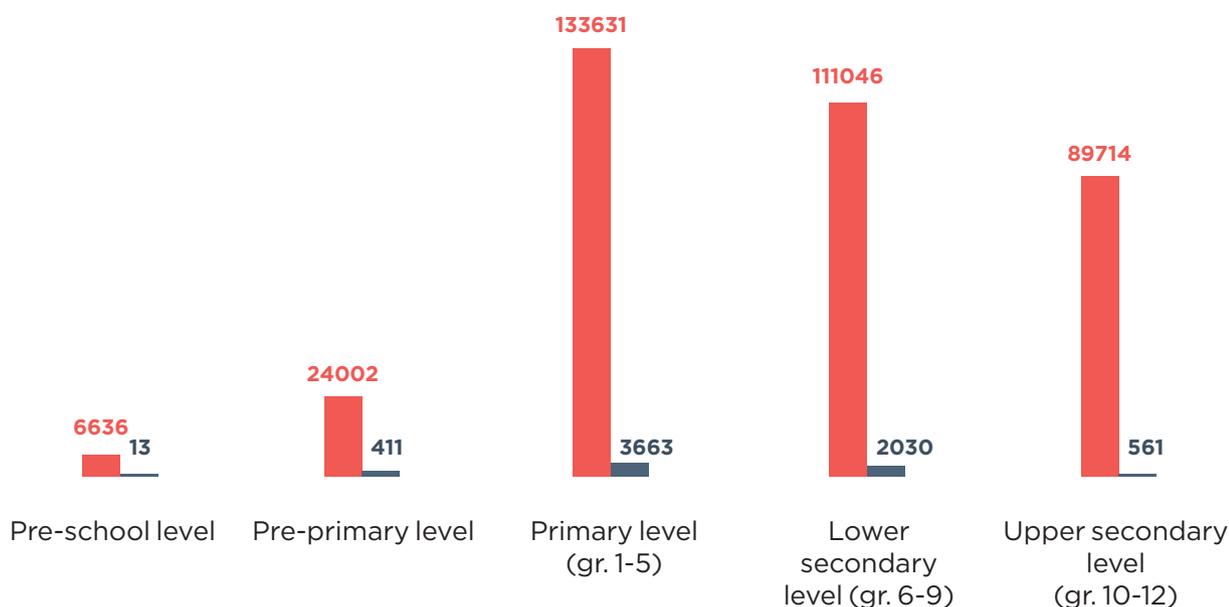
¹⁶ Drafting of Local Action Plans supported in the framework of EU funded project "Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN" implemented by a coalition of four Kosovo-based civil society organisations. Plans accessible at: <http://www.keen-ks.net/sq/publikimet/plane-lokale-te-veprimit-per-komunitete/>

4. Roma, Ashkalis and Egyptians in education system

In general, an improvement of the position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the education system in Kosovo can be concluded. The enrolment rate at all levels of education is increasing, although still lower than the average in the country. Improvement of their position in the education system is largely a result of the work of civil society organizations and contributions from external donors.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian pupils in the academic year 2017/2018 account for 1.8% of the overall number of students in pre-university education.¹⁷ According to Kosovo Education Statistics 2017/2018, 13 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children attend pre-school level, respectively 0.2% of the overall number of children in pre-school level, while 411 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are included in the pre-primary level, respectively 1.7% of the overall number of children at the pre-primary level.

Figure 1 Number of students in pre-university education in 2017/2018 academic year



Source: Education Statistics in Kosovo 2017/2018¹⁸ and calculations of the authors

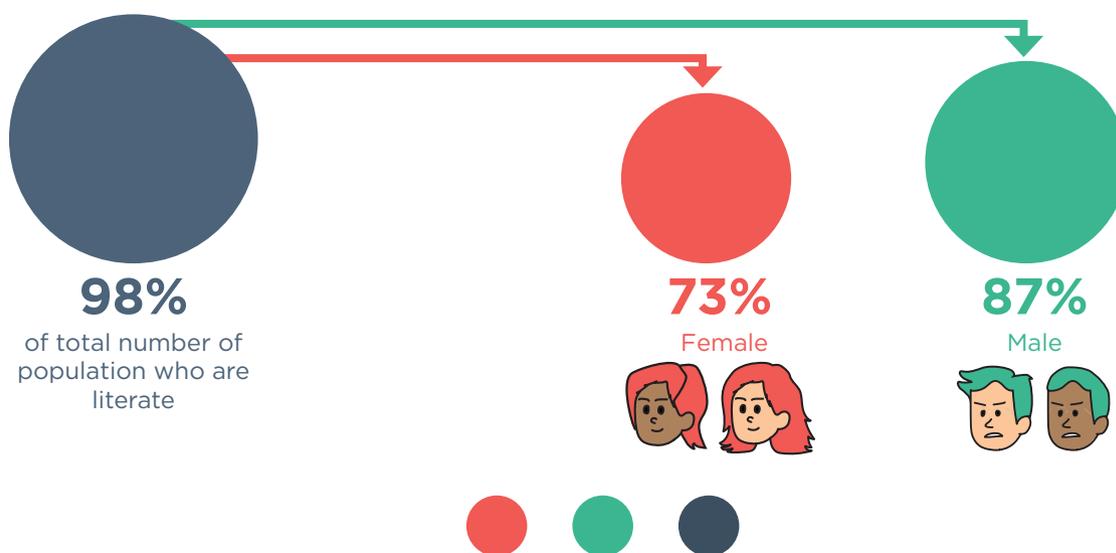
¹⁷ The total number of students in pre-university education (public and private) in the academic year 2017/2018 is 365,029, while the number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in pre-university education (public and private) in the academic year 2017/2018 is 6,678 students.

¹⁸ Education Statistics in Kosovo 2017/2018. Accessible at <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/07/statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-kosove-2017-18.pdf>

Participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary education (grades 1-5) is better, but it significantly goes down at the highest levels of education. In primary education there are 3,663 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students, or 2.7% of the overall number of pupils in elementary level, while in lower secondary education (grades 6-9) there are 2,030 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students respectively 1.8% of the total number of students in the lower secondary level. High secondary education (grades 10-12) is attended by 561 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students, and this accounts for 0.6% of the total number of students in the high secondary level.

The total number of teaching staff from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in pre-university education is 14 teachers out of a total of 23,202 education employees in Kosovo.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth are at a huge disadvantage compared to other young people in terms of their achievements in education. The literacy rate and educational achievement of these communities are lower than those of the rest of the population. Compared to about 98 percent of the total literacy population, only 73 percent of women and about 87 percent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian men read and write. At the country level, the net education participation ratio is 96 percent in lower secondary education and 82 percent in high secondary education. Moreover, at the country scale, the net participation in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children falls from 65 per cent in the lower secondary school to 30 per cent in the high secondary school.^{19 20}



Moreover, at the country scale, the net participation in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children falls from **65 per cent** in the lower secondary school to **30 per cent** in the high secondary school

19 Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2014. 2013-2014 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Key Findings.

20 ILO, Ada Huijbregtse, Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on opportunities and challenges for decent work in Kosovo: Gjakovë, Fushë Kosovë and Graçanicë, 2018.

Table 2 Education indicators

Indicator	Description	Roma,	Total (%)
Enrolment rate in primary education	Percentage of school-age children entering primary school	68.1	91.6%
Attendance ratio of elementary school	Percentage of elementary school children currently attending elementary education	85.3	98%
Attendance ratio of low secondary school	Percentage of lower secondary school-age children who are currently attending lower secondary school	65.0	96%
Attendance ratio of high secondary school	Percentage of high secondary school-age children who are currently attending high secondary school	30.3	82%
Net attendance ratio of secondary school	Percentage of secondary school-age children who are currently attending secondary school or high education	53.4	90.9
Transition rate in low secondary school	Number of children who have attended the last grade of primary school during the previous school year who are in the first grade of lower secondary school during the current school year divided by the number of children who attended the last grade of elementary school during the previous year	91.1	99.6
Transition rate in high secondary school	Number of children who have attended the last grade of low secondary school during the previous school year who are in the first grade of high secondary school during the current school year divided by the number of children who attended the last grade of secondary school during the previous year	69.9	91.5

 Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics 2014; Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013-2014²¹

21 ILO, Ada Huibregtse, Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on opportunities and challenges for decent work in Kosovo: Gjakovë, Fushë Kosovë and Graçanicë, 2018.

Causes of low participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the education system vary according to levels. In public pre-school education, opportunities are limited, while in private pre-school institutions the cost is high, whereas the number of Learning Centres is limited and there is no institutional support. Central and local authorities have not taken any measures to facilitate the enrolment and attendance conditions of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children at pre-school level. Pre-primary education is provided free of charge in public schools, but, again, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children enrolment rates are lower than in the Kosovo level.

Decrease of participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in lower secondary education, in high secondary education in particular, is linked to economic factors, namely the inability of families to cover their children's education costs, by giving up from the incomes they might bring to the family in this period of their lives. Due to the difficult economic situation many children are forced to abandon the school to become manpower for their families. However, it is a positive fact that a number of families of these communities who have children being educated receive various assistances as support for education of their children.

In most of the cases Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children sit in the last benches of the classroom and are often ignored by the teachers themselves. This often affects even lower grading and such cases are almost never reported by parents of children as it is the case with majority community parents who react in such cases. But there is also the opposite phenomenon, especially at levels 1-5, during which Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children are often graded higher than deserved only in order to avoid the problem from the school. Then in level 6, these students begin to face problems, even in reading and writing as well as simple mathematical actions as a result of ignoring these stagnations during the low cycle.

Furthermore, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children have high drop-out rates, girls in particular, as well as late enrolment after the usual age of the initial 6-year old enrolment. Among the main causes of school drop-outs are: grave economic conditions, repetition of the school year due to poor success, low level of education and parental awareness on the importance of schooling, discrimination in schools, access to appropriate infrastructure to school (lack of transport), the phenomenon of early marriages in girls and the migration of families for economic reasons.

Action plans for the prevention of drop-outs as part of the school or municipal development plans have not been drafted in most of the municipalities of Kosovo, and the only parties that work to prevent drop-outs are mediators engaged by various non-governmental organizations.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students (mainly of Roma community) from the municipality of Mitrovicë and the municipality of Graçanicë are faced with some additional problems that are typical only of these two municipalities. These students in these two municipalities attend education in Serbian schools, which operate in Kosovo with Serbia's parallel system and which are not in compliance with the Kosovo education system. As a result, these students have difficulty enrolling in high secondary education in Albanian because they do not know the Albanian language, and because it happens that due to system incompliances, their diplomas are not accepted.

In order to address and treat inequalities in access and participation in all levels of education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, and other communities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in its strategic plan 2017-2020 has given priority to participation of children of these communities in primary and secondary education.²²

Table 3 Indicators for measuring MEST’s inclusion objective

Indicators for measuring the inclusion objective	Base	Target
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary education	53.9%	70%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary education	85.3%	95%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in low secondary education	65%	85%
Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in high secondary education	30.3%	50%
The transition rate in high secondary education for Roma, Ashkali children	69.9%	80%

Source: Strategic Plan for Education in Kosovo 2017-2021

The gap between Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian females and males is noted in most education indicators, putting women in a more disadvantaged position compared to men within their ethnic group. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls start participating in elementary education alike, if not more than boys. The gender parity index for primary education is 1.01. This shows that more girls than boys attend elementary school. However, this index falls sharply in secondary education. In this regard, in the lower secondary education the gender parity index is 0.94, while in the high secondary education 0.80. This means that fewer girls each day continue or complete the highest levels of education.²³

22 ILO, Ada Huibregtse, Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on opportunities and challenges for decent work in Kosovo: Gjakovë, Fushë Kosovë and Graçanicë, 2018.

23 ILO, Ada Huibregtse, Perspektivat e të rinjve rom, ashkali dhe egjiptian mbi mundësitë dhe sfidat për punë të denjë në Kosovë: Komuna e Gjakovës, Fushë Kosovës dhe Graçanicës, 2018.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian females are more often subject to early marriages than males in their communities and females from other communities. The MICS data show that about 12 percent of females from these communities marry before the age of 15 compared to only 1 percent of males from these communities and less than 1 percent of females from other communities who marry before this age. Almost 43 percent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian females up to the age of 18 are married or co-habitation compared to only 14 percent of males from their communities and 10 percent of females from other communities.²⁴ Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children work at a higher rate, about 17 percent, compared to 11 percent of children at the country level. Almost twice as many Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children (13 percent) of age 5-17 work in hazardous conditions compared to all their peers (7 percent). Moreover, 27 percent of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children aged 5-17, who do not attend school, work compared to 12 percent of all other children.²⁵

The socio-economic condition of the family represents a major problem for Roma, Ashkalis and Egyptians. Due to the lack of financial resources, many parents cannot buy the necessary clothes and school supplies for their children, as a result children often feel ashamed to attend classes in poverty conditions. Moreover, children are often forced to contribute to family income by collecting recyclable materials together with their parents or taking care of younger sisters and brothers while their parents try to secure their livelihood.²⁶



Almost **43 percent** of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian females up to the age of 18 are married or cohabiting compared to only **14 percent** of males from their communities and **10 percent** of females from other communities.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

5. Learning Centres in Kosovo

In different municipalities in Kosovo where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live, Learning Centres have been established with a view of including these communities in the education system. Initiatives for the establishment of Learning Centres by local and international nongovernmental organizations took the very low attendance rate and achievement of education by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children into consideration, as well as the unsatisfactory level of their school performance and lack of social inclusion.

The first learning centres were established in 2001 and their role is to provide complementary educational services for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the area that it performs its activity, with a view to inclusion and improvement of their performance in school and their integration into the broader society.



The purpose of these centres is to increase participation and improve the learning results of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in preschool education, pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education through programs that provide support for:

- timely enrolment in school and regular school attendance;
- prevention of abandonment and support for returning to school for those who have dropped out;
- (re) integration of children returning to the formal schooling system;
- physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children;
- increase of their self-confidence;
- active involvement of parents in the education of their children;
- community awareness on the importance of schooling of children; and
- increase of number of students attending the highest levels of education.



The teaching programs offered by the Learning Centres develop different activities, of which the most important are:

- Inclusion of children in pre-school education;
- Support for doing the homework;
- Supplementary teaching;
- Mediation for school enrolment and attendance, as well as non-drop-out;
- Community awareness;
- Recreational activities.

In this regard, Learning Centre Programs help children to develop understanding of logic and mathematics, writing and speaking, the physical environment, and the social and cultural environment.

The Learning Centres cooperate closely with communities and schools in their area, with local and central education institutions, as well as other stakeholders. They are not part of the school system, but serve as a bridge between parents, schools and local institutions during the process of providing support for the education of marginalized children.²⁷

Learning Centres can be community-based and school-based. The community-based Learning Centre operates in the neighbourhood within a community area whose community it serves, while the school-based Learning Centre functions within the space of school's facility.

Currently, around 83 Learning Centres operate in 20 municipalities of Kosovo, mainly in municipalities where most Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities live. These centres are run by 10 civil society organizations in Kosovo with financial support from international donors. Figure 2 shows the map of the Learning Centres in Kosovo.

The key donors that have supported the work of the Learning Centres in Kosovo are: The European Union Office in Kosovo; Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS); German Development Agency (GIZ); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SCD); Austrian Development Agency (ADA); Federal Ministry

²⁷ GIZ, Shaping the profile of "Community Mediator" in Kosovo, Prishtinë, January 2017.

of Economic Cooperation (BMZ); Karl Kubel Stiftung für Kind und Familie (KKS); Diakonie Austria; Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER); Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo; United Kingdom Embassy in Kosovo; Canadian Foundation for Local Initiatives (CFLI); The Ideas Partnership UK; and non-governmental organization People in Need.

Figure 2 Map of Learning Centres in Kosovo

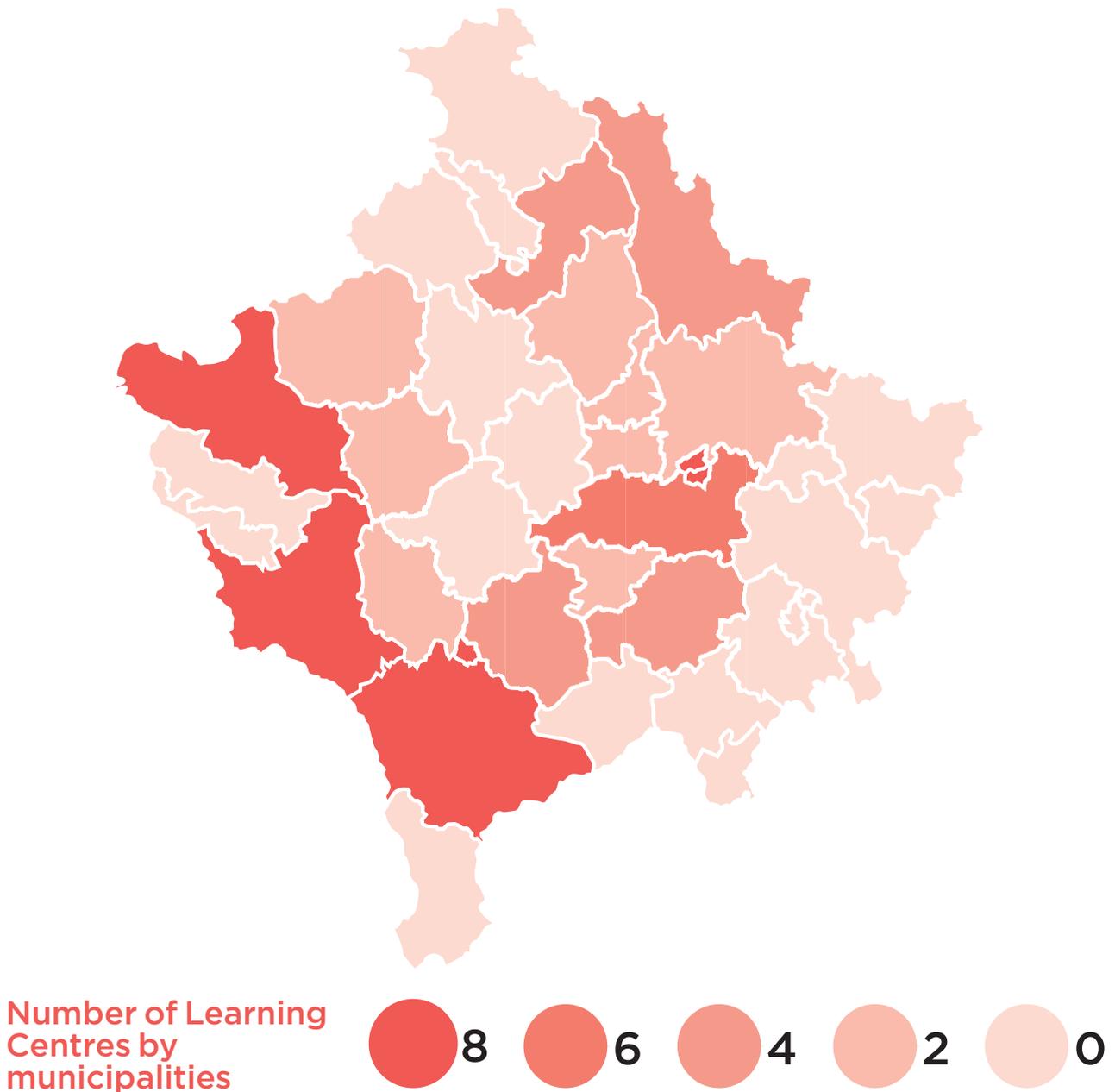


Figure 3 shows the number of Learning Centres by municipalities, where it can be noticed that the biggest number of them is in the municipalities of Gjakovë, Prizren, Pejë and Lipjan.

Figure 3 Number of Learning Centres by municipalities

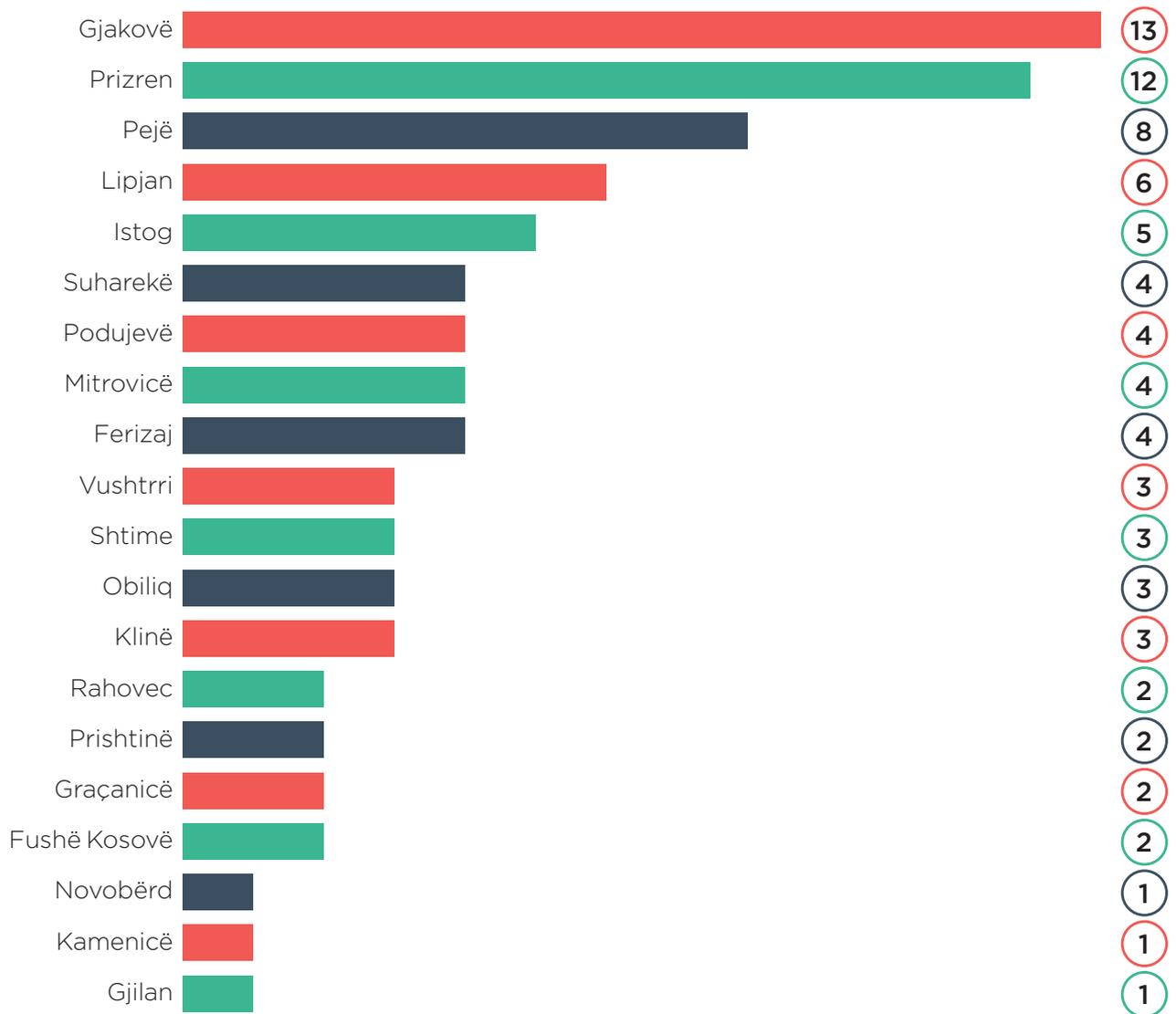
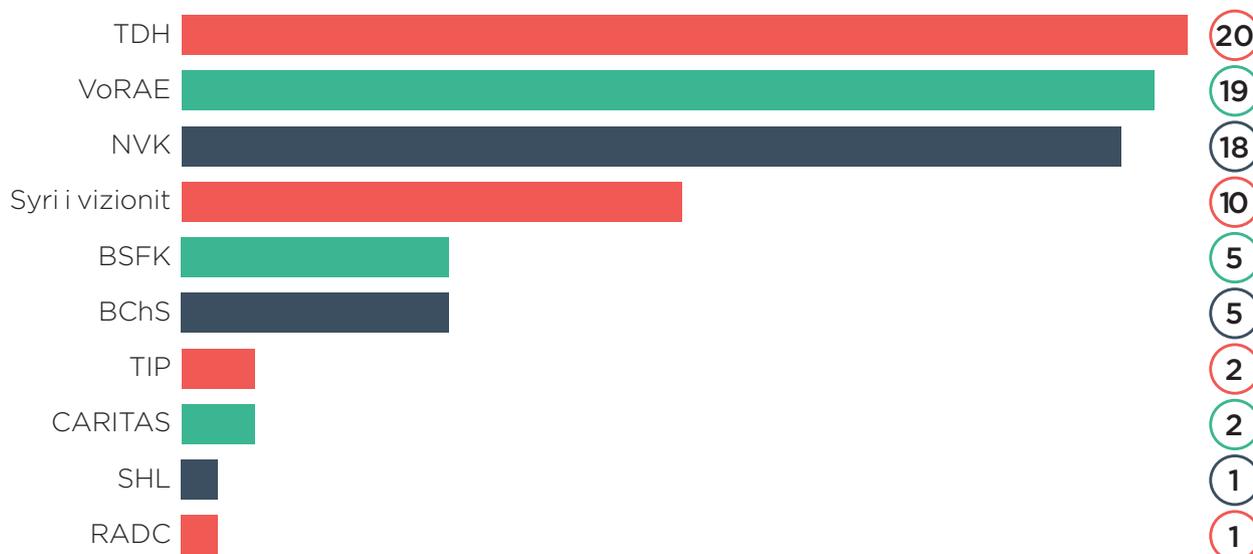


Figure 4 shows the number of Learning Centres by the non-governmental organizations that manage them, where it can be noticed that most of them are managed by the organisations - Terre Des Hommes, VoRAE, and Nevo Concept.

The “Terre Des Hommes – TDH” organization is a Swiss foundation that has been working in Kosovo since 1999 with the aim of providing assistance to children in need. This organization currently manages 20 Learning Centres in ten (10) municipalities. All of its centres are located within the facilities of public schools.

“The Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians – VoRAE” organization, besides scholarships for high school students, provides additional tuition through the Learning Centres. Currently, this organization manages 19 Learning Centres in 12 Kosovo municipalities and most of the centres are located within facilities of public schools, which has been enabled through cooperation agreements with local authorities.

Figure 4 Number of Learning Centres by the NGOs managing them



“Nevo Concept – NVK” organization manages 18 Learning Centres in three (3) municipalities (Prizren, Gjakovë and Suharekë). Within these centres, NVK carries out support activities in completing homework for students, campaigns for enrolment of children in pre-primary and primary education, and other intercultural and recreational activities.

“Syri i Vizionit – SiV” organization was established in 2001 and it manages ten (10) Learning Centres in three (3) municipalities (Pejë, Istog and Klinë). Within these centres, they carry out advocacy, intercultural activities, mediation and health campaigns for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

The “Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo - BSFK” organization, established in 2007, manages five (5) Learning Centres in four (4) municipalities. Within these centres, they manage pre-school programs, language clubs and support children with their homework. Furthermore, they offer other activities, such as reading corners, summer camp, parent program, women’s literacy programs, activities of working in network and scientific activities.

“Bethany Christian Services - BChS” is a local organization in Gjakovë, which manages five (5) Learning Centres in the same municipality. Within these centres, they carry out activities for support with homework, awareness and intercultural activities, various trainings and social and educational activities with communities.

The “Caritas Kosova” organization was established in 1992 and their goal is to provide additional assistance to children involved in formal education. The organization manages two (2) Learning Centres, one in the Municipality of Ferizaj and the other in the Municipality of Gjakovë. The centre in Ferizaj is owned by Caritas Kosova, while the land was provided by the Municipality of Ferizaj.

The “Ideas Partnership - TIP” organization was established in 2009, while it started work with the first learning centre in Fushë Kosovë in 2011. Currently, TIP manages two (2) Learning Centres, one in Fushë Kosovë and the other in Janjevë (Lipjan) whose main activities are the provision of supplementary classes for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. Learning Centres managed by TIP are distinguished for a high level of functioning, including a kindergarten (pre-school education) and academic activities for children, mothers, young people and the elderly. Some of its programs are: the mothers program - microfinance projects, youth activities, health services, the “Little Teachers” program, the Children’s Council, the Girls’ Club, etc.

The Roma Ashkali Documentation Center (RADC) organization was established in 2004 and it manages one (1) Learning Centre in the Roma neighbourhood in Mitrovicë, which is attended by over 280 children. The program activities of this centre include pre-primary program and support for completion of homework.

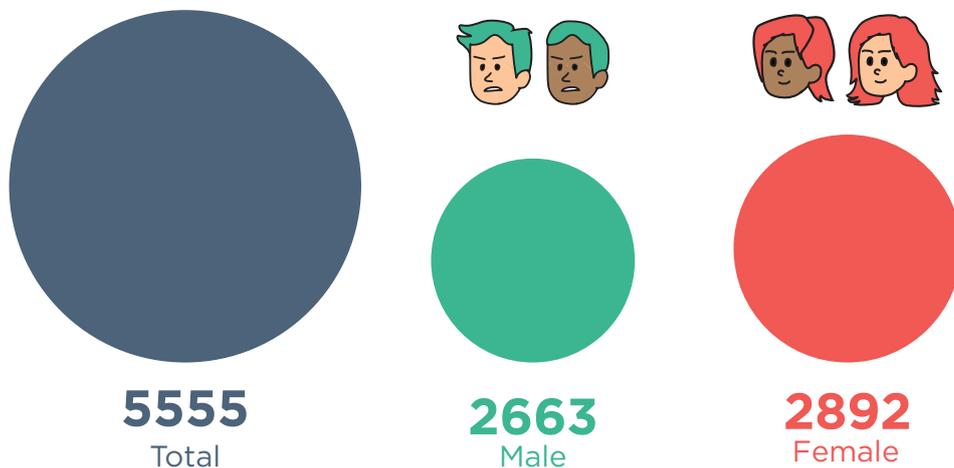
The “SHL Kosovo” organization was established in 2009 and is supported and funded by SHL Germany, as part of the Schüler Helfen Leben regional network in Europe. This organization manages one (1) Learning Centre in Rahovec where it carries out supplementary learning activities; help with homework, intercultural activities, awareness raising campaigns for pre-primary, primary and secondary school enrolment, and prevention of school drop-outs.

In most of the Learning Centres managed by civil society organizations engaged personnel are from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. An example in this regard is the EU-funded project “EU SIMRAES II” implemented by KEC, which in the seven (7) municipalities where it is implemented has engaged about 15 facilitators and 90 tutors from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. A similar practice is also applied by other civil society organizations, where in most of the areas where they are engaged, staff working with

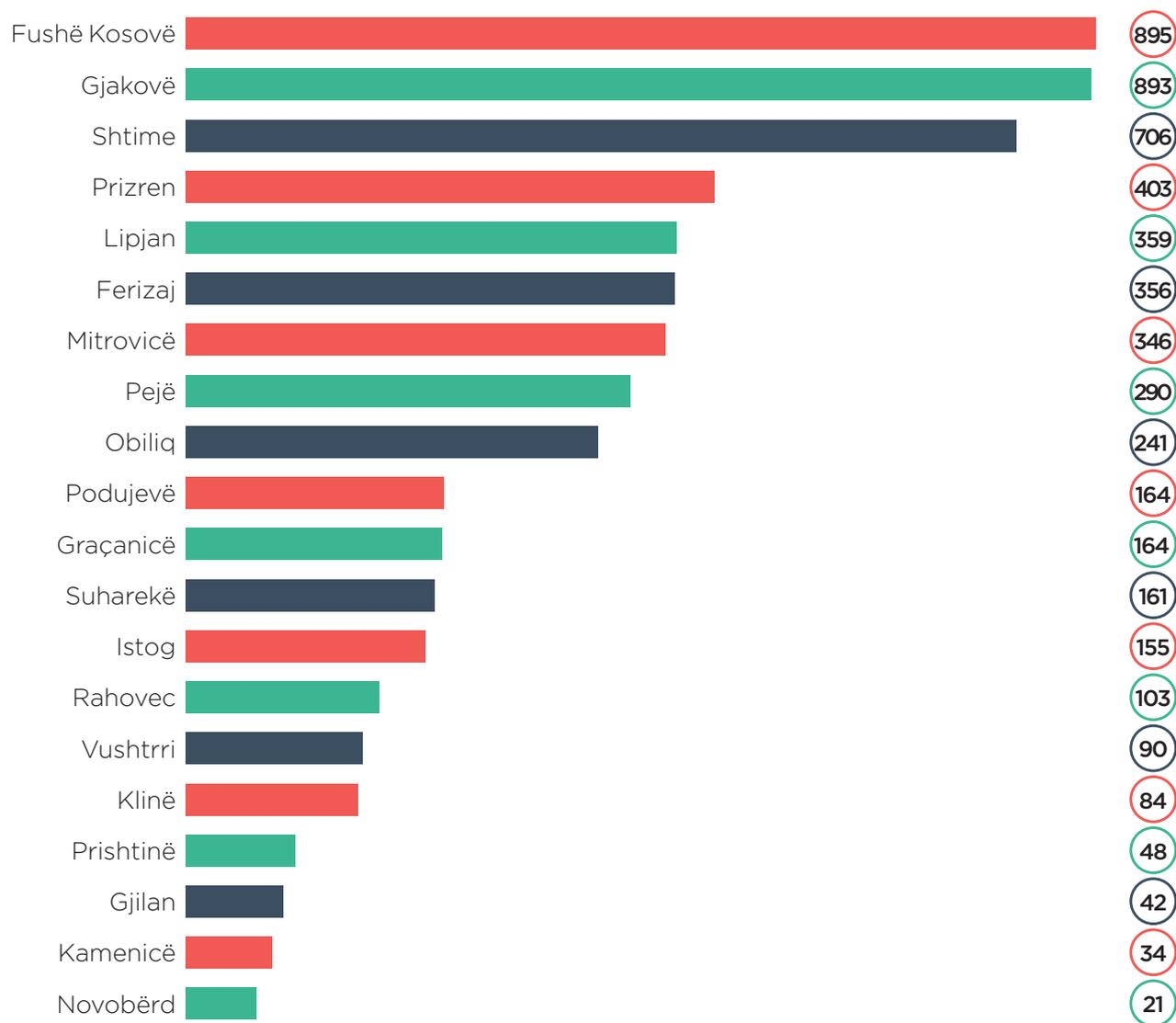
students belong to Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities. It is worth emphasizing that the staff members at the Learning Centre usually do not have any academic background, as the nature of assistance they offer to children is informal.

According to the data provided by the non-governmental organizations that manage the Learning Centres, there are a total of 5,555 children attending activities at the Learning Centres, where the number of children of both genders is almost equal.

Figure 5 Number of children in Learning Centres by gender



Municipalities of Fushë Kosovë, Gjakovë and Shtime have the biggest number of children attending activities in the Learning Centres.

Figure 6 Number of children in Learning Centres by municipalities

In the academic year 2017/2018, according to education statistics in Kosovo, there are 6662 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in pre-university education. Meanwhile, 4992 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children attend the Learning Centres. Based on the calculations, it turns out that 75% of children involved in the education system attend supplementary activities at the Learning Centres. However, this calculation is limited because a large number of children (0-5 years old) attend pre-school education programs at the Learning Centres, and they are not reflected in official education data.

Table 4: Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Learning Centres

	Municipality	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in pre-university education ²⁸	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in Learning Centres ²⁹	Inclusion in Learning Centres %
1	Deçan	98	0	0%
2	Gjakovë	1553	893	58%
3	Gjilan	1	42	Nuk aplikohet
4	Istog	417	155	37%
5	Klinë	279	84	30%
6	Fushë Kosovë	589	895	Nuk aplikohet
7	Kamenicë	198	34	17%
8	Mitrovicë	60	346	Nuk aplikohet
9	Lipjan	478	359	75%
10	Novobërdë	0	21	Nuk aplikohet
11	Obiliq	164	241	Nuk aplikohet
12	Rahovec	148	103	70%
13	Pejë	641	290	45%
14	Podujevë	166	164	99%
15	Prishtinë	78	48	62%
16	Prizren	738	403	55%
17	Skenderaj	4	0	0%
18	Shtime	157	143 ³⁰	91%
19	Suharekë	118	161	Nuk aplikohet
20	Ferizaj	757	356	47%
21	Viti	2	0	0%
22	Vushtrri	9	90	Nuk aplikohet
23	Malishevë	7	0	0%
24	Graçanicë	/	164	/
	Total	6662	4992	75%

Source: Education Statistics in Kosovo 2017/2018³¹ and calculations of the authors

28 Despite the fact that MEST collects data from schools through an advanced information management system (SMIA), in which each school has access and reports relevant data every semester, there is discrepancy in the data provided by NGOs and schools in number of students by ethnicity.

29 These data also include children attending pre-school education in Learning Centres, which are predominantly in their settlements and function mainly to address their needs and the same ones are not reflected in the pre-university education system.

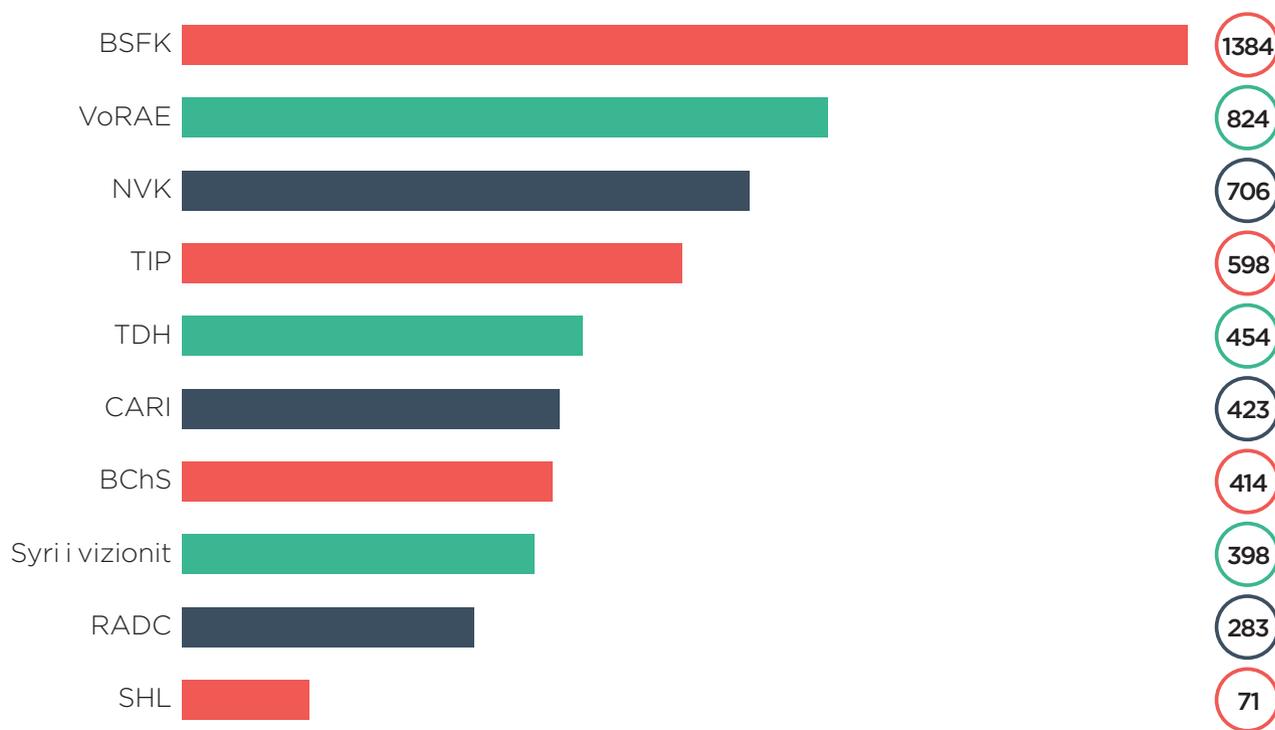
30 In the Learning Centre in Shtime, managed by Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo, the supplementary teaching and activities of the Learning Centre is attended by 620 students, including the Albanian students. Meanwhile, there are 57 Roma and Ashkali students attending this Learning Centre, of which 30 boys and 27 girls.

31 Education Statistics in Kosovo 2017/2018. Accessible at <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2018/07/statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-kosove-2017-18.pdf>

In the municipalities of Glllogoc, Dragash, Kaçanik, Klllokot, Hani i Elezit, Partesh, Ranillug, Junik, Shtërpçë, Mamushë there are no Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in pre-university public institutions, at any level of education and there is also no Learning Centre operating in these municipalities.

The Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo, Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian, Nevo Concept and The Ideas Partnership organizations have the biggest number of children attending the activities in Learning Centres they manage.

Figure 7 Number of children in Learning Centres by the NGOs managing them



Most of the parties confirm that Learning Centres contribute to improving school performance. Their work has resulted in more regular school attendance, better grades, lower drop-out rates, and increased social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. Among the key activities of Learning Centres, the greatest impact is the assistance provided to children with homework, which has directly impacted on improving their performance at school.

A more comprehensive illustration with over 1200 children has been done by the EU-funded project “EU SIMRAES II” implemented by KFOS in cooperation with KEC and six (6) partner NGOs that manage the Learning Centres. In the academic year 2016/2017, the average grade of students attending activities in 10 Learning Centres has been compared, showing that there is a gap of 1.22 points of average grade between the learning results of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students and majority students as shown in table 5.

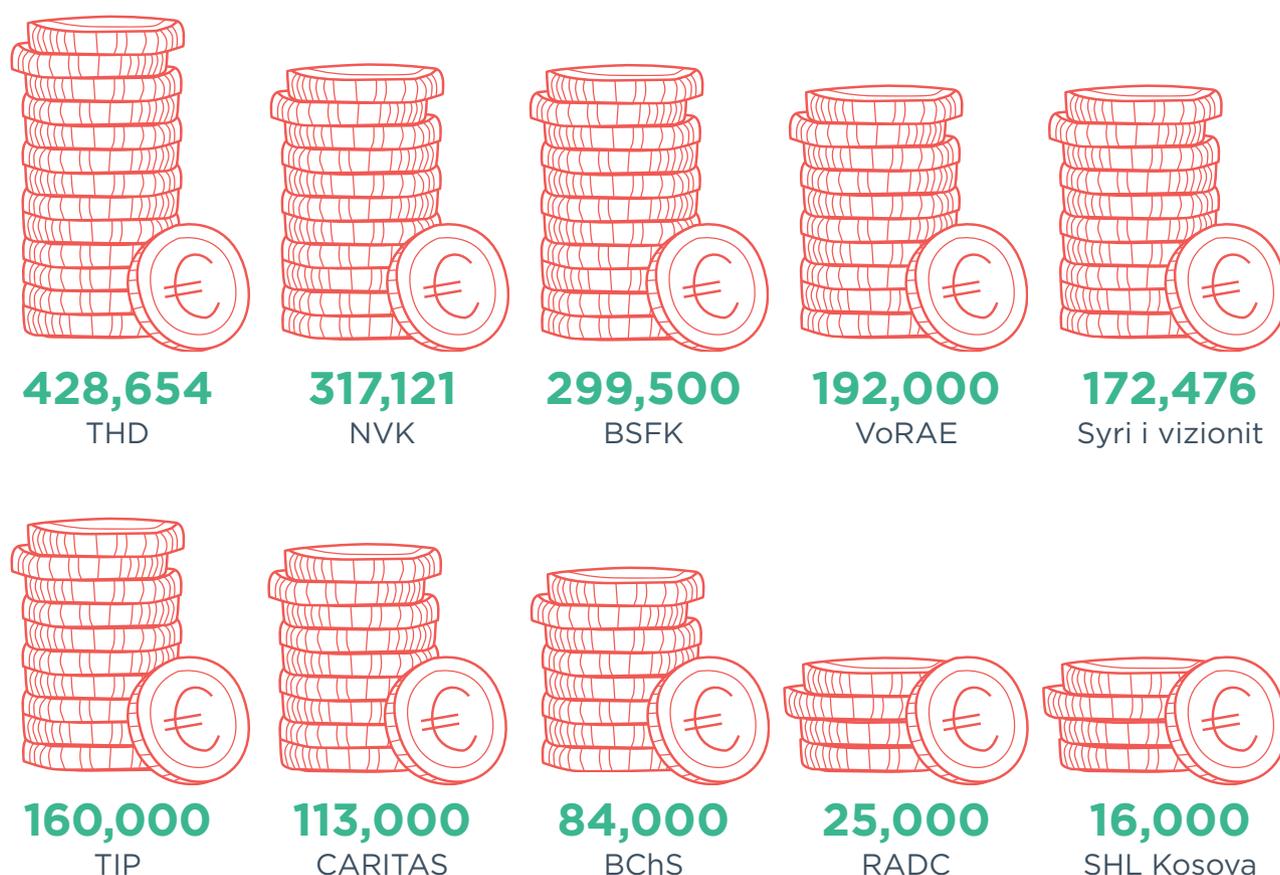
Table 5 The average grade gap among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students and those of the majority community in compulsory education

Academic year 2016/2017	Average grade Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students	Average grade Students from majority communities	Gap of average grade
	2.76	4.29	1.53
Locations	Average grade	4.04	1.33
Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students	Average grade	3.77	1.01
Majority community students	Average grade gap	4.14	1.08
Learning Centre in Serbobran, Istog	3.63	4.71	1.08
Learning Centre in Brekoc, Gjakovë	2.89	4.50	1.61
Learning Centre in Fushë Kosovë	2.83	3.79	0.97
Learning Centre -Social Building in Plemetin, Obiliq	2.74	3.52	0.78
Learning Centre in Plemetin village, Obiliq	2.89	4.55	1.66
Learning Centre Roma Mahalla, Mitrovicë	2.52	3.69	1.18
Average	2.88	4.1	1.22

Source: EU SIMRAES II project data

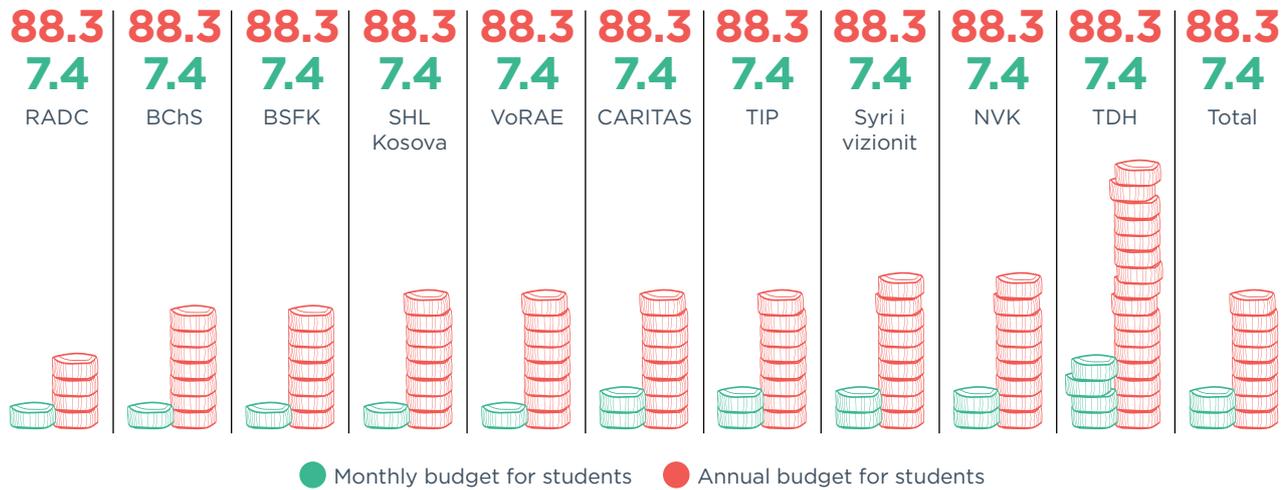
The annual budget of all Learning Centres is € 1,807,750.40, where Terre des Hommes, Nevo Concept, Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo organisations have the largest budget for the Learning Centres they manage.

Figura 8 Budget of Learning Centres by NGOs managing them



The total number of children attending the activities in all Learning Centres is 5,555, while the annual budget of all Learning Centres is € 1,807,750.40; the average annual expenditure of all Learning Centres per student is 325.4 EUR or 27.1 EUR a month.

Figure 9 Monthly and annual costs of LCs per student by NGOs



Learning Centres mainly operate through financial support from donors, and this support will not be able to be provided on a long-term basis. Despite the fact that the Roma and Ashkali communities’ inclusion strategy foresees support for the work of the Learning Centres, MEST did not allocate funds for this purpose. In recent years, a large number of Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with central and local authorities, through which local authorities have pledged to provide school facilities for the Learning Centres to carry out their activities. Some municipalities have also offered their support with coal supply to provide heating of Learning Centre premises during the winter months.

Learning Centres Staff

Having in mind that Learning Centres are managed by different NGOs, they are funded by various international donors and are destined for different communities; they are structured differently and operate differently from one another. For its functioning, the Learning Centre engages employees who are responsible for managerial, program and maintenance aspects. However, it is worth mentioning that Learning Centres use different titles for similar positions. These staff members generally include, but are not limited to, the coordinator, teaching staff, volunteers, specific professional staff and maintainers.

The Learning Centre Coordinator is responsible for managing the centre, leads and plans the activities of the centre, selects and delegates responsibilities to other staff members, and maintains contacts with relevant partners, municipal officials, donors and other relevant stakeholders.

The Tutor/Facilitator is responsible for direct work with children, helping them with homework and what they have learned during classroom classes, and he/she is also involved in other socio-cultural activities with children.

The educator engages in working with pre-school children, helping them prepare for school enrolment. Volunteers are usually young people, in most of the cases, high school students, who assist the Learning Centres' staff in carrying out their daily activities. They are mostly engaged when the centres carry out free and recreational activities.

The mediator serves as a bridge between the school and the family as well as the Learning Centre. Mediators are not always part of the Centre, as they are part of any other program. The purpose of the education mediation program is to increase access to education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, to ensure a timely enrolment in school, to prevent drop-outs and to return those who have dropped out of school back

Administrative Instruction on Learning Centres

A positive step towards recognizing the work of these centres and incorporating their activity within the institutional framework is the approval of the Administrative Instruction No. 12/2017 on the Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres,³² by MEST in August 2017. This Instruction sets the criteria and the procedures for establishing and functioning of learning centres that provide supplementary teaching support and other educational activities for pre-primary and primary pupils in Kosovo, especially for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian pupils. The Instruction envisages licensing of learning centres under defined conditions, and obliges all learning centres to harmonize their activities and regulations within a period of not later than twelve (12) months from the entry into force of this administrative instruction. Also, all learning centres that have functioned before the entry into force of this Administrative Instruction and which do not meet the criteria set out in this Instruction regarding teaching staff of Learning Centres' have a term of five (5) years to meet the requirements for qualification in accordance with this Administrative Instruction.

32 <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2017/08/ua-masht-nr-12-2017-per-themelimin-dhe-funksionimin-e-qmpdf.pdf>

6. Research Methodology



In order to carry out the research on the Learning Centres, an intertwined methodology of collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data was used. Activities carried out in the field were:

- Two (2) focus groups carried out with school teachers;
- Two (2) focus groups carried with the Learning Centres' teaching staff;
- Survey of 136 parents of children attending the Learning Centres;
- Semi-structured interviews with 24 Coordinators of Learning Centres.

Focus groups

Two (2) focus groups were organized with teachers of regular school (grades 1-9), who teach in the schools and classes attended by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students. 15 teachers from eight (8) primary and lower secondary schools, representing seven (7) municipalities, took part in these focus groups. Both focus groups were held on April 24, 2018.

Two (2) focus groups were organized with members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities working in the Learning Centres (tutors, facilitators or coordinators) where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and students are attending classes (pre-school or supplementary teaching). 16 employees of these centres, managed by five (5) non-governmental organizations, took part in these focus groups. Both focus groups were held on 23 April 2018.

Interviews with Learning Centres' Coordinators

Interviews were conducted with 24 Coordinators of Learning Centres, in which 347 children attend the pre-school education program. The questionnaire administered with the coordinators was semi-structured, focused on information on the functioning of the Learning Centres.

Survey with parents

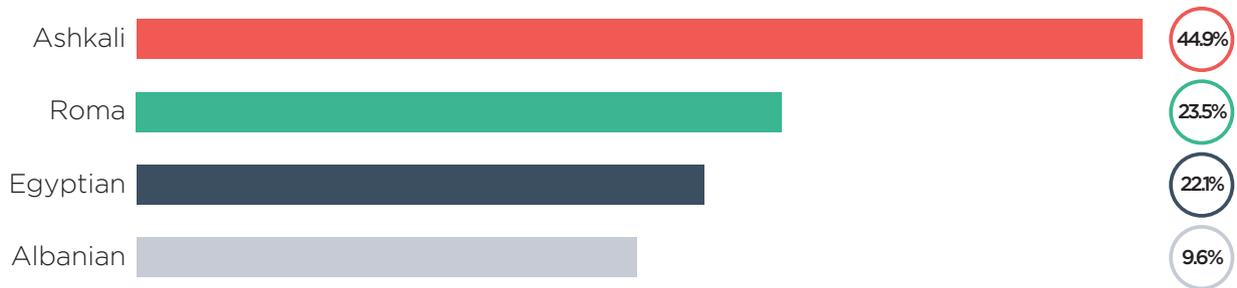
The survey was conducted with 136 parents of students attending the activities of the Learning Centres in Kosovo. Over 62 percent of the surveyed parents were women, while 38 percent were men.

Figure 10 Gender of interviewed parents



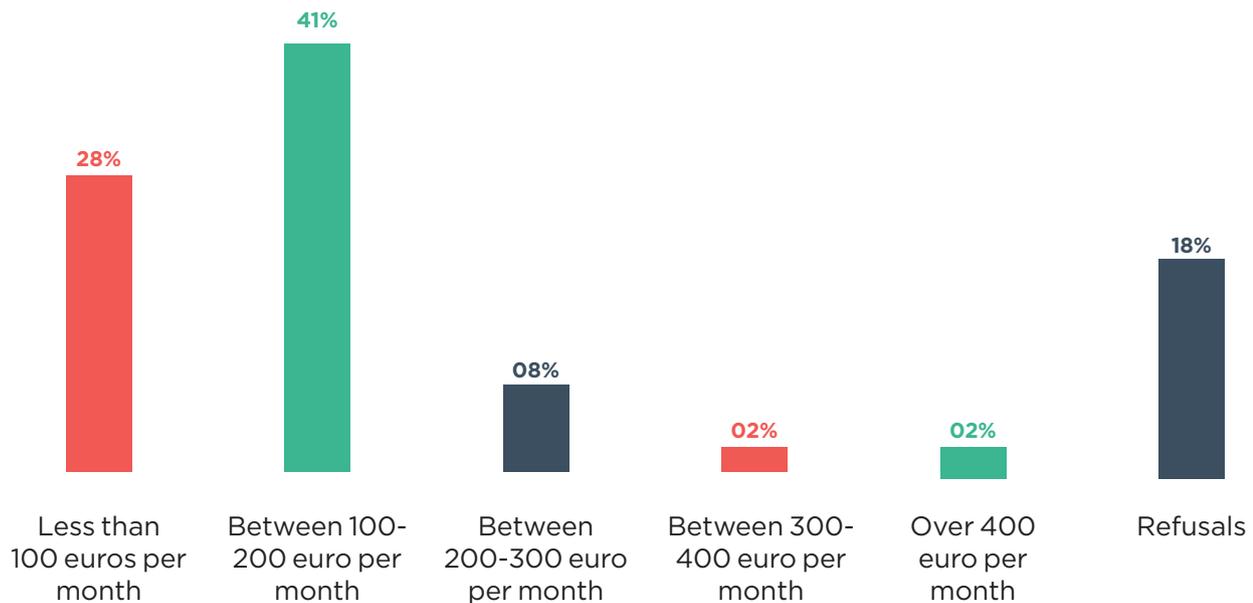
About 45 percent of the interviewed parents belong to the Ashkali community, 24 percent of them are Roma, 22 percent Egyptian, and over 9 percent of the parents were from the Albanian community.

Figure 11 Ethnic background of interviewed parents



The survey included a greater number of parents living in urban areas (69%) than in rural areas (31%). As far as the economic situation in the families of the interviewed parents is concerned, more than two-thirds (69%) stated that their families receive less than 200 Euros per month. Only 2 percent of these families have a monthly income higher than 400 Euros. 18 percent of the interviewed parents refused to make a statement about family incomes.

Figure 12 Family incomes per month



7. Research results

7.1. Attendance and success in school

Only 2 out of 136 parents interviewed stated that their children were not attending school. Most of the children of the interviewed parents attend elementary schools (76 percent), while 24 percent of the children are students in lower secondary education level.

Figure 13 Current level of children education (134 children)



The preschool education in nurseries and kindergartens is not attended by almost any Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children. This is due to the fact that attendance of nurseries or a public and private kindergarten has unaffordable costs for parents. A certain number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children attend pre-school education at the Learning Centre and this, to a certain extent, decreases the problem of non-attendance of preschool education by these children.

Pre-primary classes are attended by a larger number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, either within the Learning Centres or within regular schools.

According to participants in focus groups, while the attendance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian pupils in primary education is satisfactory, the attendance of lower secondary education (grades 6-9) and high secondary (grades 10-12) is considered to be lower, either in the sense of student absenteeism or in the sense of school drop-out.



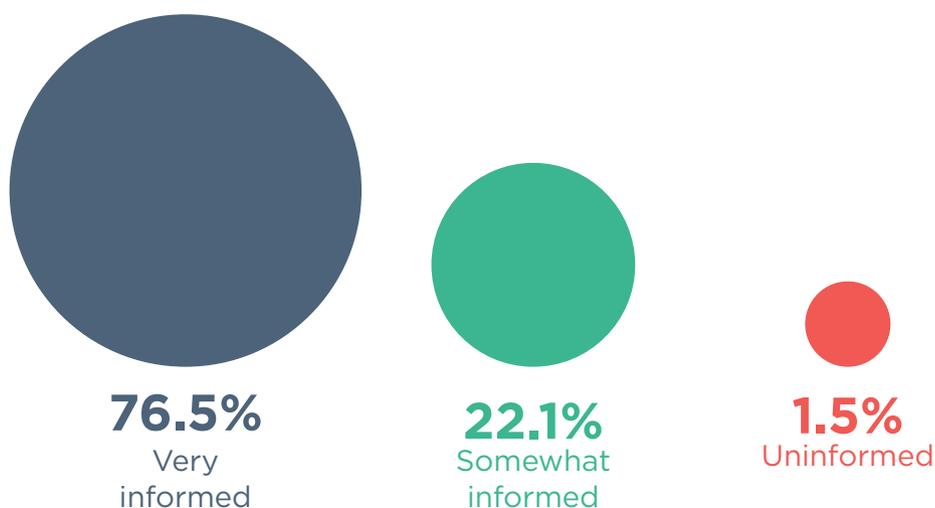
This phenomenon is estimated to be mainly related to the difficult economic situation of these communities, but it also happens because of other factors, such as:

- the grave financial situation that forces many parents to halt children (mainly male children) from school and force them to work, or seek alms.
- the grave financial situation that forces many parents to halt children (mainly female children) from school to look after the family and do the housework.
- the students at this level are older and therefore they do not show up or drop out their schooling when they do not have the necessary school supplies and appropriate clothing, as they feel more inferior in relation to other students. The clothing problem reflects the absence of students, especially during the winter period.
- the subject teachers are not as cautious toward these students as the class teachers (of elementary school). Also, the assessment (grading) during the lower secondary school is more severe than during primary school, therefore, since students of these communities have a poorer success and may happen to repeat the year, this affects the loss of self-esteem of the students and their demotivation for continuation of education.
- the cost of high secondary education is higher because of transport, clothing and textbooks that need to be covered by the very family and this is unaffordable for many families of these communities.
- a number of students (mainly females) do not attend high secondary education due to early marriages.

- a number of students do not attend high secondary education because they orientate in learning certain crafts that require less preparation and offer them opportunities for faster employment (e.g. hairdresser, tailor, etc.).
- because the students of these communities have mostly poor success during the earlier education, they find it difficult to enroll in the directions they like (mainly in gymnasiums) and therefore are obliged to enroll only in certain directions of vocational schools where there is not a lot of competition. As a result, either they do not enroll at all, or drop out school after they are enrolled.

Less than 2 percent of parents said they were uninformed about the situation of their children at school. While most parents stated they are very much informed (77 percent), 22 percent said they were informed to some extent. Furthermore, 5 percent of the surveyed parents stated that their children do not go to school regularly, mainly because of lack of transportation.

Figure 14 The level of parents' information on situation of their children in school



In general, it is estimated that on average, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students have a poorer success than students of other majority communities. Almost all the factors and reasons that impact on non-enrolment, lack of attendance and school drop-out by the students of these communities are also factors and reasons for this poorer success.



But besides that, the focus group participants have also mentioned several factors and reasons for this poor success, such as:

- non-attendance of preschool education and pre-primary class impacts on these students to be less prepared for elementary school than their other peers, and this reflects on the poor success that is followed then level by level throughout education.
- non-attendance (absences) during schooling.
- the lack of additional hours and supplementary tuition in schools with these students impacts on their poorer success.
- The high illiteracy rate among parents of these students impacts on poor success, because parents cannot work home with their children to help them with school assignments.
- Grave economic conditions of the family impact on the poorer success of these students, because families cannot offer teaching materials and stimulating conditions for their children.



According to participants in focus groups, while the attendance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian pupils in primary education is satisfactory, the attendance of lower secondary education (**grades 6-9**) and high secondary (**grades 10-12**) is considered to be lower, either in the sense of student absenteeism or in the sense of school drop-out.

7.2. Functioning of Learning Centres

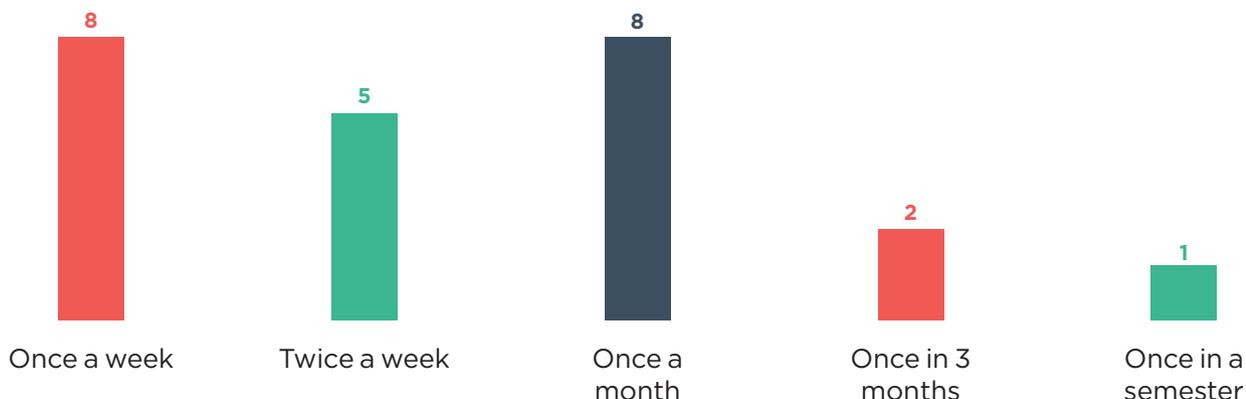
Out of 24 interviewed Coordinators of the Learning Centres, 17 of them stated that their centres work five (5) or more times a week, while seven (7) others stated that the Learning Centres work 3-4 times a week.

Figure 15 Work schedule in Learning Centres



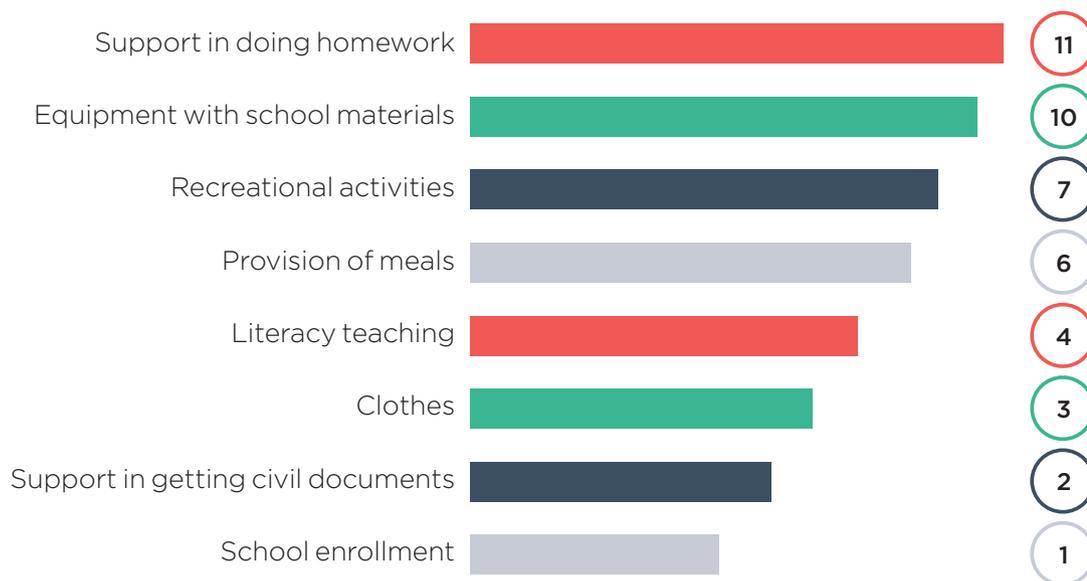
Taking into account that all these centres cooperate with schools, their coordinators were asked about the frequency of meetings between the Learning Centres and school representatives. Most centres (21) hold meetings with school representatives at least once a month. The others hold meetings every three months (2) or once in the semester (1).

Figure 16 Meetings between Learning Centres and the schools



According to Learning Centres’ Coordinators, support in doing the homework (11) and equipment with school materials (10) are the two biggest needs faced by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students participating in these centres. After these two, there is a need for recreational activities (7) and provision of meals (6).

Figure 17 Biggest needs of students in Learning Centres



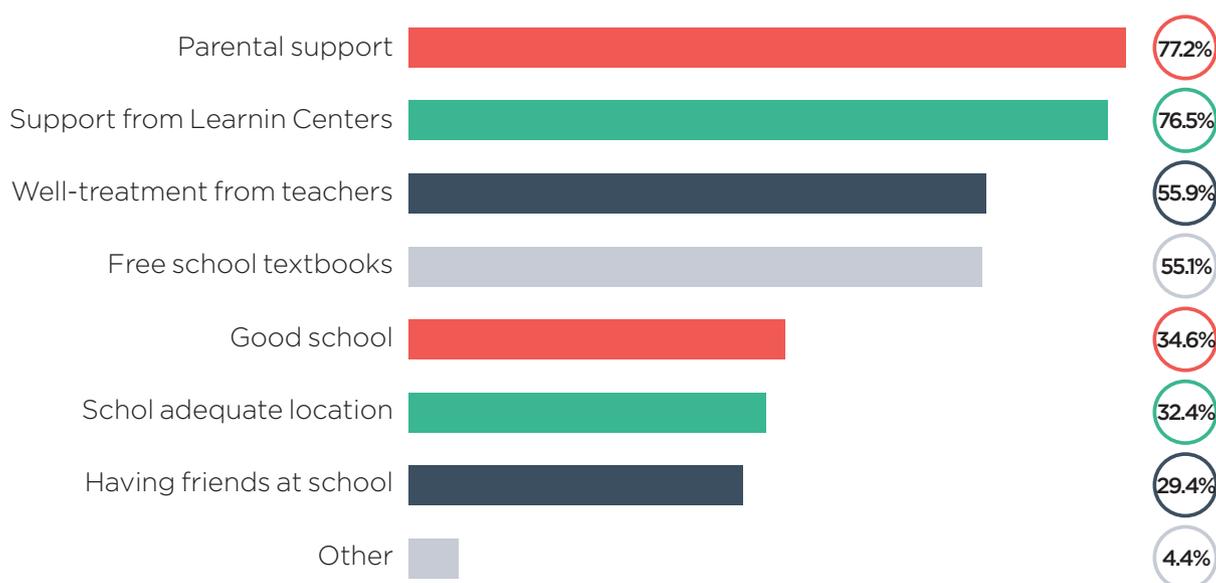
Most of the interviewed coordinators (17) stated that the facilities available to the Learning Centres are sufficient for carrying out the activities. An even higher number of them (18) claim that the Learning Centres, where they work, have support from municipal authorities, especially support in providing physical space within schools, as well as heating and students' transportation.

7.3. Factors motivating children to complete education

The focus group participants consider that the Learning Centres play a very important role in increasing inclusion in education, preventing school drop-outs, and improving the success of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students at school. This finding is based on the fact that the Learning Centres provide pre-school education, pre-primary education, as well they offer catch-up classes, complementary hours, help with doing the homework, and other social and educational activities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and students. In addition, Learning Centres often serve as a bridge between families, the community and educational institutions.

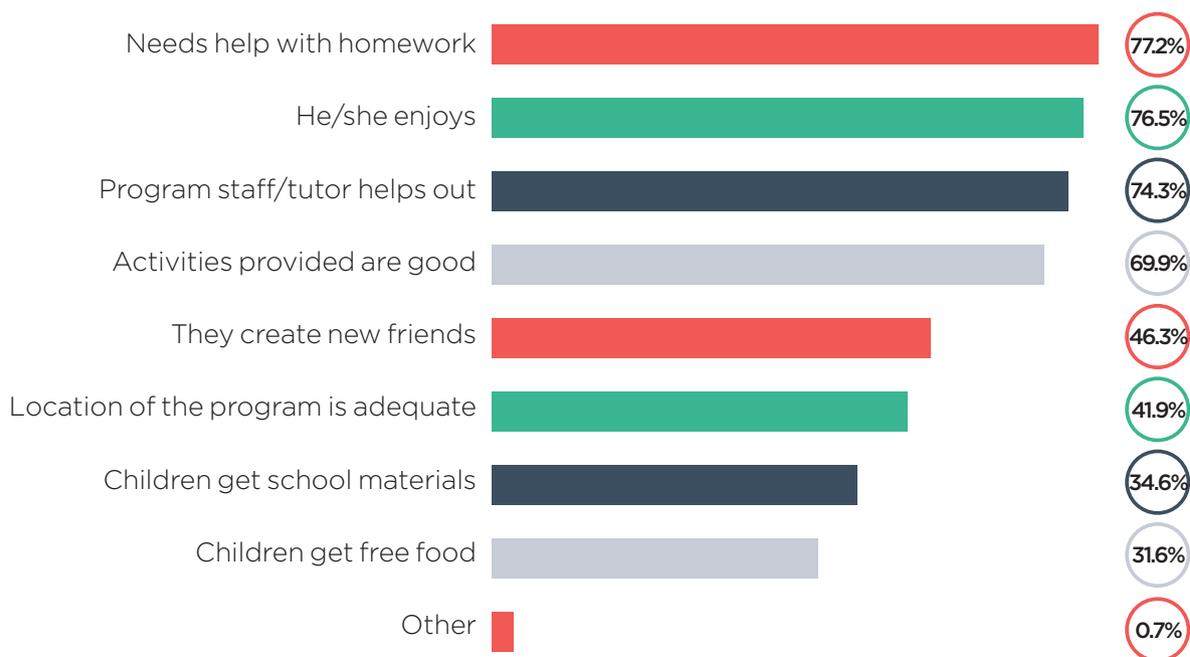
Together with parental support (77 percent), support from the Learning Centres (77 percent) is qualified by parents as one of the two most important factors in motivating their children to complete their education. Other important factors are considered to be good treatment by teachers (56 percent) and the provision of free school textbooks (55 percent).

Figure 18 Factors motivating children to complete education



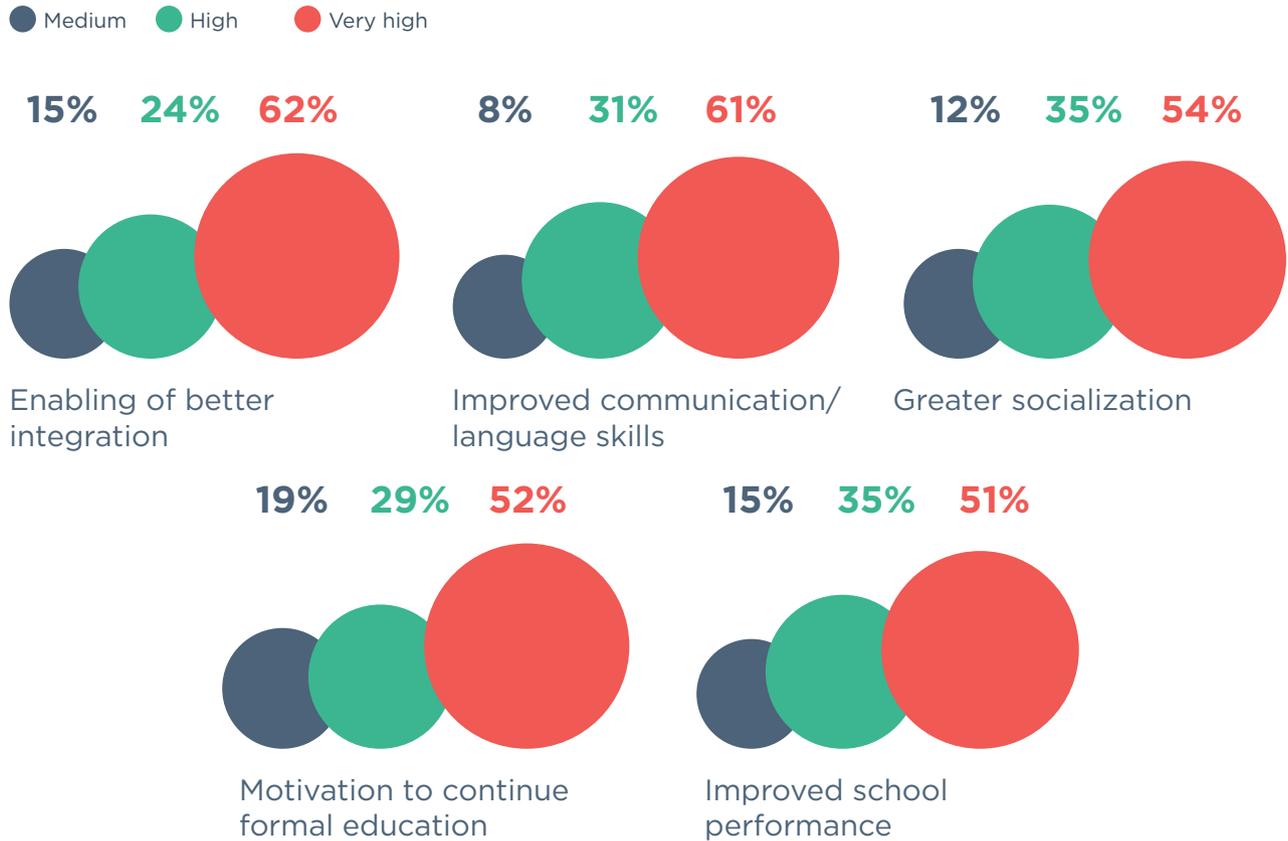
According to the majority of surveyed parents, there have been a number of reasons that have pushed their children to start participating in the activities of the Learning Centres. Among the most frequently mentioned reasons were the need for help with homework (77 per cent), satisfaction (77 per cent), support of the staff/tutors of the Learning Centres (74 per cent) and the quality of activities offered at the Learning Centres (69 per cent).

Figure 19 Reasons that push children to start participating in Learning Centres



No parent assessed the contribution of the Learning Centres as poor in various aspects. More than half of them assessed as very high the contribution of these centres in enabling better integration of children (62 per cent), improved communication/language skills (61 per cent), greater socialization (54 per cent), motivation to continue formal education (52 per cent), as well as better school performance (51 per cent).

Figure 20 Assessment of Learning Centres' contribution



Moreover, the vast majority of parents (85 percent) have expressed very high satisfaction with the professionalism of Learning Centres' staff. Others (15 percent) said they were somewhat satisfied in this regard.

Figure 21 Satisfaction with Learning Centres' staff

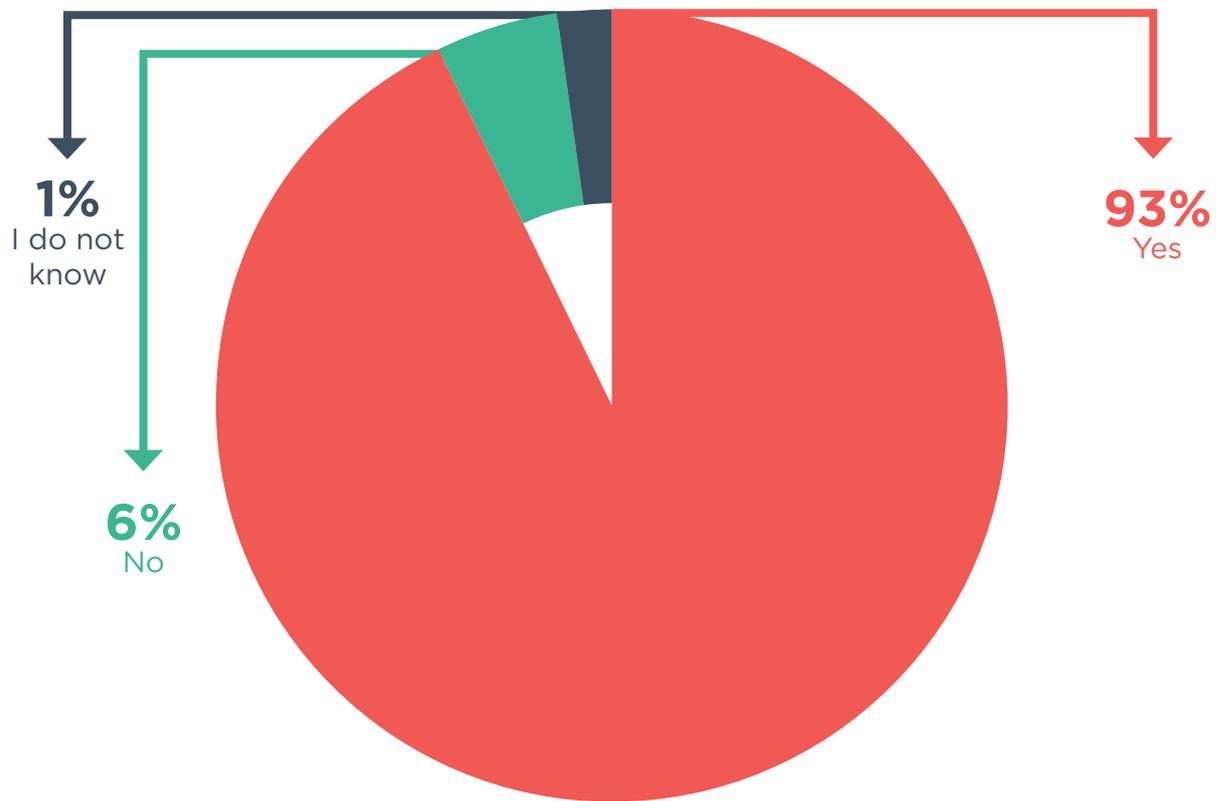


Parents of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children stated that their children have friends from other communities in the Learning Centres (93 percent). Only 6 percent of parents said that their children do not socialize with children from other communities in the Learning Centres. About 92 percent of parents have also stated that they are invited by the Learning Centres to activities they organize with parents. More than half of the parents (59 percent) said they regularly take part in these activities, 34 percent attend from time to time, and only 7 percent of parents never take part in such activities.



Moreover, the vast majority of parents (**85 percent**) have expressed very high satisfaction with the professionalism of Learning Centres' staff. Others (**15 percent**) said they were somewhat satisfied in this regard.

Figure 22 Do your children at the Learning Centres have non-Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian friends?



8. Recommendations

The overall situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo in the field of education is improving over the years, but there is still a great need for the support of these communities in many directions.

Most of the parties confirm that Learning Centres contribute to improving the performance of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students at school. The work of these centres has resulted in more regular school attendance, better grades, lower drop-out rates and increased social inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children.



Despite the important role of the Learning Centres, it is estimated that they face some serious challenges and issues, therefore measures need to be taken to strengthen and better their work, as it follows:

- Donors and local as well as central institutions should more strongly and systematically support the Learning Centres so that they can enrich their activities and increase the number of children and students receiving services from these Centres.
- Local, central institutions and donors should support the Learning Centres in order to build their capacity and quality of their work with children at pre-school level of education.
- Donors, local and central institutions should support the Learning Centres to build their vocational skills so that the work of the Learning Centres is as professional as possible.
- MEST should implement the legal framework on the functioning of Learning Centres, respectively the Administrative Instruction No. 12/2017 on the Establishment and Functioning of Learning Centres.
- Donors and non-governmental organizations should support the organization of capacity building trainings for the Learning Centres' staff and teachers, and these trainings should focus on social justice and social inclusion in order to eliminate forms of discrimination.
- Local institutions in cooperation with the non-governmental organizations should functionalize teams for prevention and response in the event of drop-outs and non-enrolment in the school by ensuring participation of representatives of the Learning Centres in these teams.

- Non-governmental organizations managing with the Learning Centres should play a proactive role in avoiding duplication of resources, while all parties, including the donors, should take care of avoiding disproportionate resource allocation to the Learning Centres.
- Local institutions in cooperation with non-governmental organizations should secure transportation and food for all children attending supplementary teaching and other activities at the Learning Centres.
- Non-governmental organizations should initiate advocacy activities to ensure regular funding from the state budget for Learning Centres and their integration into the Kosovo education system.
- Learning Centres' staff should systematically collect data and indicators on the educational achievements of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children at school in order to monitor the impact of Learning Centres.
- The Learning Centres' staff and teachers of the school should develop a mechanism of continuous cooperation so that the impact of the Learning Centres is greater in the lives of children who attend these centres.
- Learning Centres should increase their co-operation with parents and the community in order to achieve a greater impact on raising awareness of the importance of education and social inclusion



In order to reduce the number of absences and school drop-out cases of secondary and lower secondary education by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students and to improve their success during schooling, several measures must be taken, such as:

- Awareness raising campaigns for parents, so that they become aware of the importance of educating children in spite of grave economic conditions and not halt children from school in order to work, seek alms or do the housework.
- Donors and local as well as central institutions should support the students of families with grave social conditions with school packages and clothing.
- Subject teachers should be trained in order for them to be more informed and to have as inclusive approach as possible for students of these communities.
- Respective teams for prevention of school drop-outs should be more effective in addressing this problem, especially in some municipalities.

- Awareness raising campaign for parents with the aim of eradicating the early marriages phenomenon.
- Donors and local as well central institutions should support successful students with scholarships.
- In the preliminary levels of education (primary and lower secondary), more work should be done with students of these communities (also through supplementary teaching and catch-up classes) so that their success improves and they are able to enroll in directions they like and be successful throughout schooling.
- As greater inclusion as possible in preschool education and especially pre-primary class. Municipalities should allocate certain quotas and cover the costs of public nurseries for attendance of at least a small number of these children.
- Programs for eradication of illiteracy should be organized with parents of these students.

