

Kosovo municipalities facing the global pandemic

**CORONAVIRUS
COVID-19**

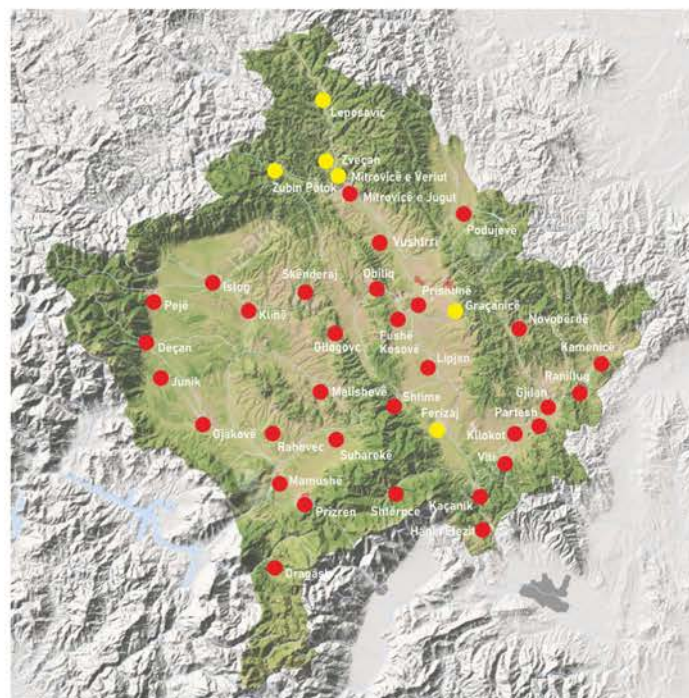
RESEARCH

Non-governmental organizations: Syri i Vizionit, Communication for Social Development (CSD), EC Ma Ndryshe and Democracy Plus (D+) have formed an alliance to implement the program “Active Citizenship and responsive municipalities in Kosovo”, which is supported by Olaf Palme International Center. The program aims to involve and to make citizens part of decision-making processes.

As part of this program, the coalition gathered information on how Kosovo municipalities have responded to the situation created by the global pandemic known as COVID-19. Also, information was collected on which services were provided to their citizens. All municipalities were involved in this research.

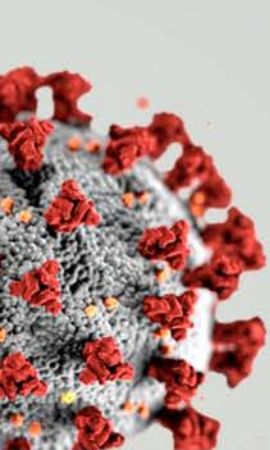
The questionnaire was sent to all mayors, as well as to their cabinets. The relevant departments of these municipalities have also contributed to the given answers. In addition to the answers, the municipalities have attached documents that help the research.

The data presented in this research reflect the situation until April 24, 2020.



The research was conducted through online questionnaires, which were sent to all 38 municipalities, in which case the latter were given ten (10) days to respond. All municipalities have also been contacted by phone to make sure they have received the questionnaires and to remind them to answer.

- Municipalities that have responded to the research (32)
- Municipalities that have not responded to the research (6)

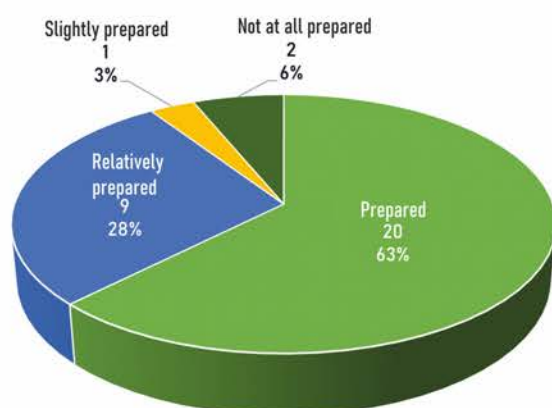


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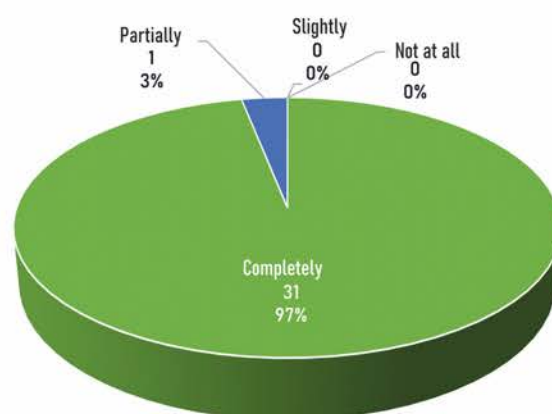
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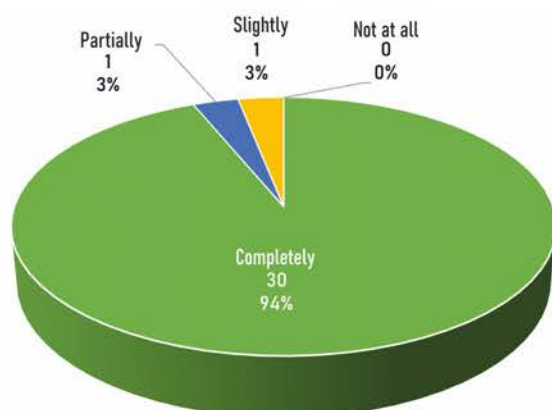
1. How prepared was your municipality, in general, to deal with COVID-19?



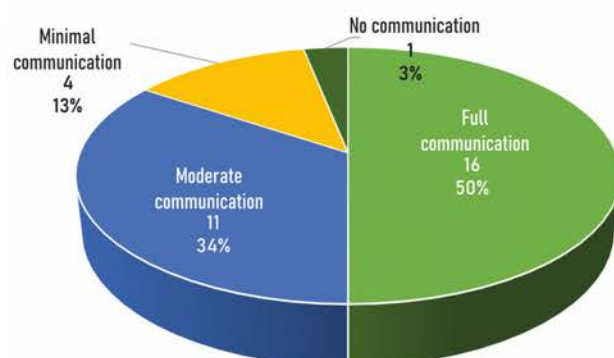
2. As a municipality, to what extent are you informed about the measures taken by the Government of Kosovo for COVID-19?

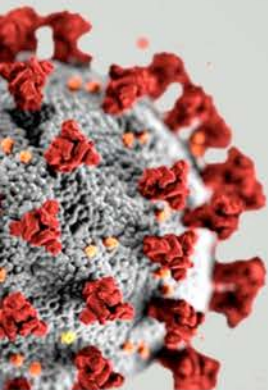


3. How much are the measures imposed by the Government respected by your municipality?



4. What is the level of communication between the municipality and the central government, namely the Ministry of Health?



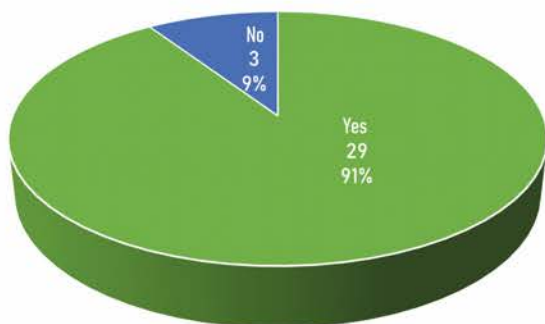


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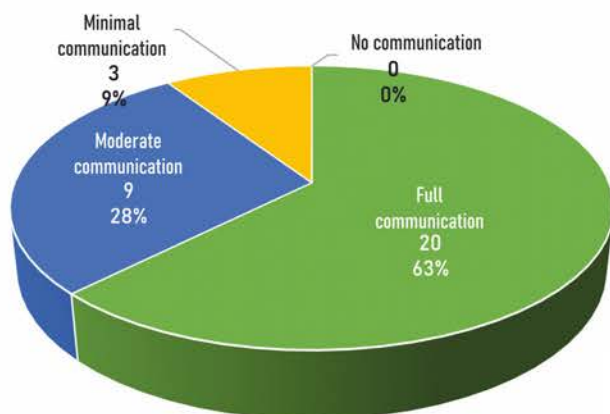
5. Have you received any protective equipment (such as gloves, masks, disinfectants, protective clothes for healthcare workers, etc.) from the Ministry of Health?



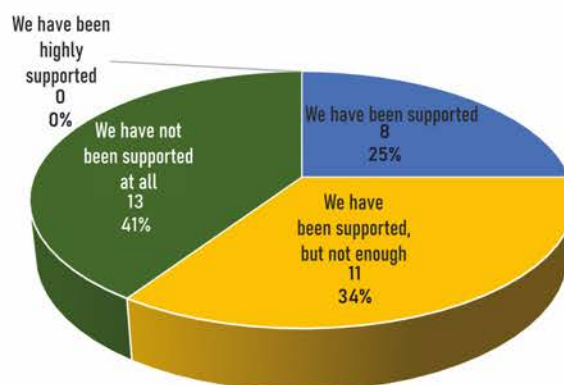
25 municipalities have sent the detailed list of equipment provided by the Ministry of Health.

The Municipality of Pristina has responded that it has not received protective equipment from the Ministry of Health, as they agreed for that equipment to be given to municipalities with a smaller budget.

7. As a municipality, how satisfied are you with the communication you have with the Ministry of Local Government Administration?



6. How much have you been supported by other ministries in this time of global pandemic?

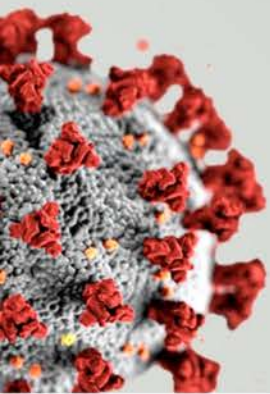


In the survey, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as the Ministry for Community and Return stood out as supporters of the municipalities.

8. Does your municipality have an Office of Emergency Management (OEM)?

All 32 municipalities that have responded have an office of emergency OEM. The 27 municipalities have provided the names of the members of these OEMs, including the positions, the departments where they come from, as well as their contacts. In the vast majority of municipalities, these OEMs consist of: the mayor, the deputy mayor, the chairman of the municipal assembly, officials from different directorates, members of the municipal assembly, community officials, police, firefighters, Family Medicine Centers, Red Cross, public water supply and waste management companies, etc.

In a small number of municipalities, the OEMs also include representatives of youth, religious communities and civil society. The average number of OEMs' staff members is 15.



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9. How satisfied are you as a municipality with the communication you have with the Association of Kosovo Municipalities?

All 32 municipalities surveyed praised their coordination and communication with the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), which they considered to be continuous and useful to harmonize attitudes and to address the requirements and needs of citizens in the respective ministries and the Government of Kosovo. As a result of the AKM's requirements, municipalities allude that some Government and ministries decisions were in line with their requests.

11. Has your municipality used local councils to communicate with citizens?

24 municipalities have stated that the local councils of all villages have had been in constant communication with the OEM, in order for the latter to get acquainted with the concerns of the citizens, and especially for the distribution of aid.

4 municipalities have responded that they do not have functional local councils. In these cases, Municipal Councils for Community Safety were used.

4 municipalities have not responded to this question.

10. Has the municipality created a special link on its website to inform them about the symptoms, risks and how to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

23 municipalities have posted such information on the existing website, as well as on the official Facebook page.

4 municipalities have set up special websites for this purpose.

4 municipalities have published only emergency numbers, where citizens can call.

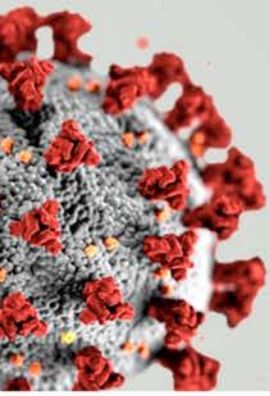
1 municipality has shared information only on Facebook.

12. Is the online application system for registry documents active?

Yes, including e-kiosks used for this purpose (16 municipalities).

No. These services are provided in the registry offices, but with reduced staff (8 municipalities).

No answer (8 municipalities).



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13. In addition to the measures taken by the Government of Kosovo, have you applied other additional measures as a municipality in this regard? If so, what measures?

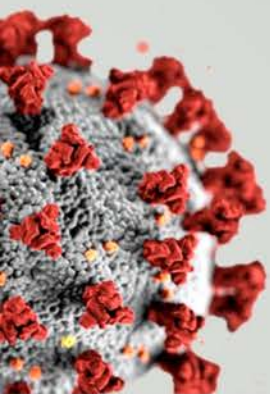
- 32 municipalities – Forming of Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
- 32 municipalities – Disinfection of municipal and public buildings
- 32 municipalities – Protective equipment for personnel
- 32 municipalities – Field inspections for the implementation of measures
- 31 municipalities – Road disinfection and cleaning
- 31 municipalities – Distribution of hygienic packages
- 30 municipalities – Closing parks
- 30 municipalities – Suspension of permits for public gatherings
- 29 municipalities – Telephone line for citizens' requests / concerns
- 27 municipalities – Facilitating online learning for students
- 26 municipalities – Creating volunteer groups
- 25 municipalities – Restriction of movement of vehicles in certain places
- 24 municipalities – Disinfection of collective building entrances
- 20 municipalities – Giving meals to people with social assistance
- 20 municipalities – Establishing economic measures
- 17 municipalities – Placing additional beds in the Family Medicine Centers
- 16 municipalities – Creating quarantines
- 11 municipalities – Disinfection of public transport
- 2 municipalities – Advice for local businesses
- 1 municipality – Providing psychological services

14. Explain how online learning is working for students in your municipality?

Most municipalities have responded that online learning is working quite well. The directorates of education in the municipalities have forwarded all the information, instructions/measures/decisions from MAST to the educational institutions, their staff, and students. It is also reported that in some villages of some municipalities there is a lack of electricity and internet. Two municipalities did not answer to this question.

15. Do you have any documents that shows at what capacity the municipal directorates are working?

Most municipalities (26) have pointed out that in the relevant directorates, their administration works with the main staff, while the rest of the employees work part-time or remotely/online. Some municipalities have attached additional documents as evidence. 6 other municipalities did not answer this question.



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16. What is the level of functioning of public services in the municipality?

	Water supply	26	Well, as usual	3	Difficult	2	Dysfunctional	1	Not applicable/unanswered
	Road cleaning	31	Well, as usual	1	Difficult	0	Dysfunctional	0	Not applicable/unanswered
	Waste management	31	Well, as usual	1	Difficult	0	Dysfunctional	0	Not applicable/unanswered
	Sewage treatment	26	Well, as usual	3	Difficult	1	Dysfunctional	2	Not applicable/unanswered
	Park maintenance	29	Well, as usual	2	Difficult	0	Dysfunctional	1	Not applicable/unanswered
	Maintenance of public spaces	30	Well, as usual	2	Difficult	0	Dysfunctional	0	Not applicable/unanswered
	Maintenance of local roads	30	Well, as usual	2	Difficult	0	Dysfunctional	0	Not applicable/unanswered
	Public transport	0	Well, as usual	0	Difficult	17	Dysfunctional	15	Not applicable/unanswered

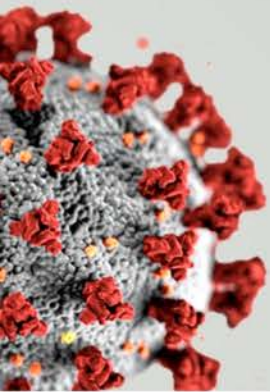
17. What is the amount of budget funds that your municipality has allocated for the fight against COVID-19?

1.380.000,00 Prishtina
 400.000,00 Fushë Kosova
 366.000,00 Podujeva
 250.000,00 Prizren
 229.200,00 Glogoc
 228.245,81 Gjilan
 200.000,00 Lipjan, Vushtrri
 170.000,00 South Mitrovica
 150.000,00 Malisheva
 139.000,00 Skënderaj
 120.000,00 Dragash
 100.000,00 Shtime, Kaçanik, Obiliq, Deçan, Peja, Viti



60.000,00 Suhareka
 50.000,00 Istog, Klina
 20.000,00 Novobardo
 15.000,00 Junik
 10.000,00 Hani i Elezit, Rahovec
 3.000,00 Partesh
 2.000,00 Mamusha
 1.000,00 Klllokot

The municipalities of Gjakova, Kamenica, Ranillug and Shterpca have not given any amount, but have stated that they are spending the reserve funds from the category of goods and services.



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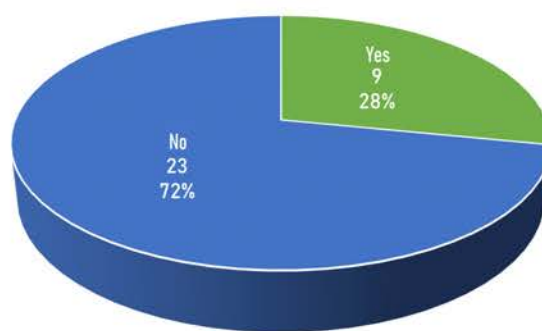
18. Have you been supported by other sectors (donors or private sectors), except the Government of Kosovo?

Most municipalities (30) have stated that in addition to state institutions, they have been supported by international and local organizations, local businesses, humanitarian organizations, and philanthropists. The aid were mainly products with food packages, medical supplies, and medical hygiene items.

Below you can find the list of donors:

- UNICEF
- Red Cross
- Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland (ASB)
- Albanian Embassy in Kosovo
- Turkish KFOR
- TIKA
- Islamic Community of Kosova
- CampalGN #700for700 from the diaspora
- Charities: Jetimat e Ballkanit, Bereqeti, Firdeus, Shqiptarët për shqiptarët and Opoja
- Labinot Tahiri Foundation
- Bonevet Foundation
- Qatar Charity
- ETC
- VIVA FRESH
- Buqaj
- Arjeta Group and QTA
- Benita Company
- Alba Group
- Madekos
- Market Meka
- Eurokos

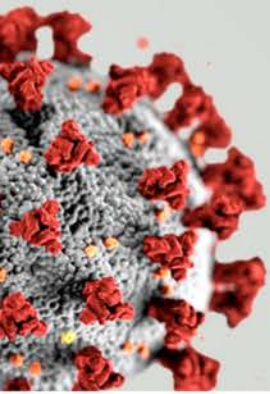
19. Have you asked for help from any local organization regarding a specific service, where the latter are professionals?



A small number of municipalities (6) have stated that they have requested assistance for food packages, hygiene items and medical products from some of the above-mentioned organizations.

The Municipality of Prizren has requested assistance from the University of Pristina regarding the psychological counseling project for citizens.

The Municipality of Vushtrri has initiated procedures for assessing the economic damage caused by COVID-19.



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20. In your municipality, have the public buildings been disinfected?

All 32 municipalities have responded that all public buildings have been disinfected, including municipal buildings, health, education, and religious buildings, etc. Some municipalities have provided more detailed information on how many buildings and how many square meters have been disinfected. Also, some municipalities have mentioned the installation of disinfection tunnels, which are located in hospital and/or public spaces.

21. As a municipality, what measures are you taking for people/families with social assistance?

The 32 surveyed municipalities stated that this category was assisted with food packages and hygiene items. Some municipalities have also provided additional information about these aids. These aids were provided through volunteer groups established by the municipalities.



22. What measures are you taking for citizens with disabilities?

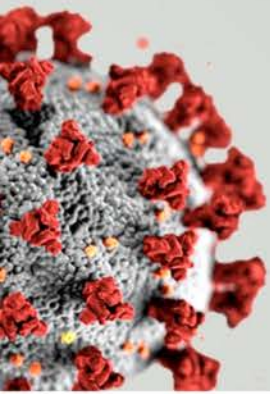
Similar to citizens receiving social assistance, all 32 municipalities surveyed stated that people with disabilities were also helped with food packages and hygiene items. These aids have been distributed with the help of organizations representing this community.

CONCLUSIONS

From the research conducted by four organizations through the program "Active Citizenship and responsive municipalities in Kosovo", we can conclude that the municipalities of Kosovo, based on their capacity and budget, have coped quite well with the situation created by COVID-19. Municipalities have had genuine communication with the central level and the citizens, where they have largely respected the measures of the Government of Kosovo. This has led to a smaller number of infected and dead cases compared to other countries in the region or even wider.

The key challenges that Kosovo municipalities are still facing:

- Lack of funding from the central level to purchase additional protective equipment in the fight and prevention of COVID-19.
- Lack of a larger number of tests for people suspected of being infected by COVID-19.
- Increased number of families with difficult economic situation and increased demand for food and hygiene packages.
- Closing numerous of private businesses.
- Complaints from the agricultural sector.
- Ambiguity about permits for citizens or businesses circulation issued by MELTIESI.
- Ambiguities caused by MELTIESI about how different businesses work.
- Small number of municipal inspectors.



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Recommendations:

- The central and local levels, as well as civil society, must work on the continuous awareness of citizens about respecting preventive measures and avoiding the consequences of pandemic.
- The Government of Kosovo needs to develop a comprehensive economic package for the private sector.
- More structured coordination and consultation between the Government of Kosovo and the municipalities regarding the protection and preventive measures to be taken in the future.
- Municipalities should activate and functionalize the local councils for better communication with the citizens.
- Municipalities should seek professional assistance from various organizations and companies to better cope with the situation created by the pandemic.