

# Review on the Situation of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Education in Kosovo

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## Abstract

Inclusive education for children with disabilities is a significant global concern, with the goal of ensuring equitable access to education for all. Kosovo's commitment to inclusive education is reflected in its alignment with international conventions and national legislation. The Constitution of Kosovo guarantees equal rights to all citizens, including those with disabilities. Additionally, Kosovo has ratified the CRPD, committing to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to an inclusive, quality, and free education on an equal basis with others. Despite these legal foundations, challenges in implementation persist. Legal provisions often fail to translate into practice due to limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training. The gap between policy and practice leaves many children with disabilities either segregated in special schools or marginalized within mainstream schools, without appropriate support. This paper provides an overview of the current situation regarding inclusive education in Kosovo from recent studies and reports focusing on the legal frameworks, implementation practices, and the socio-cultural barriers that impact the quality of education for children with disabilities. It examines key factors such as teacher preparedness, infrastructure accessibility, societal attitudes, and parental involvement, which contribute to either the success or failure of inclusive education. Additionally, it discusses the role of international organizations, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Kosovo government in promoting inclusive education. The analysis concludes by recommendations to overcome the identified challenges, emphasizing the need for systemic changes, professional development for educators, provision of support services and stronger collaboration between stakeholders.

**Keywords:** inclusive education; Kosovo; children with disabilities; equal rights; challenges

## Introduction

Inclusive education is the foundation of a just and equitable society. For children with disabilities, this principle is not merely a matter of educational reform but a fundamental human right. International frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education advocate for inclusive education as a means to ensure that

all children, regardless of ability, have access to quality education. In Kosovo, efforts have been made to advance inclusive education, in line with UN (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite legislative frameworks and policy initiatives, the practical realization of inclusive education for children with disabilities faces numerous challenges. In Kosovo, a country with a recent history of socio-political transitions, the challenge of implementing inclusive education remains significant. While legal and policy frameworks have been introduced, the practical application lags behind, leaving many children with disabilities excluded from the educational system or provided with substandard education.

As of the latest available data, the number of children with disabilities attending inclusive education in Kosovo is relatively low compared to the overall population of children with disabilities. Estimates suggest that only a small percentage of these children are enrolled in mainstream schools, while many others either attend special education schools or do not attend school at all. Up-to-date statistics are scarce, but reports indicate that approximately 10-15% of children with disabilities in Kosovo are included in mainstream education, while the rest are in specialized institutions or out of the school system entirely.

Children with disabilities that attend inclusive education in Kosovo include the following types of categories of disabilities, such as:

#### Physical Disabilities:

- Children with mobility impairments (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy)
- Children requiring assistive devices (wheelchairs, crutches)

#### Sensory Disabilities:

- Visual impairments (including children who are blind or have low vision)
- Hearing impairments (children who are deaf or hard of hearing)

#### Intellectual Disabilities:

- Children with intellectual developmental delays, including those with conditions like Down syndrome and other cognitive impairments
- Autism Spectrum Disorders: Children with autism, who often face difficulties with social communication and interaction

#### Learning Disabilities:

- Children with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other learning disorders that affect reading, writing, and comprehension

#### Emotional and Behavioral Disorders:

- Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or other emotional or behavioral challenges that impact their learning environment

Although children with different types of disabilities are present in inclusive settings, their access to quality education is often limited due to:

- Lack of proper accommodations (e.g., learning materials in braille, sign language interpreters)
- Inadequate teacher training for dealing with specific disabilities
- Infrastructure issues that prevent children with physical disabilities from accessing school buildings
- Lack of financial resources and lack of support services, stigma and socio - cultural barriers

Addressing these challenges requires a more robust commitment from the government, better implementation of existing policies, and a focus on adapting schools to meet diverse needs.

This paper aims to introduce the current situation in inclusive education for children with disabilities in Kosovo and explores the current situation, reviews progress, the challenges and barriers to effective implementation of inclusive education and the.

## **Methodology**

The paper is based on the literature review of various papers, studies, legal frameworks, policy and strategic documents and conventions that provide legal foundation, a range of data, policy analysis, and practical insights into the state of inclusive education for children with disabilities in Kosovo. The reports and papers reviewed for this paper include various studies conducted by main donor organizations in partnership with Kosovo government and also papers written by eminent authors involved in the field of inclusive education in Kosovo. They further highlight the gaps between policy and socio-cultural and economic factors that impact implementation of inclusive education and views on how to improve inclusive education for children with disabilities in Kosovo. These reports collectively underline the urgent need for Kosovo to implement comprehensive support services, improved financing structures, and disability-inclusive policies to fulfill its commitments to inclusive education.

## **Inclusive education in Kosovo**

Inclusive education is a human rights issue that ensures all children, regardless of ability or disability, have access to equitable and quality education. The commitment to inclusive education is reflected in international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which Kosovo ratified in 2013, as well as in national legal instruments such as the Law on Pre-University Education (2011) and the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children (2019).

Naser Zabeli's research on inclusive education in Kosovo has emphasized the need to move from a special education model to a fully inclusive framework, which he argues should involve restructuring school environments, policies, and community relationships to welcome all students, including those with special needs, into mainstream educational settings. Zabeli (2010) sees inclusive education as a social process that acknowledges each student's right to learn and participate, regardless of disability, ethnicity, language, or socioeconomic status. In his work Zabeli highlighted inclusive education as a commitment to "education for all" that goes beyond physical integration. This perspective calls for the full involvement of students in the curriculum and community life, while removing barriers to learning and encouraging collaboration among students. For Zabeli, inclusion also includes individualized assessment approaches to support all learners, fostering a school culture where diversity is embraced as a strength. In his further contributions, Zabeli (2014) further explores Kosovo's shift from specialized institutions toward resource centers within schools, which aim to provide support for inclusive education. Zabeli has been instrumental in advocating for the alignment of Kosovo's educational policies with international inclusive education frameworks, including those from UNESCO and the European Union, to ensure equitable access and support for all students within regular schools.

Situation analyses of inclusive education from various authors and international partners show that, despite the legal framework in place, the practical application of inclusive education in Kosovo encounters numerous challenges, from insufficient teacher training to deeply ingrained societal stigma. Inclusive education is fundamental to ensuring that children with disabilities receive equitable opportunities for academic and social development. In Kosovo, a region marked by complex social and political dynamics, the implementation of inclusive education faces various barriers despite robust legislative frameworks and the practical realization of inclusive education remains limited. Challenges such as insufficient resources, inadequate teacher training, lack of infrastructure, and societal stigma still persist. However, positive developments are also evident, particularly through international cooperation and initiatives supported by organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank. By addressing these barriers, enhancing teacher preparedness, and increasing community awareness, Kosovo can better align its educational practices with its legal commitments.

### ***Legal and Policy Frameworks on Inclusive Education in Kosovo***

Kosovo's legal framework for inclusive education is built on both international conventions and national laws, reflecting the country's commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities have access to quality education. The legal framework for inclusive education in Kosovo is well-established, but significant challenges remain in its practical implementation. While progress has been made, particularly through

international collaboration and advocacy, children with disabilities still face barriers in accessing quality education.

The key features of Kosovo's Legal Framework on inclusive education include:

- Non-discrimination: All children, including those with disabilities, must have equal access to education.
- Integration into mainstream schools: The legal framework prioritizes integrating children with disabilities into regular classrooms rather than segregating them into special schools.
- Individualized support: Laws require that children with disabilities receive individualized support through tailored education plans and resources.
- Municipal responsibilities: Municipalities are legally responsible for ensuring that schools have the necessary infrastructure and support systems to implement inclusive education.
- Training and support: The framework emphasizes the need for continuous teacher training and development to foster an inclusive environment in schools.

Whereas, the key elements of the legal framework on inclusive education in Kosovo consist of both International Frameworks and National Legislations.

Although not a member of the United Nations, Kosovo adheres to several international conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which mandates inclusive education as a fundamental right. The CRPD calls for states to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to education and are fully included in mainstream educational systems. The European Union's influence has also been critical in shaping Kosovo's education reforms, particularly through funding and development programs aimed at fostering inclusive practices (ETF, 2018).

While, the *National Legislation frameworks* provide foundation for implementation of inclusive education in Kosovo which starts with the Constitution of Kosovo (2008), that guarantees the right to education for all individuals without discrimination. It affirms equality before the law and the right to education for children, including those with disabilities. Article 47 specifically ensures every person the right to free basic education.

The Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo (2011) which sets the foundation for inclusive education for all children, as their right to quality education, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It obligates public educational institutions to accommodate children with special needs and emphasizes the importance of integrating these children into mainstream schools. The law also promotes individualized education plans (IEPs) to cater to the specific needs of children with disabilities.

The Law on Education in Municipalities (2008), that grants municipalities' significant responsibility in managing local educational institutions including the provision of education for children with disabilities. It mandates that municipal-level education directors ensure inclusivity in schools within their jurisdiction and provide resources for the education of children with special needs.

Administrative Instruction on Special Education (2012) provides more specific guidance for the implementation of inclusive education at the school level. It sets out requirements for adapting school infrastructure, training teachers, and providing resources such as assistive technologies to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); Kosovo, though not a UN member, is committed to adhering to international human rights standards. The CRPD, ratified in 2013, plays a crucial role in shaping Kosovo's policies. It requires states to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to an inclusive, quality, and free education, promoting their full participation in society.

#### *The Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children (2019)*

This law outlines children's rights, specifically focusing on safeguarding children with disabilities from discrimination. It ensures their right to inclusive education and mandates the government to provide the necessary support services and facilities to guarantee equal access to education.

#### *National Strategy on Pre-University Education (2017-2021)*

While not legally binding, this policy document outlines the government's vision for developing an inclusive education system. The strategy stresses the importance of integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools and highlights the need for teacher training, resource allocation, and the development of individualized learning plans.

#### *National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2016-2020)*

This strategy provides a framework for promoting inclusive education for all learners, focusing specifically on children with disabilities. It includes objectives such as improving physical access to schools, providing training for teachers and school staff on inclusive practices, and developing support mechanisms for children with disabilities.

Administrative instruction (MEST) No. 16/2017 – provide specific guidance for professional assessment of children with special instructive educational needs for attending inclusive education.

### ***Review of the current situation on inclusive education in Kosovo***

Based on the report on Situation analysis of children with disabilities in Kosovo, (2017), classrooms at schools are often over-crowded, teachers cannot meet the specific needs of children with disabilities. This makes the presence of personal assistants crucial but insufficient funding has implied that such assistants have not been hired in most schools. Parents who want to ensure education for their children must pay teaching assistants themselves. Widespread unemployment and poverty mean they often cannot afford to pay for personal assistant at school. There is still a lack of action plans and individualized development policy plans for students with disabilities in many schools. A lack of accessible learning materials and infrastructure including accessible toilets and alternative pathways to classrooms, such as ramps and elevators, are some of the key barriers for young students with disabilities in pursuing their education. Inadequate transportation is another barrier for children with disabilities, especially for students from rural areas.

Literature review of various studies further emphasize that Kosovo's legal framework concerning inclusive education is progressive on paper but faces hurdles in implementation. Despite these legislative efforts, the implementation of inclusive education faces challenges, such as insufficient resources, lack of teacher training, and societal stigma, which hinder the full realization of these laws (Poni, 2021). Although the ambitious goals of the National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2016-2020) outlines the government's vision for integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools, reviews and evaluations have shown that many schools lack the infrastructure, trained personnel, and resources necessary to fulfill these aims (World Bank, 2019).

Data on participation of children with disabilities in education in Kosovo is scarce, and the information that is available presents a concerning picture. A report by Kosncy (2019) revealed that children with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in mainstream schools. The report found that only 5% of children with disabilities were enrolled in regular schools, while the majority either attended special schools or were not enrolled in any educational institution.

According to a UNICEF study on Kosovo Profile on Disability inclusion published in 2023, only 5,300 out of estimated 43,000 children with disabilities that are actually attending inclusive schools. This comprises around 2.1% of all students in school and only around 12 % of school-age children with disabilities that are actually in school in Kosovo.

Dropout rates among children with disabilities are also alarmingly high. Many students leave school due to the lack of appropriate accommodation, poor academic performance, and social exclusion. As a result, educational outcomes for children with disabilities are generally lower than those of their non-disabled peers, with

fewer children with disabilities progressing to higher levels of education or achieving meaningful academic qualifications.

Based on global estimates, the prevalence of disabilities makes up around 15 percent of the population, which provides a rough idea of the extent to which they are excluded from the society.

The identification of students with disabilities in Kosovo is mainly done through three sources: a) school principals who provide information about students in the Education Management Information System (EMIS); b) children are enrolled when they attend classes or visit resource centers; and c) educational evaluation committees, which are typically composed of social workers, psychologists, health professionals, educators, and support teachers. This identification approach informs school's policies, plans, and resources.

Pedagogical documents in Kosovo related to inclusive education of children with disabilities are grounded in, and aligned with, international conventions on disability and child rights, as well as other international documents. However, assessment reports reveal that there are major shortcomings in the implementation of inclusivity. Also, teachers who often have little or no formal (or informal) training in inclusive education may lack a good understanding of its essence. They perceive inclusive education as a "humane action" rather than a professional responsibility.

A survey conducted by UNICEF (2023) on barriers to inclusion in Kosovo's schools identified social norms and attitudes towards children with disabilities as a major barrier to inclusiveness, affecting 39% of children with disabilities. While, employing personal assistants at school impact 33% and adapting school curricula impact 30% of children with disabilities and are considered among the main factors impacting the quality of inclusion.

In addition, the lack of support services for children with disabilities in inclusive schools in Kosovo is a critical barrier to their effective education and inclusion. Limited resources and systemic challenges mean that many children with disabilities do not receive adequate assistance in areas such as learning support, accessibility, and individualized educational accommodations.

According to a 2023 UNICEF report, many schools in Kosovo still lack basic infrastructure modifications, such as accessible entrances and classrooms, to support children with disabilities. The report emphasizes that physical barriers, along with insufficient specialized personnel like teaching assistants or therapists, severely limit these students' participation and success within inclusive settings. Save the Children's 2017 report further elaborates on the gaps in funding and infrastructure that affect inclusive education. The report highlights that educational financing in Kosovo is not



designed to adequately support the additional resources required for children with disabilities. Consequently, many inclusive schools are unable to employ specialized staff or provide necessary adaptive tools, impacting students' ability to engage fully in classroom activities. The World Bank also discusses Kosovo's need for disability-inclusive reforms, suggesting that an integrated support system with well-trained staff and accessible facilities is essential for advancing inclusive education. The World Bank notes that without such support, children with disabilities often face increased dropout rates and lower educational outcomes, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and inequality (World Bank, 2023).

Kosovo's inclusive education system faces significant challenges also due to inadequate data collection on children with disabilities. This gap makes it difficult for policymakers and educators to understand and address the specific needs of students with disabilities, impeding efforts to build an inclusive and equitable education system. A report by UNICEF (2017) highlights that Kosovo's Education Management Information System (EMIS) collects only aggregate data, with minimal data on individual needs, types of disabilities, or school participation rates for children with disabilities. Without detailed, disaggregated data, it is challenging to monitor educational access, identify resource gaps, or track progress toward inclusion goals.

Save the Children's 2020 analysis on data practices in Kosovo's inclusive education echoes these concerns. It notes that data collection is fragmented across different government units, with limited coordination between the Ministry of Education and other agencies. This lack of a centralized data system prevents the systematic tracking of enrollment, attendance, and outcomes for students with disabilities. Such fragmentation leads to inconsistent and incomplete data, ultimately limiting informed policy-making and efficient resource allocation.

The World Bank also recognizes this issue, stating in a 2023 report that the lack of data-driven monitoring and evaluation hinders Kosovo's ability to meet its inclusive education goals. The report recommends creating a centralized data system that can provide real-time insights into the needs of children with disabilities, which would help drive targeted interventions and support service expansion.

### ***Teacher Training and Preparedness***

Researches indicate that many teachers lack the training and skills required to effectively support children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Teacher education programs in Kosovo have not fully integrated inclusive education modules, leaving educators non-equipped to manage diverse classrooms that include children with different disabilities. Teacher preparedness for inclusive education is a major obstacle according to Halili & Buçinca (2022), most teachers in Kosovo feel unprepared to teach children with disabilities due to the lack of specialized training in inclusive

pedagogical practices. The pre-service teacher training programs in Kosovo offer limited modules on special education, and professional development opportunities for current teachers are sparse (Poni, 2021).

The situation is exacerbated by a shortage of specialized support staff, such as teaching assistants and speech therapists, in schools. Many teachers report feeling overwhelmed and underprepared to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The lack of ongoing professional development opportunities further limits teachers' capacity to adapt teaching strategies to ensure inclusivity.

Efforts to address these gaps have been made by international organizations and NGOs working in Kosovo. For example, organizations like Save the Children and Handikos have implemented training programs for teachers on inclusive education. However, these initiatives are often short-term and project-based, lacking the sustainability needed for systemic change.

### ***Infrastructure and Accessibility***

Another major issue is the physical infrastructure of schools. Many educational facilities in Kosovo are not accessible to children with physical disabilities. A 2020 report by the Office of Good Governance in Kosovo found that less than 20% of schools had accessible entrances, ramps, or appropriate toilet facilities for students with disabilities. The lack of accessible transportation to and from school also poses significant challenges for children with mobility impairments, further contributing to their exclusion from the educational system.

In addition to physical barriers, there are no initiatives to support and encourage parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities. There are issues with insufficient parental engagement of children with disabilities in fostering the provision of assistive technologies that can facilitate learning for children with sensory disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments. The scarcity of resources, coupled with a lack of knowledge on how to use assistive devices effectively, limits their availability and integration into classroom learning. This includes providing resources and training for parents to advocate for their children's rights and fostering a culture of inclusion within communities.

### ***Access to Support Services***

Children with disabilities often require additional support services, such as special education teachers, therapists, and psychologists, to fully participate in school activities. However, many schools in Kosovo lack access to such services, particularly in

rural areas (UNICEF, 2020). This shortage of specialized staff further marginalizes children with disabilities, preventing them from achieving their full potential.

### *Assistive Technology (AT)*

AT plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive education for children with disabilities in Kosovo. It helps bridge the gap between children with various impairments and the standard education curriculum, allowing them to participate meaningfully in learning activities. AT enables children with disabilities to access the curriculum in ways that are tailored to their specific needs. For instance, children with visual impairments can use screen readers or Braille displays, while students with mobility impairments might benefit from adapted keyboards or touch screens. These technologies make it easier for children with disabilities to engage with their education in ways that would otherwise be impossible and become more independent in moving and learning.

While assistive technology is important, its implementation in Kosovo faces challenges. These include a lack of resources, insufficient training for teachers on how to use these technologies effectively, and limited access to the necessary devices, especially in rural areas (UNICEF, 2020). For Kosovo to achieve its goal of fully inclusive education, continued investment in these technologies, along with teacher training and resource allocation, is essential. Research shows that when children with disabilities are provided with appropriate assistive technologies, their academic performance improves significantly and promotes social interaction and integration, which are vital for the social and emotional development of children with disabilities (World Bank, 2019). Tools such as speech-to-text software, hearing aids, and communication devices help students better understand and participate in classroom activities, contributing to better learning outcomes (Kastrati, 2020). Overcoming these barriers requires increased funding, improved teacher training, and greater governmental support.

For educators, assistive technology provides the tools needed to better support diverse learners in the classroom. Many teachers in Kosovo express the need for more resources to accommodate students with disabilities (Halili & Buçinca, 2022). With assistive technologies, teachers can customize lesson plans and adapt teaching methods to cater to individual learning needs without requiring extensive one-on-one assistance. A limited training in the use of assistive technologies is a major hurdle. Many educators lack experience and resources to effectively use AT in the classroom, which hinders the progress of inclusive education. While social attitudes towards disabilities have been evolving, stigma and a lack of awareness about assistive technologies continue to be barriers.

### ***Societal Attitudes and Stigma***

Cultural perceptions and societal stigma surrounding disability continue to be a significant barrier to inclusive education. In many parts of Kosovo, disability is viewed negatively, which can lead to discrimination within schools and communities (Amorim & Shabani, 2021). This stigma not only affects children with disabilities but also influences parents' willingness to advocate for inclusive education and affects the attitudes of school administrators towards inclusion. In Kosovo, stigmatization and discriminatory attitudes towards children with disabilities are still prevalent. Many families are reluctant to enroll their children in mainstream schools due to fears of bullying, social isolation, or inadequate support from teachers and peers. In some cases, societal views on disability are influenced by traditional beliefs, which frame disability as a familial or individual misfortune, further entrenching marginalization. These cultural barriers also affect the level of advocacy and support from parents. While some parents actively engage in pushing for their children's right to education, others may be discouraged by the system's shortcomings and societal stigma, leading to lower enrollment rates for children with disabilities. Advocacy campaigns led by both local and international organizations have contributed to reducing stigma and promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools (Kastrati, 2020).

### ***The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations***

NGOs have played a pivotal role in advancing inclusive education in Kosovo. Organizations such as Save the Children, Handikos, and UNICEF Kosovo have been instrumental in raising awareness about the rights of children with disabilities and advocating for policy changes. They have also provided essential services, including teacher training, community outreach, and direct support to families. However, the impact of these efforts is often limited by the lack of coordination with government agencies. Many NGOs operate independently of the public education system, leading to fragmented services and inconsistent levels of support across different regions. International Collaboration and NGO and DPOs in partnership with the governmental organizations play a vital role in supporting inclusive education in Kosovo. NGOs, such as the Kosovo Disability Forum and Save the Children Kosovo, provide both equipment and training in assistive technology, particularly in urban areas. International organizations such as UNICEF, the European Union, and the World Bank in partnership with NGOs and DPOS have played crucial roles in supporting Kosovo's efforts to build an inclusive education system. UNICEF has led initiatives aimed at training teachers and providing resources for inclusive classrooms, while the EU has funded infrastructure improvements and policy development (World Bank, 2019). Several pilot programs have demonstrated the potential for success in inclusive education. For example, programs funded by international donors have successfully integrated children with disabilities into mainstream schools by providing individualized learning plans and specialized

support (Halili & Buçinca, 2022). These programs highlight the importance of targeted interventions and resource allocation in achieving inclusive education.

## **Recommendations for Strengthening Inclusive Education in Kosovo**

*Teacher Training:* Comprehensive training programs on inclusive education should be integrated into pre-service and in-service teacher training systematically. These programs should focus on building teachers' capacities to differentiate instruction and use inclusive pedagogical strategies that will help children with disabilities to engage better in inclusive education process. Teacher Training Programs should be reformed and adapted with comprehensive modules on inclusive education and special education. Additionally, in-service training programs should be expanded to ensure that all teachers have the necessary skills to support children with disabilities in the classroom (Halili & Buçinca, 2022).

*Infrastructure Development:* The government should allocate funds to improve the physical accessibility of schools, ensuring that all educational institutions comply with standards for disability access. *International Collaboration:* Kosovo should continue to collaborate with international organizations and donors to secure financial and technical support for inclusive education initiatives. Long-term partnerships with organizations such as UNICEF, EU, Save the Children and similar organisations can provide valuable resources and expertise.

*Resources and Infrastructure:* One of the key challenges identified in the literature is the lack of financial resources allocated to support inclusive education. Schools in Kosovo, particularly in rural areas, often lack the physical infrastructure to accommodate children with disabilities (Kastrati, 2020). Accessible facilities, such as ramps, accessible toilets, and adaptive learning tools, are absent in many schools, hindering the participation of children with physical disabilities. The government of Kosovo must prioritize funding for inclusive education by increasing funding and resource allocation. This includes resources for school infrastructure improvements, adaptive technologies, and the hiring of specialized staff for supporting inclusive education and specific needs of children with disabilities attending regular classes. Adequate funding is critical to ensuring that schools are equipped to meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities.

*Improving Data Collection:* strengthening data collection and coordination mechanisms is crucial for advancing inclusive education in Kosovo. Reliable and detailed data would enable stakeholders to address barriers effectively and support the educational rights of children with disabilities.

*Access to support services:* The government should work to increase access to support services such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, and

special education teachers and assistants. These services are essential for the full inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (UNICEF, 2020). Special attention should be given to schools in rural areas, where access to resources and infrastructure is more limited. Developing regional strategies that focus on rural inclusion can help ensure that children with disabilities in these areas are not left behind (Amorim & Shabani, 2021). *Raise Awareness* about the rights of children with disabilities and the importance of inclusive education for gradually changing societal attitudes. Ongoing public awareness campaigns should continue to address stigma and promote the value of inclusive education. Engaging parents, community leaders, and educators in these campaigns is essential to fostering a culture of inclusion (Kastrati, 2020). These efforts need to be intensified more in increasing these types of partnerships and collaboration for enhancing further initiatives aimed at supporting inclusive education in Kosovo. Despite the challenges, reports show there is growing recognition of the importance of inclusive education, and some positive steps are being taken.

## Conclusion

The legal framework for inclusive education in Kosovo is well-established, but significant challenges remain in its practical implementation. While progress has been made, particularly through international collaboration and advocacy, children with disabilities still face barriers in accessing quality education. Efforts need to be further focused on policy improvements, enhanced funding, and better teacher training, which are essential to make assistive technology more accessible across Kosovo's schools. In addition, to achieve truly inclusive education, Kosovo must apply cross-sectorial approach by increasing resources, expanding support services, and addressing societal attitudes towards disability. With continued effort, Kosovo can create a more inclusive education system that benefits all children regardless of their abilities. Adequate and systematic data collection should be further enhanced and effective monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed for systematic assessment of inclusive education implementation process and marking the progress of children disabilities in mainstream schools. The future of inclusive education in Kosovo relies on addressing these multidimensional issues to ensure that every child, regardless of disability, has access to quality education.

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