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Research findings on the existing condition of municipalities that were a part of CSD project

“Support to the Language Commissioner's Efforts for Promoting the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID-Advancing Kosovo Together Partner Municipalities”

## Research Findings

Reports, recommendations, conclusions

My Language, My Right, My Possibility

2015



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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Communication for Social Development (CSD), with support of the US Agency for International Development (United States Agency for International Development, USAID), through the Advancing Kosovo Together program (Advancing Kosovo Together, AKT) is implementing a project titled “Support to the Language Commissioner Efforts for Improving the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID-Advancing Kosovo Together Partner Municipalities.” The aim of the project is to raise citizens’ awareness on the importance of their participation in expressing their needs for protection of language rights, as well as cooperation with institution representatives.

The project consists of three elements: “secret customer”; round table discussions; and manuals. For the “secret customer” activity, individuals visited municipal offices and requested services in minority languages. Secret customers visited the 12 selected municipalities on multiple occasions. As a result, CSD developed a clear picture of tendencies for respecting the Law on Languages per municipality. Second, CSD organized 12 debates or discussions in 12 selected municipalities. The topics of the roundtable discussions: the Law on Use of Languages, the Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, and initial results from the “secret customer” activity. The discussions were attended by representatives of local administration, civil society, media, as well as active members of communities, youth, and women. After these discussions, CSD established Action Teams, which are comprised of representatives of local administration and civil society - one Action Team per partner municipality. This report details the results of activities to date.

With help of experts, members of the Language Commissioner's office, CSD, and AKT, the Action Teams will take part in designing manuals for improving the quality of language use in municipalities. Each manual will be a unique tool and an instrument that will be used on daily basis in all municipal departments. In order for the manuals to be targeted toward the needs of each municipality with regard to implementation of the Law on Use of Languages, CSD presents this report, which gives details per municipality on the findings from the “secret customer” and discussions.

## **ABOUT THE LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

Regulation 07/2012 established The Office of the Language Commissioner in April 2012 within the Office of the Prime Minister with a mission to ensure the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo.

The Law on the Use of Languages requires all public institutions and service providers to ensure equal utilization of Serbian and Albanian, the two official languages of Kosovo. The Office of the Language Commissioner is entrusted with ensuring compliance with the Law on the Use of Languages. More information on the mandate of the Office of the Language Commissioner can be found on the organization's website: <http://www.poverenik-ks.org/?page=4,33>.

### **Establishment of the Office of the Language Commissioner**

In order to improve implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, the Government of Kosovo established a working group to reform the Language Commission in 2011. The reform project was led by the Office of the Prime Minister and Office of Community Affairs. As a result of the working group's accomplishments, Regulation 07/2012 was adopted and established two support mechanisms: the Committee on Language Policy and the Network for Linguistic Policy.

The Language Commissioner advises the Government and Language Commissioner's Office on the adoption and implementation of measures which ensure equal status and use of official languages, the use of official languages in municipalities, and the protection, preservation, and promotion of communities whose mother tongue is not one of the two official languages. The Language Commissioner makes recommendations to central and municipal institutions and proposes structural, long-term, and sustainable solutions, as well as incentive policies for use of official languages throughout the Republic of Kosovo.

### **Office mandate**

Language Commissioner's Office performs duties as outlined by the Law on the Use of Languages, including:

- Ensuring compliance with the Law in each institution under its jurisdiction;
- Taking all necessary measures within its authority, including mediation, in order to ensure compliance with the Law for every institution under its jurisdiction;
- Examining and making recommendations concerning legislation or administrative instructions in accordance with the Law and in relation to compliance and consistency of any other legal act, regulation or administrative instructions with the Law;
- Conducting investigations, either on own initiative or on the basis of an appeal submitted by any person or entity concerning omissions of any institution under the jurisdiction of the Office. This is in accordance with the Law or any other enactment relating to the status and use of official languages, as well as other languages of communities whose language is an official language of Kosovo;

- Advising the public about their rights in accordance with the Law;
- Assisting institutions under its jurisdiction in relation to their obligations arising from the Act, if necessary;
- Assisting the Government of Kosovo in implementation and independently implementing programs of public information to make the public aware of their rights under the Law.

In order to meet its obligations, the Office shall have the authority and the power to:

- Gain access to and examine institutional documents under its jurisdiction;
- Require that an institution and its employees cooperate with the Office to provide access to its premises and relevant information to the Office, including copies of partial or complete files by request with the exception of classified files or information;
- Obtain oral or written evidence from witnesses necessary for case investigation;
- Provide compensation for travel and accommodation costs for individuals who are required to appear before the Office or who need to travel in order to provide information for the purposes of the investigation;
- Impose and enforce sanctions as provided in the Administrative Instruction on determining administrative sanctions for violations on the Law on the Use of Languages;
- In cases of non-compliance or obstruction, initiate legal or disciplinary proceedings through the competent authority against a person or organization responsible for the violation.

### **Filing a Complaint**

The Office of the Language commissioner can be reached by telephone at the following numbers: 038/200 14 448; 038/200 14 902 or by email at the following address: [info-zkgj-kpj@rks-gov.net](mailto:info-zkgj-kpj@rks-gov.net). Complaint forms can be found online at: [www.poverenik-ks.org](http://www.poverenik-ks.org). The Office of the Language Commissioner is located at the following address: Government Building, 6th floor, 605/A Mother Theresa Square 10000 Pristina Kosovo.

## **ABOUT COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSD)**

CSD is an NGO from Gračanica/Graçanicë and is a non-partisan, independent, non-profit, local organization founded in 2001 with its main aim of promoting and build civil society, youth development, advocating rights of people with disabilities, integrating marginalized groups, connecting local institutions with local citizens and promoting the processes of return and dialog. Direct beneficiaries are minority communities, Kosovo Serbs and Roma, youth, and people with disabilities.

CSD activities are directed toward strengthening the NGO sector by providing technical support, informing and educating citizens, as well as promoting and representing civil society in public. CSD also works on improving NGO networking and coordinating in various projects. They provide services such as public information, radio and video production, promoting dialog and reconciliation process among communities in Kosovo, informing IDPs and educating youth.



# THE “SECRET CUSTOMER” ACTIVITY

## METHODOLOGY

Prior to initiating the activities, CSD coached each activist on the secret customer behavior, script, and methodology.

The secret customer visited the municipal office and requested information that is available to the public in one of the two official languages. The purpose of the activity was to collect a representative sample of information on the normal practice of local governments in the 12 selected municipalities, and whether they are abiding the Law on Use of Languages. Depending on the municipality and ethnic structure, the secret customer was always from a minority community of that respective municipality.

- Example No. 1: Municipality of Parteš/Partesh, where the Serb population is 100 percent, the secret customer was from the Albanian community and spoke only Albanian.
- Example No. 2: Municipality of Pejë/Peć, where over 90 percent of the population is Albanian, the secret customer was from a Serbian community and spoke only Serbian language.

The secret customer visited the Municipal Hall of each of the 12 municipalities at least twice. On the first visit, the secret customer requested documents in his/her native language and generally observed the officials’ communication demeanor upon dealing with the request. On the second visit, the secret customer acquired the requested documents and ascertained whether the language of issuance of the documents requested was the language in which they were requested. The secret customer visited the Municipal Hall as many as four times if the answer from the institution was not satisfying and in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages.

Secret customers were asked to assess information availability and the overall culture of official municipal communication. Each performed the following:

- a. Availability of information in official languages
  - Are there notifications available in the secret customer’s native language (signposts, name plates in offices and counters)?
  - Are the announcements and decisions posted on bulletin boards bilingual?
- b. Culture of communication
  - After the secret customer refers the first contact person in municipality (doorman or person behind the info desk) in his/her mother tongue, in which language does the person receive the response?
  - If this person does not speak the secret customer's mother tongue, has he/she referred the secret customer to another official who speaks the secret customer's mother tongue?
  - If the first contact person does not know the secret customer's mother tongue and has not referred him/her to a person that does, in what way did the secret customer find the needed info desk?

- Once the secret customer reached the person that speaks the mother tongue, what was their level of quality of communication and did this person know the secret customer's mother tongue enough to be understood?
  - The secret customer makes the following requests for documents in his/her native language:
    - A Certificate of Property Tax
    - A Legalization Form
    - A public municipal job application
  - What was the reaction of the officials contacted by the secret customer, who did not speak their mother tongue?
- c. Information request via email
- The secret customer sends a request as someone who is planning on implementing a Kosovo-wide project related to a certain topic that will be defined using the information from each municipality's web page. The request is sent via email in a language that is in official use in the respective municipality, and is a minority language. In case the response is in another language, CSD will send the request once again.

In addition, CSD follows up with an official email in a language that is officially used to an email posted in the official municipal web page in all 12 municipalities, thus demanding to acquire some of Assembly's latest decisions or at least an official document. In case the response is not provided in the required language, CSD resends the request.

# RESULTS OF THE "SECRET CUSTOMER" ACTIVITY PER MUNICIPALITY

## GJILAN/GNJILANE MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The municipal hall address changed and there is no notifications in either language of a location change in the old building.
- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- The notifications inside of the municipality are entirely in Albanian.
- The counter inscriptions are all entirely in Albanian.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- After the secret customer entered and asked in Serbian who to refer to regarding property issues, the doorman showed him/her where to go.
- After asking for the certificate of not owning any real estate property under his name, the secret customer got the required documents in his/her native language.
- The official who issued a certificate to the secret customer was kind, as was the staff director who signed it. (The secret customer spoke to both in his/her mother tongue.)
- In the Tax Administration office, the serial number dispenser is only programmed in Albanian language, but the doorman showed the secret customer how to use the software and acquire the serial number.
- When it was his/her turn, the clerk spoke to the secret customer in his/her mother tongue and recommended using the internet. However, since the secret customer insisted, he/she got the requested paper form, but only in Albanian.
- The secret customer completed in the form with the help of the doorman.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The email that was sent in Serbian was replied to the following day in Serbian.

## GRAČANICA/GRAČANICË MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- There is no bulletin board in the new municipal building.
- Notices and signposts on the first floor, which is most visited by the parties, are bilingual (work hours, registry office, archives counter).
- When a party from a minority community said "good morning" in their mother tongue (Albanian in this case), they did not get a response.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- When the doorman was asked in the secret customer's mother tongue which documents are needed in order to acquire a building permit, he could not answer, so he told the secret customer to wait for 10 minutes.
- After waiting for 10 minutes, the secret customer spoke to the doorman once more, but he could not respond, so they tried to find a solution to the problem: the doorman called an interpreter, but the interpreter could not come at the moment.

- After 15 minutes of waiting, an official came up. He knew some Albanian and he told the secret customer in broken Albanian what he needed and what is the procedure for acquiring the building permit.
- The secret customer asked this same official what was required to register in the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. The official provided a proper answer in broken Albanian.
- The secret customer reported that the official was kind and that he tried to explain as best as he could, despite not knowing the customer's language proficiently.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The secret customer sent an email in the language of municipal minority and requested a meeting with a municipal representative. A reply was received in both official languages.

## ISTOG/ISTOK MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- There is a bilingual board at the entrance of the municipal building.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and announcements in both official languages, as well as calls for vacancies in the municipality (at the time of secret customer's visit there was an ongoing call).
- In the municipal lobby, there is a board with the municipal hall blueprint indicating the offices, the names of officials, and their positions in Albanian and Serbian language.
- Next to every office, there were bilingual boards with name and position of the official working in that office (Albanian and Serbian language)

### **2. Culture of communication**

- For every contact made with each municipal employee, the customer got a reply in his/her mother tongue.
- In a case where an official did not speak Serbian, the interpreter was called in on short notice.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with the officials, that all forms are in both languages.
- The secret customer found that a majority of officials speak both official languages.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language of the municipality was replied to in the native language of the secret customer.

## KLINË/KLINA MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- Notifications in the municipality are not bilingual and the secret customer noticed that out of all notifications, only one was in the language of the municipal minority.
- A majority of the office inscriptions are in both languages, but written poorly in the minority language in that municipality.

## **2. Culture of communication**

- After the secret customer spoke to the doorman in Serbian, the doorman replied in Albanian and used his hand to direct him to the floor where there was a Serbian-speaking official (in a rather impolite way).
- The secret customer had many difficulties finding the office he was directed to by the doorman.
- The person working in the office to which secret customer was directed was a community official. Through conversation with the official the Secret Customer realized that most members of the minority community in this municipality come to exactly this person and that with his help they finish their obligations in the Municipality.
- Secret Customer obtained information on forms being only in the majority language, as well as that the Community official helps in filling them out in most cases.

## **3. Communication via email**

- There was no reply to the email sent in the language of the minority community of the respective municipality.

### KLLOKOT/KLOKOT MUNICIPALITY

#### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- Notifications inside the municipal building are in both languages.
- Office inscriptions are in both languages.
- There is no doorman in the building, nor is there an information desk.

#### **2. Culture of communication**

- The secret customer found the Cadastral Office on his/her own. No one spoke Albanian there, but an Albanian-speaking person was immediately called to assist.
- The secret customer received answers to all questions asked concerning documents and processes.
- The secret customer asked for a municipal job application. However, he/she was told that there was no vacancy available and that all calls are announced in both languages.
- The officials with whom the secret customer interacted were very kind and polite.

#### **3. Communication via email**

- The email sent in the minority language of the respectful municipality (where the Secret Customer referred to himself as an NGO representative and requested a meeting with municipality representatives, and the minority language is Albanian) was not replied to.

### NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË MUNICIPALITY

#### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- At the very entrance of the municipal building, there is a board on which the word "Municipality" is in both languages.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages.

- Notice of subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, which was posted at that time on the board, was only in Albanian.
- There is a bilingual board at the entrance to the administrative part of the municipal building.
- All forms and basic information can be obtained in both languages at the information counter.

## **2. Culture of communication**

- The doorman immediately and politely provided the secret customer with an answer in his/her mother tongue, explaining where he/she can ask for services.
- The inscriptions on all information counters are in both languages.
- The requested information was given to the customer in his/her mother tongue.
- The forms secret customer requested were bilingual. The official offered assistance in completing the forms.
- The secret customer checked the municipal website as well and found news being posted in both languages.

## **3. Communication via email**

- The secret customer's request was replied to in a short period of time and in Serbian language.

## OBILIQ/OBILIĆ MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- Office notices and signposts (that show which office is located where) are not in customary locations compared to other Municipal Halls.
- Notices posted on bulletin boards are available primarily in the language of the municipal majority. In the police station, notices on required documents for ID cards, passports, and driving licenses are posted in all languages.
- In the Department of Education and Culture, all notices on the bulletin boards were solely in Albanian; there are no Serbian versions of any notices.
- In the Cadastre and Municipality (they are separate buildings and are not in the same area), some notices on bulletin boards are in both languages, while some are only in Albanian.
- There are no bulletin boards throughout villages, so no announcements, calls for applications issued by the Municipality, or any other information relevant to citizens can be read as such. If any information needs to be obtained, a resident with a question must personally go to the municipal office in Obiliq/Obilić that deals with the issue.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- At the entrance of the municipal building, there is a front door booth with several employees. One of the workers knows Serbian and he usually answers the questions asked in Serbian. However, at the time of a shift change, there are no workers that speak both languages.
- Secret Customer usually got around on his/her own, because the doorman gave dull explanations of the office location (there are no signposts in the Municipality in any of the languages). If a party in the Municipality does not speak Albanian and the official does not speak Serbian, they get help from Serb workers, if present.

- If a worker who does not speak Serbian is encountered in the Department of Education and Culture, a worker who speaks both languages is called, so communication is possible and all the information is obtained without a problem.
- When a request for a confirmation is being issued, the confirmation is being issued in all languages, depending on the department (eg. cadaster, certificate of tax payment), but there are departments that issue these documents only in Albanian.
- One of the major problems, especially with the cadastral books is the data duplication. One person is being registered several times because the difference in letter “ć” which, in most of the cases is misspelled as “c” or “q.”
- As for the job application, there were no job applications in the time of visit to the Municipality by the Secret Customer, but what was discovered is that the contracts are bilingual (education).
- At the counters which serve to make payments of municipal taxes, workers speak only Albanian. If it is insisted (which the Secret Customer did), the officials unwillingly, with disapproval, wrote the amount on the paper and tried to mime the amount on the paper.
- The reaction of persons that SC got in contact with are various, depending on department and individuals encountered. Help was always provided by Serb workers in the municipal building. In the Department of Education and Culture a worker that knew both languages was called out, while in the passport issuance and car registration departments there was no communication nor help with instructions and acquiring the necessary information requested by the SC. The level of communication with officials who knew Serbian was at a high level.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The sent email (where the Secret Customer referred to himself as an NGO representative and requested a meeting with municipality representatives) was replied to in a short period of time and in Customer's native language.

## PARTEŠ/PARTESH MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- All notifications posted inside the municipal building were in the majority language, except for one, which was in the minority language.
- The office inscriptions were not in both languages and some of the offices had no inscriptions at all.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- After the secret customer entered, the doorman replied in Serbian and directed him to the office.
- The secret customer was sent to a second office, where one of the officials spoke a little of the language of the secret customer.
- The officials with whom the secret customer interacted were helpful their minimal ability to speak the customer's language.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The customer received no reply to his/her email.

## PEJË/PEĆ MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- At the very entrance of the municipal building, there is a name board in both languages.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both official languages.
- There was an information desk from which the secret customer received the information he/she requested in his/her language.
- All counters' inscriptions are in both languages, so the secret customer got around easily.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- For every contact, the customer got a reply in his/her mother tongue.
- When the official did not speak the secret customer's language, another person who did was called immediately.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with officials, that all forms are in both languages.
- The secret customer found that the majority of officials speak both official languages.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The customer received no reply to his/her email.

## RANILUG/RANILLUG MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The inscriptions on some of the offices are bilingual, while some are not. For example, inscriptions at the Registry Office, where most citizens come, are bilingual.
- The notifications on bulletin boards in the heart of the municipality are entirely in Serbian, but the bulletin boards in the villages are bilingual if the village population is mixed.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- At the entrance of the municipal building, there was a security officer who did not speak the secret customer's language, but called an interpreter.
- The secret customer deduced that when he/she is headed for a department and an interpreter is not available at the time, there will always be an official to help.
- The secret customer requested a legalization form, which he/she got in his/her mother tongue. There are bilingual notifications at the entrance of the Municipal Hall related to legalization.
- The job applications are bilingual (at least for education).
- The secret customer said that while many of the officials did not know the minority language in the municipality, they were helpful toward citizens in completing their obligations.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language was replied to in a short period of time and only in Serbian.

## ŠTRPCE/SHTËRPCË MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- The municipal hall entrance name board is bilingual.
- The municipality bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages.
- There is a board at the entrance to the administrative part of the municipal building which is in both languages.
- Office inscriptions in the municipal building are in both languages.
- Counter inscriptions in the municipal building are in both languages.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- Most of the offices are staffed with officials of different ethnicities, so obtaining necessary information in one of the official languages is easy.
- The requested information was given to the customer in his/her mother tongue.
- The forms requested by the secret customer are in both languages.
- The secret customer checked the municipal website and discovered that most of the news is being published in both languages, but some news is a couple of days late in the language of the minority community of the municipality.

### **3. Communication via email**

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language was replied to in the native language of the secret customer.

## VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN MUNICIPALITY

### **1. Availability of information in official languages**

- There is a bilingual board at the entrance of the municipal building.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and announcements only in the language of the majority community of that municipality.
- The door notification on the Office for Issuance of IDs and Passports is bilingual. However, for example, the Office for Issuing Certificates did not have the notification in the language of the municipal minority.

### **2. Culture of communication**

- There were three people in reception at the entrance to the municipal hall; the secret customer got a response in his/her mother tongue immediately.
- The secret customer got a reply in his/her own language right away in the Office for Issuance of IDs, as well as all relevant information from very friendly staff.
- The secret customer received all necessary information immediately upon requesting it in the Office for Issuing Certificates in his/her language.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with the officials, that all forms are in both official languages.

### **3. Communication via email**

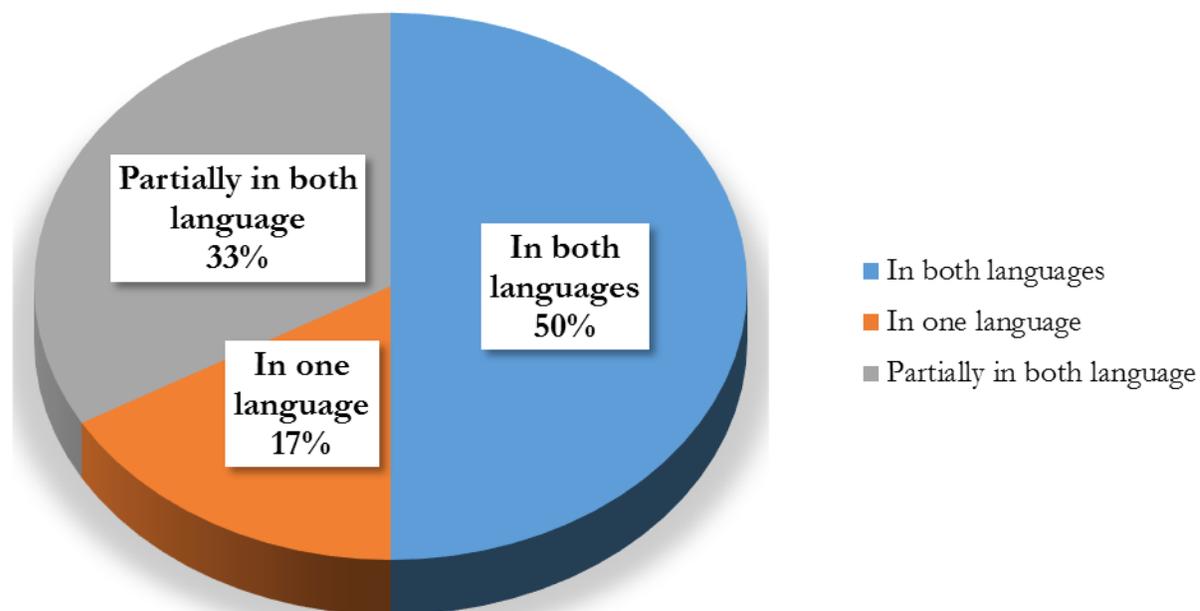
- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language of the municipality was replied to in the native language of secret customer.

## SUMMARY OF “SECRET CUSTOMER” FINDINGS

1. Are there notifications available in native language of the SC (signposts, name plates in offices and counters)?

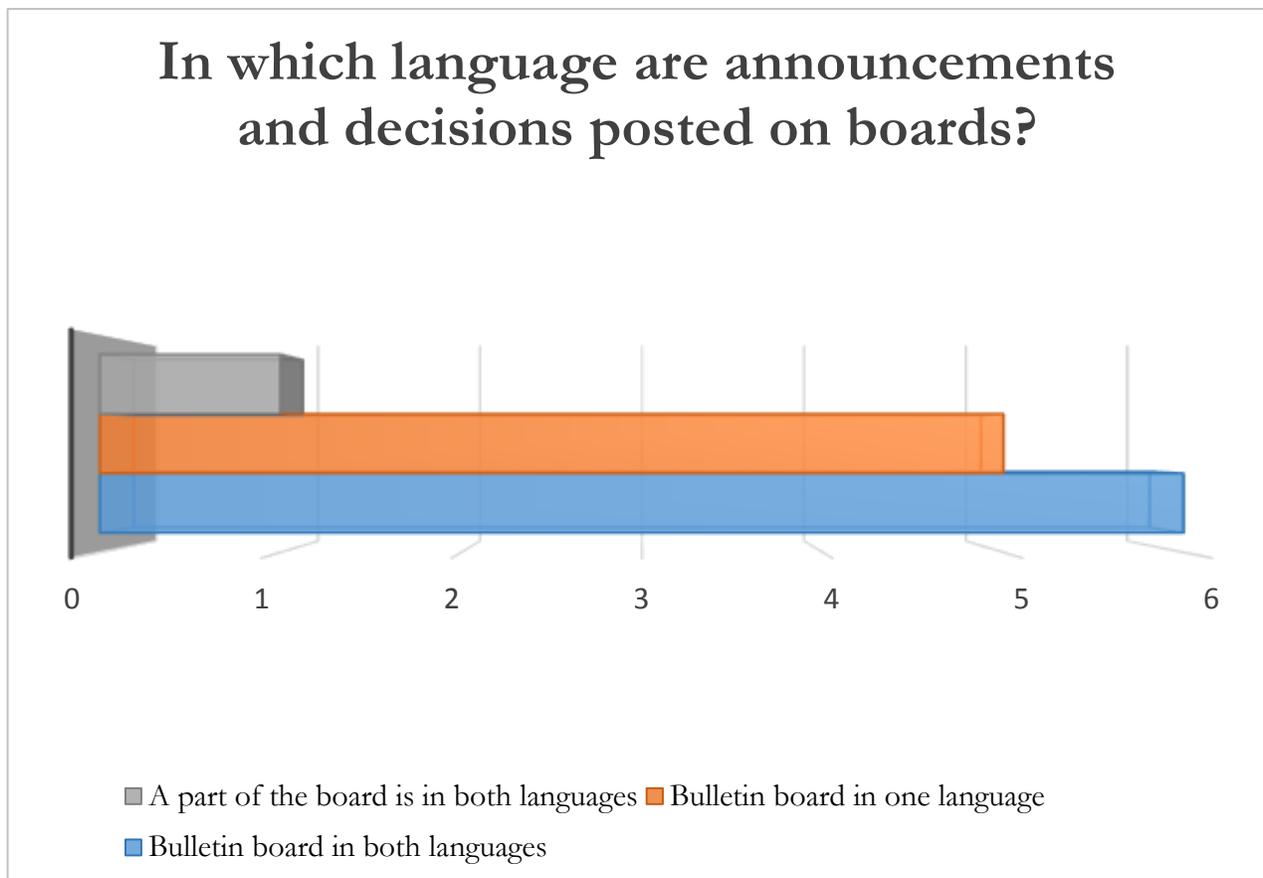
No.	Municipality	Signposts	Boards
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	No	No
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	Yes	Yes
5	Kllokot /Klokot	Yes	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	No
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	Yes
12	Vushtri/Vuçitrn	Yes	Yes

### Are there announcements in the customer`s mother tongue?



2. In which language are the announcements and decisions posted on bulletin boards?

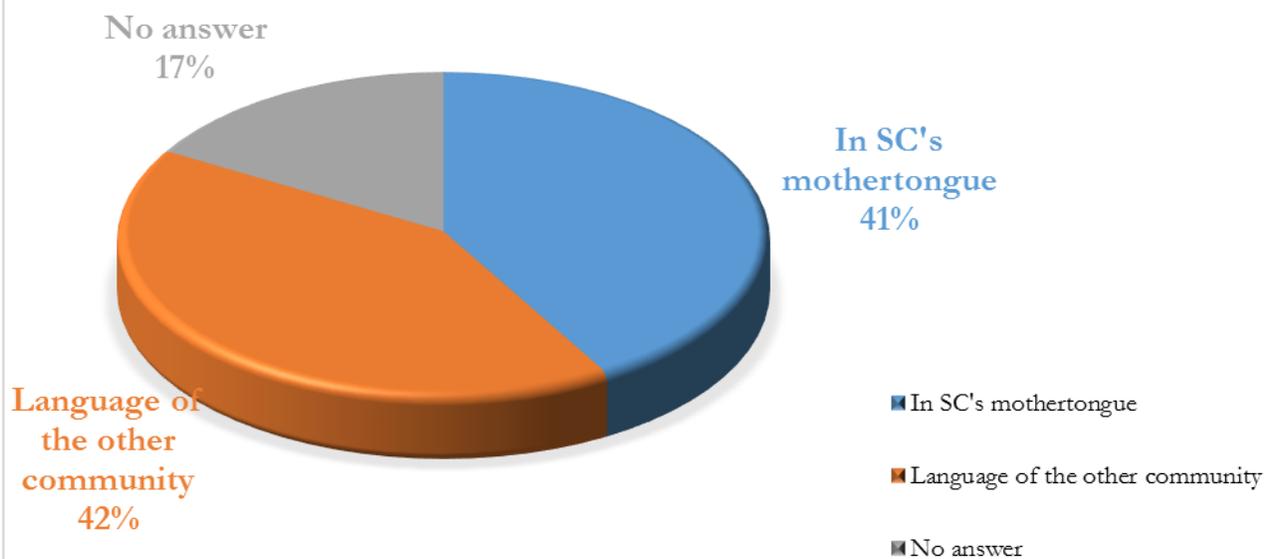
No.	Municipality	Albanian	Serbian
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes	No
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	Yes	No
5	Klllokot /Klokot	Yes	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes	No
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes	No



3. When the secret customer makes first contact with a person in the municipal building (doorman or person behind the info desk) in his/her own language, in what language does the person get the response?

No.	Municipality	In mother tongue	In language of another community
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	No	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë		
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	No
4	Klinë/Klina	No	Yes
5	Klllokot /Klokot	No	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	No
7	Obiliq/Obilić	No	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	No
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	No	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	No
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes	No

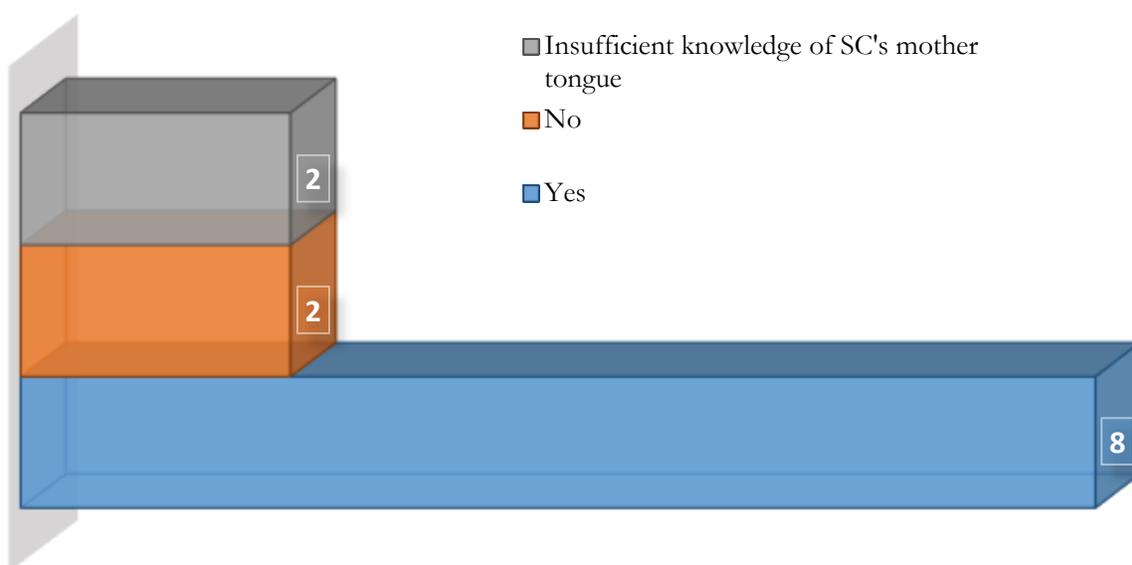
### IN WHICH LANGUAGE DID THE FIRST CONTACT PERSON RESPOND IN THE MUNICIPALITY?



4. If the first contact person does not speak the secret customer's mother tongue, has the person referred the secret customer to another official who speaks the customer's mother tongue?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Insufficient knowledge of customer's language
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No
5	Kllokot/Klokot	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	No
8	Parteš/Partesh	Insufficient knowledge of customer's language
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Yes

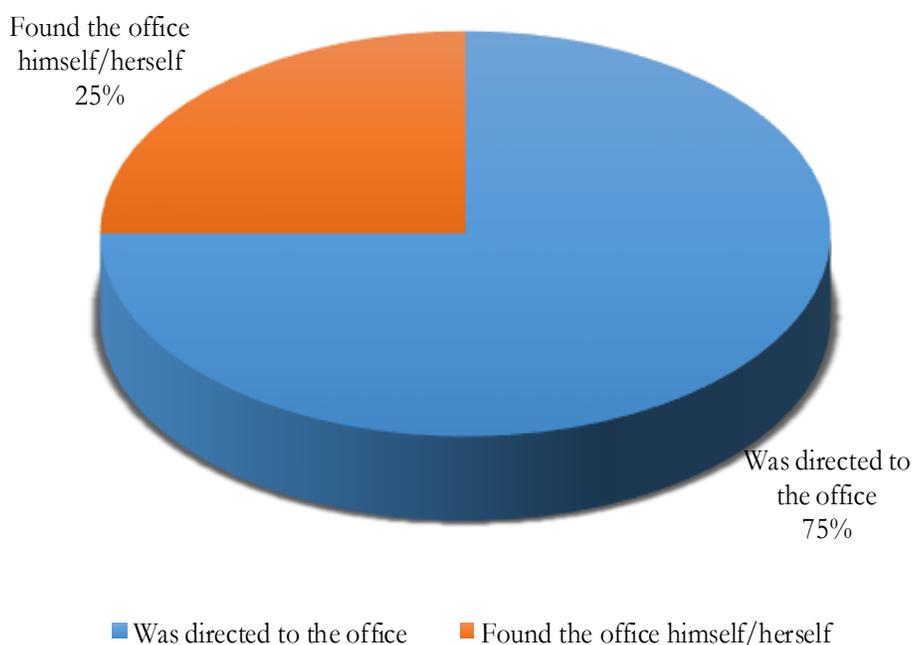
If the first contact person did not speak the customer's mother tongue, was he/she referred to someone who did?



5. How did the secret customer manage to reach the information desk or office needed?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	The Customer was directed to the office.
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	The Customer was directed to the office.
3	Istog/Istok	The Customer was directed to the office.
4	Klinë/Klina	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
5	Klllokot/Klokot	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	The Customer was directed to the office.
7	Obiliq/Obilić	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
8	Parteš/Partesh	The Customer was directed to the office.
9	Pejë/Peć	The Customer was directed to the office.
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	The Customer was directed to the office.
11	Štrpce/Shtërpcë	The Customer was directed to the office.
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	The Customer was directed to the office.

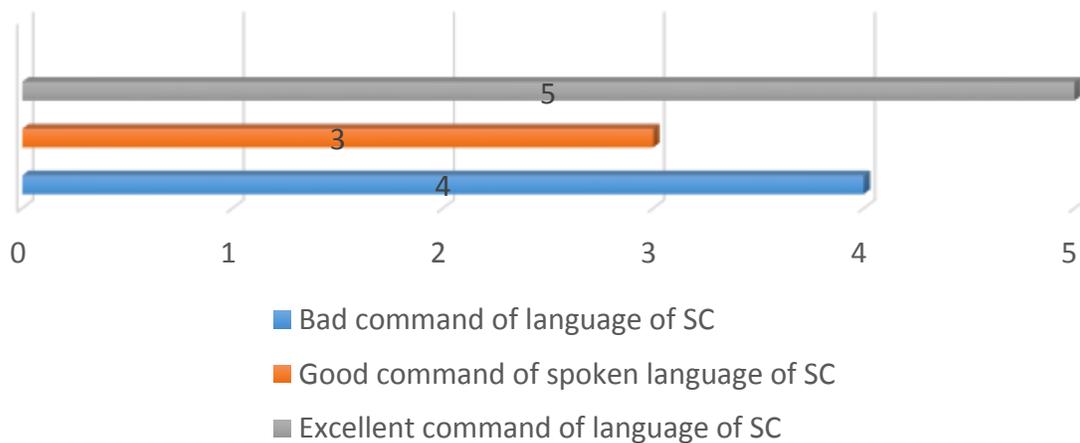
### How did SC manage to reach the info desk/office needed?



6. Once the secret customer reached the person that speaks his/her mother tongue, what was the quality of communication? (Did this person know the secret customer's mother tongue well enough to be understood?)

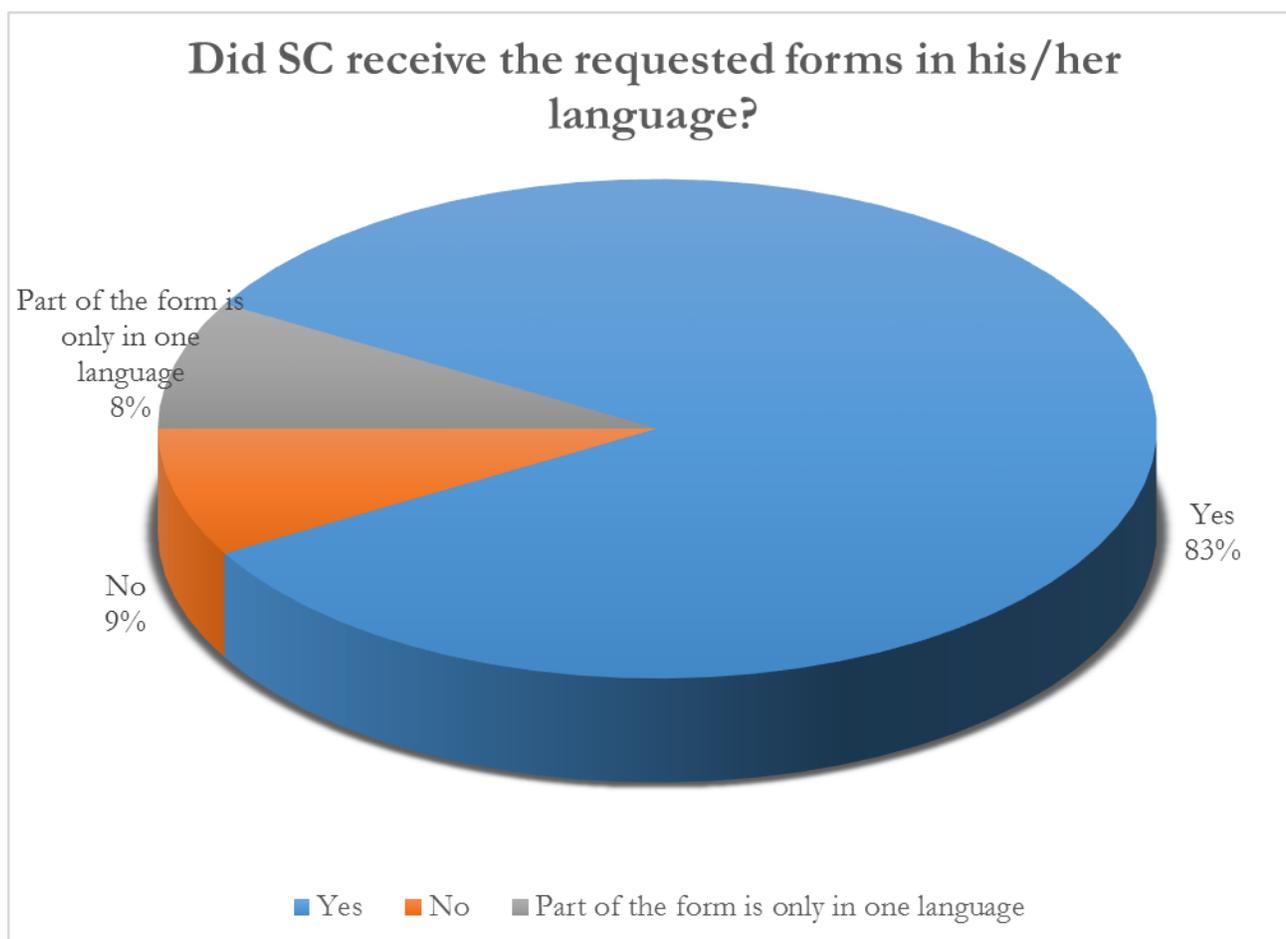
No.	Municipality	Good	Fair	Bad
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane		X	
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë			X
3	Istog/Istok		X	
4	Klinë/Klina			X
5	Kllokot/Klokot	X		
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	X		
7	Obiliq/Obilić			X
8	Parteš/Partesh			X
9	Pejë/Peć	X		
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	X		
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë		X	
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	X		

**In conversation with the person who spoke language of sc, of how high quality was their communication and did this person speak language of sc good enough?**



7. Have the required documents been provided to the secret customer in his/her mother tongue?

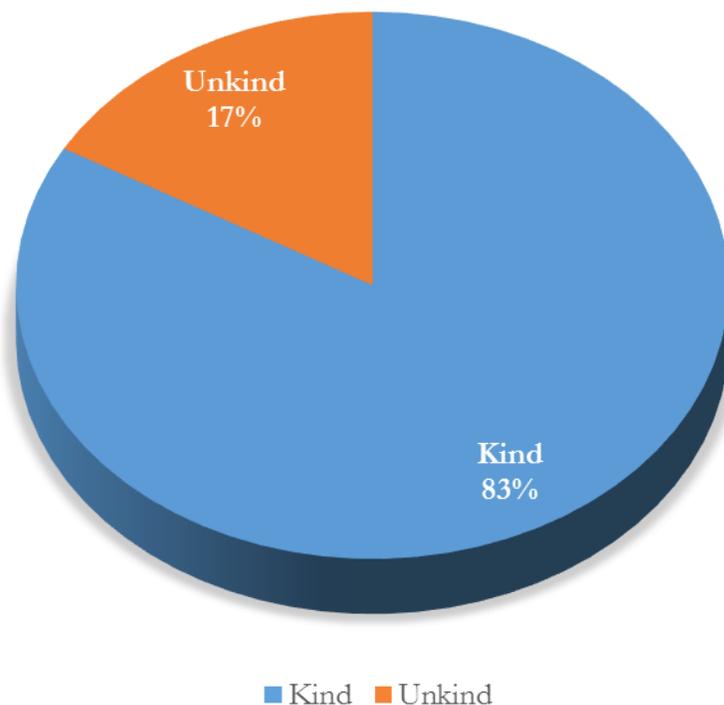
No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No
5	Kllokot/Klokot	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Part of the form is only in one language
8	Parteš/Partesh	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes
11	Štrpcë/Shtërpcë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes



8. What was the nature of the response given by officials with whom the customer interacted?

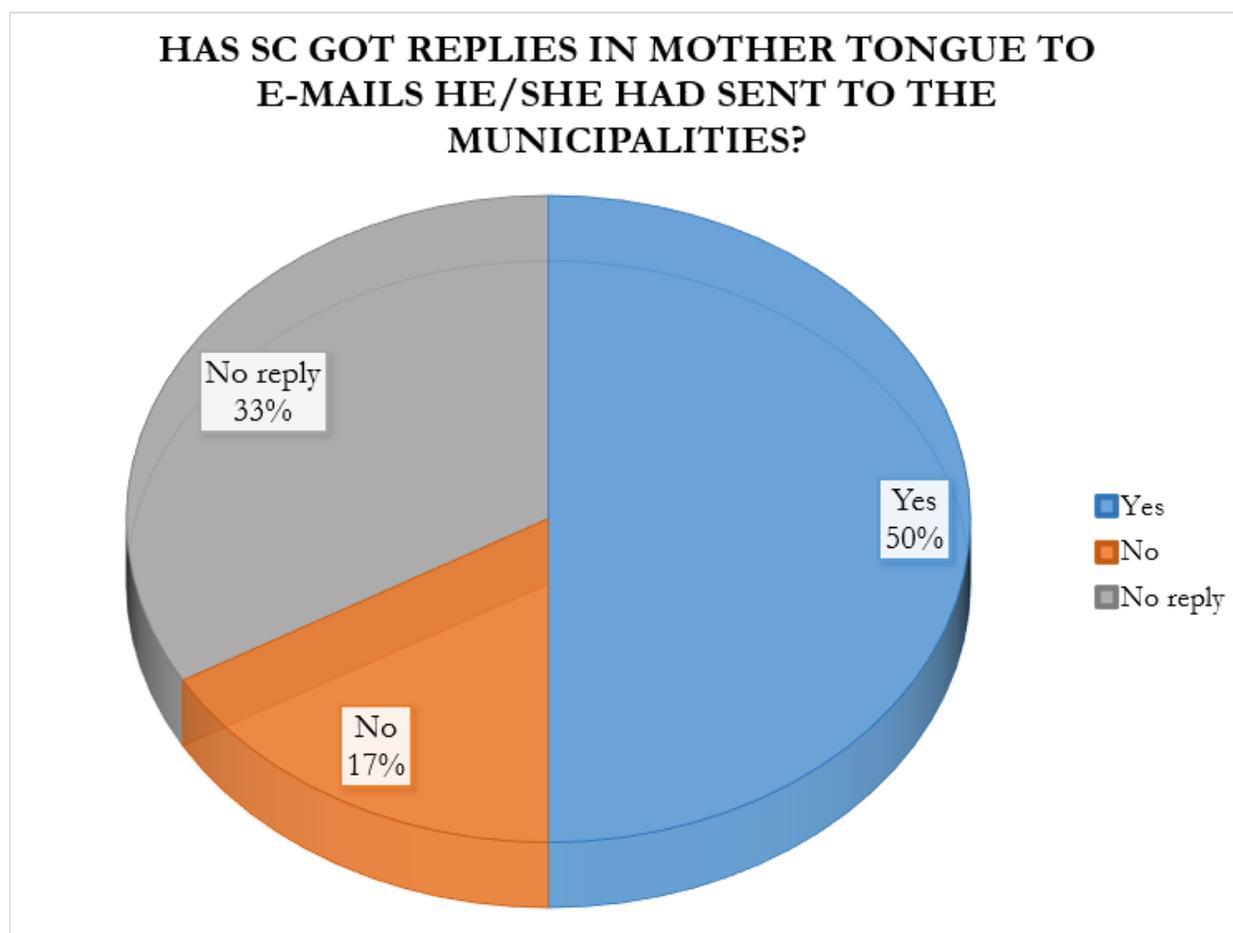
No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Kind
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Kind
3	Istog/Istok	Kind
4	Klinë/Klina	Unkind
5	Klllokot/Klokot	Kind
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Kind
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Unkind
8	Parteš/Partesh	Kind
9	Pejë/Peć	Kind
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Kind
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Kind
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Kind

What was the treatment of people whom SC contacted?



9. Has the secret customer received a response to the email sent to municipality in his/her mother tongue?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No reply
5	Kllokot/Klokot	No reply
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	No
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No reply
9	Pejë/Peć	No reply
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	No
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Yes



## ABOUT THE ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY

CSD organized roundtables on the topic of “Improvement of Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Municipalities of Kosovo” in the 12 partner municipalities. They were attended by representatives of local administration, civil society, media representatives, active citizens, women and youth, representatives of the Office of the Language Commissioner, CSD, and AKT.

Each round table had a two-hour interactive discussion. By exchanging experiences, information, and personal opinions the participants got answers to numerous questions relating to the enforcement of the Law on the Use of Languages, its implementation, methods and responsibilities. In addition, all participants had a better insight in work and mandate of the Office of the Language Commissioner. The very role of the Commissioner was explained, as well as the method of filing a complaint, recent activities and intentions and the Strategy on Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo was announced. The Language Commissioner Office representatives also pointed out that during 2014 all municipalities in Kosovo were supervised. Participants of round tables had the opportunity to see a hard copy of the report in both languages. The report can also be found on the web page and contains what was said at the round table. What is evident in all municipalities is that all signposts and symbols used by parties, and which should be bilingual, are not in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages. Similar situation is also present in central institutions, said some of the participants.

What is also emphasized, as well as in every debate, is the presence of political will, but that it requires efforts and time. Moreover, the Manual for use and easier implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages was presented to the participants.

The very program supported by the USAID, *Advancing Kosovo Together*, has also been presented next to the Language Commissioner Office. In each round table the representatives of the USAID project *Advancing Kosovo Together* presented their program, so the participants had the opportunity to inform themselves about the possibilities this program offers.

## RESULTS OF THE ROUNDTABLE PER MUNICIPALITY

### GJILAN/GNJILANE MUNICIPALITY

The roundtable in Gjilan/Gnjilane was held on March 4, 2015. The moderator presented the findings of the “Secret Customer” activity. Overall, the situation in this municipality is not at a satisfactory level, but a person can easily find their way around with the help of individuals. Just by entering the building the person feels familiar with the environment. The office inscriptions are in both languages, even though notifications at counters and on bulletin boards are only in Albanian. The culture of communication of municipality officials is satisfactory and they offer kindness and willingness to help. Considering that this is a municipality with a highly diverse population and that there is only one translator, the findings are encouraging.

Participants in the roundtable reflected on the findings, potential root causes, and potential solutions. Municipal authorities face a challenge enforcing the Law on Use of Languages. The municipality lacks the staff and resources to enable both languages to be equally represented. While Officials who speak both languages are very helpful and assist people to find their way around, some officials do not speak both languages and there is no legal regulation requiring officials holding certain positions to speak both languages. They predict that the challenge of officials speaking only one language will become greater as youth do not speak the language since there is no school curriculum in majority Serb or Albanian schools where learning a second local language is included. There is also a problem with having one translator in the municipality, which is insufficient for the workload required for compliance with all legal aspects related to the Law on the Use of Languages. Participants explored whether the Language Commissioner's Office help in enforcing Law on Use of language more effectively. There is a great need of joint efforts of local authorities, as was pointed out. Further, participants looked to the Language Commissioner's Office and civil society organizations to improve and enhance the quality of language used, especially in direct communication with citizens.

### GRAČANICA/GRAČANICË MUNICIPALITY

On March 25, 2015, the roundtable moderator presented findings of the “Secret Customer” activity. Overall, while the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë is a municipality with a Serb majority, the Albanian community population do face difficulties in communication due to the fact that municipal officials do not speak their language although they are trying to be helpful. The municipal hall has inscriptions and signposts in both languages. All forms and notifications are available in both languages from municipal services. The municipal webpage is not very functional (there is a delay in news upload of several days in Albanian), but there is an official email for applications, questions and requests. The email sent in Albanian with the request of holding a meeting was replied to in appropriate time manner in both Albanian and Serbian.

Participants in the roundtable reflected on the findings, potential root causes, and potential solutions. One of the problems roundtable participants had was adherence to the Law by central level institutions. Ministries often send documents, notifications and calls in one language. The responsibility for not enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages is on several levels should not be ignored, because institutions at the central and local levels, organizations, and individuals all share the burden. On the other hand, one of the participants spoke highly about the work of the Ministry of Health and gave it as an example of good practice of respecting the Law on the Use of Languages.

A question was raised on what is this Serbian „alphabet“ mentioned in the Law? The Commissioner explained that Latin and Cyrillic script are equal Serbian alphabets and that both can be used as such, but Latin is preferred for the sake of comprehensibility. The Commissioner also stated that it is necessary to establish a body to deal with translations and interpretation. Only then can the Law be proofread and the use of literary Serbian language possible.

The situation in the Municipality of Pristina was also mentioned during the round table because bilingualism is a matter of individual's good will there. The question that was raised on how the USAID decided which municipalities will be partners in their program *Advancing Kosovo Together* was answered.

A question was raised about adopting Romani as an official language in the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. The Municipality representative's explanation was that there were not enough resources for doing so, but it is likely that by the end of the year, in November maybe, this could be adopted by the Municipal Assembly of Gračanica/Graçanicë.

What also sounded like an interesting initiative was the reintroduction of learning languages in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum, and so will Albanians have Serbian language. Even though this might sound like science fiction and something we are going to need more than a hundred years to achieve, people understand that it is the only realistic strive and goal. Mutual understanding is the only thing that can lead to reconciliation and respect of human rights.

During the round table problems were discussed, as well as challenges and ways in which the Office of the Language Commissioner can help municipalities with their work. Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### ISTOG/ISTOK MUNICIPALITY

On May 13, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. As the Municipality of Istog/Istok has an Albanian majority population, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research results in the Municipality of Istog/Istok are satisfying and reasonable. Findings of the "Secret Customer" in the Municipality of Istog/Istok show a clear image of a Municipality respecting the Law on the Use of Languages, and indicates readiness of municipal officials to respond to the citizens' demands in any of the official languages, as it is required by law. According to the report of the "Secret Customer," the inscriptions and signs are adequate and all other services requested were received in the Customer's language and the service was at a very professional level. In addition, when the "Secret Customer" sent an email to an official email address of the municipal authorities requesting certain information, the reply came in a reasonable amount of time and in Customer's mother tongue. All research findings of the "Secret Customer" have been confirmed by all round table participants.

Several topics, including problems citizens face when it comes to use of language, were discussed. The round table also encompassed difficulties the Municipality has with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages, as well as how the Language Commissioner's Office can help.

Serb community representatives discussed the problems of language use when it comes to other institutions and businesses that have social significance, such as distribution companies, judiciary, banks, etc.

Certain municipal officials stated that they did not know the Office of the Language Commissioner existed.

It has been confirmed that there are problems with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages in this municipality, but they are minimal despite a lack of capacity and resources for enforcement. It has been concluded that the willingness of municipal officials and management to respect the laws exists, especially the Law on the Use of Languages.

### KLINË/KLINA MUNICIPALITY

On April 22, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. Given that the Municipality of Klinë/Klina has an Albanian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research findings in the Municipality of Klinë/Klina are not optimal and people do not feel acknowledged or welcomed on the municipal hall premises. Most of the inscriptions inside the Municipal Hall were only in one language, and the receptionists were very rude. Therefore, the necessary information could not be obtained. Most of the information and announcements on bulletin boards are entirely and only in the Albanian language. The "Secret

Customer” also observed that there are not enough civil servants who speak both languages. This makes the situation even harder for the citizens to use their rights and tend to obligations they have with local authorities.

Topics including problems citizens face when the Law on the Use of Languages is not being respected were also discussed. The round table also discussed difficulties the Municipality has with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages as a topic, as well as how the Language Commissioner’s Office can help and contribute.

Representatives of the Serbian community expressed their concerns for the respect of their rights and obligations of local administration. They claim issues arise from the disrespect of Law on the Use of Languages by the local administration and other public institutions. Representatives of the Language Commissioner’s Office answered questions as to the limits and responsibilities of their Office.

The Commissioner's Office will do everything in its power to improve the quality of the use of official languages in this and other municipalities. The office expressed concern and surprise about the problems citizens are facing. The Language Commissioner’s Office was not familiar with either of the problems discussed at the round table, even though citizens have the opportunity to file complaints to the Office.

Through round table discussions, the Commissioner's Office tried to explain the jurisdiction they have and efforts they undertake to promote language use. They also expressed concerns on several occasions because the reports they received from this municipality were satisfying, so they did not know the full weight of the situation.

Participants requested that the Commissioner's Office raise questions on the inequity of rights due to language barriers, referring to a large number of deficiencies they have in everyday communication with municipal authorities. The Commissioner's Office where it was strongly urged to use all available resources in order to make local authorities respect the Law on the Use of Languages. In this way, communication between Serbs and municipal representatives will be facilitated so they have access to their rights.

Issues with the recommendations by the Commissioner was mentioned, as well as efforts for these recommendations to be taken into account by relevant institutions. The Commissioner's Office was requested to provide the participants with recommendations adopted and implemented by some institutions so far. They also asked what happens if these recommendations are not respected, and does the Office have other mechanisms at its disposal.

Problems with other institutions and competent authorities, such as police and judiciary have also been mentioned. Very often citizens receive court calls only Albanian, and if they do not respond, they are made subject to sanctions, despite the institution not fulfilling its legal obligation regarding the Law on the Use of Languages.

The Language Commissioner answered all questions and addressed citizen suggestions, explaining the procedure for filing a complaint, as well as the procedure for proving that rights have been violated.

## KLLOKOT/KLOKOT MUNICIPALITY

On February 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer.” As Municipality of Parteš/Partesh has a Serbian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Albanian. Her experience demonstrates that members of the Albanian community feel welcomed when they enter the Municipal Hall building. Inscriptions and signposts are bilingual, staff and officials are helpful. Municipal offices can provide all forms and announcements in both languages. The web site is not very functional and there is no official email to which requests or

questions can be sent. In conclusion, considering the resources and possibilities, municipal leaders are indeed trying to enforce the Law on Use of Languages to the best of their ability. Participants pointed out that the budget is small and inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle.

One problem raised is that the Municipality receives documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit key information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in only one language. Traffic signs and road markings are also an issue. Software that municipal officials receive from the central level is only in Albanian. It was also noted that not knowing both languages discouraged the minority population from using healthcare services (“We are lucky if a staff member is senior, in which case they know both languages!”).

The round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË MUNICIPALITY

On March 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer.” In this instance, the Secret Customer was Albanian. The research conducted by CSD was done just prior to the round table and concluded that members of any ethnicity feel completely welcomed when they enter the Municipal Hall. At the entrance to the Municipal Hall, there is a bulletin board in two languages, so each party has access to information. The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages. However, notices of subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management which were posted at that time on the board were only in Albanian. Helpfulness of all employees was confirmed. There is a bilingual board at the entrance to the administrative part of the Municipal Hall. All forms and basic information can be obtained in both languages at the information desk. The inscriptions on all information counters are in both languages. The Customer also checked the municipality website and found that all news and updates are in both languages and that it is very easy to find requested information.

The municipality information system, as well as website and translations have been significantly improved compared to the previous period and the municipality currently has two translators employed. They are extremely overwhelmed by administration and translation work (departments are mixed, so internal documents are translated as well).

A problem indicated by a representative of the local administration is that they receive documents from the central level in only one language. Ministries inadvertently omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language.

The Commissioner explained why sanctions are not implemented and why individuals are not punished. He asserts, based on his experience, that the Law on the Use of Languages has not been violated deliberately, and that all parties are ready to respect recommendations and cooperate. Citizens tend to complain only in public meetings, and the number of those who complain on violation of their rights is small. For example, it is a little known fact that, when registering a vehicle in Gjilan/Gnjilane, the driver's license can only be acquired in Albanian. Serbian names have been transcribed into Albanian, which hurts the identity of an individual, and all this allegedly because of the lack of a server.

A question was raised with regard to whether the Serbian alphabet is mentioned in the Law. The Commissioner explained that Latin and Cyrillic script are equal Serbian alphabets and that both can be used as such, but Latin is preferred for the sake of comprehensibility. The Commissioner also stated that it is necessary to establish a body to deal with translations and interpretation. Only then can the Law be proofread and the use of literary Serbian language possible.

Another interesting initiative was the reintroduction of language learning in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum and Albanians will have Serbian language.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### OBILIQ/OBILIĆ MUNICIPALITY

On March 18, 2015, the moderator presented research results of the "Secret Customer." As the Municipality of Obilic/Obilić is majority Albanian, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. The research conducted by CSD was done just prior to the round table. The "Secret Customer" was obliged to visit the Municipality several times, and each time he experienced different treatment, speaking of a culture of communication with the doormen. Treatment of the "Secret Customer" depended upon the personal commitment of an individual to communication with the public. In the same way, access to documents and communication in Serbian depend upon the will of an individual or municipality departments in which the customer asks for information.

A similar situation occurs with availability of information. Notifications on bulletin boards are in most cases only in one language or do not exist at all. Namely, whether announcements are in both languages largely depends on individual departments and the will of individuals working in them. In general, most of the information and announcements are only in one language.

Round table participants stated that the research presented by the "Secret Customer" resonates and that the problem does not lie in the will of the authorities to solve this problem and enforce the Law on the Use of Languages completely. It is, rather, in a lack of resources.

Representatives of the local administration spoke about the inability to completely implement and enforce the Law on the Use of Languages because of the lack of staff and resources. Individuals, particularly youth, do not speak another language.

The round table was carried out in a friendly and constructive atmosphere where everyone respectfully expressed their concerns on this topic regardless of which community they came from. During the round table, issues were discussed, as well as challenges and ways in which the Language Commissioner's office can help municipalities with their work. There was also discussion on how to improve work of the Language Commissioner's office together as well as enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### PARTEŠ/PARTESH MUNICIPALITY

On February 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer." As the Municipality of Parteš/Partesh has a Serbian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Albanian. His experience demonstrates that the members of Albanian community do not receive services requested in their native language. Inscriptions and road signs are not bilingual. Staff and officials who are in charge of directing the people to the right place could not meet their requests. After visiting the Municipal Hall several times, the Albanian Customer could not find a single official who was able to help them and reply in their native language.

During the round table, representatives from the local administration pointed out that municipal authorities have a large budget problem. It must also be mentioned that the municipal building in Parteš/Partesh does not have inscriptions in Serbian, neither on the new building nor some of the offices. Representatives from the local administration stated it is true that the previous government did not have a single translator employed, and as soon as this administration started its work, an official for translation was hired. However, the problem is that all decisions and documents

that have been adopted previously must also be translated, which takes a long time with only one translator. The political will of municipal authorities does exist, but resources and time are needed.

One problem indicated is that the municipal authorities receive documents from the central level institutions in one language. Ministries omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language, and all documents have to be translated.

The responsibility for enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages rests on several levels and local level institutions, government institutions, organizations, and individuals all share that burden.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages

### PEJË/PEĆ MUNICIPALITY

On April 22, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. As the Municipality of Pejë/Peć has an Albanian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research findings from the Municipality of Pejë/Peć are satisfying and are very positive. All of the inscriptions on the Municipal Hall premises are in both languages, so visitors feel welcomed upon entering the premises as they can orientate themselves and find their way easily. The "Secret Customer" saw that most of the officials in the Municipality of Pejë/Peć speak Serbian/Bosnian language and they were friendly, providing adequate support. All documents and other information that citizens need can be acquired in both languages. Considering the evident lack of qualified staff and the fact that only two (2) professional translators/interpreters are employed, the research results are encouraging.

Topics, such as problems citizens face when it comes to use of language, were discussed. The round table also discussed difficulties municipal authorities have with enforcing Law on the Use of Languages, as well as how the Language Commissioner's Office can help and contribute to solving this issue. Municipal authorities showed willingness to create a working group for languages, which was praised by all participants.

Serb representatives pointed out the language problem in other relevant institutions during the round table, such as health centers, hospitals, judiciary, bus stations, etc. Representatives of the Commissioner's Office committed to ensuring that the Law on the Use of Languages can be in effect in all Pejë/Peć and Kosovo institutions.

Representatives of the Bosniak community also discussed an issue of inadequate updating of the municipal web page and not publicizing news and other information in Bosnian. They demand their language be equally respected as an official one in the municipality.

At the end of round table, it was concluded that there are problems in enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages on the municipality territory. However, it is very important to highlight the willingness of the Municipality in solving these issues and finding a solution related to language rights in accordance with the Law.

### RANILUG/RANILLUG MUNICIPALITY

On March 4, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer." As the municipality of Ranilug/Ranillug has a Serbian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Albanian. Her experience reveals that members of the Albanian community feel comfortable when they enter the Municipal Hall. Most inscriptions and signposts are bilingual, however, in some places they are not. Staff and officials are helpful although they do not speak Albanian. Municipal offices can provide you with all forms and announcements in both languages.

The website is not functional because there is a delay of several days in the minority language of the municipality. The email our “Secret Customer” sent was not answered in his native language by the municipal officials. In conclusion, considering the resources and possibilities, the municipal leaders are indeed trying to enforce the Law on Use of Languages.

Participants pointed out that the budget is small and the insufficient infrastructure is a major obstacle. The problem listed is that they receive documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language. Traffic signs and road marking are also an issue. Software that the municipal officials get from the central level is only in one working language, Albanian.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### ŠTRPCE/SHTËRPECË MUNICIPALITY

On April 1, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer” at the round table. As the Municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë has a Serbian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Albanian. The research conducted by CSD was done prior to the round table, and it found that members of the Albanian community feel they are welcomed once they enter the municipal building. There is a bilingual board at the very entrance to the Municipal Hall. The municipality bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages. There were two doormen, one Serb and one Albanian so the “Secret Customer” received all the necessary information. Most of the offices are staffed with officials of different ethnicities, so obtaining necessary information is relatively easy.

Inscriptions on all offices are in both languages, as well as counter signs. The required information was given to the “Secret Customer” in his/her mother tongue. All forms and documents can be obtained in both languages at the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipal Hall.

The “Secret Customer” checked the municipality website and discovered that most news is being published in both languages, but certain items are a couple of days late. There are two translators in the municipal administration, one Serbian and one Albanian.

Good will cannot and must not be the crucial factor in this case, especially when we speak about enforcing Law on the Use of Languages. Enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages requires a certain responsibility. We could not get a proper answer to the question saying who would be the responsible person in such a case. The author of the original replied to the message content. If, however, something is lost in the translation or the meaning has been changed, it would be almost impossible to find the person responsible.

The problem indicated is that they receive documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit information inadvertently because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language. There are exceptions, but in most cases, positive experiences all come from individual efforts rather than institutional processes.

What also sounded like an interesting initiative was the reintroduction of learning languages of in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum, and Albanians will have Serbian language. Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

### VUSHTRRI/VUÇITRN MUNICIPALITY

On March 18, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer” at the round table. As the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has an Albanian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Serbian. Research results of “Secret Customer” in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn are satisfying considering that Customer got a response for his every request in his language and the officials demonstrated helpfulness and professionalism. As with other municipalities some deficiencies were noted. The municipality only has one translator/interpreter, however, other officials help and provide service without delay in the language of the Customer. If an official did not know the Customer's language he/she, in a very polite way asked the Customer to wait until official who speaks the language could assist. However, the “Secret Customer” noticed that not all inscriptions and announcements are in both languages. This makes it difficult for citizens to find their way around the premises of local government.

Problems with language use were raised for both Serbian and Albanian languages. Both languages are largely distorted and grammatically incorrect as a consequence of a lack of staff and resources as well as lack of professional translators/interpreters. Of course, the greater issue is with Serbian, but there are issues with translations in Albanian as well.

The municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has only one translator/interpreter and there is a strong will of management among employees in implementing bilingualism, which was noticed by the “Secret Customer.” Regardless of the difficulties, the municipality demonstrated will to continue improving quality of language use in order to overcome the barriers and problems citizens who reside in the territory of his municipality are facing.

The debate passed in a friendly atmosphere where all participants, regardless of their ethnicity, expressed their dissatisfaction and problems they are facing when it comes to the use of language.

## SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLES

Results from round tables held in all 12 USAID Advancing Kosovo Together project partner municipalities from February to May 2015 demonstrate that all municipalities have similar issues in the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. During the implementation of the project “Support to the Language Commissioner's Efforts for Promoting the Use of Official Languages in 12 Partner Municipalities,” CSD noticed a few shortcomings in the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. The problem with enforcing the Law has first been seen in the lack of capacity and professional translators/interpreters in local self-governments, as well as lack of direct communication with central authorities.

All partner Municipalities face similar issues, including a lack of capacity and resources when it comes to translators/interpreters and their responsibility to correctly translate text. Serbian and Albanian are official languages throughout the territory of Kosovo and they have equal importance as such. Both languages must be consistent and equal without ambiguity. The Law on the Use of Languages protects both languages equally as well as the institutional ethnic structure. However, fully enforcing this law is still difficult because during the law-making process, implementation and difficulties that may arise were not taken into account. Unfortunately, the case of Law on the Use of Languages is not the only one. There are other cases and laws which are not fully enforced, but can be interpreted in a different way because of poor translation. Each of the mentioned municipalities in which this project was implemented has one to two translators/interpreters which are overworked with translating municipal documents. They mostly work on regulations, letters, requests, and other administrative paperwork, while working least with citizens who are being done a disservice. Municipalities that show progress and fulfill greater

obligations toward this law have equal structures for citizens of Albanian, Serbian, and other communities.

What also can be considered a conclusion from the round tables is confirmation from representatives and officials of local authorities that the communication with central authorities is always, or very often, only in one language. This means that all documents, regulations, laws and other means of communication from central authorities with local administration is monolingual (only in Albanian in this case), which obliges the translators/interpreters working in local administrations to translate all documentation. Translators/interpreters working in local administrations are not trained in specific technical areas, but they translate/interpret everything, from infrastructure to education and health, which often leads to incorrect interpretation. However, local administrations are obliged to send central institutions all requirements, regulations, and other documents in two official languages or they will not be accepted. Local government has additional difficulties because translators undertake additional work that is nearly impossible to perform adequately and with a high level of quality.

The question of who bears responsibility for incorrect translation was discussed during the round tables. None of those present had a concrete answer, but it is known from prior experience that no one has been penalized because of poor translation. This is true for both individuals and institutions. In this way, citizens are the ones who suffer the most, whether because they cannot understand the translated text or because some procedures are being delayed due to a violation of the Law on the Use of Languages by institutions. In addition, most documents are not in both languages; binding enforcement order is obtained. Sanctioning does not exist when the Law is not followed by the institutions themselves. This, in turn, harms the citizens as such.

We cannot generalize these conclusions to all municipalities, nor say that the Law on the Use of Languages was violated deliberately. Municipalities with different ethnic structures and officials are ahead in terms of ensuring that all their citizens receive adequate services in their own language. This is true in terms of the maximum capacities of local administration. The very ethnic structure and officials who use both official languages in internal communication facilitates provision of services to citizens in both languages.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### MUNICIPALITIES

These recommendations will not solve all issues local administrations have in fully enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages, but they will help municipalities reach out to citizens and provide them with services in their own language, something they are guaranteed by law. These recommendations are in accordance with current abilities of the municipalities to succeed in providing citizens with services in two official languages in all communities with minimal effort.

- Citizens from a minority community do not feel comfortable and have many problems orientating themselves and finding their way around once they enter most local administration premises. If officials in the reception do not know the citizens' language, they simply cannot find required departments and information in those municipalities.

- a) With little effort, translators working in local administrations can adequately translate the names of departments;
  - b) Officials from minority ethnicities working in local self-governments can help with translating into different languages;
  - c) Very little effort is needed to translate information maps, which show department locations, into the minority language.
- In some local municipal administrations, when a citizen from a minority community requests certain information in their mother tongue, the officials do not react because they do not know the language. Very often these people try to find another way or simply give up on their requests.
    - a) There must be more consideration from the officials in the department of reception. When a person who speaks another official language enters, he/she should ask colleagues who also speak the language to help in providing services.
  - When a minority community member asks for a form for the sake of using services provided by the local self-government, he/she receives it in another language or in a very bad, even incomprehensible language of the minority community of that municipality.
    - a) With solidarity of officials coming from minority communities who work in these local administrations, these documents can be corrected and be unequivocally translated in the target language;
    - b) When someone who speaks an official language requests a form from an official, but in language of minority community of that municipality, the official should try and deliver this form in their language, or, if he/she does not understand the requests then he/she should ask colleagues who speak the language to provide services to customers;
    - c) If there is no one who speaks the person's language in the department, solidarity among officials who provide services for citizens is of crucial importance.
  - There are other institutions which are obliged to abide by the Law on the Use of Languages, as well as companies of social value which often do not comply with the mentioned Law. When these institutions or companies violate the Law and do not provide citizens service in their language (one of official languages), even though there are mechanisms for doing so, citizens do not know whom to refer to for help and support in using their rights.
    - a) Local administrations should act as a service provider for its citizens, even if this some cases are not in their jurisdiction. They should then be referred to the adequate address where citizens can ask for help in using their language;
    - b) If a person is not capable of requesting in person or filing a request to the adequate address, the local administration is the one to help its citizens. It should introduce them with processes and procedures so they can use their rights that are guaranteed by law in institutions that are not under the municipality's jurisdiction.

## INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Over the years of CSD's work with officials and local administrations, the problem of not using official languages was encountered on a daily basis, especially during the period of project implementation. In order to solve this problem at a local level, changes in job classification and

compulsory education are needed. CSD recommends the following for solving these problems:

- Every municipal department should have a translator/interpreter. The translator/interpreter of each department should know the department, terminology, and activities of the department. In so doing, problems would be resolved in terms of:
  - a) Availability of information to the citizens in their mother tongue;
  - b) Availability of forms and requests all municipal languages;
  - c) Translations from one language to another will be correct and without ambiguity, reasonable and available to citizens;
  - d) Instructions, signposts, and maps would be clear and in official languages of the municipality;
  - e) Communication with central authorities would be facilitated and there would be no delay, obscurities, or rejection by the central government due to ambiguous translations or requests in only one language.
  
- Learning the language of the environment as part of compulsory education (both Serbian and Albanian) in all primary and high schools in Kosovo.
  - a) By adopting this recommendation, the problem of not using languages would not be solved immediately, but would resolve itself in the near future. Learning languages in schools would result in a complete, systematic solution to implementing of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo;
  - b) Because of the general political situation, if this recommendation cannot be implemented soon, the temporary solution would be to introduce informal language teaching in every municipality throughout Kosovo. Officials from local administrations, judiciaries, police, etc. who work directly with citizens would be given preference over all other interested citizens. Another priority group would be company employees who perform a social activity and work directly with citizens by providing services.

#### THE LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE:

- a) The Language Commissioner's Office can independently, without complaints from citizens, react if irregularities are noticed in the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages;
- b) Every recommendation that Language Commissioner's Office outlines to institutions that do not fully enforce the Law on the Use of Languages should be public and published on the Office website in order to be clearly visible. This would result in raising Office transparency to a higher level;
- c) Public meetings should be regularly organized in municipalities so citizens can gain trust in the Commissioner's Office and realize the importance of communication and cooperation. The institutions themselves will see the necessity for the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages;
- d) Monitoring of the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages should be done in cooperation with civil society organizations at the local level. Define measurable indicators for progress of local governments in the implementation of the law;

- e) Promote the introduction of learning Serbian and Albanian languages as a compulsory subject in primary and high school education in Kosovo;
- f) Until conditions for compulsory language learning in schools are met, the Language Commissioner's Office should support and encourage civil society organizations to organize extracurricular classes of learning the official languages;
- g) Ensure that extracurricular learning of official languages is mandatory for civil servants in central and local institutions that directly provide services to citizens.