Save the Children

IDELA RESULTS

Improving access and quality to Early Childhood Care and Development in Kosovo

December 2019

PROJECT SUMMARY

Title	IDELA Results
Date of report	15 November 2019
Type of report	Technical Report
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Name of the project	Improving access and quality to Early Childhood Care and Development in Kosovo
Project start and end dates	01.01.2018 – 31.12.2019
Project duration	2 years
Project locations	Prishtina, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Gjakova, Peja, Mitrovica, Klina and Junik
Thematic areas	Education
Sub themes	N/A
Donor	Ferrari
Estimated beneficiaries	1,500 children
Overall objective	Girls and boys aged 0-6 in eight municipalities access quality ECCD services that foster their holistic development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
IDELA	International Development and Early Learning Assessment

LIST OF TABLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For a snapshot on the IDELA assessment results, see the dashboard below. Results are broken down in more detail in the following sections of the report. The baseline assessment was conducted in November 2018, and the reassessment was conducted approximately one year after, in October 2019.

385 IDELA assessments in **total**

10 ECCD centers across eight Kosovo municipalities

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

34% Total **IDELA** Score

193 assessed **children**

52% of assessed children were **girls**

4.2 **average age** of assessed children

AVERAGE SCORES BY **DOMAIN**

37% Motor
29% Literacy
33% Numeracy
37% Social - Emotional
31% Executive Functions
59% Approaches to Learning

TOP THREE **MASTERED** IDELA TASKS

51% of children mastered **size and length** comparison
36% of children mastered **hopping**
28% of children mastered **conflict solving**

TOP THREE **STRUGGLING** IDELA TASKS

80% of children struggled to **identify numbers**
78% of children struggled to **identify letters**
67% of children struggled to solve **puzzles**

REASSESSMENT

37% Total **IDELA** Score

192 assessed **children**

45% of assessed children were **girls**

4.2 **average age** of assessed children

AVERAGE SCORES BY **DOMAIN**

40% Motor
33% Literacy
33% Numeracy
42% Social - Emotional
43% Executive Functions
66% Approaches to Learning

TOP THREE **MASTERED** IDELA TASKS

49% of children mastered **hopping**
48% of children mastered **size and length** comparison
33% of children mastered **oral comprehension**

TOP THREE **STRUGGLING** IDELA TASKS

92% of children struggled to **identify letters**
86% of children struggled to **identify numbers**
59% of children struggled to solve **puzzles**

BACKGROUND

The *'Improving access and quality to Early Childhood Care and Development in Kosovo'* project is funded by Ferrari and implemented by Save the Children in Kosovo. The project, with a total budget of 500,000 Euro, spanned two years of implementation and lasted from January 2018 to December 2019. The specific objective was for girls and boys, age zero to six, in eight municipalities in Kosovo, to access quality early childhood care and development (ECCD) services that foster their holistic development. Alongside that, the project had three main outcomes:

1: Girls and boys, aged 0 – 6, and especially the most vulnerable, have improved access to a quality and stimulating learning environment

2: Existing ECCD services for girls and boys, aged 0 – 6, are of high quality and incorporate a holistic understanding of children's needs and parents' participation

3: Increased awareness and commitment of communities, municipal authorities and national institutions to quality ECCD provisions

The project was implemented across eight Kosovo municipalities, which included Prishtina, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Gjakova, Peja, Mitrovica, Klina and Junik. In total, ten ECCD centers were supported during the project's lifespan. These centers are located in rural areas and catered mostly to children from rural and vulnerable communities. One ECCD center each is located in the following villages: Broboniq, Vernica, Suhodoll, Rashan, Zaskok, Skivjan, Junik, Drenoc, Zajm and Novosella. Save the Children in Kosovo supported these centers with trained educators and community mobilizers, didactic materials, and appropriate child-friendly spaces, among other things. The ECCD centers are free of charge, and families in nearby communities are continuously encouraged to have their child attend. Study upon study confirms that children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as children living in rural areas, benefit greatly from participating in early childhood programs (Save the Children Italy, 2019).

An external evaluation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's strategic plan found that the quality of early childhood education programs in Kosovo was low. As is, participating in early childhood education did not translate to better performance in school for children (Muja, 2018). This confirms that Kosovo is in dire need of quality ECCD services, to foster children's holistic development.

To assess the impact of these ECCD centers on children, the project administered the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) tool at two time intervals: once in November 2018 (hereon after referred to as the baseline assessment); and another time in October 2019 (hereon after referred to as the reassessment). More on what the IDELA tool is and measures is explained in the *Methodology* section of this report.

This technical report discusses the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the data collected through the IDELA tool at both assessments.

METHODOLOGY

The project administered the IDELA tool to children in ten ECCD centers to assess their holistic development, per the project's strategic objective. The IDELA tool, developed by Save the Children, is a global, easy-to-use tool that measures children's early learning and development. The IDELA tool captures data across four domains: motor development, emergent literacy, emergent numeracy and social-emotional development. Data from these four domains informs the total IDELA score.

The tool itself consists of twenty-four tasks which are administered to children ages 3 to 6 to assess their development across the four above mentioned domains. The tasks include a combination of requesting children to write, recognize numbers, and fold papers, among other things. A full set of all tasks is available in **Table 1.1**. Prior to administering it, the tool and all supporting material were translated and adapted into Albanian. A full copy of the original IDELA tool in English is available in **Annex 1**.

Table 1.1 IDELA Domains and Tasks

Domain	Task	
Motor Development	Hopping Copying a Shape Drawing a Person Folding Paper	
Emergent Literacy	Print Awareness Oral Vocabulary Letter Identification Emergent Writing	First Letter Sounds Oral Comprehension
Emergent Numeracy	Comparison by Size and Length Sorting and Classification Number Identification Shape Identification	One-to-One Correspondence Addition and Subtraction Puzzle Completion
Social-Emotional Development	Friends Emotional Awareness / Regulation Empathy / Perspective Taking Sharing / Solving Conflict	Self-Awareness
Other items	Approaches to Learning Inhibitory Control Short-term Memory	

As mentioned earlier, for this project, Save the Children in Kosovo administered the IDELA tool at two time intervals: once in November 2018 and once in October 2019. This was done to collect both baseline data, as a lot of the ECCD centers opened at the end of 2018, and reassessment data about a year after, to capture any impact ECCD centers had on children's early learning and development. Both times, the IDELA tool was administered by a set of ten trained and certified research assistants, who administered the tool via physical data collection sheets. These assessments were carried out during the span of two weeks each. Every research assistant administered approximately 20 IDELA assessments during the baseline study, and 20 IDELA assessments during the reassessment. At the end of the administration process, every research assistant transferred the collected data to an electronic data collection sheet, through which the results were computed.

Census sampling was used for both assessments. A total of 193 children were evaluated during the baseline assessment, and another 192 during the reassessment one year after, resulting in 385 IDELA evaluations in total. From this total, 188 were girls and 197 were boys. The average age of children for both the baseline assessment and reassessment was 4.2 years old.

For a breakdown on their age, gender and location, per assessment, see **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2 IDELA Sample Demographic Compositions

Variable	Baseline	Reassessment
Gender		
Girls	101	87
Boys	92	105
Age		
3 year olds	35	30
4 year olds	90	79
5 year olds	61	79
6 year olds	7	4
ECCD Center		
Broboniq	27	23
Vernica	23	21
Suhodoll	23	27
Rashan	6	9
Zaskok	23	14
Skivjan	13	21
Junik	16	20
Drenoc	20	15
Zajm	26	22
Novosella	16	20
Total		
Total	193	192

Following both assessments, and after the research assistants transferred their collected data to the electronic data collection sheet, project staff completed a data cleaning process to correct for any missing or erroneous data. The data was analyzed using the electronic IDELA data collection sheet. The results from the assessments, which are presented in the following section, are grouped around three main categories, per the IDELA scoring guidelines below:

— Scores are categorized as **Struggling**, if the Total IDELA Scores fall under 25%;
— Scores are categorized as **Developing**, if the Total IDELA Scores fall between 25% and 75%;
— Scores are categorized as **Mastering**, if the Total IDELA Scores fall over 75%.

Because this time around the IDELA tool was only administered to ECCD centers, and no control groups, no cause and effect can be ascribed to the results. Nonetheless, because the data collected was a census sample in both assessments, it provides a good picture of the progress of every child during the span of attending one year's worth of activities in ECCD centers.

MAIN FINDINGS

Baseline Assessment

During the baseline assessment, 193 children were evaluated by the project's research assistants. Overall, the average Total IDELA Score for this group of children was 34%. Using the IDELA scale for reference, this places the baseline cohort under the *Developing* category. The results disaggregated by categories and the different domains are shown in **Table 2.1.**

Table 2.1 IDELA Baseline Results (% of children under each category and domain)

Variable (% correct)		Motor	Literacy	Numeracy	Social - Emotional	Total IDELA	Executive Functions	Approaches to learning
All children	*Average*	37%	29%	33%	37%	**34%**	31%	59%
Struggling	*<25%*	39%	44%	37%	38%	39%	42%	13%
Developing	*25%-75%*	49%	53%	60%	53%	59%	52%	57%
Mastering	*>75%*	12%	3%	3%	9%	2%	6%	30%

Age group wise, the average results disaggregated by age and the different domains are shown in **Table 2.2.** The average IDELA scores per domain increase with the age of the child. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that the sample was not equally divided between the age groups, which might skew percentages a little. Overall, the best performing age group, considering the Total IDELA Score was six-year olds, with an average Total IDELA Score of 52%. This places the sub-group in the *Developing* category as well, albeit in the middle.

Table 2.2 IDELA Baseline Results (% of children under each age group and domain)

Variable		Motor	Literacy	Numeracy	Social - Emotional	Total IDELA	Executive Functions	Approaches to learning
All children		37%	29%	33%	37%	**34%**	31%	59%
3 year olds	*n = 35*	7%	8%	14%	17%	11%	13%	31%
4 year olds	*n = 90*	33%	26%	29%	35%	31%	30%	58%
5 year olds	*n = 61*	58%	43%	47%	52%	50%	42%	74%
6 year olds	*n = 7*	68%	44%	50%	45%	52%	35%	61%

When looking at the cohort's performance per IDELA task, the tasks with the largest percentage of children *mastering* the task were in comparing by size and length (Task 2), with 51% of children mastering the task; in hopping (Task 24), with 36% of children mastering the task; and in solving conflict (Task 12), with 28% of children mastering the task.

On the flip side, during the baseline assessment, the tasks with the largest percentage of children *struggling* with a task were in identifying numbers (Task 5), with 80% of children struggling with the task; in identifying letters (Task 17), with 78% of children struggling with the task; and in puzzle completion (Task 8), with 67% of children struggling with the task. The performance for every task is outlined in **Table 2.2.**

Table 2.3 IDELA Baseline Results (% of children under each category and task)

Task	Average Score	% of children …		
		Struggling	Developing	Mastering
1. Self-Awareness	53%	15%	68%	17%
2. Comparison By Size and Length	77%	5%	44%	51%
3. Sorting And Classification	29%	51%	39%	9%
4. Shape Identification	35%	48%	42%	10%
5. Number Identification	19%	80%	9%	11%
6. One-To-One Correspondence	22%	52%	45%	3%
7. Addition And Subtraction	28%	47%	44%	9%
8. Puzzle Completion	19%	67%	27%	6%
9. Friends	24%	62%	32%	6%
10. Emotional Awareness / Regulation	34%	38%	52%	10%
11. Empathy / Perspective Taking	37%	43%	40%	17%
12. Solving Conflict	40%	49%	23%	28%
13. Short Term Memory	36%	28%	67%	5%
14. Inhibitory Control	26%	66%	17%	17%
15. Expressive Vocabulary	18%	66%	33%	1%
16. Print Awareness	42%	31%	56%	13%
17. Letter Identification	14%	78%	16%	5%
18. First Letter Identification	21%	60%	33%	7%
19. Emergent Writing	46%	26%	60%	14%
20. Oral Comprehension	31%	59%	23%	18%
21. Copying A Shape	46%	38%	36%	26%
22. Drawing A Person	35%	48%	39%	12%
23. Folding Paper	21%	53%	43%	4%
24. Hopping	47%	40%	24%	36%

Reassessment

At the reassessment, 192 children were evaluated by the project's research assistants. Overall, the average Total IDELA Score for this group of children was 37%. Using the IDELA scale for reference, this places the baseline cohort under the *Developing* category. The results disaggregated by the different domains are shown in **Table 2.4.**

Table 2.4 IDELA Reassessment Results (% of children under each category and domain)

Variable (% correct)		Motor	Literacy	Numeracy	Social - Emotional	Total IDELA	Executive Functions	Approaches to learning
All children	*Average*	40%	33%	33%	42%	**37%**	43%	66%
Struggling	*<25%*	28%	40%	36%	24%	27%	20%	6%
Developing	*25%-75%*	64%	56%	59%	70%	71%	66%	51%
Mastering	*>75%*	8%	4%	5%	6%	3%	14%	43%

For comparison, the Total IDELA Score in Serbia's assessment, for children ages 3 to 5, was a comparable 34% (Results for Development, 2017). The Total IDELA Score in Bosnia's assessment, for children ages 5 to 6, was 63% (Save the Children in the North West Balkans, 2016). Albania also assessed children, mostly aged 5 – 6, from the Roma community in 2017, where the Total IDELA Score was 44% (Save the Children in Albania, 2017).

When looking at the reassessment sample by age group, the average results disaggregated by age and the different domains are shown in **Table 2.5.** The average IDELA scores per domain increase with the age of the child, as with the baseline assessment. Overall, the best performing age group, per the Total IDELA Score, was six-year olds, with an average Total IDELA Score of 54%. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the subsample of six-year olds was very small.

Table 2.5 IDELA Reassessment Results (% of children under each age group and domain)

Variable		Motor	Literacy	Numeracy	Social - Emotional	Total IDELA	Executive Functions	Approaches to learning
All children		40%	33%	33%	42%	**37%**	43%	66%
3 year olds	*n = 30*	20%	16%	16%	26%	19%	35%	45%
4 year olds	*n = 79*	33%	29%	29%	39%	32%	39%	66%
5 year olds	*n = 79*	53%	44%	43%	51%	47%	48%	74%
6 year olds	*n = 4*	61%	48%	45%	61%	54%	61%	66%

As with the baseline sample, when looking at the reassessment cohort's performance per IDELA task, the tasks with the largest percentage of children *mastering* the task were in hopping (task 24), with 49% of children mastering the task; in comparing by size and length (Task 2), with 48% of children mastering the task; and in oral comprehension (Task 1), with 33% of children mastering the task.

The tasks with the largest percentage of children *struggling* with a task were in identifying letters (Task 17), with 92% of children struggling with the task; in identifying numbers (Task 5), with 86% of children struggling with the task; and in puzzle completion (Task 8), with 59% of children struggling with the task. Children struggled most with these three tasks during the baseline as well. The performance for every task is outlined in **Table 2.6.**

Table 2.6 IDELA Reassessment Results (% of children under each category and task)

Task	Average Score	% of children …		
		Struggling	Developing	Mastering
1. Self-Awareness	62%	9%	62%	29%
2. Comparison By Size and Length	73%	8%	44%	48%
3. Sorting And Classification	40%	42%	36%	22%
4. Shape Identification	32%	55%	37%	8%
5. Number Identification	10%	86%	10%	4%
6. One-To-One Correspondence	23%	57%	38%	5%
7. Addition And Subtraction	28%	47%	43%	10%
8. Puzzle Completion	26%	59%	34%	7%
9. Friends	26%	54%	44%	2%
10. Emotional Awareness / Regulation	43%	21%	68%	11%
11. Empathy / Perspective Taking	40%	32%	53%	15%
12. Solving Conflict	39%	44%	35%	21%
13. Short Term Memory	48%	16%	76%	8%
14. Inhibitory Control	37%	46%	31%	23%
15. Expressive Vocabulary	25%	49%	49%	2%
16. Print Awareness	54%	15%	57%	28%
17. Letter Identification	7%	92%	5%	3%
18. First Letter Identification	31%	53%	34%	13%
19. Emergent Writing	36%	37%	54%	9%
20. Oral Comprehension	47%	33%	34%	33%
21. Copying A Shape	49%	32%	44%	25%
22. Drawing A Person	30%	48%	47%	5%
23. Folding Paper	19%	55%	43%	2%
24. Hopping	61%	27%	24%	49%

CONCLUSIONS

In general, both the results from the baseline assessment and reassessment are in line with IDELA results in countries in the region. During both assessments, children received an average Total IDELA Score that places them in the *Developing* category. On an average, the results in the reassessment, which happened approximately one year after the baseline assessment, were slightly higher across domains. **Table 3.1** below showcases the percentage change in average scores for each of the twenty-four IDELA tasks. Overall, fifteen of the twenty-four tasks saw a rise in average scores at the reassessment, while eight saw a fall in average scores.

Table 3.1 IDELA Baseline and Reassessment Results (% change per task)

Task	Average Score Baseline	Average Score Reassessment	Percentage Change
1. Self-Awareness	53%	62%	17%
2. Comparison By Size and Length	77%	73%	- 5%
3. Sorting And Classification	29%	40%	38%
4. Shape Identification	35%	32%	- 9%
5. Number Identification	19%	10%	- 47%
6. One-To-One Correspondence	22%	23%	5%
7. Addition And Subtraction	28%	28%	0%
8. Puzzle Completion	19%	26%	37%
9. Friends	24%	26%	8%
10. Emotional Awareness / Regulation	34%	43%	26%
11. Empathy / Perspective Taking	37%	40%	8%
12. Solving Conflict	40%	39%	- 3%
13. Short Term Memory	36%	48%	33%
14. Inhibitory Control	26%	37%	42%
15. Expressive Vocabulary	18%	25%	39%
16. Print Awareness	42%	54%	29%
17. Letter Identification	14%	7%	- 50%
18. First Letter Identification	21%	31%	48%
19. Emergent Writing	46%	36%	- 22%
20. Oral Comprehension	31%	47%	52%
21. Copying A Shape	46%	49%	7%
22. Drawing A Person	35%	30%	- 14%
23. Folding Paper	21%	19%	- 10%
24. Hopping	47%	61%	30%

Because both the baseline and reassessment results showed similar scores, it can be inferred that the IDELA tool accurately captures the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum in place for early childhood programs. This curriculum is currently under revision by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Based on the IDELA results presented in this report, the following recommendations can be put forth to help strengthen – and even out - the early childhood education experience for children.

— **New Activities.** Save the Children in Kosovo can work with ECCD educators to jointly design new interactive activities for children that will help strengthen their skills in certain IDELA tasks, where they seem to consistently struggle. As one of the tasks children struggled with most at both assessments was puzzle solving, one such activity could be incorporating more puzzle work in the ECCD centers. Another task that children struggled with was folding papers into shapes, which could be easily addressed through incorporating more similar activities in the classroom.

— **Letters and Numbers.** The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo should evaluate whether it would like to integrate more lessons on letter and number literacy into the existing curricula for early childhood education. Currently, letter and number literacy are intentionally not a priority of Kosovo's early childhood education curriculum, to avoid overloading children with information they learn in school. This is reflected in the IDELA results.

— **Working with Parents.** Some of the tasks measured with the IDELA tool could easily be practiced at home between parents and children. This has the potential to not only translate into a higher IDELA score across different domains, but might also strengthen communication between parent and child at home. In particular, oral comprehension, expressive vocabulary and puzzle solving could be good tasks to routinely administer at home.

Despite the great findings of the IDELA assessments and report, it would not be fair to conclude without addressing a few of the limitations of the study and suggesting changes to future research. One of the larger limitations of the study was that at the time when the baseline assessment was conducted, there was no control group. Future research should consider integrating a control group or control group institution in its research design, to improve the possibility of ascribing effects to changes in IDELA results to ECCD services.

Because the baseline assessment and reassessment were administered less than one academic year apart, children were not exposed to ECCD services for a long period of time. It is worth mentioning that a significant portion of six-year old children that participated in the baseline assessment, had already been enrolled in ECCD centers for a long period of time. This might have skewed the baseline assessment results.