

## **Kosovo Facing Covid-19: The Challenge of the 21st Century**

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### **KEYWORDS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is the objective presentation of the impact and consequences of COVID-19 on students of different schools and those with special needs such as other handicaps, and the role and importance of Kosovo's institutions in fighting the pandemic. Various scientific methods and methodologies have been used in this scientific paper. Qualitative and quantitative methods are appropriate methods for analyzing, evaluating and identifying relevant documents suitable for this research. Historical, analytical, comparative, descriptive and structural methods were used. The difficulties caused by the lack of experience, the direct impact of the pandemic on continuity during learning and especially the results of learning then, especially among students with intellectual and health deficiencies, the lack of legal infrastructure and human obstacles in the exercise of rights and obligations are the main findings of this study. In conclusion, the research showed that the state institutions, although they have tried, have not fully achieved the goal of providing such people with sufficient care. Online learning causes delays and consequences for student success across the country. At the end of this abstract, we can say that COVID-19 remains the challenge and danger of this century. (WHO, 2020).

## **1. Introduction**

The research article is a research and analysis of the work of the organization "Handikos" and the primary school "Resource Center for Learning and Counseling - Mother Teresa" in Prizren. The research is focused on a category of society with several goals: Analysis of the situation during the pandemic, online learning as an innovation in Kosovo education, methodologies used in online learning, the obstacles that have appeared during COVID-19, the legislation and its harmonization with the category of children with special needs, especially its impact on learning outcomes, including activities outside the premises of the association "Handikos" and the primary school "Resource Center for Learning and Counseling - Mother Teresa" in Prizren.

The reasons and importance of this paper lies in the problems and causes that led to the application of new learning methods, as well as the need to draw up an action plan in terms of helping people with special needs, especially of children. The issues raised in this paper originate from the questions to which we will be able to give answers as far as the possibilities and confidence of the research of the school documentation and that of the "Handikos" association allow:

- Was Kosovo ready to face COVID-19?
- How ready were the state mechanisms of Kosovo to implement WHO recommendations, laws and decisions of Kosovo institutions and:
- How much difference was observed in teaching and learning before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

The importance of this work lies in the browsed materials, direct communication with the responsible persons of the school and the "Handikos" association. The work is made even more important for the reader by the first-hand information about the institutional work and activity of Kosovo, then, the difficulties of these people, especially during the peak of the pandemic when they were confined to their homes and the application for the first time in the history of education Kosovo, online learning with special emphasis on students who have different physical and mental difficulties. Dealing with

such a topic provides interesting insights for the reader. This scientific research is the minimum of what can be called information for not only ordinary people but also for students and researchers of social sciences. The scientific research was based on the data of the central and local institutions of Kosovo, diaries, summary reports of educational activities held in schools, etc. These are data for which we analyzed and compared the achievement in teaching and learning, attendance at school during and after the pandemic and the negative consequences that COVID-19 had on students with intellectual hearing problems, etc.).

## **Literature Review**

During the research, the authors used materials mainly related to the practical view of the situation in the Municipality of Prizren during the COVID-19 pandemic, with special emphasis on the primary areas of social life in the Municipality of Prizren. Likewise, a part of this work is the normative rules approved in the parliament of Kosovo and the decisions of the local government institutions in Kosovo are an integral part of this work. The entire work in content has basic human rights and freedoms. The general framework for basic human rights and freedoms in Kosovo has its source in international conventions which the Constitution of Kosovo has voluntarily accepted although, so far, it has not been invited by any international organization for signature and ratification. The reason for the direct incorporation of the Conventions into the Constitution is the character and integrative will of Kosovo as the youngest state in Europe. Articles 2, 3, 7 and 8 of the Constitution of Kosovo oblige public authorities in Kosovo to ensure equality for all before the law, regardless of origin, guaranteed by international law. Besides the individual guarantee of human rights, an important issue is also the interpretation of these rights. Article 53 of the Constitution of Kosovo stipulates that the interpretation of basic human rights and freedoms in Kosovo must be done in harmony with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights based in Strasbourg (Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008). When we talk about basic human rights and freedoms, of course we also talk about the possibility of legal restriction of these rights.

The Government of Kosovo, based on the public interest, applied measures related to the preservation of the public health of the citizens of Kosovo, which were taken in proportion to the created situation. However, these restrictions, according to the Constitutional Court of Kosovo, should be applied only after the approval of the law. In this aspect, this court, with its decision, declared the government's actions unconstitutional, especially those actions related to the prohibition of public gatherings and the police hours. The decision of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo led to the drafting by the Ministry of Health and the approval of the Law for the Prevention and Combating of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Republic of Kosovo After the approval of the anti-pandemic law in 2020, (Kosova, 2020). Kosovo has undertaken a series of measures that were related to restrictions on the freedoms of its citizens, always in the spirit of preserving the health of citizens. These measures were; the restriction of circulation hours, the restriction of the gathering of no more than 5 people, the restriction of religious, cultural and educational activities, the application of the 14-day quarantine system, etc. Such measures hit the citizens, especially in terms of social and fragile welfare in Kosovo. The situation was further aggravated when the so-called green zones, yellow zones and red zones were created. All these led to the restriction of civil, social, economic, cultural rights, etc. Decisions of the Government of Kosovo on general and specific measures to protect against the COVID-19 pandemic, dated 11.11.2020 and 22.12.2020 have increased the number of restrictive measures related to the entry of citizens of Kosovo who live and work in the outside world and who come for vacation in their hometowns, but also of those citizens of Kosovo and also foreign citizens who were passing transit through Kosovo. These measures were related to the obligation to declare the negative test of COVID and at the same time the obligation of public and private

institutions to take hygienic measures in closed premises (Kosova G. o., 2021) .Such measures had a profound impact on the material and emotional condition of the citizens of Kosovo. On the positive side, such measures were, in a way, necessary for the protection of people's health and as a preventive measure against COVID-19. From the situation created in Kosovo, the rate of infections, the rate of mortality and the number of people who have recovered from the pandemic, it follows that such measures have given relative results. The reason is the fact that such measures were valid only in the behavior of citizens in public places, but such measures and sanctions were not valid in the family as well.

Citizens of Kosovo have the family as their basic foundation which implies that they lean towards traditionalism. This has led to the fact that the infected family members, in most cases, have not been quarantined or have not had the possibility of quarantine, due to the conditions and circumstances in the family, especially the elderly and people with disabilities. The difficulties increased when the capacities of the hospitals in Kosovo were overloaded and there was no possibility to hospitalize all the infected. This is confirmed by the alarming figures of deaths and infections. As of December 31, there were 51,328 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,335 deaths. All these data were provided by the National Institute of Public Health of Kosovo (NIPHK) on the social side, COVID19 caused a range of consequences. These consequences were related to the restrictions that had been imposed by the Government of Kosovo, then, the drastic reduction of financial income, staying at home, clashes within families that resulted in the increase in the number of cases of domestic violence, etc. The obligation to vaccinate has had a very negative emotional impact, especially for those who worked in institutions since they had their employment relationship and monthly income conditional on vaccination. This was accompanied by propaganda that talked about the negative effects and consequences of vaccination. Consequently, because of the duration of these measures, the citizens began not to adhere to them, which led to the taking of decisions, specifically the imposition of civil sanctions, but also the arrest of over 1200 persons for violating the traffic schedule and the initiation of criminal proceedings. However, the Supreme Court of Kosovo declared such actions illegal. In the general session of this court, led by the chairman, Enver Peci, held on August 20, 2020, in Pristina, the Legal Opinion was approved regarding the criminal offense - Failure to act according to health provisions during the epidemic from Article 250 of the KPRK- taking into account the decision of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo no. 01/15 of March 23, 2020. This legal opinion was initially issued at the request of the basic court in Gjilan, according to the reasoning of this court, many indictments have been filed due to non-compliance with the decisions of the Kosovo government. for limiting/stopping the circulation of people in the times determined by this Based on the circumstances created, the Government of Kosovo took measures to curb the growing social problems by approving the emergency package and the economic recovery package.

The total value of these packages is 535 million euros. In the legislative aspect, the Economic Recovery Package - COVID-19 (GAP, 2020) was approved. Such packages, described as emergency packages, were generally focused on the social life of the citizens of Kosovo. However, the shared value does not constitute the possibility of substantial impact, namely the real prevention of the economic decline of the youngest state in Europe, Kosovo, since such sums did not even come close to responding to global economic trends. However, in this article we are mentioning the main areas that these two funds focused on. Through this Legal Opinion, it has been clarified that the criminal offense of "Not acting according to health provisions during the epidemic" from Article 250 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, cannot be considered committed by the suspect when we are dealing with the violation of the decision in question (Court, 2020). In economic terms, Kosovo's fragile economy shrunk to a great extent. As a result, various businesses went bankrupt and this caused the loss of jobs and the lack of financial income. Their poverty caused the growth of social

schemes. according to statistics, during 2020, over 55,000 people lost their jobs. This has caused the rate of economic development of Kosovo to decrease by 6 percent. The emergency package included 15 measures focused on 8 fundamental objectives: 1. Emergency support of the business community in meeting a part of current expenses (covering a part of salaries for two months, covering half of the rent for two months, postponement of loan installments for businesses with problems, postponement of deadlines for payment of tax obligations); 2. Support of the business community in maintaining the contingent of engaged workforce; 3. Stimulation of the business community to increase the degree of formalization of economic activity, through the design of incentives in favor of announcing a number of new employees; 4. Support with additional liquidity for public enterprises that were faced with the postponement of payments of obligations by citizens for the supply of public services; 5. Keeping under control the pressure for increased exposure to poverty, especially extreme poverty for certain categories; 6. Ensuring the purchasing power of households to enable easier coping with the isolation phase, but also to maintain the aggregate demand in the market at a satisfactory level; 7. The support of the municipalities in coping with the increased cost while addressing the needs of the citizens in the two months of the application of the restrictive measures of movement and economic activity and 8. Guaranteeing the long-term fiscal stability of the public sector (GAP, 2020). The impact of COVID has not only hit the whole society, it has also hit all levels of power. The Government of Kosovo, in order to address the threats coming from the pandemic with the aim of the best possible management of COVID-19, drafted an action plan that includes: in the field of health: a) Actions in the sector included the so-called strategy " Flatten the Curve" that is. movement restrictions and distance keeping, b) Increasing health insurance capacities and c) Providing information and giving concrete instructions, in the field of economy: a) Providing financial support for individuals and businesses b) Economic stimulus measures and c) Extending debt payment terms public and credit and in the field of education a) Online learning application b) Internet and computer access and c) Designing the plan for physical education during the 2020/21 school year. (footnote: Effects of the Pandemic in Kosovo, Fridrih Ebert Stiftung, Pristina, 2020. In addition to the courts, coercive measures were also taken in the correctional institutions of Kosovo On March 11, 2020, on the day of the approval of the measures by the Government, the Correctional Service of Kosovo in cooperation with the Department of the Ministry of Health for Health Care in Prisons and with the Ministry of Justice, approved the Operational Plan entitled "Operational Plan - Increasing the measures of security due to the spread of the coronavirus or in case of any reported cases of infection On the date of the approval of the measures by the Government of Kosovo, (March 11, 2020), there were 1755 (1282 convicted and 473 detained. In the Correctional Center for Women in Lipjan there were 42 and 44 juveniles convicted, detained or in educational measures and 16 adult prisoners. On December 31, 2020, the number of people in prisons was 1,398 of which, 1,014 were convicted and 384 were detained, 35 of them were in the Correctional Center for Women in Lipjan and 39 minors were convicted, detained or under educational measures and 15 adult prisoners were in the Correctional Center in Lipjan. The measures that were taken were: Prohibition of family visits for prisoners from March 12 to March 27, 2020 (Institution, 2020);

- the possibility of more telephone calls for prisoners;
- Installation of Skype communication in correctional institutions;
- Temporary suspension of vacations during weekends (vacation at home);
- Prohibition of internal transfers (between institutions) of prisoners;

Prohibition of movements outside institutions such as humanitarian visits, medical checks, except in emergency cases; Reduction or temporary suspension of court hearings for detainees (in coordination with the relevant courts);

The directors of the institutions increase security measures in terms of additional personnel, manning the watchtowers 24/7;

- Intervening units in the Dubravë CC, BSL and other centers should be in a state of readiness;
- The prisoner escort unit should be on standby 24 hours a day; Initiation of the procedure for the suspension of the execution of the sentence for prisoners with serious illnesses;
- Disinfection, rodent control and disinfection of all housing areas and prison facilities (this must be done by DDD);
- The reception staff should be provided with sterile masks and gloves;
- Continuous examination of staff by doctors in correctional/detention centers (with the consent of the prison health department);

Continuous examination of prisoners/detainees with symptoms of infection; Supply of prisoners Assessment and recommendations for the period March 2020 – March 2021 (EULEX, March,2020- March,2021- May-2021), Special report on the impact of COVID-19 on the rule of law in Kosovo Assessment and recommendations for the period March 2020 – March 2021, May, 2021, p. 18-20.

At the local level, the municipalities of Kosovo have undertaken a series of preventive measures as well as measures to curb the decline in living standards, especially of marginalized social groups. These measures (restriction of freedom of movement, suspension of classes in primary and middle schools, suspension of urban and inter-urban transport, etc.) have had a negative impact on the public sector and the private sector. The limitation of administrative services, (the impossibility of undertaking public procurement actions, the cancellation of public consultations), then, in the private sector, (interruptions in the construction, gastronomy, hotel, textile, various services) caused the difficulties of social life to be added. Based on the reports of the municipalities to the Ministry of Finance and Transfers (MFT), in March and April 2020, all municipalities collected revenues worth 5.8 million euros, or about 9.3 million euros less compared to the same months of last year. During 2020, some municipalities have approved economic packages where they have foreseen the forgiveness of most payments from businesses. While in 2020, traffic fines had dropped by 90%. In February 2020 (before the measures were taken), the police across the country issued over 43,000 fines for traffic violators, while in April 2020, 4,462 fines were issued nationwide. In terms of the justice system, the work of the courts was greatly reduced.

The work was focused only on the necessary cases related to the urgency of solving the cases, especially in the criminal cases that had to do with the legal restriction of human rights and freedoms. The Judicial Council of Kosovo, dated March 15, 2020, decided to reduce all activities of the regular courts of Kosovo. Furthermore, from March 15, possible preparations were made for the transition to the online trial system, which lasted until September 20, 2020, when the first online court session was held. The first court that held the session online was the basic court in Prizren, in September 2020. The coercive measures of the Kosovo authorities have caused the citizens, against their will, to refrain or act in accordance with the decisions and laws in force related to the measures against COVID-19. These measures caused long-term consequences. These consequences are evident even today, both in economic, social, psychological and physical aspects. The compulsion to be vaccinated led to an increase in the dose of fear and mistrust among citizens regarding the longterm consequences of vaccination. In all the cities of Kosovo, places were opened where citizens could be vaccinated. Also, in the media, announcements were made about the possibility of vaccination, but television programs were also shown, where specialist doctors from various fields were invited, who told about the knowledge they had about vaccines and also about pharmaceutical companies. Despite



these actions of the Ministry of Health at the central level and the Directorates of Health at the municipal level, vaccination did not find citizen support. Those who were forced to be vaccinated twice and even three times were the employees in public institutions of Kosovo and the citizens of Kosovo with temporary or permanent jobs in the outside world. Mostly it was about the elderly, but without neglecting the other ages of the population, about which there were many conspiracy theories on the global level. The situation was more delicate for people with special needs. The causes were various, in terms of the organization and functioning of their lives. During our research, we contacted institutions and responsible persons, from whom we received information regarding the organization of work during the pandemic, specifically during communication with the director of the "Handikos" office, various obstacles were observed. Among them, the most prominent were: the impossibility of assistance and access to children with special needs, the lack of means for transporting the handicapped to health institutions, social work centers and banks.

The malfunctioning of the commissions for examining requests for disability pensions has also been a serious obstacle. As a result of stopping the complete circulation of the movement (Kosovo I. O., 2019) during 2020, "Handikosi" had a total of 2026 people with special needs registered. In the framework of "Handikos" regular services and services are offered from time to time, depending on the requests and needs of the registered persons. Before the pandemic, 35 children received regular services. During the time of traffic restrictions, these children were unable to receive these services, due to the lack of a special permit for traffic. As a result of these restrictions, paraplegics and tetraplegics were not prioritized by the commissions for examining requests for invalid pensions, even a request was not considered before 6 months (HANDIKOS, HANDIKOS around us., November 2020-2023).

## **Methodology**

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used during this scientific research. In the quantitative methods, we have taken as a basis the analysis of the data through direct communication with the competent persons of the school and the organization "Handikos". The data were obtained based on the numerical analysis that resulted from their collection and are presented as data in tabular form. Within the qualitative research method is the naturalistic character of the work which is based on real data, based on figures, documents and real communications, being open to any kind of discussion. "Handikos" and the primary school "Mother Teresa" were deliberately taken as cases because these two organizations are rich in information through which a real overview of COVID-19 was created. The work is focused on document research, communication with the responsible persons of "Handiko" and "Mother Teresa" elementary school, consultation and communication with fellow professors regarding the legislation of Kosovo implemented during COVID-19, as well as conversations with various people who verbally expressed their opinions and evaluations about our research.

For the application of the methods mentioned below, we focused on two issues: the approach and technique that is suitable for collecting and analyzing the data and our work about this study as the authors of the paper. The use of scientific methodologies is the cause and reason for being a qualitative work which leaves room for studies and further expansion of knowledge.

Several scientific methods were used during this research. The methods that dominated in this paper are analytical, comparative, descriptive and structural methods. Through the analytical method, data from the official documents of the school and the non-governmental association "Handikos" were analyzed, as well as conversations and interviews with responsible persons of these institutions. Class diaries, summary reports of learning activities, valid legislation during the pandemic and activity of

experts. In this research article, the work about the organization and maintenance of online learning, the tools and methods used during the development of online learning, the difficulties and obstacles that have existed are taken as a basis. The authors analyzed the legislations at the time of the pandemic and their adaptation to the category of children with special needs, especially the progress of learning, learning outcomes, additional activity outside the facilities of the "Handikos" association and the school. Diaries, summary reports of learning activities, etc. are the sources that helped the authors in comparing the results in teaching and learning, comparing the attendance of students in school during and after the pandemic and success. The covid-19 pandemic had a particularly negative impact on students who had multiple disabilities (intellectual and hearing, etc.). The most detailed analysis is described in the tables which are an integral part of this research. During the research done in the primary school "Resource Center for Learning and Counseling - Mother Teresa" in Prizren and the "Humanitarian and Non-Governmental Organization HANDIKOS" in Prizren the authors focused on the first to fifth grades and members of the aforementioned association, the assistance of persons responsible for providing professional services in external environments, which start from health services, home care (daily services) and equipment with electric wheelchairs and prostheses. In the indoor facilities, the services offered are related to teaching and learning, the necessary equipment for distance learning (tablets and laptops) and physical education at school. From a structural point of view, the paper consists of data described in written and tabular form. The written form contains data and statements that have their source from interviews, conversations and official documents of these institutions, without leaving aside the legal norms that were in force during the pandemic. By using these scientific methods the authors found it easier to create both the content and the structure of the paper. In this aspect, the construction of the work on pillars is more accessible to the reader and researchers of various topics.

During the conducted researches, the documents and other official documents were very carefully examined and analyzed, maintaining their confidentiality due to the sensitivity that they can present, especially the data of the students of the lower grades of the primary school. Also, the work is made even more meaningful by the experience and personal and professional commitment of the authors, which is an important part of scientific research. Here we can mention the very successful cooperation with the school management and professional persons who showed very good communication experience.

## **Results**

During the research, the authors, analyzing the data, noticed that the results of teaching and learning were significantly different compared to the period before, during and after the pandemic in terms of the form of learning development, conditions, methods, results in learning periods and final success. The differences were first noticed in the difficulties surrounding the organization of online learning, for which Kosovo had no prior experience. The research is focused on two aspects: the use of scientific methods and methodologies suitable for this work and browsing, talking and viewing the documentation of two institutions which are registered and licensed in the institutions of Kosovo, the non-governmental organization "Handikos", the regional office in Prizren and the Resource Center for Learning and Counseling "Mother Teresa" based in Prizren (HANDIKOS, 2015). The research is focused on the continuity of learning, the differences before and during the pandemic with special emphasis on the use of tools and methods of work of educational staff with students. The authors have focused their research on grades 1 to 5, specifically in primary school during the school years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, for the reason that the consequences for this category of students were greater both physically and psychologically. Despite the fact that regular classes started physically on September 2, 2019, the emergence of the pandemic made the second and third periods

take place only online. Also, the evaluation of students during the years 2019/2020 was done online. Grades one, three, and four are taken as examples. Class books, receipts, weekly summary reports of educational activities organized during distance learning were used as samples. Below are presented the statistics expressed in tabular form

Table number 1 shows the assessment periods divided into a total of three periods and the final assessment for the first class, the third class and the fourth class (MEST, 2021).

The first class presented in table number 1 started the school year with 7 students registered of which only 2 finished this school year, 5 students remained ungraded due to the decision to drop out in the first class. The reasons for the abandonment were different, but all due to the pandemic.

In these three classes, when we talk about positive success, we are specifically dealing with the percentage of students' achievement during the three assessment periods. ((Resource Center for Learning and Counseling "Mother Teresa", 2013)., 2013).

Table-1

	Class I	Class III	Class IV
Number of students registered	7	3	3
Number of students graded	2	3	3
Attendance	reasonable absences 63	reasonable absences 112	reasonable absences 136
Passability	100%	100%	100%

Table number 2 presents statistics for the 2020/2021 school year (Reports from the Resource Center for Learning and Counseling "Mother Teresa" - Reports, 2013), for first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade and fifth grade. This school year, as a result of the pandemic, started two weeks late, specifically, it started on 14.09.2020 and ended on 07.07.2021.

The table includes: The number of students registered at the beginning of this school year, the number of students graded, their attendance giving the total number of absences of all students of the respective classes. For passability, the authors have referred to the data from the final success at the end of the school year.

In the first and second grade, all students are hearing impaired. While in the third grade, four students are intellectually disabled (MANUAL, 2022). In the fourth grade, two students also had an intellectual disability and one had a hearing impairment. In the fifth grade, three students had hearing impairments.

Table-2

	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Number of students registered	3	2	4	3	3
Number of students graded	3	2	4	3	3
Attendance	73 reasonable absences	68 reasonable absences 39 unreasonable absences	179 reasonable absences 10 unreasonable absences	445 reasonable absences	155 reasonable absences
Passability	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Table number 3 shows the statistics for the first grade, second grade, third grade and fourth grade. In school year 2021/2022.

The first class started the school year on November 22, 2021 and ended on June 24, 2022, this class started teaching 2 months late because the evaluation team did not work earlier due to the pandemic. In addition, supplementary education, additional education and support education were not held. The first grader had a hearing impairment. The second class started on September 21, 2021 and ended on June 24, 2022. This class had a total of three hearing-impaired students, who received 15 hours of supplementary lessons and 8 hours of additional lessons. The third class started its lessons on September 27, 2021 and ended on June 24, 2022. This class had two students who had 14 hours of supplementary lessons and 8 hours of additional lessons. The fourth grade started the school year on September 1, 2021 and ended on June 24, 2022. This class had a larger number of students, a total of 5 students (QBMK-class books (diaries) of the years 2021/2022., 2013).

Table-3

	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Number of students registered	1	3	2	5
Number of students graded	1	3	2	5
Attendance	18 reasonable absences	117 reasonable absences	168 reasonable absences 31 unreasonable absences	446 reasonable absences
Passability	100%	100%	100%	100%

It is worth noting that during the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 school years, teaching was combined, with physical presence (in school facilities) and online (USAID, 2021).

The methods and methodologies used during teaching are methods that are applied in schools of a special type, such as the case of this school. The following tables show work methods and techniques for all primary school classes.

Work methods and techniques	Forms of work	Didactic materials	Support from internal and external professional partners
verbal Illustration Demonstration	Individual groups	photography Illustrations Various sign language tasks	Health workers (pediatricians, nurses)

Learning assessment methods
Allowing extra time for students to complete tests and assignments Allowing verbal responses Simplifying the language used and the instructions for asking questions in the tests Use of pictures and symbols The use of concrete tools during the lesson Assessment through portfolio.

## **Discussion**

The article talks about the impact and consequences of COVID-19 on certain layers of the population of the Municipality of Prizren, especially in that layer of action of persons with disabilities, the difficulties in their communication with educational and health institutions at the central and local level. An integral part of this article is the impact of the Pandemic on the local government, the difficulties in collecting municipal taxes as income from the municipalities themselves and the impact of the pandemic on the essential change in the initial planning of the municipalities. Normally, the article starts from two aspects; Social aspect and legal aspect. In the social aspect, the increasing number of infected people, while the legal aspect (Fred, 2020) originates from the World Health Organization (WHO, 11.mars, 2020), which on March 11, 2020 announced the corona Covid-19 virus as global pandemic (WHO, 2020). During the conversation with the director of the Handikos Regional Office in Prizren and the browsing of the documentation it resulted that during 2020 the "Center for Social Work in Prizren" received financial assistance for around 600 families. Also "Handikos" in cooperation with international and internal humanitarian organizations have provided carriages and dentures. What was a serious obstacle to achieving the objectives of this humanitarian organization was the inability to help all people with special needs who are evidenced. The difference in taking care of them, between the pre-pandemic and the Pandemic's time was evident. Such obstacles raised deep concerns specifically in terms of the health of these people, e.g. For nearly a year during the pandemics specifically in 2020, in general in Kosovo, especially at the beginning of the pandemic there have been lack of basic equipment for protection against Covid-19 (eg masks, disinfectants, insufficient spaces in "Handikos" facility which were conditions set by the Government of Kosovo) (Parliament, 2020). Part of this paper is the research done at the "Elementary School "Mother Teresa Resource Center for Learning and Counseling" based in Prizren (RSLC, 2013). The research is focused on the continuity of learning, and the differences before and during the pandemic with special emphasis on the use of tools and methods of work of educational staff with students.

The authors have focused their research on grades 1 to 5, specifically in primary school during the school years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, for the reason that the consequences for this category of students were greater both physically and psychologically. Despite the fact that regular classes started physically on September 2, 2019, the emergence of the pandemic made the second and third periods take place only online. Also, the evaluation of students during the years 2019/2020 was done online. Grades one, three, and four are taken as examples. Class books, receipts, weekly summary reports of educational activities organized during distance learning were used as samples.

With negative consequences, COVID-19 has also had an increase in domestic violence. During this time, there has been an increase in gender-based violence, which has increased the level of abuse. Inadequate clinical management of mental health and lack of psycho-social support due to the overload of health workers due to COVID-19 has put the lives of individual victims of domestic violence at risk. During 2020, there was an increase in the rate of domestic violence as a result of movement restrictions and quarantine. The Group for Security and Gender Equality, seeing the situation created in Kosovar families, has encouraged people who seek help or advice regarding domestic violence to call in cases of violence. The call is free and business calls can be made 24 hours a day, ensuring that conversations are confidential and anonymous. (link, 2024)

## **Conclusion**

The institutional commitment of the state of Kosovo was in two aspects: in terms of helping to survive against COVID-19 for all living social groups and in terms of organizing the educational process. The institutional commitment was focused on health, education through the application of anti-Covid laws, financial support for all social categories, postponement of the payment of taxes and duties for businesses, postponement of the payment of loan kits, then, assistance for many families from the Center for Social work in Prizren. Also "Handikos" in cooperation with international and internal humanitarian organizations have provided carriages and dentures. What was a serious obstacle to achieving the objectives of this humanitarian organization was the inability to help all people with special needs who are evidenced. The difference in taking care of them, between the pre-pandemic and the Pandemic's time was evident. Such obstacles raised deep concerns specifically in terms of the health of these people, e.g. For nearly a year during the pandemics specifically in 2020, in general in Kosovo, especially at the beginning of the pandemic there have been lack of basic equipment for protection against Covid-19 (eg masks, disinfectants, insufficient spaces in "Handikos" facility which were conditions set by the Government of Kosovo) (Parliament, 2020). Part of this paper is the research done at the "Elementary School "Mother Teresa resource center for Learning and Counseling" based in Prizren (RSLC, 2013). The research is focused on the continuity of learning, the differences before and during the pandemic with special emphasis on the use of tools and methods of work of educational staff with students.

Online learning was a novelty. Online learning was a difficult start to implement because teachers were not ready for this type of learning. However, for a reasonable time, teachers began to show results during online learning and that n. Two aspects: Attendance of online learning by students and their activity during online learning. The results showed good teacher-student engagement. This is especially noticeable in lower grade students who are persons with limited ability to act. From the results of the research, it appears that the region of Prizren, like Kosovo, has suffered a lot of damage due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially the consequences in education are also observed in 2023, around the general success of students.

### **Limitations**

This study investigates and analyzes the general situation in Kosovar society, the comparative aspect with the normal situation before and after COVID-19 and the relationships created in different spheres of social life. The research article is focused on the actions undertaken by the institutions of Kosovo in the prevention and fight against COVID-19, specifically the social and educational situation, especially of persons with special needs. Despite the fact that the research has included a series of works and actions that have been carried out in the school and in "Handikos", however, there are still deficiencies in some issues:

There is a significant lack of data regarding the degree of use of work methods and techniques in school, especially for grades five to nine since our research was reduced only from the first grade to the fifth grade. The tables show some of the work methods and techniques that were received in the form of information from the school officials. We have not seen a practical demonstration of the implementation of these methods during COVID-19 due to practical and legal obstacles.

2) The study is quantitative but also includes a qualitative study. The quantitative research method has dominated more compared to the qualitative research method because the analysis statistics can be used to process and analyze the data to obtain accurate results on the objectives although the quantitative research risks eliminating or hiding the complexity and diversity. of research. Such concealment can be a serious obstacle that makes it difficult to deepen the research until reaching a final objective.

(3) The research article was limited in terms of time and in terms of the use of scientific methods and methodologies. Time constraints were dictated by objective conditions and constraints. The research was a study of the real situation only for a certain period of time, COVID-19 for students of only one school from the first grade to the fifth grade, which limits us to go deeper to reach the final result. In the future, we or anyone else, starting from the initial results of this research, can continue the research by expanding to students of other levels of education, then research other schools, and compare the results of two or more schools and at the same time to track the work of other non-governmental organizations of Kosovo, relations with state institutions and their cooperation with persons with special needs but also with other persons. These actions can serve for a deeper analysis.

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