PRISHTINA   SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY CITY NOTE

This note presents the results of a Social Sustainability Assessment carried out by the Institute for International Urban Development (www.i2ud.org), Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development (www.co-plan.org) and Archis Intervention Prishtina. This assessment is part of the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Sustainable Cities Initiative and the WB-Austria Urban Partnership Program (UPP) for Strengthening Local Governments in South-Eastern-Europe, funded by the UPP and managed by the ECA Social Development and ECA Urban Development departments and the World Bank Institute. A summary of findings of the desk and field research, which included Focus Group Discussions and In-Depth Interviews, as well as a Participatory Workshop are presented below. Further details are available in the Prishtina City Synthesis Report. For more information, please refer to the ECA Sustainable Cities Website: http://bit.ly/XWFMCG and www.seecities.eu. The analysis, results, and views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and do not represent the position of the World Bank or any of its member countries.

THE WORLD BANK

BMF FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE

MUNICIPALITY OF PRISHTINA
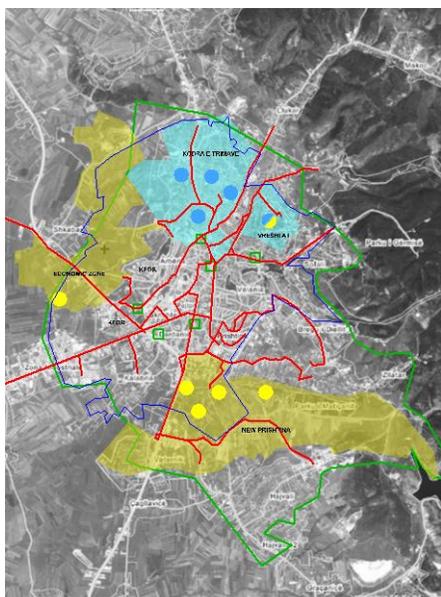
Vulnerability map

BASIC INDICATORS[1]

- Population - Municipality: 198,897 inhabitants
  City: 145,149 inhabitants
- National Ethnic Composition: Albanians (97.77%), Serbs (0.22%), Turks (1.08%), Bosniaks (0.2%), RAE[2] (0.31%), Gorans (0.10%), Other (0.32%).
- 25% of the population younger than 15 years of age.
- With 45% national unemployment and a 34% poverty rate (no city data available).

VULNERABLE GROUPS[3]:

1. The elderly: 13,158 (6.62% of population)
2. Persons with disabilities
   (long-lasting): 8,728 (4.4% of population)
3. Children/youth (0-24 years old):
   85,897 (43.18% of population)
4. Women (especially unemployed)

CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The multiple postwar transitions, rapid urban growth, a neglected infrastructure, and informal development interventions are among the major causes of the difficulties to provide all residents with basic services. Although most residents are in some way affected by the following service deficiencies, marginalized groups are the most susceptible to inefficiencies and low-quality services.

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[1] Source information: REKOS (Census 2011) : http://census.rks-
gov.net/istarMDAS/MD/dawinciMD.jsp?a1=yC&a2=mF0&n=1UR906$$$$$&o=0D0Q&v=1UR060DM00V710000&p=0&sp=null&l=0&exp=0
[2] Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian Community
[3] Source information: REKOS (census 2011)

- According to the World Bank, with a GDP per capita of EUR 2,368 Kosovo is one of the **poorest countries** in Europe, with income levels two-thirds that of other countries in the Western Balkans.[4] This poses a challenge for citizens who cannot afford to pay for public services.
- **Registration** of the population was carried out in 2011 and the data were made available by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics in September 2012. However, there are no substantial analyses of the socio-economic profile of the municipality: labor force participation rates, poverty levels, level of schooling, etc.
- The pace of urbanization changed rapidly after the war of 1999. Between 1999 and 2004 no urban plans were drafted and no former urban plans utilized as the basis for issuing building permits; hence many started to build illegally. **Illegal construction** continued after the adoption of urban plans and after the property registration process that started in late 2010. In the city center, infrastructure is overburdened due to the high densities associated with illegal construction; the periphery still lacks such basic infrastructure as roads, water and sewage.
- The daily **water supply** is limited to 4-8 hours a day, while families living on the periphery either lack access or are illegally connected to the water supply.
- The current **sewage system** discharges untreated sewages and rainwater and poses a hazard for the citizens.
- Low-income families that cannot afford to pay their taxes have their **power supply** cut off.
- **Central heating** is only provided in neighborhoods urbanized during the socialist regime, in the city center and in public buildings.
- The state of **road infrastructure** is medium-to-poor; a number of road segments are poorly maintained.
- The lack of a city hospital and sufficient medical personnel results in unequal access to **health services**, particularly in the periphery.
- **Education:** Primary and secondary schools have shown progress in the last 2-3 years in terms of physical distribution. The third shift in Prishtina schools has been eliminated. The challenge remains a very low number and limited access to kindergartens.
- In general, **public transportation** has become more accessible due to new bus lines; yet it is still unsatisfactory in distribution and quality. The fares are unaffordable for most vulnerable groups.
- Unsatisfactory **solid waste** collection is a result of weak management by the regional company; insufficient waste selection and categorization; failure to locate an area for land-fill; and lack of a regulatory framework.
- Poor infrastructure for **youth entertainment**, leisure and engagement alternatives.

Focus Group Discussions

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[4] World Bank – Kosovo Partnership Program Snapshot, September 2011. pp.2
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/KOSOVOEXTN/Resources/Kosovo_Snapshot.pdf

INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Public participation is regulated at both the central and local government levels. However, the challenge remains in the implementation of vital provisions that ensure social inclusion[5] and sustainable citizen involvement in decision-making.

The following regulations apply to the municipality of Prishtina:

- Statute of Municipality of Prishtina, Chapter 3[6] is dedicated to public participation in decision-making, entitled "Direct participation of citizens in meetings and decision-making activities on issues of the public interest".
- Regulation on the work of Municipal Committees.
- Regulation on Transparency.

The Development Strategy of the Municipality of Prishtina 2008-2011, provides citywide goals and objectives, as well as projects and budgets for meeting these objectives. However, there are not specific projects targeting vulnerable groups, except for providing housing for the homeless. The Municipality is in the process of reviewing its strategy, and has shown a commitment to include social accountability provisions in the revised strategy, based on the outcomes of this assessment.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES TO BE CONSIDERED

- The political system in Kosovo offers provisions for representation in the City Council for **minority communities**, with one seat held by the Kosovo Democratic Turkish Party representative who also holds the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities. Communities are further represented in the Municipal Assembly Communities' Committee and the Municipal Community Office. In addition, non-majority communities are represented by two members of the Serb community.
- **Women** are represented in the Municipal Assembly with 19 seats out of 51, as well as in a Municipal Office for gender issues. However, the role of women in decision-making remains low despite legislation which guarantees equal rights.
- Marginalized groups (e.g. **youth, persons with disabilities, large households)** are unrepresented.

EXISTING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

- ✓ Municipal council meetings are open to the general public and the media.
  - o Focus group participants reported being unable to actively participate for a number of reasons, including lack of information.
- ✓ All municipal council decisions are electronically available.
- ✓ Monitoring and performance measurement of municipal service provision is not a regular practice; rather it is an *ad-hoc,* project-based process. Occasionally, NGOs conduct surveys.
- ✓ The e-government platform entails digitizing and archiving documents among municipal institutions. An indirect benefit, from a public service provision perspective, is the improved management of citizen complaint procedures.
  - o Focus group participants reported that complaints are not processed adequately.
- ✓ The municipality has invested in the modernization of services to citizens within the municipal administration by establishing a "Citizens Service Center", which is now operational with modern information technology. Offices operate in different neighborhoods of Prishtina and are connected to on-line documentation systems.
- ✓ There is legislation establishing the rights and procedures for the access to information and official documents, and to receive an official response from government bodies.
  - o Municipal authorities reportedly delay responses to official information requests.

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[5] In 2009, the Republic of Kosovo's Assembly released a white paper on social inclusion challenges in Kosovo, which pegs the main causes of exclusion are: poverty, unemployment, ethnic and cultural factors, access to infrastructure and public services
[6] Statuti i Komunës Së Prishtinës. http://kk.rks-gov.net/prishtina/Municipality/Assembly/Regulations/2010.aspx

WHY PROMOTE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRISHTINA?

There is a cycle of neglect of complaints and inputs filed with the Municipality through official channels and growing citizen apathy. The municipality is seen as detached from its citizens.

There is a sense that public employees are not motivated to assist citizens, fueling distrust and increasing corruption as a result of the need to resort to informal channels to elicit action.

Citizens and members of vulnerable groups feel their interests are under-represented in city decisions; and that there is a lack of NGOs and CBOs to voice and address their needs.

Despite feelings of wide-spread *institutional neglect, lack of dialogue, discontent at service quality, and skepticism vis-à-vis the municipal planning and spending practices,* citizens are willing to establish a communication channel with the municipality, and react to incentives that promote active participation and information exchange.

Public authorities at various levels acknowledge that the intent and actions of strategies, legislation and policies have at times failed to materialize. Attributable factors include insufficient communication, irregularly provided information, and no communication strategy or performance monitoring to facilitate performance measurement. This was recognized as an opportunity for improvement.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

In order to gauge existing levels of social accountability in each city in a comparable way, this Assessment developed a Social Accountability Index around 5 categories relating the framework of Participation, Transparency and Feedback/Monitoring. The index is a simplified measure of the effectiveness of existing practices and identifies areas that can benefit from improvement.
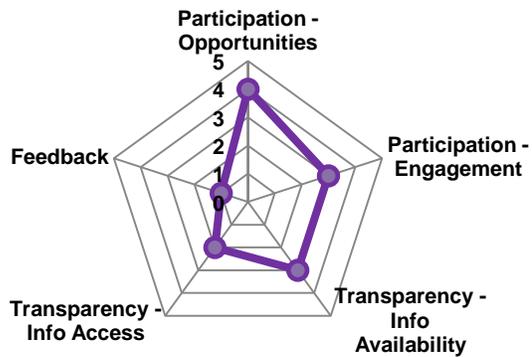
Index results for Prishtina[7]
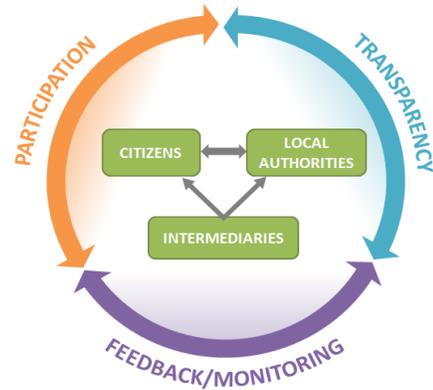
Social Accountability Framework

STAKEHOLDER OWNERSHIP

Whilst the Municipality is responsible for implementing a number of the suggested interventions, the intermediaries and the community alike need to play an active part and take ownership of the interventions/actions directly connected to community and vulnerable groups. Details about each component and the identified responsible parties are available as part the Prishtina City Synthesis Report. Stakeholders pursuing these initiatives should meet quarterly to report on their efforts and consult.

Participatory Scenario Development Workshop

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[7] Please refer to the City Synthesis Report Annex for a full description of the index and its categories.

PROPOSAL #1: INCREASED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH INTERACTIVE WEBSITE(S)

According to "BE in Kosovo" (http://www.beinkosovo.com/en/communications-in-kosovo) "Kosovo's Internet connectivity is among the best in the world. It has a nationwide broadband wireless backbone, which allows businesses and individuals to obtain high-speed, reliable Internet connections at prices at or below those available in Western Europe and the United States". This provides a great opportunity to develop and widely use internet based information and services in Prishtina. Although the municipality has its website, it does not meet the desired level in terms of city-citizen communication and interaction; also, municipal/public service providers lack websites.

Overall Goal: Improved information exchange by enhancing the City's online presence and instituting interactive features that collect and publish relevant data.

Vision
- ✓ User-friendly and highly functional city website provides the platform for efficient information sharing between the local government and Prishtina's citizens.
- ✓ The website becomes a reliable source of timely information that citizens consult with confidence.
- ✓ It includes interactive features that allow citizens to submit questions or complaints and receive responses through the same medium.
- ✓ Citizens and such intermediaries as NGOs provide grassroots-level information that alert the Municipality of specific needs at the community or individual level.
- ✓ The website is used to elicit information of citizens' satisfaction on the city's performance (such as through online citizen satisfaction surveys).
- ✓ Monitoring and feedback is incorporated into the city's *modus operandi*.

Specific Actions

WHAT	**A) An interactive municipal web site that is maintained and updated daily**.
HOW	ICT features to add to the existing website include: guidelines/information for citizens on "how to fill in a complaint/request"; complaint/request system available for citizens online with links to SMS modalities; citizen feedback-related information to be made public; Frequently Asked Questions. Municipal service providers should also have dedicated websites visibly linked to the main municipal site. The website should support survey platforms to collect citizen input and publish results.
WHO	The Municipality
WHEN	Two years
INDICATORS	Increased exposure and visibility; improved city-citizen communication;
COST	Municipal website adjustment; website design for two municipal publicly owned enterprises (POEs)[8] and one inter-municipal cultural institution[9]; links to two inter-municipal cultural institutions[10] to the municipal website.
WHAT	**B) The Municipality raising citizen awareness about their rights and available online services.**
HOW	The enhanced municipal web site and the newly created public services (municipal POEs) websites provide structured information for citizens (including features fit for vulnerable groups) and their rights; and some online services. Information on such technology-based tools will be disseminated through several media and information

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[8] Public Housing Enterprise; Waste Management Company "Pastrimi"
[9] Municipal Archive Prishtina
[10] Cultural Kinds Centre; Dodona theatre

sources (through public campaign). The Municipality would also provide training for best use of new technologies and a dedicated desk and qualified staff to assist citizens.

WHO Municipality; municipal Socially Owned Enterprises; private sector

WHEN Two years

INDICATORS Increased transparency on public services, increased awareness on available services and online services.

COST Information dissemination, trainings on the use of online services: about 2,000.00 Euro per event, with about 20 events per year (to cover all neighborhoods and key public institutions). Setting up of the assistance desk at the municipality: two IT personnel fully employed for two years, average wage as per municipal administration criteria.

PROPOSAL #2: ENHANCED COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH CITIZENS' CHARTER & CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

The FGDs, IDIs and PSD Workshop participants identified that "one-size fits all" social accountability practices further marginalize certain groups because they are not tailored to their special needs and circumstances. Diversification of information forms and sources is an opportunity that vulnerable groups would benefit from the most and would encourage their participation in city-citizen communication.

Overall Goal: Implementation of national-level legislation on social inclusion at the local level.

Vision
- ✓ Implementation in Prishtina of the national law in Kosovo which ensures inclusion of vulnerable groups in access to information.
- ✓ The City expands its communication initiatives in medium and method to ensure that relevant information is available to vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Language and disability considerations increase access to information by marginalized groups.
- ✓ Appropriate communication methods ensuring all citizens are aware of opportunities for participation and their civic rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Positive effects that reverberate across sectors and improve service satisfaction levels.

Specific Action

WHAT	**A calendar of activities** and **Citizen Charter** using different means and forms of communication and dissemination
HOW	The Municipality and public service providers make available information about rights and responsibilities (such as a Citizen Charter) and publish an annual calendar of activities. Both the Charter and the calendar are available to all groups through multiple media (SMS, TV, Web, sign language, Braille, audio, visual).
WHO	Municipality and public service providers, special needs related NGOs, media.
WHEN	2013-2014
INDICATORS	Enhanced information/service quality for vulnerable groups; etc.
COST	Citizen Charter (preparation, publishing – soft/hard copies, including audio, Braille, etc format): tentative 25 - 30,000.00 Euro. Calendar of activities (setting up: preparation of template, publishing as above, maintenance) – tentative 5,000.00 Euro first year.

PROPOSAL #3: INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC REFORM

The FGDs, IDIs and PSD Workshop participants identified the fact that current feedback and monitoring mechanisms are poorly maintained and promoted, hence resulting in unsatisfactory institutional responsiveness rates to citizens' requests and complaints. Enhancement of internal monitoring is identified as the most important step the Municipality ought to initiate in relation to the responsiveness to citizens' requests and complaints.

Overall Goal: A more transparent and interactive city administration that prioritizes feedback and monitoring to promote continuous growth.

Vision
- ✓ Actions promoting transparency and discouraging corruption match stated political objectives.
- ✓ Electoral programs, and concurrently the municipal strategy, include concrete projects and actions related to feedback and monitoring mechanisms.
- ✓ Institutional responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Specific Action

WHAT	Prioritize institutional responsiveness to citizens' requests and complaints in **internal and external monitoring**/auditing processes/procedures.
HOW	Internal reform (internal monitoring/auditing): Adjust the Terms of Reference for municipal officials and public service providers to assure accountability in their performance regarding citizen requests/complaints response times. Foster internal and external evaluation: better structured, more and diversified public educational events (hearings/debates/lectures, etc.) as per the published/annual calendar of activities in order to enable feedback/external monitoring by citizens and intermediaries.
WHO	Municipality and public service providers, civil society, education institutions, media.
WHEN	Two years
INDICATORS	Enhanced comprehension of rights and responsibilities; enhanced public participation
COST	Internal reform (difficult to estimate); external evaluation: 100,000.00 Euro in first year.