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LNOB Social Mapping Report

Municipality of Lushnja

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Report on LNOB Social Mapping in Municipality of Lushnja



Social Mapping Results Report:

Social mapping for identification of needs for Children with Disabilities in the municipality of Lushnja

Municipality of Lushnja / Gender Alliance for Development Centre
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1. Executive summary

This report examines the situation of children with disabilities in the municipality of Lushnja through the methodology of Social Mapping. The main goal of the social mapping is to contribute to the documentation of the needs for social and health services that the children with disabilities have in the municipality of Lushnja. By providing appropriate services, the efforts are aimed at strengthening social cohesion at local level building social inclusion by improving the quality of citizens life.

A new National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (PKVPAK) 2021-2025¹, is guiding the National policies as an inter-sectoral document of the Albanian government that includes policies dedicated to persons with disabilities that will be implemented over the next 5 years. The municipalities, according to the Law 139/2015, on local self – government², have jurisdiction in the field of social and child protection, and they are obliged to undertake measures to provide social protection to vulnerable persons. Municipalities are responsible for creation and administration of social services at local level for persons with disabilities, single mothers, abused women, victims of traffic, the elderly in the manner prescribed by law, construction and administration of social houses, centres, for the provision of local social services, establishment in cooperation with line Ministries responsible for social welfare of the social fund for financing of the services in the manner prescribed by law.

However, municipalities need help to overcome difficulties in realizing a social mapping exercise for a certain target group. The Social Mapping conducted will pave the way of Municipality staff to apply this methodology for other target groups in the future and fulfil the obligations that derives from the 2030 Agenda and its 17 development goals, and especially the overarching “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB) principle, which actually enjoys little attention among relevant state authorities and is progressing sluggishly.

Main findings:

- Out of 187 children with disabilities, 118 of them live in rural administrative units, and a considerable part of them in villages with very few houses where the number of inhabitants does not exceed 100. It is precisely this category that lives in remote areas, which have the most shortages in terms of hospitals or other services and are further left behind.
- More than 50% of these families depends on the social assistance due to the disability of their children and in almost 99% of cases one of the parents does not work because the parent takes care of the child, and usually the caregiver parent is the mother.
- 70% of the respondents live on the below the average wage

¹ Ministry of Health and Social Protection 2021. *National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025*. Online: <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/333>

² Official Publishing Centre. *Law No. 139/2015 On Local Self-Government*. Online: https://qbz.gov.al/share/KJE20lswSs6DI_qmEC9geA



- According to focus groups with parents of children with disabilities, this category is often discriminated against, in hospitals, on public transport, at school or even in society.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has physically and mentally affected this category. Fear of deteriorating child health, isolation, lack of finances has exacerbated the situation in these families.
- In Lushnja municipality there is only one centre for children with disabilities, called Development centre for children with disabilities. This is a day centre which offers services for children with disabilities of different age groups ranging from 2 to 16 years and operates five days a week from Monday to Friday.
- Only 8% of parents of children with disabilities are registered in the employment office while the unemployment rate is quite high for these parents.
- The identified children face many problems in learning due to the lack of professional assistant teachers.
- Lack of proper logistic of the transportation.
- There is lack of patronage services.
- Out of 44 middle and high schools in the whole municipality of Lushnja, only 16 of them provide basic logistics for children with disabilities. And, this logistics has to do only with the construction of ramps.
- There is a lack of home services for children with disabilities, especially those who live in remote rural areas.
- The Municipality of Lushnja has drafted the Social Plan 2021 - 2023 but currently it has not been implemented yet, due to lack of budgets
- 60% of respondents live on incomes below the legal minimum wage.
- 13.5% of the respondents suffered hunger several times (2-3 times).
- 77.8% of homes of the respondents meet the basic living conditions, while 7.1% of the respondents' homes does not meet the basic living conditions and 13.5%.
- 81.7% of the respondent's home lacks adequate access for the children with disabilities.
- In 43.7% of the cases, it is the mother who helps the child with the daily activities.
- 53.2% of the respondents have stated that their child need home care and that they would like someone to visit him/her.
- The majority of the respondents (60.3%) during Social Mapping have claimed that their child does not receive personal assistance service.
- There are no clubs in the municipality that provide socializing, entertainment and recreation for children with disabilities.
- There is no institution in the municipality of Lushnja that provides professional care and support for food, clothing and health care if a child does not have the conditions for independent living;
- The municipality does not have an SOS telephone number, but they have distributed the personal numbers of specialists and employees of the Social Service or Development centre for children with disabilities The Municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group, or financial compensation, and many parents more often skip medical visits of children when they were outside of the administrative unit;



- Many parents had very little information regarding the services provided in the municipality of Lushnja for their children with disabilities.
- During the COVID-19 the children with disabilities did not receive additional financial assistance from the state but food packages from the municipality.
- Parents with children 0-6 years old cannot take their children to nursery or kindergarten because the law does not provide for a supportive teacher or educator, and for this reason they are obliged to keep them at home.

2. Target group(s) of the Social Mapping

During the preparation of the concept note, Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC) has organized several coordinative meetings and interviews with representatives of the municipality of Lushnja, and has also done desk research and reviewed the Social Plan³ of this municipality, budget items, issues raised and lack of services. The National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025⁴ was reviewed and based on the preliminary data and local and national problems it was decided that this social mapping should be performed for **children with disabilities in this municipality**.

The aim of this Social Mapping is to improve the life and quality of services of children with disabilities in Lushnja municipality, to lead to changes in strategic and practical action towards inclusion. Also, to strengthen services of providers and children with disabilities to receive the necessary support from their family/community environment or/and municipality to attend school regularly (no early drop-outs!).

According to preliminary data in the municipality of Lushnja there are 187 children with disabilities of which 87 girls and 100 boys.

The Municipality of Lushnja did not have the financial and human opportunity to carry out this type of study in depth, so this study is a necessity to improve the following issues:

- Lack of infrastructure in several institution for children with disabilities.
- Lack of the transport to school, space and the right place to have access to school facilities.
- The means of transport do not meet the logistical needs of this target group
- Transport to go to the Development centre for children with disabilities (PAK centre) to get the services the target group's needs,
- PAK centre offers services until the age of 16 years old, creating a problem for the lack of services for 16+ target group.
- Lack of support teachers is a problem raised by many parents, causing many children not to attend school or to lag far behind with lessons.
- Lack of tools needed in school for different categories of children with disabilities.
- Discrimination – this target group is faced every day with insults, non-acceptance in common environments, non-involvement in various activities.

³ Social Plan of the Area - Municipality of Lushnja 2021-2023

⁴ Ministry of Health and Social Protection 2021. *National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025*.

Online: <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/333>



- Lack of a social centre for this target group
- Lack of specialised health care.
- Quite low economic income of families of children with disabilities, sometimes up to the poverty line.

2.1. Explanation why the targeted population(s) is LNOB group

According to a national study⁵ it is identified that children and young people with disabilities in the country face discrimination, economic and educational hardship, and a lack of necessary services. The main problems identified from the above-mentioned studies are:

- Dissatisfaction with the infrastructural conditions of the educational institutions and their distance;
- Dissatisfaction with the child's progress in school, the level of adaptation of teaching as well as the level of respect shown by the educational staff;
- Unaffordable necessary expenses that enable children to attend educational institutions, etc.
- High discrimination;
- Widespread underestimation of the abilities and potential of children with disabilities.
- Lack of knowledge of parents/legal guardian on how they can benefit from the social scheme.

The pledge to leave no one behind is a commitment to end extreme poverty in all of its forms and to act explicitly to ensure that those who have been left behind can catch up to those who have experienced greater progress. Children with disabilities and their families are struggling not only because of their disabilities but also for living a life out of poverty, lacking a social life and community support.

LNOB factor geography: Out of 187 children with disabilities, according to preliminary data, 118 of them live in rural administrative units, and a considerable part of them in villages with very few houses where the number of inhabitants does not exceed 100. It is precisely this category that lives in remote areas, which have the most shortages in terms of hospitals or other services.

LNOB factor socio-economic status: While the economic status of the families of this target group is below the average level for a decent living. According to preliminary interviews, more than 50% of these families live on social assistance due to the disability of their children and in almost 99% of cases one of the parents does not work because the parent takes care of the child, and usually the caregiver parent is the mother. Taking care of children, mothers have no opportunity to work, no opportunity for time for themselves, and are available to children 24/7. Also, out of 187 families who have children with disabilities, only 50 of them receive financial assistance from the state as personal assistant.

⁵ World Vision and Save the Children.2018. *Disability among children in Albania: Prevalence of disability, access to services and quality of services*. Online: https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/PV%20FINAL_ALB.pdf



LNOB factor Discrimination: According to focus groups with parents of children with disabilities, this category is often discriminated against, in hospitals, on public transport, at school or even in society. As specialized services in hospitals are lacking for different types of disabilities, parents are often confronted with discriminatory behaviour by medical staff who follow them without much explanation. Lack of proper public transport logistics, facing parents with difficulties and discrimination by other passengers or drivers.

LNOB factor Vulnerability to shocks: The COVID-19 pandemic has physically and mentally affected this category. Fear of deteriorating child health, isolation, lack of finances has exacerbated the situation in these families. Another aspect that aggravates these families are the natural floods that occur in these areas and as a result cause damage to the crops of these families, which in many cases are their first financial source.

LNOB factor Governance: Parents and guardians of children with disabilities do not meet with each other on a regular basis. There are very few cases when they participate in public hearings organized by the municipality of Lushnja, even in cases when it comes to the interests of this target group. In many cases, they do not even have information about what is being organized or discussed.

The municipalities, according to the on local self – government, have jurisdiction in the field of social and child protection, and they are obliged to undertake measures to provide social protection to vulnerable persons, also the municipalities are responsible for the creation and administration of social services at the local level for persons with disabilities, single mothers, abused women, victims of traffic, the elderly in the manner prescribed by law, construction and administration of social houses, centres, for the provision of local social services, establishment in cooperation with line Ministries responsible for social welfare of the social fund for financing of the services in the manner prescribed by law. However, municipalities need help to overcome difficulties in realizing a social mapping exercise for a certain target group. The social mapping that was conducted during the implementation of this action, will pave the way of Municipality staff to apply this methodology for other target groups in the future and fulfil the obligations that derives from the 2030 Agenda and its 17 development goals, and especially the overarching “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB) principle, which actually enjoys little attention among relevant state authorities and is progressing sluggishly. Social Mapping will help this municipality to analyse the situation, for more in-depth social plans with relevant budgets which will consequently lead to better governance for this target group.

2.2. Summary of the consultations with the municipal officials and other stakeholders

GADC has organized several meetings and in-depth interviews with the municipality of Lushnja representatives where it was concluded that children with disabilities and their families constantly experience barriers to the enjoyment of their basic human rights and to their inclusion in society.

The municipality of Lushnja offers disability assistance set by the Medical Commission for Assignment of Work Ability which is paid for children with disabilities through a conditional fund of the Government of Albania, and the municipality administers its distribution. The



payment that these families receive is quite low and often not enough to cover the expenses for medicines or other specialized services that are not provided in Lushnja.

In Lushnja municipality there is only one centre for children with disabilities (Development centre for children with disabilities – PAK centre). This is a day centre which offers services for children with disabilities of different age groups ranging from 2 to 16 years and operates five days a week from Monday to Friday. The function of which is foreseen in the budget of the Municipality of Lushnja with a total fund of 119,160 EUR/ year (14,366,000⁶ ALL/year.) In this centre work 4 psychologists, 2 physiotherapists, 2 speech therapists, 2 specialists of special pedagogy as well as the support staff.

The assumption is that after the after socio-economic analysis, the municipality of Lushnja will review the budgets for specialized services within its territory and the government will review the monthly payment for this category.

According to the meetings and focus groups conducted, only 8% of parents of children with disabilities are registered in the employment office while the unemployment rate is quite high for these parents.

The identified children also face many problems in learning due to the lack of professional assistant teachers, lack of proper transport, lack of basic services at the local level, families have low economic incomes and as a result, cannot receive services for children outside the municipality of Lushnja. Parents of these children have to take care of them on an ongoing basis as patronage services are lacking, resulting in very low economic income in the family. The municipality of Lushnja has no other opportunities to identify any problems, and the Social Mapping derived from this study, will guide it to identify problems and set priorities and their social or general plans, accompanying them with relevant budgets.

Children with disabilities are a very sensitive category, vulnerable and needs a lot of attention. Also, this category has been less involved in social services due to the payment they receive from the state budget related to their disabilities. This category needs to be supported continuously with psychological counselling services and in kind such as: food, clothes, medicines, logistics etc.

Due to the close collaboration with Lushnja municipality the following initial assumptions and perceptions were described for this collaboration:

- Staff from Lushnja Municipality are willing to collaborate and receive the knowledge, however the risk that these people might be transferred to other departments or authorities is high.
- Continued good cooperation and interest from Lushnja Municipality to make significative changes for people with disabilities.
- Children with disabilities and their families are willing to collaborate and will inform sincerely during the focus groups discussion and during face-to-face interviews.
- Officials assigned to collaborate with GADC will change their mind-set and act after capacity building activities.

⁶ Exchange rate by National Bank of Albania



- Social mapping is successful and lead to changes in strategic and practical action towards inclusion.

2.3. Summary of the secondary data analysis

According to the official data of the municipality of Lushnja, in 2021 the total budget for financial assistance for the children with disabilities and their assistant was 203,494 EUR (24,533,244 ALL). From 187 families, only 50 of them benefit the economic aid for personal assistance.

The Medical Commission for Determining the Ability to Work for the Disabled (KMCAPİ) is a medical and legal body that bases its activity on the provisions of law no. 7703, dated 11.5.1993 "On Social Insurance in the Republic of Albania" and on the medical criteria of determining the ability to work of the sick and disabled. It determines the degree of loss of ability of the disabled to work and the paths to be followed for his physical and professional rehabilitation. When the person with disabilities, in this case children with disabilities, who by the decision of this medical commission, is determined to need care, then and only then receives monthly financial assistance for their assistant too. This depends on the category assigned to each of the children with disabilities by this commission. Most children with disabilities in this municipality are categorized as part of the first category that does not include financial payments for caregivers.

If we analyse the monthly payment for each of the children, it is an average of 91.2 EUR (11.000 ALL) per month, an amount which in the case of municipalities which do not have many services for this category, is quite low and the need for bigger support whether financial, in kind or with specialized services is quite high.

Parents of children with disabilities are forced to stay at home and offer care for them, as there is a lack of proper day or residential centres, lack of patronage services, etc. For this reason, the monthly economic income in these families is quite low, in the best cases a salary from one parent and in other cases they are families which rely only on the help they receive for the child. According to interviews with representatives of the local Labor Office, the number of parents of these children applying for work is relatively low.

Out of 44 middle and high schools in the whole municipality of Lushnja, only 16 of them provide basic logistics for children with disabilities. And, this logistics has to do only with the construction of ramps and only one high school in the city of Lushnja it is equipped with an elevator.

According to law 69/2012 amended⁷ "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania", the article 64 specifies that:

⁷ Ministry of Education and Sports. Law no. 69/2012 "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania" updated and Sub-Legal Acts in its Implementation



- The local educational institution, responsible for pre-university education, according to the criteria and procedures determined by a joint instruction of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health, **provides home education** to students who cannot attend a regular or specialized school of basic education.

But, this is not the case of children with disabilities in the municipality of Lushnja. According to the analysed data this target group in the school is assisted by supportive teachers during the school hours in the regular schools with all the other children. They usually stay 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon as the case may be, and the results are quite low in the learning of knowledge by children. In rural areas, further away from the city, there are no such teachers, or they are not permanent and their presence is often absent in classes where there are children with disabilities.. The above law does not provide support teachers for children attending nurseries or kindergartens (0-6 years old), and this fact was also emphasized during the interviews or focus groups organized near this municipality.

During the interviews, focus groups but also during the survey analysis, another gap is the environmental infrastructure which is quite poor and needs improvement, especially in rural areas. The specialized staff according to the specific needs of the cases that are treated in the only centre of the municipality is not enough and the number of children treated by this center is quite low compared to their total number in the whole municipality.

There is a lack of home services for children with disabilities, especially those who live in remote rural areas (according to the obligations arising from the law issued for home services for vulnerable groups, December 2016)

According to the interviews and fact check in the field, the entire municipality of Lushnja lacks the proper transport logistics for this category, whether it is public or private transport. Also, the municipality of Lushnja does not cover the cost of transportation in cases when children with disabilities have to travel to receive the necessary services. According to the interviews at the municipality of Lushnja, for related to the urban transport people with disabilities benefits a fund of 13,271 EUR (1,600,000 ALL.) This fund for 2021 is used 100% for transportation for people with disabilities in connection with the provision of disability booklets which are provided at the time of receiving the diagnosis. But, according to the interviews and focus groups with parents or guardians of children with disabilities, none of them have benefited from this fund. It is assumed that this fund is used for adults with disabilities, for the use of public transport free of charge, using the document of disability.

Red Cross - Lushnja Branch, provides assistance and support with food packages and clothing for poor and needy families, including families of children with disabilities. Usually the distribution of these packages is done once a year and their content is the basic food package for a family of 4-5 people, for 1 month. Three years ago, at the initiative of the Red Cross were sent mental development toys to the Social Center for Children with Disabilities, but since

Online <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Permbledhje-parauniversitari-8-Tetor-2020.pdf>



then there have been no budgets to send other. In February 2021, Red Cross distributed checks to 30 families in need in the municipality of Lushnja, where only 2 of them were families of children with disabilities. The value of the check was \$ 100.

3. Brief information about Municipality of Lushnja and policies at local level

Geographical Area: Following the territorial reform of the Republic of Albania in 2015 the new municipality of Lushnja is bordered on the north by the municipalities of Rrogozhina and Peqin, on the east by the municipality of Belsh, on the south by the municipalities of Fier and Roskovec, and on the west by the municipality of Divjaka. The center of the new municipality is the city of Lushnja.

The new municipality has under its administration a city and 85 villages. The area of the new municipality is 372.72 km². Lushnja is the most important agricultural area of Albania with crops, vegetables, melons and livestock products in the lowlands, as well as olives and vineyards in the hilly areas.

Lushnja is divided into 10 administrative units and 5 regions, of which 10 are rural and 5 regions are in urban areas.

The population: The Municipality of Lushnja, according to Institute of Statistics to the 2011 Census has a resident population of 83,659 people, while the Civil Registry shows a population of 127,438 people. According to the census, the population density is 244.7 inhabitants per km², while according to the civil registry the density is 341.91 inhabitants per km². According to statistics from the beginning of 2017, the majority of the population of this municipality lives in rural areas, 63% of it.

Health: The legal function of local government units extends only to the maintenance of primary care service infrastructure. The Regional Directorate of Health in Fier is the main institution which covers this area in the Municipality of Lushnja. The following services are currently offered by this directorate: 1. Epidemiology Service, 2. Medical Health Service, 3. Family Medicine Service, 4. Dentistry Service, 5. Psycho-Social and Mental Health Service.

Social Care: In the framework of Law no. 139/2015 on local self-government, the Municipality of Lushnja is charged, as well as other local government units, with a wide range of responsibilities and competencies in the field of social care services. Social care services include the provision of community social services, review and decision-making regarding custody procedures; as well as the management of residential services in specific cases. The legislation also sets out specific obligations for social service at the local level, including the establishment of gender focal points and the fight against domestic violence and Child Protection Units.

The Social Service Program provides social protection for groups in need provided through (i) cash payments of economic assistance and for persons with disabilities. This part of the program is fully funded; on the other hand, the Municipality plans every year a fund for groups in need that, for certain reasons, do not benefit from the central economic assistance scheme,



but which the Municipality deems necessary to support financially outside this scheme; for 2021 the fund that the Municipality of Lushnja has approved from its budget for social care is 287,213.33 EUR (34,626,440 ALL).

Part of the Social Service Program provides social housing with a fund which consists of planned operating expenses with a total of 33,178 EUR (4,000,000 ALL), expected expenses for renting the place for the elderly is a fund of 15,925 EUR (1,920,000 ALL), while for public transport benefiting persons with disabilities, the fund of 13,271 EUR (1,600,000 ALL) is unforeseen.

The budget of the municipality of Lushnja for children with disabilities and their guardian is: 203,494 EUR (24,533,244 ALL) for 2021⁸. This budget includes monthly payments received by children with disabilities and their assistants.

In the municipality of Lushnja, in 2021, only 2 children with disabilities were treated with economic assistance.

There are many problems encountered for different categories of children with disabilities, among these problems for blind children is underlined the lack of voice signals in public spaces, making it difficult for them to move, attend these spaces, institutions, etc. and consequently, isolating them from society. Also, the main problem for children with tetraplegic abilities is the lack of adequate infrastructure in schools, health centres and public spaces. The Municipality of Lushnja has drafted the Social Plan 2021 - 2023 but currently it has not been implemented yet, due to lack of budgets. This is also the reason that in most cases the Social Plans are drafted but remain on paper and not implemented precisely due to lack of funds and specification of items in the municipal budget.

4. Objectives of the Social Mapping

The overall objective of the Social Mapping is to contribute towards social inclusion of children with disabilities in the Municipality of Lushnja, improving the quality of life as well as fostering social cohesion at the local level by promoting the localization of Agenda 2030 and its objectives, in particular, the Leave no One Behind – LNOB principle at municipality of Lushnja level.

Outcome: Improve the life and quality of services of children with disabilities in Lushnja Municipality.

- Social mapping is successful and leads to changes in strategic and practical action towards inclusion.
- Service providers strengthen their pro-poor services.
- Children with disabilities receive the necessary support from their family/community environment, municipality to attend school regularly (no early drop-outs!)

⁸ Source: Municipality of Lushnja



Social Mapping will contribute to the LNOB principles and the directive for the municipality of Lushnja to the fulfilments of specific SDGs, for:

- a) Good health and well-being;
- b) Inclusive and quality education
- c) Reduction of inequalities;
- d) Sustainable cities and communities.

The research questions:

- **The socio – economic status of children with disabilities and their families?**

Families of children with disabilities have major socio-economic problems as a result of unemployment, disability assistance is used more for food, and not for services for children with disabilities. 50% of the interviewed parents live on social assistance due to the disability of the child and only 5.6% of them enjoy the right to financial assistance from the state as a personal assistant. Medicines (which are not reimbursed) cost a lot and the services that are missing in the municipality of Lushnja force these families to spend both for transportation and for the service received in another city.

There are 29.4% of parents of children with disabilities who stated that in the last 12 months they have faced several times the lack of finances to buy food for the family and 38% of them have not been able to afford medicines.

- **What is the level of incomes of the families of the people with disabilities?**

60% of respondents for this social upheaval had their income between 10,000-30,000 ALL

- **How are the living conditions of the children with disabilities?**

From the interviewed parents and fact check in the respective apartment, 12.7% of these families did not have internal plumbing. 19% of them did not have bathroom and shower installed inside the house and 22% of them did not have a kitchen in the house.

- **What is the level of risk and danger of children with disabilities?**

The level of risk and danger of children with disabilities is high, that in adapting the home with a suitable logistics for their movement. Having an economic situation below average, the families of these children find it impossible to create a friendly environment for their children. Also, logistics is lacking in various public institutions. Often due to the distance from the centres where services are provided, parents skip their medical visits, thus leading to deteriorating health. The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the risk of deteriorating health of this target group. Also the support of psychologists is not at the best levels, especially in terms of frequency. Both children and their parents need such support, but for the latter (parents) it seems that this is the last service they think of themselves.



- **What are the needs for social services of children with disabilities? What is the overall condition of the children with disabilities?**

Children with disabilities, especially in rural areas, suffer from a lack of social or medical services, due to their distance. Lack of information from parents, as well as financial income, often has consequences for the deterioration of children's health.

- **What conditions and social centres, as well as human resources are offered by the municipality?**

In Lushnja municipality there is one center for children with disabilities. This is a day center which offers services for children with disabilities of different age groups ranging from 2 to 16 years and operates five days a week from Monday to Friday. The function of which is foreseen in the budget of the Municipality of Lushnja with a total fund of 14,366.00 ALL. In this center work 4 psychologists, 2 physiotherapists, 2 speech therapists, 2 specialists of special pedagogy as well as the support staff.

- **What is the short term and long terms actions that municipality can take to tackle the problems?**

Through social mapping the situation of children with disabilities will be informed and better social protection policies will be planned by Lushnja municipality.

5. Methodology

Social Mapping in the municipality of Lushnja was conducted in the period December 2021 - April 2022, targeting the predetermined group of children with disabilities in this municipality using face to face survey mode.

The methods to conduct the social mapping of the children with disabilities in Lushnja municipality.

- **Field survey:** 126 interviews with parents/guardians of children with disabilities were conducted in 15 administrative units of Lushnja municipality. 15 pollsters were trained in one-day training based on the given questionnaire, translated into Albanian language. The questionnaires were completed in real time during the interviews on the LimeSyrvey platform
- **Focus groups discussions:** Upon completion of the field survey, 5 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted, respectively: 4 with parents/ guardians of children with disabilities and 1 FGD with stakeholders near this municipality. Focus group discussion were guided by semi structure questionnaire.
- **In-depth interviews:** For the realization of Social Mapping, 6 in-depth interviews were conducted in the municipality of Lushnja. 1 interview was conducted with a representative of the civil society organization, which operates throughout Albania, including Lushnja and which focuses on children and families living in difficult economic conditions, including families with children with disabilities; 1 interview was conducted with social worker at the Social Centre for Children with Disabilities; 1



- interview with the head of the Social Service sector at the municipality of Lushnja; 1 with representative of Public Health in Lushnja; 1 with representatives of Red Cross.
- **Sample design:** Sampling of children with disabilities in the Municipality of Lushnja was based on the official of the municipality. In total 187 children with disabilities. We used the targeting sampling method, conducting 126 questionnaires in 15 administrative units.
- **Questionary:** During the Social Mapping in the municipality of Lushnja The questionnaire used was quite detailed and, some adjustment were made based on national legislation as well as local needs, in total 125 questions.
- **List of indicators:** 1. Socio-economic status – risk factor; 2. Geography – risk factor; 3. Needs assessment for children with disabilities (Needs assessment based on health status; Assessment of home service needs; Assessment of social service needs in the local community; Assessment of education services and facilities) 4. Governance – risk factor; 5. Discrimination – risk factor; 6. Vulnerability to shocks – risk factor – COVID 19.
- **Pilot test.** 5 test interviews were conducted in the municipality of Lushnja. According to the field monitoring, the average time to complete the interview was 45 minutes. The questionnaire was revised during the training and there were no problems.
- **Response rate:** All 126 parents / guardians of children with disabilities answered 100% of the questions included in the questionnaire.
- **Program of processing of the data cleansing and preparation:** LymeSurvey and SPSS
- **Methods of data analysis:** Descriptive statistics
- **Limitations:** None

6. Social Mapping results

This chapter is based on the findings obtained within the research activities conducted on territory of Municipality of Lushnja. The results are presented for the children with disabilities following the survey structure. Each questionnaire was composed of several chapters aimed to examine the risks and vulnerability in line with the LNOB factors. The questionnaire consisted of 126 questions divided into categories as risk factors as follows:

- Socio-economic status
- Geography
- Needs assessment for children with disabilities
- Governance
- Discrimination
- Vulnerability to shocks

Main findings for each LNOB group are explained in detail with relevant data presented in charts explanation at the chapter 8.



7. Analysis of geo-tagging of available socio-economic resources

The Municipality of Lushnja has not yet been able to establish or support services of a residential nature, for any of the categories or groups in need, such as the elderly, children, abused women, etc. This is a very significant shortcoming and the establishment of a residential center is often underlined as a priority during the evaluation process that preceded the drafting of the social plan. Establishing a residential service for children is considered important especially for children with disabilities.

In the municipality of Lushnja there is only one daily center that offers services for this target group. The center for the development of children with disabilities is located in the territory of the municipality of Lushnja, near the hospital "Isan Cabej".

The center is funded by UNDP and treats children of different ages from 0 to 16 years old. The capacity of the center is for 24 children while currently 54 children receive services. The center is daily and also offers two beds for cases where the parents of children have urgent needs to leave the children, but not more than two nights. At this center are offered the services of: developmental therapy; speech therapy; physiotherapy; counselling therapy with parents of children with disabilities; and game, music or group therapy. Services for 16–18 year old with disabilities are missing.

The legal function of local government units extends only to the maintenance of primary care service infrastructure. The Regional Directorate of Health in Fier is the main institution which covers this area in the Municipality of Lushnja. The following services are currently offered by this directorate: 1. Epidemiology Service, 2. Medical Health Service, 3. Family Medicine Service, 4. Dentistry Service, 5. Psycho-Social and Mental Health Service. Services provided at health centers in Lushnja are basic, and there are no specialized medical services for children with disabilities.

In the municipality of Lushnja there is no organized transport for the categories of children with disabilities. Also, none of the public or private means of transport provides the necessary logistics for this category.

Out of 44 schools operating in the territory of Lushnja municipality, only 16 of them have ramps for children with disabilities, and only 1 high school in the city also offers an elevator. While according to the law in force, every primary school, media and high school has assistant teachers for children with disabilities, the service is missing in kindergartens and nurseries. In Lushnja the only organization that offers assistance for this category is the National Association in support of Venerable Groups, which in its membership also has families of children with disabilities and help them with food packages periodically once a month. Facilities for access for children with disabilities where there are built ramps or in some cases elevators are: Municipality; Lushnja Hospital; Passport application office; Polyclinic (Ambulance) and ER.

Red Cross - Lushnja Branch, provides assistance and support with food packages and clothing for poor and needy families, including families of children with disabilities. Usually the



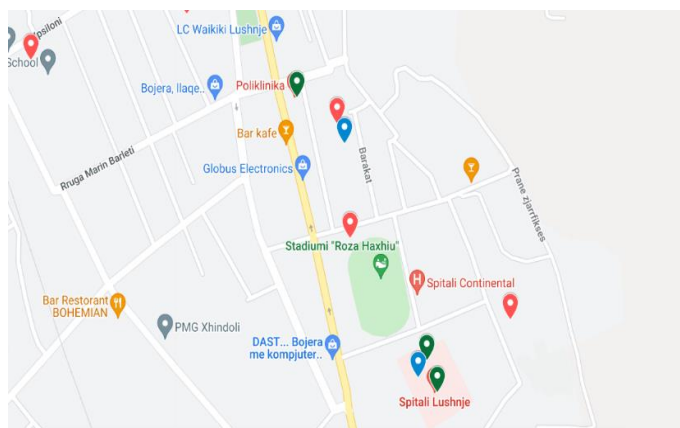
distribution of these packages is done once a year and their content is the basic food package for a family of 4-5 people, for 1 month.

The map of Public Institutions, Schools and Health Centres. <https://bit.ly/3a2JsoM>

7.1. Geo-tagging of critical points for children and adults with disabilities

In the municipality of Lushnja, although interventions have been made, there are still problems in adapting the appropriate logistics for access to various institutions for children with disabilities, as for example the Education Office of this municipality, Cultural Center, Library or Museum, Post Office, Health Centers no. 1 and no. 2 in the city of Lushnja.

While the Town hall building; City Central Polyclinic; Passport application office; The Court and the Hospital have built ramps. There is also an elevator in the hospital.



In Lushnja municipality there is only one non-governmental organisation that sometimes offers support for children with disabilities. Apart from that, the only institutions that provide services are: Lushnje Municipality; Development Center, under the auspices of the municipality, polyclinics (basic services) and hospital.

In terms of logistical facilities of 9-year and high schools in all 15 administrative units of Lushnja municipality, the situation varies from rural to urban units. Of the 44 schools in the municipality of Lushnja, only 16 of them are equipped with separate entrances and ramps, while **28 of them do not offer any logistical relief for this target group.**

All 10 health centers of the administrative units lack special entrances and ramps for children with disabilities.





The Education Office and Cultural Center of the Municipality of Lushnja does not have special entrances or ramps for children with disabilities.



The Library, the Museum and Post Office does not have special entrances or ramps for children with disabilities



Department of public health and Health center no. 2 does not have special entrance or ramps for children with disabilities.

Models of Schools without ramps or/and elevator

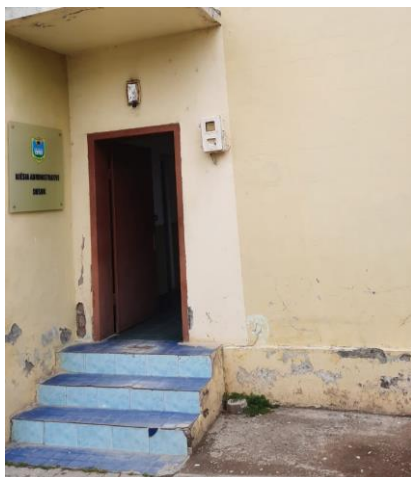


Administrative Unit Bubullime (Rural)



Administrative Unit Hysgjokaj (Rural)

Models of Health Centres in rural areas without ramps and/or elevator



Administrative Unit Dushk



Administrative Unit Golem

7.2. LNOB group – Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities are generally excluded, but especially children and families of children with disabilities in rural areas suffer the most from this exclusion. This, from the lack of medical services at residential centers to discrimination at various institutions.

Insufficient information that these families have; lack of knowledge of the law regarding children with disabilities; distance from urban centers and specialized hospitals are some of the reasons that makes these families to be the furthest behind.

In the part of the analysis of Social Mapping are found in detail the main problems arising from FGD, in depth interviews and survey which highlight the current situation of this target group.

LNOB factor geography

There are 13.5% of respondents to the questionnaire who live in isolated areas with less than 100 inhabitants, thus making it more difficult to obtain information as well as from family members. These are areas that provide only basic health care for the whole community.

LNOB factor socio-economic status:

70% of the respondents live on the below the average wage. About 57% of families with disabilities do not have a computer at home to help their children integrate into the home. And from other families that have such a device do not have internet to the extent of 40% although they would like to have it. 20.6% of dwellings for children with disabilities do not meet the minimum living conditions or meet them partially. 81.7% of all dwellings of the families of these children do not meet the proper logistic conditions and do not have proper access for wheelchairs. Only 18% of parents of children with disabilities in the entire municipality of Lushnja are employed.

LNOB factor Discrimination: According this study, this category is often discriminated against, in hospitals, on public transport, at school or even in society. As specialized services in



hospitals are lacking for different types of disabilities, parents are often confronted with discriminatory behaviour by medical staff who follow them without much explanation. Lack of proper public transport logistics, facing parents with difficulties and discrimination by other passengers or drivers

LNOB factor Vulnerability to shocks:

The COVID-19 pandemic period has brought not only serious mental health consequences but also great financial difficulties, and often deteriorating health of children with disabilities. During this period none of the families of this target group has benefited from extra financial payments from the state.

LNOB factor Governance - The participation in social and political life on local level by families of children with disabilities is at very low rate. They never or rarely participate in social life at local level and do not support petitions or civil protests. Furthermore, as citizens they are quite passive in that regard and very often do not take any actions to protect and advocate their interests.

To continue with other reasons why this target group is left behind: 70% of children with disabilities have requested patronage service and highlight the need they have for this service. And 53% of them need help for the child in the family.

Lack of logistics in transport; estimated lack of financial income; discrimination are other problems that this target group faces.

Following the analysis, below are presented in detail the main findings of the FGD, accompanied by: Conclusion and Recommendations as well as Recommendations in line with SDGs.

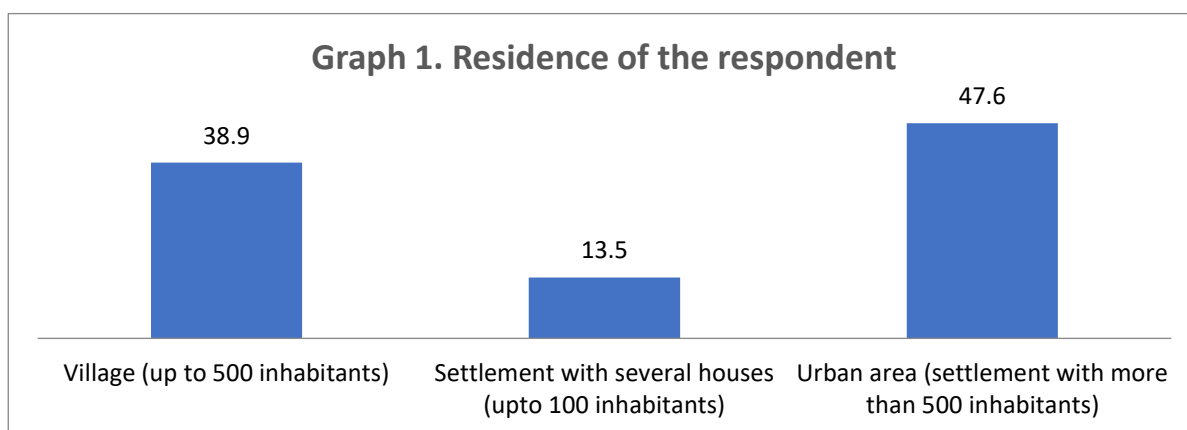
In order to result in a more accurate and detailed social analysis, it was also conducted 126 interviews with parents/guardians of children with disabilities in 10 rural administrative units and 5 urban regions of Lushnja municipality. The developed questionnaire was divided into 5 categories as risk factor: Social-economic status; Geography; Governance; Discrimination; Vulnerability to emergency situations.

7.3. Social-economic status

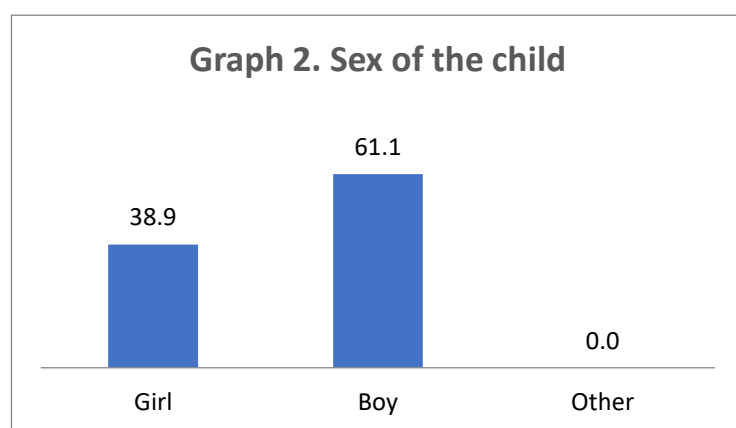
7.3.1. Demography employment

The majority of the people who were part of the survey have claimed to live in urban area. As per graph 1. 47.6% of them live in urban area i.e. settlements with more than 500 inhabitants). 38.9% of the interviewed live in the villages with a number of up to 500 inhabitants, and 13.5 % live in settlements with several houses (up to 100 inhabitants.)

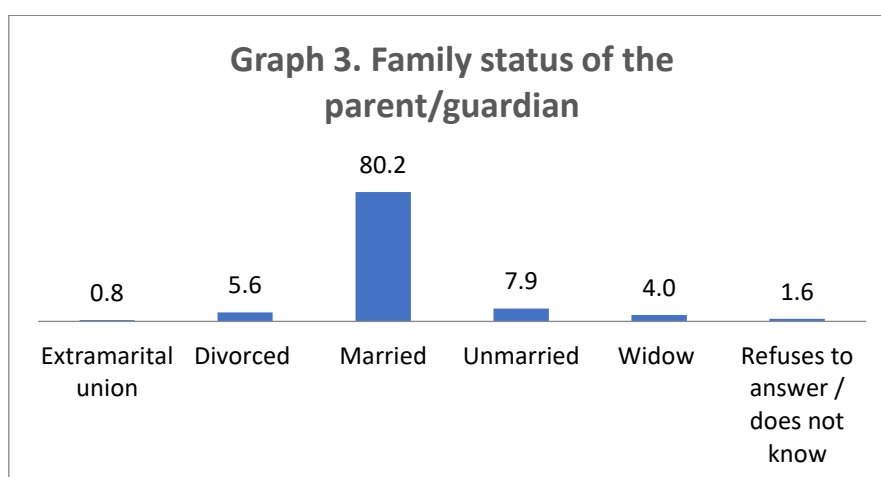
61.1% of the children with disabilities, whose parents were interviewed were boys and 38.9 of them were girls.



Out of the total of the interviewed the highest percentage (80.2%) belongs to the group of married couples (parents live together and are married with a big difference to the other category whose parents live in a relationship (Extramarital union) of about 0.8%.



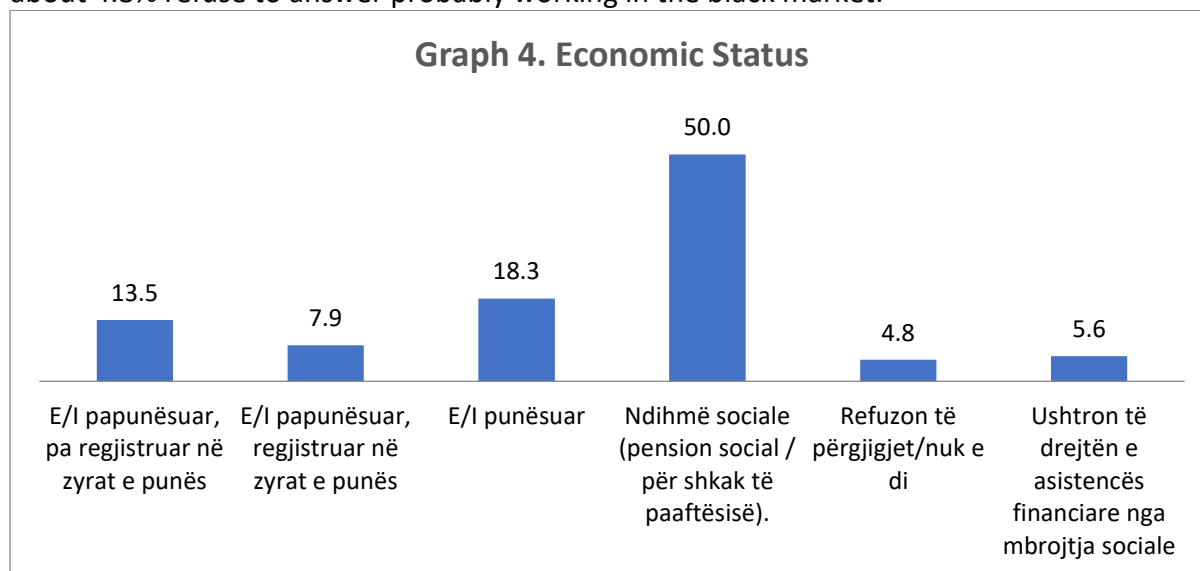
About 7.9% of the interviewed correspond to the unmarried category which speaks for a considerable number of unmarried girls who became mothers. 4% of the interviewed have admitted to live with one parent due to the death of the other parent. About 5.6% of the interviewed live with divorced parents while 1.6% refuses to answer to this question.



7.3.2. Income

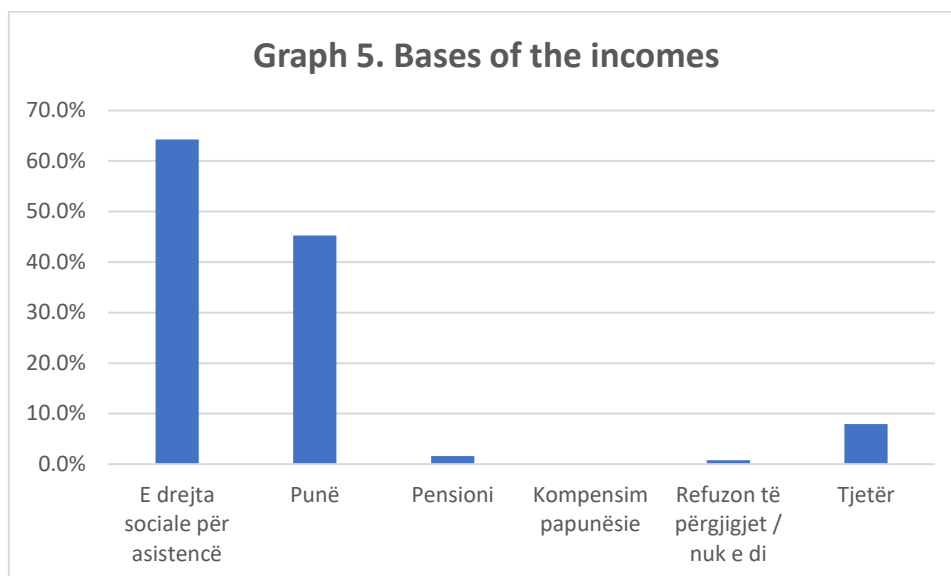
The economic income of families with children with disabilities is very low. This does not make a difference from urban or rural areas. In most cases, it is the mothers who take care of the children, thus preventing them from working. Also, the financial assistance they receive from the state for the disability of children is quite low, and does not meet the requirements that this target group has. Below are presented in graphic some of the findings of this Social Mapping.

From the graph below, we can see the biggest percentage 50% of the interviewed are beneficiaries of the social security (social pension / due to disability). This figure is followed by 18.3% who are employed which still speaks for a big gap between the ones who live on the social economic aid and are the majority as compared to the ones that are employed. What makes a strike is the fact that a number of 13.5% are unemployed and are not registered with the Employment Agency if compared to a lower number of those who are unemployed but at least are registered and hope to get a job referred by the Employment Agency. There is a percentage of 5.6% who exercise their right to financial assistance from social protection and about 4.8% refuse to answer probably working in the black market.

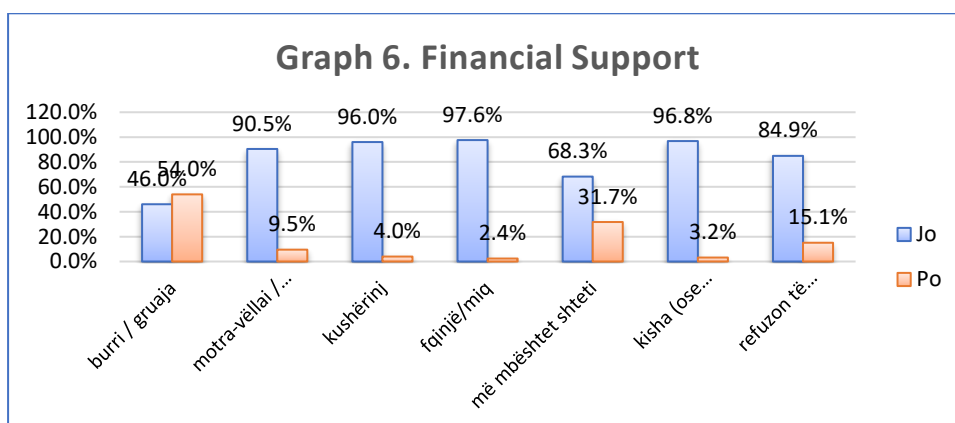


64% e of the respondents stated that they benefit from realization of social right to assistance; 45.2% from work of one of the parents, and 1.6% because of the pension.

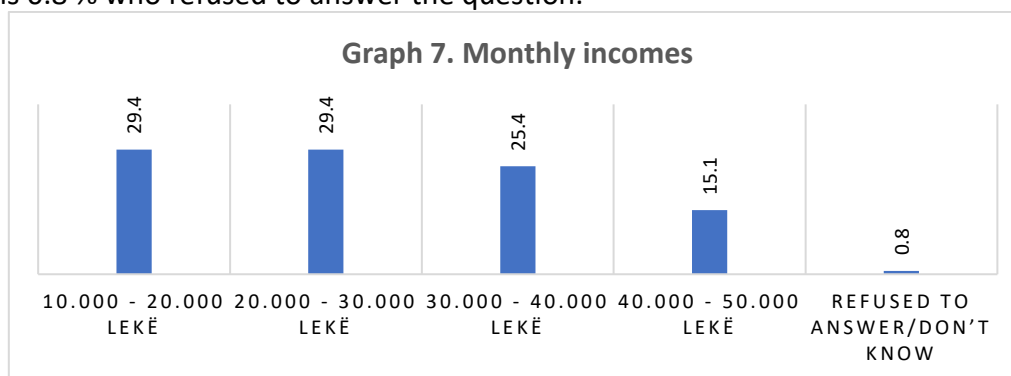
Related to the financial support from the others, most of the interviewed have responded negatively to this question in general but when analysed among those who have responded positively, we see that only 54% received financial support from husband /wife and 31.7% getting support from the state.



The figures go lower to other categories such as receiving financial support from siblings or children to about 9.5%. Trusting your relatives is even less to about 4% and getting from churches (or other religious organization) 3.2% and it is even lesser to friends and neighbours up to 2.4%. There is a figure of 15.1% who refuse to answer/do not know.



Graph no.7 shows an equal percentage of the respondents who claim to have their monthly income between 10.000ALL to 20.000ALL and those from 20.000ALL to 30.000LL which speaks for about **70% of the respondents live on the below the average wage**, 25.4 % live on the average wage of 30.000LL to 40.000LL and only 15.1% get their salaries from 40.000-50.000LL. There is 0.8 % who refused to answer the question.

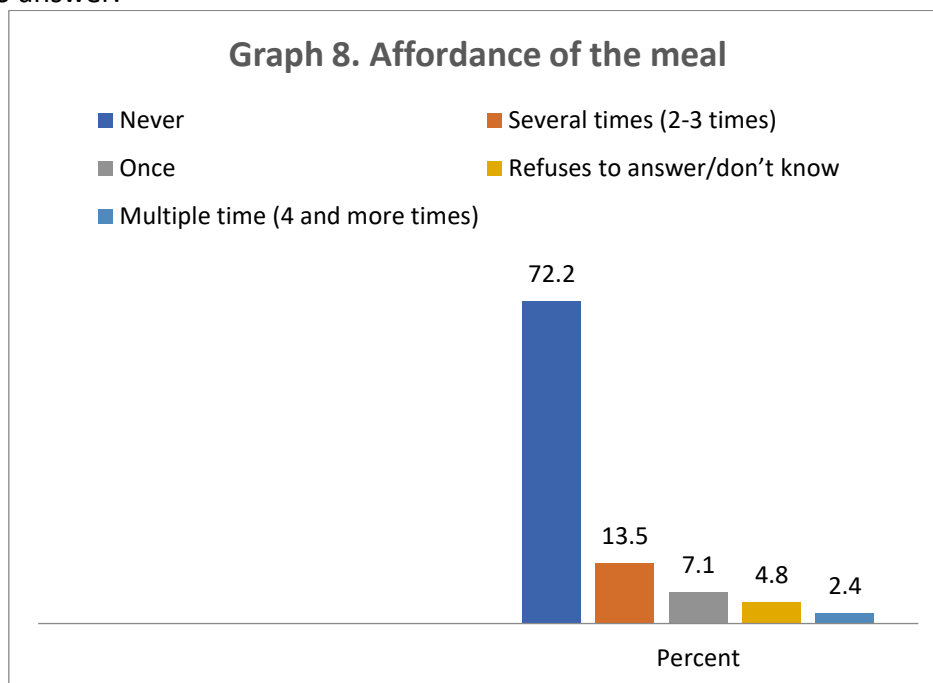


From the answers of the respondents we can see a big difference among those who are not satisfied with their budget as 72.2 % claim that their budget does not satisfy their basic needs while only 25.4 % can meet their basic needs. There is a 2.4% of the interviewed who claim to live a comfortable life although their budget does not allow for saving money.

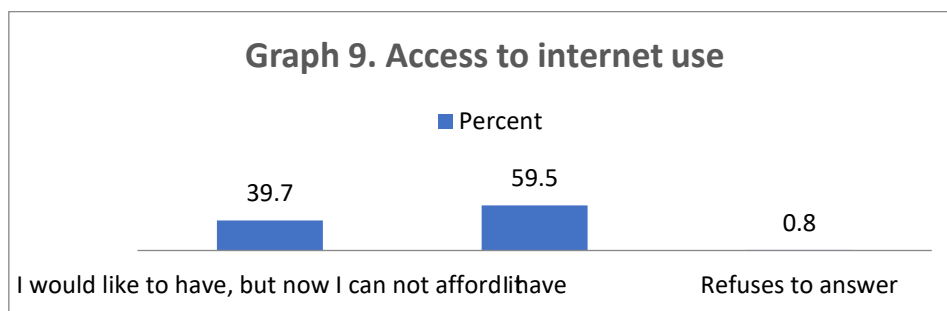
7.3.3. Living Conditions

Water supply at least seems to be efficient in most of the households as 92.9 of the interviewed admitted to have had enough drinking water In the last month, whereas only 7.1 of them did not.

Meanwhile, from the graph below it is quite obvious that 72.2% of the targeted respondents always could afford themselves a meal in the last month which contradicts the small percentage of 2.4% who were not so lucky for most of the time referring to 4 and more times within last month. 13.5% of the respondents suffered hunger several times (2-3 times) and 7.1% could not afford themselves a meal in the last month only once. It is striking that 4.8% refused to answer.

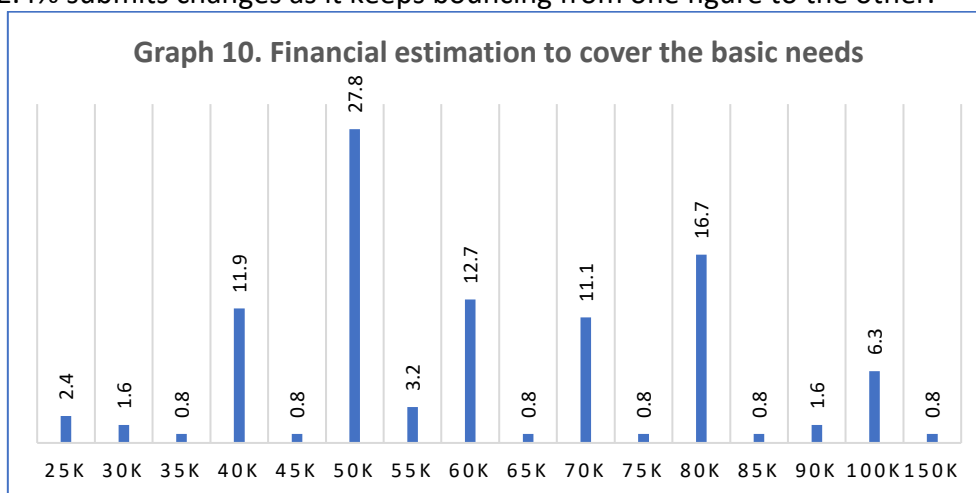


44.4 % of the respondents have confirmed of having a computer or other device in their households such as a laptop or tablet, whereas 55.6 % negated to own any and when asked about internet access for personal use we notice a considerable percentage of the interviewed who said they wish to but it is hard to afford, whereas 59.5% affirmed to have one. There is 0.8 % who refused to answer the question.

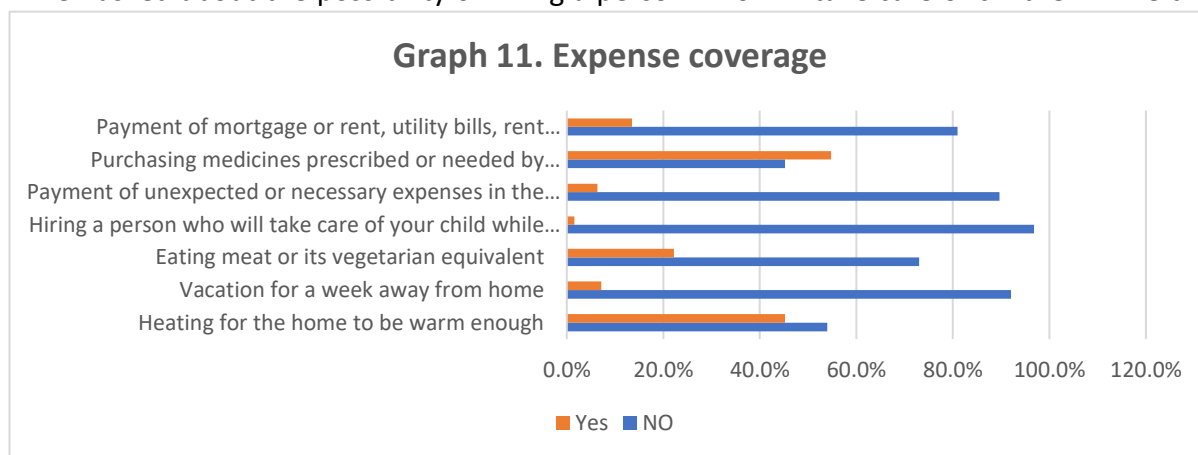


Meanwhile 73% of the respondents affirmed on owning a TV with available channels for their age while on the other hand 25.4% of them said they wished to have one but could not afford it, and 1.6% said they do not have a TV and they do not need one.

The estimation of how much money do these families need per month to cover the basic cost of living, was very interesting for the parents/guardians of children with disabilities because it shows personal perceptions based on the needs. It is easily understood that among the targeted respondents only a small percentage aim high for big amount of money 0.8% said they would need about 150.000 ALL, whereas 27.8% said they would need 50000 ALL as monthly income raising the peak of the majority of the respondents who are satisfied with this amount of money. As seen the variability here is higher. The monthly budget of 25.000 ALL for 2.4% submits changes as it keeps bouncing from one figure to the other.

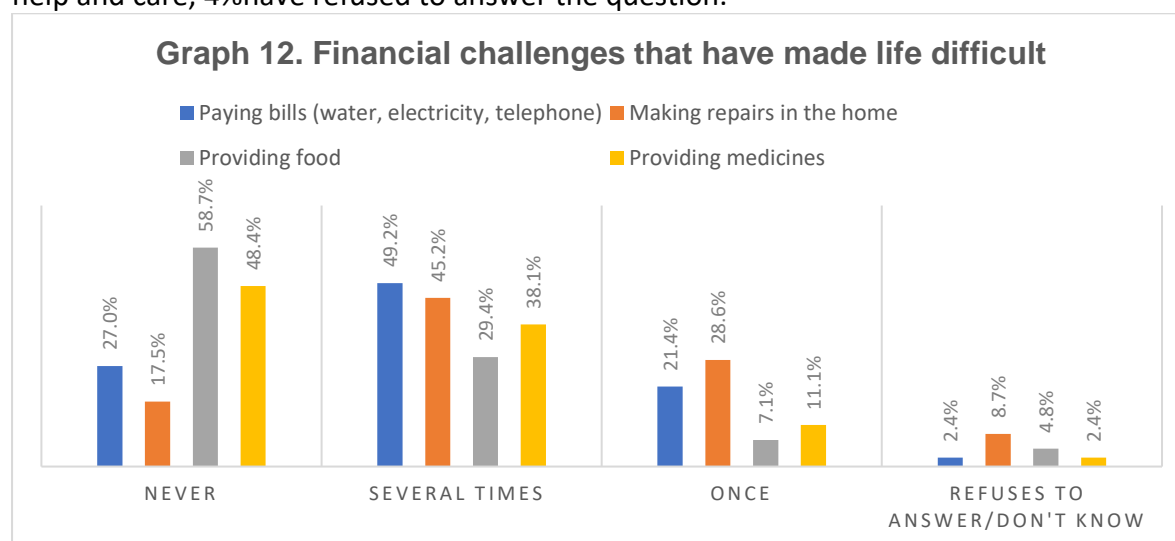


In the graph no 11. is shown the highest statistic for negative responses to all the questions. When asked about the possibility of hiring a person who will take care of children while the



interviewed is at work or not able to (for the parents)96.8% of them responded negatively and only 1.6 could afford this service equal to another 1.6% who refused to answer this question. For 92.1%of them is quite impossible to go on vacation for a week away from home, while only 7.1%of the interviewed have claimed to afford and 0.8% refuse to answer the question. About 89.7% cannot afford payment of unexpected or necessary expenses in the amount of 300 to 500 euros while 6.3% can and only 4% refuse to answer or don't know what to say. When asked about payments of mortgage or rent, utility bills, rent instalments or other loan repayments, 81% of the interviewed result incapable of affording it while 13.5% can, followed by 5.6% who refuse to answer. 73% do not eat meat or its vegetarian equivalent at a time when only 22.2% can afford it with 4.8%who refuse to answer. 54% have said they are not able to provide heating for the home to be warm enough, 45.2% can afford it but 0.8 % refused to answer. It seems that buying medicines prescribed or needed by another family member is important for 54.8% of the interviewed while 45.2% who have said they cannot afford it.

When asked about the satisfaction related to the living conditions, only 10.3% have said that they are satisfied, they have everything they need in the meantime 87.3% have disagreed on this point and 2.4% have refused to respond. Regarding the option of lacking decent living conditions to take care for the child 61.1% agree on it while there is 31% who disagree and 7.9% who refused to answer this question. 69.8 of the interviewed have agreed on the option of needing professional help and care while 26.2%do have said they do not need professional help and care, 4%have refused to answer the question.



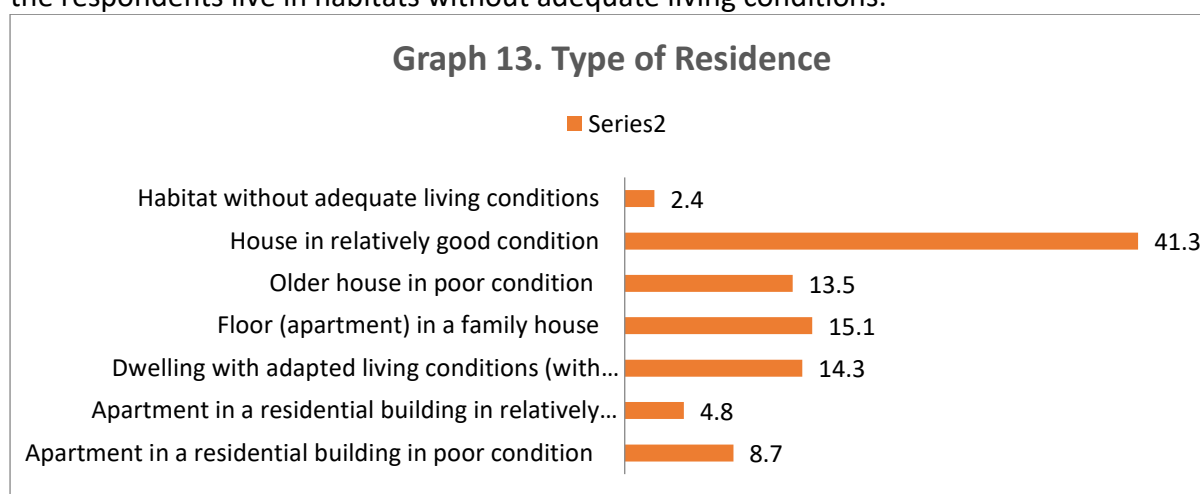
When asked about the financial challenges that have made the life of the respondents difficult for paying bills such as water, electricity, telephone, 27 % of them have said they have never had such challenges, 49.2% admitted to have met some challenges, 21.4% of them have met challenges only once and 2.4% refused to answer the question. Making repairs in the home has never been difficult for 17.5% of the interviewed while it was evident that for 45.2% sometimes, they faced difficulties, while 28.6% were faced with such problem only once, 8.7% refused to answer. When asked about financial challenges for providing food 58.7% said they never had such problems, 29.4 percent claimed to have had such problem sometimes, 7.1% said they had this problem only once and 11.1 percent refused to answer the question. With regards to financial challenges for providing medicines 48.4% said they never experienced

such challenge, 38.1% have met with this difficulty sometimes, and 11.1 percent experienced it only once while 24% refused to answer.

7.4. Geography – risk factor

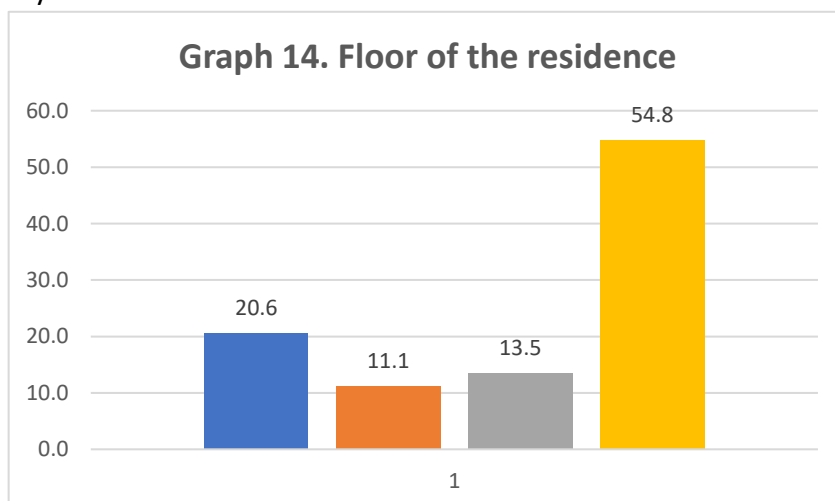
7.4.1. Danger and risk of isolation due to living conditions

When asked about their type of residence 41.3% of the interviewed claimed to live in house in relatively good condition, followed by another high percentage of them 15.1% who live in Floor (apartment) in a family house, another 14.3 % of the respondents live in dwelling with adapted living conditions (with electricity, water, toilet, telecommunications, etc.) 13.5% of the targeted interviewed said they live in old houses in poor conditions whereas 8.7% said they live in apartment in a residential building in poor condition to be followed by 4.8% who claimed to live in apartment in a residential building in relatively good condition. The 2.4% of the respondents live in habitats without adequate living conditions.

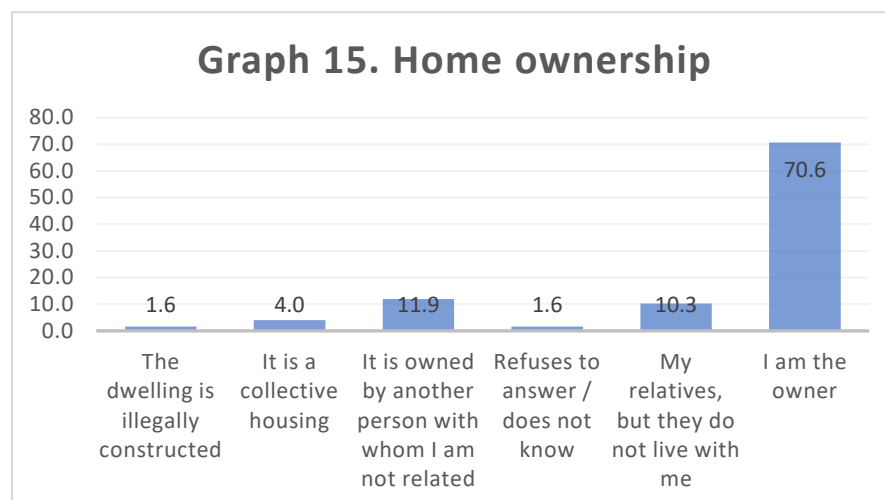


77.8% of homes of the respondents meet the basic living conditions, while 7.1% of the respondents' homes does not meet the basic living conditions and 13.5% of these homes meet these conditions partially.

From all the respondents, 54.8% live on the ground floor that makes the movement of children with disabilities easier, 20.6% live on the first floor, 11.1% of them live on the second floor and 13.5% of the respondents said they live on the third floor or higher. Only 8% of respondents living on the first floor and above claim to have an elevator.



81.7% of the respondents said that their home lacks adequate access for the children with disabilities, 15.9% affirmed their households provide adequate access for children with disabilities, whereas 2.4% refuse to answer.



As per the graph no. 15, a high figure of 70.6% stated that they own their houses, whereas we see the lowest figure of 1.6% stated that their dwelling was illegally built, 11.9% live in other people's houses quite unknown to them, 10.3% use the houses of their relatives separately,

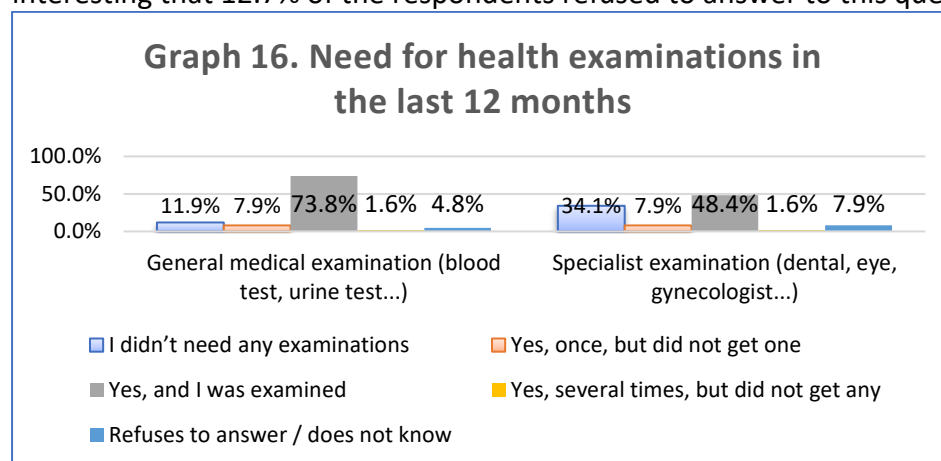
4% live in collective houses and 1.6% do not answer the question.

As per the survey, the majority of the respondents have admitted to have the necessary living conditions such as a kitchen incorporated in the house structure 77.8%, drinking water and plumbing installations 87.3%, shower and toilet within the house 81%, and electrical installations 95.8% while a small percentage of the interviewed said they lack these living conditions and respectively kitchen incorporated in the house structure 22.2%, drinking water and plumbing installations 12.7%, shower and toilet within the house 19% and electrical installations 3.2%.

7.4.2. Needs assessment for children with disabilities

7.4.2.1. Needs assessment based on health status

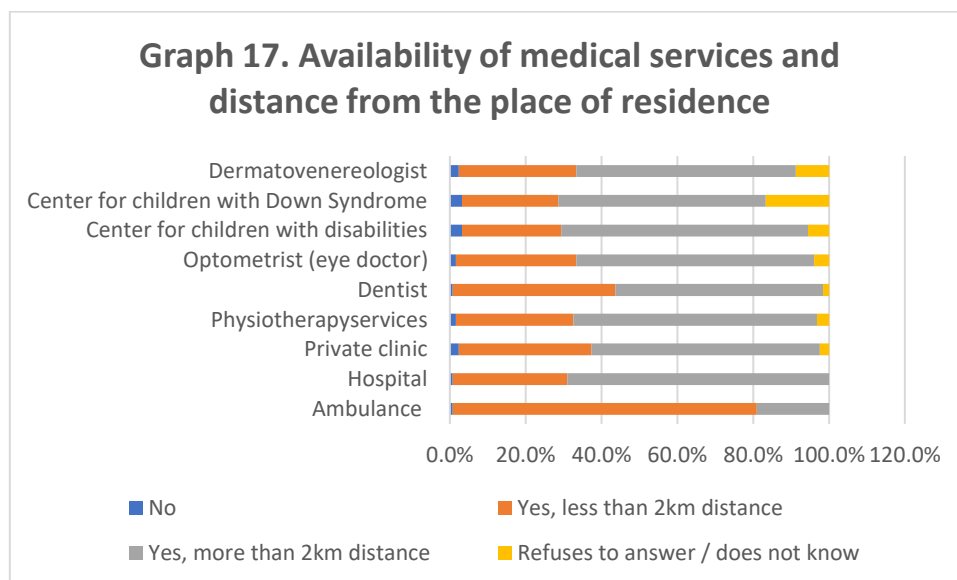
Most respondents have needed medical examinations in the last 12 months, 73.8% of them needed general medical examination while 48.4% needed specialized examination, while in a total of 46% didn't need any examination at all. 7.9% of the respondents claim that they did need both examinations but did not get one and 1.6% of the respondents said that they needed both types of the examinations several times but unfortunately did not get any. It is interesting that 12.7% of the respondents refused to answer to this question.



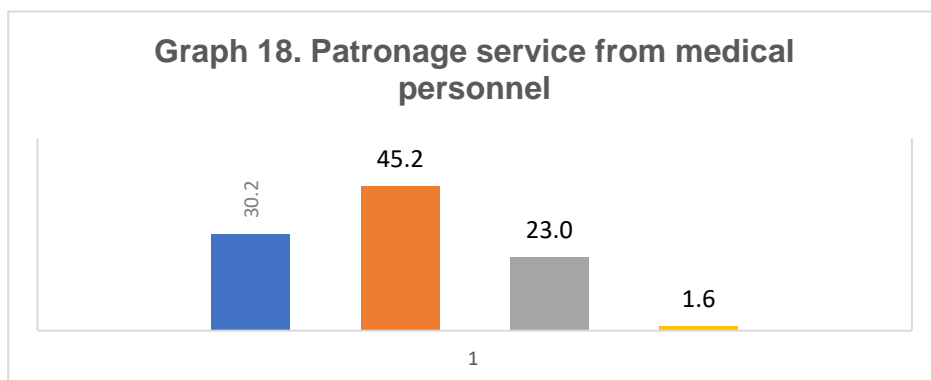
When the above respondents were asked if they had received these services when they needed, 87% of them confirmed this fact whereas 12.7% admit they did not benefit from these services. There is 1.6% of respondents who refused to answer.

As per the graph no. 17 below, the availability of medical services and distance from the place of residence can be summarized in two sections:

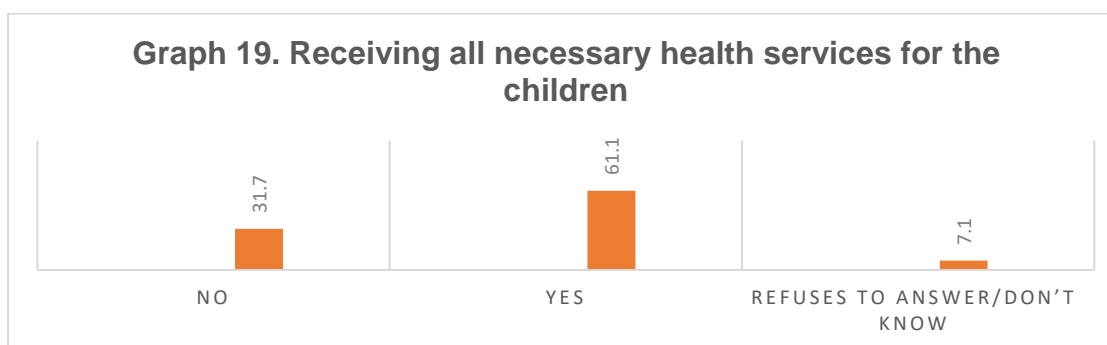
- Firstly, the medical institutions / services exist in every municipality, in a distance of more than 2 km. The ambulances are an exception as according to 80.2% of the respondents they can be found in less than 2 km of distance.
- Secondly, in 7 out of 9 responses (ambulances & hospitals not included) the graph shows there are very small respondent percentages who claim these medical institutions' services do not exist at all.



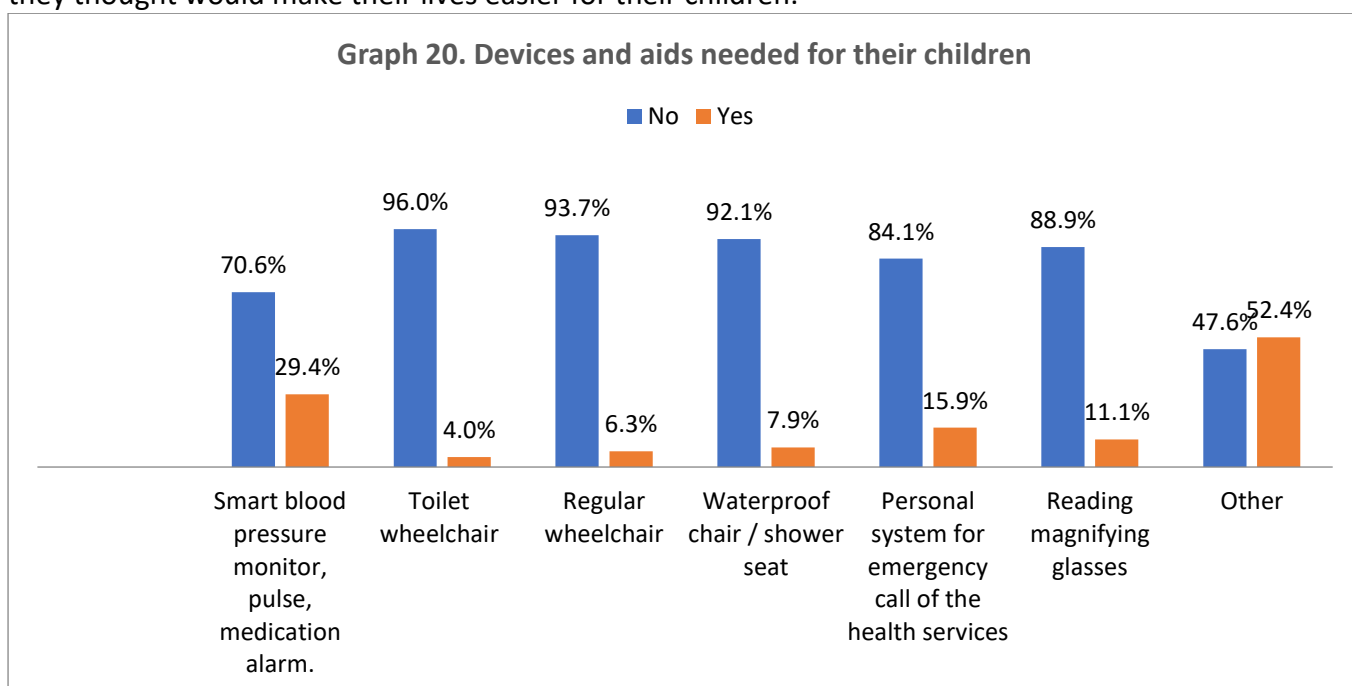
The patronage services from the medical personal do not exist in Lushnja Municipality but 23 % of the interviewed admit they have received patronage service from health providers and 30.25 deny of having receives such services.



Almost half of the total of the interviewed 45.2% stated that they have no information that such service exists at all. When asked how satisfied they are with this type of support, 13.5% of the respondents claimed to be very satisfied, whereas 5.6% said they are satisfied and about 4% stated they are not satisfied with this kind of support. When respondents were asked if they needed this type of service, 69.8% of them stated that such a service would help.



When asked if they get all the necessary health services for their child, 61% of the interviewed who are parents or guardians, admitted they do in contrast with 31.7% who stated that they do not receive such service for their child which is a considerable number of children out of this care. There is a 7.1% who do not know the answer to this question or refused to answer. Parents or guardians of children with disabilities were also asked about devices and aids that they thought would make their lives easier for their children.

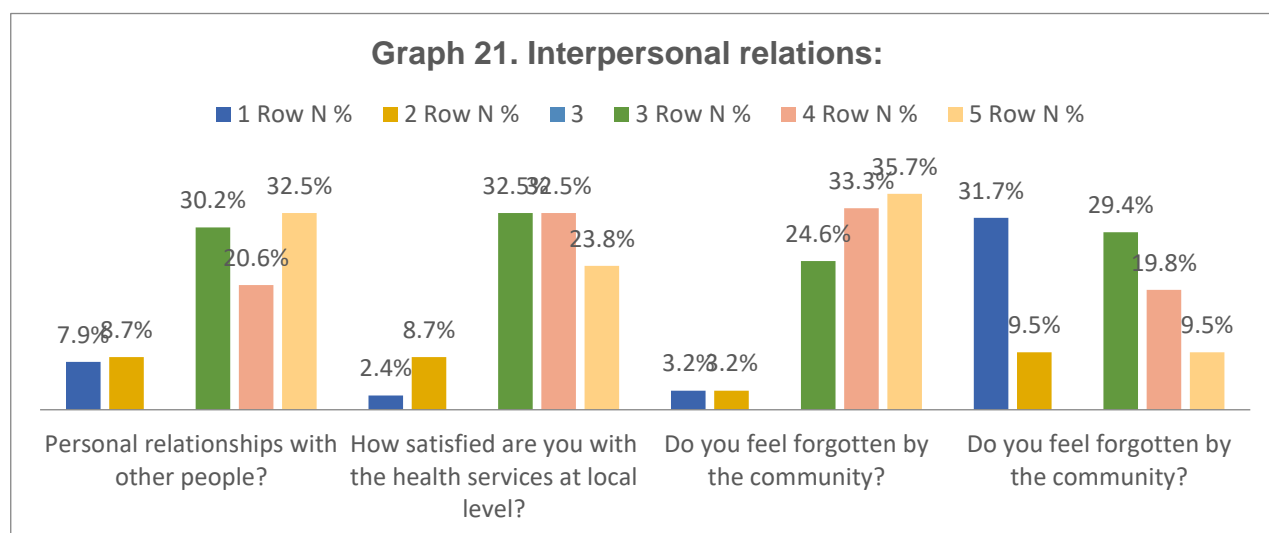


Very high rates of respondents admit the need to have: Smart blood pressure monitor, pulse, medication alarm (70.6%); a toilet wheelchair (96%); the regular wheelchair (93.7%);) Waterproof chair / shower seat (92.1%); a personal system for emergency calls for medical services (84.1%); Reading magnifying glasses (88.9%) and present them as facilities that would ease theirs and their children's lives.

When asked if they would you like to be able to call someone to help with certain activities, strong affirmation of about 74.6% of the interviewed who would like to have call someone to help them with some of the activities with their children whereas about 21.4% refusing the idea. There is a 4% who do not know what to say.

The graph no. 21 below is an interesting one, because it shows personal perceptions, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest score. The satisfaction about interpersonal relationships varies from 31.7% to 9.5%, whereas the abandonment feeling

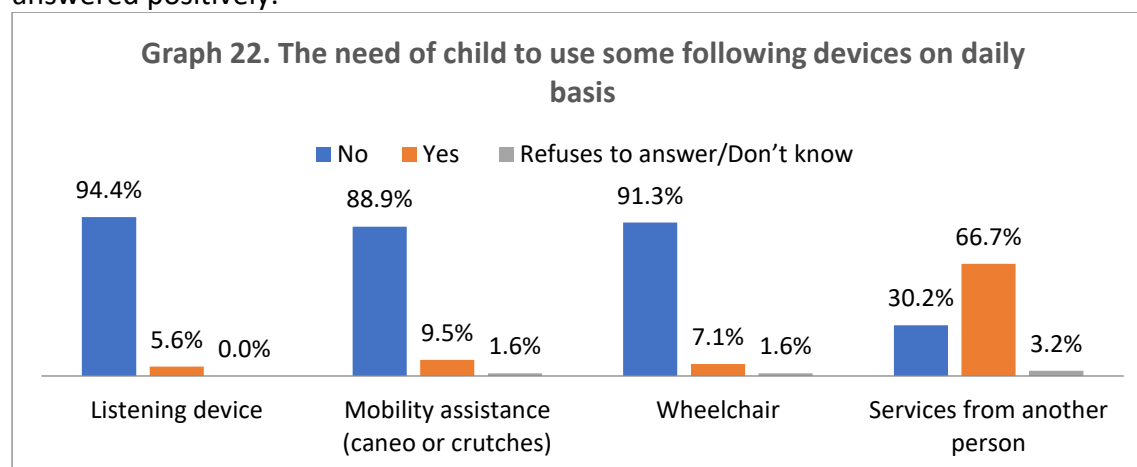
from the community varies from 2.4% to 32.5%. As seen the variability here is higher. The numbers per se can be interpreted as low to moderate and therefore somewhat problematic. Almost the same variability goes for the next questions: what is your level of satisfaction with the local social services and what is the level of satisfaction with the local medical services. The first varies from 3.2% to 35.7%, while the last one varies from 2.4% to 32.5%. In general, it can be stated that all the forementioned answers as a group tend to be higher, or lower depending on the municipality the respondents live in.



7.4.2.2. Assessment of home service needs

Respondents were asked few questions related to the daily needs and activities that they have and perform, i.e., whether they need help with some of them.

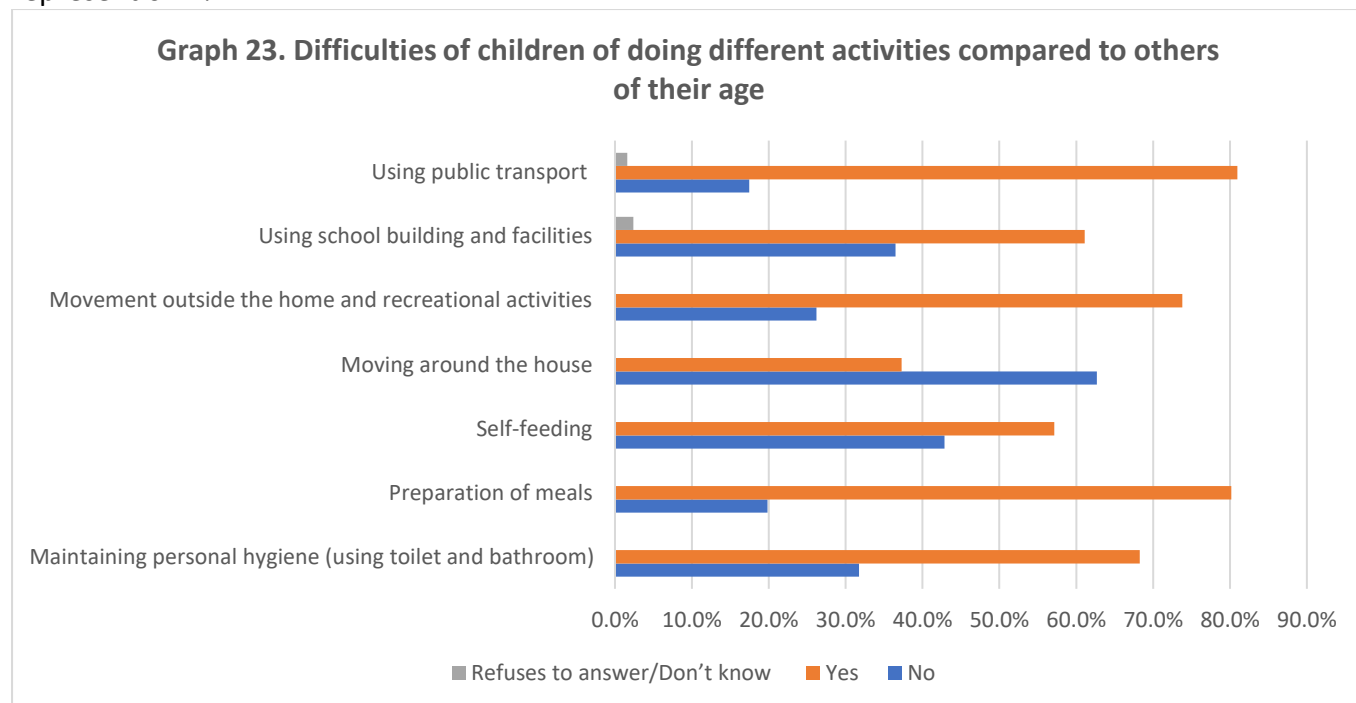
Affirmative rates can also be seen in the below graph which asks whether in parents' point of view their children need hearing aid which 5.6% confirmed; whether their children need moving assistance, which 9.5% confirmed; whether their children need a wheelchair, which 7.1% answered 'yes'; and whether their children need assistance from other people 66.7% answered positively.



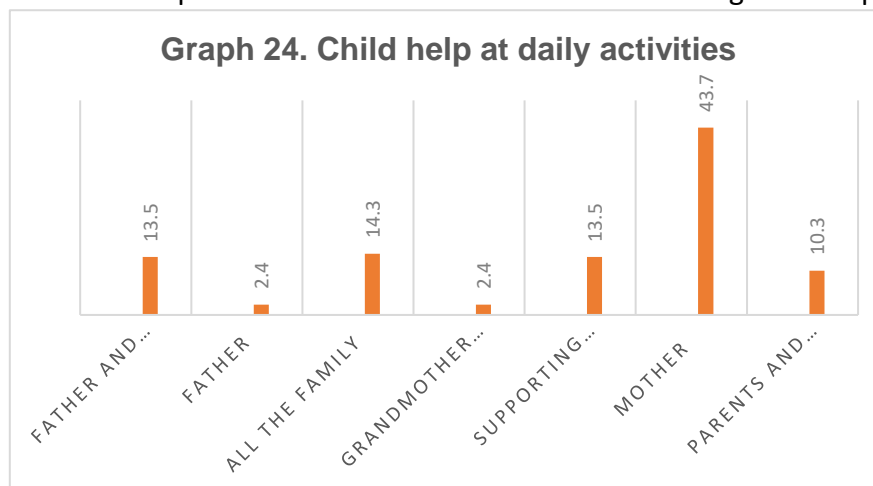
Expected answers that show no surprises at all come from the graph below. According to the respondents their children encounter greater difficulties than other children performing



various acts like personal hygiene, meal preparation, eating, movement in and out house, use of school environments and the public transportations. Affirmative answers vary from 37.3% (movement inside the house) to 81% (use of public transportation). Meanwhile, parents who said their children do not need assistance while eating represent 42.9% of the respondents and those who said their children do not need assistance to move inside their houses represent 62.7%.



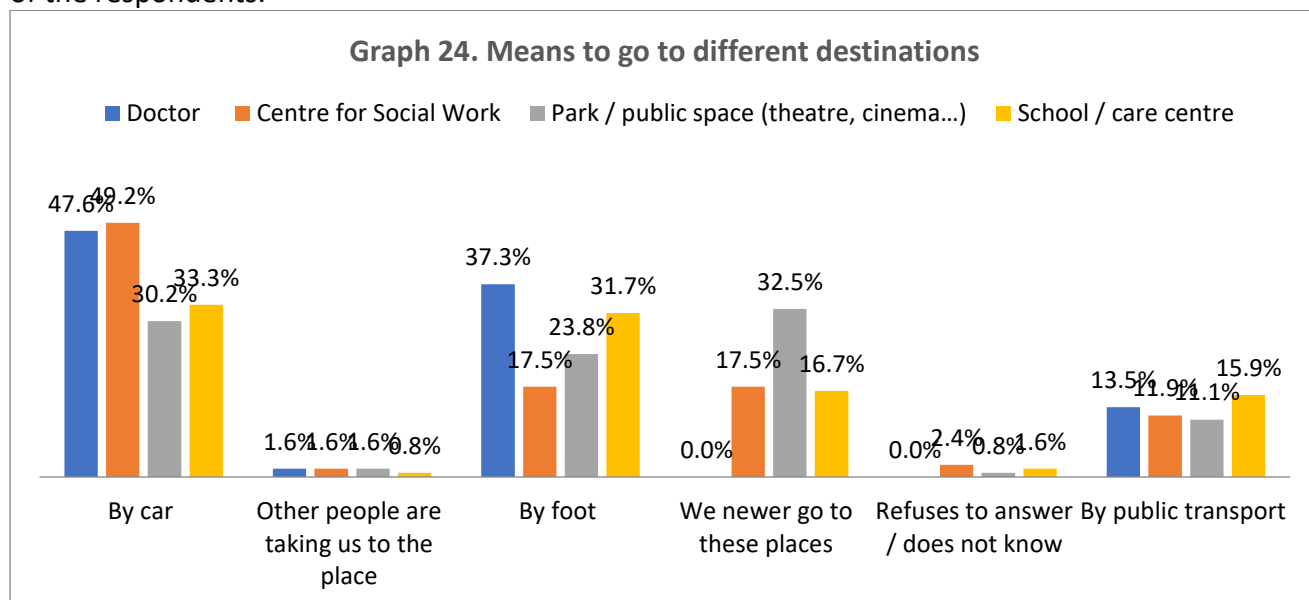
When asked who helps the child with the daily activities, as the graph below shows the prevalence is taken by the mother of the child with 43.7% whereas the father takes only 2.4% of the responses. 13.5% of the respondents stated that mother and father together help with the daily activities of their child and when the whole family is engaged this is confirmed by 14.3% of the responses. A low figure of 2.4% admitted that the grandmother and the mother of the child take care for the daily activities.



The presence of the dedicated teaching assistant is confirmed in these activities only by 13.5% of the respondents and 10.3% of them stated that parents together with dedicated teaching assistants help the children with their daily activities.

The respondents were also asked about the way and time needed to go to several different destinations. Almost the half of the respondents use cars to go to the doctor and in the social centres, but this percentage is lower when going to school (33.3) and public spaces (30.2%).

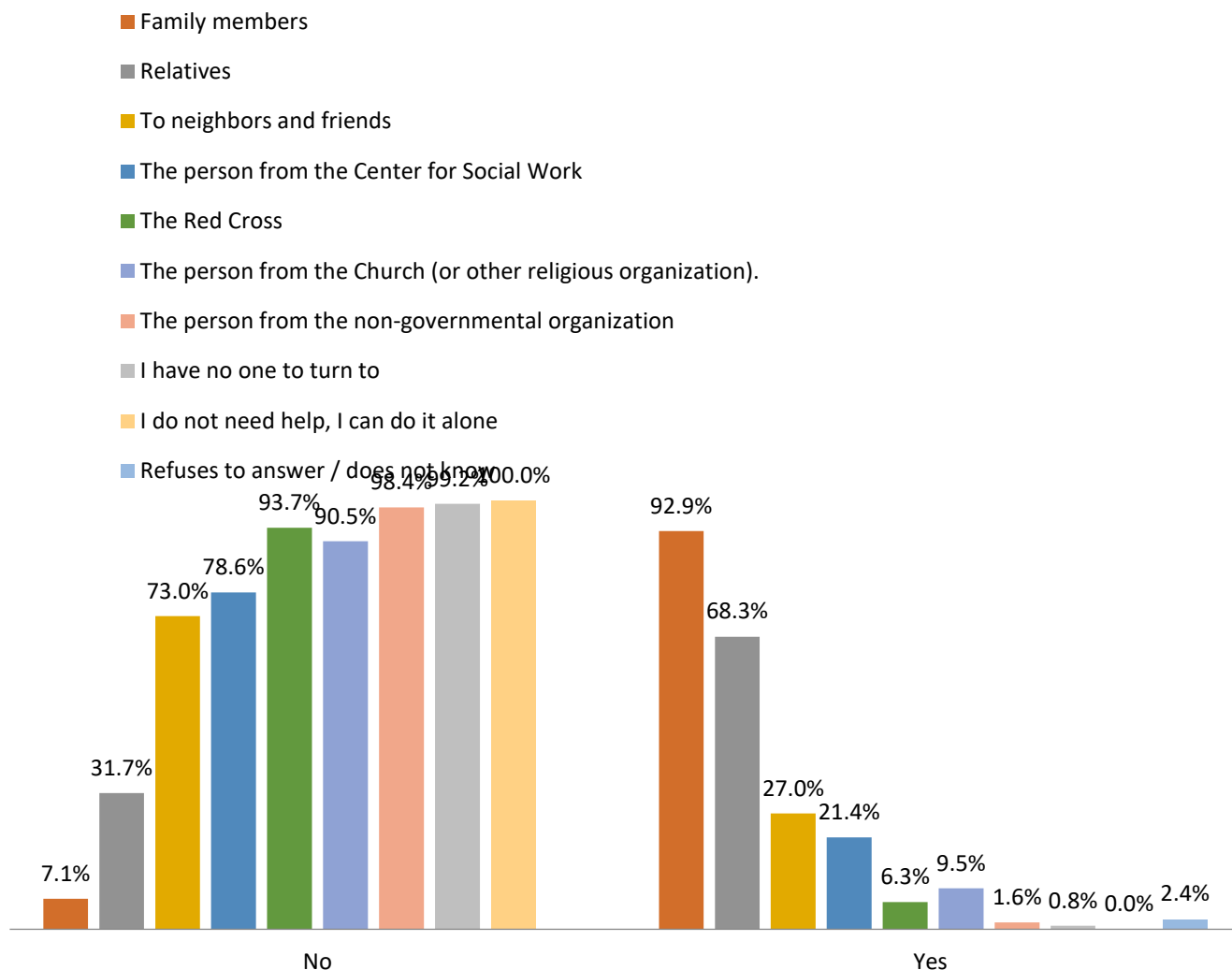
It seems family cars cannot be freely used for daily, or common activities. Very few respondents admitted there are other people who accompanies them to these places using their own cars (0.8% to 1.6%). A considerable number of respondents varying from 17.5 (social centres) to 37.3% (doctors); obviously there are no people who don't see the doctor at all, but there is a high percentage (32.5%) that admits they don't frequent public spaces as well as relatively high percentages of respondents who told their children don't go to social centres (17.5%) or to school (16.7%). On the average respondents need from 10.52 minutes to 28.8 minutes, but this distance can also be 120 minutes depending on the specific location of the respondents.



During the last 12 months most of the respondents (61.1%) have received social workers' services, but the percentage of those who have accessed other services is quite low. It varies from 10.3% for assistance about daily activities at home to 37.3% for counselling / moral assistance.

When asked if their health is seriously deteriorating or they have a fragile health and cannot take care of their children to whom they will ask for help and support, the most noticeable result is the very high percentage of respondents (92.9%) who claim in case of need there are their families who would offer them help. That is a very high rate, especially when compared to only 21.4% who admit they would rely on the help of someone from the social centre; 1.6% who would call a civil society organization and 6.3% who admitted they would be assisted from the Red Cross. Although only 0.8% said they have no one to rely on the fact that the ultimate majority rely on their families as the most trusted it is noticeable and needs immediate address.

Graph 25. Ask for help in cases kur nuk mund te kujdesen per femijen



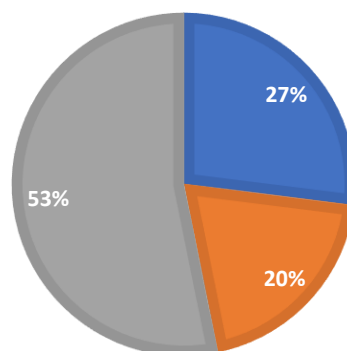
Even when they were asked if they have anyone to talk to about personal problems, similarly, the answers show that family members continue to be the most reliable source of comfort, 93.7% confirm this. It is to be added that a high percentage relies on their friendship as well (72.2%).

The respondents were asked also if the people who usually help them are not available, would they like another person to assist when they might need help. 62.7% of the respondents stated they would like to have someone to turn to for help. 22.2% said they could do everything by themselves. An interesting number of the interviewed about 7.9% said that they would wait for these people to be available, because they did not want other people to help them. 7.1% of the respondents refused to answer.

53.2% of the respondents have stated their child need home care and that they would like someone to visit him/her. Another 27% stated they would like to have someone to turn to and 19.8% claimed they do not have such a need.

Graph 26. Need for homecare and visits

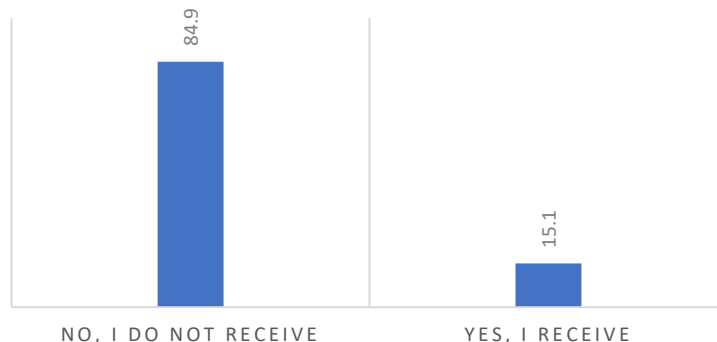
- My relatives help me, I do not need additional help
- I do not have such a need
- Yes, I would like to have someone to turn to



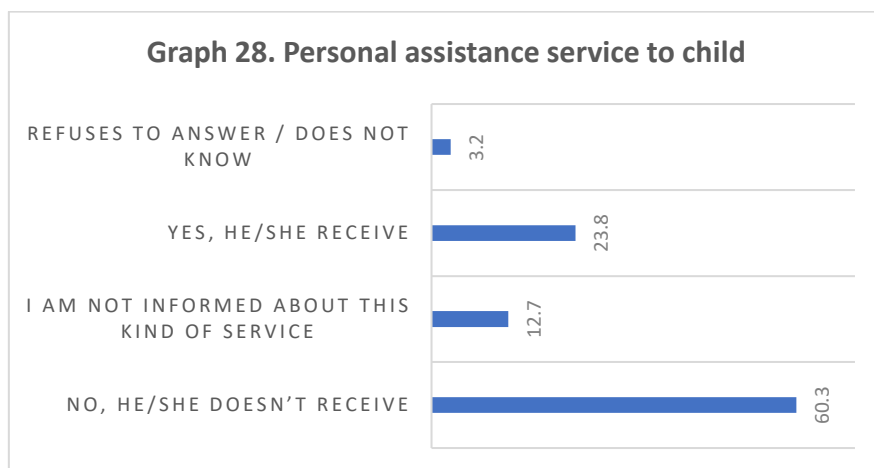
When asked if they have available rooms, would they share the residence with a person who would assist with the child in carrying out the daily activities, 29.4% of the respondents answered no, because they do not need daily assistance, except in certain cases. 32.5% of them just do not want to share the residence with other people and 33.3 % of the respondents would share the residence with someone who would assist their child.

Very impressive answers to the care services at home which speaks of the lack of such services as residential service. When asked if the parents or guardians receive help and care services at home as social services, 84.9% responded negatively whereas 15.1% answered positively, but again they are not able to share what services they are. But when asked who provides these services, 3.2% of the respondents naming the special allowance of money for the health condition of the child as well as the social state service. Another 2.4% goes similarly to the municipality and the centres of development that depend from the municipality, we see that only 1.6% claim that these services are offered by the social workers as well.

Graph 27. Care services at home



Reading the chart below, it is obvious that the majority of the interviewed have claimed that their child either does not receive personal assistance service (about 60.3%) or they do not know about its existence (12.7%). 23.8% stated that their child gets such service whereas 3.2 percent refused to answer.

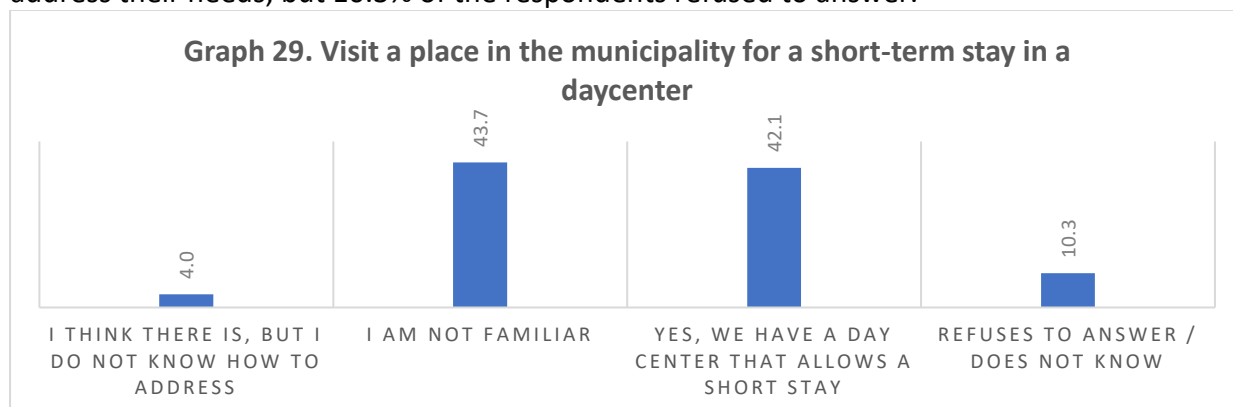


Respondents who responded positively to the above were also asked how satisfied they were with this kind of support. The answers for this question start with 1st as the least satisfied to the 5th as the most satisfied, so striking to the eye the highest percentage of the interviewed stated they are the least satisfied with this kind of service and 31.7 % find a middle way to cope with the service. The level of satisfaction on the service sees decrease with a considerable number of the respondents of 6.3 % for the option of very satisfied and extremely satisfied.

But if personal assistance is available, will they use it? The majority of the respondents have affirmed their answers with 61.9% thus showing a great need for the personal assistance services for this targeted community. Although 23.8% of the respondents stated that they would use this service rarely because they do some of the activities themselves. A negative response for the service comes from 6.3% whereas 7.9% refused to answer.

7.4.2.3. Assessment of social service needs in the local community

When asked if their children can visit a place in the municipality for a short-term stay in a daily centre, the majority of the respondents 43.7% have no idea that this service even exists whereas 42.1% are aware of the Daily Centre that allows a short stay for their children. There is a 4% of the interviewed that have an idea for such centres but they do not know how to address their needs, but 10.3% of the respondents refused to answer.

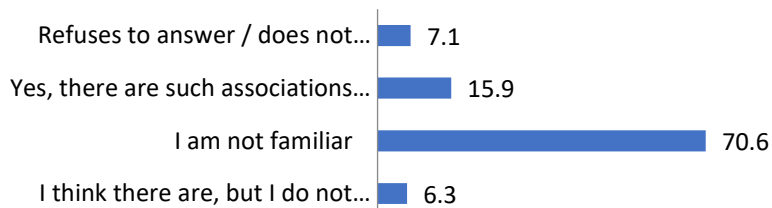


When asked about using the services of a daily care centre 60.3% said they did not or have not used such service, 29.4% are positive in having used this service whereas 10.3% refuses to answer / does not know. Related to satisfaction about these services where 1 is the worst

grade and 5 is very satisfied only 29.4% have responded to this question. 3.2% of the respondents rated it with 1 and 9.5% of them gave a maximum rating of 5, very satisfied. It is worth mentioning that 11.9% have a satisfied level for this service, evaluating it with a grade of 4.

Another interesting question was the existence of clubs in the municipality that provide socializing, entertainment and recreation for children with disabilities. The majority of the respondents 70.6% have stated that they have no idea that such facilities exist in their municipality. 15.9% of them admit that there are such arrangements and

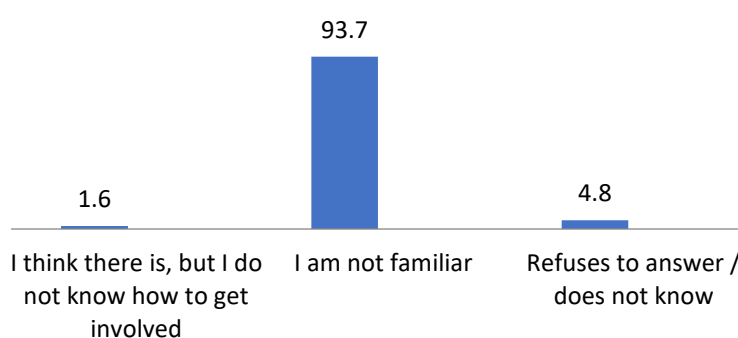
Graph 30. Existence of clubs in the municipality that provide socializing, entertainment and recreation for children with disabilities.



associations whereas 6.3% think there are such facilities but they do not know how to get involved. 7.1% refuses to answer. It is interesting because in the focus groups organized with parents or guardians of children with disabilities, or with stakeholders, it turned out that such clubs are missing. When asked about using or having ever used the services of these clubs and societies for children with disabilities, 73% of the respondents said no, 13.5% have used such services for their disabled children, whereas 13.5% refuse to answer. Respondents who have used these services rate them as good or very good at 7.2%.

Respondents were also asked about the existence of soup kitchen in the municipality where food is served and brought to vulnerable categories of citizens. 93.7% of the respondents do not know about the existence of this service, a tremendously sad figure for municipal service for the citizens. 1.6% of the respondents said they know about it but do not know how to get involved and benefit from such service whereas 4.8% of them refuses to answer.

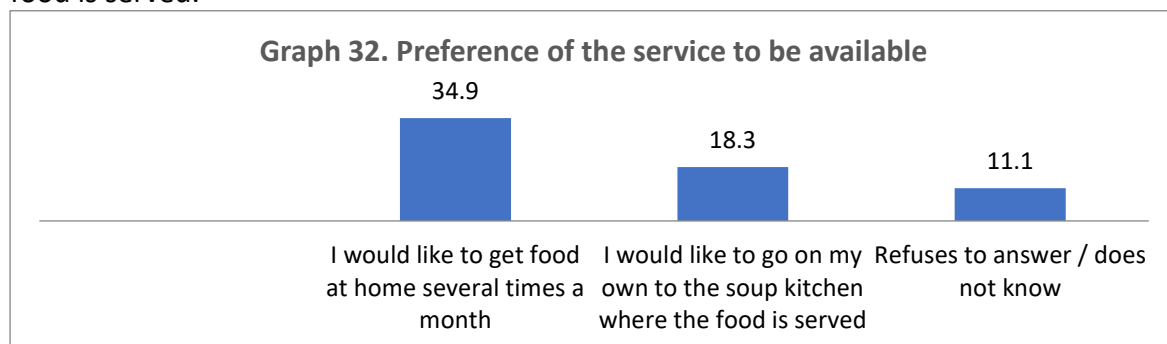
Graph 31. Existence of soup kitchen in the municipality where food is served and brought to vulnerable categories of citizens



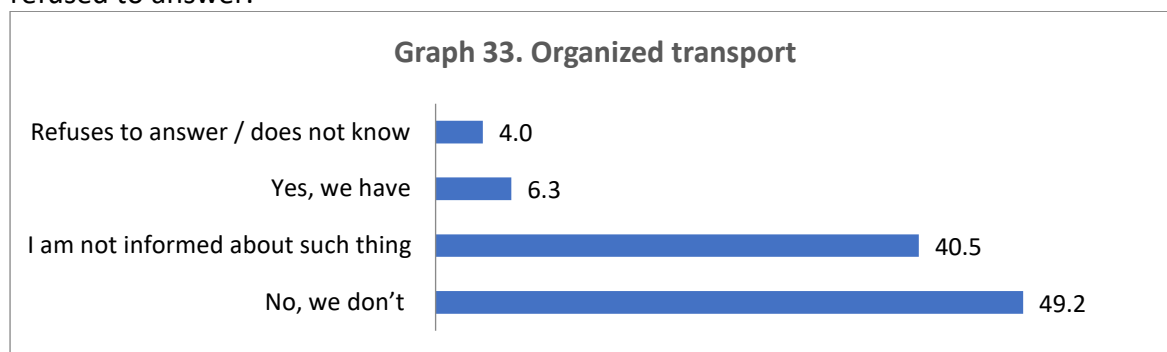
While, 40.5% of the respondents has admitted that they would use the service of municipal soup kitchen if available but not too often, whereas 22.2% said they would use it pretty often. A significant figure of 25.4% would not use such service whereas 5.6 refuse to answer the question.

Respondents were also asked how they would like this service to be available to them. A total of 64.3 % have responded to the question out of which 34.9% would like to get food at home

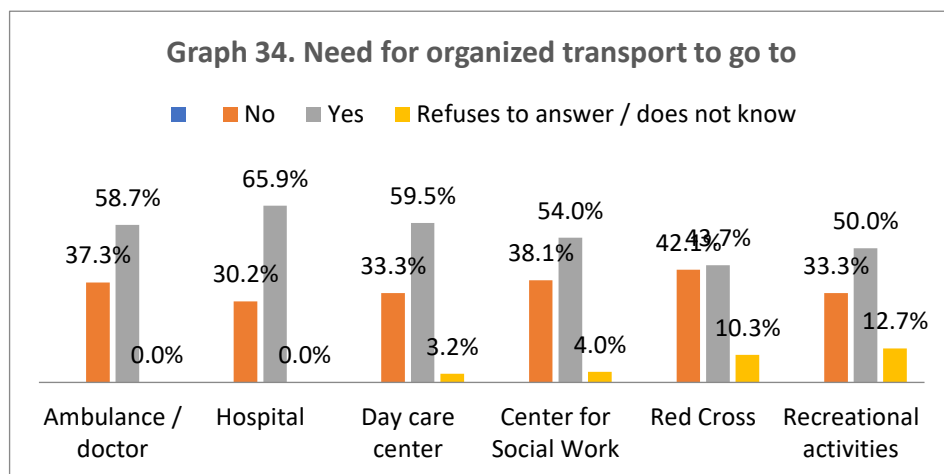
several times a month, 18.3% would prefer going on their own to the soup kitchen where the food is served.



Regarding the question of organized transport to the ambulance, care centres or clubs / associations for the elderly or other community centres in the municipality 49.2% of the interviewed said they do not have such service. 40.5% of them have no information on such service and only 6.3% of the respondents said they have such service. 4% of the interviewed refused to answer.



When asked if they needed an organized transport to go several places the answers showed that in every case less than 50% affirmed this. However, it should be clarified that the affirmative percentage is not small either. Actually, it varies from 30.2% to 42.1% being the highest one. Almost 70% of the respondents need organized transport to go to hospital, around 60% of them need this kind of transport to go to day care centre, almost 60% of the respondents need the organized transport to go to the doctor/ambulance. The graph no. 34 shows all the answers of the respondents involved in this survey.



38.1% of the respondents affirm on the existence of institutions in the municipality that provide daily care for children with disabilities at the municipality, while 34.1% are not aware of their existence and 19.8% of them think that there are such institutions. 5.6% of them said there are none of such institutions that offer services whereas 2.4% of them refused to answer.

When asked about the official name of the institution 57.9% of the respondents have answered the question out of

which 42.1% have referred to the Development Centres for such services, 4.8% have named the Social Service, 2.4% of them see Centres for children that can offer such services, 4% of the respondents do not have full information about it and 2.4% of them do not know the names of such institutions.

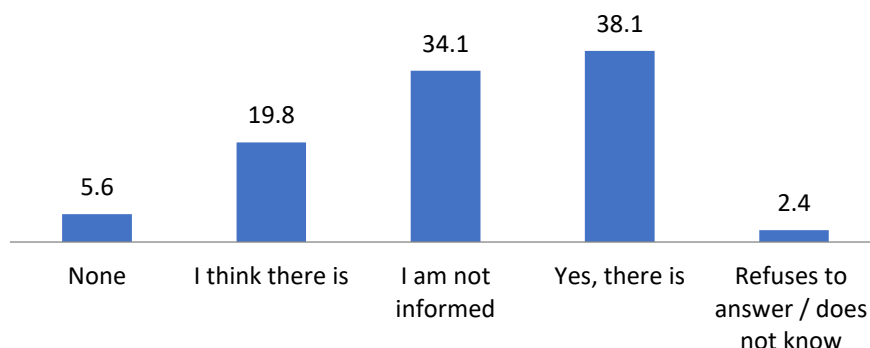
Related to the provision of adequate conditions for foster care and day care for children with disabilities, the question was responded by 57.9% of the respondents out of which 38.1% affirmed on good conditions, 8.7% of them said the conditions are not satisfying and 11.1% of them refused to answer.

If available, 39.7% of the respondents answered the question on using social services, out of which 23.8% confirmed on the use of such services, 7.1% of the respondents said they would use them but only if they needed help, whereas another 7.1% refused to use these services. There is a 1.6% of the respondents who do not know what to say.

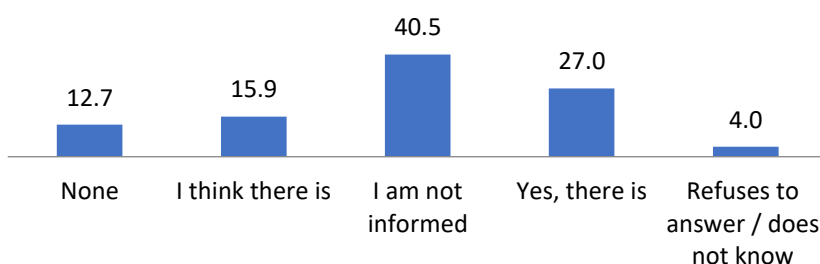
Related to the institution in the municipality that provides temporary residence for children with disabilities, 40.5% of the respondents negate to have such information, 27% admit there is such an institution in their municipality, whereas 15.9% of them think there is such institution but are

not quite sure of it. 12.7% of the respondents said there is no such institution in their municipality and 4% of them refused to answer. When asked about the official name of the institution 42.9% of the respondents have answered the question. Although they are not very informed about these services. 32.5% have referred to the development centres for such services, 0.8% have named the social service, 1.6% of them see centres for children that can offer such services, 7.9% of them do not know the names of such institutions. 42.9% of the interviewed provided their personal perception on adequacy of such institutions for

Graph 35 . Existence of institutions in the municipality that provide day care for children with disabilities

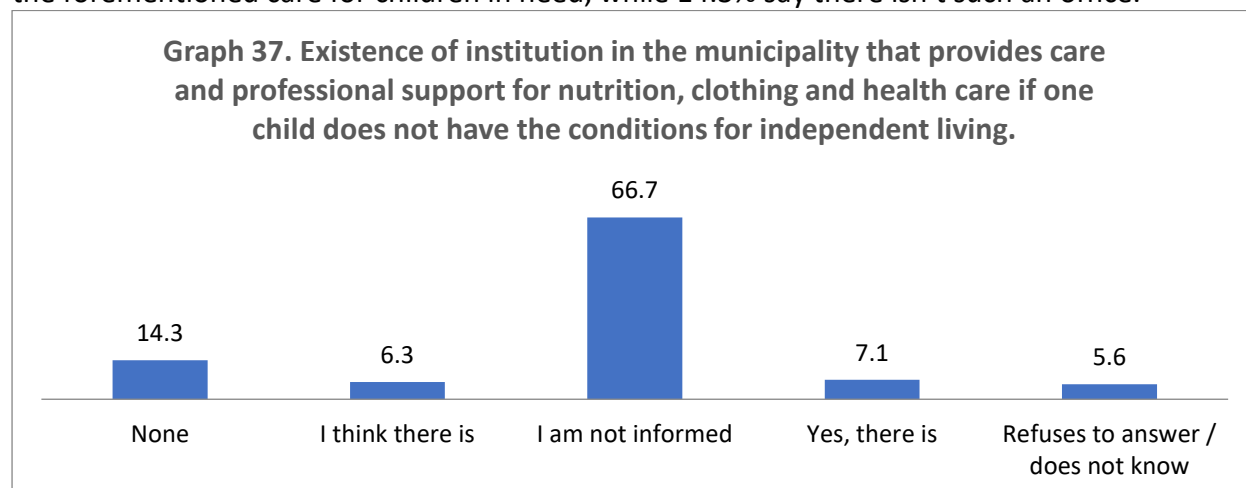


Graph 36. Existence of institution in the municipality that provide temporary residence for children with disabilities

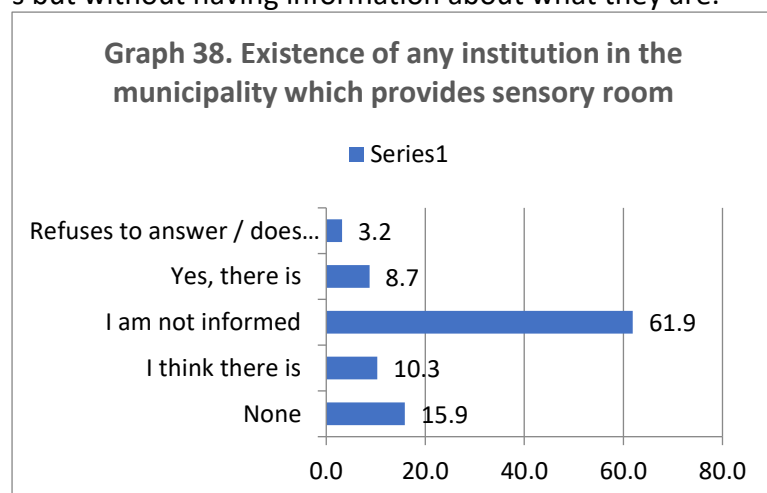


temporary residence of children with disabilities out of which 34.1% affirmed on good conditions, 3.2% of them said the conditions are not satisfying and 5.6% of them refused to answer. When asked whether they “would use social services if available” the majority, 20.6% confirmed they would, 18.3% stated they would do so just in case of need, while 6.3% refused to answer and almost 8% declared that they will not use these services.

As per the graph below, it is interesting how 66.7% of the respondents admit they have no idea if there is any institution in the municipality that offers care and professional support regarding food, clothing, and health in case the child lacks them. A small percentage (6.3%) stated they think there should be such an office; 7.1% admit there is an office that provides the forementioned care for children in need, while 14.3% say there isn’t such an office.



When respondents who answered positively to the above question, were also asked about the names of these institutions there is a confusion in the answer. 6.3% of the respondents think that the Centre for Development which is situated within the municipality is the institution that offers such services; 2.4% do not know the name of the institution, while in the opinion of 4.8% of the respondents attribute the existence of this facility to different CSOs but without having information about what they are.



The majority of the respondents (61.9%) do not have any information if there are any institution in the municipality that provide a sensory room in which students with disabilities will be able to spend a certain period of the day, in case they have difficulty in following the teaching process. 16% stated there are no such rooms, 10% believe there should be such a room, but are not quite sure,

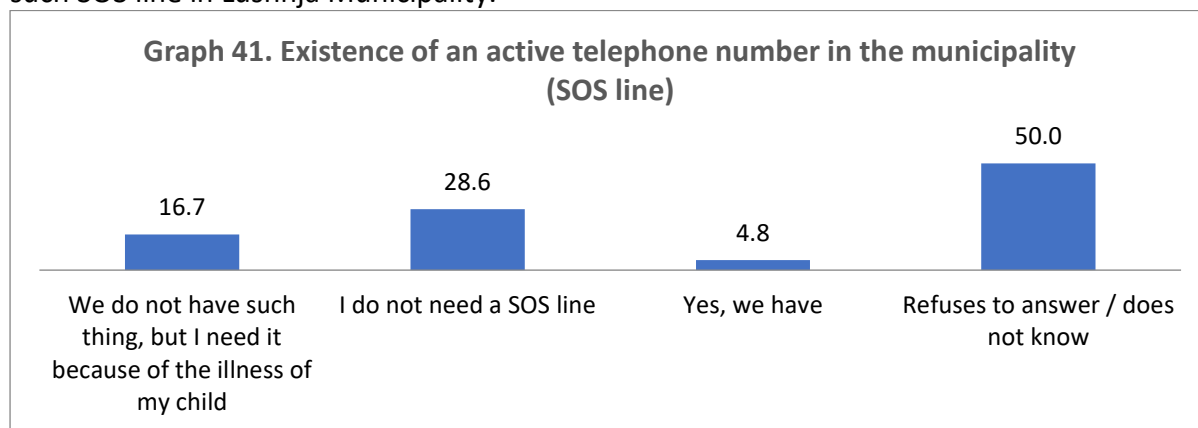
whereas 9% are sure such a room exists. 5% of the respondents believe there is a Social Centre that offers a sensory room, while in the opinion of 14% of the respondents the Development Centre is the one that offers such a room.

Respondents were also asked if they would use these institutions if they existed. 4% of them denied their possible use; 44.4% would use them without hesitation; 21.4% would use them just in case of need, whilst 7.9% refuse to answer.

When asked whether anyone had ever asked from them compensation for the services provided in

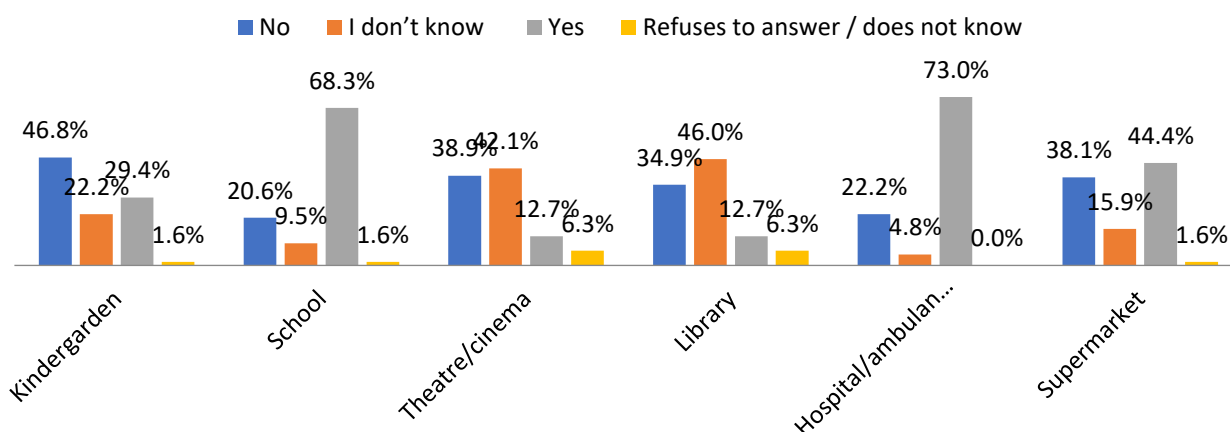
the care institutions for children with special needs: 73% stated that no one had ever asked them money; 22.2% stated they had never used these services; 0.8% stated that the services are not paid by them and 4% refused to answer.

In regards of an active telephone number in the municipality (SOS line) where they can call if something happens, 16.7% of the respondents stated there doesn't exist a specific phone number in the municipality where people can call in case something happens; 28.6% answered they don't need such a number; 4.8 % said that, yes, there is a specific number for such emergencies and 50% said they don't know / refused to answer. Fact is that there is no such SOS line in Lushnja Municipality.



When asked if there was an adequate access to the several institutions for the children with disabilities, independently or with parent's support, 73% of the respondents confirmed that there is proper access to hospital and ambulance and 68.3% claim the same for schools. It is interesting that almost 47% of the respondents say that such proper access is missing at kindergartens. More data are shown at the graph no. 42 below.

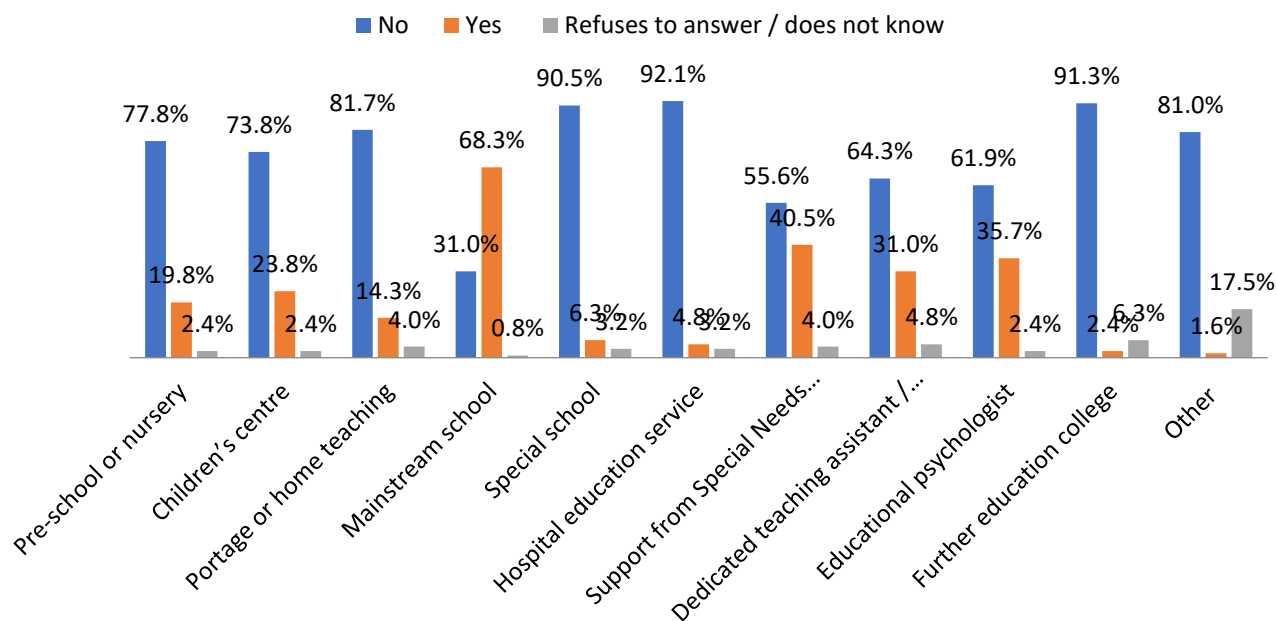
Graph 42. Adequate access to the following institutions



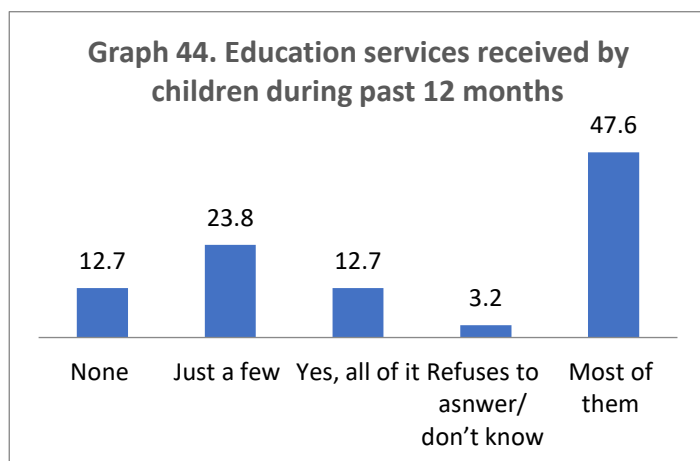
7.5. Assessment of education services and facilities

Parents or guardians of the children with disabilities were asked also in relation with educational services for their children, During the last 12 months most of the children have frequented common schools with other children who do not display their needs (68.3%). Among children who have been given any forms of education 40.5% have been assisted by a teacher for children's special needs (supporting teacher). It can be noticed that only 19.8% of respondents' children have frequented preschool institutions, and only 23.8% of them go to a centre for children. It is quite surprising that only 35.7% of these children are assisted by an educational psychologist, even that this service should be provided by law.

Graph 43. Educational services for children in the last 12 months



Almost half of the respondents (47.6%) stated that in the last 12 months their children have

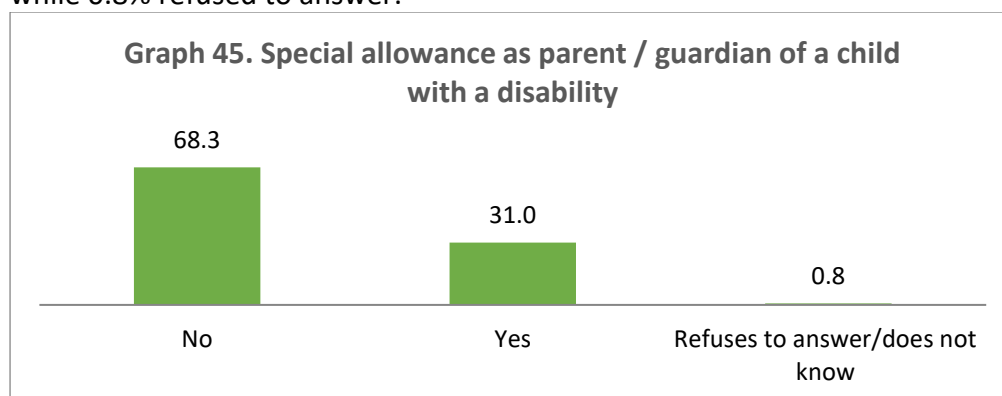


been provided most of the educational needs they need; 12.7% stated they have been provided all their needs, but the same percentage goes for those who think absolutely the contrary, that no educational services at all have been provided to their children; and 23.8 answered that only a few educational services have been provided to their children.

According to 41% of the respondents there are special classes / department within schools for children with special needs; 37% have a different opinion, that there are no such classes, while 22% don't know or refuse to answer. But, based on the focus groups organized with both parents and stakeholders, but also based on in-depth interviews, such classes do not exist in the schools of Lushnja municipality.

We have asked the respondents to list the educational support services their children need on local level. 22.2% of them, the highest percentage stated that their children need a teacher for children with special needs; 15.1 % don't have any opinion; 8.7% are pleased with the educational services their child receives, while 9.5% have simply answered their children need "school". There are also other needs expressed in smaller percentages like a speech therapist with 3.2%, 7.1% on special class; 2.4% for a psychologist etc.

When asked if they receive any special allowance as parent / guardian of a child with a disability 68.3% of the respondents have claimed that they do not receive any special compensations as the parent/guardian of a child with special needs; 31% stated they do so, while 0.8% refused to answer.

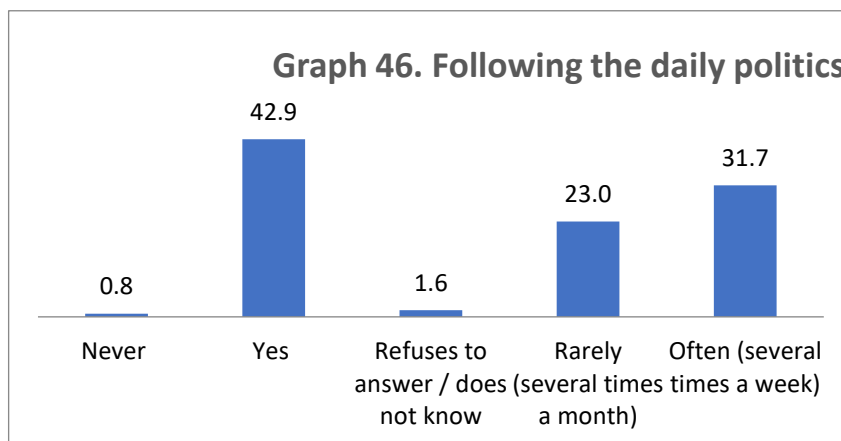


The vast majority of the respondents, 88% admit they have never been asked any payments for the educational services their child receives; 4% admit the contrary, while 8% refuse to answer.

7.6. Governance – Risk Factor

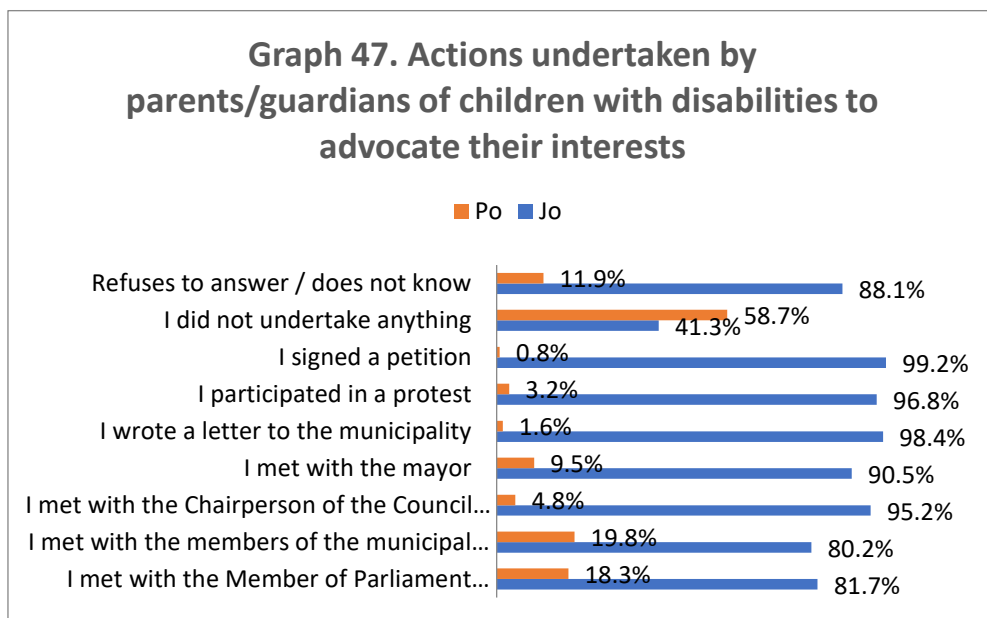
7.6.1. Assessment of the views and needs of people with disabilities

Related to governance as risk factor, we have asked the parents/guardians of children with disabilities several question. One of questions was in regards of the daily politics. There is high percentage of the



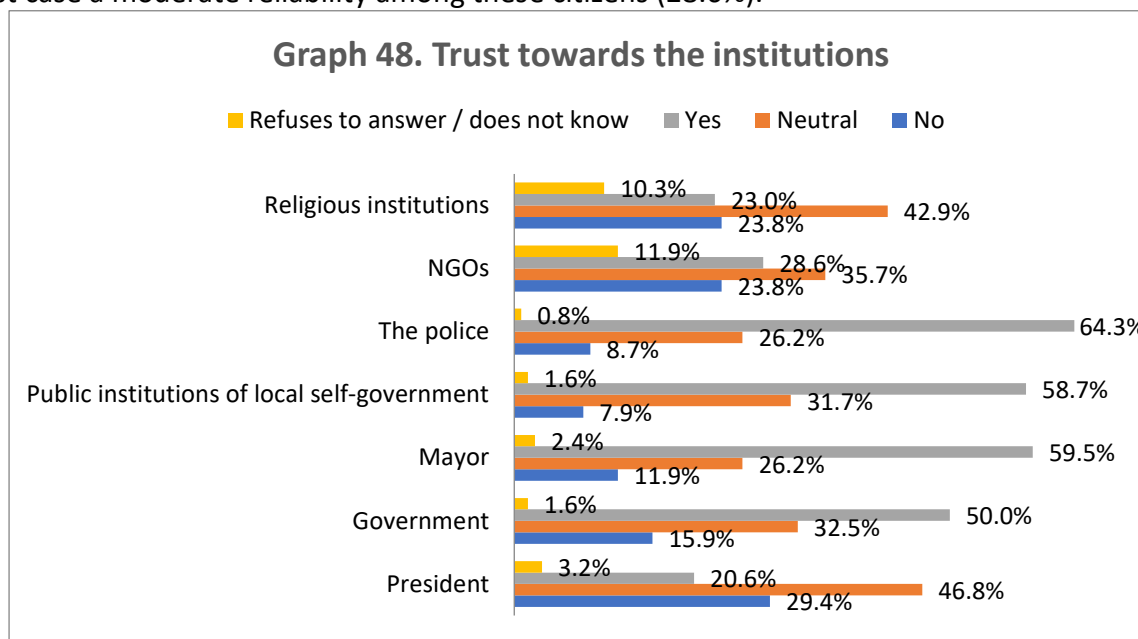
respondents who fail to follow the latest developments in the country (42.9%); 31.7% follow them at least several times a week; 23% rarely do so, and 1.6% refuses to answer. In regards of any policies adopted at the local level in the last 3 years that are of interest to parent/guardian of child with disability, 54% of the respondents do not know whether in the last 3 years' policies in the local level that favour them as have been adopted, 29% are sure such policies are not adopted while 17% think the contrary.

As per the graph no. 47 few actions have been undertaken by the respondents to advocate their interests. The majority of them (58.7%) haven't claimed their rights at all. However, some have met the members of the parliament of their area (18.3%), or members of the municipal council (19.8%). Smaller percentages have met the mayor (9.5%), or the chairman of the municipal council. Those who have participated in open protests belong in a very small group (3.2%). An even smaller group, 0.8% consists of those who have signed a petition. Lastly, the percentage of those who have given no information for this question is 11.9%.

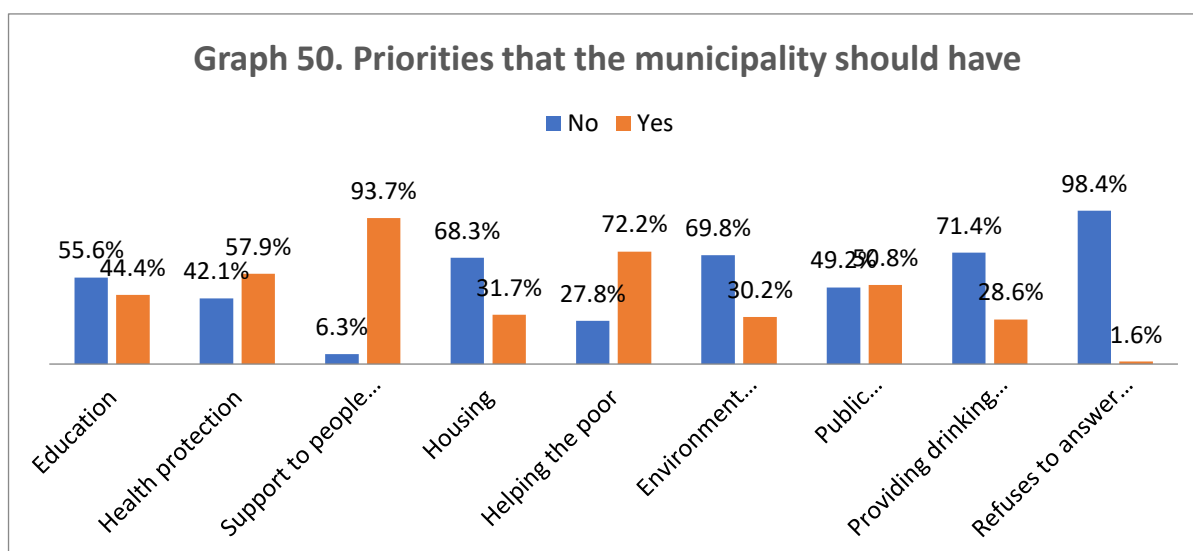


Related to the trust towards the institutions, central and local governmental institutions, except the president seem to enjoy a high reliability that varies from 50% to 64.3%. Actually, these statements are contradictory since the abovementioned analysis shows that respondents have received only little support and concrete services from these institutions! Also, it is to be noted that

religious institutions are the second less trusted institutions (23%). The CSO-s too have in the best case a moderate reliability among these citizens (28.6%).



We also asked the parents/guardians of children with disabilities related to the priorities that Municipality of Lushnja should have. The most important thing for the respondents seems to be the assistance toward people with special needs with 93.7% of the respondents. Health protection should be a priority for 57.9%, help towards poor people is an issue of high concern as well. 72% of the respondents consider it to be a priority the municipality should absolutely have. Public infrastructure should be municipality's priority for 50% of the respondents. Issues like environmental protection or drinking water are considered less of an issue and therefore only 30.2% and 28.6% see them as top priorities the municipality should have.



The interesting fact is that according to 66% of the respondents there are no gatherings, no unity between parents / guardians of children with special needs and only 31% claim that there are such groupings. Also, according to the parents/guardians of children with disabilities, 71% of the respondents do not know and are in no contact with any organizations

that helps people with special needs and their parents/ guardians; only 15% have such a knowledge. As it can be expected 60% of them don't know whether any organizations have taken any initiatives to defend or progress their rights and needs in the municipality council; only 7% have a different opinion, whereas 33% refuse to answer or don't know.

It is interesting and somewhat impressive that the majority, 63% of the respondents do not know if there are any organizations that represent people with special needs in public hearings, debates, forums, meetings with the local community etc. In addition, 31% of the remaining respondents are sure there are no such organizations. Therefore only 6% do now that indeed there are organization who represent their interests.

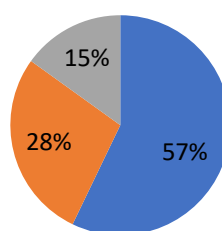
7.7. Discrimination – Risk Factor

7.7.1. Assessment of facing discrimination

We have asked the parents/guardians of children with disabilities if they think that the rights of people with disabilities are respected in the country. 45% of the respondents think that the rights of people with special needs are not respected in the country; 43% said they don't know or refused to answer and only 12% are happy with the way people with special needs are treated. However, 57% of the respondents stated that neither them, nor their children have felt discriminated during the last 12 months. 15% refused to answer / didn't know what to say; and only 15% admitted it has happened so. In fact, this statement from the survey contradicts the focus groups organized with parents of children with disabilities, where discrimination was one of the problems they encountered in their daily lives.

Graph 51. Feeling discriminated against

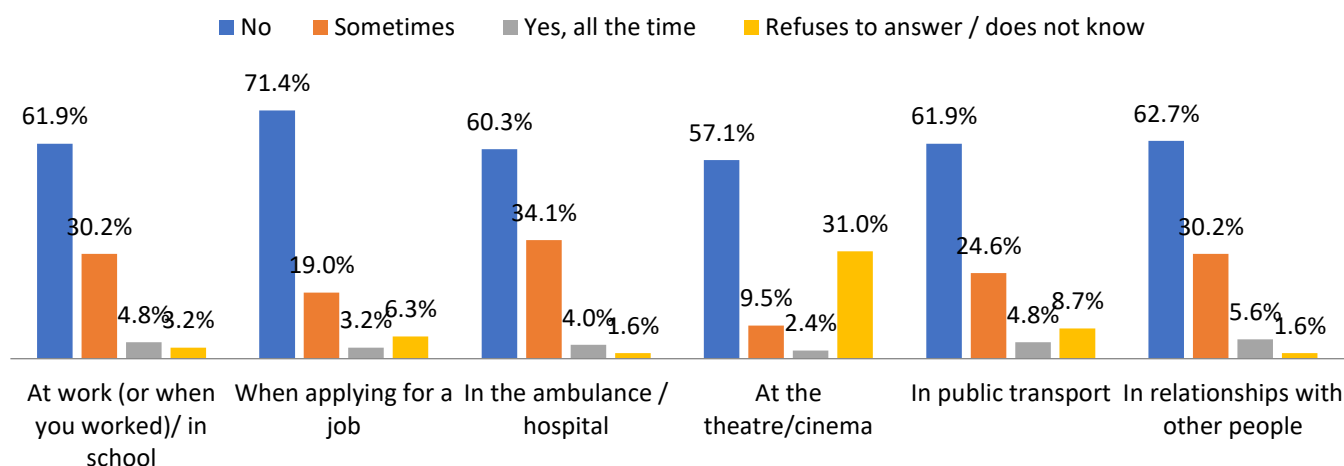
■ No ■ Yes ■ Refuses to answer / does not know



Asked if they felt discriminated against by various institutions, the very low percentage of those who admit that they felt discriminated 2.4% to 5.6% is almost unbelievable. If not for something else, it can at least be attributed to the prejudice of social desirability. Perhaps, in part it is an expression of the desire to be seen as equal and capable.

It is problematic that although responses have this tendency, the highest percentage of those who admit to feeling "sometimes" discriminated against have experienced this sensation in hospital / ambulance.

Graph 52. Felt discriminated in the everyday situations

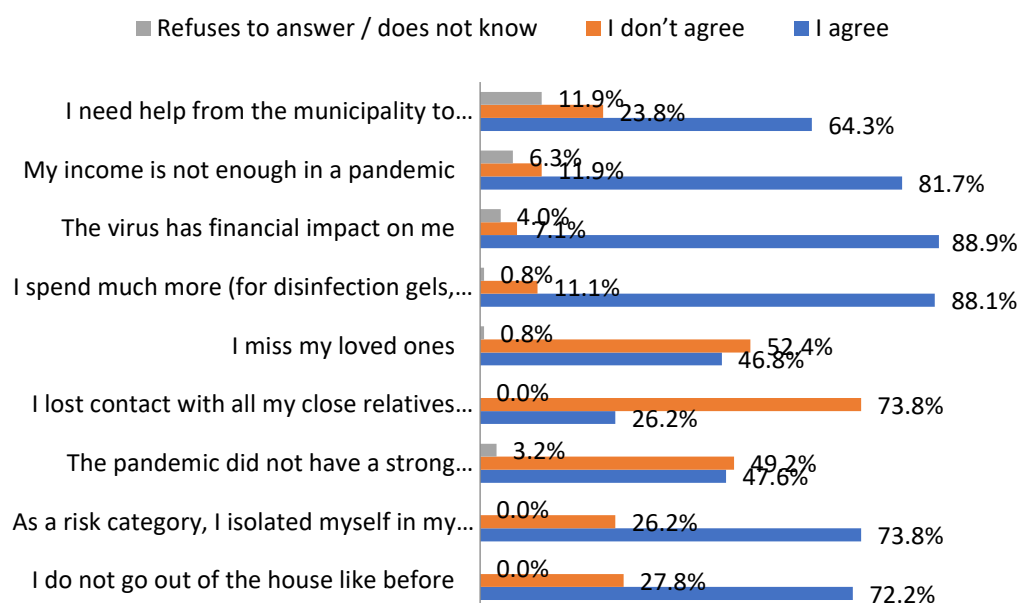


None of the respondents has ever reported an act of discrimination.

7.7.2. Vulnerability to shocks – risk factor – COVID 19

The pandemic weighed heavily on the respondents' finances. Also, most of them do not get out of home as previously (72.2%). Feeling more endangered than others they have mostly isolated themselves at home (73.8%). Mental health keeps being a debatable issue, as the percentage of those who think they have been affected mentally and emotionally by the pandemic (47.2%), is almost equal to those who claim the contrary (49.2%).

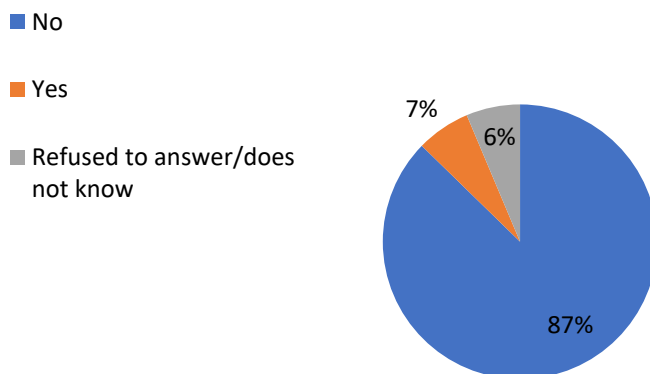
Graph 53. Impact of the virus at daily activities



When asked related to the measures that was taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and how these measures affected them, contradictory answers were given by the respondents. The vast majority of the respondents have stated their physical activity and that of their children did not suffer any changes despite the limitations (81%). Only 38.1% felt lonely. The same percentage goes for those who were fearful they would get infected, but there are far more respondents (65.1%) who admit their and their children's health were deteriorated. Despite their optimistic attitude, only 34.9% of the respondents believe there will be a successful resolution to the situation.

Meanwhile related to savings, 87% of the respondents admitted they do not have savings they can use to resolve problems and issues caused by the coronavirus pandemic. A small percentage, 7%, admitted they do have savings; and 6% refused to answer.

Graph 52. Savings that can be used to alleviate the problems caused by the coronavirus situation



More than half of the respondents in different administrative units, ranging from 53.2% to 92.9% admitted they have taken on debt to withstand the situation caused the pandemics. 62% denied to have received financial assistance to deal with the coronavirus. The rest have received financial assistance but not from institutions but from family members.

Here it comes another contradictory answer compared to those given above. 57% of the respondents admit they need psychological assistance during pandemic times. In accordance with previous answers respondents have stated they need financial help (86.5%). Many respondents would like to have assistance regarding drugs and vitamins (41.3%). Interestingly, only a few consider socialization in nature as important (13.5%).

When asked what they need most and what the municipality should cover, 86.5% of the respondents mentioned that support should cover respectively: 41.3% one-time financial assistance in the amount of the average pension, 31.7% affirmed they would need grocery vouchers whereas 13.5% need other types of help.

The pandemic time has influenced every respondent in multiple ways. People feel abandoned by the government (65.1%), but have more trust in the local institutions. This result too is in open contradiction with at least one of the previous answers according to which government's reliability was 50%, while that of the local institutions 58%. Additionally, it is logically unexplainable why 47.6% of the respondents would answer that all the citizens have the same possibilities to take the necessary services, when the lack of trust in the central government is so high! Thirdly, it is difficult to explain the fact that only 42.9% of the respondents claim that, as parents of children with special needs they were left in difficulty when the vast majority of them have stated in the previous answers they needed financial and psychological assistance. What strikes the eye is highlighted is that within the same graph 60.3% answered that actually those who are more educated and who earn more income have more possibilities to be safe, because of their connection with hospital staffs and other influencing people.



8. Focus group analysis – Children with disabilities

In the municipality of Lushnja were organized 4 focus groups with parents / guardians of children with disabilities. In general, in all four organized focus groups, the findings and problems of parents / guardians of children with disabilities are the same.

Findings from Focus group 1:

The Focus Group was organised on March 30th, 2022 at 9:00 near the Development Center of Lushnja Municipality, with the participation of 8 parents of children with disabilities.

- This FGD was attended by parents from the city but also from rural administrative units.
- All the participating parents suffer from economic problems and the child's illness has made the situation more difficult;
- 80% of participants were unemployed and unregistered at the employment office;
- 100% of the parents received financial assistance from the state for the child but did not receive financial assistance as a Personal Assistant;
- Lack of proper logistics in transport makes it difficult to move with children;
- When they have to travel to Fier or Tirana, the costs increases more and families cannot afford it;
- During the COVID-19 period they all drastically reduced their movements, had children's health crises. During this period, they did not receive additional financial assistance from the state but food packages from the municipality;
- The Municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group, or financial compensation, and many parents occasionally skipped medical visits of children when they were outside the city;
- All participating parents brought their children to the Center, but according to them the time available is not enough;
- Supporting teachers in schools are not very functional.
- School psychologists are absent or even when they (psychologists) cover some schools;

Findings from Focus group 2:

The Focus Group was organised on March 30th, 2022 at 10:15 near the Development Center of Lushnja Municipality, with the participation of 9 parents of children with disabilities.

- This FGD was attended by parents from the city and one from rural administrative unit.
- Most of the participating parents suffer from economic problems and the child's illness has made the situation more difficult;
- 60% of participants were unemployed and unregistered at the employment office;
- 100% of the parents received financial assistance from the state for the child but did not receive financial assistance as a Personal Assistant;



- Lack of proper logistics in transport makes it difficult to move with children;
- When they have to travel to Fier or Tirana, the costs increase more and families cannot afford it;
- Parents demand at least a refund from the municipality for transport with 5000 ALL per month;
- During the COVID-19 period they all drastically reduced their movements, had children's health crises. During this period, they did not receive additional financial assistance from the state but food packages from the municipality. During this period they have performed all medical visits of their children or in Tirana.
- The Municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group, or financial compensation, and many parents occasionally skipped medical visits of children when they were outside the city;
- All participating parents brought their children to the Center, but according to them the time available is not enough;
- Parents are not satisfied with the supporting teachers in schools.
- Parents often feel discriminated against when receiving medical services in Lushnja;
- Parents with children 0-6 years old cannot take their children to day-care or kindergarten because the law does not provide for a supportive teacher or educator, and for this reason they are obliged to keep them at home.
- The procedures for preparing the dossier for child support assistance are very lengthy and the required documentation is often impossible to collect;
- Parents request a change in the procedure for approving financial assistance for caregivers (Personal Assistant) for all families with children with disabilities.

Findings from Focus group 3:

The Focus Group was organised on April 1st, 2022 at 9:00 near the Hysgjokaj Administrative Unit of Lushnja Municipality, with the participation of 8 parents of children with disabilities.

- This FGD was attended by parents from rural administrative units.
- All of the participating parents suffer from economic problems and the child's illness has made the situation more difficult;
- 100% of participants were unemployed and unregistered at the employment office;
- 100% of the parents received financial assistance from the state for the child but did not receive financial assistance as a Personal Assistant;
- Lack of proper logistics in transport makes it difficult to move with children;
- During the COVID-19 they did not receive additional financial assistance from the state but food packages from the municipality.
- The Municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group, or financial compensation, and many parents more often skipped medical visits of children when they were outside the administrative unit;
- Being far away, they rarely take children to the center for children with disabilities in Lushnja;
- Many of them have removed their children from school
- Parents very often feel discriminated against.



- The procedures for preparing the dossier for child support assistance are very lengthy and the required documentation is often impossible to collect.

Findings from Focus group 4:

The Focus Group was organised on April 1st, 2022 at 9:00 near City Council Hall of Lushnja Municipality, with the participation of 8 parents of children with disabilities.

- This FGD was attended by parents from rural administrative units.
- All of the participating parents suffer from economic problems and the child's illness has made the situation more difficult;
- 90% of participants were unemployed and unregistered at the employment office;
- Many parents had very little information regarding the services provided in the municipality of Lushnja for their children with disabilities.
- 100% of the parents received financial assistance from the state for the child but did not receive financial assistance as a Personal Assistant;
- Lack of proper logistics in transport makes it difficult to move with children;
- During the COVID-19 they did not receive additional financial assistance from the state but food packages from the municipality.
- The Municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group, or financial compensation, and many parents more often skipped medical visits of children when they were outside the administrative unit;
- Being far away, they rarely take children to the center for children with disabilities in Lushnja;
- Parents very often feel discriminated against.
- The procedures for preparing the dossier for child support assistance are very lengthy and the required documentation is often impossible to collect;

As part of the information gathering, GADC also organized 1 focus group discussion with stakeholders. This FGD was attended by representatives of the Social Service, Social Center for Children with Disabilities; Representatives from Education, Health, and Civil Society Organizations.

Main findings:

The Focus Group with the stakeholders was organised on March 30th, 2022 at 9:00 near the City Council Hall of Lushnja Municipality, with the participation of 9 stakeholders.

- The center for children with disabilities has a staff of 19 people, of which 12 are specialized to provide services for this target group and the rest are support staff. Although the capacity of this center is 26 children, currently 54 children participate in this center, so the need for budget and human resources is quite high. The budget for 2021: 14,366.00 ALL



- The infrastructure of educational institutions for people with disabilities is partially lacking in the municipality of Lushnja, highlighting here the existing buildings;
- No personal social assistance services are provided for children with disabilities;
- Each school has support teachers for this target group, it is usually a teacher for 2 children, and the assistance it gives to each child is in a certain order during the day;
- Although there are support teachers, there are no special classes for children with disabilities in Lushnja schools.
- There is a total lack of services for children with disabilities aged 16-18.
- There is no residential center;
- There is no organized transport in the municipality, this is because the children of this target group are divided into different areas and it is impossible to coordinate means of transport;
- There is no institution in the municipality of Lushnja that provides professional care and support for food, clothing and health care if a child does not have the conditions for independent living;
- The Municipality does not have an SOS telephone number, but they have distributed the personal numbers of specialists and employees of the Social Service or Social Center;
- In the municipality of Lushnja there are no clubs that offer socialization, entertainment or recreation for this target group;
- The number of psychologists in schools is low, having 1 psychologist per 700 students.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

During the drafting of this Social Mapping, we managed to once again highlight the needs that this target group has. Families of children with disabilities have major financial problems, which often affect receiving medical visits or specialized services for children. This is especially true for children with disabilities in rural areas. In most families who have a child with these needs, one of the parents is always unemployed and forced to stay home to take care of the child. Social services, although present in this municipality, still do not meet all the daily needs of this target group or offer residential services. Young people with disabilities aged 16-18, cannot receive services in the Social Center for this target group.

Specialized medical care is lacking, thus not only increasing the risk of children deteriorating but also increasing the cost of traveling to other municipalities to receive the service. None of the means of transport, public or private, has the minimum necessary conditions for children with disabilities. The financial assistance that this target group receives from the state in many cases does not even cover the basic needs of children, thus leading to significant shortcomings.

The quality of assistance provided by support teachers is not in all cases at the right level. As well as this help is often lacking especially in urban administrative units, as the number of teaching assistants is lower than the need of children and their number.

Main Recommendation:



- The municipality in cooperation with the Regional Directorate of Education should identify the number of support teachers and ensure that every child with disabilities receives daily assistance and according to the educational program.
- The Municipality of Lushnja should provide a budget which will cover the organized transport of children who should receive specialized services outside their residential centers.
- As soon as possible and urgently, ramps should be built in those schools where they are missing.
- The municipality should control and oblige the public transport operators that their vehicles meet the logistical conditions for this category.
- Review of the law and recognition of years of service (of parents) for children for all categories of disability. Also, determination of working hours.
- Review the law and provide financial assistance to any parent who has children with disabilities and stays at home to care for them.
- Revision of the law on the appointment of assistant educators for children who must attend kindergarten.
- Prioritizing the solution of problems for the provision of services for young people with disabilities aged 16-18.
- Providing home education for all children who cannot attend school.
- Reimbursement of all medicines for children with disabilities, and the inclusion in the reimbursement scheme of vitamins.
- Consider the possibility of setting up a soup kitchen within the territory of the municipality which offers at least one meal for children with disabilities suffering from extreme poverty.
- Providing psychological assistance to parents of rural administrative units who suffer from the burden of disability of children.
- Informing the general public and this category in particular about all services offered by the municipality to help children with disabilities.
- Establishment of active telephone number in the municipality (SOS line) where parents of children with disabilities can call for different needs.
- Providing patronage service for children with disabilities.



10. Recommendations in line with SDGs

Problem identification	SDG ⁹	Effect (Medium; Low; High)	Target	Indicator	Key institutions
Mos of targeted children with disabilities in addition to the disability that accompanies them all their lives, they also have other health problems that come as a result. The lack of specialized medical services for their disability near residential centres aggravates the situation even more. (Presented in% or descriptive in the Report)	SGD 3: Good Health and Well-Being	High	Target 3.8: By 2030 achieve universal health coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of specialized medical services for which children with disabilities. • Number of services added according as per above. • Number of children with disabilities who have benefited from specialized medical services near residential centers or within the municipality of Lushnja. 	Ministry of Health and Social Protection; Municipality of Lushnja; Ministry of Finance and Economy.

⁹Here please specify which SDG is priority. Include 3 to 5 priority SDGs which point out to the respective policy areas where recommendations are provided and as per LNOB group.



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children who benefits from Social Centers 	
	Recommendation 1: Providing specialized medical services near residential centers.				
	Recommendation 2: Cost recovery in cases when these services must be obtained outside the municipality of Lushnja.				
	Recommendation 3: Increasing the capacity of the Day Care Center for children with disabilities as well as the establishment of a residential center for children of this target group suffering from extreme poverty.				
Children with disabilities suffer the lack of proper logistics to access schools or kindergartens. Also the	SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all	High	Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate identification of the 	Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of



lack of a sufficient number of assistant teachers makes their progress in school difficult and they often interrupt the learning. Children with disabilities in the schools of rural administrative units remain problematic.	and promote lifelong learning		complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	number of support teachers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of support and specialized teachers for children with disabilities. The number of beneficiaries who receive this service in a proper and uninterrupted manner. Number of schools that meet the logistical criteria for children with disabilities. 	Finance and Economy; Regional Education Directorate; 44 schools of Lushnja municipality and Municipality of Lushnja
	Recommendation 1: Equipping with proper logistics for access to school for children with disabilities. Construction of ramps in 28 schools that lack this facility.				
	Recommendation 2: Review of the support curriculum for this target group				



	and make available support teachers for each child with disabilities				
	Recommendation 3: Revision of the law on the appointment of assistant educators for children who must attend kindergarten				
Families of children with disabilities have large shortages of financial income. As many services for children are missing, in 99% of cases one of the parents is forced to stay at home as unemployed. The financial assistance received by the state for children is quite low and does not meet basic needs. Also the number of parents who receive additional financial assistance as guardians is very low. After all, even in cases where parents receive financial assistance from the state, the years of service are not recognized as years of work for all categories of this target group. Thus missing the payment of basic health and social contributions.	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	High	<p>Target 10.1: By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average</p> <p>Target 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents in the target group who will receive financial assistance from the state for child care. • Changes in the legislation regarding the monthly fee that this target group benefits due to disability. • Review of the law and recognition of years of service (of parents) for children for all categories of disability. 	Medical Commission for Assignment of Ability; Ministry of Health and Social Services; Ministry of Finance and Economy; Albanian Government.



	Recommendation 1: Review the law and provide financial assistance to any parent who has children with disabilities and stays at home to care for them.		race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.		
	Recommendation 2: Review the amount of financial assistance for this target group.				
	Recommendation 3: Review of the law and recognition of years of service (of parents) for children for all categories of disability. Also determination of working hours.				
Lack of logistics in means of transport is a major obstacle for children with disabilities. The lack of services near residential centers forces the families of this target group to undertake trips, often daily. But, both public and private	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. .	High	Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of public transport line operators that meet the necessary conditions for children with disabilities. 	Municipality of Lushnja; Public Transport operators.



transport do not provide the necessary conditions for these children. Also, the municipality of Lushnja does not provide organized transport for this target group for movements to receive services, thus increasing the costs of families of children with disabilities.			for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget item for transport organized by the municipality. Number of children benefiting from the transport organized by the municipality 	
	Recommendation 1: Obligation by the municipality for every public transport operator to meet the necessary conditions for children with disabilities.				
	Recommendation 2: Provision in the annual budget of the municipality of Lushnja of a fund to cover transport for this target group, or the creation of organized transport according to administrative units.				