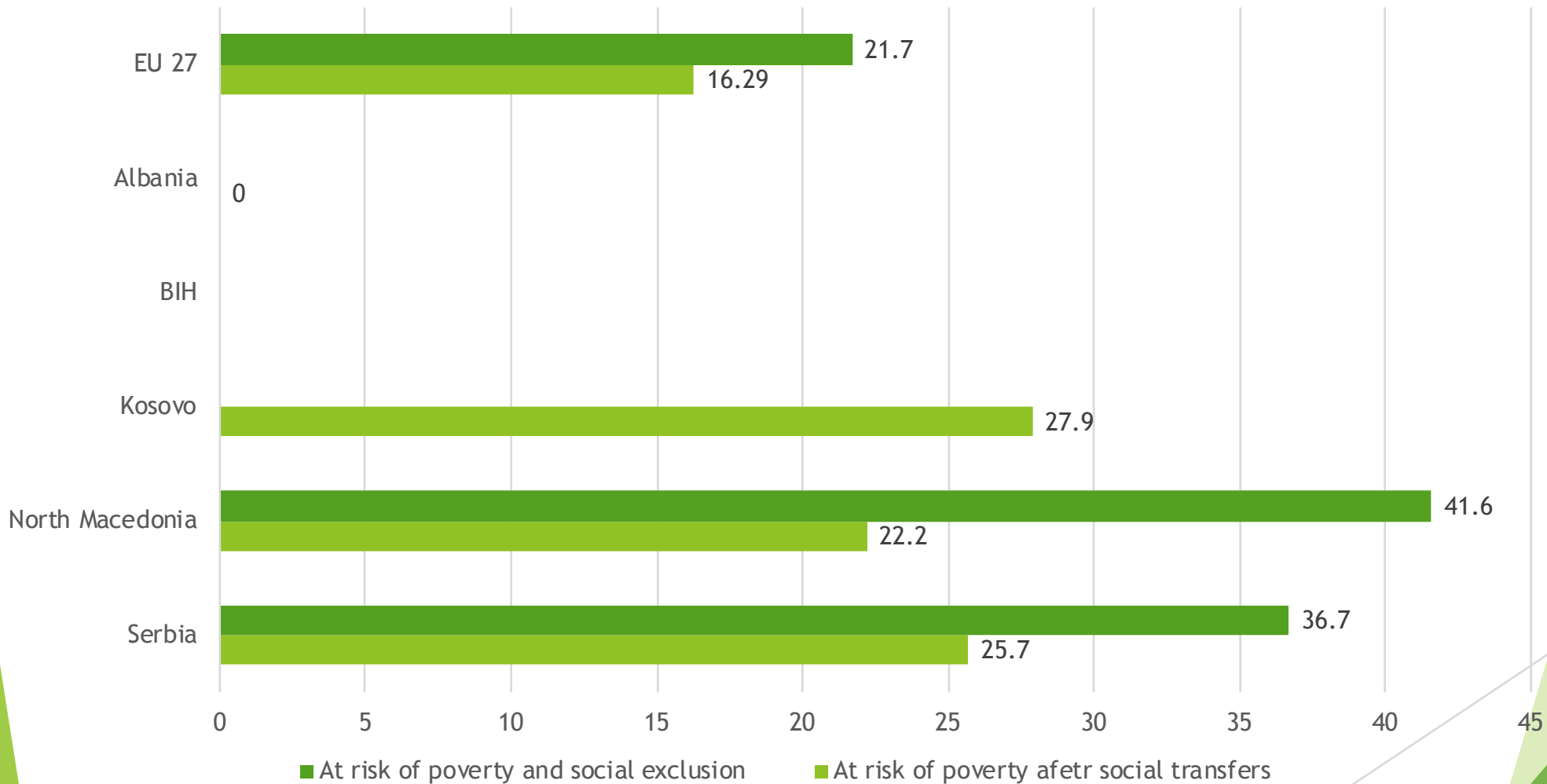


Western Balkans Policy Analysis Laboratory,
21 - 24 October 2019, Bečići, Montenegro

Community-based Services in the Western Balkans: Regional overview

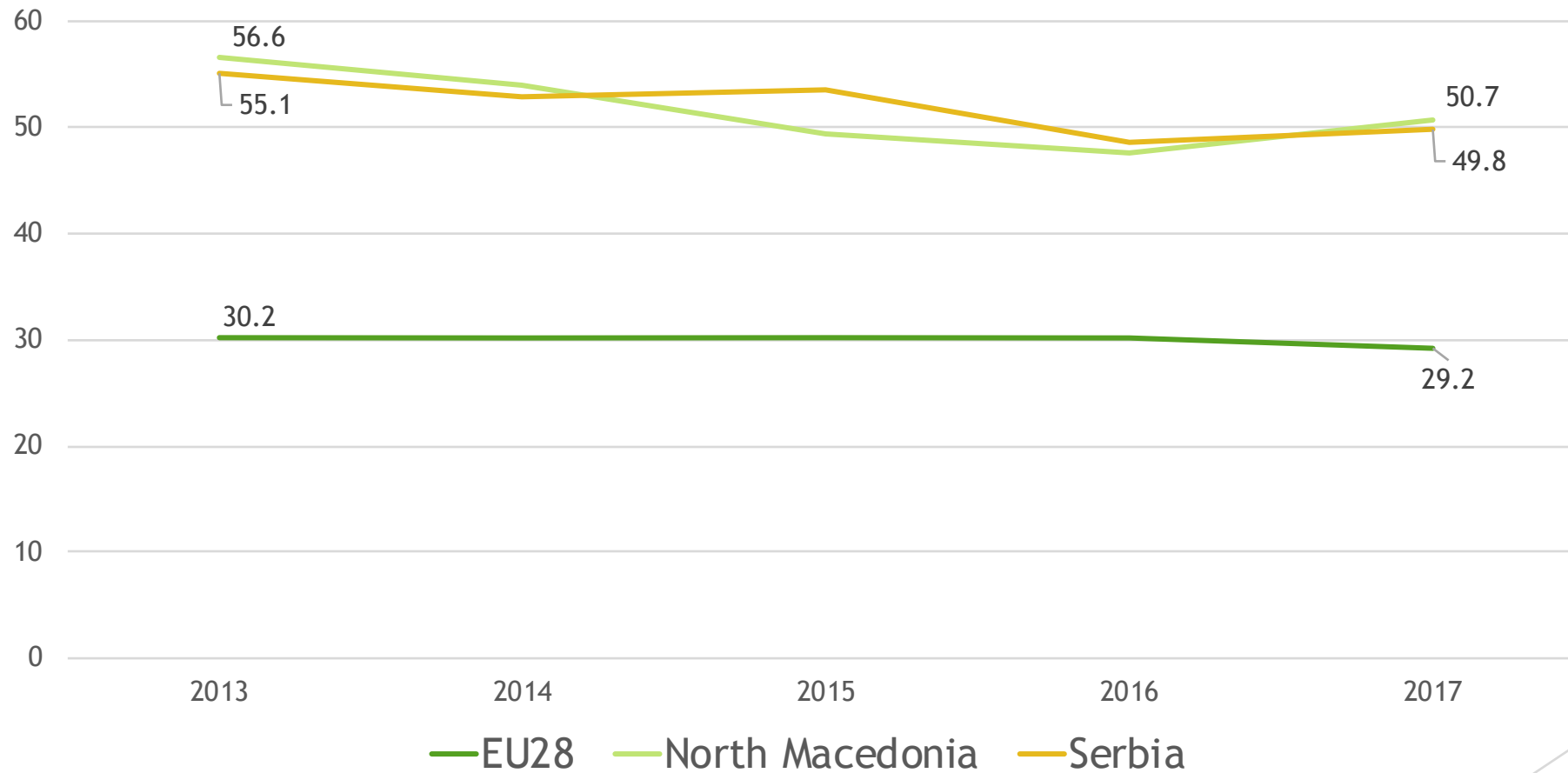
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At risk of poverty after social transfers in the Western Balkans



Source: EU SILC tps00184, lc_peps01, data for Kosovo from experimental assessment by the European Social Policy Network members from Kosovo

At risk of poverty and social exclusion by level of activity limitation (some or severe)



Source: Eurostat, [ilc_peps01], [hlth_dpe010]

Community-based services in the Western Balkans

- ▶ Prior to 1990ties, community-based services existed only in the form of: foster families, clubs of disability organizations i.e. associations of deaf and blind persons, associations of handicapped persons, association of invalids, 'mentally retarded' persons etc.
- ▶ Development of community-based services in the Western Balkans was initiated in the late nineties and the beginning of 2000;
- ▶ Reasons for lack of community-based services before 2000: inherited dominant role of the state in provision of social services, lack of financial and human capacities at the local level (particularly in the smaller, rural municipalities), lack of bottom up initiatives, lack of trust in the local providers, etc.
- ▶ Impetus for development of community-based services after 2000: reduced (financial) capacities of the public sector for social service provision, strategic documents (for deinstitutionalization, for development of social protection, for improvement of conditions of persons with disabilities, etc.), financial and technical support from international organizations (UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, etc.), responsibilities from signing international declarations, etc.

Strategic documents related to community-based services

	General	Disability	Elderly	Children
Albania	Strategy of Decentralisation and Local Government 2015-2020; National Strategy on Social Protection 2015-2020 (2016), National Strategy for Social Inclusion 2007-2013; Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020	National action plan for persons with disabilities 2016-2020,	- No Strategy for Aging or Elderly persons; Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in Albania during the 2012-16	National Agenda for Children's Rights, 2017-2020
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Strategy of deinstitutionalization and transformation of social protection system in the FBiH, 2014-2020	Policy in the field of disability in BiH („Official gazette BiH, No76/08); Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in BiH 2011-2015; Strategy for advancement of rights and status of Persons with Disabilities in BiH 2016-2021.	Strategy for improvement of status of elderly persons in FBiH 2018-2027	Policy for protection of children without parental care and families in risk of separation FBiH 2006-2016 (2008)
Kosovo	Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2014–17; National Strategy for Development (2016-2021)	National Strategy on the Rights of People with Disabilities 2013–2023, Action Plan on implementation of the Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2015, National Programme on the provision of services in sign language and deaf persons in the Republic of Kosovo	No Strategy for Aging or Elderly persons	Strategy on the rights of the child 2019-2023 (previous Strategy for the period 2009-2013)
Montenegro	No Strategy for Deinstitutionalization	Strategy for integration of persons with disabilities in Montenegro, 2016-2020 (previous Strategy for the period 2008-2016)); Strategy for protection and enhancement of mental health in Montenegro 2019-2023.	Strategy for the development of social protection system of the elderly 2018-2022 (previous Strategy for 2013-2017)	Strategy for Children Rights (2019-2023); Social and child protection system development strategy 2018-2022 (previous Strategy for 2013-2017) and subsequent annual Action Plans.
North Macedonia	Strategy for Deinstitutionalization Timjanik 2018-2027; Programme for Development of Social Protection 2011-2021	National Strategy on Achieving Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities 2010-2018;	National Strategy for Elderly 2010-2020	No National Strategy for Children Rights
Serbia	Strategy for Social Protection 2019-2025 (Previous Strategy - 2005)	Strategy for Improving the Situation of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia 2007 – 2015	National Strategy for Aging , 2006-2015	National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence 2018-2022

Community-based services in the Western Balkans for persons with disabilities: selected examples

Country	Community-based service provision for persons with disabilities
Albania	In Albania there are 28 social service facilities for persons with disabilities, including 12 residential institutions, 14 day care centres and two non-public community centres. There are currently 182 persons with disabilities in residential facilities, 38 of whom are children.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	People with intellectual disabilities are often placed in institutions, rather than being empowered to live independently. According to USAID, the number of mentally and physically disabled persons in public institutions of BiH is estimated at 2,000. Data from 2013 show that through the process of deinstitutionalization 59 persons with mental disability have been relocated from the Institute of mentally disabled to separate housing units in Bakovici, Drin and Pazaric. The Programme of the Union of organizations for support of persons with intellectual disabilities "Life in the local community with support" also provides significant support for supported living in the community.
Kosovo	Access to social services among people with disabilities is limited, due to lack of services at local level, insufficient development of professional networks and qualifications, limited awareness of the general population in relation to disability issues and a medical and outdated perspective on disability in general. An Ngo HNADIKOS provides services through a network of 14 community-based rehabilitation (CBRs) centers and 12 local offices throughout Kosovo.
Montenegro	Lack of support services for adults with intellectual disabilities in Montenegro, predominant placement in institutions of long-term care or home isolation. People with disabilities are provided with personal assistance services, home care, counselling and therapeutic services, employment mediation and day care centre. These services are conducted in eight municipalities of Bar, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Cetinje, Mojkovac, Nikšić, Pljevlja and Podgorica. The State does not finance any support service related to independent living and living in the community.
North Macedonia	Since 2017 increased focus on organised living with support in separate housing units. In 2019, there were 81 beneficiaries (43 in Negotino and 38 in Skopje) in the housing units of NGO Poraka Negotino resettled from Special Institution Demir Kapija.
Serbia	Trend of reduced number of adults with disabilities in residential institutions. Assisted/supported living for adults with disabilities (one of the services of support to independent living) in 2016 was provided by six institutions (Tutin, Pančevo (Jabuka), Stari Lec, Čurug, Novi Bečej and Veliki Popovac). Financing partly project-based, and partly by the local self-government, or from the national budget. Issue of licencing. Small accommodation units are located both within the institutions themselves and in the community. The family accommodation service (type of foster care for adults) is still insufficiently applied to this group of users.

Community-based services in the Western Balkans for children: selected examples

Country	Community-based service provision for children
Albania	Children with disabilities are still placed in residential care centers. The process of transitioning from residential institutional care to community-based care has been extended to all nine public residential institutions for children under 18. Foster care and other forms of alternative care are promoted by the state social services. However, these care services require further financial support and the adequate allocation of human resources from the state.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	In 2014, USAID provided funds to establish the first ever service center for disabled children in BiH. Based on the successful model of the first Sarajevo center, centers have since been established in Banja Luka, Foca, and Tuzla and in another part of Sarajevo. In total, the five centers provide services to more than 700 families of children with disabilities. However, parents of children with disabilities emphasize lack of accessible and free services.
Kosovo	There are very few children in residential institutions in Kosovo. However, adequate support in the community is not available as children grow up. Stigma and discrimination are pervasive – Most children with disabilities spend a significant portion of their time in limited family groups. Shortage of medications, a lack of accessible facilities and long waiting times often drive families to seek private specialized services.
Montenegro	Among local social care services 20.3% were targeted towards children with disabilities (20.3%). The State through public works of Employment Agency supports different kinds of services which are called “personal assistant service”. This type of service is most offered to children with disabilities in teaching.
North Macedonia	Since fall 2019 there are no children under 3 in institution; 5 small group homes for infants and toddlers without parents and parental care; 32 day-care centres for children with disabilities; 2 day-care centres for street children; 2 small group homes for children without parental care and children with behavioural and social problems;
Serbia	The number of children in foster families grew from approximately 1,800 in 2002 to 6,268 in September 2015. According to the data from 2015, 730 children are still in residential institutions for children, vast majority of them are children with disabilities (77.3 %). Support services in the community, like day care centres or respite care, are not widely available. Parents report that they tend to rely on informal networks for support, such as extended family (44 per cent) and neighbours (16 per cent).

Community-based services in the Western Balkans for elderly: selected examples

Country	Community-based service provision for elderly
Albania	<p>There is no formal (institutionalized) long-term care in Albania. Instead, long-term care consists merely of some dedicated (“earmarked”) hospital beds, which provide health care mainly for chronically ill older people. On the other hand, there are no home-based social services for older people in Albania, putting enormous pressure on close family members. There are several asylums (residential facilities mainly providing shelter and food for the elderly) available, but nevertheless, they provide inadequate services, and more importantly, do not cover the population needs for social care and support of older people.</p>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<p>Entity and cantonal social protection laws prescribe services such as home care and assistance, day care, or institutional and foster care, but not all include the same services. Community services remain underdeveloped and are often delivered by international or local non-governmental organisations; this support tends to be project-based rather than government-sponsored. The financial capacity of administrative units also impacts service delivery. Some primary healthcare or elderly care institutions, usually located in urban areas, may organise home visits; otherwise, services such as community nursing may be provided by international and local non-governmental organisations.</p>
Kosovo	<p>Kosovo has a very young population - only 8% of Kosovo’s population today are elderly. This explains partially why there are fewer publicly provided long-term care services in Kosovo than elsewhere in the region. Most cases requiring long term care in Kosovo are dealt with in the extended family combined with home care services that are available in some of the main towns in Kosovo.</p>
Montenegro	<p>Most of the identified local social care services are dealing with the elderly (21.9%). Services include: personal assistance services, counselling and therapeutic services, help at home, and service of carers for older persons (geronto housewives).</p>
North Macedonia	<p>12 day-care centres for the elderly; 3 centres for giving assistance to the elderly in their homes.</p>
Serbia	<p>Public formal care comprises institutional care in public homes for the elderly, day care and home care services, and cash benefits for dependent persons. In 2016 only 1% of the elderly were covered by day care and home care services. There are permanent waiting lists for admission to institutional care and for day care services in larger cities. With a low volume of supply of formal care services, public spending is also low; in 2017 only 0.45% of GDP was spent on all LTC services and benefits for the elderly. In recent years the private sector has increased the supply of LTC services.</p>

(Some) Challenges and priorities in provision of Community-based Services in the Western Balkans

- ▶ Tradition (prejudices, stereotypes, conservatism, intolerance);
- ▶ Project-based financing or annual calls, lack of continual financing for service providers on equal basis;
- ▶ Holistic approach to deinstitutionalization, connecting laws and institutions within all sectors: social protection, education, health, housing, etc.
- ▶ Moratoria on new admissions to institutions.
- ▶ Personal assistance services must be advanced as a right to service within the social protection system.
- ▶ Development of new standard of quality for the community based services based on quality of living, focusing on the process of service delivery; including user's rights, involvement, methods, staff training, ethics, complaints procedures etc.

Questions for discussion:

- ▶ Are strategic documents relevant and needed in the process of development and provision of community-based services?
- ▶ Is assessment of needs (data, surveys, etc.) for community-based services available and possible at the local level?
- ▶ Does the process of licensing of community-based services improve its quality or hinders its provision?
- ▶ What are the innovative approaches in community-based service provision?

References

- ▶ Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED): Country reports on independent living in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, <https://www.disability-europe.net>
- ▶ European Social Policy Network, Country profiles for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
- ▶ Websites of national Ministries of Labor and Social Policy in the Western Balkans, related to strategic documents.
- ▶ UNICEF (2018) *Everybody counts: Situational analysis of inclusion of children with disabilities in Western Balkan and Turkey*, Geneva: UNICEF.