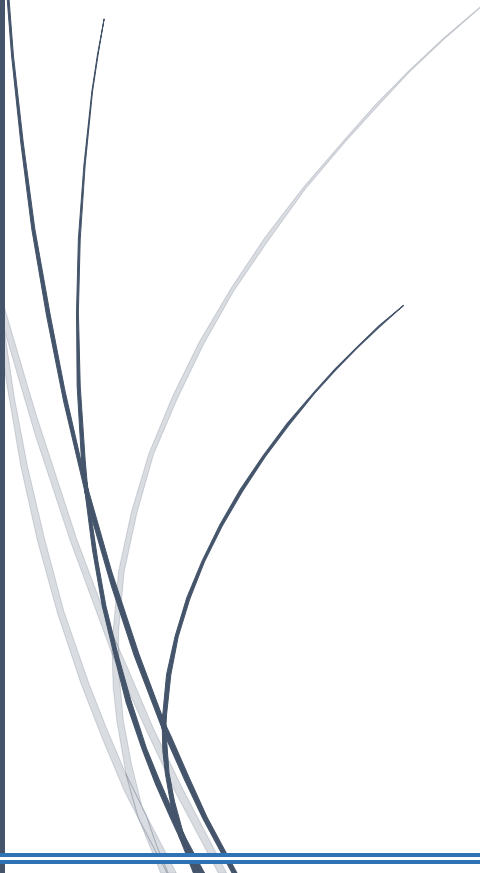




# ANNUAL REPORT - 2019

HANDIKOS, 2020



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## PREFACE

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HANDIKOS was originally established in response to the plight of people with disabilities in Kosovo. Studies have shown that in developed societies, the provision of social care is considered an important aspect of the state's role, so the benefits of care are part of the rights of the individual; an approach which offers the success or failure of caring for people with disabilities, which for many reasons is crucial to the well-being of society.

According to the National Strategy for the Rights of People with Disabilities, the current situation of people with disabilities doesn't meet the full realization of fundamental rights and freedoms on an equal footing with others. Therefore, all entities are responsible for guaranteeing this right which is achieved only by eliminating any kind of barriers and obstacles that create difficulties in respecting the principle of non-discrimination against people with disabilities. In this context, we emphasize that Kosovo institutions still have a lot of work and efforts to do.

As an Association of Paraplegics and Paralysis of Children of Kosovo, HANDIKOS during 2019 has worked to increase the welfare of people with disabilities, by lobbying and advocating for an inclusive society with equal conditions for everyone.

Our main goals during 2019 have been focused on three objectives:

- Advocacy and lobbying for the protection and advancement of the rights of people with disabilities in their inclusion in the legislation of Kosovo;
- Continuity in service providing for children and adults with disabilities, which are more than necessary, and which still remain a challenge;
- Capacity building for people with disabilities and HANDIKOS staff on PWDs rights;

People with disabilities face many challenges and barriers in our country, among which still remain: accessibility, education, employment as well as respect and advancement of their rights, based on Kosovo legislation and other international documents. When we mention the challenges, however, here we should mention in particular the challenges that HANDIKOS faces, based 100% on projects, without any permanent support, especially when we are dealing with services that are not yet provided by local institutions.

People with disabilities should be an integrated part of society and they should be offered the opportunity towards individual independence, where through their experience, talents and capacities they can contribute to the development of our state.

Afrim Maliqi

Director

## Executive Overview

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The Annual Report - 2019 presents a summary of HANDIKOS' achievements during 2019 within the implemented programs. The reported data are based on HANDIKOS's achievements in implementing projects supported by local and foreign donors. Through the services provided throughout the year for children and adults with disabilities as well as their parents/family members, HANDIKOS has continued its mission to advance the disability situation in the country. Furthermore, over the course of a year, HANDIKOS' tireless work has significantly impacted the social well-being of people with disabilities in Kosovo through its influence on policies, administrative instructions, laws and other regulations.

Over the course of a year, HANDIKOS has provided direct services to 76 children with disabilities and 97 adults with disabilities in the Pristina region. At the same time, services related to assistive devices were provided to 303 people with disabilities in Kosovo. HANDIKOS during 2019, as in previous years, through legal advice has influenced the fulfillment of human rights for people with disabilities. Over the course of one (1) year, 215 of these legal advices were offered to persons with disabilities throughout Kosovo, which were mainly relevant to providing support in filing requests/complaints regarding legal judgements/benefits.

The close cooperation that HANDIKOS has continued to maintain with civil society organizations, organizations of people with disabilities, international organizations, local and central institutions, society, and the disability community itself, has significantly influenced daily functioning, addressing of the needs of people with disabilities and the advancement of their situation in society. HANDIKOS continues to work for an inclusive society, with full recognition and realization of human rights for people with disabilities.

## INTRODUCTION

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- HANDIKOS' HISTORY

HANDIKOS (Association of Paraplegics and Paralysis of Children of Kosovo) was established in 1983, with the initiative of Mr. Halit Ferizi, then president of the association and later leader of the disability movement in Kosovo, along with a group of citizens with disabilities. The main objective was to “improve the rights and living standards of people with disabilities in Kosovo” through action in the field of health, social and employment protection.

From its establishment to the present day, HANIDKOS has been supported by a significant number of international and local organizations which have made it possible for HANDIKOS to exist for more than two (2) decades. In its inception, HANDIKOS received strong support from: Handicap International, OXFAM, the Finnish Agency FIDIDA, the Government of Finland, the Embassy of Finland, the Italian Organization “Onlus Wamba-Athena”, “Onlus Roberto Bazzoni”, “Save The Children”, “UNICEF”, the European Agency for Construction and Reconstruction, supporters who have enabled the mission and vision of HANDIKOS.

Despite the lack of local statistics on the number and prevalence of disability in the country, in its database, HANDIKOS has registered more than 18,000 members with physical and combined disabilities of different ages, genders and ethnicities throughout Kosovo. HANDIKOS has provided social services in community and home for children and adults with disabilities, as well as their families. Furthermore, throughout this experience, HANDIKOS has also focused on advocacy and lobbying for the recognition and respect of human rights for people with disabilities in Kosovo by intervening in the consciousness of society as well as in legal and sub-legal acts.

Over the years, HANDIKOS has modeled and provided various sets of rehabilitation programs which have supported all people with disabilities in the country and their families. All of these, were provided through the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program - CBR, a program that HANDIKOS has been providing since 2002 in Prishtina, Podujeva, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Gjakova, Prizren, Suhareka, Malisheva, Vushtrri, Peja, Istog, Mitrovica; within which, numerous sets of advocacy services and techniques have been implemented. Recently, HANDIKOS within the CBR program is modeling the bio-psycho-social approach in all its services, an approach which places the person at the center from different perspectives.

Despite the actions taken in recent years, people with disabilities in Kosovo continue to face various challenges in all aspects of life which make it impossible for them to realize human rights and a dignified life as reflected in the Constitution of Kosovo and other legal acts of the country.

Based on a recent research by the World Health Organization, it is estimated that about 15% of the world's population has at least one disability. In Kosovo, according to the latest census, there are about 93,288 people with disabilities, while statistics from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare during 2016, report only 26,247 people with disabilities who benefit from various social schemes and destination services.

- HANDIKOS (currently)

HANDIKOS in its five (5) year development strategy (2018-2022) has restructured its activity through a programmatic approach reflected within the strategy, which has not affected the internal functioning of the organization in the implementation of activities planned to address issues relevant to disability, however the programmatic approach has aimed at the stability and sustainability of the organization and its actions. As part of this approach, HANDIKOS has set itself the strategic goal of *Empowering people with disabilities to participate in society.*

- Our vision

*"Inclusive society, with full recognition and realization of the equal rights and opportunities of people with disabilities."*

- Our mission

*"Achieve positive and lasting changes in the lives of people with disabilities through representation, protection of their rights and support."*

In the framework of the Development Strategy (2018-2022), HANDIKOS has foreseen its strategic objectives:

1. *Participation* – increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in public and political life;
2. *Employment* – increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the labor market;
3. *Education and Training* – increasing the participation of people with disabilities in inclusive education and lifelong learning;
4. *Social Welfare* – promoting decent living conditions for people with disabilities;
5. *Health* – improving access to quality health services; &
6. *Organizational Development* – capacity building of HANDIKOS and partner organizations.



**FOR AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY**

## Projects implemented by HANDIKOS during 2019

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- ***Promoting Inclusion in Consultative Processes for Government and Public Administration Reforms in the Disability Sector at Local, National and Regional Level - Inclusive Kosovo (2019-2023) - supported by the European Union Office. The project is implemented by HANDIKOS, in partnership with Disability Partnership Finland, Threshold, the Kosovo Association of the Deaf and Kosovo Association of the Blind with support from the European Union.***

The main goal of the project is *an inclusive society in which people with disabilities can realize their full potential and live a dignified life as equal citizens.*

Within the project, the following objectives are foreseen:

- a) Government and public administration reforms are inclusive for PWDs;
- b) Strengthening various levels of government to draft, review and implement an inclusive disability legislation;
- c) Strengthening the DPOs dialogue with the parliament and the Government at local and national level; &
- d) Improving the joint advocacy of DPOs and their networks.

- ***Promoting violence prevention in all settings for children with disabilities in Kosovo (2017-2021) – supported by Save the Children and SIDA.***

The overall goal of the project is *promoting and addressing CWD's needs through improvement of inter-sectoral coordination and promotion of necessary measures to mainstream disability in all legislation, policies, strategies, practices and systems.* During 2019 this project had two main objectives:

- a) Formal and Informal Local Child protection systems are strengthened and functional to provide good quality, accessible, flexible and gender sensitive preventive and responsive services;
- b) Promotion of child-focused social accountability and child participation measures to improve inclusion of CWDs and provision of appropriate CWD specific services.

- ***Advancing the situation of children with disabilities in Kosovo (2019-2020) - supported by UNICEF.***

The main goal of the project is *advancing the situation of children with disabilities in Kosovo in the field of protection and active participation through the advancement of current legislation relevant to children with disabilities and access to high quality services based on the principles of the bio-psycho-social model.*

Within this project is intended to:

- a) Incorporate the CBR program model based on the principles of bio-psycho-social approach in the Inclusive Law and in the upcoming lay changes to the local legislature, relevant to children with disabilities;
- b) Strengthen school initiatives to advance/provide access to their schools for children with disabilities (of all categories);



- c) Increase the visibility of issues related to children with disabilities in Kosovo; and
  - d) Strengthen the network of CBR Centers in Kosovo in addressing issues relevant to children with disabilities.
- ***Advancement of human rights, participation in society and conditions for independent living for People with Disabilities in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans - supported by Threshold Finland.***

The overall goal of the project is *advancement of human rights, participation in society and conditions for independent living for people with disabilities in Kosovo*. The project aims to:

- a) Advance capacities of People with Disabilities and DPO's in order to improve their living standards;
  - b) Empower People with Disabilities and DPO's to actively participate in collaborative mechanisms at local, national and international levels in order to integrate their rights into development policies at all levels;
  - c) Increase the awareness of institutions and society for the rights of people with disabilities and promote the Advocacy of Human Rights between people with disabilities at the local and national level.
- ***Increasing social welfare of children with disabilities and their families (2018-2019) - supported by Save the Children in partnership with the European Union office in Kosovo and Swedish SIDA.***

The primary goal of this project is to provide quality services for children with disabilities and their families through the provision of day care services. Within the project is intended to:

- a) Create and provide quality community-based day care services for children with disabilities and their families in the Prishtina Region;
  - b) Increase the quality and expansion of qualitative social services provided in the community for children with disabilities and their families.
- ***Provision of quality services for children and adults with disabilities in the region of Prishtina (2019) - supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.***

The main goal of the project is to *provide quality social services based on the community for children and adults with disabilities and to support their families in dealing with disabilities in everyday situations*. The project aims to:

- a) Improve the social welfare of children and adults with disabilities;
  - b) Improve the right approach and care for family members towards their family members with disabilities.
- ***Maintaining and improving the health of children with disabilities and their families (June - November 2019) - supported by the Ministry of Health.***

The main goal of the project is *improving physical and psychological health for children with disabilities*, while it is aimed to achieve:

- a) Providing quality rehabilitation services of community-based day care for children with disabilities and their families in the Region of Prishtina;

- b) Increasing the quality and expansion of community health services provided to children with disabilities and their families.
- ***Increasing the quality and expansion of community health services provided to children with disabilities and their families.***

The main goal within this project is *to improve social welfare of children with disabilities in the Pristina Region*, while aiming to achieve:

- a) Improving physical and psychological development of children;
- b) Advancing independence skills for children with disabilities.

## SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGHOUT 2019

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### ➤ Day care services for children

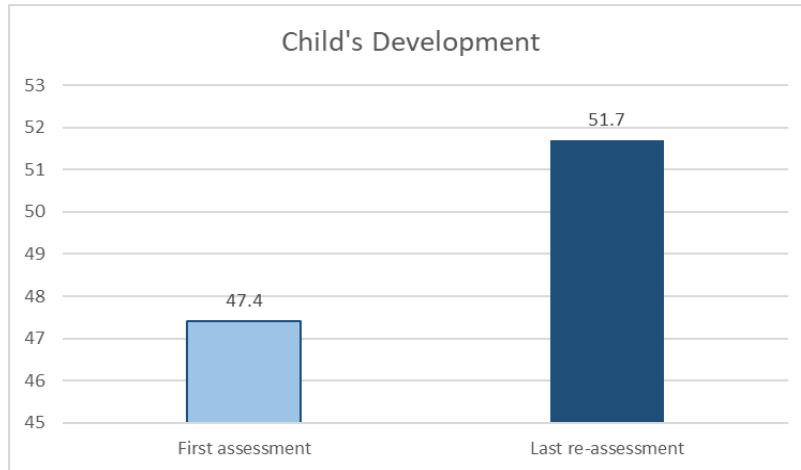
HANDIKOS, within the CBR Program, throughout the implemented projects during 2019, has managed to provide day care services for more than 70 children with disabilities in the region of Prishtina. The key services provided throughout this year have supported the holistic development of children with an emphasis on daily skills, cognitive, physical and emotional development.

The services provided in this program have been developed by assessing the needs of children with disabilities by the HANDIKOS multi-disciplinary team, by putting the child in focus and analyzing the perspective of parents and other service providers (when applicable). Based on the assessment results, individual intervention plans have been compiled for each beneficiary child, while their re-examination has been done on a three (3) month basis by applying the re-assessment process in all areas of development. Despite individual planning for beneficiary children, the multi-disciplinary team at HANDIKOS has continuously developed 1-3 month workshops in which the active participation of children has been unavoidable. Through participation in those workshops, children with disabilities have advanced their holistic development while playing and having fun. All this is reported on a monthly basis for each beneficiary child, where the same reports are then shared with parents/guardians, updating them with the monthly progress of their children.

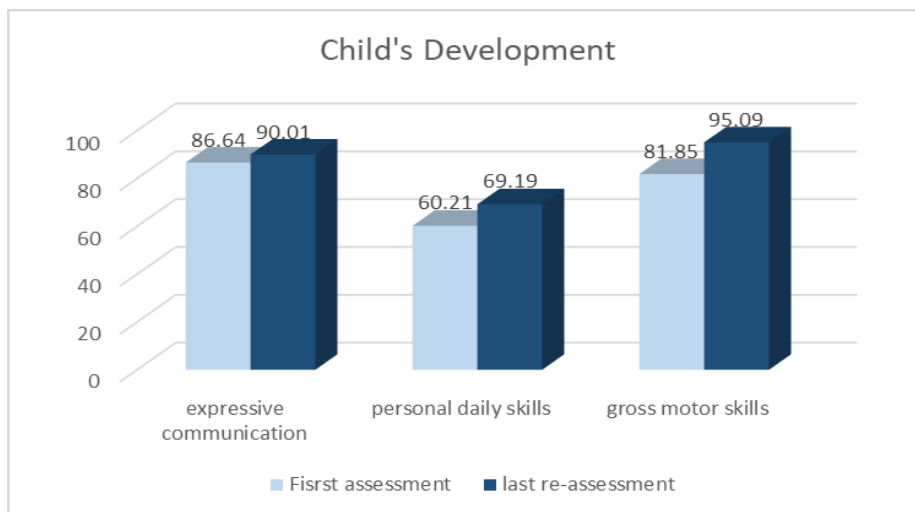
Data from the first assessment of children and those from the last re-assessment conducted in December 2019 show satisfactory results of the work with children with disabilities over one (1) year.

Demographic data of beneficiary children					
76 children	Gender divided		Age divided		
	Girls	Boys	3-5 years	5-6 years	6-16 years
	32	44	7	11	58

Within the framework of this program, during 2019, four (4) intervention rooms have functioned, which had specific goals in supporting children's development. The field of expressive and receptive communication development, daily skills development, socialization, and fine and gross motor skills development, are areas in which children with disabilities have received support. Over the course of a one (1) year intervention, the average of children's development has risen from 47.4 percent to 51.7 percent for 76 beneficiary children.



The most noticeable impact has been identified in the development of expressive communication, personal daily skills and the development of gross motor skills.



In order to meet the targeted objectives of children with disabilities (to support their development), an active rehabilitation camp was organized during 2019. During this event, 15 children with disabilities benefited from physical rehabilitation, which was organized with the main goal of advancing their physical health, while through the implementation of recreational activities during the camp, the same children have been supported on cognitive and emotional development.

### ➤ Day care services for adults

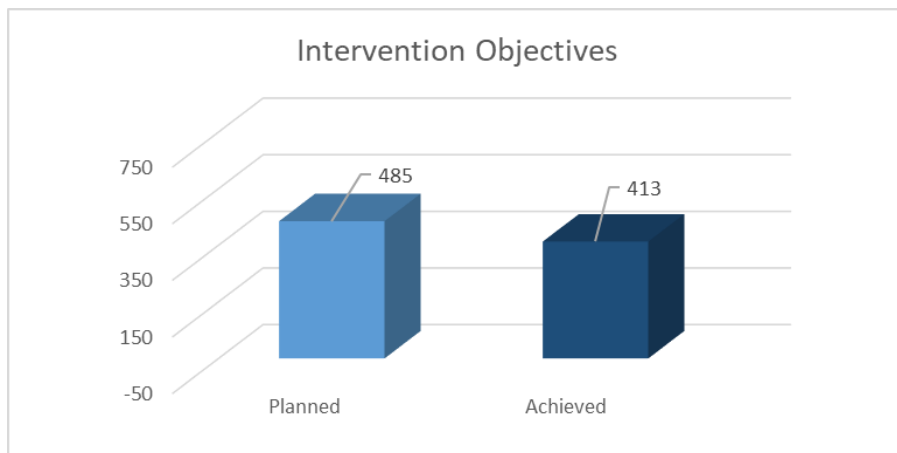
In addition to services provided for children with disabilities, HANDIKOS has worked intensively with 97 adults with disabilities (51M & 46W), through services provided at CBR as well as home services. During one (1) year HANDIKOS has provided social services for 30 persons with disabilities (12W & 18M) within the CBR program. These services have supported people with disabilities in recognizing and functionalizing their

affinities, developing daily skills (thus supporting independent living), as well as recognizing and protecting human rights for people with disabilities.

Demographic data of adult beneficiaries				
97 adults	Gender divided		Age divided	
	Women	Men	Center	Home
	46	51	30	67

Over the course of a year, HANDIKOS has held nine (9) meetings with its beneficiaries in order to advance their knowledge regarding physical health, by supporting them in maintaining and advancing their health (including maneuvering and using assistive devices, referrals for relevant health services, and essential knowledge in health crisis management, which come as a result of disability). Furthermore, throughout 2019, HANDIKOS, in cooperation with its members, has carried out 12 recreational activities outside the Center which, in addition to the positive impact on the members themselves, had a wide impact on society, thus making the issue of disability more visible.

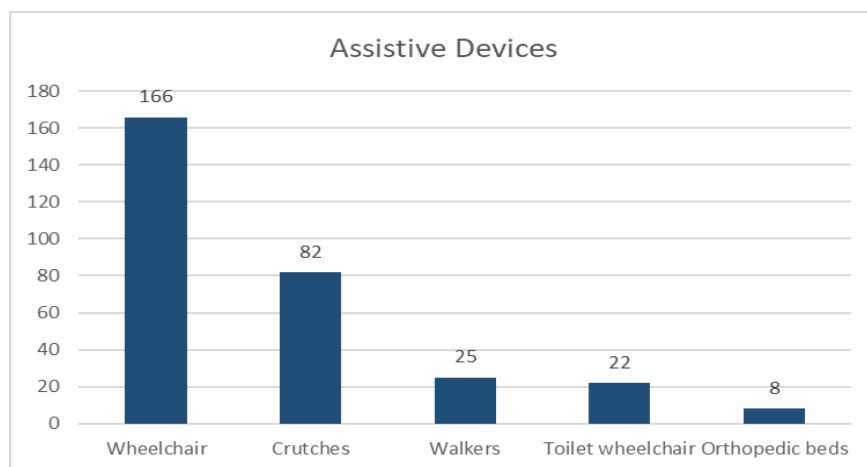
For each member, HANDIKOS has compiled individual intervention plans, in which specific objectives were set in order to support them towards independent living. As a result, for 97 beneficiaries, during one (1) year, 485 objectives have been set and worked with during activities/services within the CBR program, while 413 of them have been achieved.



### ➤ Assistive devices services

Since its establishment, HANDIKOS has worked with many foreign and local partners to meet the needs for assistive devices for people with disabilities in Kosovo. As a Resource Center, HANDIKOS during 2019 has continued to be a key distributor of assistive devices for people with disabilities in Kosovo.

During 2019, HANDIKOS has provided assistive devices services to 303 people with disabilities (170W & 133M) throughout Kosovo, respectively it has distributed 303 assistive devices, which were mostly wheelchairs (standard, active type, for all terrains and toilet carts) as well as walkers, crutches and orthopedic beds.



At the same time HANDIKOS has distributed 11 standard wheelchairs and 11 pairs of crutches for citizens of Albania affected by earthquake.

For all beneficiaries of assistive devices, HANDIKOS has initially assessed their condition, thus assessing their physical health and the need for an assistive device, and administered the necessary measurements to provide the appropriate assistive device. The appropriate device for the person is fixed and adapted in HANDIKOS spaces where then their user as well as the guardian, are trained for its use, maneuvering and maintenance.

The wheelchairs distributed by HANDIKOS during 2019 are a donation received by the Foundation “The Late Days of Jesus Christ”, as well as the Municipal Assembly in the Municipality of Prishtina and a private donor.

### ➤ Legal services

HANDIKOS' Legal Adviser provides legal and judicial services to people with disabilities. During 2019, were given:

Legal Advices	Lawsuits	Complaints/Appeals
215	40	20

Legal advices were given to people with disabilities directly, either through office visits or through other means of communication.

The lawsuits were filed in the Administrative Court, and were mainly filed for allegations of erroneous findings by the Evaluation Commission for the Evaluation of Paraplegics and Tetraplegic Persons. Two (2) of the lawsuits have been filed against the families of children with disabilities. It turns out that until the moment of reporting, two (2) cases have been decided by the court, in favor of the complainant.

Complaints have been addressed to Complaints Council at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare regarding allegations of erroneous judgement for pensions of paraplegic and tetraplegic persons.

The Legal Adviser of HANDIKOS, on behalf of the organization has submitted a request to the Kosovo Judicial Council regarding the payment of court fees, and as a result the KJC has amended the Administrative Instruction on Judicial Tax, a change which exempts people with disabilities from paying the court tax in all cases when they go to the courts. Also, the legal advisor has held several meetings with public officials in order to advocate for physical access and employment of people with disabilities.

### ➤ Other services

HANDIKOS within the CBR program has provided other services which have influenced the advancement of the situation of children and adults with disabilities in the country. Hence, over the course of one (1) year, HANDIKOS has influenced the reduction of prejudice against disability, community mobilization, and advancing support from parents/caregivers and service providers.

As a result, during 2019 HANDIKOS has conducted 56 information sessions in different schools of the lower secondary education cycle in the municipalities of Prishtina, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Mitrovica. During these sessions, 1444 children became aware of disability itself, with special emphasis on children with disabilities and the importance of their inclusion. Moreover, during 2019, HANDIKOS has conducted information sessions for 608 service providers in communication techniques and typology of disability, and also in promoting the prevention of violence against children with focus on children with disabilities.

Within the Community Score Card - an instrument of social accountability, which HANDIKOS has been implementing since 2017, this year HANDIKOS has cooperated with Centers for Social Work in the municipalities of Prishtina, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Mitrovica, to address issues related to the services of this institution for children with disabilities.

HANDIKOS has continuously worked to increase the capacities of its members and beyond. During 2019, in the program of Positive Discipline in Daily Parenting HANDIKOS has trained 146 parents and service providers in children's rights and their development during eight (8) sessions. It is estimated that more than 1,457 children are indirect beneficiaries of this service (the number of children declared by parents'/service providers).

During 2019, HANDIKOS has worked intensively in the field of child protection, where one of such activities was the training of 88 children with disabilities from the municipalities of Prishtina, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Mitrovica in types and prevention of violence. Furthermore, the training program was drafted by the children with disabilities themselves, representatives of the CWD Advocacy Led Group- HËNA.

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING INTERVENTIONS

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During 2019, in addition to services provided to the community, HANDIKOS has worked intensively to advance the situation of children and adults with disabilities through advocacy and lobbying in both current legislation as well as the awareness of the community and society in general.

Consequently, during 2019, HANDIKOS for the first time in Kosovo, marked March 1st- the International Day of Wheelchair Users with the motto "*Ne k'shtu lëvizim*". More than 150 children and adult wheelchair users, from seven (7) regions of Kosovo, paraded in the main square of Pristina conveying messages in order to raise public awareness of the importance of assistive devices (wheelchairs) and accessibility. In the same event, a basketball game was organized in a wheelchair, as well as a joint dance with the paraders.

In order to advance the awareness of the society regarding the importance of social inclusion of children with disabilities and their protection from all types of violence, HANDIKOS has developed information brochures which were distributed throughout the year at various events (N≈ 5,000). Furthermore, on the celebration of December 3rd - International Day of People with Disabilities, during this year HANDIKOS has launched an animated video which has shown the importance of involving children with disabilities in physical activities in school. The celebration of December 3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities, has also been accompanied with the publication of the report on the findings of local legislation relevant to physical access for people with disabilities, by HANDIKOS.

Recently, HANDIKOS in cooperation with 15 CBR Centers in Kosovo have drafted a joint Advocacy Strategy and Communication Strategy to advance the situation of children with disabilities in Kosovo. Furthermore, didactic materials have been provided for 15 Centers, in order to facilitate the provision of social services for children with disabilities in the municipalities in which the aforementioned Centers operate.

The close cooperation of HANDIKOS Centers has continued, where only during 2019 in collaboration with the Office for Good Governance, ten (10) consultative meetings were held (Gjakova, Prizren, Ferizaj, Prishtina, Suhareka, Drenas, Gjilan, Peja, Vushtrri and Mitrovica) in order to discuss the current plan and strategy for people with disabilities and recommendations for the future plan which implementation will begin in 2021. Participants of these meetings were about 300 people with disabilities (141W & 157M).

HANDIKOS has continued to work closely with local and international organizations of people with disabilities. During 2019, a two-day workshop was held to increase the capacities of these organizations, a workshop which brought together 51 participants (16W & 35M).





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HANDIKOS, 2020