

REPORT



Functioning of public administration and opportunities for citizens

October 2009



**National Endowment
for Democracy**
Supporting freedom around the world

Functioning of public administration and opportunities for citizens

REPORT

on the accountability of public institutions

Introduction

This report is part of the one-year project “Accountability of democratic institutions towards civil society in Kosovo”.

The report contains findings, interviews, meetings organized in focus groups with citizens, in order to register their experiences with different institutions of the country.

The project had two main objectives, promoting accountability and efficiency of democratic institutions in Kosovo, and strengthening the oversight capacity of the civil society.

The project “Accountability of democratic institutions towards civil society in Kosovo” is implemented in Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, and Gracanica.

The project aimed to evaluate the accountability and efficiency of national institutions, by registering experiences of citizens with local institutions, in order that these experiences/results are shared with the wide public and institutions.

It can be concluded in this report that many citizens hesitate to publish their problems related to national institutions, even when they have the right to services that the public institutions are obliged by law to offer them. Activities of this project have aimed to gather information of individual and group experiences of citizens for all the public sectors.

Partner organizations for this project are: Syri i Vizionit in Peja, Community Business Development Centre (CBDC) in Gjakova, Communication for Society Development (CSD) in Gracanica, and Peace and Human Rights Council (PHRC) in Prizren.

During the implementation period there were daily interviews with the citizens, offering them a possibility to speak about their difficulties or as result of the failure of responsible institutions for certain public services for citizens. Focus groups meetings with citizens were also organized, in which they were able to express their experiences with institutions, and the general perception of citizens regarding the functionality of different institutions in Kosovo, with a special focus on local institutions.

Main findings

Every citizen has declared that he/she has had, or at present has, a problem with institutions, also declaring that they know other people, such as relatives, who have similar problems, showing this way an indicator on a high level regarding general opinion of citizens for the difficulties in having access to services from public institutions.

Citizens have also mentioned the lack of will of officials to serve responsibly, corruption, and the increasing tendency for accepting bribes even for smaller services, avoiding responsibility and tasks, by causing this way confusion to citizens who are uninformed on the procedures of a certain service.

Many citizens have mentioned the municipal institution as the main cause of their problems. They mentioned problems they have had with the municipal administration, also including concerns with the infrastructure of their habitation. Even though there was no quantitative interviewing in this project, it was concluded from the interviews that the institutions with which citizens faced most difficulties are in the following order: Civil Service, KEK, Police, Municipality, Court, etc.

Lack of will of officials to serve responsibly

In general, citizens have expressed their dissatisfaction with all public services. They have said that it is not difficult for them to understand the economic situation and low salaries of the officials and civil employees, but they also mentioned the lack of will of these officials to serve responsibly.

One of the most typical situations is the big number of people standing in lines, for months now, in the offices of civil registration, where despite the big number of citizens waiting in lines the responsible institutions have shown no efficiency to establish better working means which would make their work and the services much easier. "I have waited for days to apply for the ID card, but one day I had to wake up at 05:00 in the morning in order to get a good place in the line¹."

Avoiding responsibilities and duties

The excessive bureaucracy through different documents, frequent changes of criteria for a service, and lack of clarification regarding procedures for a service, have been the answers of many citizens who expressed their opinion regarding officials who have avoided their responsibilities and duties.

'The lack of one single legal basis in Kosovo is causing confusion among institutions and citizens².'

Centre for Social Work has been mentioned for their hard criteria for getting social help, or for the cases when people who are working get social help, and those who live in high poverty get no social help at all, and this is likely to happen as long as there is no proper control in order to eliminate these paradoxical cases.

Health service in a severe condition

Citizens have also mentioned doctors who ask for money in order to have a surgical intervention, and in centre of family medicine they do not offer many services, for which they have the equipment, with the justification that they are out of order, while patients are advised to visit the private sector.

We know that the Government has special funds for public health institutions, especially for essential medications. Therefore, it is unreasonable that you can never find such medications in centers of family medicine³.

Aside from that, citizens have also said that the patients are endangered from unchecked medications. There are even medications without any explanatory notes, and some of them are kept in bad hygienic and thermal conditions. On 'World Consumer Day', Associations of Kosovo asked for the establishment of the Ministry for Consumers, also including requests for the establishment of a special court for the rights of the consumer. The respective law has given no results, and even though it was established in 2004 no fines have been given yet⁴.

Though there are always many complaints from the citizens regarding the low quality of medical services, medical staff corruption in hospitals and family medicine centers, the citizens rarely or never submit any complains or initiate indictments.

¹ Citizen from Peja

² Kosovo at the crossroads, perceptions of conflict, access to justice and possibilities for peace in Kosovo, FIQ and Saferworld, December 2007

³ Citizen from Peja

⁴ Newspaper Express, In the mercy of merchants, 16 March 2009

Even in the monitoring project of BIRN, in which BIRN staff participated in opening complaint boxes placed in these institutions, it was noticed that there were no complains inside the boxes. Patients and their relatives that were interviewed by BIRN staff have stressed that they make no written complains because they do not believe that any measure will be taken against the people they have complained⁵.

Public medium violates the rights of tax-payers

In several meetings with focus groups, citizens have mentioned as one of the worst violations done to the citizens the payment of 3.5 Euros as a tax for the public television (RTK) in locations where there is no coverage of this television. Citizens have said that it is absurd how institutions have not found a modality which would not “punish” citizens who are not able to watch this public medium, or in cases when citizens pay this tax for a commercial premise which uses no TV at all. Citizens have asked for direct funding of the public medium by the Government's budget, because they consider that this media is subject to great political and governmental pressure, and RTK itself has shown until now no transparency in the management of its incomes.

This issue was also treated by the daily press. The Commission for budget and finance, based on the report of the General Auditor's Office for incomes and expenditures of Radio-Television of Kosovo for 2007, has addressed serious criticism to this public media and the Office of the General Auditor as well because of the lack of seriousness and professionalism in their work. The Commission stressed the fact that RTK in 2007 has had 5 bank accounts and 2 bank sub-accounts. The Chairperson of the Commission has expressed his doubts on the report itself⁶.

Courage to complain against institutions and means of civic pressure

In random interviews, citizens mainly responded by reflecting their perception about problems people have with national institutions, or by discussing briefly for any experience they have had in the past.

Most or all of the interviewees said that even though they have had serious problems with an institution, they never took any legal measures to solve their problem or to submit their complaint to higher institutions, by expressing this way their lack of trust for the rule of law in the country. Among others, they are already convinced that every case they send to the court will be delayed for years until it is processed, by losing this way the reason and effect of the complaint.

Maybe such a situation can be confirmed by the monitoring program of BIRN for the courts, in which was also mentioned the bad management of court cases, and corruption in courts.

During monitoring in several courts, it was noticed that the parties wait for several years for their cases to be solved. Firstly, contesting parties wait for a very long time for their contest to be solved by the court, and second they have to wait again for the execution of the decision. The monitoring staff have noticed and reported delays in solving cases in a reasonable period of time because of the bad management of court cases⁷.

⁵Fatmire Tërdevci, Monitoring Project Manager, BIRN

⁶Koha Ditore, RTK in 2007 with 5 bank accounts and 2 sub-accounts, 19 March 2009

⁷Fatmire Tërdevci, Monitoring Project Manager, BIRN

Communication with institutions

All the findings of this project have been presented regularly to Mayors of municipalities in which the project was implemented. This was done because the aim of this project was increasing the pressure against institutions for offering an equal and legal treatment for all citizens.

Moreover, citizens with problems, which they want to make public, had the opportunity to cooperate with the media.

Main findings in Gjakova

From January to August 2009, 199 people of different age, profession, gender, rural and urban locations have been interviewed. Out of 199 interviews, in 27 cases we had the possibility of inviting citizens to our offices and registering their complaints, and 172 were random interviews.

We received 115 complaints from the citizens of Gjakova, addressed to 20 different institutions, such as: Ministry of KSF, Government of Kosovo, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Kosovo Property Agency, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, KEK, Courts, Kosovo Police, Municipality, Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports, Directorate of Public Services, Directorate of Urban Development, Geodesy, Cadastre and Property, Directorate of Health, High schools, Hydro-system "Radoniqi", Centre for Social Work, Media.

Discussions with citizens in focus groups

During January-August 2009 four focus groups have been organized with citizens of different ages and professions. They have talked about certain cases, their experiences or experiences of their family members and relatives. Some of them had no opinion or impression about the institutions with which they never dealt.

Main findings in Peja

Since the beginning of this project, 107 interviews were conducted with citizens, and two interviews were conducted in the offices of our partner organizations. In these interviews the following problems and concerns were identified with different institutions:

- Administration services, respectively the civil service for personal documents in the local level (certificates, wedding certificates), and especially personal documents such as ID cards, passports, etc. 55 interviewed citizens complained about bad procedures, waiting time, delays and administrative procedures.

- Public hygiene was also a sector for which citizens said they have bad services, (11 interviewed citizens)

- Kosovo Energetic Corporation (KEK) is another public sector for which the citizens have expressed their dissatisfaction, in regard to means of invoicing, and slow reaction in repairing deficiencies in the power network, (27 interviewed citizens)

-The court was also mentioned as a problematic institution by the citizens. They considered this institution as negligent towards parties, causing delays in solving cases, taking unfair decisions and also being corrupted (6 interviewed personnel)

- Health is also another public institution in which citizens were very disappointed, by saying that they have the impression that the personnel of this institution is corrupted, and also negligent in treating patients, (3 interviewed citizens)

- The Municipal Tax Office is another institution for which citizens complained, saying that this office has forced many citizens to pay a tax much higher than the normal tax, since their property is not in the zone as defined by this office, (1 interviewed citizen)

In many cases, citizens did not want to give answers during interviews expressing lack of trust in the rule of law and monitoring projects.

Undeclared corruption

One citizen refused to give an interview, but has admitted to tell us (in anonymity) about a case when money was asked from him by an officer for changing the status of his premise/commercial place. He said that the official offered to change the status for a certain amount of money, and the license he would have to pay through another procedure would have cost him a lot more. He accepted the offer of the official and he thinks that it is not worth mentioning this in our project, because he needs to work and establish good relation with the officials, on which he is often dependable for some services and procedures in his profession.

Discussions with citizens in focus groups

During the period January-August 2009 three meetings were held in focus groups with citizens of different ages and professions. They have discussed and shown about real cases, their experiences or experiences of their families or relatives. Some of them had no opinion or impression for many institutions with which they never dealt.

In these meetings the participants identified concerns in areas such as education, economy, social problems and infrastructure.

Many requests made by them to improve their livelihood and social welfare addressed to the respective institutions, were never considered, despite the promises.

Participants mentioned bribes for medical services, or instructions they are given by the medical personnel to send patients to their private clinics. "In the hospital their work depends on bribes. There are many doctors who say that their equipments do not work and instruct patients to visit their private clinics", declared the citizens.

Another problem coming out of focus group discussions was also the negligence of the staff regarding working hours, especially from the civil service administration.

KEK was also another public sector for which the participants complained, by telling of many examples when this corporation disconnects citizens from the network, despite the contracts for paying debts periodically.

Education was also another sector for which the participants complained, mentioning the lack of engagement from the educational inspection, resulting in weak educational process in schools. The participants gave several examples. One of the stories was as follows: “When the inspectors were to come, the professors prepared us one day ahead, telling us about the work we were going to do, questions he was going to make and the right answers, and told us to raise our hand during the classes. We had a normal class and lecture only when the inspectors visited us”.

Main findings in Gracanica

Many activities were done since the beginning of project implementation in Gracanica (a newly found municipality with the decentralization process, including surrounding villages), such as: informing colleagues of other NGO's, broadcasting advertisements on local radio stations regarding the project, all this in order to inform the citizens about means to contact the organization in order to express their complaints. We have also printed and distributed a number of leaflets, also officially informing some institutions in Gracanica about our activities. An important fact concerning the project is that the municipality of Gracanica is a very specific case in comparison with other municipalities, where the project was also implemented, because Gracanica does not have many Kosovo institutions, and this can best be described by the fact that only a few days ago the PTK opened an office in Gracanica. It is also worth mentioning that there is another element making this situation more difficult and that is that there are many prejudices for NGO's, making our work in the field unpleasant.

Moreover, citizens hesitated or felt afraid to give their personal data during the interview, since they said that these are very sensitive data and they do not want their identity to be disclosed. They often mentioned the fear of future persecution and unavoidable consequences in case the institution that is criticized is contacted.

Starting from January until August we were able to make 90 interviews, conducted in the field, respectively in public areas, according to the principle of choosing citizens passing by (random), who were willing to give brief interviews. This way of interviewing has enabled citizens to not disclose their identity, which many of them chose, but we have also had citizens who disclosed their full or partial identity.

By gathering all the results from the interviews, we easily come to the conclusion that most of the critics are against the work of Kosovo Police (the Serbs still refer to it as the Kosovo Police Service, a name used before the declaration of independence of Kosovo), then the Kosovo Property Agency, also including courts, for which citizens say there are many manipulations.

However, if we talk about special cases when citizens have confronted the institutions and have volunteered to be interviewed and registered, there is an impression that the specter of institutions mentioned by citizens is wide.

Office interviews

We have had 30 in depth interviews with citizens, who with their arguments and documents have verified that they have had problems with one of the institutions. There were also many cases when the citizens have had problems with the institutions, but they did not want to give an interview, because, according to them, they are afraid from those institutions, cause “Gracanica is a small place and words spread very fast”.

In general level, and based on same sample of interviews, the rank of institutions which people complain the most is as following:

Police is one of the institutions operating in Gracanica, inside a police station. During most of the time while the project was implemented in Gracanica, Serb Police Officers were not on duty, because they expressed their dissatisfaction with the declaration of Kosovo's independence by quitting their jobs, and as a result were collectively suspended with payment. At that time, there were only Albanian Police Officers in the police station of Gracanica. During this period, trust in Police by the Serb community decreased significantly, and the crime increased.

One of the reasons of many accusations and critics by Serb citizens in our interviews was that police confiscated a huge number of their driving licenses, which were issued by the SIAS (Secretariat of Internal Affairs of Serbia), with its office in Nish, but dedicated for Prishtina.

There were other critics, such as regarding the confiscation of vehicles (for which the owners said they had legal documents, and which were brought while conducting the interviews). Later on, their problem complicated more, because the confiscated vehicles are sent to the Customs, where a fine has to be paid for every day the vehicle spends in the Customs.

Another case we have had in the interviews was the case of the confiscation of a hunting rifle, even though the citizen has had a license, issued in a legal way. This case was considered as a violation of human rights. As a result the person whose rifle was confiscated was convicted for the violation of law. According to him, more than 2 years have passed and during this time he has not violated his probation, but also mentioned that it happens that the police officers involved in this case threaten him verbally.

Regarding **Kosovo Property Agency (KPA)**, citizens stressed that when contacting this institution the main problem is with unsolved cases of usurped property, also including the slow process of verifying the ownership of the property, since the citizens say that there are many falsified documents, such as the ownership papers and the copy of the plan.

There were also visits called „Shko e Shiko“ (Go and Look), during which displaced Serb citizens say that often they were subject to verbal provocations from their neighbors. This is another critic for the bad management of possible returns.

The Court as an institution has its branch in Gracanica. The court building is new, and the employees, starting from the doorman up to the head of the court, are welcoming and friendly. However, citizens have many critics about the court, which are supported with certain declarations. Court cases and contests in the court last forever, all court acts as supporting mechanisms in court practice last for a long time, there is no Albanian-Serbian interpreter/translator in the court, and translation/interpretation is really necessary there. Moreover, indictments, court decisions, public documents, court minutes of meetings and other relevant documents are very unclear, probably because of bad translation. Citizens say they often are in situations when money (bribes) is required of them, but as they say “it is better to give some money and have a job done than wait for 3-4 years “ (quotation).

In general, there is also another negative connotation linked to the court, in regard to 2 cases when citizens were not invited to a court contest, despite the fact that they were the damaged party (one case a material damage, and the other physical damage). Citizens say that when the word “Court” is mentioned, it doesn't mean the court building and its employees in Gracanica, but in general the Court of Prishtina, because the court of Gracanica does not have many competencies (verifying authorizations for vehicles, and similar administrative matters), and all other cases which are considered more serious and more complex need to be addressed to the Municipal Court of Prishtina.

In the office of our partner organization of this project CSD, a citizen belonging to the Roma community has heard from a relative of his that we are working in a project on the accountability of institutions. He has asked for his cases to be registered, because he said that he was discriminated against by an official working in the Ministry of Return. The citizen is a displaced person and the present situation does not enable him to go back to where he lived, since his house and the entire property have been damaged, respectively burned. Now he is living in the house of his relative and says that he meets all the criteria needed to get an apartment in Llaplesello. However, when he wanted to submit his request, the official did not want to give him the request form saying that “those apartments are not for gypsies”.

Personal documents service – was also criticized by the citizens, because in order to get a Kosovo ID card, besides waiting for more than 3 months, citizens are being asked for money in order to make this process faster for them.

Discussion in focus groups with citizens

During the period of our project there were four focus groups with citizens. In the last group, the fourth one, we have had a representative of the Albanian community. In this focus group we were able to listen to many comments, opportunities and points of view, which will be reflected through the following citations:

“Police's work is not professional as we have many car thefts, and other grand thefts (an old man who was robbed and beaten in his house, in which case 4 thousand Euros were stolen from him), no cases are being solved, the community is facing many problems because of the lack of Serb officers in the Police”.

“We have many problems with documents, passports, license plates for vehicles... Unfortunately there is still discrimination”. “There is a need for the cooperation of police and all communities in order to decrease all kinds of crime”.

In the court building, from Monday to Friday, you can see more Albanians than Serbs; no one provokes or disturbs anyone; everyone is doing their job and since the beginning of the establishment of this institution no ethnically motivated incident was registered, which is to be appraised.

Communication with the institutions

Because of the lack of local governance, the communication with institutions is very limited.

Main findings in Prizren

The number of interviews in Prizren was minimal, in comparison with casual interviews, in which citizens complained about the bureaucracy and procedures they considered unnecessary.

In meetings of focus groups, citizens also mentioned the Directorate for Urbanism as a problematic sector. It is highlighted that groups of people who have lost their jobs during the privatization process have suffered a lot while trying to get their money (20%) from the sold enterprise.

The hospital was also mentioned by some citizens that for a simple X-ray check people have to wait up to four days, be it because of the lack of material, or other complications, and especially because the services are done only based on family connections.

People of Prizren have mentioned the important fact that there are not enough interviews by specialized institutions regarding the work and transparency of public institutions. Moreover, there is a lack of institutional actions for increasing awareness and education of citizens, there is no way to execute the law for access to official documents, because the ignorance of officials is very high in case a citizen shows some interest in learning something specific.

In the first roundtable discussion of this project, organized in June, 2009, Naser Buzhala, Director of Administration and Personnel in the Municipality of Prizren said that most of the problems happen in the centre for civil registration, which is a sector under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. According to him, the Municipality has offered some space to MIA in order to open 12 centers for personal documents, including a staff of apprentices in order to prevent big lines of people, but the MIA did not accept this.

Some of experiences/perception of citizens regarding the functionality of public institutions in their municipality:

- They did not recruit me in KSF, despite my rank, experience and the criteria I met (Female, Gjakova).
- We never attend our last classes in school because of the bus which takes us to our village, and this is a problem for me since I always miss one subject (Male, 17 years old, Gjakova).
- All the students have paid for the engagement of a private security company in the school, but this has not happened yet, despite the fact that the money has been collected (Female, 17 years old, Gjakova).
- The road to my village is damaged and without any lights. I am concerned about my safety on the way home from schools (Female, 18 years old, Gjakova).
- On the way home from school (village Bretkoc) I have been often bothered by the hooligans, hence I have asked to have more police patrols in the evening (Female, 18 years old, Gjakova).
- I have paid the tax for installing a veranda in my cafe-bar, and the municipal inspectorate have sued me in the court, only because they were not informed by the Urbanism office that the payment was done, and it is still in the court of Prishtina as an unfinished case. (Male, Peja).
- The police have confiscated my vehicle while I was practicing with a candidate of the driving school. I did not have the instructor's license with me. Now, the case is still in the court and Customs have sold my car through a public auction (Male, Gracanica).
- The police have confiscated my vehicle three years ago and I had proper documents for it. I still have no response and the case is still in the court (Male, Gracanica).
- My vehicle was damaged in a car accident with a police vehicle, and the court has not closed the case yet, hence the damage was not compensated to me (Male, Gracanica).
- The Police confiscated my hunting gun with a temporary decision, and even after two years it was not given back to me, and I have had no response at all (Male, Gracanica).
- I have waited for one and a half year to verify a document in the court. I had to engage a lawyer, pay him 200 Euros in order to get the document in two weeks time (Male, Gracanica).
- I have a permanent problem because of my driving license, for which I think I am being discriminated based on my ethnicity (Male, Gracanica).

- I have a problem with emergency numbers (112, 92, 94 etc.), because many times they did not answer the phone, or have told me that I have dialed the wrong number (Male, Gjakova).
- I live in the neighborhood called 'Mbretëresha Teuta' near the village Moglicë. Near my house a bridge has been built connecting the village Moglica and the city of Gjakova. However, the bridge is constructed in a private property, since when the bridge was constructed the agreement was to compensate the landowner the use of his property, which never happened, and because of this he blocked the bridge. Now my movement is limited in this direction, but this problem is happening with other inhabitants of the village of Moglica who want to go to the city (Female, Gjakova).
 - In the neighborhood called "Sadik Stavileci" in Gjakova there is a problem disturbing all the inhabitants. In this neighborhood there is a bridge without any side protection. During 2002-2009 there were two accidents in this bridge resulting in the death of two citizens. Despite the fact that the representatives of the neighborhood have made a request in the Municipality for the repair of this bridge, there were no actions. The worst thing is that the children of this neighborhood pass through this bridge to go to school (Male, Gjakova).
- In the neighborhood "Sadik Stavileci", where I live there are no garbage containers and the habitants of this neighborhood are obliged to throw the daily garbage on the street. This garbage except for polluting the environment also attracts many stray dogs that are dangerous, especially for the children (Female, Gjakova).
- I am an excellent student of the high professional school "Gjon Nikollë Kazazi". Now I am on my last year and my concern is that the students of this school have had no educational curriculum regarding history, and in the national graduation test, there are questions from history, which have a big number of points. (Female, Gjakova).
- I have worked in the Medical Centre in Gjakova in 1991 as a dentist. After the request for specialization, I was told that we are obliged to work after specialization for at least five years in the Medical Centre of Gjakova. I finished my specialization in March, 2005, in the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo. However, after the specialization I have found no job in the Medical Centre of Gjakova. The same happened to four of my colleagues (Female, Gjakova).
- I am a teacher of Albanian Language and Literature, with an experience of 27 years. My working hours have been given to another teacher, who has replaced me. After the expiry of her temporary contract, my hours were given to her without any job advertisement. I have presented this case in the Office of the Inspectorate of Education of Gjakova, who brought a decision on the date 12.08.2008, referring to the Law for the inspection of education in Kosovo, article 4.3(h), through which they cancelled the decision of the school council. However, this decision was not respected by the school principal. I have sued the school principal and I am still waiting for an invitation from the Municipal Court (Female, Gjakova).
- I live near the river „Krena“ in Gjakova, where people throw a lot of garbage. I require from the Municipality and the NKP "Qabrati" to stop this action which threatens our health (Female, Gjakova).

Some of the opinions of citizens taken by the random interviews

- Why Gjakova has no military base for KSF? (Male, Gjakova)
- The Municipality is not distributing small shops fairly in Gjakova (Male, Gjakova)
- Only the traffic sector functions properly in the Police (Male, Gjakova)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has established bad liberal regulations for students (Male, Gjakova)
- Civil Service in Prizren has an inappropriate space and insufficient staff for the service and the number of citizens (Male from the focus group, Prizren)
- The services offered by the Municipality have too much bureaucracy (Male from a focus group, Prizren)
- Money (bribe) is being asked from the people in the Hospital of Prizren (Male, Prizren)
- I have waited for three years for the team of the Municipal Office for Tax on Property in order to register the real state of my property (Male, Peja)
- The officer in the post office of Prishtina did not want to answer to me in Serbian, even though according to the law it is the second official language (Male, Gracanica)
- We have problems with the police in Gracanica, since they belong to another nationality. Until when are we going to be discriminated by the Albanian Police Officers in Gracanica (Male, Gracanica).
- Why do the police confiscate our driving licenses issued in Serbia (Male, Gracanica).
- Gjakova needs to have a rehabilitation centre for persons with mental disabilities, in order that they do not move on the streets without any care (male, Gjakova).
- A citizen thinks that all the local and central media have a censorship, since they don't publish his article (Male, Gjakova).
- In the high school „Kadri Kusari“ in Gjakova the initiatives of students are not supported by the school Principal and school staff (Male, Gjakova)

What changes have been made during project implementation?

During this period, which is not necessarily linked to the influence of our activities, there was development reflecting positive changes in municipalities where our project was implemented.

In Gjakova, a number of complaints have been treated or solved in the meantime, roads have been reconstructed for which the citizens have complained in interviews, 6 dentists were employed, who were interviewed by us, the issue of scholarships for students was solved, a space was defined for the Youth Centre of Gjakova, and many others.

In Peja, during that period there were many informational campaigns from the Municipal Office for Information and Municipal Administration regarding personal documents, especially the new way of application for birth certificates, wedding certificates and death certificates, online. The Municipal regulation for transparency and access to official documents was also displayed, an initiative of the Municipality in cooperation with OSCE.

The municipality of Peja has started reusing the former Army House, in which the administrative staff and personnel have moved. That is the place where the best services are offered for the citizens.

Moreover, the administration has opened local offices, in local community buildings in rural zones such as Gorazhdevc, Zahaq, Baran, Novosellë and Vitomiricë.

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Some of the recommendations given by the citizens:

- Avoiding the big number of documents needed for personal documents, and the registration of the vehicle etc.
- Frequent inspection of health and education inspectorate, for the improvement of services and prevention of corruption
- Pressure in courts to process cases much faster
- Improving invoicing of electricity, regular registration of electricity counters for every month
- More supervision to the municipality to improve the public hygiene, influencing in the improvement of city cleaning in general
- There should be a universal principle and that is to have access and proper relation with citizens. With concrete actions efficiency will be seen, and laws and regulations will not be in paper only.
- The advancement of work in institutions, transparency, tolerance and advancement of staff responsible for different services such as information, communication with citizens regarding their needs and suggestion, and also explanations in all the languages in institutional buildings and public spaces.
- Examples given on how the transparency should increase, and how institutions can be more professional in serving the clients by mentioning the work of banks in Gracanica, such as Raiffeisen, Pro Credit, NLB.

Methodology

The staff engaged in the project has conducted daily interviews with citizens, interviewing based on the questionnaire consisting of ten questions.

There were also in depth interviews conducted in the offices of respective municipalities of partner organizations where the project has been implemented. These interviews were conducted through based on a more detailed questionnaire. During the interviews citizens had the opportunity to present additional documents to support their declaration regarding problems or unsolved cases with any institution in the local or central level.

The staff of partner organizations has offered their offices to the citizens who expressed their interest and willingness to share their experiences with institutions. Public information was done through leaflets with basic project information and notifications through local radios. It was possible to keep information in confidentiality for every citizen, in case it is requested by the citizen, and also in cases when assistance is offered on proceeding with the case (complaint, request) to responsible institutions. In all cases citizens were offered the possibility of presenting their case to the media.

Data accuracy on the report

All data on this report, interviews, citizens' statements remain as special cases, treated or not by the legal institutional layers. These are peoples' experiences and perceptions.

The staff of this project was trained to on how to measure the transparency in the local level, confidentiality, institutional structure in the local level, procedures for complaints of citizens against irresponsible institutions, the criteria based on which the project officers will offer advices how to register cases, procedures for informing the citizens after advising with them, and other sensitive cases related to legal aspects.

The general applicable legislation and the secondary legislation were treated, also including the law on local governance, law on access to official documents and municipal statutes.

The matter of confidentiality during project implementation was treated and studied carefully, including institutional communication and standards achieved up to now, with a focus in three municipalities of Peja, Gjakova and Prizren, the importance of transparency for protecting the direct interests of citizens.

During training, project officers understood that their role is not to advocate on behalf of the citizens, they cannot become part of the problem, they cannot play the role of the advocate, legal representative, public procurement or police officer. Their role was treated carefully and their limits and advantages were defined. Hence, it was clearly understood that the role of project officers is to make public pressure through media and other institutions in order that the complaints and requirements of citizens are taken into consideration by the responsible institutions and solutions are found.



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