



CEL
CENTRE FOR EQUALITY
AND LIBERTY | KOSOVA

NL Netherlands



LGBTI+ PERSONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Acknowledgment

Centre for Equality and Liberty Kosovo (CEL Kosovo) would like to thank the Office of Good Governance, the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo, the Kosovo Police, the Agency for Free Legal Aid, Linja e Jetës, and the psychologists and psychiatrists engaged by CEL Kosovo, and the LGBTI+ community for their cooperation during the research process and their contribution to the publication of the research study “LGBTI+ Persons During COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Disclaimer

This research study is part of the project Together Liberated! funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo and implemented by CEL Kosovo. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo.

Copyright

© Centre for Equality and Liberty of the LGBTI+ community in Kosovo (CEL Kosovo), December 2021. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of CEL Kosovo.

Author

Jeta Bakija, Executive Director of JB Consulting
Email: jetabakija@hotmail.com; Tel: +383 (0) 44 334 582; Address: Rrustem Statovci, 39, Prishtina, Kosovo.

Contributing author

CEL Kosovo.



ACRONYMS

MIA

Ministry of Internal Affairs

OGG

Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Ministers

OIK

Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo

KP

Kosovo Police

FLAA

Free Legal Aid Agency

CEL Kosovo

Centre for Equality and Liberty Kosovo

WHO

World Health Organization

VMGs

Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups

NGOs

Non-government Organizations

CSOs

Civil Society Organizations

ILGA Europe

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Europe

LGBTI

Lesbian, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex

SMEs

Small and Medium Enterprise

IDAHO

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

KIPA

Kosovo Institute for Public Administration

CONTENT

About CEL Kosovo	5
Abstract	6
Methodology	7
Introduction	9
Education	11
Economy	11
Health Care	12
Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	13
Kosovo Institutions and Organisations Contribution in Response to COVID-19	17
Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo	18
Kosovo Police (KP)	19
Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo	20
The Free Legal Aid Agency	22
Linja e Jetës	24
CEL Kosovo	24
Psychologists and Psychiatrists Point of View	26
LGBTI+ Persons During COVID-19 Pandemic – the Perspective of LGBTI+ Persons	27
General Information of the Respondents	28
Economic Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTI+ Persons	30
Government of Kosovo Support to LGBTI+ Persons	32
Wellbeing of LGBTI+ Persons	33
Conclusions	37
Recommendations	39

ABOUT CEL KOSOVO

Centre for Equality and Liberty of the LGBTI+ community in Kosovo (CEL) was established in July 2013 with the aim to empower the LGBTI+ community, prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, raise awareness of the general population about LGBTI+ rights, and advocate for equal rights and non-discrimination of LGBTI+ persons living in Kosovo in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Kosovo. CEL Kosovo was established in response to the continuous discrimination, stigmatization, and prejudice of the Kosovo society towards LGBTI+ persons. The programs that CEL Kosovo provides are as follows: Support Program, Capacity Building Program, and Awareness Raising and Activism Program.

CEL Kosovo is considered a driving force behind the creation of a progressive, diverse, and tolerant society in Kosovo towards the LGBTI+ community and a motivator for change of traditional social constructs, and a support system for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all. CEL Kosovo has also sought to strengthen the legal framework for LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo as well as to increase their participation in relevant international and regional mechanisms and projects beneficial to the community and society at large. CEL Kosovo has managed to become one of the leading organizations and driving forces for the empowerment of LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo by promoting and protecting LGBTI+ rights and by working towards creating an inclusive society which advocates for equality and recognizes and respects diversity. CEL Kosovo's approach is that every person shall be valued and treated with respect, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this research study is to present the situation of LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo since March 2020. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began, a pandemic caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

The research study will analyze the measures that the Government of the Republic of Kosovo (here on out referred to as the Government of Kosovo) took to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 and their effects to the lives of LGBTI+ persons; the measurements and activities that relevant Kosovo institutions took to protect VMGs, focusing on LGBTI+ persons, who were potential victims of any form of violence during the lockdown;

the strategies and activities that CEL Kosovo and other organizations took to provide support to LGBTI+ persons during the lockdown period until the end of 2020; the situation of LGBTI+ persons living in the pandemic time from their perspective; and the point of view of psychologists in regards to the situation of LGBTI+ persons and issues they faced during the lockdown.

Recommendations were developed based on the findings of the research study and are directed to relevant Government institutions, organizations, potential donors, the media, and other stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge that has impacted the normal flow of life in the entire world. To address the effects of the pandemic, adequate measures were taken by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. In order to present the situation caused by the pandemic and its effect to LGBTI+ persons, CEL Kosovo published the report “LGBTI+ Persons during COVID-19 Pandemic” within its project Together Liberated! Funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo.

This research will have the following components:

- Measures of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo to prevent the spread of the coronavirus;
- The impact of the COVID-19 to the lives of LGBTI+ persons;
- Kosovo Institution and Organisation Contribution in Response to COVID-19;
- Conclusions; and
- Recommendations.

This research implements several methodological approaches, including desk research, policy analysis, face-to-face interviews, and online questionnaires. These methodical approaches aimed to find information about the Government of Kosovo's measures providing support to LGBTI+ persons during the pandemic; the contribution of organizations and donors and their response to the pandemic; and the experience of LGBTI+ persons since March 2020.

In order to gather data from the field, the following institutions and organizations were interviewed:

- Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo;
- Kosovo Police;
- Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo;
- Linja e Jetës;
- CEL Kosovo.

Further, a questionnaire was developed and shared with the following:

- Agency for Free Legal Aid;
- LGBTI+ persons, where seventy (70) responses were received.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for the COVID-19 within WHO has provided advice to WHO and the global community on measures to control this outbreak such as putting in place strong measures to detect disease early, isolate and treat cases, contact-trace, and promote social distancing measures commensurate with the risk.¹

The spread of Covid-19 had a high degree of impact on Kosovo in different areas such as education, economic development, health, and overall functioning of institutions. Therefore, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and to reduce and keep under control its impact on the education, economy and health sectors, the Government of Kosovo has undertaken a range of critical actions. In August 2020, the Kosovo Assembly adopted the new Law on Prevention and Fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic which provides a solid legal framework for the required public health measures.² The first measure the Government of Kosovo took to prevent the spread of the coronavirus was to close entrances and exits to certain municipalities with a confirmed high number of positive cases.³ Further, with the spread of the coronavirus, the Government of Kosovo adopted preventive and restrictive measures. In most of the municipalities in quarantine, there were movement restrictions, social distancing measures, closure of all non-essential businesses, suspension of educational process, and movement and travel restrictions until the number of infected people started to decrease.⁴

¹ World Health Organisation (January 2020), Novel Coronavirus(2019-nCoV) Situation Report – 11, available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200131-sitrep-11-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=de7c0f7_4

² European Commission, (October, 2020), Commission Staff Working Document, Kosovo 2020 Report, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/-files/2020-10/kosovo_report_2020.pdf

³ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2020), Prishtina Office, The Effect Of Covid-19 Pandemic in Kosovo, available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kosovo/17758.pdf>

⁴ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo (April, 2020), Decision, available at: <https://msh.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Vendim..pdf>

EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kosovo developed an online learning platform that was used for the organization of online distance learning activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The learning materials were shared via online learning platforms such as Moodle and some recorded courses were televised. In September, due to the reduction in the number of people infected with the coronavirus, the Ministry of Education developed and implemented a three-stage plan which combined in-person and distance learning systems. The Ministry of Education monitored the epidemiological situation and the spread of coronavirus, and in cases where the situation deteriorated, in-person courses stopped, and all teaching was shifted to distance learning platforms developed by the Ministry.⁵

ECONOMY

Based on the practices of other countries, the Government of Kosovo decided to adopt severe measures by completely shutting down the private sector for almost two (2) months in all municipalities of Kosovo. In order to assist Kosovo's economy and citizens, the Government of Kosovo introduced many different mechanisms such as direct wage subsidies, guaranteed loans, rent subsidies, access to finances for SMEs, tax delays, and restructuring loan repayments.⁶ However, according to an article published by The World Bank, "in Kosovo, the pandemic is exerting unprecedented pressure on economic activity and the livelihoods of people. Despite the easing of containment measures in June 2020, the economy continues to decline, as the shock of the pandemic continues to stifle diaspora-driven service exports, investment, and private consumption. Kosovo's economy is expected to contract by 8.8 percent in 2020."⁷

⁵ OECD (2020), The COVID-19 Crisis in Kosovo*, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/COVID-19-Crisis-in-Kosovo-archive.pdf>

⁶ KMPG (June, 2020), Government and Institution measures in response to COVID-19, available at: <https://home.kpmg/xx-en/home/insights/2020/04/kosovo-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>

⁷ The World Bank (October 2020), Recession Deepens as COVID-19 Pandemic Threatens Jobs and Poverty Reduction in Kosovo, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/22/recession-deepens-as-covid-19-pandemic-threatens-jobs-and-poverty-reduction-in-kosovo>



HEALTH CARE

The Government of Kosovo has undertaken a range of critical actions such as healthcare subsidies to contain pandemic-induced downturns in order to address health threats⁸ resulting from the increase of the health care professionals and clinics dealing with COVID-19 cases.⁹

Further, the Government of Kosovo was focused on the “flattening the curve” strategy and capacity-building in order to enhance the healthcare system.¹⁰

Flattening the curve is a worldwide public health strategy which is designed to slow the spread of the pandemic so that the peak number of people requiring care at a time is reduced and the health care system does not exceed its capacity, which would be very costly in human lives.

Flattening the curve relies on mitigation techniques such as hand washing, use of face masks, and social distancing.

⁸ The World Bank (April, 2020), Kosovo: Health Systems, Safety Nets, and Support to Businesses All Critical to Protecting Lives and Livelihoods, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/09/europe-and-central-asia-kosovo-health-systems-safety-nets-and-support-to-businesses-all-critical-to-protecting-lives-and-livelihoods>

⁹ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2020), Prishtina Office, The Effect Of Covid-19 Pandemic in Kosovo, available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kosovo/17758.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

International and national crises often highlight inequalities in society that disproportionately affect individuals from VMGs. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes in society due to the Government of Kosovo's Covid-19 prevention measures has showcased inequities in access to decent work and experiences of discrimination which has impacted many of VMGs, specifically LGBTI+ persons living in Kosovo for whom the lockdown and other measures were much harsher and had higher negative impact.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 24, states that "1) All are equal before the law. Everyone enjoys the right to equal legal protection without discrimination; 2) No one shall be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, relation to any community, property, economic and social condition, sexual orientation, birth, disability or other personal status."¹¹ Further, other national and international human rights instruments applicable in Kosovo guarantee the rights of all citizens of Kosovo and combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.^{12 13}

According to the ILGA Europe's Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of LGBTI+ People in Kosovo covering the period of January to December 2020, "civil society reported better cooperation with the Advisory and Coordination Group for the LGBTI community, which released the new National Action Plan (2019-2022) in 2019."^{14 15} However, the implementation of the Action Plan was made difficult due to the Government of Kosovo's Covid-19 restrictions. Moreover, the Government of Kosovo's restrictions on freedom of movement and closing the borders impacted LGBTI+ persons, mainly transgender people, since it affected their access "to gender affirming healthcare abroad, as Kosovo does not offer any trans healthcare services."¹⁶ Further, according to the article "LGBTQ Life Under Quarantine" published by Kosovo 2.0 LGBTQ, trans people mentioned that "at some point in our lives, at least once, all of us have dreamed about disappearing and hiding somewhere. When a particular moment became too difficult many of us would just give into escape. The need to withdraw makes more sense than ever during lockdown in the Covid-19 era, but for the majority of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) persons in Kosovo retreating into lonely corners is a way of life."¹⁷

¹¹ The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (June, 2008), Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>

¹² The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (June, 2015), Law on the Protection from Discrimination, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10924>

¹³ The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (June, 2015), Law on Gender Equality, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10923>

¹⁴ European Commission, (October, 2020), Commission Staff Working Document, Kosovo 2020 Report, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/kosovo_report_2020.pdf

¹⁵ ILGA Europe (December 2020), Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of LGBTI people in Kosovo covering the period of January to December 2020, available at: <https://rainbow-europe.org/annual-review>

¹⁶ Ibid, page 67.

¹⁷ Kosovo 2.0 (May, 2020), LGBTQ Life under Quarantine, available at: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/lgbtq-life-under-quarantine/>

In 2020, after many years lobbying and advocating to have the issue of safe spaces for LGBTI+ persons addressed, the municipality of Prishtinë/Priština announced 300,000 Euros in financial support for the building of a Safe House for LGBTI+ persons. The Safe House will be used by LGBTI+ persons who are victims of domestic violence and/or are forced to leave their houses because of family rejection.¹⁸ Further, in 2020, the establishment of a Drop-In Center for LGBTI+ persons was financially supported by the Municipality of Prishtina.

The Drop-In Center is used by NGOs working for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons to organize different cultural, educational, and fun events for LGBTI+ persons and to provide them a safe space to socialize.¹⁹

In December 2020, the Basic Court of Prishtinë/Priština affirmed the right of Mr. Blert Morina to change both his name and sex marker in his identification documents, marking a landmark decision for Blert himself, transgender persons, and the whole LGBTI+ movement in Kosovo. After almost two (2) years of battle challenging the system in Kosovo, the court's decision stated that the decisions by the Directorate for General Administrative Work within the Municipality of Gjakovë/Djakovica, based on a recommendation by the Kosovo Civil Registration Agency (ARC), were "annulled as unlawful" and obliged the relevant institutions to officially correct Blert's name and sex marker within 15 days of receiving the court's decision. This is the second case in which Kosovo's courts decided in favor of protecting the rights of transgender people living in Kosovo. Two (2) transgender men have successfully changed their gender mark and name with the approval of Basic Court after Mr. Blert Morina's case.²⁰

The draft Civil Code was published in July 2020 causing disappointment among civil society, especially to organizations working for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons. The Civil Code fails to make progress on legal recognition of diverse families and same sex partners. The draft Civil Code defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman and fails to establish the institution of civil partnership. Instead, it states that other forms of partnership may be recognized through different legislation, which suggests the rights of civil partnerships will be different from married couples. CSOs are following the amendment of the draft Civil Code, which is still in Parliament, and are lobbying and advocating with concrete, legally based recommendations to have same-sex partnership included in the document and to have the definition of marriage changed to include the gender-neutral term "spouse" to be in line with the definition in the Constitution.^{21 22}

¹⁸ CEL Kosovo (May, 2021), CEL Kosovo Annual Report 2019 – 2020, available at: https://cel-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual_report_CEL.pdf

¹⁹ Ibid, page 7.

²⁰ Ibid, page 45.

²¹ Ibid, page 43.

²² ILGA Europe (December 2020), Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of LGBTI people in Kosovo covering the period of January to December 2020, available at: <https://rainbow-europe.org/annual-review>

During the pandemic, the number of LGBTI+ persons requesting psychological support and counselling increased. This support was provided by CEL Kosovo psychologists and psychiatrists through the entire year. The main therapy approaches used for the psychological sessions were cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychoanalytical approach. Organization of psychological sessions is considered to be one of the most effective activities organized by CEL Kosovo as it provides direct support to LGBTI+ persons who are victims of any kind of violence, have issues with their sexual orientation or gender identity, have suicidal thoughts, have risky behavior such as use of narcotic substances or alcohol, or face any form of discrimination based on their sexual orientation.²³

²³ CEL Kosovo (May, 2021), CEL Kosovo Annual Report, available at: https://cel-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual_report_-_CEL.pdf

KOSOVO INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

• Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo

The OIK represents the legal mechanism for the protection, monitoring, and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms of natural and legal persons from unlawful and irregular actions or inactions of the public authorities, institutions, and persons or other authorities who exercise public power in the Republic of Kosovo. The OIK also acts as a national mechanism of prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatments and punishments within all places where persons deprived of their liberty are placed, including police retention, pre-trial detention facilities, stay in health institutions, customs detention, and immigration detention as well as all other facilities where suspicions of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms may occur. Furthermore, the Ombudsperson is an equality mechanism for promotion, monitoring, and support of equal treatment without discrimination on the basis of the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Protection from Discrimination; laws which, jointly with the Law on Ombudsperson, comprise the legal package of human rights in Kosovo that entered into force in July 2015.

An interview with Mr. Naim Qelaj, the Ombudsman, was organized in order to discuss the effects of the Government's Covid-19 prevention measurements on the institution's daily work including human rights violation cases reported based on gender identity and sexual orientation, how the institution raised and addresses these cases, and the overall situation of LGBTI+ persons from their perspective. According to Mr. Qelaj there were several impacts of the lockdown measurements.

First, there were a considerable number of employees infected with the virus and the Ombudsperson Offices in the regions were closed for a period of time. Second, the number of employees working from the office was limited due to health conditions some of the employees had.

And third, even though the OIK provided an opportunity for citizens to report cases of human rights violations or any other case online, the number of cases reported decreased. According to Mr. Qelaj, this happened because most of the citizens are used to submitting their cases in person and not online or through the post office as it was recommended. According to the Annual Report 2019 of the OIK, 2,014 complaints and requests for advice or legal assistance were filled by the citizens of Kosovo to the OIK headquarters in Prishtinë/Priština and the regional offices during 2019²⁴ whereas in 2020, according to the Annual Report 2020 of the OIK, 1,419 complaints and requests for advice or legal assistance were filed by the citizens of Kosovo to the OIK headquarters in Prishtinë/Priština and the regional offices.²⁵

²⁴ Ombudsperson Institution (2020), Annual Report 2019, available at: <https://oik-rks.org/en/2020/04/02/godisnji-iz-vestaj-2019/>

²⁵ Ombudsperson Institution (2021), Annual Report 2020, available at: <https://oik-rks.org/en/2021/04/14/annual-report-2020/>

From 2019 to 2020, we can see a decrease of 595 in the number of complaints and legal assistance requested by citizens of Kosovo.

Additionally, the OIK has a mandate to advocate and influence the advancement of human rights through the media. During 2020, the OIK was advocating for equal rights and opportunities with a special focus on VMGs.

On 30 March 2020, the Government of Kosovo approved the Decision on the Emergency Fiscal Measures to financially support taxpayers, employees, and businesses during the COVID-19 situation in Kosovo. Therefore, citizens of Kosovo requested for advice and legal assistance from the OIK on how to benefit from the government support.

● Kosovo Police (KP)

The KP is a public service within the scope of the MIA which operates through a unified chain of command throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.²⁶ The KP actions are guided by the following principles:

- Fair and equal treatment of all persons;
- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Neutrality and impartiality regarding persons' political views and affiliations;
- Integrity, honesty and accountability in public service;
- Transparency - providing information to the public and being open to public;
- Legitimacy, suitability and proportionality;
- Commitment to employment, advancement, and assignment of duties in comprehensive, merit-based, and non-discriminatory manner, by reflecting the multiethnic character of Republic of Kosova and by recognizing the principles of gender equality and human rights foreseen by the Constitution.²⁷

²⁶ The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (March, 2012), Law on Police, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2806>.

²⁷ Ibid

In order to gather information regarding human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity during the lockdown period, an interview was scheduled with Mr. Salih Dragidella, Captain of the Kosovo Police. According to Mr. Dragidella, the pandemic affected the work and commitment of the KP towards these specific issues because their focus was on enforcing Government of Kosovo's measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

During 2020, there were three (3) human rights violation cases reported by LGBTI+ persons, all in Prishtinë/Priština, that were referred to the Kosovo Prosecutor's Office of Kosovo. Two (2) cases were incitement to hatred and one (1) was harassment. The number of reported human rights violations in 2020 decreased compared to the six (6) cases reported in 2019 and the five (5) cases reported in 2018.

According to Mr. Dragidella, the KP continuously works for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons and provides support needed by the community per their request. Kosovo Police are part of different events organized in order to ensure safety for LGBTI+ persons and other participants of the events. Activities to which the KP contributes are: Pride Parade Week, IDAHOT, workshops, trainings, conferences, and other events organized for discussing the situation, rights, and needs of LGBTI+ persons. Further, the KP discusses the rights of LGBTI+ persons in the programs for the new police cadets and contributes to increasing the awareness of LGBTI+ persons about reporting any form of violation.

Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo

Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Non-discrimination is located within the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo and has, among others, the following duties, and responsibilities:

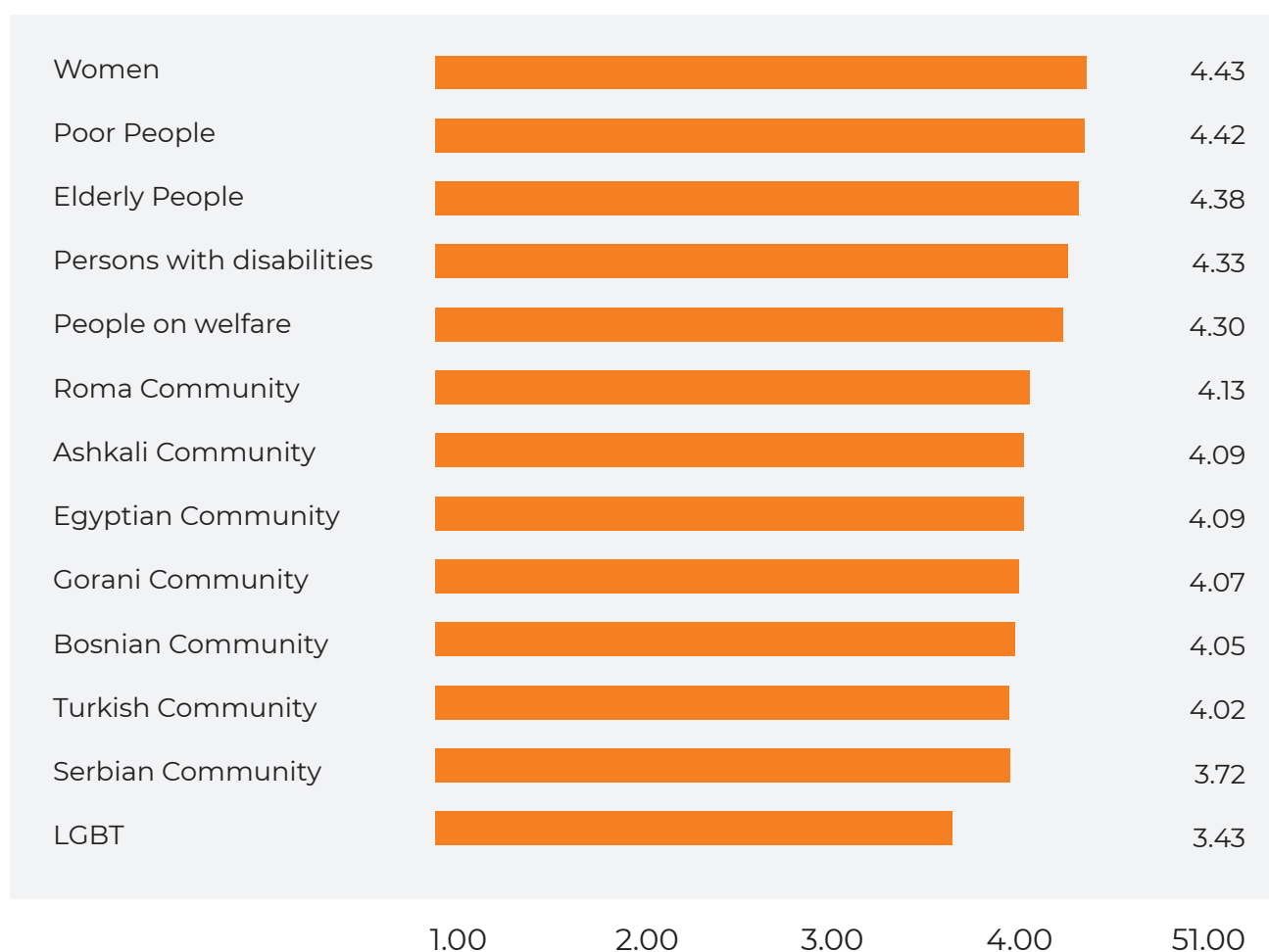
- Provide advice to the Prime Minister and OPM respective units in the areas of good governance, human rights, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination issues;
- Oversee and provide advice to Ministries in the areas of good governance, human rights, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination issues;
- Draw up policies in the areas of good governance, human rights, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination issues;
- Review action policies, draft legislation prepared by government bodies in compliance with human rights standards in force and practices of good governance in cooperation with the Legal Office, and provide advice and recommendation to the Prime Minister and respective Ministries in compliance with circumstances;

- Assist in the development and implementation of public communication campaigns and other promotional projects to raise the awareness of the population about international standards on human rights, transparency, ethics and accountability of public administration, good governance, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, and other principles of democratic governance;
- Consult with representatives of various groups of interest and if needed establish advisory bodies to review issues of good governance, human rights, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination issues;
- Coordinate the process of involving civil society in policy-making and decision-making and support the cooperation between the Government and civil society;
- Coordinate the process of establishing supervision of and reporting systems for inclusion of civil society;
- Ensure strengthening of cooperation, partnership, coordination of activities, and inclusion through government institutions and civil society with the aim of drafting and implementing public policies for the benefit of citizens;
- Serve as a Secretariat and a Coordination Unit for various Government bodies and mechanisms and serve as a Secretariat to national committees and councils in the area of human rights and good governance.

According to Ms. Armenda Berani, senior official for Equal Opportunity and Disability, the OGG is working continuously on promoting the rights of VMGs, including the rights of LGBTI+ persons. In October 2020, the OGG presented the research “Diversity and Equality in Kosovo” and launched the new reporting framework on monitoring the Law on Protection from Discrimination. The aim of the study “Diversity and Equality in Kosovo” was to identify the general public perception and direct experiences of citizens with human rights violations, as well as their knowledge and evaluation of the work of human rights institutions in Kosovo.²⁸ The study measured the willingness of citizens to support others based on whether or not they are victims of domestic and gender-based violence, their socio-economic conditions, their ethnicity, their disability, their sexual orientation, and their gender identity. The below table shows that LGBTI+ persons living in Kosovo receive less support from citizens in cases of human rights violations.²⁹

²⁸ Council of Europe (June, 2021), Presentation of the research “Diversity and equality in Kosovo*” and launching of the new reporting framework on monitoring the Law on Protection from Discrimination available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/inclusion-and-antidiscrimination/-/presentation-of-the-research-diversity-and-equality-in-kosovo-and-launching-of-the-new-reporting-framework-on-monitoring-the-law-on-protection-from-di>

²⁹ Kosova Press (April, 2021), Rreth 50 përqind e qytetarëve mendojnë se ka diskriminim në Kosovë, available at: <https://kosovapress.com/%E2%80%8Brreth-50-perqind-e-qytetareve-mendojne-se-ka-diskriminim-ne-kosove/>



The OGG is working on finalizing the indicators to measure the implementation of the Law on Discrimination which will contribute to the identification of obstacles of the implementation process and provide recommendations to the relevant institution responsible for the implementation of the law.

The Free Legal Aid Agency

According to Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Right to Fair and Impartial Trial, “free legal assistance shall be provided to those without sufficient financial means if such assistance is necessary to ensure effective access to justice.”³⁰ The Free Legal Aid Agency is a public institution which exercises functions and responsibilities in compliance with the Law on Free Legal Aid³¹ and it is the only institution in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo responsible for the organization and provision of free legal aid.

³⁰ The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (June 2008), Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, available at: https://mapl.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1.CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_KOSOVO.pdf

³¹ The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (February 2012), Law on Free Legal Aid, available at: https://www.ecoi.net/en/-file/local/1223586/1226_1404464803_kosovo-law-free-legal-aid-2012-en.pdf

The FLAA headquarters are in Prishtinë/Priština and they have regional offices in the municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Pejë/Peć, Prizren, Gjiilan/Gjnilane, Gjakovë/Djakovica and Ferizaj/Uroševac. There are also mobile offices in the municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Drenas/Glogovac, Deçan/Dečan, Istog/Istok, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Dragash/Dragaš, Mitrovicë Veriore/Mitrovica, Zveçan/Zvečan, Leposaviq/Leposavić, ZubinPotok/Zubin Potok, Malishevë/Mališevo, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Skënderaj/Srbica and Kamenicë/Kamenica.

Authorized services of free legal aid are provided within the primary and secondary legal aid. Primary legal aid includes the following services:

- Information and legal advices regarding the legal procedures;
- Drafting of paperwork and entire other technical aid that has to do with completion of the case;
- Representation in civil, administrative, and minor offence procedure;
- Defense and representation in all phases of criminal procedure;
- Information and legal advices related to violation proceedings;
- Information, legal advice and aid in the mediating and arbitral procedures as foreseen by the law in force.

The secondary legal aid includes services are:

- Drafting of paperwork and entire other technical aid that has to do with completion of the case;
- Representation in civil, administrative, and minor offence procedure.

The FLAA faced difficulties in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities during the lockdown because of the situation and the Kosovo Government's Covid-19 prevention measures. However, according to Ms. Flutura Berbat Zena, Director of the Department of Legal Aid, the FLAA used alternative methods to provide the support requested to the citizens of Kosovo. The FLAA developed a strategy and procedures to provide access to free legal aid to people in need through the development of an online platform to apply for free legal aid and the appointment of legal aid officers to offer services over the phone.

During 2020, no cases of any form of violation were registered by LGBTI+ persons; however, the number of cases of human rights violation increased compared with the previous year.

During 2020, the FLAA, with the financial support of USAID Justice Matters Activities, organized information sessions targeting LGBTI+ persons with the aim of increasing their knowledge on human rights, specifically LGBTI+ rights and the existing support mechanisms for victims of any form of violence.

Linja e Jetës

Linja e Jetës is a call center which aims to provide mental health services to people and to prevent suicide. Linja e Jetës provides support to those who call and request for help just by talking on the phone. In order to find out more about the situation of LGBTI+ persons since the beginning of lockdown measures in March 2020, we organized an interview with Linja e Jetës.

Based on the experience of Linja e Jetës, we can conclude that the lockdown measurements in March 2020 contributed to decrease the number of people calling to request for support via phone. According to Mr. Skeja, employee at Linja e Jetës, this decrease in calls might be because people were isolated and lived in the same house with their families, therefore, people in need did not have a private space to call and discuss their issues of concern. The number of calls increased the moment the Government decided to ease the pandemic restrictions.

Linja e Jetës's main support for people calling is talking to them and discussing mental health issues, specifically problems callers raise, and informing them about the institutions that are responsible for addressing the issues they raise such as domestic violence, discrimination, bullying, and other problems. However, according to Mr. Skeja, the lack of trust in Kosovo's institutions prevents people from raising their voice and reporting violence.

Linja e Jetës first point of reference is CEL Kosovo psychologists who, according to Mr. Skeja, have gained the trust of clients.

When asked if they had cases reported by LGBTI+ persons, Mr. Skeja said that they never ask a person personal question and all calls are automatically deleted to protect the privacy of clients; therefore, they did not register any case and type of human right violations segregated per VMGs.

Linja e Jetës usually registers more calls after each awareness campaign or activity organized by them, for example more calls were registered after the release of the song by Dafina Zeqiri that tackles the issue of mental health.

CEL Kosovo

CEL Kosovo is a local NGOs which works for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo. CEL Kosovo is considered a driving force behind the creation of a progressive, diverse, and tolerant society in Kosovo for the LGBTI+ community, a motivator for change in traditional social constructs, and a support system for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all.

In order to understand CEL Kosovo's contribution to the protection of LGBTI+ rights during the pandemic, their activities, and their concrete support for LGBTI+ persons, an interview with Mr. Blert Morina, the Executive Director of the organization, was organised.

According to Mr. Morina, the pandemic has directly affected CEL Kosovo's work, and the implementation of the programs and activities planned for 2020. The Government of Kosovo's Covid-19 prevention measures affected the implementation of activities which aimed to engage institutions, LGBTI+ persons, activists, and other stakeholders. Therefore, CEL Kosovo had to plan alternative activities and adopt new implementation methods in order to respect the Government of Kosovo's measures. Most of the activities organized during the first months of the pandemic were implemented using online platforms.

The organization of the work of CEL Kosovo during the pandemic was done based on the emergency strategy that CEL Kosovo developed with the support of its staff and in consultation with LGBTI+ persons who constantly requested different types of support from CEL Kosovo. However, the organization of the work, the implementation of different activities, and the support for LGBTI+ persons during the pandemic time were very difficult and challenging for CEL Kosovo. This situation occurred due to the lack of projects/funds needed to meet the needs of LGBTI+ persons during the pandemic time and the lack of call for applications for emergency funds dedicated to supporting LGBTI+ persons in housing, food and essentials, psychological support, legal consultations, and other support.

The COVID-19 pandemic directly affected the lives of LGBTI+ persons, according to Mr. Morina. Most of LGBTI+ persons were obligated to return to live at their family houses due to the lack of employment/engagement opportunities that would help them generate the income needed to afford living expenses in Prishtinë/Priština. Due to this living situation, they were discriminated against, and their rights were violated by family members because of lack of acceptance of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Taking into consideration this fact, CEL Kosovo provided support to ten (10) LGBTI+ persons by offering them a safe space to live for more than six (6) months. Further, CEL Kosovo engaged psychologists and psychiatrists to provide online and in person (when possible) psychological support and counselling to LGBTI+ persons. According to Mr. Morina, human rights violation cases reported to CEL Kosovo during this period included domestic violence, discrimination, and cases where the person was forced to leave their home. The victims of any form of human rights violations were put in contact with the legal advisor of CEL Kosovo, who provided information and support to the victims on the procedures of reporting the case to the Kosovo Police.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in Kosovo, March 2020, CEL Kosovo has provided direct support to twenty-seven (27) LGBTI+ persons from different municipalities of Kosovo. However, there was a huge need for support to LGBTI+ persons, which CEL Kosovo was not able to provide due to the lack of funding opportunities from different donors to address the emergent needs and requests of LGBTI+ persons caused by the pandemic.

Psychologists and Psychiatrists Point of View

CEL Kosovo provides psychological support to LGBTI+ persons within its programs. In total, there were three (3) psychologists engaged during 2020. In order to understand the situation of LGBTI+ persons and the direct effect of the pandemic on their mental health, a questionnaire was developed and shared with the engaged psychologists and psychiatrists.

Mr. Sami Shatrolli, a psychiatrist engaged by CEL Kosovo, mentioned that the pandemic affected the workflow with patients; however, most of the sessions were organized in person with necessary measurements taken in order to protect the health of the patient and the psychiatrists (masks, hand sanitizer, social distancing). There was no increase of requests for psychological support from Mr. Shatrolli registered in March 2020; however, there were some cases which raised the issue of dealing with family members and the change of the way of life due to the measurements taken by the Government of Kosovo to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. According to Mr. Shatrolli, the pandemic did not affect only LGBTI+ persons, but it had a huge effect on all people because of the isolation and the change of the peoples' daily routine. The effect can be seen most in the persons who tested positive for the COVID-19 virus and those who experienced the death of any family member(s) during this time.

Ms. Fortesa Kadriu, a psychologist engaged by CEL Kosovo, mentioned that the measurements adopted by the Government to prevent the spread of the pandemic impacted her work since she had to plan her psychological sessions using online platforms such as Zoom or Skype. In the beginning of the lockdown, the number of persons requesting psychological support increased; however, over time, it started to normalize. There were no cases of human rights violations reported by clients. The main issue raised by clients was the interpersonal relations with family members, which worsened during the lockdown. According to Ms. Kadriu, LGBTI+ persons might be the group of people who experienced the most psychological difficulties in cases of lockdown and living with their families. Therefore, the lockdown contributed to increase the request for psychological support and other support by LGBTI+ persons. Ms. Kadriu emphasized that LGBTI+ persons are the category of citizens who greatly need the provision of psychological support because they are stigmatized, discriminated against, not accepted, and are the main potential victims of domestic violence and any other form of violence.

LGBTI+ PERSONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC – **THE PERSPECTIVE OF LGBTI+ PERSONS**

The Government of Kosovo declared a public health emergency in March 2020 and introduced containment measures and restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. One of the first measurements was the lockdown and the restriction of movement of the citizens which were applicable for almost two (2) months and had a direct effect on LGBTI+ persons.

In order to analyze the situation caused by the global pandemic, CEL Kosovo conducted a research study which aimed to understand the situation of LGBTI+ persons from March 2020.

CEL Kosovo received seventy (70) responses from LGBTI+ persons who were invited to be part of the research process for the publication of this report “LGBTI+ Persons During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The questionnaire was developed and published online in English and Albanian languages. The findings of the research are presented in the following pages.

GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

In total, seventy (70) LGBTI+ persons were part of the research process for the publication of this report, “LGBTI+ Persons During COVID-19 Pandemic,” which was conducted by an expert engaged by CEL Kosovo. The respondents’ ages were from 15 to 32 years old. The information regarding the municipalities from which the respondents are from as well as their sexual orientation and their level of education are presented in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

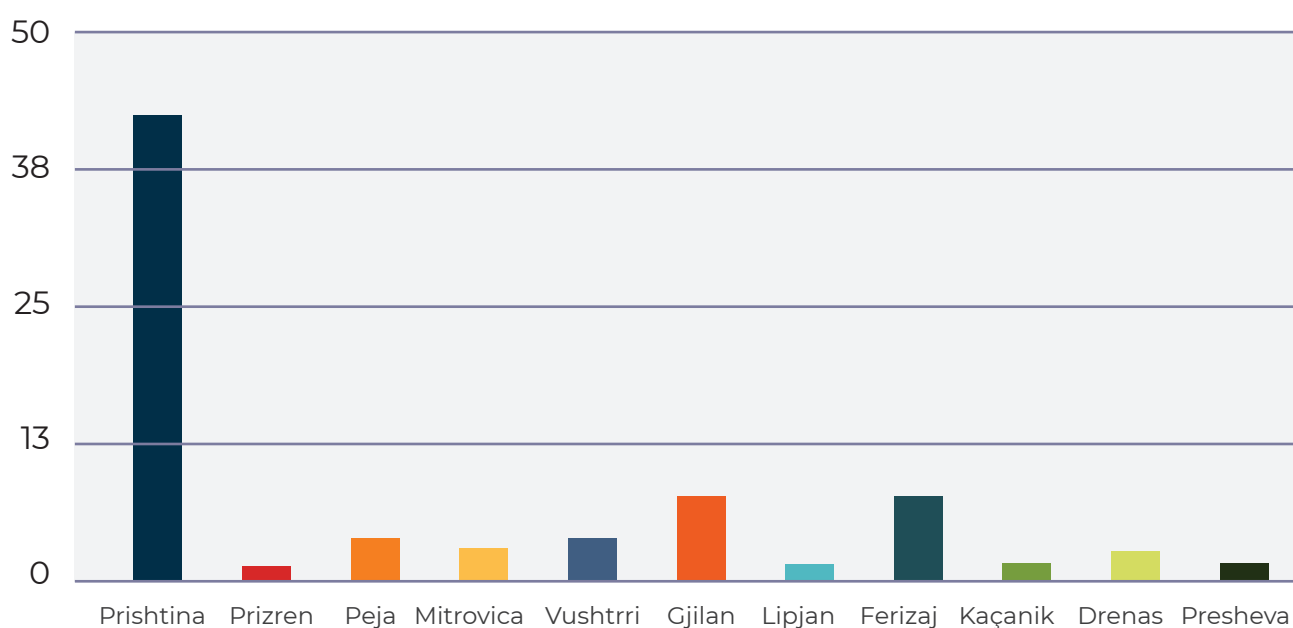


Figure 1: Municipalities where the respondents live

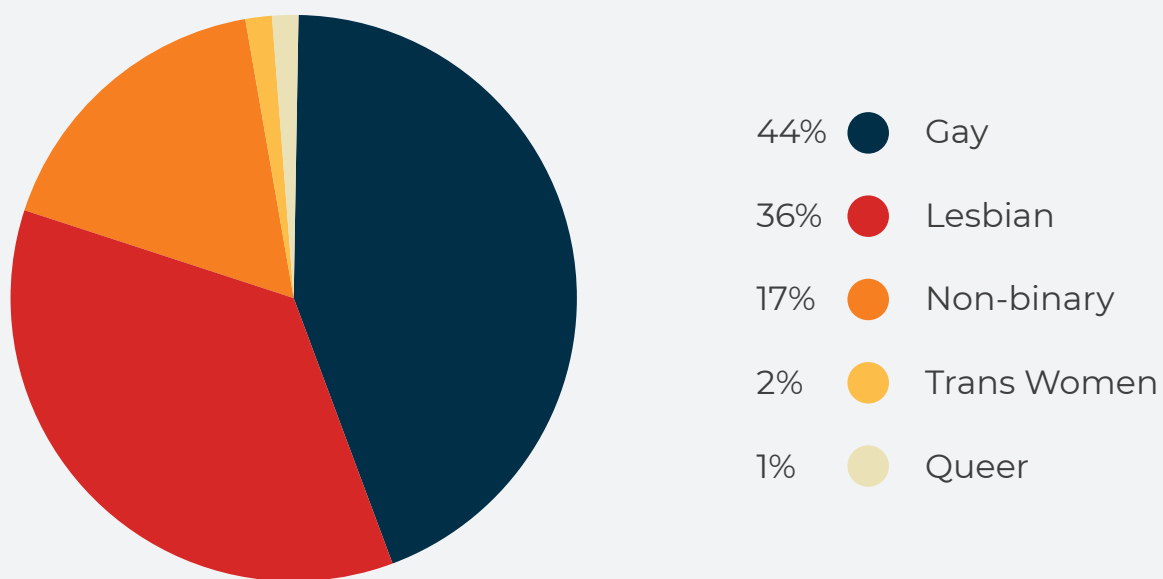


Figure 2: Sexual orientation and/or gender identity of respondents

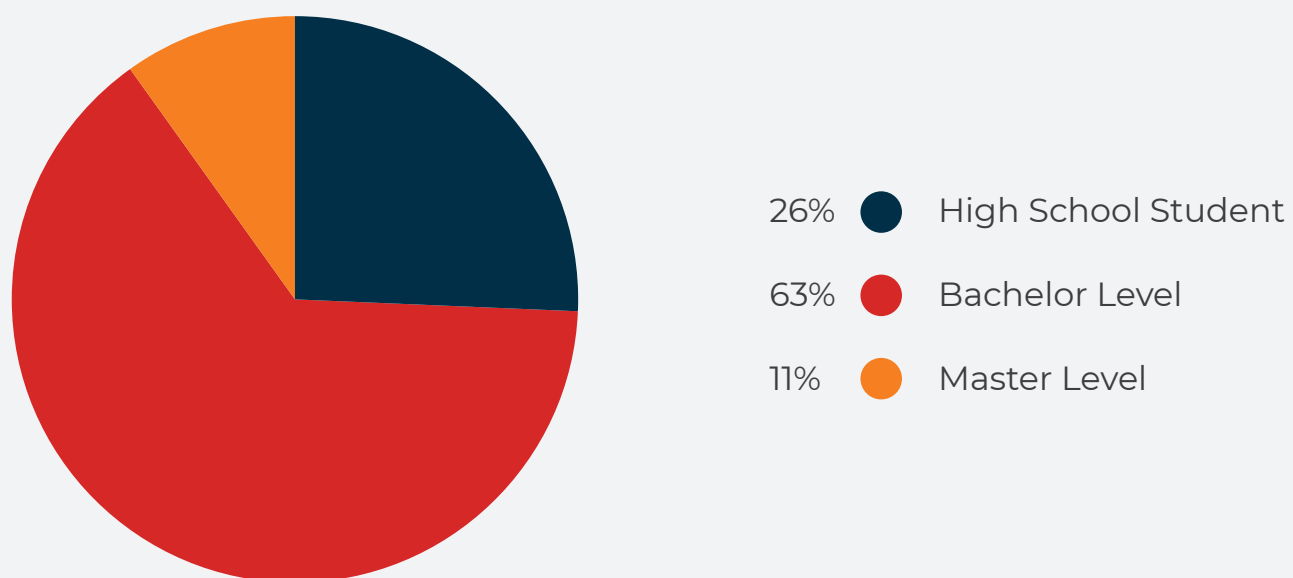


Figure 3: Level of education of respondents

Economic Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTI+ Persons

The respondents of the questionnaire are engaged in different field and have different professions such as IT professional, graphic designer, nurse, fashion designer, programmer, make-up artist, call agent, project and finance manager, student, sociologist, English teacher, bartender, translator, musician, blogger, public relations officer, waiter, architect, business manager, economist, marketing agent, entrepreneur, stomatologist, public health provider, athlete, laboratory technician, program manager, and teacher. Taking into consideration their professions and engagement, the monthly income of the respondents varies from min 0.00 – 100.00 Euro (24.3%) to more than 551.00 Euro (20%). The monthly incomes of the seventy (70) respondents are presented in Figure 4.

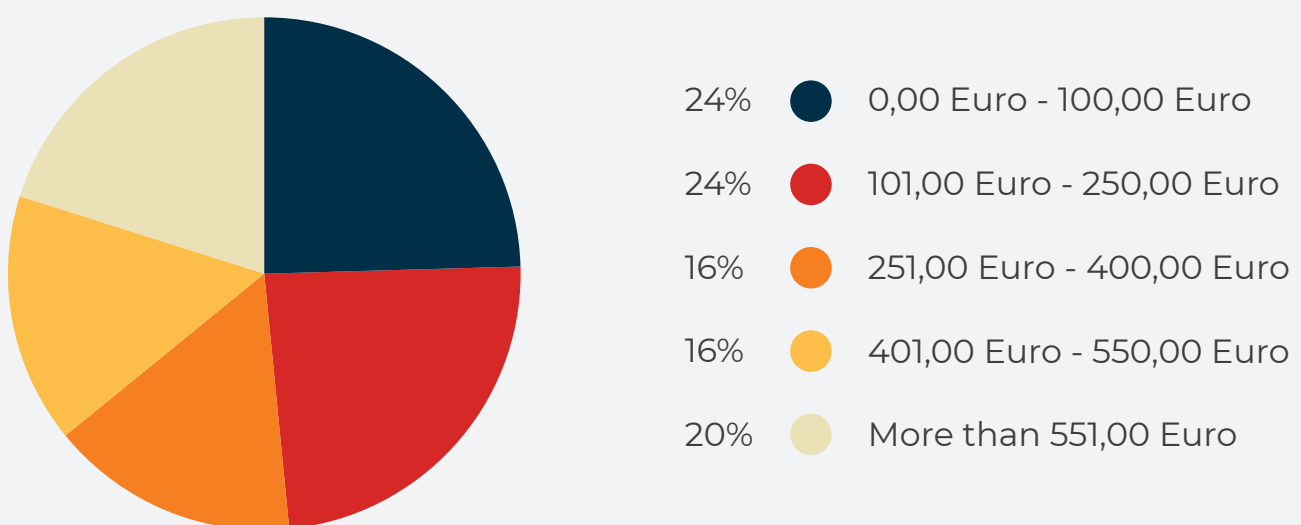


Figure 4: Monthly income of respondents

Due to the Government of Kosovo's restrictions, the labour market was affected. We have analyzed the engagement of LGBTI+ persons in the labour market during the first months of the pandemic and the effect the lockdown had on their jobs/engagements. From seventy (70) participants of this survey, 39 or 55.7% were unemployed, 7 or 10% lost their jobs, 5 or 7.1% said that their salary had decreased, and 19 or 27.1% said that the lockdown did not affect their jobs as can be seen in Figure 5.

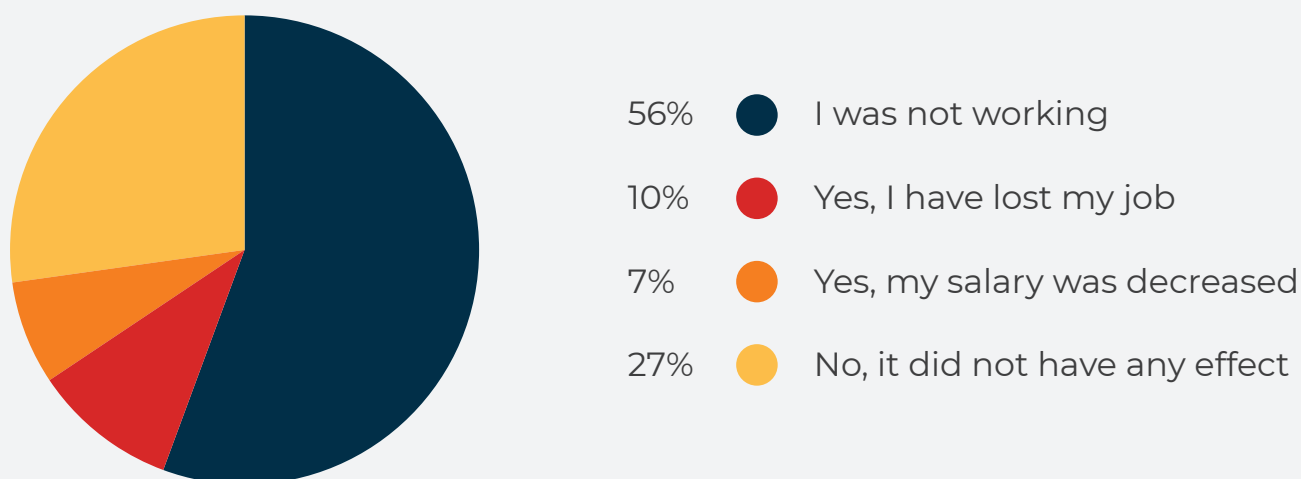


Figure 5: The effect of the lockdown in the respondents' job

Further, answers to how respondents covered their monthly expenses during the first months of the pandemic are presented in Figure 6.

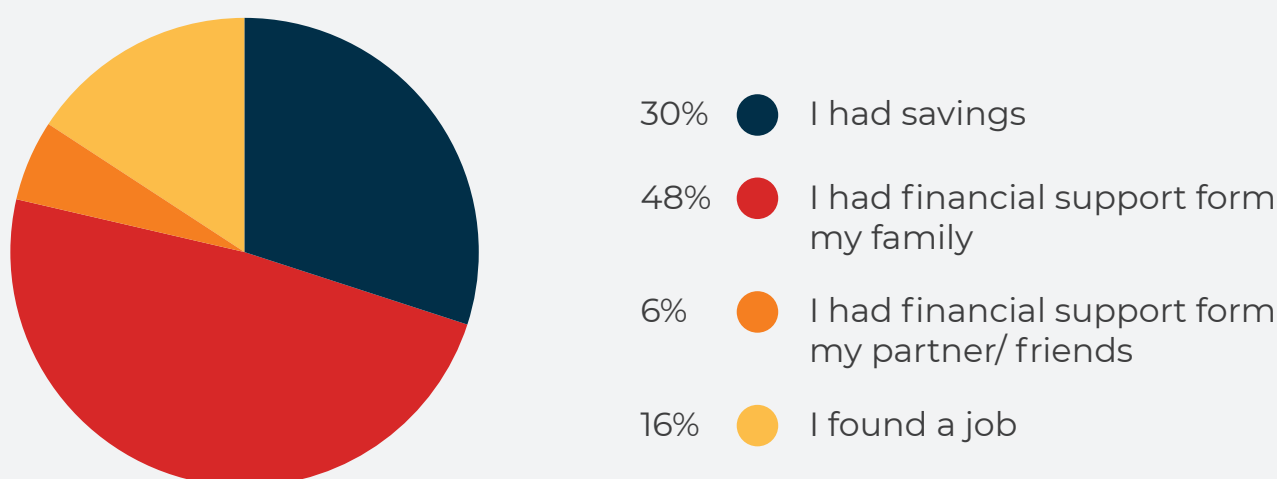


Figure 6: How the respondents managed to cover living expenses

Government of Kosovo Support to LGBTI+ Persons

In order to mitigate the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis, an initial emergency package of EUR 180 million was adopted by the Government of Kosovo in April 2020 which aimed to provide support to businesses, farmers, and employees and additional social protection such as assistance measures and flexibility for loans and tax payments to the citizens of Kosovo. Further, in July, the Kosovo Assembly endorsed an Economic Recovery Programme which includes an additional EUR 185 million for the year 2020.

In August 2020, the Assembly ratified the EU Macro-Financial Assistance loan agreement worth EUR 100 million, which aims to help Kosovo limit the economic fallout of the pandemic.³²

Although the Government of Kosovo's emergency package was adopted, out of seventy (70) respondents, only fourteen (14) of them, or 20%, received financial support from the Government and/or other public institutions. The other respondents stated that they have not applied for any kind of support.

³² European Commission, (October, 2020), Commission Staff Working Document, Kosovo 2020 Report, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/kosovo_report_2020.pdf

Wellbeing of LGBTI+ Persons

During the lockdown and the movement restrictions that began in March 2020, out of the seventy (70) people that participated in this research, 61 or 87.14% were living with their families, 3 or 4.28 % were living alone, 2 or 2.85% were living with their partner, 1 or 1.42% was living with friends, and 3 or 4.28 % responded other.

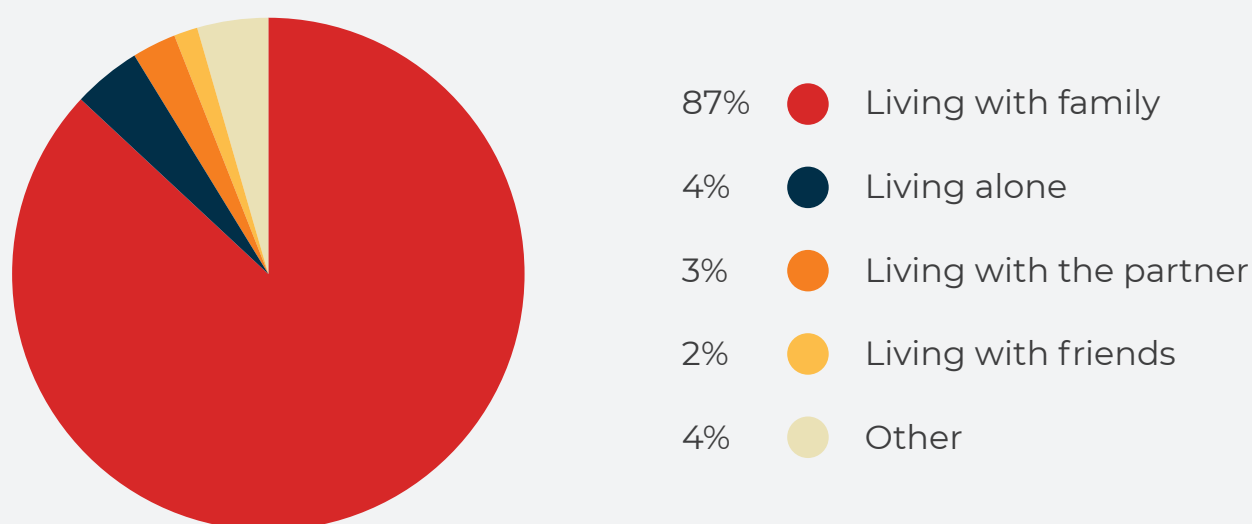


Figure 7: Where the respondents lived during the lockdown

Since most of the respondents answered that they have lived with their families during the lockdown and movement restrictions, on the question regarding if they have felt safe during these times, 29 or 41.42% answered that they felt safe because their family is not aware of their sexual orientation and gender identity, 20 or 28.57% answered that they felt unsafe and had pressure from their family, 14 or 20% answered that they have felt safe because their family supports them, and 7 or 10% answered that they did not have any pressure because they lived alone during these times. Further, 22 or 31.42% of the respondents stated that they were victim of domestic violence and discrimination. Out of the 22 people who were victims of domestic violence and discrimination, 14 or 63.63 % of them were closed in their rooms, 3 or 13.63% of them escaped from their house, 3 or 13.63% reported the cases to Kosovo Police, and 2 or 9.09% requested psychological support from CEL Kosovo.

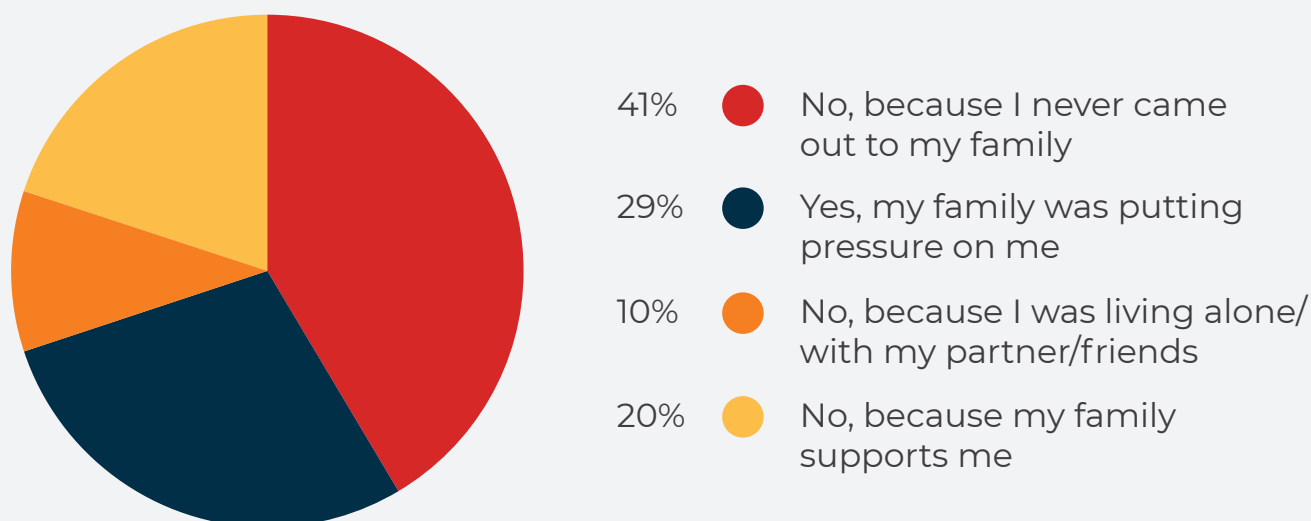


Figure 8: Did you feel unsafe during the lockdown?

Fifty-nine (59) or 84.28% of respondents felt that the pandemic and lockdown contributed to an increase of the number of violation cases towards LGBTI+ persons.

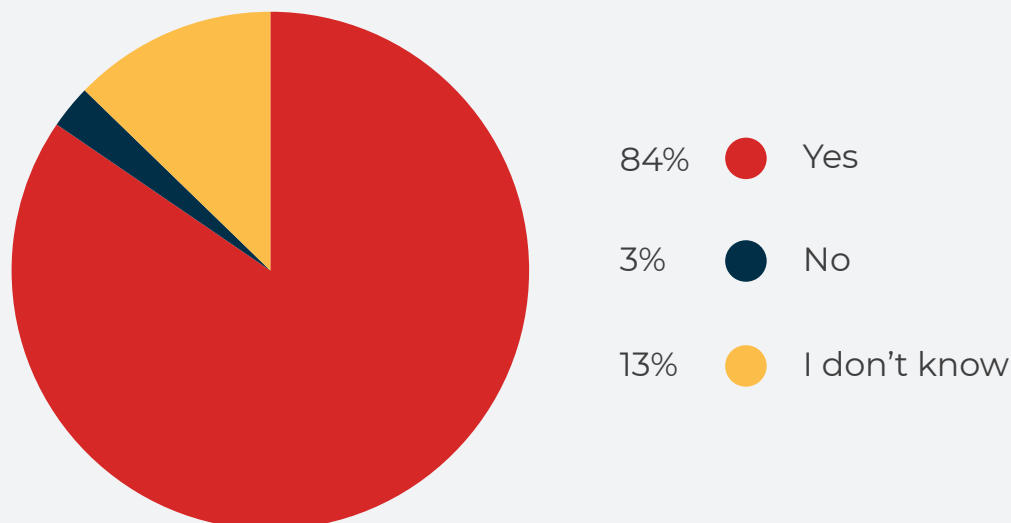


Figure 9: Do you feel that the lockdown contributed to the increase of violence towards LGBTI+ persons?

Further, the isolation affected the mental health of LGBTI+ persons. Since LGBTI+ persons are one of the most VMGs in Kosovo who are discriminated against and not accepted by the society, they were highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic measures and 97.1% of the respondents agreed that there is a need of a consistent free psychological support and counselling to be offered to LGBTI+ persons.

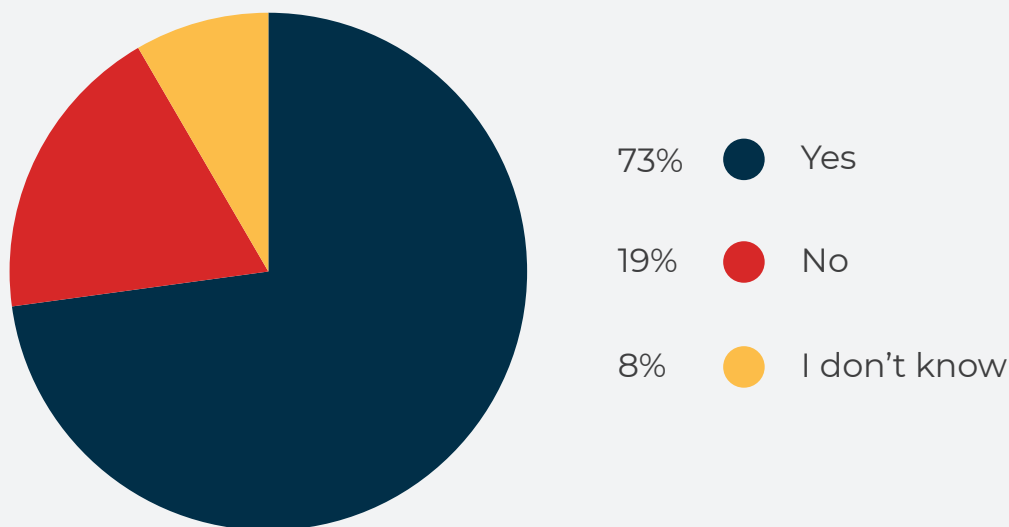


Figure 10: Did the lockdown affected your mental health?

In order to understand the contribution of civil society organizations in promoting and protecting the rights of LGBTI+ persons and the provision of any support needed since March 2020, respondents were asked if they are satisfied with the role of NGOs during these difficult times. Figure 11 below presents the answers of seventy (70) respondents.

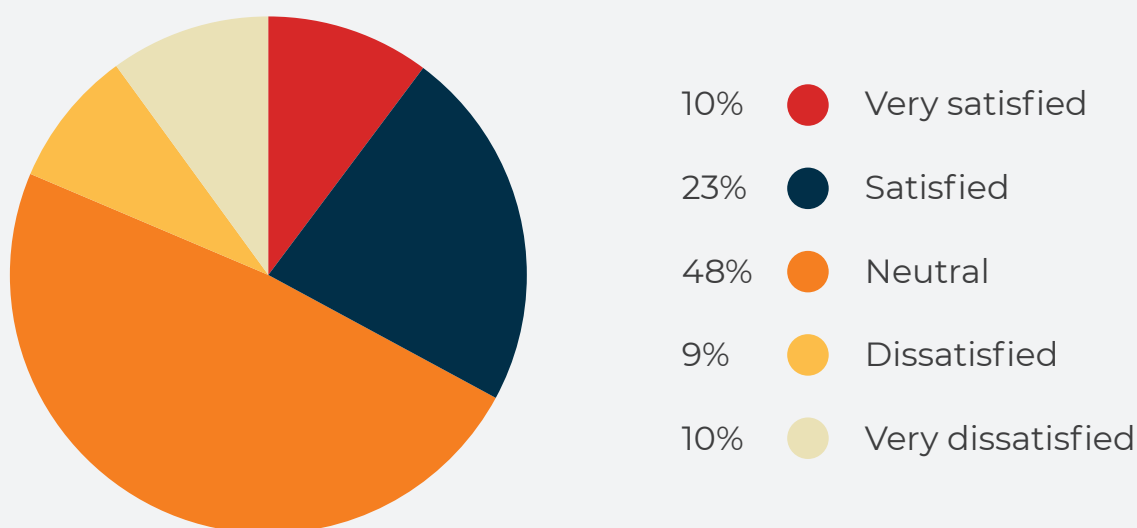


Figure 11: The level of satisfaction on the role of CSOs

Further, the respondents were asked to express their level of satisfaction regarding the work and support of the Kosovo Government to LGBTI+ persons during the pandemic time and the contribution of Kosovo Police to provide safety to LGBTI+ persons as potential victims of domestic violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Figures 12 and 13 present the answers of seventy (70) respondents regarding the above questions.

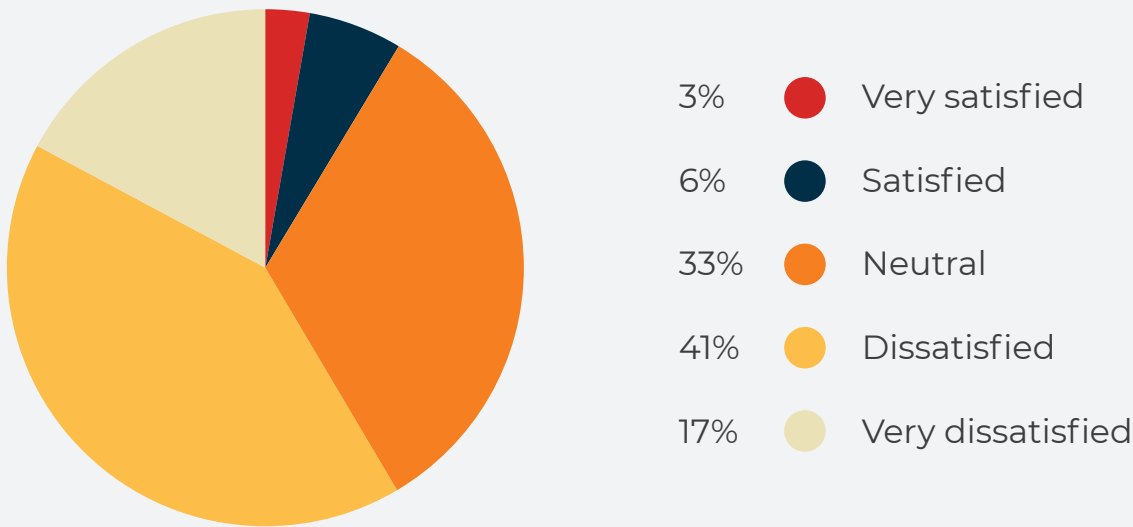


Figure 12: The level of satisfaction on the work of Government of Kosovo

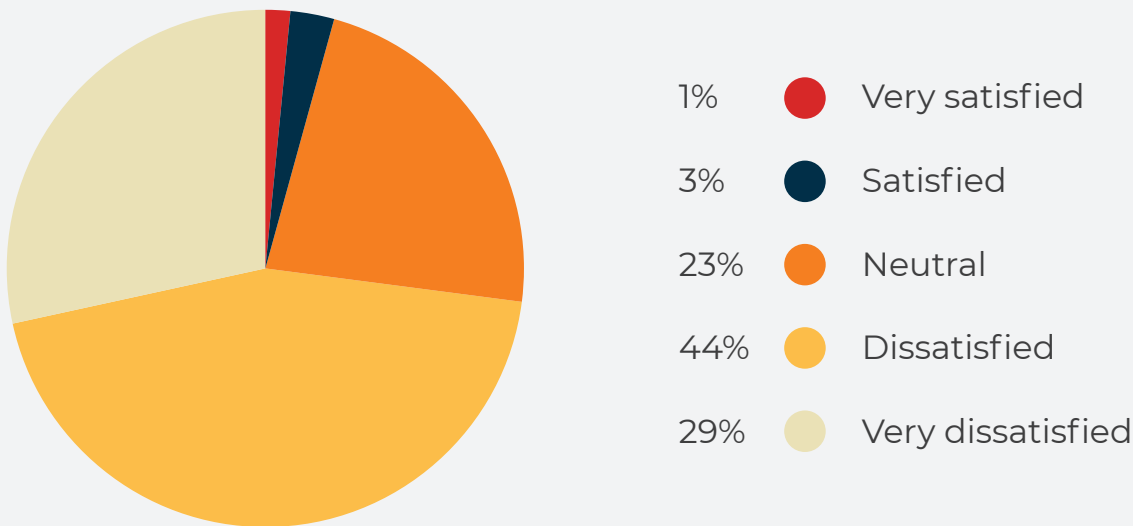


Figure 13: The level of satisfaction on the work of Kosovo Police

Further, the isolation affected the mental health of LGBTI+ persons. Since LGBTI+ persons are one of the most VMGs in Kosovo who are discriminated against and not accepted by the society, they were highly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic measures and 97.1% of the respondents agreed that there is a need of a consistent free psychological support and counselling to be offered to LGBTI+ persons.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of all citizens of Kosovo, especially the lives of LGBTI+ persons as one of the most VMGs living in Kosovo. COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative effect on the lives of LGBTI+ persons because their position in Kosovo society, the level of discrimination towards them, the different forms of violence they experience, and the lack of acceptance from the society and their families. COVID-19 pandemic measurements adopted by the Government of Kosovo to prevent the spread of the virus had a negative effect specifically on the mental health of LGBTI+ persons, especially those who were obliged to go back and live with their families during the lockdown. According to Linja e Jetës, an NGO that provides psychological support to people in need, the number of requests for support was decreased in the beginning of the lockdown due to the fact that potential victims of domestic violence were living in the same place with their perpetrator and therefore, did not have space to call and ask for support. Further, the psychological support offered by CEL Kosovo through online platforms was a huge help for LGBTI+ persons during these times; however, that was not the only support LGBTI+ persons needed. Due to the fact that there were cases reported where victims had to leave their houses because their families

did not allow them to stay at home, there was a huge need for safe spaces for victims of domestic violence. CEL Kosovo adapted their activities and provided temporary housing for ten (10) persons. However, there is a need for a permanent solution to this challenge faced by LGBTI+ persons and victims of domestic violence such as safe housing and provision of safe places such as a shelter.

Fortunately, there were no any fatal cases registered during this period, which could be due to the fact that almost 50% of respondents' families are not aware of the sexual orientation and gender identity of their children.

Even though the Government of Kosovo adopted the emergency package to provide financial support to businesses, farmer, and employees, additional social protection and assistance measures, and flexibility for loans and tax payments to the citizens of Kosovo, out of seventy (70) respondents, only 14 of them or 20% received financial support from the Government and/or other public institutions. The other respondents declared that they have not applied for any kind of support. To cover the cost of living, almost 50% of respondents had financial support from their families whereas others had savings or had support from their friends and/or partner.

The lack of knowledge about the application procedures for financial support and the lack of promotional campaigns from different institutions might have contributed to the lack of applications for financial support by LGBTI+ persons. Government institutions did not pay specific attention to LGBTI+ persons during the pandemic period and did not provide them with information on the possible Government support benefits they could receive.

The level of satisfaction with the work of government institutions and Kosovo Police during this time was reported to be low, 41% and 44%, respectively. Furthermore, the level of satisfaction with the work of NGOs during the lockdown period was marked “neutral” from 48% of respondents, which is a disturbing finding. The lack of support by CEL Kosovo to the LGBTI+ persons was due to the lack of funding opportunities from different donors who did not respond to the situation with the development of urgent grant schemes and programs to provide the support needed to VMGs.

In conclusion, LGBTI+ persons still remain the most VMGs category in Kosovo experiencing discrimination, segregation, violence of any form, and bullying.

There is a need for a concrete strategy to be developed and coordination between NGOs, government institutions, international and national donor organizations, and other stakeholders to work together in developing programs which will increase the socio-economic conditions of LGBTI+ persons and guarantee their wellbeing in Kosovo.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were drafted and are directed to government institutions at the local and central level, NGOs, judicial and non-judicial human rights structures, international organizations, and other donors.

- To increase the number of beneficiaries of the state support, specifically LGBTI+ persons, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo should develop and adopt financial packages dedicated specifically for LGBTI+ persons;
- Government institutions, namely the Ombudsperson Institution, Kosovo Police, and the Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo should continuously organize activities to raise awareness about LGBTI+ rights, the opportunities from which the community can benefit, and the institutions from which they can seek help if their rights are violated;
- Government institutions, namely the Ombudsperson Institution, Kosovo Police, and Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo should provide information on the possible benefits that LGBTI+ persons can receive from the programs and strategies adopted by Government of Kosovo in cases of crises such as COVID-19 pandemic;
- Taking into consideration the mental health of LGBTI+ persons and the constant need for psychological support and counselling, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo, should continuously provide psychological support free of charge to LGBTI+ persons;
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kosovo should develop a training program for psychologists and psychiatrists on LGBTI+ rights, issues, challenges, and methods on how to approach the community and provide counselling to them;
- Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions should develop programs to address mental health which might include the following components:
 - Family-to-Family education program;
 - Basics education program;
 - Peer-to-Peer education and support programs;
 - Programs for students of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Psychology and Sociology, University of Prishtinë/Priština;
 - Establishment of a Connection Recovery Support Groups for individuals living with mental health problems.

-
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of the Republic of Kosovo should encourage the private sector to employ LGBTI+ persons by providing equal opportunities for all;
 - Kosovo Police, CEL Kosovo, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo, and Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister should coordinate to conduct research studies and publish reports on all human rights violation cases towards LGBTI+ persons, specifying the forms of violation, the violation of legislation in force in Kosovo which guarantees equal rights for all, the response of respective institutions towards violence occurred where the victims are LGBTI+ persons, the capacities of the Kosovo Police, the Ombudsperson Institution, Human Rights Units in the local level, social workers, University Clinical Center of Kosovo, Medical Care Centers in all municipalities of Kosovo to provide services and promote the rights of LGBTI+ persons, the strategies of Kosovo Institutions in addressing the rights of LGBTI+ persons, and other relevant issues.
 - Donor organizations in Kosovo should have Urgent Grants Funds dedicated specifically for NGOs working for the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons;
 - The municipality of Prishtina should prioritize the building and functioning of the Safe House/Shelter for LGBTI+ persons;
 - To address the high unemployment rate of LGBTI+ persons, NGOs should develop professional training programs which will contribute to preparing LGBTI+ persons for the labour market and increasing their capacities to generate incomes and be financially independent;
 - In order to increase the awareness of the citizens of Kosovo about LGBTI+ rights and needs, CEL Kosovo, government institutions, and other organizations should organize campaigns which will reach out to all citizens of Kosovo. To deliver the information, public television, local TV stations, radios, and other means of communications shall be used;
 - CEL Kosovo in cooperation and coordination with KIPA should develop training programs on LGBTI+ rights for social workers, human rights units in the local level, health professionals and Kosovo Police in order to increase their capacities in identifying, raising, protecting, and following-up to human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity and providing the support needed to LGBTI+ persons.

