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EUROPEAN FORUM ON STREET CHILDREN 2009 – BUDAPEST, SEPTEMBER 24-25 2009

“Street children” phenomenon in its traditional sense (children who do not have their own home or families) do not exist in Kosovo. We refer as “street children” to children who are involved in Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) including trafficked children, children involved in illicit activities, begging or selling goods in streets etc.

Trafficking in Kosovo was first reported in 1999 and was in the following years mainly an issue of foreign teenage girls and women forced or lured into Kosovo for sexual exploitation. More recently, trafficking in Kosovar women and girls abroad, or within Kosovo, and trafficking of boys for labour services seems to be growing. According to the annual report of the Centre for Protection of Women and Children, the great majority of the Kosovar children victims of trafficking are of Albanian ethnicity. Other ethnic groups include Roma, Serbian, Ashkalie and Bosnian.

According to the UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kosovo, between 2000 and 2004, 3,461 children were either suspected or victim of criminal activity. Furthermore, the OSCE reported that approximately 180 juveniles were indicted for serious offences and that approximately 23 per cent of all serious crime involved people under the age of 18. Almost 50 per cent of the offences are related to theft. Juveniles who are sentenced in a criminal court are placed in Lipjan Correctional Facility. They can take 4 hours a day classes from grade 1 to grade 12. Classes are not separated by level taught but by category of offenders.

As per child labour, the bulk of it in Kosovo is concentrated in the informal sector. Urban centers are considered attractive work locations because of perceived earning potential and greater access to customers. The highest number of children involved in street working and scavenging were identified in Pristina. On top of long working hours and late night shifts, many child workers have to travel to and from their working locations.

There are many reasons that drive children in these activities, but the most important factor is poverty. Poor families put their children to work to supplement their household's meagre income. The 2005 World Bank Poverty Assessment showed poverty rates remaining high and pervasive even six years after the war, with 37% of the population living below the poverty line of Euro 1.42 per day. This situation affects children's well being too. Unemployment is probably still the main social and economic problem for Kosovo. In 2004, overall labour force participation rate in Kosovo was 46.2 per cent, the lowest in the region. The 2004 and 2005 Labour Force Surveys (LFS s) indicate that approximately fifty percent of the labour force was unemployed during these years. Rates are especially high among youth (ages 16-24), women, and the rural population.

The education system suffered immensely during the war of 1999, with an estimated 45% of schools being completely destroyed. The schools were reconstructed, but due to large numbers of people migrating from rural to urban regions space became an issue in the urban schools. Only one third of the age cohort enrolled in the 1st grade attains upper secondary vocational qualification or a higher education diploma. It is estimated from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that the drop out rate in compulsory education is about 12-13 per cent, in secondary education about 28 per cent and in higher education more than 50 per cent.



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Post conflict and transitional environment followed with changes in governing structures, socio-economic problems, war trauma etc. caused also Kosovo to become an arena for different criminal activities. Lack of legal and executive mechanisms for the impediment of illegal cross-bordering, transient of goods and humans has contributed to the problem of organized crime which has international dimensions.

In general, a/ supportive attitude to child labour, b/ disrupted family environment, c/lack of access to education, d/ discrimination and low integration possibilities (ex. for certain minorities, like the Roma Community) and f/ after the war, a high rate of migration from rural areas to urban ones are some of the estimated factors as contributors for becoming labourer, begging, trafficked and on illicit activities children.

Response

Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of child labour. While it is well known that poverty and child labour are the main components of a “low economic equilibrium” at family, community, and country level, the Kosovo Government is committed since 2005 to develop a strategy for child labour elimination and to ensure that all members of the society are protected and live in a safe and protected environment.

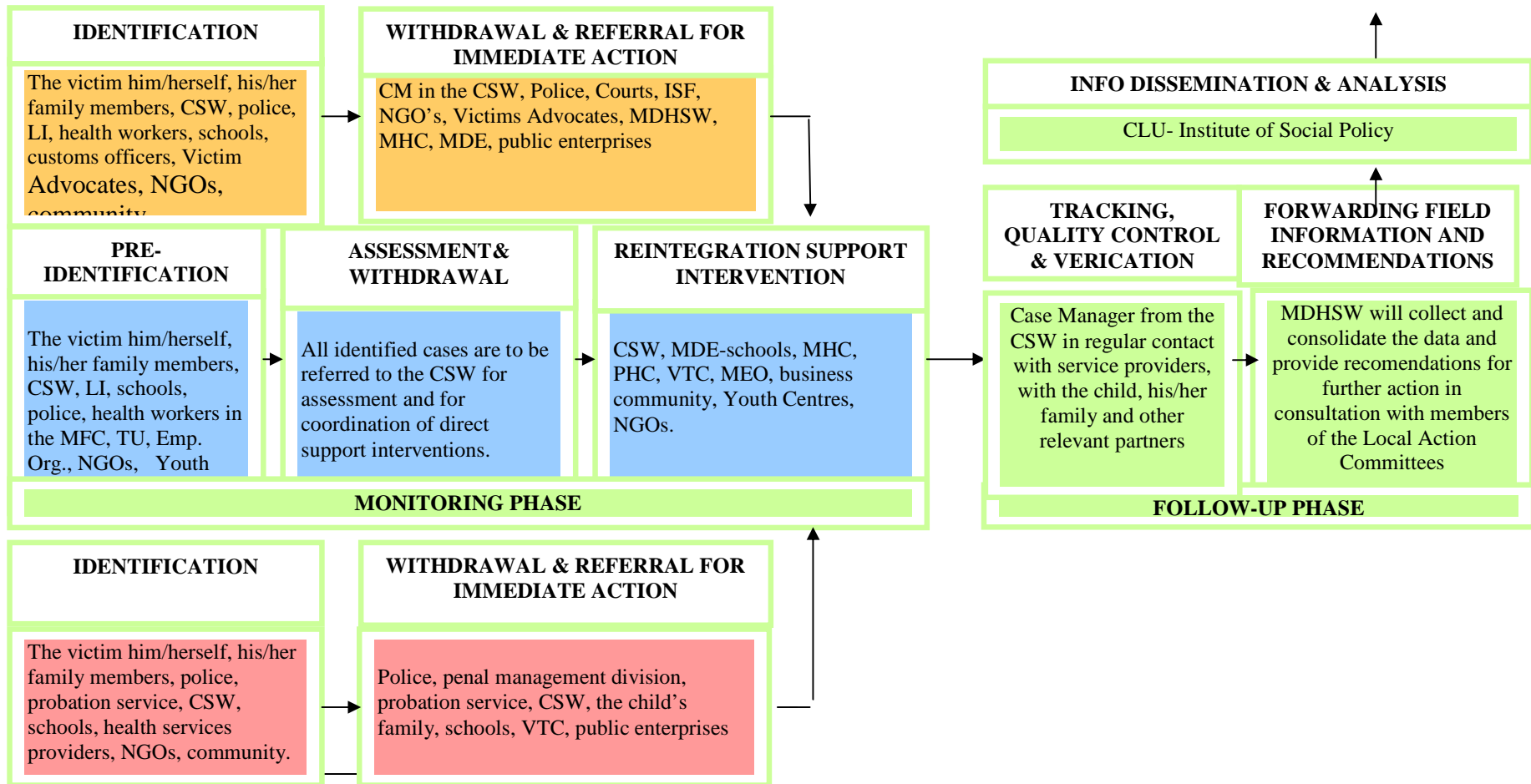
Institutional and legal framework of dealing with these issues is well established. The principles of international human rights law have been explicitly incorporated into the legal framework of Kosovo through the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government. Relevant International Instruments like The Convention on the Right of the Child, The ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1979), The ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour are ratified, Hazardous Child Labour List for Kosovo (fourth category of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, as defined by the ILO C182, Article 4) is established by the Government etc.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) recognised that a comprehensive and integrated system of long-term reintegration does not develop overnight. The whole process of planning, decision-making and implementation by public institutions and NGO- s needed to be based on a/ international human rights standards; b/ Kosovo legal norms and c/ institutional mandates. While there are also many actors, both governmental and non-governmental, those play a role in meeting the needs of children, victims of WFCL and services would lose an element of effectiveness when provided by individual agencies in isolation, an effective response that required agencies to collaborate were more than needed. Based on these facts Kosovo Institutions helped by International Labour Organisation created a national strategy of dealing with children involved in WFCL including trafficking and illicit activities. Below are an illustrated figure and a table for the whole Kosovo Strategy on Eliminating WFCL-The Kosovo Child Labour Monitoring Process.



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The Kosovo Child Labour Monitoring Process¹



¹ ■ Children victims of sexual exploitation; ■ Children victims of illicit activities; ■ Children victims of HCL; ■ A CLM Structure;



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| Monitoring phase | | |
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| CLM activities | Key actors involved | Specific considerations |
| <p>Identification</p> <p>Identification of girls and boys at work by designated and mandated institutions under the CLM structure</p> | <p>Teachers/ CR counselors in schools, social workers, labour inspectors, forestry inspectors, police officers, workers representatives, medical centres, youth/childrens groups, NGOs.</p> | <p>Responsible institutions for identification provide first hand information through direct observation/ interviewing of children involved in WFCL.</p> <p>Identification includes also a preliminary assessment of the situation. (first contact and visual assessment of risks, followed by preliminary analysis of school attendance and progress documents);</p> <p>Responsible actors are trained on interviewing and observation techniques.</p> <p>In the process of identification the pre-notification form (attached) should be filled in and the child is referred to the Centre for Social Work</p> |
| <p>Assessment</p> <p>Checking the workplace to see what types of work related hazards exist and to which child labourers are exposed, using a common set of tools. Gathering complementary information from the school and the family to contribute to a comprehensive analysis and to a justified decision.</p> | <p>Labour inspectors, social workers (in consultation with OSH experts when necessary).</p> | <p>Needs and capacity assessment analysis is made comparing the data from school/ family/ workplace, consultation with a child and his/her family. The needs assessment form has to be filled in by the designated Case Manager.</p> <p>Decision to withdraw (or not) the child from work depends on the child labour case and the identification of available alternatives.</p> <p>Special links need to be established with the police and courts in case a/the child may provide information as a witness in a criminal case, b/the child is himself/herself a juvenile offender, c/the parental rights of his/her parents need to be (temporary) removed because of a direct threat to his/her safety.</p> <p>A plan of activities is designed for the rehabilitation of the child, including specific objectives and indicators.</p> |
| <p>Withdrawal and referral</p> <p>Withdraw children identified as child labourers and assessed to be at serious</p> | <p>CSW (Case Manager) and service providers, including Vocational Training Centres, Employment Offices,</p> | <p>The referral process requires a net of service providers that agree to participate.</p> <p>Children involved in illicit activities and children victims of sexual exploitation are identified, withdrawn</p> |



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| <p>risk and referring them to services corresponding to their needs and capacities, via a network of service providers and agreed procedures.</p> | <p>NGO's providing social rehabilitation programmes, etc.</p> | <p>and sentenced and/or rehabilitated according to specific standard operating procedures for victims of trafficking and provisions of the Juvenile Justice Code for children victims of illicit activities. At this stage they can be referred to the CLM structure for follow up social and economic reintegration in order to ensure a long term support to their reintegration process.</p> |
| <p>Protection</p> <p>Noting different risks, to which the child was exposed at the workplace visited, for follow-up monitoring. It includes a/ raising awareness (among employers, community members, parents and children) on the issue of child labour and occupational safety and health aspects and b/ provision of protection measures to reduce the risk as a temporary measure before withdrawal.</p> | <p>CSW (Case Manager), teachers, health profesionists (Medical Family Centres, Mental Health Centres, Public Health Centres) labour inspectors or OSH specialists.</p> | <p>Protection can be provided as a temporary measure for hazardous work. It is based upon the reality that many children remain in the workplace in the short term till the plan for their rehabilitation is agreed upon. In terms of protection it is important a/ to identify hazards and evaluate risks to which the child is exposed at the workplace, b/ to make sure that risk control/management measures are undertaken by employers/parents and c/ to ensure follow up monitoring.</p> |
| <p>Data management and analysis</p> <p>Recording the information in a data base and reporting upon indicators agreed upon in the plan of activities.</p> <p>Documenting and making information available for action and as inputs to social planning and policy.</p> <p>The data is recorded as accurately and in as much details as possible to avoid confusion at later stage².</p> | <p>Centre for Social Work (Case Manager)</p> | <p>All actors included in the CLM system will keep records on different CLM activities implemented by each of them (e.g. schools, health centres, labour inspectors, community police officers will keep records on children referred by them to the CSW, service providers will keep records on services provided, etc..).</p> <p>Case Managers in the CSW will maintain consolidated data for each case in personal files (in consultation with related partners).</p> <p>CSW will consolidate this data including a/ total number of children referred to the CSW during the reporting period, b/ a summary of needs assessment of children involved in WFCL, c/ available services provided, d/ lack of services and/or barriers to access to services for children at risk/withdrawn from child labour and their families, based on specific cases. This data analysis will be put forward to Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare (MDHSW).</p> |
| <p>Follow up phase</p> | | |



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| <p>Tracking</p> <p>Case Manager has to keep track of services the ex child labourer has accessed and is being provided to know the whereabouts of the child.</p> | <p>Case Manager (CSW), service providers, the child itself and his/her family.</p> | <p>Tracking requires that a/ service providers keep records on the child, b/Community Police Unit traces children withdrawn from street work, c/ labour inspectors trace children withdrawn from formal sector and other related partners able to trace specific cases withdrawn from CL keep records and feed that information to the Case Manager on regular basis. Tracking also requires regular contacts with the child and his/her family.</p> |
| <p>Quality control and verification</p> <p>Verification of the quality of services provided to children and checking the information to make sure it is credible and accurate.</p> | <p>Case Manager (CSW) and service providers, the child and his/her family.</p> | <p>Quality control requires periodic verification visits and continuous communication with service providers, with the child and his/her family until the case handover.</p> <p>Quality control of services provided by NGOs will be evaluated by the CM according to the set of standards on social and family services established by the General Family and Social Services Council.</p> |
| <p>Providing data for enforcement/ improvement of laws and policies and social planning</p> <p>Identification and documentation of gaps in service provisions for children withdrawn and /or at risk of child labour based on specific cases and tracking system</p> | <p>Municipal Directorates of Health and Social Welfare</p> | <p>MDHSW will call for meetings of LACs on a bi-annual basis in order to a/ review consolidated data from the CSW and b/ provide recommendations on policy improvements regarding elimination of CL. Information about violation of laws related to child labour will be made available to law enforcement officials and the judiciary. ISP will call for meetings of the TWG on CLM on bi-annually basis to consolidate the data received from the field a/ on child labour trends in specific sectors and/or areas, b/ available services provided, c/ lack of services and/or barriers to access to services for children at risk/withdrawn from child labour and their families, and d/ recommendations for further actions.</p> |
| <p>Information dissemination and analysis</p> <p>Regular national report on child labour is compiled by the ISP on CLM.</p> | <p>MDHSW, Institute of Social Policy, Working Group on CLM</p> | <p>MDHSW will collect and consolidate the data and recommendations at the field level and put forward the data to the Institute of Social Policy (ISP). ISP will consolidate the data at central level and present the annual report to the Kosovo Committee for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour, to the donors and to other relevant stakeholders on 12th of June, WDACL.</p> |

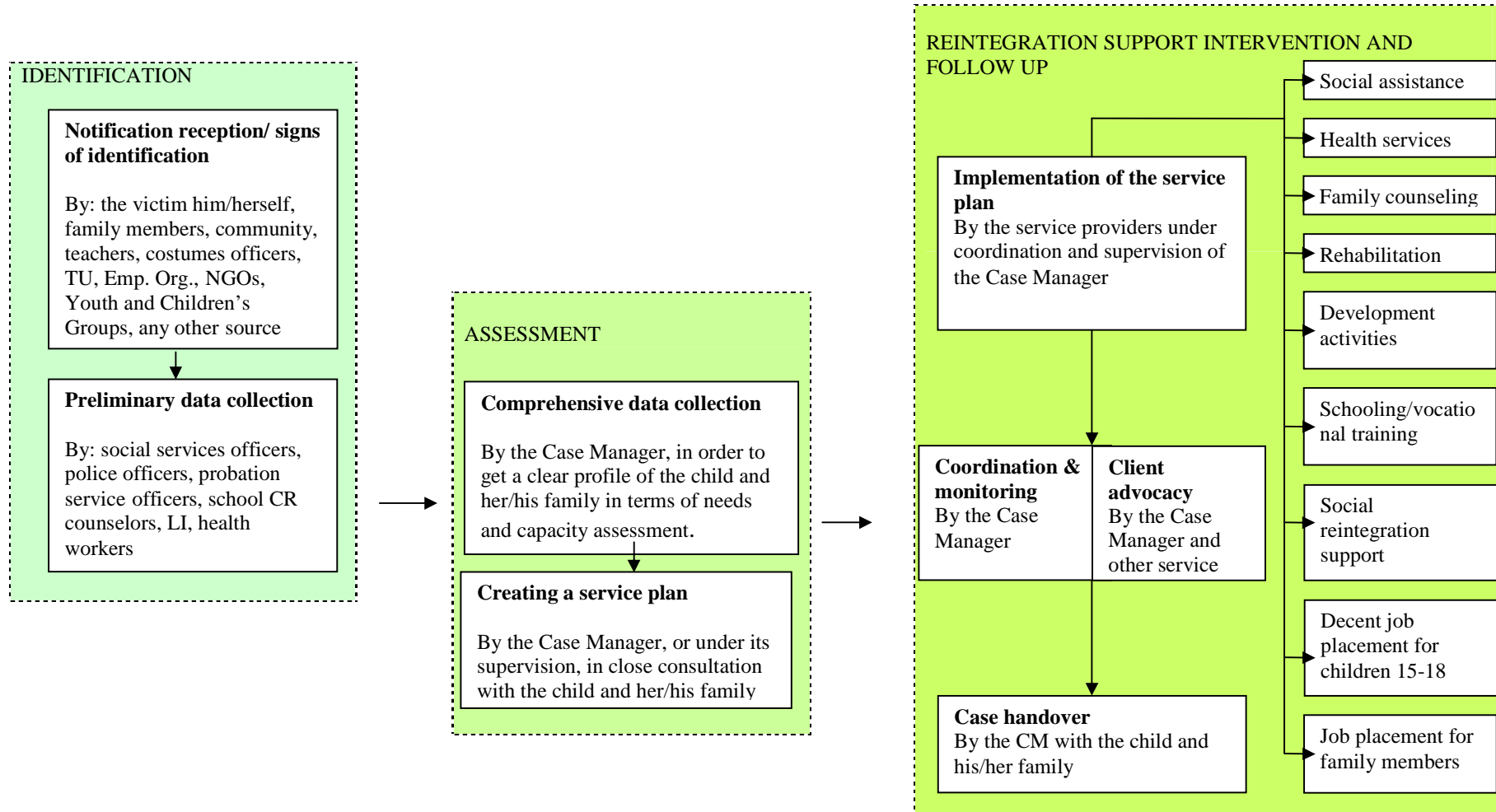
Bellow is the case management process on which Centers for Social Work officials are trained:

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Case Management as part of CLM





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When the above shown model was firstly being piloted below written difficulties and problems were encountered:

- Limited capacity of social work officials to address child labour through a/ case management procedures; b/ child friendly approach and emotional support during the long term reintegration of children withdrawn from WFCL, c/ client advocacy and d/ continuous provision of fact based recommendations on existing needs and available services at local level to support withdrawal of children from WFCL;
- Lack of experience among teachers to support social inclusion and school reintegration of children at risk and/or children withdrawn from WFCL.
- Lack of coordination and networking among key stakeholders at local level in particular of the Centres for Social Work and Labour Inspectors, Labour Market Institutions, schools and health authorities.
- Lack of partnerships with the business community and civil society organizations.
- Limited annual allocation for administration/logistic costs of the Centres for Social Work in order to effectively implement all their functions (including telephone, fuel for vehicles and generators, vehicle maintenance etc.);
- Lack of an emergency grant for the social services division to cover immediate needs of beneficiaries until sustainable solution is made (health care services/including medicines, travel, nutrition etc.);
- Lack of a dedicated allocation for Centres for Social Work to provide a/ “nutrition voucher”, b/ school supplies and meal for children mainstreamed in education, c/ travel costs for children that have to travel to and from school or scholarships for ex-working children to prevent school drop (for families that did not fulfilled criteria for social assistance scheme or for which this assistance is insufficient);
- Limited number of services that would support prevention of children at risk and withdrawal of children involved in WFCL such as a/ day care centres that would provide emotional and social rehabilitation support programmes, educational support programmes to catch up with school requirements, b/ peer to peer education programmes in schools to prevent school drop out and to improve school attendance and performance rates of working children , c/ non-formal education activities, d/ catch up programmes, f/ professional psychological services in schools and CSW etc.



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It's obvious through this summary that Kosovo Institutions are committed and highly involved in the process of combating WFCL; capacity building of existing responsible institutions has been made, a level of coordination among the partners is achieved but the problem of limited services still remains. While the case management process attempts to achieve a successful rehabilitation and reintegration of victim children, this is reported to be impossible by CSW since there are not enough services in the local level. Actually this remains the main challenge for our Institutions.

Recently Kosovo Government (in cooperation with professionalized nongovernmental institutions) is intensively working in establishing strategy and national action plan for children's rights for 2009-2013. The issue of helping these marginalized children was continuously discussed so there is a hope for changes and investments in functionalizing the rehabilitation and reintegration system.