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People With Special Needs and Their Difficulties in Front of Covid-19 in the Municipality of Prizren

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The paper addresses the impact of Covid-19 in the territory of the Municipality of Prizren. The article speaks of the impact and consequences of COVID-19 in certain strata of the population of the Municipality of Prizren, especially in that strata of people with disabilities of action, the difficulties in their communication with educational and health institutions at central and local level. An integral part of this article is the impact of the Pandemic on the local government, the difficulties in collecting municipal taxes such as self-revenue of municipalities and the impact of the pandemic on the essential change in initial planning of municipalities. Prizren during the pandemic issued decisions to extend the term of payment of municipal tax installments. Normally, the article starts from two aspects; Social aspect and legal aspect. In the social aspect, the increasing number of infected people, while the legal aspect (Fred, 2020) originates from the World Health Organization (WHO, 11.mars, 2020), which on March 11, 2020 announced the corona Covid-19 virus as global pandemic (WHO, 2020).

1. Introduction

Covid-19, was the global epidemic with very serious human consequences. As a result of the infections thousands of people of different ages lost their lives. The number of infections and deaths increased from moment to moment. As a result, according to the World Health Organization reports, the number of deaths from Covid-19 has gone to 15 million people (Signal, 2022). From this situation, Kosovo could not escape either. Our scientific research is focused on two aspects: the use of scientific methods and methodologies appropriate for this work and browsing, conversation and viewing of the documentation of two institutions that are registered and licensed in Kosovo institutions, "Handikos" non-governmental organization, Prizren Regional Office and "Mother Teresa" Learning and Counseling Centers based in Prizren (HANDIKOS, 2015). During the conversation with the director of the Handikos Regional Office in Prizren and the browsing of the documentation it resulted that during 2020 the "Center for Social Work in Prizren" received financial assistance for around 600 families. Also "Handikos" in cooperation with international and internal humanitarian organizations have provided carriages and dentures. What was a serious obstacle to achieving the objectives of this humanitarian organization was the inability to help all people with special needs who are evidenced. The difference in taking care of them, between the pre-pandemic and the Pandemic's time was evident. Such obstacles raised deep concerns specifically in terms of the health of these people, e.g. For nearly a year during the pandemics specifically in 2020, in general in Kosovo, especially at the beginning of the pandemic there have been lack of basic equipment for protection against Covid-19 (eg masks, disinfectants, insufficient spaces in "Handikos" facility which were conditions set by the Government of Kosovo) (Parliament, 2020). Part of this paper is the research done at the "Elementary School "Mother Teresa resource center for Learning and Counseling" based in Prizren (RSLC, 2013). The research is focused on the continuity of learning, the differences before and during the pandemic with special emphasis on the use of tools and methods of work of educational staff with students. The authors have focused their research on grades 1 to 5, specifically in primary school during the school years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, for the reason that the consequences for this category of students were greater both physically and psychologically. Despite the fact that regular classes started physically on September 2, 2019, the emergence of the pandemic made the second and third periods take place only online. Also, the evaluation of students during the years 2019/2020 was done online. Grades one, three, and four are taken as examples. Class books, receipts, weekly summary reports of educational activities organized during distance learning were used as samples.

Below are presented the statistics expressed in tabular form

Table number 1 shows the assessment periods divided into a total of three periods and the final assessment for the first class, the third class and the fourth class (MEST, 2021). The first class presented in table number 1 started the school year with 7 students registered of which only 2 finished this school year, 5 students remained ungraded due to the decision to drop out in the first class. The reasons for the abandonment were different, but all due to the pandemic.

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

Table-1

	Class I	Class III	Class IV

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

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

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

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

Table-2

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

Në tabelen numër 3 janë paraqitur statistika për klasën e parë, të dytë, të tretë dhe të katërt. Viti shkollor 2021/2022

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

Table-3

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

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

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

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

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

2. Research Method

Several scientific methods were used during this research. The methods that dominated in this paper are analytical, comparative, descriptive and structural methods. Through the analytical method, data from the official documents of the school and the non-governmental association "Handikos" were analyzed, as well as conversations and interviews with responsible persons of these institutions. Class diaries, summary reports of learning activities, valid legislation during the pandemic and activity of experts. In this research article, the work about the organization and maintenance of online learning, the tools and methods used during the development of online learning, the difficulties and obstacles that have existed are taken as a basis. The authors analyzed the legislations at the time of the pandemic and their adaptation to the category of children with special needs, especially the progress of learning, learning outcomes, additional activity outside the facilities of the "Handikos" association and the school. Diaries, summary reports of learning activities, etc. are the sources that helped the authors in comparing the results in teaching and learning, comparing the attendance of students in school during and after the pandemic and success. The covid-19 pandemic had a particularly negative impact on students who had multiple disabilities (intellectual and hearing, etc.). The most detailed analysis is described in the tables which are an integral part of this research. During the research done in the primary school "Resource Center for Learning and Counseling - Mother Teresa" in Prizren and the "Humanitarian and Non-Governmental Organization HANDIKOS" in Prizren the authors focused on the first to fifth grades and members of the aforementioned association, the assistance of persons responsible for providing professional services in external environments, which start from health services, home care (daily services) and equipment with electric wheelchairs and prostheses. In the indoor facilities, the services offered are related to teaching and learning, the necessary equipment for distance learning (tablets and laptops) and physical education at school. From a structural point of view, the paper consists of data described in written and tabular form.

The written form contains data and statements that have their source from interviews, conversations and official documents of these institutions, without leaving aside the legal norms that were in force during the pandemic. By using these scientific methods the authors found it easier to create both the content and the structure of the paper. In this aspect, the construction of the work on pillars is more accessible to the reader and researchers of various topics.

3. Result and Discussion

During the research, the authors, analyzing the data, noticed that the results of teaching and learning were significantly different compared to the period before, during and after the pandemic in terms of the form of learning development, conditions, methods, results in learning periods and final success. The differences were first noticed in the difficulties surrounding the organization of online learning, for which Kosovo had no prior experience. The Ministry of Education made the decision to close schools for long periods of time, without presenting at least a clear rationale why such measures are required in the case of Kosovo. The main factor that influenced the closing of schools was the health institutions' data on the number of people infected with covid-19 and their quarantine. The teachers, due to the lack of training and seminars, were not able to demonstrate their skills in the same way as in physical education, due to other techniques that were required to be used for online learning. After the outbreak of the pandemic, difficulties were also observed in the absence of students in the continuation of the lesson. In addition to other causes, the difficulties also appeared in the lack of basic tools for the development of online learning (laptops, tablets, lack of internet). Problems also appeared in holding additional and complementary lessons. During the peak of the pandemic, there was a difference in the number of students who started the school year and those who finished it. From the tabular data, it can be observed that in the first grade of the 2019/2020 school year, out of a total of 7 registered students, only 2 of them finished the first grade. It's a great concern were the many absences of students due to various circumstances that appeared to them at that time. From the research and analysis of the school documentation, a large number of absences can be observed, which during the comparison between reasonable and unreasonable absences, reasonable absences dominated, which shows that the students had the will to continue attending classes, but the conditions and the possibilities. During this time, due to the price increases that came as a result of the pandemic, the obstacles became even more evident since the invalid pensions now no longer coincided with the level of expenses for the purchase of drugs, various therapies, the increase in living expenses, then the increase in the price of transport, etc. the central and local institutions in Kosovo were not financially prepared and this significantly affected the fulfillment of the basic conditions of this category.

4. Conclusion

The entire work contains the basic human rights and freedoms, their respect and the legislation in force in the Republic of Kosovo, which begins with the law Law No. 07/L-006 for the Prevention and Combating of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Territory of the Republic of Kosovo, then the decisions of the Government of Kosovo and local institutions, respectively municipalities. The authors in the paper have analyzed the impacts and differences in the legal and social effect of legal acts and norms on the citizens of Kosovo, especially on the category of people with special needs. The positive aspect of the legislation is related to the prevention of the spread of the pandemic and at the same time the allocation of funds from the budget of the Kosovo government for these persons. Despite the positive and preventive role that these acts and norms had, they also had significant negative consequences for the category of people with special needs, the great consequences in education and health were evident. These restrictions were observed in all spheres of their lives, starting from circulation restrictions, regular teaching, receiving health services and daily services which for them are essential that affected the overall success. In terms of the content of this paper, the authors have faced the limitations which are of different nature, starting from the difficulties of the work of official persons during the time of the pandemic regarding the compilation of official documentation, then the confidential nature of some documents and the difficulties presented by communications at a distance in the relationship between teachers, students and parents. Such limitations have left room for the future research to be expanded to other institutions and NGOs in the Prizren region, as the region is considered the second largest in Kosovo, so the authors did not have the opportunity and time to contact and research also in other municipalities that belong to the Prizren region, such as Suhareka and Dragashi and Mamusha. From the results of the research, it appears that the region of Prizren, like Kosovo, has suffered a lot of damage due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially the consequences in education are also observed in 2023, around the general success of students. The authors did not consider it necessary to analyze the post-pandemic periodical diaries and reports in order to accurately compare the results of teaching and learning. It is left to other researchers to analyze, research and compare the learning outcomes of these students in the future.

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