



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans 2017

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD-QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN KOSOVO



A nurse giving a prescription to a patient in a primary healthcare centre.

© SDC

The standard of healthcare provision in Kosovo is inadequate and does not meet the needs of the general population. Vulnerable groups are particularly affected, with a number of economic and social barriers limiting their access to care. That is why the SDC is working to improve the quality and inclusivity of the primary healthcare system in Kosovo.

Kosovo has some of the poorest health indicators in the whole of south-eastern Europe. In particular, the high cost of healthcare, discrimination and corruption are obstacles to effective healthcare. Furthermore, investment in the healthcare sector (2.9% of GDP in 2015) is not enough to cover the cost of care for everyone, and patients are often required to pay for good-quality services from their own pocket. Against this backdrop, the first casualties of the system are vulnerable groups that lack the means to pay. For example, studies have shown that in certain Roma groups the rate of vaccination is only 30% compared to 78% of the general population. In addition, people in Kosovo often lack knowledge about health matters – such as the right moment to go to the doctor or how to live healthily.

For the first time, the government of Kosovo has made health an objective for the 2015–18 period. In

this vein, the SDC is supporting a project that aims to improve the quality of medical services, strengthen organisational capacities among those responsible for public health services, and raise public awareness about health matters. The project is taking place in 12 municipalities. Its objective is to improve the quality of medical services in Kosovo to reflect the needs of the population, ensure better access to healthcare services and make healthcare more efficient. These measures are complementary to additional support to health sector reforms such as the establishment of a mandatory health insurance in cooperation with the World Bank

HIGHER QUALITY CARE AND A BETTER MANAGED SYSTEM

To improve primary healthcare, efforts need to focus on improving the quality of services in order to win back public confidence in the system. That is why clinical teams are given better training and infrastructure to do their work. Based on World Health Organization guidelines, follow-up protocols including treatment and counselling have been put in place for certain non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension. This allows the teams to provide patients with vital services that will help improve their quality of life.

Another aim of the project is to develop the management and administrative capacities of healthcare systems in order to help medical establishments be more independent, efficient, and exercise oversight more fully. It also offers modular healthcare management courses aimed at improving current shortcomings in the system and providing skills in areas such as service and technology management, budget planning, communication and consulting. In addition, the project supports those responsible for public health services to evaluate the system and identify potential areas for improvement.

INCLUDING VULNERABLE GROUPS

The project is intended to be inclusive for the population as a whole, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups in Kosovo such as women, disadvantaged people living in rural areas, elderly people, young people, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The municipalities have a key role to play in understanding the needs of the population and raising people's awareness of their rights. One example from the project is the implementation of outreach strategies for people who tend to be marginalised. Developing community services helps to supplement outpatient treatment. Citizens also have the chance to rate healthcare services and make complaints.

Besides these measures, the project includes a number of activities to raise public awareness of health issues and help people adopt healthier lifestyles, with a view to preventing and managing certain non-communicable diseases in the long term.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Accessible Quality Healthcare

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

TOPIC

Healthcare

COUNTRY/REGION

Kosovo

PARTNERS

Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
Save the Children

BACKGROUND

Kosovo has some of the poorest health indicators in south-eastern Europe. Its healthcare system is facing considerable challenges and better basic healthcare has emerged as a priority. Vulnerable groups are particularly affected, especially Roma and elderly people.

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The programme is intended to help people in Kosovo achieve a better state of health thanks to healthcare services that are more responsive to their needs and greater awareness of their rights.

TARGET GROUP

Mayors and heads of health and social policy departments, primary healthcare establishments, health personnel and administrators in the 12 municipalities (out of 38), civil society organisations and organisations working to protect the rights of patients, other health actors

DURATION

Phase 1: 01.01.2016 – 31.12.2019

BUDGET

Phase 1: CHF 7'190'000

FURTHER INFORMATION

The SDC's activities in Kosovo: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/kosovo.html>

Project website: <https://www.aqhproject.org>

World Bank press release on its Kosovo Health Project: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/05/13/world-bank-health-reforms-kosovo>

CONTACT

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Western Balkans
Division
Freiburgstrasse 130, 3003 Bern
Phone: +41 (0)58 462 22 12
E-Mail: deza-oza@eda.admin.ch
www.sdc.admin.ch