

## REPORT FROM THE SOCIAL AUDIT GROUP IN RAHOVEC

### MONITORED PROJECT

## CONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (RAHOVEC, XERXE, FORTESE, KRUSHE E MADHE, CELINA, HOQE E VOGEL, OPTERUSHE, MALESI E VOGEL, RATKOC, DEJN AND QIFLLAK)







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*The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the positions of the European Union Office in Kosovo, the Governments of Switzerland, Sweden, Norway or HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.*



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## About the **DEMOS** Decentralisation and Municipal Support

The Project for Decentralization and Support to Municipalities (DEMOS), is a project co-financed by the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation-Kosovo.

DEMOS supports all municipalities of Kosovo to bring systemic changes that promote good governance, and the provision of better services that positively affect the daily life of citizens.

DEMOS III general objective is the improvement of the performance of municipalities in governance, management and services, to contribute to the increase of citizens' satisfaction.

## About the platforma **CIVIKOS**

The CiviKos Platform is an initiative of civil society organizations in Kosovo, established to create and promote an environment suitable for formal and structured cooperation between civil society and state institutions in Kosovo.

The CiviKos Platform, in constant growth and currently with about 300 member organizations of civil society, is dedicated to deepening cooperation between member organizations, public authorities, and other stakeholders in the development of civil society in Kosovo. With its mission to enable a favorable environment for civil society in Kosovo, and its membership in all regions of Kosovo, the CiviKos platform continues to be actively engaged in supporting its members operating at the local level and promoting democratic participation at the local level.

## **SOCIAL AUDITING: Why is it Supported by DEMOS and What is its Purpose?**

DEMOS supports municipalities based on their performance, using the Performance Grant as its main tool. The better the municipality's performance, the higher the grant amount. Municipal performance is evaluated through the Municipal Performance Management System (MPMS) of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA).

By developing positive competition between municipalities, the performance grant consequently promotes positive changes in the behavior of municipalities for the improvement of democratic governance, financial and human resources management, transparency and integrity.

DEMOS, in addition to the Performance Grant, provides technical assistance to municipal staff that empowers them to deliver better results. Technical assistance is provided in areas where performance is considered to be weaker.

DEMOS also supports the central government in systemic policies, for a more favorable framework for decentralized governance.

According to the first component of the project, DEMOS III aims to open up data for wider public scrutiny of municipal performance and initiate social audits to monitor the impact of Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects on citizens.

The purpose of this intervention is to involve civil society organizations and citizens in conducting social audits to monitor Municipal Performance Grant (MPG) projects implemented by municipalities.

To mitigate the reliability risks of Performance Grant funds, and at the same time, to monitor the impact of projects on citizens, DEMOS has established social audits within the Municipal Performance Grant (in the system). Social audits will also include performance monitoring and project planning processes at the municipal level. The project will support the development of sampling tools and methodologies, including training to successfully conduct such social audits. The aforementioned social audits will be funded from a part of the Municipal Performance Grant funds and will be developed by civil society organizations. For this, DEMOS will partner with key CSOs.



## INTRODUCTION

This is a summary report of the Social Audit Group composed of activist citizens, members of various organizations from Rahovec, who have joined the Social Audit Group to monitor the implementation of the project for the construction of infrastructure for people with special needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Ofterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak).

The report elaborates the methodology followed by the Social Audit Group, the actions for data collection - including field visits and discussions with the mayor and representatives of the Municipality, and the elaboration of findings and recommendations.

The Social Audit was made possible thanks to the support of the Decentralisation and Municipal Support Project (DEMOS), a project co-financed by the European Union, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation-Kosovo.

*Through this activity, DEMOS aims to install social audit as part of the citizen monitoring culture for capital projects implemented by municipalities.*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period November-December 2022, with the support of the DEMOS Project, the CiviKos Platform has identified a group of citizens and representatives of organized groups of citizens to monitor the implementation and progress of the capital investment in the Municipality of Rahovec, which aims the Construction of Infrastructure for people with special needs in the city and surrounding villages.

The investment in question, with a value of EUR 71,569.00

provides for preparatory work, construction of ramps, placement of vertical and horizontal signs, placement of information boards, placement of guardrails, marking of parking spots as well as placement of signage and audio signals for blind people in two intersections which are regulated by traffic lights.

During this two-month period, 21 citizens participated in a two-day intensive training and in five other meetings, including field meetings and meetings with the Mayor and other representatives of the Municipality of Rahovec. The composition of the Social Audit Group is determined on the basis of the impact that the project of the Municipality has on different groups of the population, especially the marginalized ones. More precisely, the CiviKos Platform, as an integral part of this group, has invited to participate members from the HANDIKOS branch in Rahovec, who are best acquainted with the difficulties of people with special needs. In addition to the fact that the participation of women and young people was also stimulated in this social audit, it is worth noting that the group included an architect and a lawyer, as well as representatives of various relevant professions who contributed to an easier understanding of contractual requirements and obligations. Since the project as a whole has a wide scope in terms of geography and logistical burden for the citizens engaged in this monitoring, the focus of the Social Audit Group was the realization of the project in the city of Rahovec.

The Municipality project, contracted through the open procurement procedure, under the name '**Construction of infrastructure for people with special needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Opterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak**', according to the Social Audit Group has been implemented properly to some extent. However, the Social Audit Group has raised some concerns, not only about the successful implementation of the project, but also about its planning process.

Although this project was the result of citizens' requests, monitoring has identified that the key community that should benefit from this project was not consulted during the project's planning phase. As a consequence of the lack of public consultation during planning, especially of narrow interest groups, the project itself had some

shortcomings and irregularities of a technical nature, which could have been avoided. One of the main shortcomings from the lack of public consultation was the proper identification for the placement of ramps and markings, contributing to the placement of ramps not only in crossings and schools where they were missing, but also in highly frequented spaces, including the facility of the Municipality of Rahovec.

Regarding this during the monitoring, the Social Audit Group has identified another difficulty. The office of the Mayor of the Municipality was on the upper floors of the building, and as a result the lack of an elevator in the building of the Municipality made it impossible for people with special needs to access his office. Another shortcoming that the monitoring found was the complete damage to the ramps during the construction of the city square, leaving no access to the square for people with special needs.

These technical deficiencies, identified during monitoring, were also among the main causes of the delay of 196 days in the implementation of the project. One of these problems was the misplanning of the dimensions of the fences, since they were planned with dimensions larger than the sidewalks, and in which it was necessary to intervene after the start of the implementation of the contract. The problem with dimensions was also identified in the built ramps, as some of them were narrower than the standard allowed for a wheelchair user to pass.

The monitoring had also identified problems in the established signage. The sound of the acoustic signal placed at the traffic lights was so low that they often could not be heard by the blind and hard of hearing people. Further, the monitoring identified that vertical and horizontal signs were not placed throughout the city of Rahovec to inform citizens with special needs about the paths for people with special needs, thus making the purpose of the paths unclear for the users of traffic.

A particular concern of the Social Audit Group was that the Municipality of Rahovec did not have a contract for the maintenance of fences, ramps and signs, which degrade over time, risking that after a while these investments would be unusable and useless for the community.

The aim of the Social Audit Group is that the Municipality of Rahovec, in addition to improving proper communication with citizens, especially in projects that directly affect their lives, also take concrete measures such as: Measures for widening the ramps located in the crossings for pedestrians that are currently below the standard, in order to make this investment functional and that would enable the passage of a person with a wheelchair; To increase the sound of acoustic signals placed at traffic lights so that citizens can hear it; Place all the vertical and horizontal signs indicating the crossings for people with special needs for all users, which would avoid blockages from stopped cars, or danger from bicycle riders, etc. In order to ensure the sustainability of the investment, the Social Audit Group intends to encourage the Municipality to secure as soon as possible a contract for the maintenance of fences, ramps, vertical and horizontal signs within the framework

of the maintenance of roads and sidewalks, as well as to ensure that the damaged ramps during the construction of the square should be restored and functionalized.

The municipality has welcomed the civic commitment to improve the implementation of the project in question, in which case it has pledged to take into account the findings and recommendations of the Social Audit Group. In the following, the Municipality explained to the Group that the problems with the standards of the ramps, the lack of horizontal, vertical and side markings are a consequence of the lack of space. As for the acoustic signals and access to the town square, the Municipality made a promise of immediate engagement in addressing them. In the future, the Municipality also pledged to include the maintenance of ramps and markers within the public services of the Municipality, in order to ensure the sustainability of this investment.

All parties involved were grateful for the help provided by the CiviKos Platform, and DEMOS to deepen the cooperation of the Municipality with the citizens. Based on the findings and recommendations from the social audit process, the Social Audit Group will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations that emerged from this report, keeping citizens informed of new developments.

## ABOUT SOCIAL AUDITING

According to the guide prepared by DEMOS, social audit is one of several approaches towards achieving social accountability, through a process of constructive engagement between citizens, government, civil society, and in some cases also private sector stakeholders to assess the behavior and the performance of public officials, elected leaders and service providers who use public resources to deliver services, improve community well-being and protect people's rights.

The social audit is based on the basic principles of democratic and good governance, which means that the process is participatory, inclusive, transparent, with access to the necessary information and that decision-makers and policy-makers are held accountable.

Social audits should not be confused with formal and financial audits, but they are an essential element with the potential to complement traditional financial audits to help public institutions compare their overall performance. Social audit reports, and in particular the results generated from them, can be used to be included in the annual internal audit plans of municipalities.

Social audits are sometimes undertaken as a one-off event, but are most effective when carried out systematically as a process carried out at regular intervals. To enable this, it is essential to build a shared understanding and mutual ownership of social auditing among relevant stakeholders. When successful, social accountability processes lead to improved management of public resources, project implementation, and the delivery of public services and policies that benefit people, especially marginalized groups in society. If conducted regularly and constructively, the process and its outcomes have been shown to strengthen mutual trust between citizens and government institutions.

The cooperation between DEMOS and the CiviKos Platform aims to create the infrastructure for social audit. Since it is a new form of cooperation between citizens and public authorities, capacity building is necessary. Therefore, this cooperation has started with the piloting of the social audit in four municipalities: Peja, Kamenica, Lipjan and Rahovec. Through the activities in this project, DEMOS and the CiviKos Platform aim to install this methodology to public authorities in Kosovo and civil society, so that it can be further developed as practice in the future for various capital projects.

## STEPS OF THE SOCIAL AUDIT PROCESS

The CiviKos platform, based on the steps of the social audit methodology of DEMOS, has worked actively in creating the infrastructure for monitoring four capital projects in the four partner municipalities. Namely, in Peja, Kamenica, Lipjan and Rahovec. The methodology and approach were built along a process and discussion between the CiviKos Platform and DEMOS. The following parts will elaborate on each step that shaped this cooperation and laid the foundations for the development of the social audit concept in Kosovo.

## METHODOLOGY

### Selection of Projects and Municipalities

One of the important parts of the Social Audit process is the selection of municipalities and projects that will be monitored by the social audit groups. Initially, only the municipalities that benefited from the performance grant were subjected to the selection process. The first step was the listing of municipalities and projects in order to create a solid basis for the conducting of the social audit.

The initial step has been led by DEMOS, which in cooperation with the CiviKos Platform and Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), have sent to all these municipalities a request for expression of interest/will to pilot the social audit. The municipalities have responded positively to this request to a large extent, and consequently those municipalities that have expressed their willingness to cooperate for the implementation of the social audit have been placed on the list of potential municipalities to pilot the social audit.

**After the completion of the first phase, DEMOS together with the CiviKos Platform and MLGA have made the selection of projects based on the following criteria:**

The status of the project (if it is in completion, more than 50% of the works are completed, or it is in the initial phase);

Targeting and high or low impact of projects for marginalized groups such as women, youth, elderly, persons with special needs and non-majority communities;

The nature of the project and the area of influence with priority in the fields of education, health and environment;

The value of the grant allocated for the realization of the capital project.

As a result, the projects that have received the most points based on the abovementioned criteria are proposed for social audit.

**The selected projects are:**

- Arrangement of the Karagaç Park in the Municipality of Peja;
- The water distribution project for the villages of Hogosht and Lisocka in the Municipality of Kamenica;
- Construction of infrastructure for people with special needs in the Municipality of Rahovec (Rahovec, Xerxa, Fortesa, Krusha e Madhe, Celina, Hoca e Vogël, Opterusha, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak); AND
- Construction of the Water Reservoir and Rehabilitation of the Water Supply Network in Janjeva in the Municipality of Lipjan.

The municipalities that have been selected for the social audit have been officially notified and all have expressed their willingness to pilot the social audit for the respective selected projects.

After the selection of the project, the next and most important phase of the project has begun – the establishment of cooperation with the selected municipalities and the establishment of groups for social audit in the field. This phase was also the main and necessary part for a successful social audit.

- **Preparatory meeting with the municipal executive:** DEMOS, together with the CiviKos Platform, have held meetings with the mayors and representatives of the municipalities of Peja, Rahovec, Kamenica and Lipjan to inform them about the social audit process, as well as to exchange the necessary information for the projects in question. These meetings, in addition to informing the institutions, have also served as an opportunity for the development and maintenance of cooperation between citizens and local institutions.

- **Careful selection of social audit groups:** One of the most challenging steps in this process was the selection of social audit groups. The CiviKos platform has developed this step in cooperation with the municipalities and member organizations in each municipality - as CiviKos has a rich network of non-governmental organizations operating at the local level throughout Kosovo.

The social audit groups in the four partner municipalities have been selected with special care. As a criterion during the selection, the interest of the citizens to join the group, as well as the impact that the project has on their lives, was taken into account. Particular importance is placed on trusting that community members are genuinely convinced that the social audit group represents their interests. Another very important element during the identification of the group has been the representation of marginalized or underrepresented groups, giving them an equal voice during the social audit process. The CiviKos platform, in addition to citizens who are members of the community, has also included civil society organizations operating at the local level. The inclusion of organizations is done in order to benefit from the social audit methodology which can be replicated by them in the future for similar projects.

- **Training of social audit groups:** Since the social audit is a very new concept in Kosovo, DEMOS has recommended that immediately after the selection of the social audit groups, training for the social audit and basic information for the selected project should be started. At this stage, the DEMOS team has been very supportive, providing assistance in the training of the audit groups. In this phase, all the selected projects are broken down and cohesion is created among the group.

- **Regular meetings of social audit groups:** The CiviKos platform has facilitated regular meetings of social audit groups. During the regular meetings, the social audit groups have met in the areas where they operate and have analyzed the implementation of the project and also identified specific findings.

In order to verify the findings, receive additional information and remove misunderstandings or misinterpretations, the social audit groups also met with the representatives of the respective municipalities where the implementation of the social audit was planned. The social audit groups have also held meetings in the field to see closely the realization of the investments that have been made in relation to the projects in question, and to analyze the level of project implementation. All this was done in order to record the findings during the monitoring process. In addition to validating the findings, these meetings aimed at building a spirit of cooperation between citizens and institutions.

- **Preparation of social audit questions and indicators:** The social audit groups in the four pilot municipalities have compiled specific questions for the municipality, held meetings with the mayors of the municipalities, and the directors of the relevant departments for the project that was monitored. These questions have been developed with citizen input in regular meetings through a process facilitated by the CiviKos Platform and with the support of the DEMOS team.

After the meeting with the municipalities and receiving the information, written requests for providing additional information or documentation related to the project were sent as necessary. After collecting relevant information and documents, the main findings and recommendations for the municipality were compiled.

- **Signing memorandums of cooperation with the four partner municipalities:** In order to formalize the cooperation with the pilot municipalities, the CiviKos Platform has signed memorandums of cooperation with the four partner municipalities. The cooperation memorandum formalizes the cooperation between the CiviKos Platform and the partner municipalities. Through the signed memorandums, the municipalities have agreed to compile an action plan 3-6 months after the monitoring process, when the group of citizens has compiled the monitoring report and presented their findings and recommendations. This is in order to ensure follow-up and progress achieved in addressing the findings and recommendations.



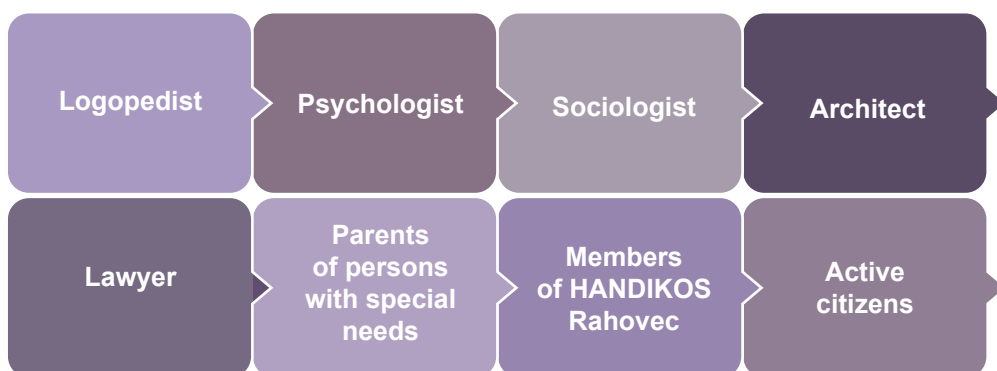
# SOCIAL AUDIT PROCESS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF RAHOVEC

## Establishment of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec

In order to identify and select the members of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec, and taking into account the uniqueness of the project, the representatives of the association HANDIKOS in Rahovec, which work to promote the rights of people with special needs, were initially contacted. More specifically, for paraplegic and tetraplegic people. Since the project implemented by the Municipality of Rahovec, “Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Opterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak), mainly was the construction of infrastructure for people with special needs, initially the members of HANDIKOS in Rahovec were identified. After the initial meetings with HANDIKOS, some of the members of the group have been identified. Later, psychologists, sociologists and parents of children with special needs joined the group.

In total, 21 members of the Social Audit Group were identified and selected in Rahovec, of which ten are men and eleven are women. Satisfactory gender inclusion has also been achieved in this group, and the composition of the group is mainly made up of people with special needs or their family members.

As for professions, the members of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec are as follows:



Immediately after the consolidation of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec, the CiviKos Platform has organized a two-day training for the Social Audit Group in Rahovec on November 5 and 6, 2022. During the training, the participants learned about the functioning of the local level, the contract monitoring process as active citizens and have been notified of the steps of the social audit process.

## Regular meetings of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec

Immediately after the training and consolidation of the Group, the participants have started regular meetings. The Social Audit Group in Rahovec held a total of five meetings, including two meetings with representatives of the Municipality of Rahovec.

### Specific Purpose of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec

The specific purpose of the Social Audit Group in Rahovec was to measure the impact of the implementation of the project 'Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Opterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak' on the people with special needs. Through the monitoring of this contract, the group has seen whether it is built according to the standards and needs of all categories of persons with special needs. Through this activity, the findings and recommendations aim to address all the deficiencies identified during the implementation of the contract and provide the Municipality of Rahovec with space for cooperation along similar projects in the future.

### *The performance indicators prepared by the Social Audit Group for the monitored project are as follows:*

- Public consultation with groups of citizens, specifically with people with special needs.
- Realization of works on time according to the contract.
- Satisfaction of the social audit group about the quality of completed works.
- Placement of signs, audible traffic signals, ramps and other interventions, according to the contract.
- Maintenance of the investment after the end of the contract.

### Requests for information/documents as well as questions sent by the Social Audit Group in Rahovec to the Municipality of Rahovec

Taking into account the nature of the project, the Social Audit Group has requested the following documents and information from the Municipality of Rahovec in order to collect information necessary for the process:

- The invitations and minutes that the Municipality has for the participation of citizens during budget hearings/public consultations for the project: "Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Opterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak) - Provide minutes of public hearings/consultations for the project in question.
- Has the project been completed in entirety?
- If yes, provide the report of completion and expenses incurred.

- ▪ If not, when is the project expected to be completed?
- ▪ Was there a need for additional budget for project implementation?
- ▪ Were there any delays in project implementation and if so, what were the reasons for the delays?
- ▪ Was the assignment of locations preceded by an analysis of where the ramps should be placed, where the acoustic signals, reserved parking spots, etc.?
- ▪ If yes, provide such analysis/study.
- ▪ Has the implementation of the project been monitored on a regular basis by the Municipality? Do we have any monitoring reports and if so is it provided for the Group?
- ▪ Is the construction of ramps also foreseen in Rahovec Square?
- Are the ramps installed in all school and other public institutions? How many?
- From the field visits, it was observed that the ramps are not worked according to the slope standards? Do you have information why they were not built according to the standards?
- In Rahovec Square, during the visits, it was noticed that the audio traffic signals for people with special needs do not work. Do you have any information why they are not working?
- Has the supply and installation of vertical and horizontal signs been done, which inform people with special needs about the path they can cross with wheelchairs?
- Has the supply and installation of metal fences been done and is their maintenance planned since some of them are found by the citizens to be demolished?
- Has the supply and placement of 4 information boards been made - a board showing a map of the city's streets, also equipped with information about these opportunities for people with special needs to pass? How much is the information in these tables comprehensive in the information they provide for the people with special needs?
- Regarding the reserved parking spaces (50) for persons with special needs in the parking lots of school institutions and other public institutions:
- Is the supply with yellow paint done?
- Are the vertical signs placed?
- Creation of islands that allow maneuvering for drivers with special needs?
- Have you considered improving the infrastructure in the Municipality facility for access for people with special needs - especially for the meeting of citizens with special needs with the Mayor of the Municipality (since in such cases, in the absence of an elevator, it is impossible for them to access to the President's office and usually the meetings should be held in the assembly hall)?
- Is it intended that similar interventions and investments should also be invested in public/urban and rural transport to improve the infrastructure that enables easier access for people with special needs?
- Is the maintenance of this investment foreseen in the contract?

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project	<b>Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs</b> (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Ofterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak)
The total price of the works in the contract	EUR 71,569.00
Contract status	Completed



Figure 1. Map with infrastructure investments for access of persons with special needs in the city of Rahovec.

## KEY FINDINGS

Some of the main findings on the implementation of the project 'Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Ofterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak)' are summarized as follows:



**- Lack of organization of public consultation with citizens:** For the project "Construction of Infrastructure for People with Special Needs (Rahovec, Xerxe, Fortese, Krushe e Madhe, Celina, Hoqe e Vogel, Ofterushe, Malesi e Vogel, Ratkoc, Dejn and Qifllak)", the municipality of Rahovec has not organized a special consultation, especially during the design and planning part. Such a consultation is even more necessary due to the fact that this project includes not only the part of the city of Rahovec, but also 11 other villages. However, it should be noted that this project is the result of frequent meetings and consultations with the Municipal Community Safety Council of the Municipality of Rahovec. Given that this Council is composed of municipal, police and security representatives, NGO representatives, citizens and representatives of the community of people with special needs, it can be concluded that the request for such a project came from the representatives of this community. In the minutes provided by the Municipality of Rahovec of the meeting of this Council held in September 2020, the agenda also included the identification of spaces for the access of people with special needs. A specific request was the cooperation with the Directorate of Public Services and the police for the identification of all spaces and objects that do not have access for people with special needs. Council members had unanimously agreed to draw up a joint plan to enable easier and better access.





**- Lack of ramps and supporting infrastructure for people with special needs in highly frequented locations:** The Social Audit Group has identified that the ramps have been placed in pedestrian crossings as well as in the schools where they were absent, but not in highly frequented public spaces. One of the highly frequented places by citizens is the building of the Municipality of Rahovec, more precisely the part where the Mayor's office is located. Since the primary goal of this project has been to ensure better access for people with special needs to public institutions, this access or supporting infrastructure has not been provided in the Municipality of Rahovec to enable easier access to the office of Mayor to discuss concerns they may have. This is because the Mayor's office is located on the highest floors of the building and there is no elevator that would enable these people to access that office.





**- Delay in project implementation:** The contract for the said project was signed on August 12, 2021, however the works on this project had started on October 7, 2021. According to the contract documents, the duration of the works should be 120 days. The Social Audit Group has identified that there


were delays in the implementation of the project. According to the contract, the works were supposed to be completed by February 4, 2022. However, the project was completed on August 19, 2022. This delay of 196 days was due to deficiencies in the measurements/technical design of the project. The fences were originally planned with larger dimensions than the sidewalks, and then repeated measurements and additional intervention had to be made to reduce them and adapt them to the sidewalks.

 - **Ramps outside the standard:** The Social Audit Group has evidenced that some of the ramps located in the city of Rahovec are narrower than the standard allowed for a person in a wheelchair to cross. The same also lack the rails to grip on, thus making the investment not achieve value for money and fulfill its purpose in creating the necessary and safe infrastructure for people with special needs. According to the Municipality, this is a consequence of narrow sidewalks, insufficient spaces for the placement of rails and the refusal of businesses to place them in front of the premises. However, the Social Audit Group considers that the Municipality should have identified these risks and challenges before the start of the project in order to avoid delays and investments that do not meet the needs of citizens.

 - **Acoustic signals installed at traffic lights emit low sound:** The Social Audit Group has identified that in some of the installed traffic lights, the acoustic signals do not work at all, and some have too weak a sound to be heard well by blind people or people with hearing difficulties. In particular, there is a lack of pedestrian crossing infrastructure that orients blind people to where they can cross.

 - **Lack of complete marking of the infrastructure for people with special needs:** The monitoring of the project in question has identified that not all vertical and horizontal signs have been placed in the city of Rahovec that inform about the paths for people with special needs.

 - **Lack of mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the project:** One of the findings of the Social Audit Group is also the fact that the Municipality of Rahovec does not have a special contract for the maintenance of fences, ramps and signs. In the absence of proper and regular maintenance, it can be concluded that this infrastructure created so far can easily be damaged and not serve the purpose for which it was originally intended.

 - **Damage to the infrastructure for people with special needs from other projects carried out by the municipality:** In the Rahovec square, the ramps were damaged during the construction of the square and currently there are no ramps for people with special needs in the square. Since both projects are projects of the Municipality, the Social Audit Group considers that the Municipality does not have cooperation and alignment of priorities and resource planning within the institution in order to rationalize public investments. During the last meeting with the Social Audit Group, the Municipality pledged that the ramps will be placed in the square.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Social Audit Group recommends the Municipality of Rahovec to engage in the construction of ramps in highly frequented public spaces, starting from the municipality's facility itself, which would enable people with special needs easier access to the Mayor's office to discuss any concerns they may have.
- Also, the Social Audit Group recommends that an elevator be installed inside the municipality building that enables access of people with special needs to the Mayor's office, which is located on the highest floors of the building.
- The municipality should align investment plans and increase cooperation between supervisors and implementers of municipal projects that may have indirect interest. Such cooperation would affect the alignment of investments and would avoid challenges such as in the case of the construction of the square, where the ramps are damaged. This case, in addition to causing challenges in the circulation of people with special needs in that part, can also increase the cost of the repair, be it on the side of the economic operator.
- The municipality must ensure that after the construction of the square in Rahovec, ramps are installed for people with special needs.
- The municipality should engage in finding a solution for widening the ramps located in pedestrian crossings where they are placed with a width below the standard where a person with a wheelchair can pass. If this is not done, the investment will remain unusable and will not achieve its purpose.
- To increase the sound of traffic lights acoustic signals that signals blind people and people with hearing difficulties who are users of traffic lights in the city of Rahovec.
- Put all the vertical and horizontal signs indicating the crossings for people with special needs for all users. Also, in order to avoid delays in future projects, the Municipality should better identify the risks that a project may have and make a better planning for their management. If the problems with the business owners had been identified in the planning phase, they could have been addressed before the works started. Consequently, delays in the realization of projects or resistance in placing the necessary markings would have been avoided.
- Municipality of Rahovec to include the maintenance of fences, ramps, vertical and horizontal signs within the maintenance of roads and sidewalks.

## SOCIAL AUDIT GROUP COMPOSITION LIST

	<b>Name and surname</b>	<b>Organization/Profession</b>
1	Mejreme Gerguri Krasniqi	Economist
2	Shaip Shala	Lawyer
3	Leontina Cena	Architect
4	Alba Jupa	Architect
5	Erza Metkamberi	Architect
6	Venhare Shtavica	Aktiviste
7	Blerim Cena	Activist
8	Bejram Kryeziu	Member of HANDIKOS
9	Selman Shtavica	Member of HANDIKOS
10	Burim Elshani	Member of HANDIKOS
11	Agron Neziri	Activist
12	Gazdrit Durguti	Member of HANDIKOS
13	Qazim Daka	Member of HANDIKOS
14	Leonora Rama	Activist
15	Remzije Haxhimurati	Member of HANDIKOS
16	Qendrim Ramadani	Member of HANDIKOS
17	Teuta Shehu	Member of HANDIKOS
18	Zana Qmega	Logopedist
19	Anduena Shtavica	Psychologist
20	Edmond Kabashi	Psychologist
21	Haxhi Hoxha	Director of HANDIKOS
22	Gjizide Raba	Active Citizen / Parent of the child with special needs





