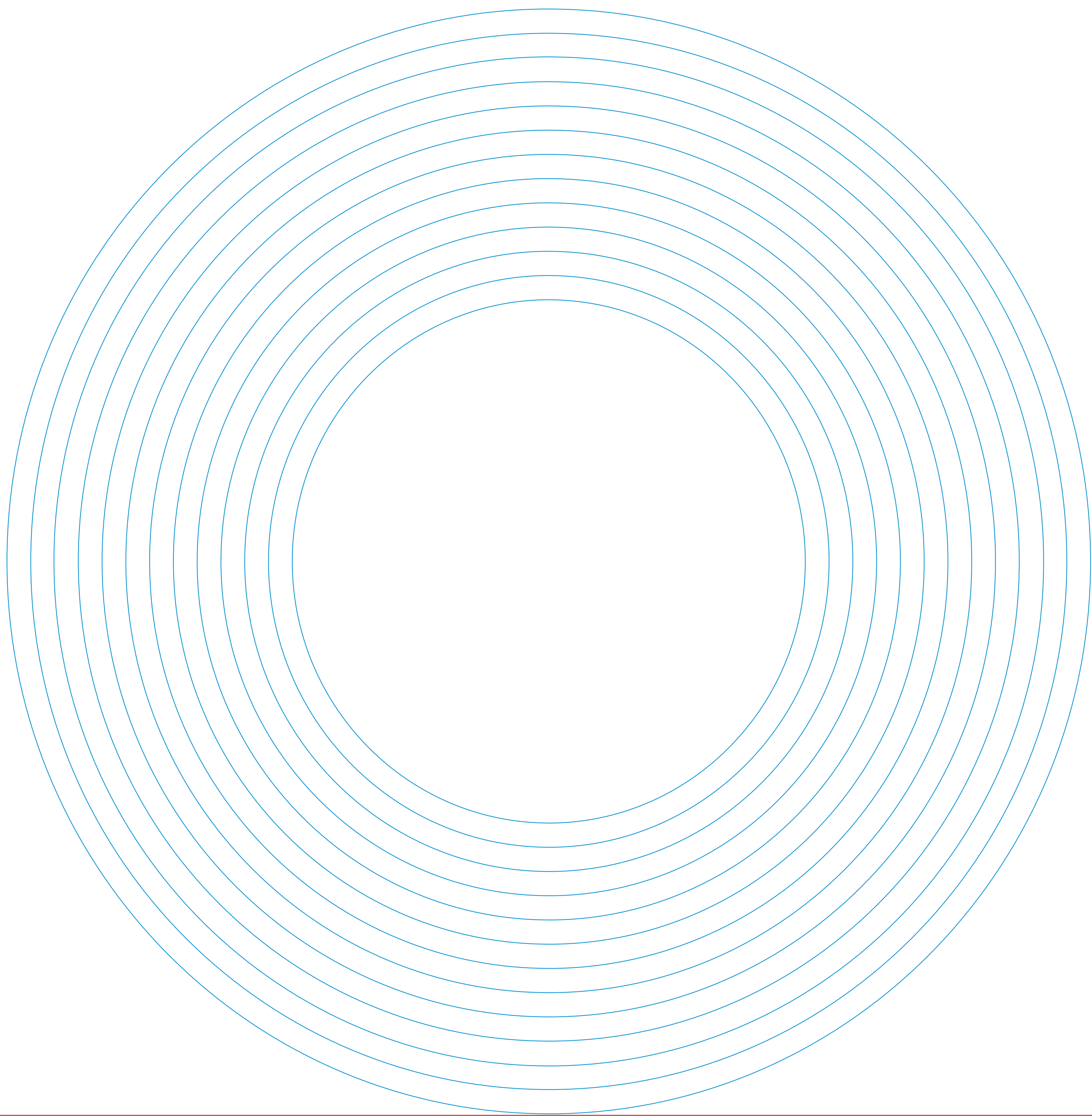




# **BRIEF REPORT ON USING THE DATABASE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**





# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

HANDIKOS thanks all those who contributed to the compilation of this report, which aims to promote the most efficient use of the database for the identification of domestic violence, with a focus on identifying children with disabilities experiencing domestic violence.

**HANDIKOS** particularly thanks:

- Ministry of Justice
- Kosovo Police
- Centers for Social Work in the Municipality of Prishtina, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Mitrovica
- Shelter for the Protection of Victims of Violence in the Municipality of Gjakova

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The content of this report is the sole responsibility of **HANDIKOS** and does not reflect the views of **Save the Children** and **SIDA**.

# CONTENT

- ✦ Introduction..... 5
- ✦ Goal . .... 6
- ✦ Objectives ..... 6
- ✦ Methodology.....6
- ✦ Geographical coverage ..... 6
- ✦ Executive Summary ..... 8
- ✦ Issues to consider ..... 9
- ✦ Statistics within the Database for victims of domestic violence ..... 11
- ✦ Key findings ..... 14
- ✦ Recommendation ..... 21



# ABREVIATIONS

|        |                                   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| SOP    | Standard Operating Procedures     |
| MoJ    | Ministry of Justice               |
| MICS   | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey |
| WHO    | World Health Organization         |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organization     |
| CSW    | Center for Social Work            |
| KAS    | Kosovo Agency of Statistics       |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund    |

# INTRODUCTION

Violence and corporal punishment of children in Kosovo remains a social norm accepted and applied by our society, as a means of education and discipline for children. While the long-term negative effects that the use of violence has on the well-being of a child for many parents are unknown, they have been overlooked and ignored. Often, parents themselves are the ones who use different forms of violence such as physical or emotional violence. At the same time, they can even encourage it in other settings outside the household where the child spends their time.

Children and adults with disabilities face a **wide range** of physical, social and environmental **barriers** when participating in society, including limited access to health services, education and other social and support services. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be victims of violence than other children without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

According to MICS 2020 published by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ASK) and UNICEF, 72 percent of children of ages 1-14 in Kosovo have experienced some form of **violent discipline**. Among the children of ages 2-14 in Kosovo, children with functional difficulties are more likely to experience forms of violent discipline (82 percent) as opposed to children without functional difficulties (72 percent).<sup>2</sup>

1. <https://www.who.int/disabilities/violence/en/>

2. [https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5740/3-alb-mics6kos-statistical-snapshot-child-discipline-20201015\\_20201119.pdf](https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5740/3-alb-mics6kos-statistical-snapshot-child-discipline-20201015_20201119.pdf)

In an effort to address domestic violence, the Ministry of Justice in 2018 has established the National Database of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women Survivors, a database under the responsibility of the National Coordinator Against Domestic Violence.

During 2018, HANDIKOS together with other stakeholders such as the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence, the Agency for Gender Equality, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Kosovo Police, the Centers for Social Work and the Office for Good Governance within The Office of the Prime Minister has begun reviewing the Standard Action Procedures (**SOP**) document for protection from domestic violence to clarify the specifics of persons with disabilities within this document, and to determine the services that institutional mechanisms should provide to persons with disabilities at different stages of the Standard Operating Procedures.

Throughout this process, among other matters, it was seen necessary to build mechanisms for more adequate data collections, where as a result it was proposed to disaggregate the existing database for identifying cases of domestic violence, in order to provide a clearer picture for the number of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence. As a result, the current database of domestic violence cases has been updated, with a column specifying whether the person (victim, perpetrator or witness) is disabled or not.

The specific database on domestic violence is an online database and the same is used by all stakeholders of the defense line such as the Police, the Center for Social Work, the Court, the Prosecution or the Shelters. The database is the responsibility of the **Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence** within the Ministry of Justice.



“

## GOAL

The goal of this report is to reflect the use of the Domestic Violence Database, specifically the use of the database on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence and the level of reporting of domestic violence cases against children with disabilities.

## OBJECTIVES

- The presentation of findings on the current state of use of domestic violence database, specifically the use of the database on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence and the level of reporting of domestic violence cases, towards children with disabilities.
- Provide recommendations for promoting and increasing the use of the domestic violence database, specifically the use of the database for children with disabilities involved in domestic violence.

## Methodology

The report drafting methodology relies on data collection based on the qualitative method that includes theoretical analysis as well as field research.

A total of 11 interviews were conducted in four municipalities of Kosovo. Interviews were conducted with representatives of central and municipal level:

- Interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Justice;
- Interviews with representatives of the Centers for Social Work in four municipalities of Kosovo;
- Interviews with the Kosovo Police;
- Interviews with shelter representatives;

## Geographical coverage

The report was drafted based on the data collected in four municipalities of Kosovo: Municipality of Prishtina, Municipality of Ferizaj, Municipality of Mitrovica and Municipality of Gjakova.

The selection of municipalities for this assessment was made to:

- Involve the target municipalities which have been part of the initiative initiated by HANDIKOS to review the Standard Action Procedures (SOPs) for protection from domestic violence, in order to clarify the specifics of persons and children with disabilities.
- Including municipalities with a larger number of residents and consequently a larger number of cases such as the municipalities of Prishtina, Ferizaj, Mitrovica and Gjakova.







## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

As the purpose of this report is to reflect the use of the database on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence, the findings of this report show that as of December 2020 there are no registered cases of children with disabilities, simultaneously, victims of Domestic violence in the database managed by the Ministry of Justice. The same applies for child perpetrators with disabilities.

According to **all professionals** responsible for using the database from the four municipalities interviewed for this purpose, during 2020, there has not been a single case of children with disabilities that were victims domestic violence. Given the fact that children with disabilities are more likely to be found in situations of violence when compared to other children, there is an exceedingly low level of reporting by family and community on the one hand, and an exceedingly low level of case identification of children with disabilities victims of violence from institutions in the family and community.

It is worth noting that according to all respondents, the **COVID-19** pandemic has severely damaged the work process in general, including identification and consequently has damaged the use of the database in 2020.

Although all officials responsible for using the database were provided with the necessary training and knowledge to use it, many of them expressed difficulties in updating it due to the large volume of work on the one hand and the primary obligation, according to them, to the institution's database.

In general, the database is considered as an added value, where the addition of a column for children with disabilities (victims, perpetrators or witnesses) involved in domestic violence, has facilitated the use of the database which might also affect inter-institutional coordination for referral and service delivery for children with disabilities.

Considering the small number of referrals, it is more than necessary for the Centers for Social Work in cooperation with the Kosovo Police and other institutions to take urgent action, in order to identify children with disabilities, victims of violence. Identifying and reporting children in situations of violence is the first step to protecting children. The legal framework obliges all officials and professionals committed to protecting children, to identify and report cases of child victims of violence.

On the other hand, continuous capacity building training for officials on the use of the database is highly recommended. It is recommended to add columns to enter additional data on people with disabilities, such as the type of disability, the type of illness, data on other family members, etc. Greater cooperation and coordination of responsible institutions with organizations working with children with disabilities on the identification and registration of cases of children within the database is also **recommended**.



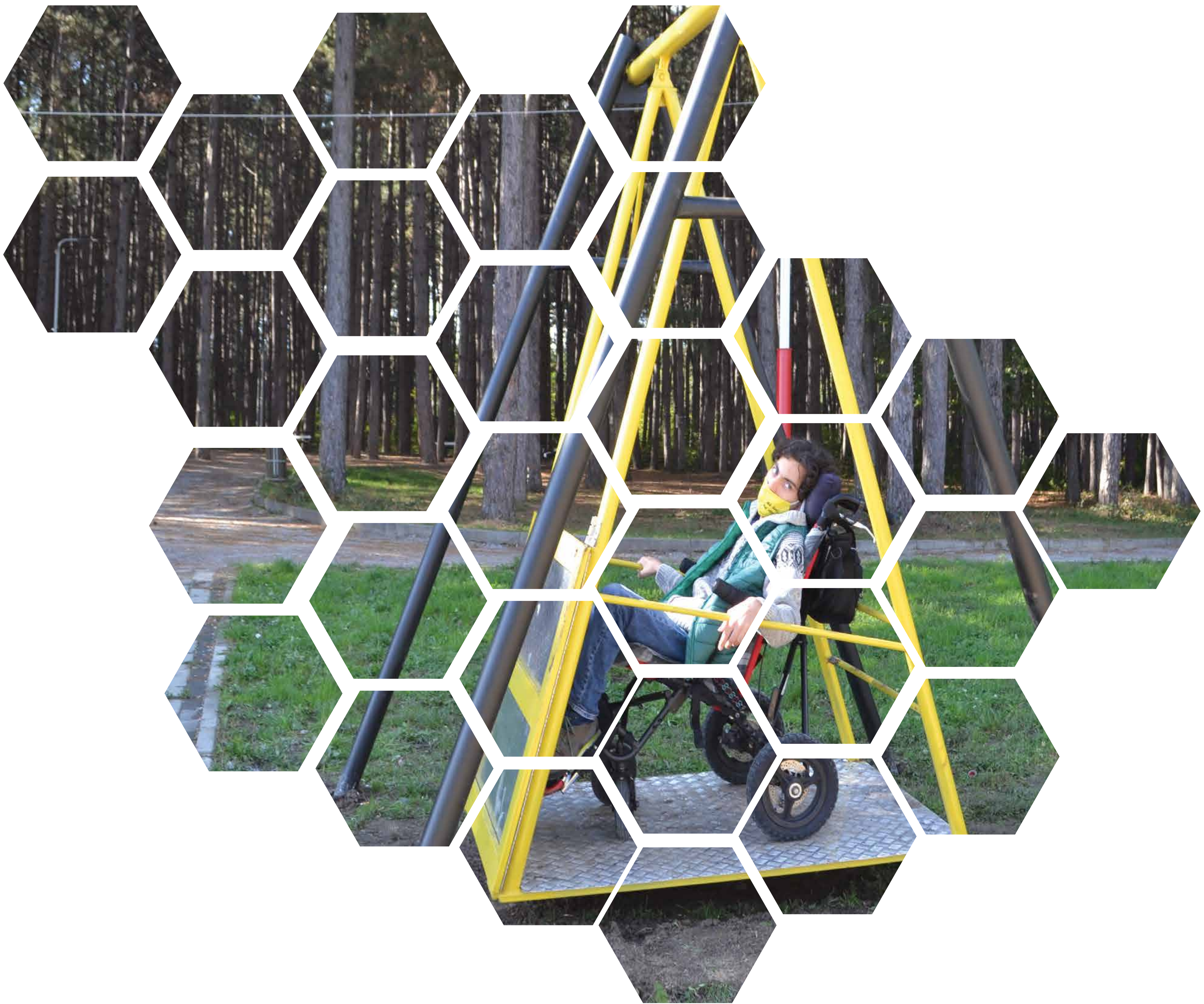


## Issues to consider

The National Database of Survivors of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women is a relatively new database, created in **2018**. The year 2019 has been a pilot phase for the use of the database, and at the same time a period for capacity building of professionals responsible for using and updating the database. During 2019, joint trainings were held for capacity building for the use of the database. In addition to joint trainings, individual trainings were held with relevant officials for capacity building for database use. ”

According to all respondents, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has severely damaged the process of using the database in 2020. This is due to the high number of infected officials, quarantine, isolation of staff and reduction of staff in institutions through the organization of work only with essential staff. All respondents expressed that the assessment should not include the period from March 2020 due to the organization of work in exceptional circumstances.





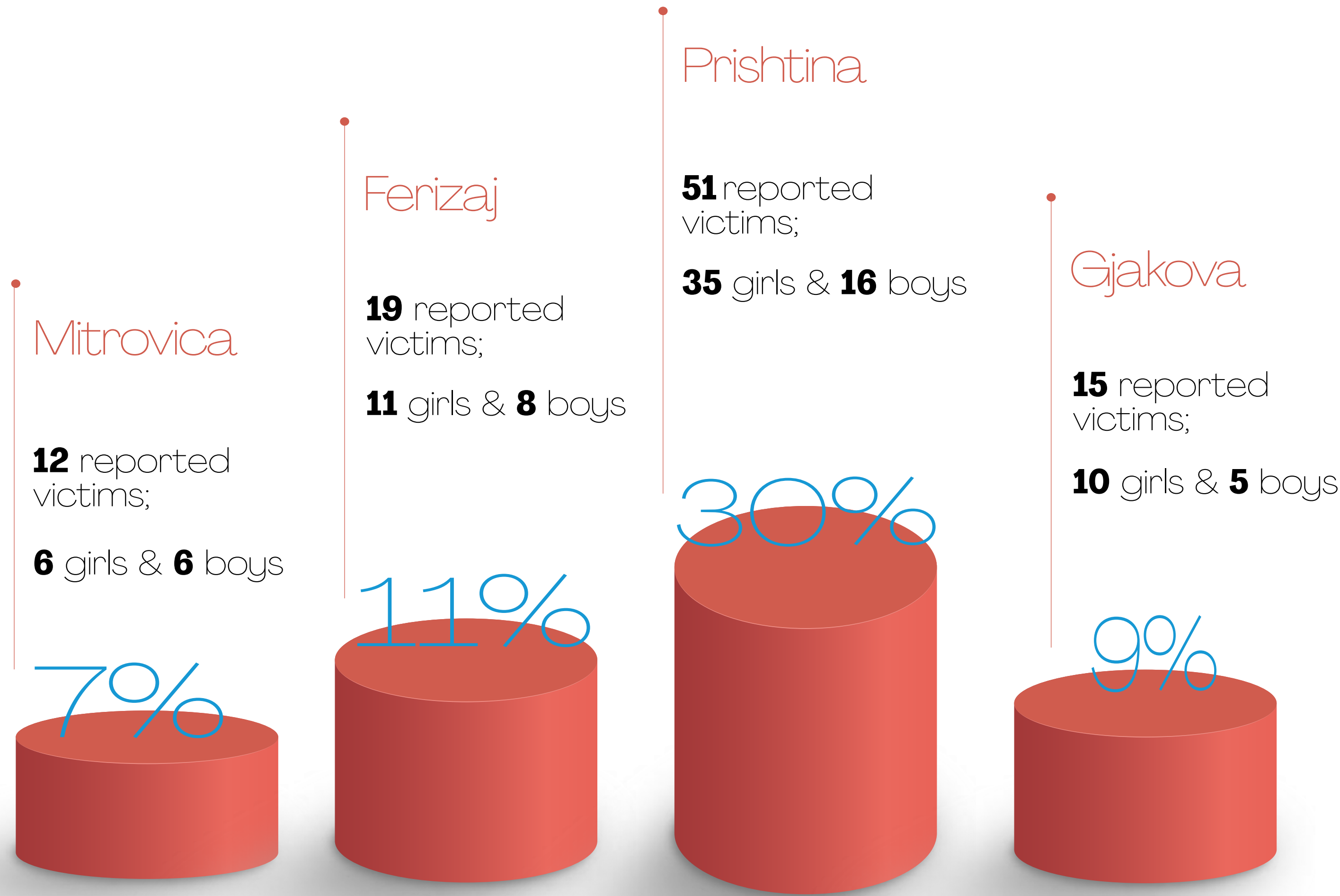


# Statistics within the Database for victims of domestic violence

According to the data of the Ministry of Justice during 2020, in the database there are **97 children** victims of violence, aged 1 to 18 years old from the Municipality of Prishtina, Gjakova, Ferizaj and Mitrovica. Of the 97 child victims, **62 girls**, while **35 boys**.

”

| Statistics by victims (ages 1-18) |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level of reporting                | By regions              |
| Date of incident                  | 01/02/2020 - 04/12/2020 |
| Group-age                         | 1 - 18                  |

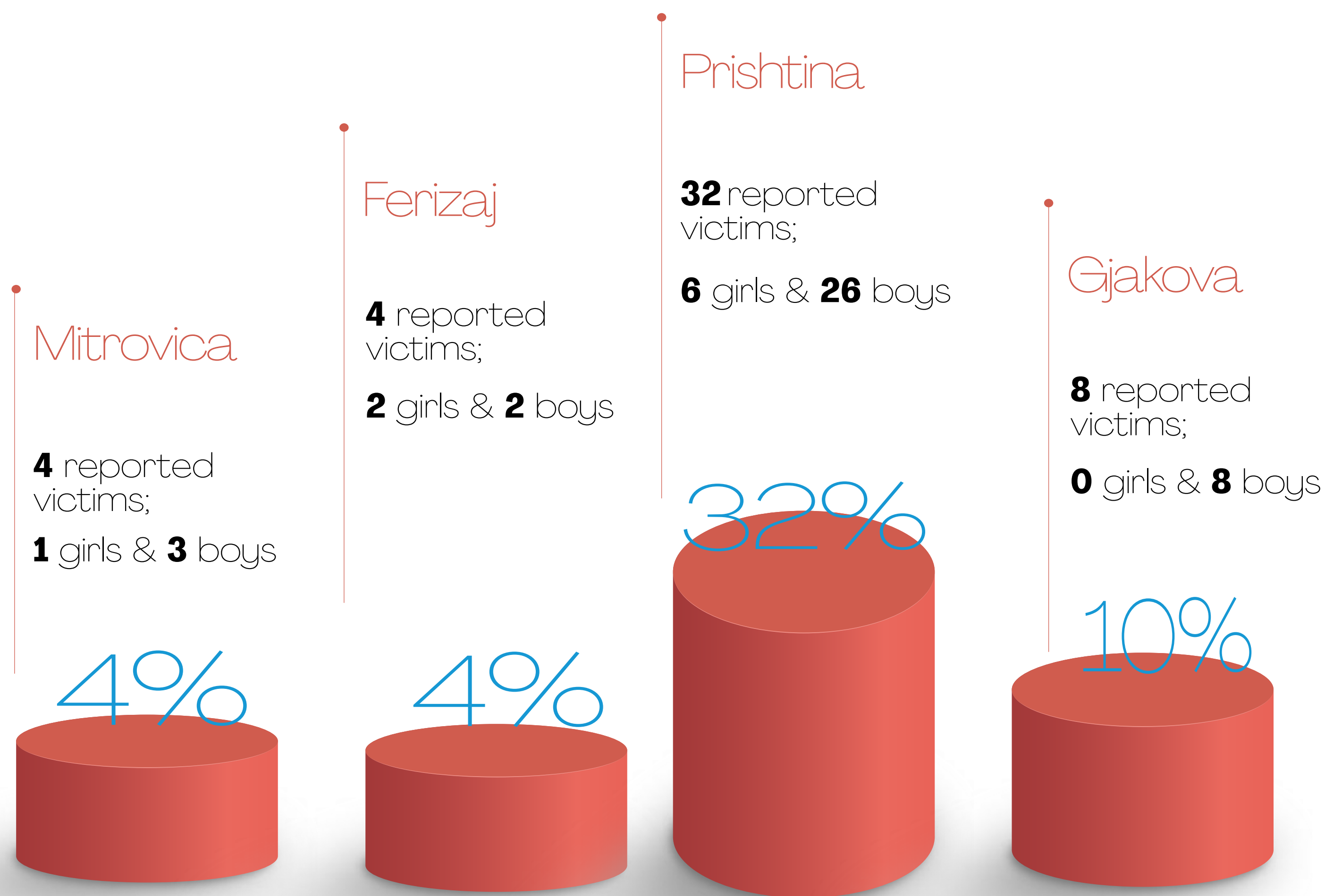


Source: Ministry of Justice, December, 2020



Whereas, the number of perpetrators under the age of 18 is **48**, of which 39 are boys and 9 are girls.

| Main statistics (age 1-18) |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level of reporting         | By regions              |
| Date on incident           | 01/02/2020 - 04/12/2020 |
| Group-age                  | 1 - 18                  |



“

In regards to the number of children with disabilities that are victims of violence, which is also a subject of this report, **no case** of children with disabilities, victims of domestic violence **has been registered** in the database.







## Key findings about the use of the **database** for children with disabilities involved in domestic violence

To conduct a more objective assessment of the current situation of the use of the database, with a focus on recording and updating data on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence, two separate questionnaires were used, where one questionnaire was used for interviewing local level stakeholders such as the **Kosovo Police, CSW**, and service providers (shelters from the NGO sector), while the second questionnaire was designed and used to interview officials from the **MoJ**, under whose group also operates this database.

“To conduct the field research, a total of **11** officials involved in the use of the database were interviewed, of which nine (**9**) from the local level, respectively five (**5**) interviews with CSWs, three (**3**) with the Kosovo Police and one (**1**) with shelters, from the four targeted municipalities. Meanwhile, two (**2**) officials from the central level were interviewed, respectively from the MoJ, which is also the carrier of the database.”

Generally from the answers received during the interview, it results that the database is welcomed by all stakeholders involved in the chain of identification and reporting of cases involved in domestic violence. The special column related to cases of children with disabilities is also considered as an asset of this database, which helps to respond quickly and provide the necessary services for the case.



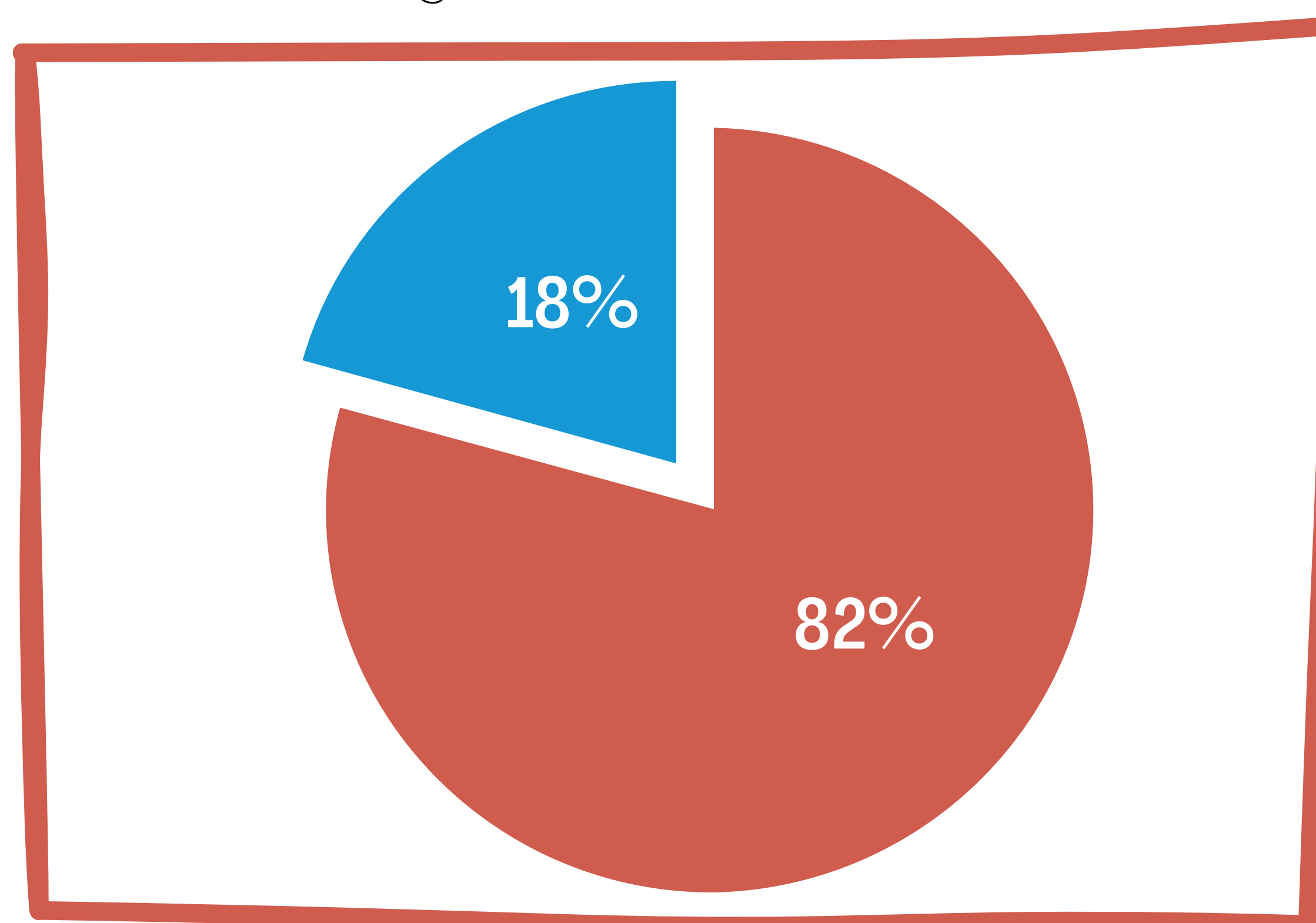
## No cases of children with disabilities victims of violence have been identified and registered in the database during 2020

- According to data provided by the Ministry of Justice, as of December 2020, **no cases of children with disabilities victims of domestic violence** have been registered in the database managed by the Ministry of Justice. The same goes for child perpetrators with disabilities.
- According to all professionals responsible for using the database from the four municipalities interviewed for this purpose, during 2020, there has not been a single case of children with disabilities that were victims domestic violence. Given the fact that children with disabilities are more likely to be found in situations of violence when compared to other children, there is an exceedingly low level of reporting by family and community on the one hand, and an **exceedingly low level of case identification** of children with disabilities victims of violence from institutions in the family and community.
- Another reason for not identifying / registering cases of children with disabilities victims of violence within the database, may be the **lack of knowledge** of officials responsible for using the database to identify disabilities, or identify any special needs to victims of violence. This was declared by the Human Rights Coordinator within the Ministry of Justice.
- In general, all interviewed officials stated that among the main measures to be taken to increase the use and functioning of the database, in order to generate real data, are raising the **awareness and recognition** of the whole community, starting from children, citizens, institutions and professionals from both the public sector and NGOs, of the importance of increasing the reporting of these cases, especially cases of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence, towards institutions that register these cases on the basis of data. In this regard, the Human Rights Coordinator within the MoJ, stated that she calls on all organizations that work with these children, and that may have evidence of these cases of children involved in domestic violence, to contact **directly with MoJ**, to work together on their referral to the database, and at the same time analyze possible obstacles in the referral system, which make it impossible to identify these cases.



## The responsible officials have knowledge of the database

- Regarding the question whether these officials are familiar with the **disaggregated database** for the identification of cases involved in domestic violence, all respondents from both central and local level, answered that they are familiar and informed with this database.
- While asked how long they have been aware of the database, **82%** of respondents stated that they have known about the database since its inception two years ago, and only **18%** of them said that they have been aware of it for more than a year.



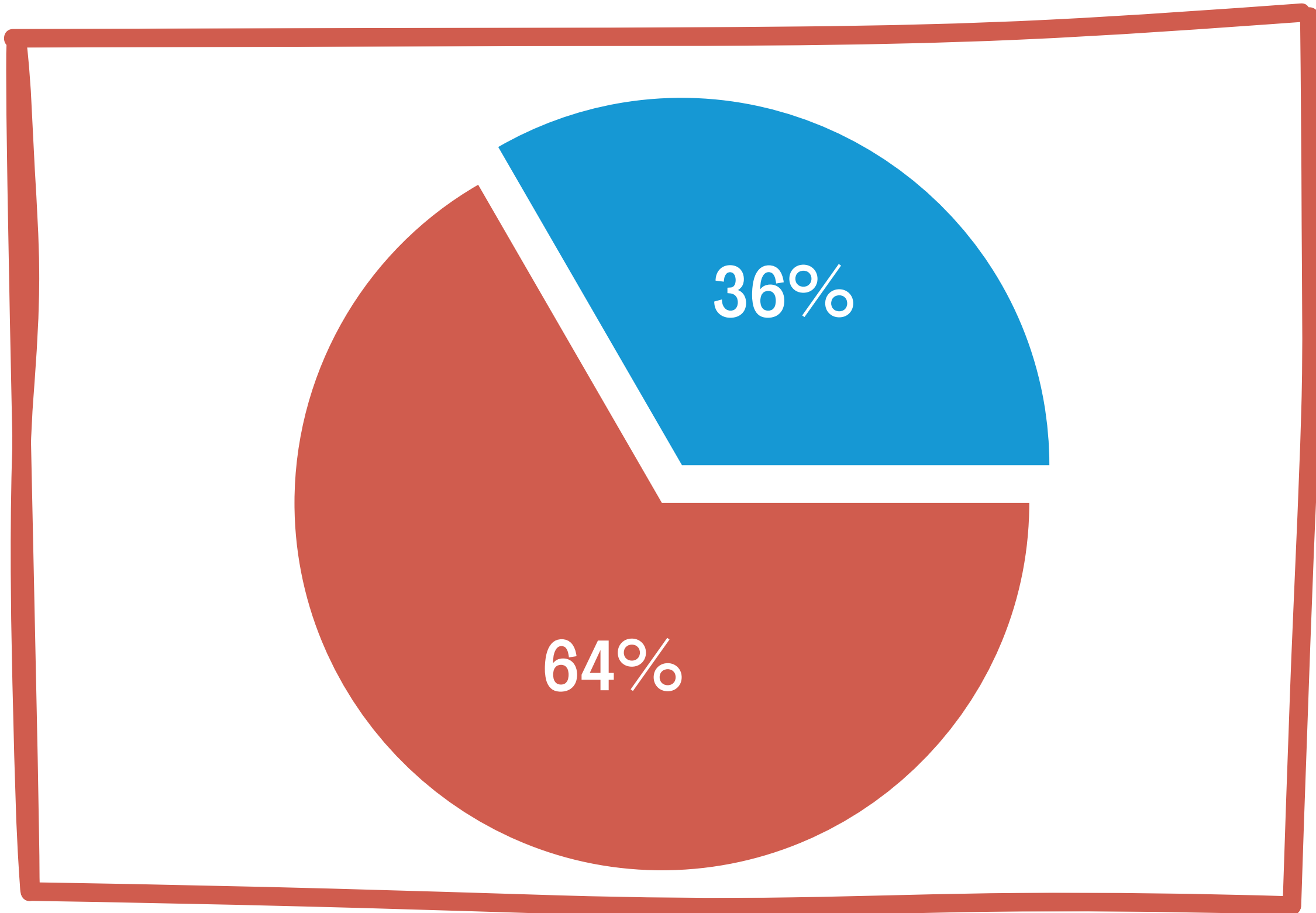
How long have you been aware of the database?

## The use of the database by responsible officials

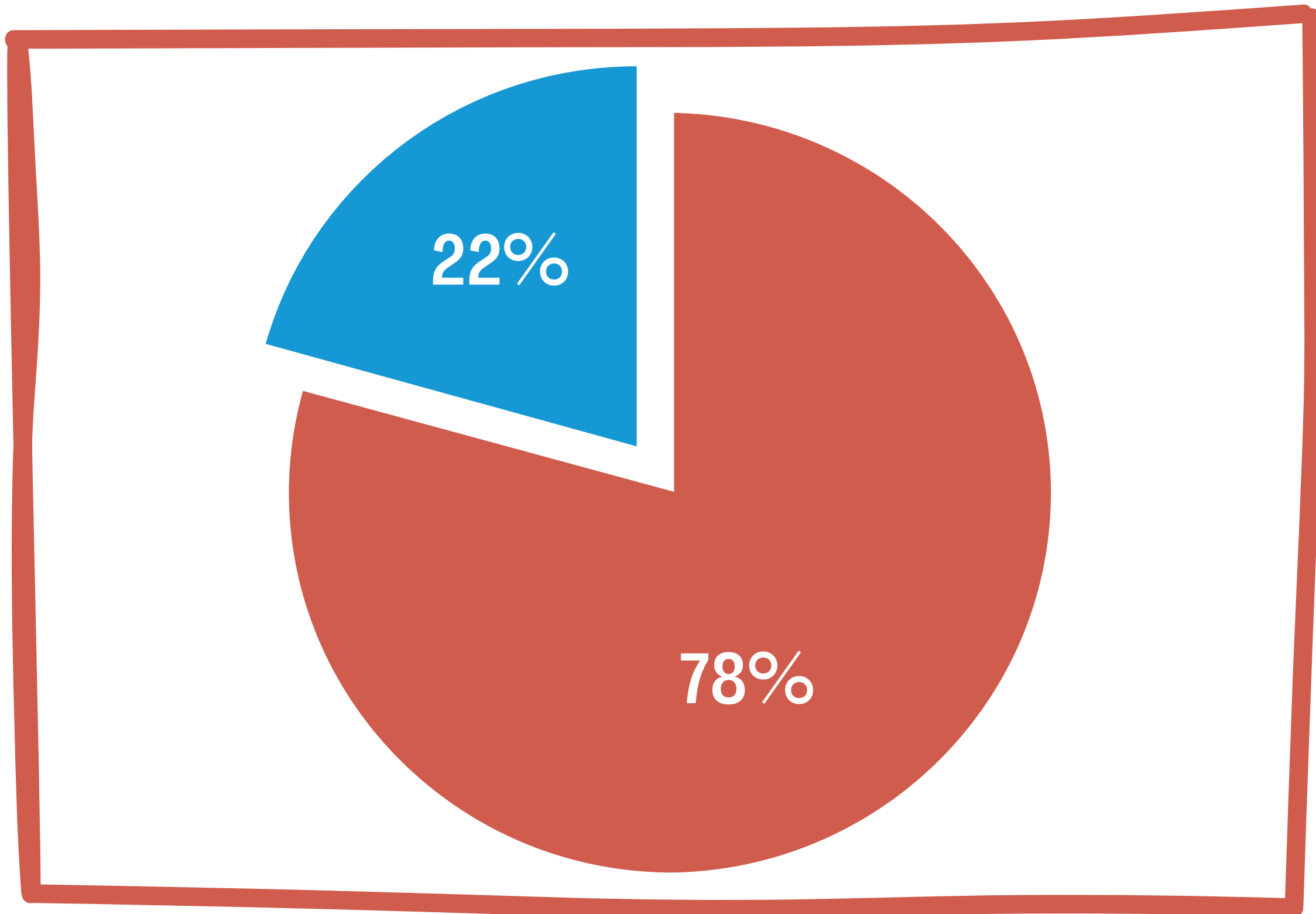
In regards to, the question of how often these officials have used the database during 2020, there was a variety of answers among the respondents. Most of them (**64%**) stated that in 2020 they rarely used the database, where some of the respondents stated that from the period February – March 2020 they were not able to use the database properly because they were more engaged on the field, as a result of the situation caused by the pandemic. While the rest of the respondents, ie **36%** of them stated that they have used the database on a daily basis.



It is worth noting that if we consider only the answers given by the local level, ie CSWs, Kosovo Police and the Shelter, for the frequency of use of this database, only **22%** of respondents stated that they use it on a daily basis, while **78%** of them use it infrequently, considering of course the period from March 2020, where the focus of engagement has been shifted as a result of the unusual circumstances caused by the **COVID-19** pandemic.



How often do you use the database?



How often do you use the database (local level)?



## Columns for **children with disabilities** involved in domestic violence may affect inter-institutional coordination for referral and service provision for children with disabilities



The addition of a column for children with disabilities (victims, perpetrators or witnesses) involved in domestic violence has facilitated the use of the database and this has been stated by all respondents seeing this specificity as an added value in generating data related to children with disabilities. The director of the shelter for the protection of women and children victims of domestic violence in the Municipality of Gjakova has announced that they now have sheltered a child with autism who has been registered in the database, and as a result the child is now part of the system of institutions. At the same time, the head of social services at the Center for Social Work in Mitrovica stated that once a child is classified as a child with disabilities, the database facilitates the work as it classifies the emergency response and coordination with stakeholders mandated to protect this category. But, on the other hand, the leaders of social services of the Centers for Social Work from the Municipality of Gjakova and Ferizaj have stated that they have not had the opportunity to use the column for children with disabilities, as there have been no cases of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence.

•The added column in the database of cases of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence may affect inter-institutional coordination for referral and service provision for children with disabilities. The head of the Center for Social Work in Mitrovica stated that this database has facilitated the chain of response and actions of the necessary institutions for the case

The Center for Social Work in Prishtina is of the opinion that the database saves time due to the fact that it refers the case immediately to the institutions, and does not take time to take the case and wait for a response. The same opinion was shared by the head of social services of the Center for Social Work in Ferizaj, emphasizing that the database facilitates institutional coordination, and provides more evidence for cases and their referral.

The disaggregated database in general, and the column for people with disabilities involved in domestic violence within the database in particular, is nevertheless considered as an added value, as it enables the identification and provision of services for children with disabilities involved in domestic violence in a faster time, while also including mandated service providers.



## Difficulties of responsible officials in using the database

→ In regards the difficulties encountered with using and updating the database for data generation, there were different perceptions among the institutions.

Specifically, **55.5%** of the respondents, mainly from the Kosovo Police, stated that the database has no difficulties but there are simply no cases of children with disabilities, in order to submit them to the database.

→ While **44.5%** of them, mainly from the CSWs and the shelter, have shown that the database has some shortcomings, thus preventing its adequate use. Specifically, the director of the Shelter for the protection of women and children victims of domestic violence in the Municipality of Gjakova, stated that at the beginning of using the database they encountered various shortcomings, so they provided recommendations to the **Ministry of Justice** and requests were always taken into

account. . Whilst the Head of Social Services from the Center for Social Work in the Municipality of Prishtina, stated that the database has difficulties, emphasizing that other sections need be added regarding the type of disability, etc. This database does not allow the entry of these important data, unlike the database for social services within the Centers for Social Work which allows the entry of such data.

→ While the Head of Social Services from the Center for Social Work in Gjakova has stated that since February they have not used the database regularly for victims of **domestic violence** due to restrictive measures in the pandemic.

→ The Center for Social Work<sup>3</sup> in Ferizaj has stated that the **database is very clear**, but that its use is related to the opportunities for officials to use it, and the necessary technical conditions available, to make the whole process functional.

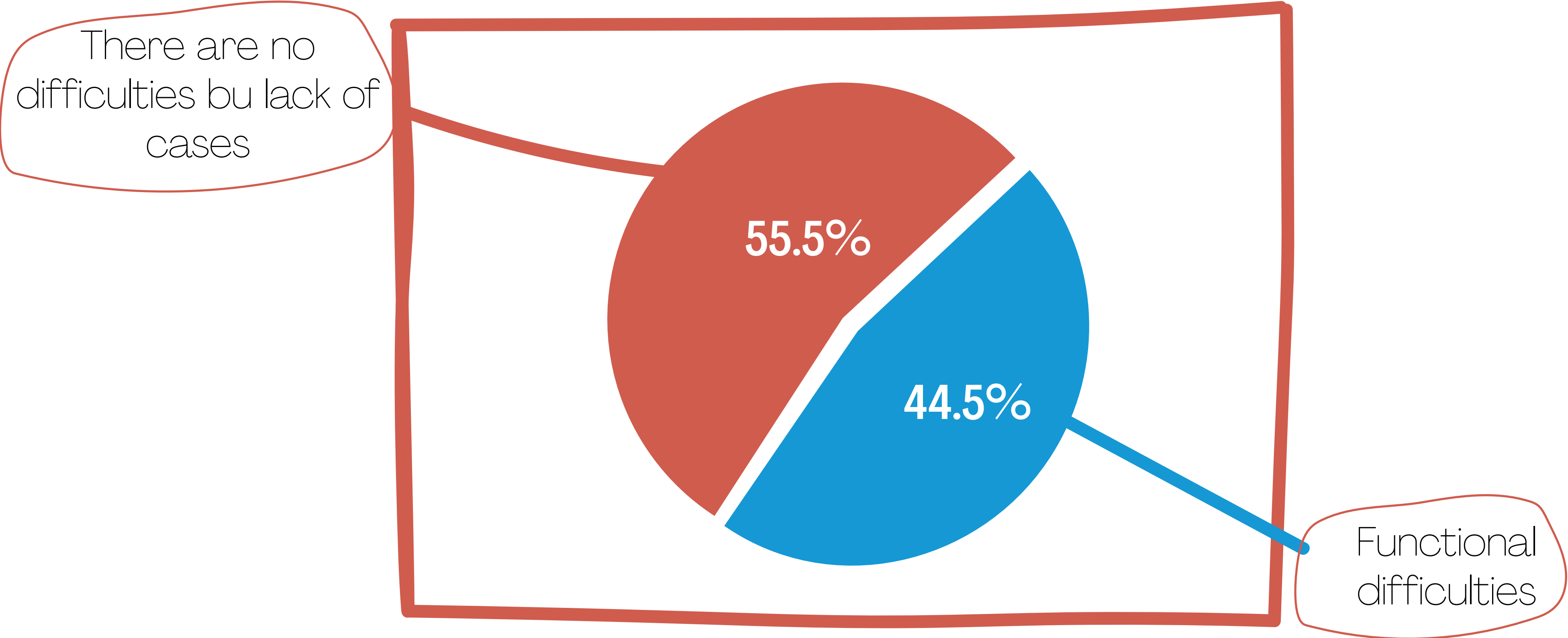
→ The head of social services at the Center for Social Work in Mitrovica has stated that within the CSW there is no designated official for case registration and updating of data in the database. However, such a proposal should not be appropriate, given that **data entry** should be part of the work process of a case manager, who should constantly update the database depending on actions, measures and the services provided to the victim as a case manager. Furthermore, the **internal organization** of the Centers for Social Work engages all staff in the capacity of case managers with the same job descriptions.

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3. Interview with the Head of Social Services at the Center for Social Work in Ferizaj



Po ashtu disa nga të intervistuarit kanë shprehur hapur edhe nevojën për vijimësi në ngritje të kapaciteteve dhe trajnime të cilat do të risnin dhe zhvillonin më tej aftësitë e profesionistëve për të punuar në vazhdimësi në këtë **databazë**.



Are there difficulties updating the database?





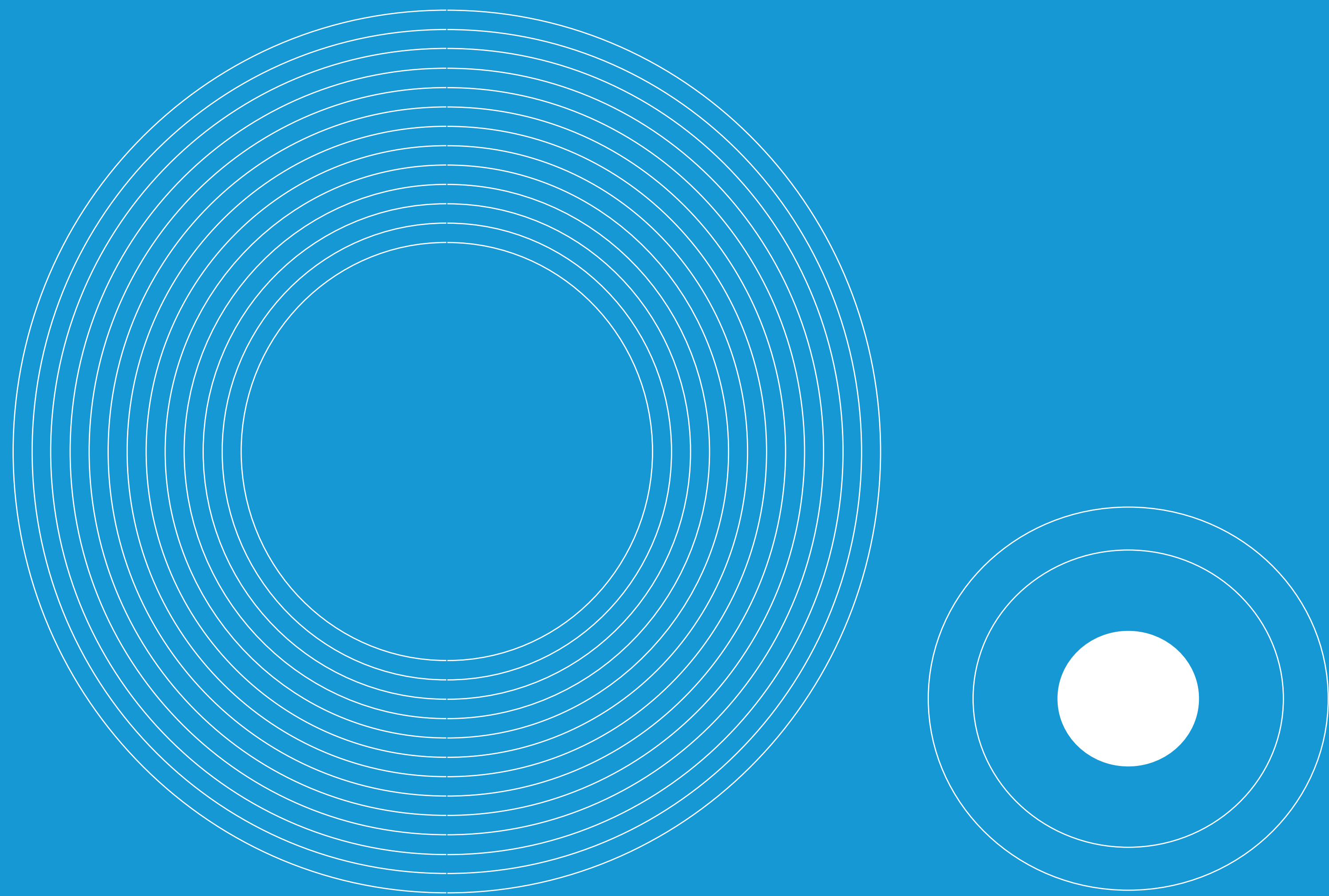
## Recommendations for increasing the use of the database for children with disabilities involved in domestic violence

In general, all officials interviewed for the purpose of compiling this report welcomed the initiative to create and operate a disaggregated database to identify cases involved in domestic violence. As part of the discussion with them about the difficulties and challenges of regular use, recording and data generation to make the database functional, the main goal was to develop some **recommendations** that will influence and further help to increase the use of this database and to provide real data which will then not only develop policies and strategies at the central level, but at the same time ensure a rapid response chain of reference and provision of necessary services to children with disabilities, involved in domestic violence.

Based on the **theoretical analysis** and research conducted through the **field interview** process of institutions, the main recommendations to increase the use of disaggregated database to identify cases of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence, are:

- ✧ Given the small number of referrals, it is more than necessary to take urgent action by the Centers for Social Work in cooperation with the Kosovo Police and other institutions to **identify** children with disabilities victims of violence.
- ✧ **Continuous training** for capacity building of officials about the use of the database. There are now several databases in each institution so the use of several different databases creates confusion among officials.
- ✧ Capacity building of professionals to **use the database** to be equipped with basic knowledge about the identification of functional difficulties, or any disability in victims, as well as further referral of the case.
- ✧ **Adding columns** to enter additional data on people with disabilities, such as type of disability, type of illness, data on other family members, etc.
- ✧ Modification of some rubrics of the database, e.g. institutions do not always have available data on the perpetrator. It should be possible to **record data on the victim** even with the lack of data on the perpetrator.
- ✧ Introduction of an **additional component**; opinion of the evaluating committee and categorization of children based on the degree to which the disability is categorized.
- ✧ Greater **cooperation and coordination** of responsible institutions with organizations working with children with disabilities, regarding the identification and registration of cases of children within the database.







## Annex 1

### Questionnaire about the disaggregated Database to identify cases of domestic violence Questionnaire for the local level

1 Are you aware of the disaggregated database for identifying cases of domestic violence?

2 If yes, how long have you been informed and have access to the disaggregated database for identifying cases of domestic violence?

3 During 2020, how often have you used the database to add relevant data?

On a daily basis

On a weekly basis

On a monthly basis

More rarely

4 Has adding a column for children with disabilities (victims, perpetrators, or witnesses), including domestic violence, facilitated the use of this database?

Yes

No

Please clarify: \_\_\_\_\_

5 How has the increased number of cases of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence affected inter-institutional coordination for referral and service delivery for these children?

6 Currently the database has little or no added data on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence. What have been your biggest difficulties in increasing the use of the database and generating the data needed for these cases.

7 What would you recommend as a solution to increase the use of the database and to continuously update it with the data of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence.

8 What recommendations can you give to improve reporting of violence?

9 What do you think is the added value of the disaggregated database, which specifically lists children with disabilities involved in domestic violence?



## Annex 2

### Questionnaire about the disaggregated Database for identifying cases of domestic violence Questionnaire for the central level

1 During 2020, how often have you used the database to add relevant data?

On a daily basis

On a weekly basis

On a monthly basis

More rarely

2 Has adding a column for children with disabilities (victims, perpetrators, or witnesses), including domestic violence, facilitated the use of this database?

Yes

No

Please Clarify: \_\_\_\_\_

3 What is the number of cases of domestic violence for the 4 target municipalities (if it is possible to share this data for municipalities)?

4 What is the number of children involved in domestic violence for the 4 target municipalities (divided into victims, witnesses or perpetrators / if it is possible to share this data for municipalities)?

5 What is the number of children with disabilities involved in domestic violence for the 4 target municipalities (divided into victims, witnesses or perpetrators/ if it is possible to share this data for municipalities)?

6 How do you consider the level of reporting of violence against children with disabilities and the reasons for potential non-reporting?

7 What would you recommend as a solution to increase the use of the database and to continuously update it with the data on children with disabilities involved in domestic violence.



## Annex 3

### List of respondents

#### Centers for Social Work

| Name and Surname  | Position              | Municipality |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Adelina Rexhepi   | Head of SH.S.         | Ferizaj      |
| Zylfije Mujko     | Coordinator           | Mitrovicë    |
| Blerim Shabani    | Director CSW          | Prishtinë    |
| Sevdije Ibrahim   | Head of SH.S.         | Prishtinë    |
| Jozefina Osmani   | Head of SH.S.         | Gjakovë      |
| Erbolina Dinarama | Director – Safe House | Gjakovë      |

#### Police- Domestic Violence Division

| Name and Surname | Position  | Municipality |
|------------------|---|--------------|
| Lindita Jashari  | Supervisor of Investigator Sector                 | Ferizaj      |
| Leonora Kelmendi | Violence Sector in Police Force                   | Mitrovicë    |
| Basri Shabani    | Director of Community Police and Crime Prevention | Prishtinë    |

#### Ministry of Justice - Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence

| Name and Surname           | Position                              | Municipality |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Florentina Beqiraj         | Coordinator of the human rights unit  | Prishtinë    |
| Albina Stavileci Dalladaku | IT and database administration expert | Prishtinë    |



