



UNITED NATIONS
KOSOVO TEAM



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

COMMON KOSOVO ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2020



UNITED NATIONS KOSOVO TEAM



The United Nations Common Kosovo Analysis (CKA) is the UN Kosovo Team's independent, impartial and collective assessment and analysis of the Kosovo context, which has shaped the development of its Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025. It examines progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks vis-à-vis Kosovo's commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda. A living document, the CKA in current and future iterations will inform UNKT work on a continuous basis, making the UN responsive to emerging needs and changing conditions. The CKA is the result of an extensive multi-stakeholder process and combines data currently available separately throughout the system, useful to inform both internal and external audiences. Some data sources are outlined in the annexes



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KOSOVO CONTEXT

POLITICAL SITUATION AND GOVERNANCE TRENDS

In the last two decades Kosovo¹ has made a notable progress in support of democratisation, rule of law and effective governance. Kosovo has taken steps to re-establish security and foster post conflict economic reconstruction, including by expanding trade and advancing its market economy. However, internal political instability has been reflected in repeated elections, with only one of five governments completing its four-year term in the past 12 years. The latest governing coalition, led by Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti, was formed on 3 June 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic following the breakdown of the previous coalition, which had been formed on 3 February 2020 after general elections in October 2019. According to a 2019 United Nations assessment, public confidence in, and satisfaction with, the government and its institutions continue to waver. Measures are needed to ensure fair elections, rule of law and support effective, transparent and accountable governance. Diverse, inclusive representation reflective of the communities in Kosovo is critical in the government and its institutions as is the active engagement of all in political decision-making. Yet, the engagement of women and marginalised groups in government structures, leadership roles and decision-making processes remains limited. Although the law sets a 30 per cent quota for female candidates in public elections and the Law on Gender Equality encourages equal gender representation in public institutions, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions at the central and local levels. The number of female candidates barely met the 30 per cent quota in the 2017 and 2019 legislative elections and, today, less than 20 per cent of ministers are female and one of four deputy prime ministers is a woman. At municipal level, none of the 38 mayors is a woman.

The Constitution guarantees rights and freedoms and accounts for the direct applicability of core United Nations and European human rights instruments under which Kosovo carries out ad hoc reporting, although it cannot formally be a party to these instruments. These reporting processes need to become less fragmented and legal guarantees more consistently implemented. Kosovo needs a comprehensive human rights strategy to consolidate existing human rights policies and laws and

strengthen implementation. Although freedom of expression is enshrined in the Constitution, the media is assessed as “partially free”, with incidents of self-censorship and public broadcasters vulnerable to political pressure. There is peaceful cohabitation among ethnic groups in Kosovo even though communities are relatively separated and there are limited opportunities for interaction and language barriers. The full potential for trust and progress in inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation at the community level is hindered by limited realisation of the rights and interests of non-majority communities as well as by divisive historical and political narratives. Additionally, the lack of an inclusive, comprehensive approach to “Dealing with the Past” represents a challenge to the full normalisation of relations between Pristina and Belgrade. As a result of the conflict in Kosovo, 1,646 persons remain unaccounted for, and transitional justice processes require acceleration, such as with regard to the ongoing establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission.

With Kosovo a potential candidate for European Union (EU) membership, a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU has been in force since April 2016, providing a key framework for reforms and development. As Kosovo’s largest donor, the EU contributes nearly 100 million Euros per year from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), providing Kosovo with support in areas requiring reform for membership (justice and rule of law, education, employment, energy, environment). Kosovo has made progress in developing a legal and policy framework aligned with the EU acquis communautaire, but implementation is lacking. Non-merit-based recruitments in the public sector and ad hoc decisions influenced by special interests impact the effectiveness of the civil service. The judiciary is somewhat vulnerable to undue political influence and the administration of justice remains slow, with institutions needing sustained efforts to build capacities. The Anti-Corruption Agency has made progress in verifying allegations, but corruption is a barrier to development. In the north, although Kosovo-Serb judges, prosecutors and support staff have been integrated formally into Kosovo’s judicial system, more work is needed to ensure full functionality in Mitrovica. Progress made through the 2014—2019 strategic plan of the Kosovo Judicial Council has been slowed by a backlog of unresolved court cases. Implementation of legislation is hampered by overlapping mandates, inefficient institutional coordination, limited capacity, budget allocation and political continuity, weak accountability, and lack of a data collection system.

¹References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

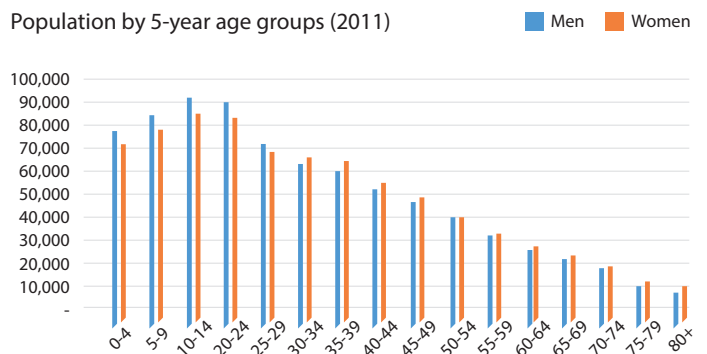
Prospects for EU membership have been hampered by the decelerated enlargement process and divisions among EU Member State. Kosovo has met the requirements for visa liberalisation but awaits approval of further steps by the European Council. Although several countries, including 22 EU Member States, recognise Kosovo's independence, there is not yet consensus for a unified international position on Kosovo. The Security Council remains divided on Kosovo's status and has held it on its agenda under resolution 1244 (1999). EU membership is also a key incentive for the normalisation of Pristina-Belgrade relations, which remains an ongoing process. The EU-facilitated Dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade was stalled for most of 2019 but resumed in July 2020, following the April 2020 appointment of an EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues, coupled with the June 2020 formation of the new government of Kosovo and the June 2020 parliamentary elections in Serbia. While there is new impetus in the process, it is not yet clear how women will be engaged in the Dialogue. Complementing the EU-facilitated process of normalisation of relations between Pristina and Belgrade, agreements signed by the parties in Washington, DC in September 2020 focused on contributing to economic cooperation and investments. The UN Action Plan in support of dialogue, trust-building and reconciliation in the Western Balkans (which provides a strategic framework for the United Nations in advancing these objectives across the region) underscores the need for women and youth's active participation and empowerment in society-building through inclusive processes and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth as agents of change in all stages of sustaining peace, as called for in Security Council resolution 1325 and other resolutions.

For non-majority community members and people on the move, scarce opportunities and discrimination inhibit viable income-generation activities. Reintegration support is only partially available for returnees and a proper referral system is lacking. Kosovo has an increased influx of migrants and refugees along the Eastern Mediterranean route, with asylum seekers increasing four-fold (594 in 2018, 2,081 in 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly and adversely impacted people on the move and the most marginalised communities with pre-existing housing vulnerabilities, hindering their ability to follow distancing and hygiene recommendations.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

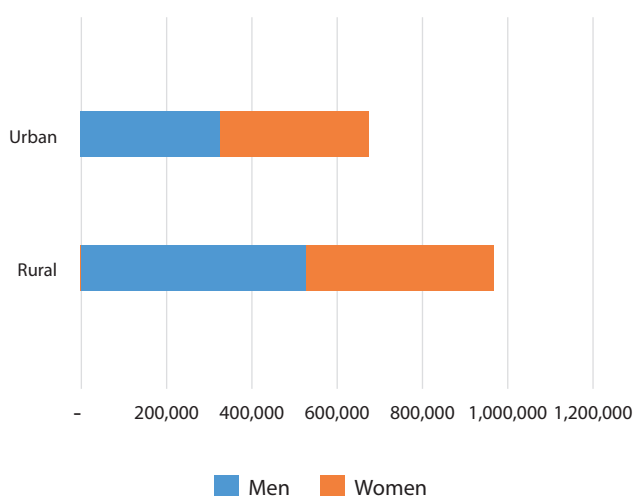
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Population by 5-year age groups (2011)



Kosovo's economy is the third poorest in Europe, after Ukraine and Moldova, with a nominal GDP per capita of 4,409 US Dollars (2019) and GDP per capita power purchasing parity (PPP) of 11,152 US Dollars (2018). Inefficient, near-subsistence farming is common, the result of small plots, limited mechanisation, and a lack of technical expertise. Around 60 per cent of Kosovo's population relies on agriculture and farming; yet agriculture accounted for just 7.2 per cent of GDP (2018). Thirty per cent of value added is from trade, construction and real estate, while 13.5 per cent is from mining and manufacturing. The diaspora remittances which amounted to 15.8 per cent of Kosovo's annual GDP in 2019 and eight per cent of individual income in 2017 are an important influence on economic opportunities and welfare in Kosovo, although vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Distribution of population urban/rural (2011)

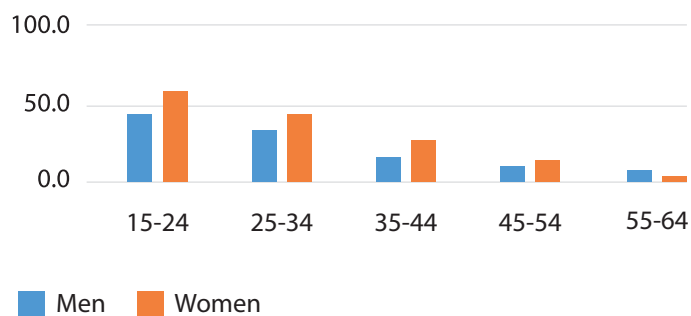


Although poverty has declined, 18 per cent of Kosovo's population was estimated to live below the consumption poverty line (in 2017), with 5.1 per cent below the extreme poverty line, and rural inhabitants, female-headed households and children disproportionately affected. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing fragility of Kosovo's economy. Precautionary measures taken (March—May 2020) shut down much of Kosovo's economy. Services, a considerable part of the economy, were significantly restricted in hospitality, retail and in-person services, and tourism is vulnerable to travel restrictions and changes in consumer behaviour. Remittances and foreign direct investment (FDI), both important sources of revenue, are both vulnerable to this crisis. The government stimulus package is low – estimated at 190 million Euros (2.8 per cent of GDP) – and could be expanded as Kosovo ended 2019 with high government deposits and relatively low debt (17.5 per cent, the lowest in the region). Due to difficulties accessing capital markets, Kosovo has turned to international financial institutions (IFIs) for financing. Alignment of longer-term recovery goals with initiatives, like the European Green Deal, may enhance access to external funding. Revenues are projected to plunge by 11 per cent due to reduced economic activity and a tax deferral. According to the World Bank, before the pandemic, Kosovo was projected to grow by 4 per cent; a 4.5—5 per cent contraction is expected now.

Kosovo has among the weakest labour market records in Europe (25.7 per cent unemployed; 30.1 per cent employed in 2019), with numbers expected to worsen due to the pandemic. The average net wage in Kosovo is higher in the public sector (477 Euros) than the private sector (348 Euros). In 2019, only 21.1 per cent of women (versus 59.7 per cent of men) participated in the labour force and unemployment was highest among women (34.4 per cent). Women's low labour participation is attributed to: low salaries; labour regulations; limited child/elderly care and family-friendly schedules; patriarchal social norms and discrimination.

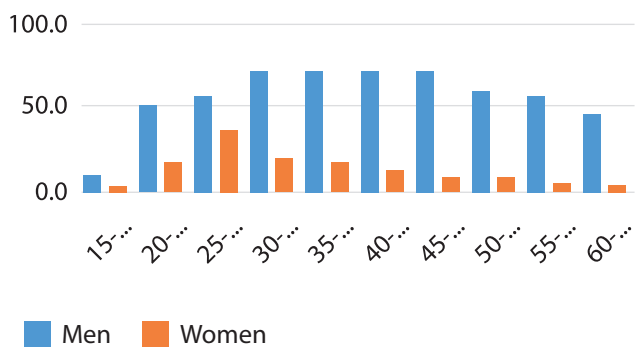
Many of the 13.9 per cent of women employed in 2019 may lose their jobs or suffer salary cuts due to increased care responsibilities caused by COVID-19. Women's jobs often lack security and protections (e.g. 30 per cent of women employed in the private sector have a contract). Similarly, informal workers perform 35 per cent of jobs, among the highest rate of informal work in Europe, but often lack security and benefits. Around 60 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and relies on agriculture and farming, the sector with the most informality (70 per cent of undeclared workforce). Although an emergency COVID-19 fiscal package (adopted 30 March 2020) subsidises certain social assistance payments, pensions and incomes, over 20 per cent of respondents to a United Nations assessment described challenges in accessing the assistance, and only three per cent of those who lost jobs obtained unemployment benefits. The same assessment showed that the sectors hardest hit by the economic shutdown (construction and hospitality) have the largest percentage of employees paid in cash (83 per cent construction, 47 per cent hospitality) and employ one-fifth of primary income earners of households.

Unemployment rate by age group and gender (%) (2019)



Around 60 per cent of Kosovo's population relies on agriculture—Beekeepers, Shtërpcë (UNDP / 2017)

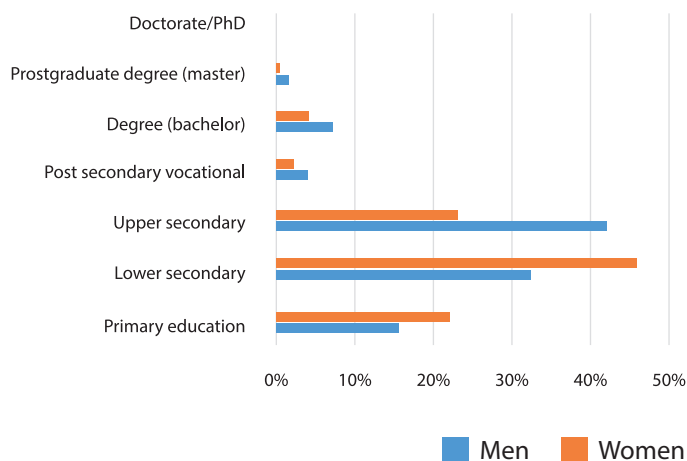
Inactive population as share of the working age population (%) 2019



a leading destination. Over 30 per cent of residents have at least one family member in the EU. As regular migration has increased, irregular migration and asylum applications in the EU have decreased. Unaccompanied children remain vulnerable to trafficking. This risk has grown, especially in labour emigration, due to the pandemic. The Criminal Code punishes human trafficking and victim protection has improved, but prosecutions and convictions remain low.

bottom of the developing world and last in the Western Balkans. The academic and vocational systems fail to prepare students for the labour market. Increased technology in classes and teaching methodologies aligned with global standards could improve education.

Educational attainment population 10+ (2011)



Non-majority returnee and resident children studying in the same class (UNHCR/2020/A.Gjakova)

Access to, and enrolment in, Kosovo's education system has improved, but inequalities remain as do challenges in terms of ensuring quality. Parallel education systems segregate along ethnic lines, impacting access to, and quality of, education for certain groups and communities. Language legislation needs to be more effectively implemented alongside opportunities to learn the diverse languages of Kosovo. While attendance at the pre-primary level (5—6 years of age) increased to 92 per cent, attendance in early childhood education (ECE) programmes (4—5 years) is only 14 per cent, due to the absence of an ECE expansion policy, low government investment, and insufficient private sector integration. The 2018 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) placed Kosovo students at the

According to World Bank Development Indicators, life expectancy at birth is 71.6 years; this has increased steadily since 2011 and is likely to continue. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented opportunities to improve productivity, efficiency and quality in the sector. To protect vulnerable groups, attention is needed in: maternal, neonatal and child health; sexual and reproductive health; HIV prevention; and cancer screening. However, Kosovo's health system receives limited GDP expenditure per capita. Although primarily tax-funded (97 per cent), private out-of-pocket payments are significant, leaving the vulnerable disproportionately affected. A recent health insurance reform has been delayed, leaving the health system limited to a government-managed, direct-provision option. Public health personnel are governed by civil service law and budget limitations. Kosovo's health-care indicators, including the number of physicians and nurses per patient and the number of beds, are among the lowest in Europe, hindering Kosovo's capacity to respond to a surge in demand. While the government adopted an early response to, and strict measures against, the pandemic, which initially helped contain COVID-19, the containment measures and re-direction of resources towards the COVID-19 response limited or paused other essential health services and routine pre- and post-natal check-ups. Deaths from preventable or treatable conditions must not exceed COVID-19 deaths. Measures to address the pandemic need to be balanced with uninterrupted essential lifesaving health services. The parallel health system also resulted in data inconsistencies and incongruent containment measures and prevented patients and medical staff from crossing boundary lines. Messaging on COVID-19 preventative measures was delayed in non-Albanian languages, reflecting systemic inequalities in access to information and obstructing rights to information and health.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Since 1999, rapid development in Kosovo has increased the urbanisation rate and scale at unbalanced rates, causing infrastructure overload, increased travel, traffic congestion, carbon emissions, pollution and health impacts. Between 2000 and 2018, Kosovo's urban area increased from 0.9 per cent to 1.5 per cent of its territory. Although urban expansion has slowed, uncontrolled development has persisted with construction often lacking permits or planning. Spatial planning and development must be joined with protection of the environment and cultural and natural heritage, disaster and risk response, and resilience.

Kosovo suffers from environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources (air pollution, water quality and scarcity, land contamination), impacting livelihood opportunities and public health and undermining sustainable development.



In 2020, children's immunisations were suspended for nearly two months due to COVID-19 (UNICEF / 2020 / S.Karahoda)

On some days, air pollution matches the world's most polluted cities and exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) recommended levels.

In winter, increased demand for heat and Kosovo's reliance on solid fuels cause severe smog. Two lignite-based power plants produce around 98 per cent of the required power in Kosovo and emit most of its pollution together with coal heating of private housing. Public transport is also limited and most private vehicles are imported second hand. Together, these factors adversely impact health, causing cardiovascular ailments, cancer and other health conditions. Air pollution disproportionately affects children, pregnant women, and individuals with respiratory diseases. Polluters are required to comply with legal frameworks and norms and to observe tolerance limits, but these are not enforced. The economic cost of air pollution, estimated at 160–310 million US Dollars (2.5–4.7 per cent of the GDP) in 2016, further obstructs Kosovo's progress.

Water management in Kosovo is limited and most rivers are polluted. In 2018, 40–55 per cent of wells were bacteriologically contaminated, and bacteriological contamination in the public water supply was also noted. No municipalities and few industries have wastewater treatment facilities; untreated wastewater is discharged into surface water bodies. Most recent estimates put the percentage of the population connected to public water systems at 89.6 per cent and the population left without water supply at 10.41 per cent. In rural areas, people (particularly women and marginalised communities) voice concern over insufficient access to water. Kosovo has seven regional landfills but limited solid waste management. Lack of collection in some areas has led to unregulated landfills; 4,000 sites are believed to pose health risks. Sites for hazardous waste are lacking and disposal of protective equipment potentially infected with COVID-19 is a concern due to uncontrolled dumping or incineration. Effective site management is critical.

Although they do not feature among Kosovo's top political priorities, the agendas on climate change and disaster risk reduction are being advanced. However, with Kosovo not a signatory to international environmental conventions, it has limited access to vertical funding mechanisms. This hinders environmental protection, related institutional capacities, and potential for a more unified, regional approach. COVID-19 presents an opportunity to align longer-term recovery goals with initiatives (e.g. European Green Deal) that could enhance access to external funding. To tackle socioeconomic challenges, Kosovo needs affordable, reliable and renewable energy. Its electricity system is "outdated, inadequate and undependable". Regular power cuts disincentivise investors, disrupt essential services, and limit residents to firewood and coal. Improving the energy sector efficiently, sustainably and cost-effectively is linked to a disputed lignite power plant project ("Kosovo E Re" plant) intended to replace Kosovo's older coal-fired power plants and meet half of its electricity demand. Large financial and environmental costs obstructed progress. Experience with micro-hydro plants have also created concerns around environmental and social impacts. Alternative, sustainable solutions are needed.



Significant levels of air pollutin impact livelihood opportunities and public health and undermine sustainable development. (UNDP / 2020)

KOSOVO'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Kosovo's commitment to the 2030 Agenda is validated in its Assembly's unanimous endorsement of a resolution on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the operationalisation of its SDG Council to monitor and help ensure implementation of the SDGs. The NDS 2016—2021 seeks improvement in sectors that align with the SDGs and has noted progress in 25 per cent of its activities. However, there is no reference to the SDGs or how they could drive reforms. The Government Programme 2020—2023 similarly omits the SDGs. A UNKT rapid assessment in 2018-2019 of 46 central and sectoral Kosovo development planning strategies found that the current development framework converges

with 51 per cent of SDG targets (87 of 169) and the current NDS with 12 per cent (21 of 169). The next NDS timeframe (2021—2030) coincides with the Decade of Action providing an opportunity to integrate the SDGs and explicitly identify common targets. As a first step towards European integration, the 2016 SAA requires alignment with applicable EU standards, incentivising development reforms under the European Reform Agenda (ERA). The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to impede Kosovo's achievement of sustainable development, impacting people in vulnerable situations most. In June 2020, UNKT presented a two-year Socio-Economic Response Plan to mitigate these impacts and support and inform government efforts.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Member States pledged to ensure "no one is left behind" and to "endeavour to reach the furthest behind first". People are left behind when they lack the choices and capabilities to participate in, or benefit from, human development and when their access to basic rights and needs is obstructed due to, or as a result of, their experience of absolute and relative disadvantage. According to the global "leaving no one behind" (LNOB) concept, five factors serve as driving forces behind exclusionary processes faced by individuals, groups, communities and segments of society: 1) Discrimination (on the basis of assumed or ascribed identity or status); 2) Geography (e.g. isolation, risk or exclusion due to location, including environmental degradation, transport and technology); 3) Vulnerability to shocks (e.g. conflict, climate, environmental circumstances); 4) Governance (e.g. laws, policies, institutions, voice and participation); and 5)

Socioeconomic status (e.g. multidimensional poverty, inequalities). Often, these factors are experienced in multiple, compounding forms.

In late 2019, the UNKT conducted a desk review and organised consultations with various reference and focus groups (over 400 people; 206 women), yielding consistent findings: Those most left behind or at risk of being left behind include certain categories of women (non-majority; rural; single mothers; domestic violence survivors; those excluded from participation); children (economically deprived; living with disabilities), non-majority communities (K-Roma; K-Ashkali; K-Egyptian communities), people on the move (asylum seekers; refugees; migrants; IDPs; voluntary returnees); people with disabilities and LGBTIQ persons. COVID-19 impacts are likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities and risks they face.



PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2030 AGENDA

It is not possible to obtain a detailed view of Kosovo's progress towards each SDG. This is due to limited and incomplete data, which results from: the absence of a central repository for monitoring; insufficient human and financial resources for evidence generation; and a lack of standardised definitions and methodologies. A 2018-2019 UNKT data mapping exercise revealed data on 33 per cent of the SDG global indicators, no data on 42 per cent, and 25 per cent irrelevant to Kosovo. The data lacks time series to enable monitoring and is rarely disaggregated, hindering identification of equity gaps. Kosovo's development framework is aligned with 51 per cent of the SDG targets, but the NDS Progress Report noted implementation delays in over half of all planned activities and achievement of just 14 per cent of SDG targets. International sources often lack or exclude data on Kosovo due to status issues under Security Council resolution 1244. EUROSTAT data on Kosovo on SDGs 3, 8 and 17 reveals interesting data on Kosovo with respect to the rest of the region. For example, of seven enlargement candidates, Kosovo had the highest rate of: neonatal mortality; unemployment for men, women and youth; unemployment gap; and young persons under 27 years not in employment, education or training. Albeit

limited, this data provides insight into Kosovo's progress toward sustainable development and the areas necessitating change.

DISCRIMINATION/INEQUALITY

Discrimination in Kosovo includes a series of economic, social and other inequalities, such as low access to economic resources/jobs; unpaid work; limited opportunities for women's entrepreneurship; gender pay gap; family planning and family care; property ownership; gender discrimination; gendered child-rearing practices; and traditional and patriarchal values. Social cohesion, especially among youth, needs to be improved, as well as access to jobs and public services in education, health, housing and water and waste collection. Without visa liberalisation, institutions and residents are unable to participate in, and contribute to, global and regional development agendas, hindering access to information and knowledge on issues that require attention for regional stability. Socioeconomic services should account for vulnerabilities and needs of groups prone to exclusion.

GOVERNANCE

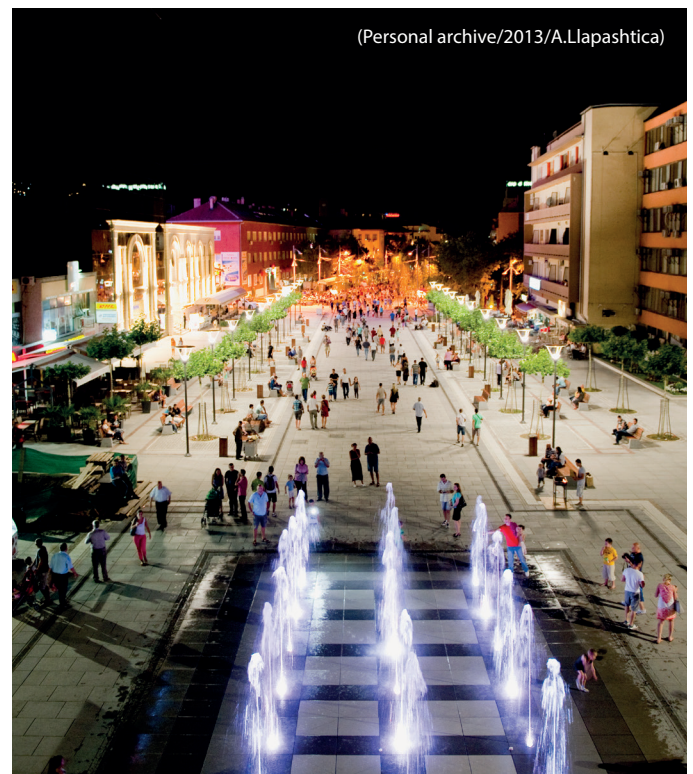
Certain groups are disadvantaged due to the impact of, or insufficient protection offered by, laws or policies, hindered access to and limited confidence in governance institutions, few opportunities to be heard, or corruption, which limits services to those with affluence, status or connections. A 2019 Public Pulse opinion poll showed 34 per cent of respondents perceived large-scale corruption in public and international institutions in Kosovo. Reference and focus group discussions reiterated this and referred to a need to strengthen governance and by increasing transparency and accountability. Inclusiveness and dialogue within and between communities and political leaders would also help renew trust, foster reconciliation and contribute to policies and practices that are reflective of, and responsive to, all.



Focus group discussions on Women Empowerment with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women in Klinë/Klina. (UNHCR / 2019 / I.Maxhuni).

GEOGRAPHY

Kosovo has one of the highest rural populations (62 per cent in 2011) in the region. In 2014, poverty and extreme poverty were slightly higher in rural than urban areas (21.3 per cent versus 20.9 per cent and 7.1 per cent versus 6.5 per cent respectively), but improvements in urban areas since then (extreme poverty reduced to 3.6 per cent in 2015) have not been experienced in rural areas. Municipalities have varied access to, and poor infrastructure for, health, disaster risk reduction, education and social services, and face disparities in living conditions, such as unequal access to public utilities (e.g. public drinking water supply, sewage system, waste management, central heating, public transportation), disparities in income and consumption, and exposure to environmental risks. A lack of data hinders identification of, and access to, those in need. With rising rural-to-urban migration, urban migration is also depopulating rural settlements.



(Personal archive/2013/A.Llapashtica)

VULNERABILITY TO SHOCKS

Vulnerability to shocks and less ability to recover from them is an indicator of risk, including the risk of being left behind. The capacity of Kosovo institutions and communities to respond to natural and human-induced disasters is limited due, in part, to a lack of infrastructure and equipment, resources, and access to information and education. This increases vulnerabilities, particularly among the most excluded groups in remote areas. Similarly, socioeconomic vulnerability is likely to render Kosovo more susceptible to the impacts of climate change, which disproportionately disadvantages the poor due to their decreased capacity to alter habits or move. Consequently, marginalised ethnic communities and women with less financial means (e.g. single mothers) are at higher risk. Evidence-based land-use planning, local risk assessments and risk-informed decisions and investments in urban areas are essential. At the same time, the social protection system requires improvements to respond rapidly to shock through unemployment insurance, more expansive targeting criteria for social assistance, and a registry of potential beneficiaries which could help the government rapidly expand emergency cash transfer support if needed urgently.

Although Kosovo has not returned to violent conflict or open disturbances since 2004, the legacy of the 1998—1999 conflict continues to threaten stability in Kosovo and the wider region and hinder the resilience of individuals, resulting in continued displacement within and outside Kosovo and enduring conflict narratives which obstruct community conciliation. Regional efforts and commitments have supported displaced persons from Kosovo to secure durable solutions, including voluntary return and integration. Although vast numbers have voluntarily returned from displacement since 2000, numbers have drastically declined (from 28,302 returned since 2000 to 444 returned in 2019). The government has not established a data collection and case management system for displaced and returnee populations, but estimates suggest that 16,150 individuals remain displaced within Kosovo. Following a global initiative to galvanise and reinforce multi-stakeholder engagement to reduce and resolve internal displacement, Kosovo has taken steps to support IDPs and returnees. Yet challenges remain and prolong vulnerabilities.



Young people in particular respond positively to opportunities for interaction (UNDP / 2016)

Radicalisation is also threatening stability, and risks increasing vulnerability. Over 300 residents are estimated to have travelled to Syria to join terrorist groups, while others remain in Kosovo. In 2019, 110 of them – including women and children – were returned to Kosovo, challenging Kosovo to rehabilitate and reintegrate returned fighters and their spouses and children. Ineffective or perfunctory deradicalisation programmes risk increasing the threat from repatriated persons and further dividing communities.

Likewise, polarisation within Kosovo and mistrust among ethnic groups are fuelled by conflict and ethno-centric narratives in public discourse, particularly through social media, and should be taken into account when assessing vulnerability. A social cohesion analysis undertaken by UNDP in 2019 found three areas requiring attention: 1) quality of political leadership; 2) stagnation in the economy, governance and social services; and 3) possibilities to coalesce for change. Opportunities to interact across ethnic lines are limited, particularly impacted by language barriers. There are also vastly different perceptions of the situation leading to differing narratives shared with younger generations which, in turn, polarise communities. Yet, there are areas of commonality (security and prosperity through long-term investments in governance and rule of law, improved service delivery, economic opportunities, and citizen engagement). UN experience shows that, when given the opportunity to participate in language courses, many participants report improved social interactions among communities and even increased work opportunities. Young people in particular respond positively to opportunities for interaction. Efforts to foster social cohesion, address vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience are vital to Kosovo and its future.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Poverty is linked to deprivation in health, development and education outcomes. Although often associated with violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, poverty can also heighten risk of violations of civil and political rights. Despite Kosovo's economic growth over the past decade, there has not been robust job creation in the private sector, making it difficult, especially for the young, to earn a decent living. With 25.7 per cent unemployment in 2019 (highest among women, youth and certain non-majority groups), 18 per cent of the population lives below the absolute consumption poverty line (1.85 Euros per day in 2017 prices), with 21.6 per cent in poverty and 5.1 per cent in extreme poverty, with inhabitants of rural areas, female-led households and children disproportionately affected. Children experience high poverty (23 per cent) and households with three or more children face 26.3 per cent poverty and 8 per cent extreme poverty. Children living in poorer households are over two times less likely to reach their first and fifth birthdays than children in the richest 40 per cent of Kosovo's households. Rural populations have a higher rate of illiteracy (twice that of urban areas, especially women), fewer economic opportunities, and limited access to the Internet, public utilities (drinking water; sewage systems) and public transport.

The ability of Kosovo's social protection system to absorb the needs of the most vulnerable is limited. Social services, decentralised at the municipal level, suffer from a lack of sustainable funding, low quality services and poor linkages with other sectors for social inclusion. Categorical and exclusionary filters in the eligibility process for the Social Assistance Scheme (SAS) mean the SAS only reached 10 per cent of all households and excluded nearly two-thirds at the bottom. In 2017, the SAS absorbed around 88 per cent of the budget for social assistance; yet, while overall spending on social assistance has increased over the past decade, relative spending on SAS has declined (with spending rising for pensions for the elderly and war veterans). Between 2009 and 2016, spending on SAS fell (19 per cent of total social protection spending to 8.13 per cent). In parallel, beneficiaries declined from over 40,000 households in 2005 to 26,000 in 2017. This decrease is contrary to the global trend and results in Kosovo's poor falling through the safety net. Kosovo aims to reform the SAS to eliminate discrimination in programme design, foster inclusion and reduce poverty. The pandemic may provide the impetus to further reforms, which should account for population projections (decreasing fertility, ageing populations) alongside demographic imbalances due to migration.

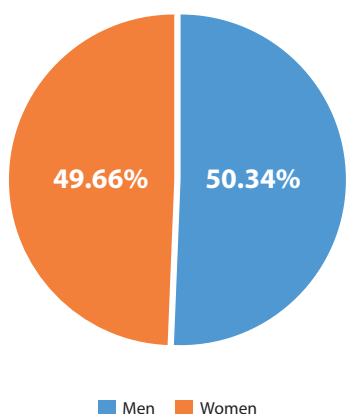
WHO IS LEFT BEHIND THE FURTHEST AND WHY?

At the intersection of factors related to discrimination, geography, governance, vulnerability to shocks, and socioeconomic situation analysed above, certain groups face multiple, reinforcing sources of deprivation and inequalities, rendering them more likely to be left behind across multiple dimensions of well-being. Certain categories of women, non-majority communities, children, people on the move, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ face vulnerabilities that place them at heightened risk to shock (as outlined further in Annex 1 below). Women, particularly women from non-majority communities, SGBV victims, older women, migrant women and women with disabilities, are under-represented in leadership roles, resulting in their voices going unheard in the policies and programming designed on behalf of the population more broadly. Non-majority women have limited education, nearly 80 per cent of women are unemployed, and less than 20 per cent own property. Violence against women is prevalent, as is early marriage in certain communities.

In the absence of strong social protection schemes, remittances from Kosovo's diaspora are vital. In 2019, Kosovo received 852 million Euros or approximately 15.8 per cent of the GDP (eight per cent of individual income in 2017). Remittances are expected to decline globally and in the region as the pandemic unfolds. A fall 2020 World Bank report found, however, that Kosovo was the only country in the region where remittances continued to grow during the pandemic, which cushioned the pandemic impact somewhat. Although authorities have acknowledged the importance of diaspora investments, capacity is needed to design effective policies for diaspora engagement in order to benefit the population.

COVID-19 has exacerbated vulnerability and risks increasing poverty and oppression faced by groups at risk. Health: Kosovo's health-care resources are stretched and vulnerable to a larger crisis or significant increase in critical cases. In addition, acute care services have been severely disrupted due to a diversion of resources and containment measures, which have reduced access, especially for those most vulnerable. Non-majority community members have reported being denied access to health facilities on the basis of their ethnicity and perceived heightened exposure. Measures taken to address the pandemic will need to include maintenance of basic services and the principle of non-discrimination. Employment: By May 2020, eight per cent had reported job loss (especially the informal sector) but few had received unemployment benefits or financial support; 56 per cent of businesses had closed; 31 per cent had reduced capacity; and 49 per cent (households) and 63 per cent (businesses) had experienced income or revenue loss. In addition, 37 per cent of women (29 per cent of men) had faced increased childcare responsibilities. Education: Schools were closed from 12 March to September 2020, impacting 345,000 children. Although the Ministry of Education implemented distance learning, four per cent of children missed lessons due to a lack of equipment or internet, adversely impacting their right to education. The education system was unprepared for e-teaching modalities, a gap filled by an online educational programme designed by private media outlets but that did not effectively reach marginalised groups. Students who lack access to distance learning, have difficulties keeping up, or are at risk of dropping out need to be identified. Girls from non-majority communities and those living in poverty had low school attendance rates prior to the pandemic, a trend likely worsening. Similarly, child marriages may lead to domestic violence, school dropouts and limited future employment opportunities. People on the move face a health crisis due to a lack of resources and poor living conditions, making it harder to follow distancing and hygiene recom

Population by gender (2011)



There is clear recognition for the need for greater participation of women in decision-making across Kosovo. Visit of Kosovo women leaders to EU institutions in Brussels (UN Women/2020)

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Non-majority communities, including K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian Serbs, face higher poverty and live predominantly in settlement communities with limited infrastructure and poor conditions. They also have limited access to education, face discrimination in employment, and suffer from child labour, early marriage, and violence. Children, particularly those in economically deprived households and those living with disabilities, experience high levels of school dropout, child labour, early marriage and violence, and may live on the street. People on the move face low education and high unemployment, often relying on social benefits. IDPs live in collective centres, informal settlements and makeshift shelters without access to public services. Persons with disabilities are largely excluded from public life and have limited access to education, employment and health care. LGBTIQ persons face heightened discrimination and violence.



COMMITMENTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

Although Kosovo cannot be a party to international human rights treaties, its Constitution foresees the applicability of related norms and proclaims human rights as the basis of the Kosovo legal order, recognising their indivisibility, inalienability, and inviolability and their precedence over Kosovo laws and other public acts in case of conflict. However, it does not establish the direct applicability of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), a gap partially filled by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including rights to social security, work, adequate standard of living, and education. The United Nations in Kosovo facilitates interactions between the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and Kosovo authorities. Since 2015, five mandate holders of the Special Procedures have visited Kosovo and issued recommendations to the Human Rights Council. However, limited progress has been achieved on the recommendations. Impartial and credible justice is one critical step towards sustainable reconciliation in Kosovo. War crime verdicts delivered by the international community between the end of the conflict (1999) and the end of EULEX's executive mandate (2018) are limited. In 2015, the hybrid Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecution Office (Kosovo Specialist Chambers) were established amid fierce political contestation to adjudicate allegations of serious crimes committed by members of

the Kosovo Liberation Army. Those questioned by the Chambers include high-profile politicians. To date, no trials have taken place; however, in an unprecedented move, the Specialist Prosecutor's Office announced on 24 June 2020 that it had charged Kosovo's President Hashim Thaçi, politician Kadri Veseli as well as other unnamed individuals with crimes against humanity and war crimes, including criminal responsibility for nearly 100 murders. Confirmation of the charges remains pending with a pre-trial judge (whose ruling is expected by October 2020). At the Kosovo level, the first indictment on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a war crime was filed in March 2020. Efforts to uphold rights to reparation and address the needs of CRSV survivors through a central commission have been encouraging and led to the granting of legal status as survivors for 785 of 1,226 applicants (758 women, 27 men as of March 2020), making them eligible for reparations. However, the process is not fully inclusive, as it excludes cases that occurred in the aftermath of the conflict. The absence of non-majority communities in the verification and compensation process is also of concern. Security incidents targeting non-majority returnee communities, especially K-Serb returnees and IDPs, also hinder relations. The Constitution declares Kosovo a secular territory, providing for freedom of thought, conscience and religion and prohibiting discrimination on religious grounds. Where seemingly ethnically motivated crimes are publicly condemned by politicians, reinforcement through local outreach activities could help ease inter-ethnic tensions and foster dialogue.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Politics in the Western Balkans remain influenced by ethno-nationalist parties and leaders who propagate divisive political agendas. Several regional and bilateral disputes remain, many related to border demarcation, war crimes jurisdiction and the interpretation of war history, the fate of missing persons, and ethnic minority rights. In addition to Kosovo, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains on the agenda of the Security Council. In 2020, European leaders agreed to open EU accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. In October 2020, the Commission adopted a €9 billion comprehensive Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, to spur the long-term economic recovery of the region and foster regional integration and convergence with the European Union. Diplomatic initiatives launched in recent years have supported progress in regional cooperation. The United Nations system has identified the lack of progress on reconciliation and of trust within and between states as possible threats to stability and prosperity in the region. Under the Secretary-General's prevention platform, the United Nations system adopted an Action Plan in support of dialogue, trust-building and reconciliation in the Western Balkans to enhance United Nations coordination and support in these areas.

The Western Balkans is emerging as a "warming hot spot." Economic growth is dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources, which invoke high costs for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Those not able to implement mitigation measures will bear the highest costs. A common regional response is lacking. Only some urban wastewater in the region is treated before being discharged in rivers and the sea. The Adriatic Sea and its coastline are polluted by plastic waste and other pollutants. Uncontrolled dumping is prevalent, and modern waste collection, recycling and sanitary landfills remain in early development. In 2019, the United Nations Environment Programme found air pollution responsible for one in five premature deaths in 19 Western Balkans cities, mainly due to emissions of thermal power plants that use lignite coal and household heating. Pollution across the Western Balkans threatens health, damages the economy, puts pressure on already strained economic resources and threatens the loss of resources.

The Western Balkans economies are closely integrated with the EU, as it is their largest trade partner and largest source of foreign investment and other financial flows (although declining in favour of China), including remittances. At the same time, most of the Western Balkans is experiencing population decline due to falling birth rates and increased emigration mainly by young people driven by high levels of unemployment, structural corruption, and ethnic-nationalist polarisation. One-third of the Western Balkans resident population is estimated to be living outside the region. The World Bank has noted that the loss of qualified workers and shortage of skills may adversely affect competitiveness, growth and economic convergence. Education often perpetuates the status quo when segregated along ethnic lines. Sustained and equitable growth is needed to create more jobs and to stabilise economies sustainably.



During the SDG Week 2020, the government building was lit with colors and icons of SDGs (UNDCO / 2020 / Sh.Qamili)

FINANCING LANDSCAPE AND OPPORTUNITIES

Kosovo enjoys lower labour costs compared to region and ranks 57th in the World Bank's Doing Business Ranking. Potential investors have been discouraged, however, by high levels of corruption and insufficient contract enforcement. For financial and technical assistance, Kosovo remains dependent on the international community (donor assistance approximately 10 per cent of GDP) and diaspora (remittances around 15.8 per cent of GDP). Nonetheless, Kosovo has made notable progress since 2015 ensuring fiscal discipline and strengthening the financial sector.

Banks remain healthy, credit growth increased, and Kosovo's economy has shown progress in transitioning to a market-based system and maintaining macroeconomic stability. The fiscal deficit has been kept well below two per cent of the GDP (budget balance rule ceiling), government bank balances are above the minimum level of 4.5 per cent of GDP, and public debt is low, enabling increased public debt in support of measures in response to COVID-19.

Foreign Direct Investment

FDI originates mainly from Kosovo's diaspora. It is still considerably lower than in other transition countries in the region, owing mainly to low productivity, poor infrastructure and perceived unfavourable business climate. Since 2008, the share of FDI in financing Kosovo's current account deficit has been diminishing, with FDI levels fluctuating between 7–9 per cent of GDP. In 2018, FDI stood at 213.7 million Euros.

Domestic Incentives and Landscape: Public and Private Finance

Public institutions continue to use domestic debt to finance deficit, due to the lack of an alternative growth model to foreign credit. The private sector could support Kosovo's economic growth and channel investments and funding towards sustainable development and SDGs. Kosovo needs more and larger companies, vibrant SMEs and a business environment that allows for growth and expanded output, employment and exports. SMEs account for 99.9 per cent of all companies, generate 81 per cent of total value added and account for 76.2 per cent of total employment with a per capita GDP of 4,108 US Dollars. Of the 20,783 active businesses registered in 2019, 11 per cent were owned by women, predominantly in the MSME sector. A wider range of financing instruments is needed to boost lending to businesses.

Kosovo Budget Allocations

The budget is the only public financing instrument for Kosovo. It has proven sustainable in recent years with a continued increase in tax revenues and expenditure ceilings due to economic growth. On 8 August 2020, a revised budget was promulgated, including a COVID-19 economic recovery package of 190 million Euros (2.8 per

cent of GDP) and with revenues about 13.8 per cent (232 million Euros) lower than in the 2020 budget approved in March. Within the budget, poorly targeted social protection spending remains high and continues to limit fiscal space. Although the Law on Gender Equality explicitly obliges budget institutions to apply gender responsive planning, implementation remains unsatisfactory and secondary legislation institutionalising gender-responsive budgeting is still pending. Altogether, a better structure of spending to support more robust economic development and vulnerable groups is needed.

Alternative Finance

There is little evidence of the use of alternative finance in Kosovo (Impact Investing; Impact Bonds; equity-based crowdfunding; forecast-based financial mechanism; Microfinance; Debt-for-nature Swaps; Islamic Finance). The International Finance Corporation is supporting development of agricultural insurance against weather shocks. Such instruments present opportunities to leverage SDG financing and it could be interesting to explore potential of the Human-Centred Business Model (HCBM) in Kosovo.

Forecasts for Potential SDG Finance Sources for Kosovo

Multilateral development financing has grown, and multilateral development banks have begun to strengthen their collaboration. Integrated reporting on the environmental, social and governance impacts of their lending would support ongoing efforts to mainstream SDG considerations in all operations. Unfortunately, the global economic recession and financial turmoil from COVID-19 are derailing achievement of the SDGs and implementation of the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which provides a global framework to finance sustainable development. Kosovo needs a more forward-looking, comprehensive approach with longer-term objectives and public financial planning.

To combat inequality, central policies must address the falling wage share, growing vulnerabilities, digitalisation and increasing market concentration. Kosovo should adjust policies to new (data-driven) realities and revisit its labour market policies, social protection systems, fiscal, competition and trade policies, and financial sector regulations and strategies to ensure alignment with new realities.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

In addition to the anticipated widespread socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, intermediate to high key risks and trends that may continue to hamper overall progress in the immediate to medium-term are:

Political:

- Slow progress on EU integration may affect Kosovo's relations with the EU.
- Slow progress in normalisation of relations with Belgrade could trigger renewed and long-term political instability in Kosovo and could increase polarisation within Kosovo and mistrust among ethnic-groups.
- Indictments by Kosovo Specialist Chambers could create inter-community tension, polarisation in society and media, weakening of the government and possible instability, and negatively affect the Dialogue.

Government and Legal:

- The government reform programme may be derailed by increased political polarisation and instability related to potential coalition disagreements on internal and external policies.
- Limited progress in the rule of law agenda may affect the ability of the government to deliver on its promises to fight corruption, leading to popular disillusionment and discontent.
- Political and social exclusion could further marginalise key segments of society, including women and youth.

Economy:

- Economic growth may be lower than expected, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the government's ability to deliver on reforming the health and educational systems.

Demographics:

- As a result of potential visa liberalisation for Kosovo, net emigration of younger and higher-skilled workers may continue, weakening growth prospects and demographics.

ANNEX 1: THE STATUS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN KOSOVO

Persons Left Behind	Challenges	Measures Taken and Suggested Next Steps
<p>Non-majority communities</p> <p>(K-Roma, K- Ashkali and K- Egyptian; K-Serbs; and others)</p>	<p>Poverty: Higher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing: Many live in settlements (poor infrastructure, dire conditions, sometimes informal). Discrimination in obtaining documentation deters access to housing services for returnees. • Child labour: Prevalent in some communities • Early marriage: Prevalent in some communities • Mortality and malnutrition: High in some communities • Violence: Prevalent in some communities • Education: Low access for some communities. No curricula, textbooks, materials for non-Albanian speaking students. Parallel education systems perpetuate divisions. • Employment: Discriminatory practices • Birth registration: Lower • Health: K-Roma, K-Ashkali, K- Egyptians display less health-seeking behaviour; K-Serbs use health services in Serbia, hindering timely access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration strategy and plan: in place • Efforts taken for late birth registration • Law on Education: equal educational opportunities; right to be taught in native language through secondary level • CoE Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) issued Fourth Opinion on Kosovo, noting moderate progress (2016). CoE Committee of Ministers adopted resolution for FCPNM implementation. • Law on Freedom of Religion: Amendments are needed to reflect recommendations of international bodies (e.g. Venice Commission).
<p>Women and girls</p> <p>Most Left Behind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women from non-majority-communities • SGBV victims • Older women • Migrant women • Women with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchal values and discrimination • Under-representation in leadership: Women hold few seats, silencing their voices, especially of minority women. • Low education: Non-majority women have lowest education due to: lack of registration; no teachers/textbooks in their languages; discrimination; scarce finances; early marriage; household obligations. Dropout furthers isolation. • High unemployment: Only 21.1% of women (v. 59.7% of men) are employed due to: low salaries; care duties; norms • Limited property/inheritance: Women own 20% of properties • Child and early marriage: Prevalent • SGBV: Prevalent. Domestic violence grew with COVID-19; support declined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience to shocks: Consider how gender influences vulnerability. • Gender equality: CSOs, in particular women's organizations, are critical in promoting gender equality, advocating against gender-based discrimination, mobilising the government to implement international normative standards, and ensuring the perspectives and voices of minority and marginalised women are heard and incorporated into policy. • SGBV: Improve tracking and reporting on DV/GBV incidents, coordination, and sustainable funding commitments. Ensure accessibility of services (language; transport) for non-majority women.
<p>Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal, neonatal and child health services: Low quality <p><i>Note: 1/4 children (<18 years) is deprived in at last who dimensions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour: All forms of forced or compulsory labour are prohibited but compliance, victim identification and protection, and investigation are not effective.

Persons Left Behind	Challenges	Measures Taken and Suggested Next Steps
<p>Children</p> <p>Most Left Behind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children living in economically deprived households • Children living with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: School dropout: High. Fewer rural children complete lower secondary education. • Child labour: 10.7% of children (17% of non-majority children) 6.6% hazardous/exploitative labour • Street children: Pushed into streets by economic hardship. 74% do not attend school at all, 26% only occasionally • Early marriage: 12% of children, mostly girls, married at 15 years (2018) • Violence: 61% of children (0—14 years) have suffered violence (30% of all children; 40% of non-majority children) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child labour: All forms of forced or compulsory labour are prohibited but compliance, victim identification and protection, and investigation are not effective. Law on Child Protection (2019) aims to ensure a well-coordinated child protection system to improve the prevention of, and response to, all related forms of violence and exploitation. • Prioritise child rights. • Prioritise inclusion of non-majority children in the education system. • Strengthen the labour inspectorate and Centres for Social Welfare. • Fund human trafficking shelters.
<p>People on the Move</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment: Surveyed IDPs: 2017: 47% unemployment; 29% of households rely on social benefits as primary income. 2018: 92% K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian female IDPs were jobless Employment initiatives target residents. • Education: IDPs: Few secondary diplomas. K-Roma, K-Ashkali, K-Egyptian IDPs: High illiteracy, no formal education • Housing: IDPs: collective centres, informal settlements, makeshift shelters, no access to public services • Documentation: IDPs: lack proof of citizenship, residence or legal tenure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a holistic, participatory process to understand the intentions and needs of the displaced and receiving/host communities and to seek solutions to displacement, strengthen resilience and limit vulnerability to conflict.
<p>Persons with disabilities, especially children and youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Life: Largely excluded • Education: Limited access: Lack of specialised staff, transportation, infrastructure, inclusive education policy/legislation. NGOs meet gaps but this is not sustainable or systematic. • Health: Limited access to health care and rehabilitation services; staff are rarely educated/trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise persons with disabilities in development agenda. Reduce stigma and discrimination. Develop human rights-based reforms (inclusive education, accessible infrastructure, support for independent living, deinstitutionalisation) • Train teachers and assistants • Develop policies and adapted early warning systems to reduce vulnerabilities
<p>LGBTIQ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence: Criminal assaults against LGBTIQ people are rarely investigated and prosecuted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution and legal framework prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and address legal gaps on LGBTIQ rights • Awareness-raising: Pride parades (2017, 2018, 2019) had support of Kosovo Police

ANNEX 2: CROSS-SECTORAL LINKAGES BETWEEN SDG GOALS AND TARGETS

1 NO POVERTY

- Extreme poverty remains evident (as much as 8.1 per cent). Key root causes include: lack of governmental strategy; and unreformed SAS. Feminisation of poverty is linked to high unemployment among women and many women in the informal sector.
- IDPs face severe living conditions in collective housing. IDPs also contend with a lack of engagement by central and municipal structures to provide sustainable housing and exclusion from education and labour markets.
- Economic growth (4.1 per cent) has not yielded job creation or decreased unemployment. Kosovo remains the third poorest in Europe with a GDP of 10,400 US Dollars per capita.
- Unemployment is particularly worrisome among the young and low-skilled workers.
- Of annual household income, 30 per cent is spent on housing and 43 per cent on food.
- Access to property is not yet gender equal, placing women behind in relation to SDG 1.4.
- Absolute poverty (SDG 1.2) and extreme poverty (SDG 1.1) declined significantly during the period 2011—2017.

2 ZERO HUNGER

- Significant exposure to Food Nutrition Security risks arise from poverty and high unemployment coinciding with low income, high food expenditure (total consumption), high dependency on remittances, and sharp agricultural and food trade deficits.
- Institutional capacities are insufficient to implement policies and strategies on food, trade, agricultural, and food safety net policies.
- No data is available to present a measurable indicator.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Only 3.3 per cent of GDP is invested in the health sector, resulting in low-quality health care.
- Overall health conditions in Kosovo are reportedly poorer compared to those in the region.
- Infant mortality (12 deaths per 1,000 live births) is nearly three times that of EU countries.
- Limited implementation of laws/policies; poor coordination between sectors and between central and municipal authorities; severe limitations in data collection; limited reporting/inaccurate data.
- Limited access to health care for persons living in rural areas; population tends to bypass family medicine centres and directly seek out specialist sexual and reproductive health care.
- Weak monitoring and accountability, including illegal practices (e.g. clandestine abortion), and limited implementation of related policies.
- Poor health-care services for women and girls with disabilities; health professionals are rarely educated on how to provide care to them.
- Health is not cited in the NDS. As such, there is no available data on the achievement of indicators. SDG target 3.1: Current data on maternal deaths make it difficult to assess the maternal mortality rate. SDG 3.8 is not measurable due to a lack of law on universal health coverage. SDG 3.9 is addressed through the Law on Tobacco, which lacks an effective monitoring mechanism.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



- 4.7 per cent of the GDP is allotted to education (versus average 26 per cent in developed countries).
- Parallel educational systems, divided along ethnic lines between K-Albanians and K-Serbs, result in differing approaches to education.
- Lack of infrastructure, poor teacher performance and limited training budget, inappropriate teaching materials, and lack of quality assurance mechanisms impact education quality.
- Kosovo has ranked consistently at the lowest level of achievement in Europe (PISA).
- Institutions have not prioritised Early Childhood Development and Education.
- The number of graduates does not correspond with demand: In 2016/2017, around 14,000 students graduated, of whom the private sector contributed around 35 per cent.
- K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities have limited access to education due to patriarchal values and gender stereotypes.
- Preschool enrolment has been consistently low (36 per cent in 2017) (SDG 4.2). The latest data shows a positive trend towards increased preschool and pre-primary enrolment.
- Kosovo has shown variable achievement of three targets (4.1, 4.2, 4.c), with progress on some and advanced progress on others. Data is still missing on the third indicator.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



- Despite robust, advanced legislation on gender equality, there is a lack of implementation.
- Gender-based discrimination impacts access to services, decision-making, economy and judiciary.
- Transitional justice and justice for women victims of sexual and other forms of violence has not reached most survivors mainly due to social and cultural stigma and low prioritisation.
- The labour market is male-dominated, excluding 80 per cent of women from employment.
- SGBV (domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, sexual harassment) persists in Kosovo.
- Women are not well represented in political decision-making and senior government roles.
- Women comprise 52.1 per cent of people with a university degree (versus 47.9 per cent of men) but only 12.7 per cent of the employed (versus 46.6 per cent of men).
- Kosovo has fully achieved target 5.a under the gender equality SDG, although unequal access to property between women and men hinders SDG 5A.
- Data is not available for the rest of the indicators.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



- Kosovo faces water scarcity and one of the lowest water resource development and storage levels in the region.
- Kosovo is increasingly vulnerable to flooding and dry spells.
- There is an urgent need to build on strengths of the water supply sector and transition to wastewater treatment, while improving service delivery in irrigation.
- Water resources are poorly managed. Kosovo's institutional capacity to deliver on mandates and integrated water resource planning is weak and its enforcement of plans and rules are haphazard.
- 40—55 per cent of water wells are contaminated bacteriologically.
- About 90 per cent of the population were estimated to be connected to the public water system, including in rural areas, while up to 10 per cent have no access to water or independent water supplies.
- Target 6.1 has seen some progress.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



- Kosovo relies on energy production from coal which contributes to environmental hazards.
- Power plants produce 98 per cent of energy and contribute to various pollutants in the air.
- Environmental considerations are integrated into sectoral policies and legislation but marginally.
- Rural areas face constant power outages and an unstable energy supply.
- The electricity system is outdated, inadequate and undependable. However, Kosovo is at an early stage in focusing on energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Underdeveloped regulatory regime and lack of complete and reliable resource data.
- The NDS aim of a 192-hour per year reduction of power outage has been achieved.
- SDG target 7.1 has yet to be met while, for SDG target 7.2, there is no available data, although Kosovo has planned an auction for wind power supported by EBRD.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



- Kosovo faces high unemployment. Economic growth (4.1 per cent) has not coincided with robust job creation in the private sector.
- Job opportunities are lacking, especially for young people, leading to migration and a corresponding loss of human capital. Yet, measures are not in place to address this issue.
- The informal sector is comprised of one-third of Kosovo's workers, among the most in Europe. Yet, informal jobs are insecure and exclude workers from many benefits.
- Women's low participation in the labour market is attributed to: low salaries; limited access to child and elderly care; lack of family-friendly schedules; high cost of maternity leave for employers; patriarchal social norms and discrimination.
- Migration among youth has declined considerably since 2016. Still, concerns persist that young people will leave Kosovo due to poor governance.
- SDG 8 shows limited progress on the majority of targets; there is no progress on the rest.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 96 per cent of Kosovo households are connected to the Internet.
- 81 per cent of the surveyed population use the Internet daily.
- Public expenditure on infrastructure is higher than expenditure on innovation and human capital.
- Globally, Kosovo ranks 150 th in industry (mineral mining, construction materials, base metals, leather, machinery, appliances, food/beverages, textiles).
- The annual percentage of growth in industrial production is estimated at just 1.2 per cent.
- Private sector incentives (industry production) are vital to boost economic development.
- Most of the processing industry was destroyed by the conflict. Investments are lacking.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



- Diaspora capital remains underutilised and is currently used mainly for consumption.
- Kosovo lacks innovative policies, which could have stimulated or boosted exports and attracted greater foreign investment. FDI inflows (2012—2014) were the lowest in the SEE region with the record low (2014) having decreased by 72 per cent (compared to 2013).
- Consistently weak rule of law and high corruption contributed to a sharp decline of FDI.
- Income gaps and inequalities disadvantage women.
- Gender gaps in employment (27.5 percent among 15–64-year-olds) are driven by gaps in labour force participation (38.6 percent in 2015): low participation of women (18.1 per cent) and high proportion of women who are economically inactive (81.9 per cent versus 43.3 per cent for men).
- Kosovo has the widest gender gap in labour force participation in the Western Balkans.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



- Since 1999, rapid development has increased urbanisation, and resulted in uncontrolled growth in urban areas, a loss of agricultural land, infrastructure overload, traffic congestion, increased mileage and carbon emissions, and pollution and related health impacts.
- Construction without a permit is considered “dead capital”, since such construction cannot be registered in the cadastre, nor legally transferred, used or put as a mortgage collateral.
- Increased migration (rural to urban and abroad) by educated young people has decreased the rural population under 15 by 10.8 per cent; people over 64 years increased 20.7 per cent (2012—2017).
- Urbanisation has been chaotic due to a lack of data for planning and budgets.
- Evident gaps in the rural-urban partnership can serve as a basis for spatial planning.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



- Extremely limited data renders it difficult to analyse trends effectively.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



- Kosovo committed to address climate challenges (Strategy and Action Plan for Climate Change), in support of environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation. Its Climate Change Strategy (2019—2028) shows its climate change mitigation/adaptation and sustainable development plans.
- Kosovo suffers from environmental pollution (especially air) and the degradation of natural resources, each of which severely affects livelihood opportunities and public health.
- The transition to a green economy, based on existing plans, has been slow.
- Kosovo is not signatory to international environmental conventions (e.g. United Nations Framework Climate Change Convention and Paris Agreement). Access to funding mechanisms (e.g. GEF and its Small Grants Programme and GCF) is limited.
- Most rivers are polluted, 74—90 per cent of wells are contaminated, and contamination (bacteria) in the public water supply has been reported (National Institute of Public Health).
- Socioeconomic vulnerability may exacerbate the impact of climate change; the poor are disproportionately impacted due to limited capacity to alter habits or flee unhealthy areas.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



- Not applicable to Kosovo.

15 LIFE ON LAND



- There is a high risk of biodiversity degradation due to the lack of human capacities to control and mitigate risks from illegal logging and other illegal activities (hunting, urbanisation/spatial planning).
- Municipal capacity and central policies to protect forests and agricultural land need to be increased.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



- Only three of 14 indicators have available data.
- Existing mechanisms for coordination and implementation of human rights are ineffective.
- Necessary legal frameworks are in place and meet the highest EU standards, but local institutions struggle to ensure respect for human rights.
- The effectiveness of institutions in prosecuting and sentencing on SGBV cases is questioned.
- Corruption has undermined Kosovo's institutional work.
- 68.8 per cent views non-merit factors (bribes, party alliances, friend/family connections) as factors in gaining employment in public institutions (UNDP Public Pulse 2019).

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



- There is a lack of domestic resource mobilisation to improve tax and other revenue collection.
- Partnerships with cultural festivals (e.g. DokuFest, Anibar) have been pursued to promote SDGs.
- Limited partnership with the private sector is evident and could benefit SDG promotion.

ANNEX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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