EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

Socioeconomic Conditions in Northern Kosovo
Factsheet on Zvečan/Zveqan

This municipality factsheet seeks to provide a specific overview of the findings reported in the recent survey on the "*Socioeconomic Conditions in Northern Kosovo*". The full comprehensive narrative of the report, issued by ECMI Kosovo in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the British Embassy in Prishtinë/Priština, is available in pdf on ECMI Kosovo official webpage, under our "Publication" section: https://ecmikosova.org/publications/.
The objective of this report, based on the perceptions and subjective opinions of the respondents, is to spotlight issues encountered by northern Kosovo residents in their daily lives, to voice their needs, concerns and aspirations. The report shows a quantitative and qualitative analysis of answers from a questionnaire administered to a sample of 721 respondents living in the four municipalities of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveqan. When analysing and comparing responses between municipalities, it is very important to remember that the questionnaire addresses perceptions and not necessarily the objective reality of the current situation.
For the sake of clarity, all the data and figures published in the following factsheet refer to the abovementioned report – where not otherwise specified.

Area and Population

The municipality of Zvečan/Zveqan is located in northern Kosovo. It covers an area of approximately 122 km² and includes Zvečan/Zveqan town and 35 villages.
The total population is estimated at 16,650, of which (in approximate figures):

- over 16,000 Kosovo Serbs;
- 350 Kosovo Albanians;
- approximately 300 Kosovo Bosniak, Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Gorani;
- 3,750 displaced persons, including 250 refugees from Croatia, arrived after the war.[1]

Education

- 3 primary schools, with 801 pupils and 76 teachers;
- 1 secondary school with 254 students and 38 teachers;
- 1 kindergarten with 240 children, which follow Serbian curriculum;
- 2 primary schools with 46 Kosovo Albanian pupils and 12 teachers following Kosovo curriculum.[2]

Additional information: After the conflict, the faculty of arts and music was relocated from Prishtinë/Priština to Zvečan/Zveqan, and the college for technical sciences and traffic engineering was relocated from Ferizaj/Uroševac. There is also a vocational school in Doljane/Dolan which is a part of the network of vocational centers funded by the Kosovo Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

I.General Perceptions

Perceptions about the delivery of formal education are generally positive: in Zvečan/Zveqan 41% of the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the delivery of formal education. Regarding the perceptions about the quality of teaching, in the municipality dissatisfaction accounted for 45%. In terms of satisfaction on the quality

[1] OSCE Municipal Profiles, November 2011. Available at: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13136
[2] Ibid.

and availability of school equipment, an overall majority of respondents in Zvečan/Zveqan have manifested dissatisfaction (20% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 23% somewhat dissatisfied and another 23% dissatisfied).

II.Transition from Education to Employment

Despite this sense of satisfaction, the transition from education to employment remains very difficult.
There is an overall pessimism about the employment opportunities after graduation, especially within the same field of studies. In Zvečan/Zveqan, the majority of respondents see few (58%) opportunities to find employment in their geographic area; there is an equal number of respondents, around 20%, who see sufficient or no opportunities. Even more strikingly, a vast majority of people interviewed see few (72%) or no (16%) opportunities to find employment within their field of studies.

III.Informal Education

One way to bridge the gap between education and employment or to mitigate the risk of working in other fields is to enhance informal education. In Zvečan/Zveqan, where local NGOs (42%) and international organizations (28%) are the main provider of such education, the 78% of respondents considered language courses and IT skills a plausible way to acquire the skills necessary for the labour market.

IV.Inclusive Education

The situation in Zvečan/Zveqan regarding discriminatory practices towards people with disabilities appears critical: not only do the most people, 40%, perceive discriminatory practices as "very often", but also the fewest, 2%, think they never take place.
Moreover, 78% of respondents considered the quality of teaching in relation to people with special needs to be below average, either poor or very poor. The lack of school infrastructures for people with disabilities is clear. The majority of respondents in the municipality (52%) gave the lowest possible rating, "very poor", for the quality of relevant school equipment. When asked about the general quality of education for people with disabilities, 58% of respondents declared to be somewhat or totally dissatisfied.

Healthcare

The primary health care system operating currently includes:

- 1 health centre;
- 4 health houses;
- 167 employees, including doctors, nurses and support staff;
- Additionally, two health houses financed by the Kosovo government are currently operating in two Kosovo Albanian villages, with 1 doctor and 2 medical technicians.[3]

I. General Perceptions

Zvečan/Zveqan has ranked generally positive reviews when it comes to the quality of healthcare: around 69% of respondents said to be somewhat or totally satisfied.
However, interviewees seemed to be dissatisfied by the quality of medical equipment: 49% defined it as "average" and 31% as poor; also, the percentage of respondents defining it as very good is indeed very low. Moreover, according to the majority of respondents, the quality of medical personnel is average (59%), with around the same amount of respondents defining it as good (18%) or poor (15%). Nevertheless, for the majority of people in this municipality the service provided by healthcare structures is good (56%), and it's very easy (52%) to access. In the municipality, a priority concern which needs to be addressed is the need for improvements in terms of quality of staff for 21% of respondents.

II.Reproductive Healthcare

[3] OSCE Municipal Profiles, November 2011. Available at: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13136

The majority of responses on the degree of satisfaction regarding the healthcare system fall under "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied": in Zvečan/Zveqan 'on the fence' answers account for 47%, while 30% found the quality to be "poor" or "very poor".
Such results could point to neutrality, but it could also reflect a low level of awareness about reproductive healthcare among respondents.

III.Substance abuse

In Zvečan/Zveqan, data on substance abuse[4] are particularly high among young people: half of the respondents aged 15 to 24 said to be addicted to substances, as well as 47% of the interviewees older than 25. This municipality has a quite high rate (71%) of nicotine addiction[5] and alcohol consumption (29%), as reported by those respondents who declared to be depending on substances.

Social Welfare

I.General

Regarding perceptions about all types of social programmes, in Zvečan/Zveqan only 7% reported being among the beneficiaries of social welfare programmes. When asked about the quality of the social service provided, the most popular answer was the neutral "neither satisfied nor satisfied," with 36.11%; it should also be noted that 35% in Zvečan/Zveqan are somewhat dissatisfied, and only 1% are completely satisfied. In another question directed only towards beneficiaries of cash value schemes, this municipality showed a high level of positive responses (43%). Finally, a striking majority (78%) of respondents agreed on the lack of adequate financial resources for local CSOs for implementing projects and delivering services.

II.Public Programmes and Services

Zvečan/Zveqan presents a rather dissatisfied sample when it comes to the general perception of the services available: 36% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while 46% are somewhat or totally dissatisfied. The same trend is visible with regards to the satisfaction over the number of services provided: 54% are somewhat or totally dissatisfied, while 32% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Another negative trend is visible with regards to the delivery of services: 55% of people are somewhat or completely dissatisfied.
Programmes and services targeting older people are far from satisfactory: in Zvečan/Zveqan, 46% are outright dissatisfied. What is most striking is that none of the participants in this municipality declared to be somewhat or completely satisfied. There was also a negative consensus from 50-70 year olds when asked whether they think their income is able to meet their basic requirements: in the municipality, those who said "no" are even the 70%.
Social development services for people with disabilities also seem far from satisfactory, with 41% of the municipality's respondents being dissatisfied, and 36% somewhat dissatisfied. Moreover, 87% of people think that people with disabilities are not able to meet their needs, even with the help of social service.
Perceptions about cultural events are also negative, with a total of 55% dissatisfied respondents, while 22% are somewhat dissatisfied. Respondents aged between 15 and 24 were the main contributor to these negative results: 71% of young people reported being dissatisfied.

III.Safety

The Kosovo police station in Zvečan/Zveçan municipality has 40 police officers:

- 35 Kosovo Serbs;
- 5 are Kosovo Albanians;
- 7 are female;
- International military presence: the multinational KFOR Joint Regional Detachment-North and other monitoring teams cover the area.[6]

[4] The term "substance abuse" is used synonymously with harmful or hazardous use; for the purposes of this survey, addiction was considered use of a substance more than once a week.
[5] For comparison, smoking rates among adults are estimated to less than 20% in OECD countries.
[6] OSCE Municipal Profiles, November 2011. Available at: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13136

When asked to report their perceived degree of safety, the least amount of respondents (6%) in Zvečan/Zveqan declared that they felt completely unsafe. Moreover, 26% of the respondents from this municipality ranked their safety as two on the 1-5 scale; in this municipality, 13% of people feel safe. When asked on the perceptions regarding local authorities' and civil societies' capacities to respond to violence, only 1% of inhabitants answered to be are actually satisfied, while 25% declared to be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. What is more striking, however, is that the majority of respondents (52%) declared to be completely unsatisfied by the capacity of local authorities to cope with violence.

Employment and Local Economy

The economy of Zvečan/Zveqan municipality is mainly based on production of batteries and battery recycling; agriculture and small trade businesses. There are 62 registered private businesses operating in the municipality.[7]

I.Labour Market

Zvečan/Zveqan has a quite high rate of temporary[8] workers (57%), in comparison to permanent ones. Furthermore, 4% of respondents in Zvečan/Zveqan reported that their employment income is insufficient, while 32% defines it as almost sufficient.

Lack of skills and educational background may seriously hamper locals' ability to enter the labour market and get decent work; 56% in Zvečan/Zveqan did not report holding a job in a field related to their education. Even more strikingly, this answer was given by 100% of young people aged between 15 and 24. This is a very clear majority, and signals a significant problem with the labour market in northern Kosovo that affects young people disproportionally. Furthermore, more than 60% of respondents have reported that the job they're holding is somewhat or very below the level of their education.

II.Economic Development

Employment:

In Zvečan/Zveqan, 51% of the participants reported being employed in the private sector and SMEs, 43% in the public sector, and only 6% in the agricultural sector. SMEs and the agricultural sector are perceived as the sectors mostly able to generate employment opportunities (according, respectively, to 88% and 84% of the respondents), followed by the private sector. Perceptions about the public sector tend to be less positive, with only 62% of positive answers.

Income:

In Zvečan/Zveqan the situation appears quite unsatisfactory in all the employment sectors: the majority of respondents perceived the income generated by the public sector (71%), SMEs (70%) and the agricultural sector (68%) to be almost sufficient or insufficient. The private sector is perceived to be slightly more satisfactory, with 27% of respondents defining its ability to generate income as sufficient.

Infrastructures:

In this municipality, the most positive rates when it comes to the satisfaction on the infrastructures appear to be in the public sector, where 56% of respondents are somewhat or completely satisfied. The private sector gains less positive opinions: 53% of respondents are "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", while an equal number (16%) are, respectively, somewhat satisfied and somewhat dissatisfied by the quality of infrastructures. The same situation is presented by the responses given for the SMEs: a high percentage of neutral responses, and an equal number of people somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied. On the contrary, the agricultural sector receives strikingly negative answers, with 53% of interviewees declaring to be completely dissatisfied by such infrastructures.

[7] OSCE Municipal Profiles, November 2011. Available at: http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13136

[8] In the context of the survey, temporary work was considered as either occasional, short-time or part-time employment.