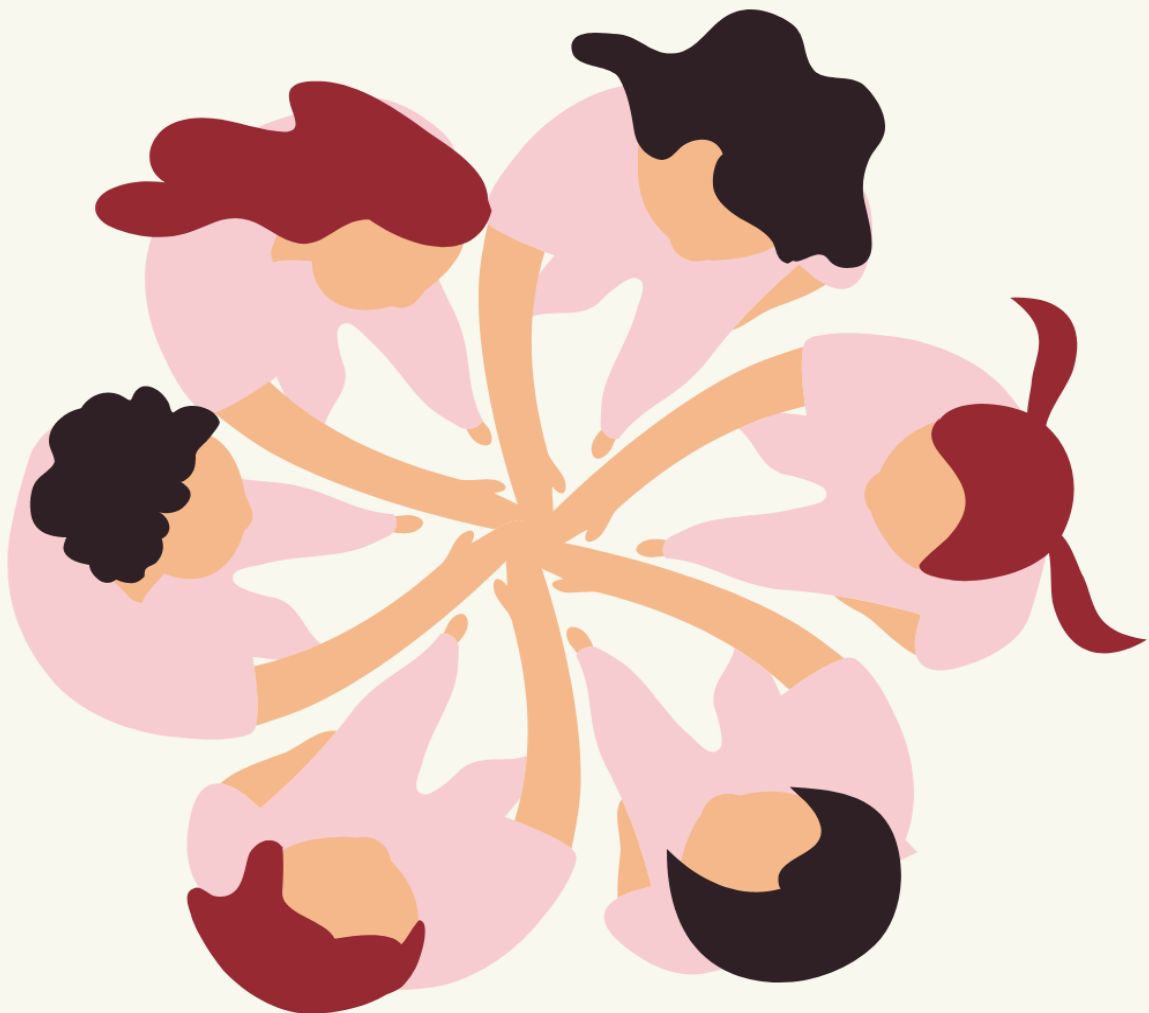


REPORT

# Impact of COVID-19 on women's employment in childcare sector

November, 2020

Pristina, Kosovo



**Drafted by:**



**Drafted for:**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC**

**EYE** Enhancing Youth  
Employment

*The development and publication of this document has been supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through its project Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE), which is implemented by Helvetas and MDA. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of UBO Consulting and does not necessarily represent the views of SDC.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. Key Findings.....	5
<b>2. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1. Sampling Design and Size .....	8
3.2. Limitation of the survey .....	11
3.3. Finalization of the questionnaire .....	13
3.4. Fieldwork and quality check .....	13
3.5. Data cleaning, tabulation and analysis .....	14
<b>4. RESULTS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1. General Information .....	14
4.2. The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic .....	17
4.3. The contribution of stakeholders in mitigating the COVID-19 crisis in Childcare sector .....	28
4.4. The main needs of Childcare sector towards mitigating the COVID-19 crisis .....	30
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>32</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Years of Kindergartens' Operation .....	15
Figure 2. The number of children enrolled in the kindergarten during the last 3 years, excluding 2020 .....	15
Figure 3. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of children enrolled .....	16
Figure 4. The number of employees (women) in the kindergarten during the last 3 years, excluding 2020 .....	16
Figure 5. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of employees (women) .....	17
Figure 6. Measures taken by kindergartens, to manage the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic .....	18
Figure 7. The way the kindergartens operate .....	19
Figure 8. The percentage of the capacity that kindergartens are currently operating with.....	19
Figure 9. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the number of children enrolled in kindergartens .....	20
Figure 10. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of children enrolled in 2020 ...	20
Figure 11. The reasons that parents stopped sending their children to kindergartens after the quarantine period .....	21
Figure 12. Parents obligations towards monthly costs of registering their children (while the kindergartens were closed).....	22
Figure 13. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the number of employees in kindergartens .	22
Figure 14. The percentage of the increase/decrease in the number of employees .....	23
Figure 15. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the layoff/firing of employees.....	23
Figure 16. The number of MALE/FEMALE employees laid off/fired from work.....	24
Figure 17. The length of time for which laid off employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were laid off .....	24
Figure 18. The method of payment for the have laid off employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic .....	25
Figure 19. The main reason for dismissal during the COVID-19 pandemic .....	26
Figure 20. The most affected work positions within kindergartens by the COVID-19 pandemic ...	26
Figure 21. The most affected kindergarten services by the COVID-19 pandemic? .....	27
Figure 22. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the income of kindergartens in the last six months, compared to the same period with the previous year .....	28
Figure 23. Financial support kindergartens have received from the Government of Kosovo, donor organizations or other relevant stakeholders, since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic .....	29
Figure 24. The efficiency of the provided support .....	29
Figure 25. Achieving support in a timely manner .....	30
Figure 26. The main needs of Childcare sector towards mitigating the COVID-19 crisis.....	31

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period of October 2020, UBO Consulting, on behalf of Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) and Association of Private Pre-School Institutions (APPI), conducted a study on the “Impact of COVID-19 on Women Employment in Childcare Sector”<sup>1</sup>. This study aimed to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the number of employees in the childcare sector, its revenues and number of children served. It also put a light on the most affected job positions, services and comparisons of volume of work per employee within this year and previous years.

This study consisted of a total of 67 interviews with representatives of kindergartens, such as principals and/or managers, mostly members of Association of Private Pre-School Institutions (APPI).

### 1.1. Key Findings

- Initially, most respondents (64%) reported that the number of children enrolled in kindergarten had increased during the last 3 years, excluding 2020, while 27 percent of them stated that this number had remained intact. The interviewed kindergartens declared a total of 3754 enrolled children, until before the onset of the pandemic.
- About 54 percent of respondents reported that the number of employees (women) had increased during the last 3 years, excluding 2020, while less than half reported that this number had remained the same (43%). The majority of the interviewed kindergartens (N=57) declared a total of 560 employees, until before the onset of the pandemic. Out of this number, 548 were female employees.
- More than half of the respondents (66%) stated that they were operating with limited capacities (respecting the anti-COVID measures), while 27 percent of them declared to have been operating at full capacity, without any restrictions.
- Further, the vast majority of the respondents (90%), reported that out of the total number of children enrolled in their kindergartens (3444) before the pandemic, there has been an average decrease of 38.24 percent, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More than half of the respondents (54%) stated that one of the reasons that the parents stopped sending their children to kindergarten was to protect them and others from exposure to the virus.
- Others believed that their reasoning had to do with the negative impact in the development of children (22%) and that parents had no sufficient income as a result

---

<sup>1</sup> The current survey was more focused on the impact of COVID-19 on Women Employment among kindergartens that were members of the APPI.

of the COVID-19 pandemic, to continue sending their children to kindergartens after the quarantine period (19%).

- Almost all respondents (97%) declared that parents were not obliged to pay the monthly fee at all, if their children did not attend kindergarten due to the COVID-19 circumstances.
- Forty-two percent of respondents who reported a decrease on the number of employees, declared that out of 250 employees, this number has decreased during 2020 with an average decrease of 33.23 percent. Out of this number (250), the vast majority of them were female employees (244).
- While 32 percent of respondents declared that they had to lay off employees (3 Male employees, and 144 Female employees), only a few kindergartens (12%) had to fire them (1 Male employee, and 20 Female employees), as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only four (4) percent of respondents were able to provide their laid off employee's full wages.
- When listing the main reasons kindergartens' management had laid off/fired employees, the majority of respondents (67 %) declared that they dismissed their employees as a direct result of the decrease in income, whereas, 22% of the respondents claimed that due to the reduction in the number of children, certain positions of employees were no longer called for.
- Data reveal that Teacher/ Caregiver positions underwent the most difficulties as generated by the COVID-19 pandemic (47%).
- The majority of respondents (95%) declared that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the kindergartens' income to a certain extent/greatly these last six months.
- A majority of kindergarten representatives (91%) declared that their institution had received financial aid from the Government, whereas, 7% of the respondents were not recipients of any financial support since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Almost half of the respondents (49%) declared that the support provided by the Government did not serve as sufficient in battling the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas the other half of the respondents alluded that the given support has proved sufficiency only to a certain extent.
- Up to 34 percent declared that the financial support had arrived on time, 33 % claimed that the financial support had not arrived on time, and 31% declared that the support was timely appropriate to a certain extent.
- Main emergency needs listed by respondents included financial support (assisting in rent, employees' salaries, tax cuts etc.) (76%). Other needs were also mentioned: extension of the financial package provided by the government directed to the businesses (11%), protective and hygienic means (7%), food packages (2%) and children's toys (1%).

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, UBO Consulting was commissioned by Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) and Association of Private Pre-School Institutions (APPI), to conduct a study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Women Employment in Childcare Sector, focusing on the kindergartens, members of the APPI. Considering the large impact of COVID-19 pandemic in all areas of present human occupation, millions of people have been unable to go to work, resulting in an exceptionally stark drop-in activity and unprecedented job losses.

Therefore, it was deemed important to grasp its impact on a sector dominated by women; respectively the childcare sector. With the prevalent given issue, EYE/APPI took upon to identify the prime consequences of COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of women engaging in this particular sector.

The present study was designed to determine the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment of women in this sector and revenues of private kindergartens. Whereas, expected outputs of the project included:

- Assessment of the childcare sector in terms of employment and revenues and number of children served
- Impact of COVID-19 on the number of employees in the sector, revenues and number of children served
- Most affected job positions in the sector
- Most affected services in the sector
- Comparison of volume of work per employee and number of employees before the pandemic and currently
- What are the reasons parents stopped or continued sending their children to kindergartens after quarantine period?
- If certain employees were laid-off and then returned to work than it is very important to understand for how long were those employees not receiving salary.

For this assignment, UBO Consulting agency assisted EYE/ APPI with technical advice in designing, developing and administering the study. Namely, the agency's major tasks included:

- Preparing the research instruments
- Proposing the data collection methods and procedure
- Conducting face-to-face interviews (surveys)
- Conducting data analysis
- Drafting a general report

### 3. METHODOLOGY

With respect to the purpose of this study, UBO Consulting used a quantitative method of research, in order to identify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of women working in the private childcare sector. Essentially, quantitative studies such as surveys have to reach enough respondents to create statistically significant results. It is in fact these statistics that makes surveys an invaluable tool for strategic decisions through placing the public's responses firmly in the realm of mathematical/statistical analysis.

The interview included questions designed to measure behavior, opinions, perceptions, and knowledge of the interviewed persons.

#### 3.1. Sampling Design and Size

One of the most significant steps in survey is the sample design since it principally ensures the accuracy of the survey information. In this sense, the sample design has to reflect the main purpose of the study within the framework of scientific principles and the possibilities they offer.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the current survey included a more representative sample in terms of the members of the APPI, rather than the whole childcare sector. In this respect, the "Impact of COVID-19 on Women Employment in Childcare Sector" survey sample consisted of 67 private kindergartens, out of which 54 kindergartens were members of the Association of Private Pre-school Institutions (APPI). Considering the recent establishment of APPI, the number of kindergartens becoming a member on the association is constantly changing, towards an increase of the membership by these institutions. Accordingly, the survey sample could be considered as quite representative based on the current association membership of kindergartens.

Sampling size for this study was designed using the list of 159 licensed pre-school educational institutions, issued by the Division for Private Pre-University Education of the Ministry of Education and Science<sup>2</sup>, in Kosovo. Namely, the final list of licensed pre-school educational institutions to be interviewed in this study was compiled in cooperation with the Association of Private Pre-school Institutions (APPI), in order to be able to identify and include members of the association.

---

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Science in Kosovo. Division for Private Pre-University Education. Licensed pre-school educational institutions 25.11.2018 Url.: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/divizioni-per-arsim-privat-parauniversitar>



This sample size was calculated considering the confidence level of 95% and the margin of error of +/- 9% for the entire sampling population.

The following table presents the list of the interviewed licensed pre-school educational institutions, depicting their membership to the association, as well as their location by municipality.

*Table 1. The list of the interviewed licensed pre-school educational institutions*




Nr.	Institution	Municipality	Membership to APPI
1	Porta e dijes	Prishtinë	Yes
2	Kopshti Shpresa	Prishtinë	Yes
3	Ninulla	Ferizaj	Yes
4	Vleta	Ferizaj	No
5	Rubiks	Ferizaj	Yes
6	Kopshti Hello	Gjilan	No
7	Kopshti Nushe-T	Gjilan	No
8	Lapsi	Prishtinë	Yes
9	Smiley	Prishtinë	Yes
10	Yjet	Prishtinë	No
11	Foleja magjike	Lipjan	Yes
12	Dielli 1	Podujeve	Yes
13	Kopshti i arte	Prishtinë	Yes
14	Foleja jone	Prishtinë	Yes
15	Samire Krasniqi	Prishtinë	Yes
16	Gjeniu	Prishtinë	Yes
17	Bardha Akademi	Prishtinë	Yes
18	Bardha 4	Prishtinë	Yes
19	Nina	Mitrovicë	Yes
20	Akademija e femijeve	Peje	Yes
21	Bardha 1	Prishtinë	Yes
22	Bardha 6	Prishtinë	Yes
23	Bota per femijet abc	Prishtinë	Yes
24	Kopshti i endrrave 3	Prishtinë	Yes
25	Kopshti i endrrave 4	Prishtinë	Yes
26	Diakonia	Mitrovicë	No
27	EDU KIDS LAND	Mitrovicë	No
28	Ala	Prishtinë	Yes

29	ABC	Peje	Yes
30	Genius land	Prishtinë	Yes
31	Eno edu ars	Prishtinë	Yes
32	Elena S	Prishtinë	Yes
33	Filizat	Gjakove	Yes
34	Bambi	Glogovc	Yes
35	Akademija e femijeve 2	Peje	Yes
36	Kopshti Elena 2	Prishtinë	Yes
37	Porta e Arte	Prishtinë	No
38	Thesari i dijes	Ferizaj	Yes
39	Babezi	Prishtinë	Yes
40	A&Z	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
41	Kopshti ANISA	Gjilan	No
42	Amelia	Gjakove	Yes
43	Bleteza	Prishtinë	No
44	Ardhmeria	Prizren	Yes
45	Kopshti Hello Viti	Viti	Yes
46	VIP Kids	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
47	Linda	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
48	Perspektiva - t	Prizren	Yes
49	Kopshti Eda	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
50	Kanarinat	Prishtinë	Yes
51	Linda	Prishtinë	Yes
52	Bota e femijeve	Prishtinë	Yes
53	Ariani - B	Prishtinë	Yes
54	Kopshti Birds	Prishtinë	Yes
55	Goni Kids	Prishtinë	No
56	Babies & toddlers	Prishtinë	Yes
57	Nje, Dy, Tre	Prishtinë	Yes
58	Bota e qudirave	Prishtinë	Yes
59	Buzeqeshja	Prizren	Yes
60	Ora	Suharekë	Yes
61	Unik	Prishtinë	Yes
62	Kopshti Mësjnjëtorja Qiriaz	Gjilan	Yes
63	Kosovo Leadership Academy	Mitrovicë	No
64	Perpektiva	Prizren	Yes

65	Zogjte 1	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
66	Kopshti i endrrave 2	Fushë Kosovë	Yes
67	Kida Home	Prishtinë	No

Interviews were conducted with kindergartens' principals/managers. The questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviews, using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) technique. CAPI technique ensures less errors and higher data quality, which is the main method to ensure validity of the study.

The interviewers followed the above-mentioned steps to conduct the interviews:

1. Used the list of the respondents handed to them:  
 *the interviewers were provided with the main list of private kindergartens, included in the study*
2. Arranged the meeting for the interview:  
 *the interview candidate was selected from the list. If the identified candidate was not available on the first visit, a maximum number of three attempts were made to contact and set up for an interview. Non-responding and refusing candidates after a maximum number of attempts were formally entered in the interviewer log.*
3. Conducted face to face interview:  
 *during the preparation for interview the interviewer explained that because of the importance of being able to answer the questions on the basis of personal beliefs and as honestly as possible, it is preferred to conduct the interview free from the presence of other people. When the conditions were meet for starting the interview, the interviewer started reading the questions from the instrument.*

### 3.2. Limitation of the survey

Apart from the advantages, surveys also have certain disadvantages. In addition to the general commodity of respondents to attend the survey and provide their answers, lack of information on the topic and clarity of questions may also affect the validity of data, derived from surveys.

Nevertheless, the limitations of the current survey are mainly related to the survey sample size and design. First, the sample size is too small (N=67), in comparison to the whole survey population (N=159). In this sense, it could not be considered as representative, with regards to the child care sector in Kosovo, limiting the extent to which the results can be

generalized and used for the sector. This could also be implied by the margin of error ( $\pm 9\%$ ), which exceeded the standard margin of error in surveys ( $\pm 3\%$ ).

When it comes to sampling design, the selection method of kindergartens could be noted as another limitation to this study. As described in the aforementioned section, the final list of licensed pre-school educational institutions to be interviewed was compiled in cooperation with the Association of Private Pre-school Institutions (APPI), in order to be able to identify and include members of the association. As a result, the random selection procedure was not applied, while designing the survey sampling.

Finally, the representation of the membership of association should also be reconsidered. Regardless of the fact that there is a considerable coverage of current members of the association in this survey, the sampling size and design should be taken with a slight dose of scepticism, due to the lack of information on the exact number of the association members.

Having in mind the aforementioned limitations, further steps could be planned to produce representative and valid results, on the sector level. In this regard, the following activities could take place in the future:

- ✚ A larger survey should take place, including a more representative sampling size, in terms of the child sector; a total of 138 kindergartens should be surveyed, in order to produce a sample size with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$  for the entire sampling population.
- ✚ The final list of kindergartens to be interviewed should be based only in the official list of licensed pre-school educational institutions, issued by the Division for Private Pre-University Education of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- ✚ In order to assure accurate and un-biased reflection, the interviews should be conducted using random probability sampling within the general target population.
- ✚ The inclusion of parents could be of a significant value for the study. In order to draw in-depth information from the complex personal experiences, beliefs and perceptions of parents, focus group discussions could be organized with the respective target group.

### 3.3. Finalization of the questionnaire

The most important part of the survey process is the creation of questions that accurately measure the opinions, experiences, and expectations of the public. Creating good measures involves both writing good questions and organizing them to form the questionnaire.

For the purpose of this study, the instrument was prepared by UBO Consulting, while approved by EYE/APPI team. It consisted of mostly close-ended questions, whereas it will also include a few open-ended questions, in order to probe deep into respondents' answers, gaining valuable information about the subject at hand.

The questionnaire attempted to collect information on the impact of COVID-19 on women employment in child sector. More specifically, questions covered the following topics:

- ✚ The number of employees, children served and revenues has changed after the COVID-19 pandemics in private kindergartens (child care sector);
- ✚ How did the number of employees, children served and revenues changed after the COVID-19 pandemics in private kindergartens (child care sector);
- ✚ What were the main factors affecting the number of employees, children served and revenues in private kindergartens (child care sector); and
- ✚ What were the measures taken by these institutions and reasons behind those decisions?

Considering the target group of this study, the questionnaire was initially drafted in Albanian language, whereas it was then translated into English language, for analysis purposes.

### 3.4. Fieldwork and quality check

UBO Consulting conducted the survey fieldwork between 22<sup>nd</sup> of October and 12<sup>th</sup> of November. The survey has been conducted with representatives of 67 private kindergartens, mainly members of the Association of Private Pre-school Institutions (APPI), in order to collect information on the impact of COVID-19 on women employment in the child care sector in Kosovo.

In order to achieve effective supervision and quality assurance, quality check was carried out by the field supervisors, who were responsible for carrying out the first quality control by screening each questionnaire submitted and data entry personnel, responsible for carrying out the second level of quality control, while checking the data in the electronic database.

The standard procedure for UBO Consulting quality assurance is to back-check 1/3rd of the sample. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents were re-contacted by phone in order to verification and validate data. This process ensured the authenticity of results and safeguard the fairness of the research.

### 3.5. Data cleaning, tabulation and analysis

The data cleaning and analysis for quantitative survey was realized in SPSS and tables were generated as per the analysis plan that was finalized by the report writing team. Our experienced data validation professionals ensured that the data did not contain any unwanted codes, errors, inconsistencies, or missing data.

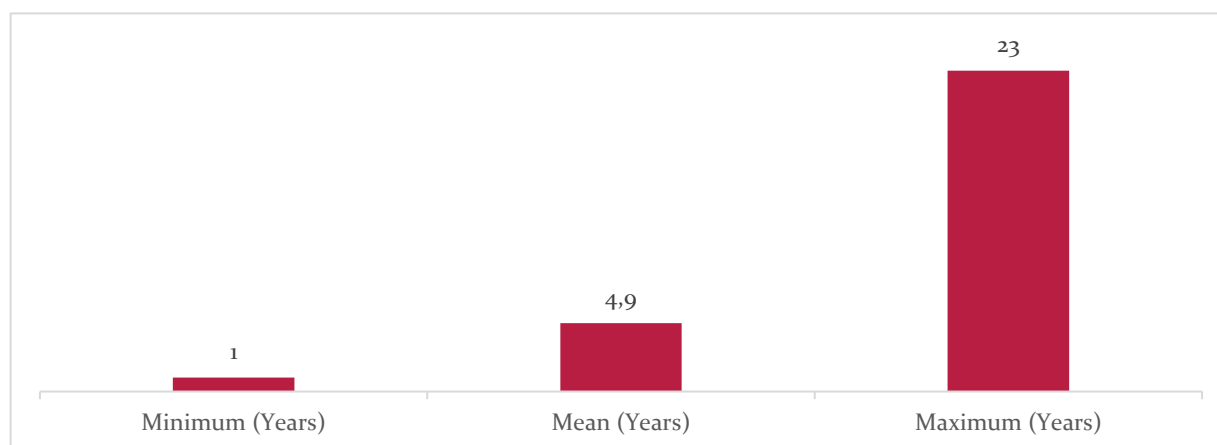
## 4. RESULTS

The following section discloses the results derived from interviews with 67 respondents regarding the “Impact of COVID-19 on Women Employment in Childcare Sector” study, among which, members of the Association of Private Pre-school Institutions (APPI) were included. This research addressed various topics, including the general situation of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment of women in this sector and revenues of private kindergartens. Specifically, it elaborated the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on job positions, services and number of employees before the pandemic and currently. Moreover, the study also elaborated on the issue of the number of children enrolled in these kindergartens, and the change in this number as a result of the pandemic.

### 4.1. General Information

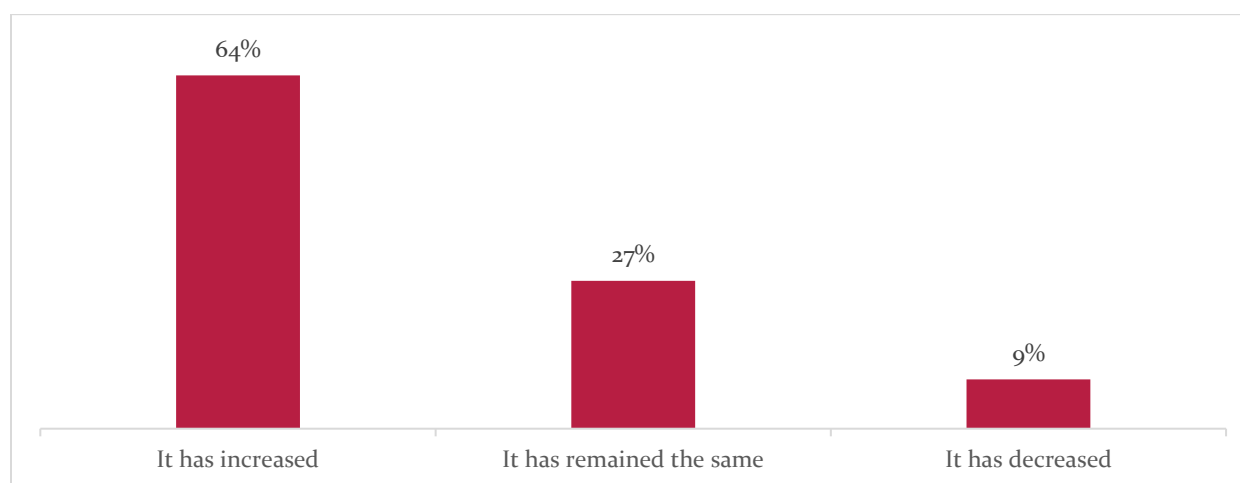
To begin with, a short description of the kindergartens’ operational years and capacities was obtained. Namely, the first part of the survey questionnaire discovered general information, on the year of kindergartens’ establishment, the number of children enrolled, as well as the number of employees and changes in the increase or decrease of these numbers during the last 3 years, excluding 2020.

Concerning the number of operational years, the mean number of years that the kindergartens have been actively operating was 4.9 years. Whereas, only one kindergarten was operating only for e year (minimum years of operation), the maximum years of operation reached a total of 23 years.



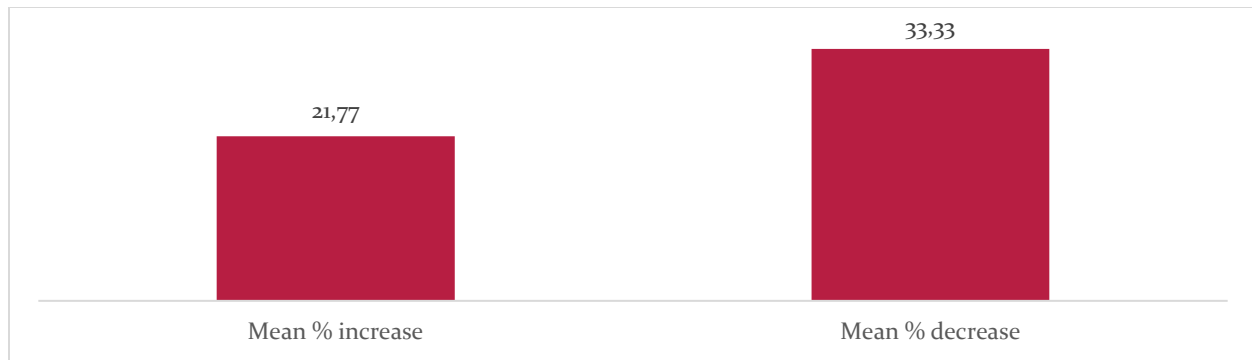
*Figure 1. Years of Kindergartens' Operation*

Further, the study provided the opportunity to elaborate on the number of children enrolled in these kindergartens, during the last 3 years, while excluding 2020. At first, the interviewed kindergartens declared a total of 3754 enrolled children, until before the onset of the pandemic. Next, as can be seen in the figure below, 64 percent of respondents stated that the number of children had increased, while 27 percent of them declared that this number had remained the same. The number of the kindergartens' representatives who stated that the number of registered children had decreased was significantly smaller (9%).



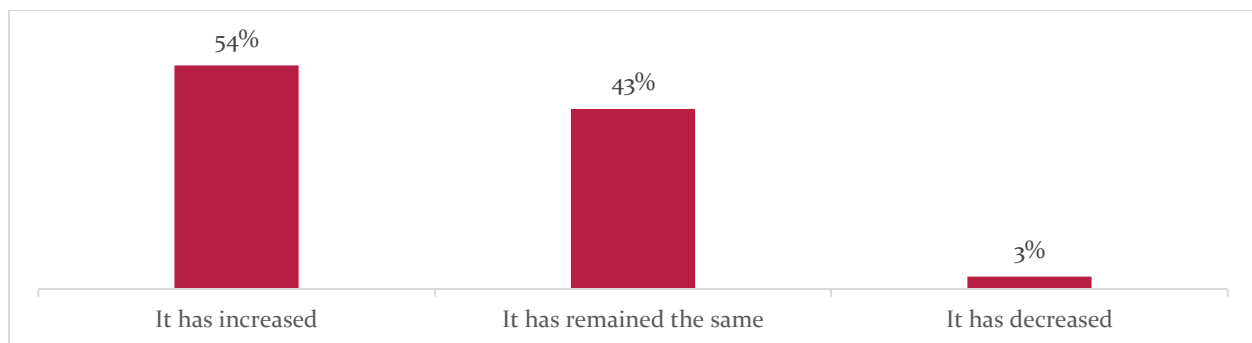
*Figure 2. The number of children enrolled in the kindergarten during the last 3 years, excluding 2020*

To further elaborate on this question, respondents were asked to specify the increase or decrease of this number, converted in percentage. Based on the results, the average increase turned out to be 21.77 percent, while that of decrease was 33.33 percent.



*Figure 3. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of children enrolled*

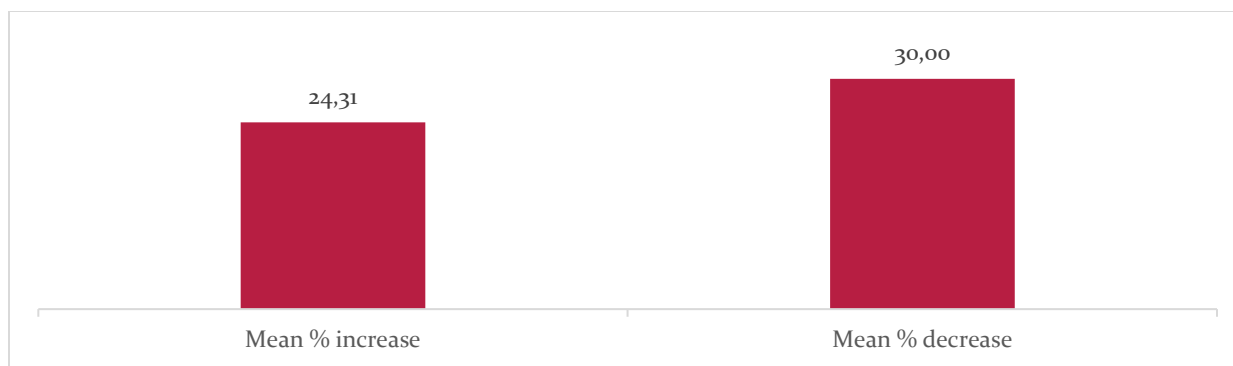
During the research, representatives of kindergartens also had the opportunity to declare if the number of female employees in the kindergartens had changed during the last 3 years, while excluding 2020. The majority of the interviewed kindergartens (N=57) declared a total of 560 employees, until before the onset of the pandemic. Out of this number, 548 were female employees. While 54 percent of them reported that the number of female employees had increased, while less than half (43%) claimed that this number had remained the same.



*Figure 4. The number of employees (women) in the kindergarten during the last 3 years, excluding 2020*

Respondents who said there had been an increase in the number of their female employees reported an increase of 24.31 percent. Whereas, the reduction of this number turned out to be 30 percent.





*Figure 5. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of employees (women)*

#### 4.2. The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

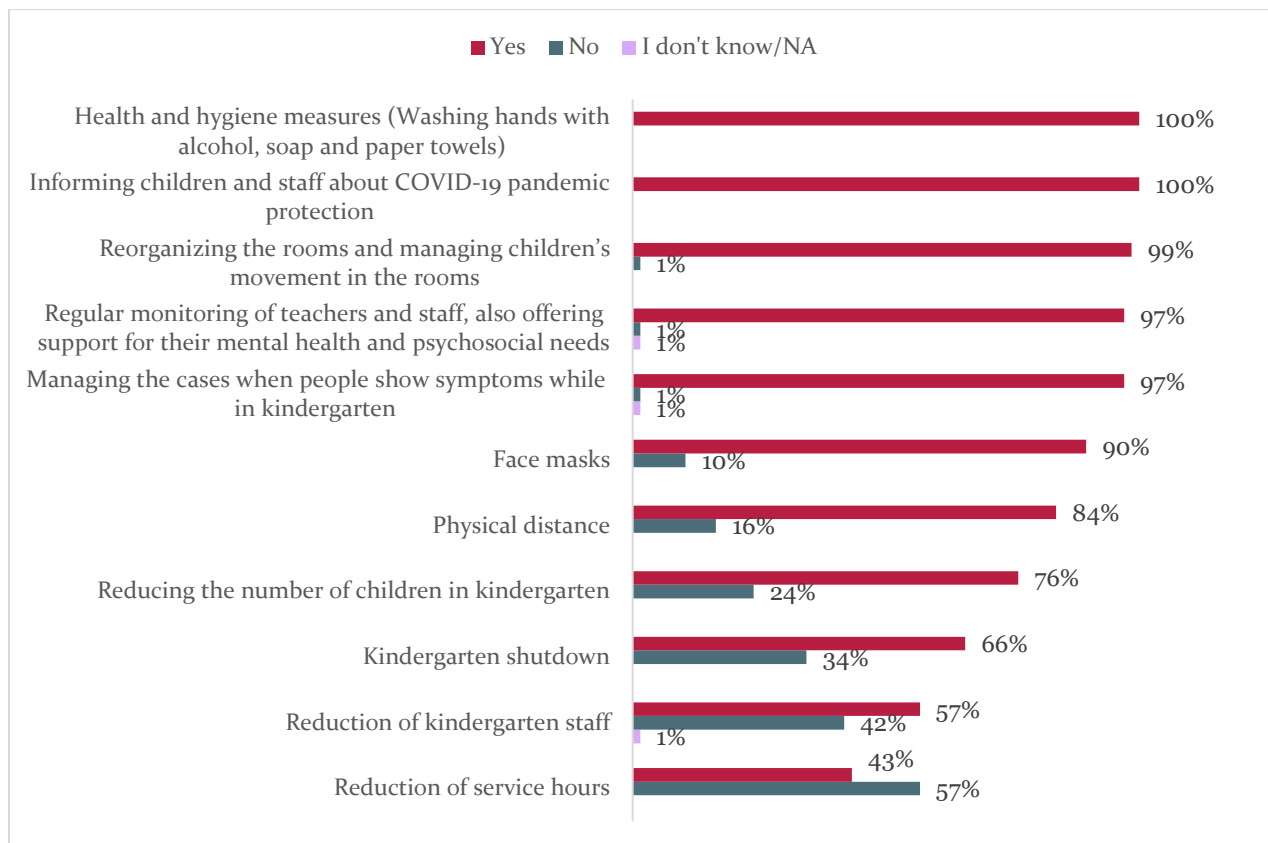
The COVID-19 crisis that has engulfed the world during 2020 challenged children's education, care and well-being. Many parents are struggling to balance their responsibilities for childcare and paid employment, with a disproportionate burden placed on women. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation of families had been described as 'a global childcare crisis'.<sup>3</sup>

With that said, this study also provided an opportunity to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had on managing kindergartens in Kosovo.

In order to expand understanding on the effect of COVID-19 on kindergartens, respondents had the opportunity to declare the measures that these institutions had taken to manage the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the results, all respondents (100%) declared to have done the following: taken health and hygiene measures (such as washing hands with alcohol, soap and paper towels), informed children and staff about COVID-19 pandemic protection and reorganized the rooms and managing children's movement in the rooms.

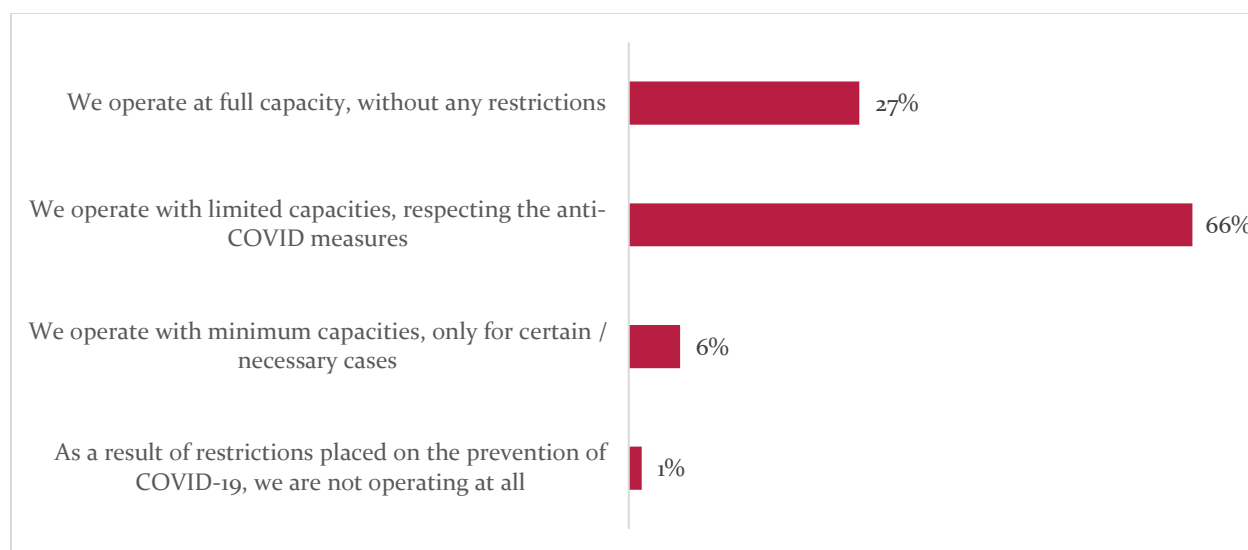
Further, the majority of them (respectively 97%, 90% and 84%), declared to have monitored regularly the physical and psychological wellbeing of their teachers and staff, while also offering support for their mental health and psychosocial needs, managed the cases when people had shown symptoms while in kindergarten, and practiced other measures of protection such as wearing masks and keeping a physical distance. Other measures towards managing the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic included: reduction of the number of children (76%), kindergarten shutdown (66%), reduction of counter-staff (57%) and reduction of service hours (43%).

<sup>3</sup> Childcare in a Global Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19 on work and family life (2020), retrieved on 17<sup>th</sup> of November. Url: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1109-childcare-in-a-global-crisis-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-work-and-family-life.html>



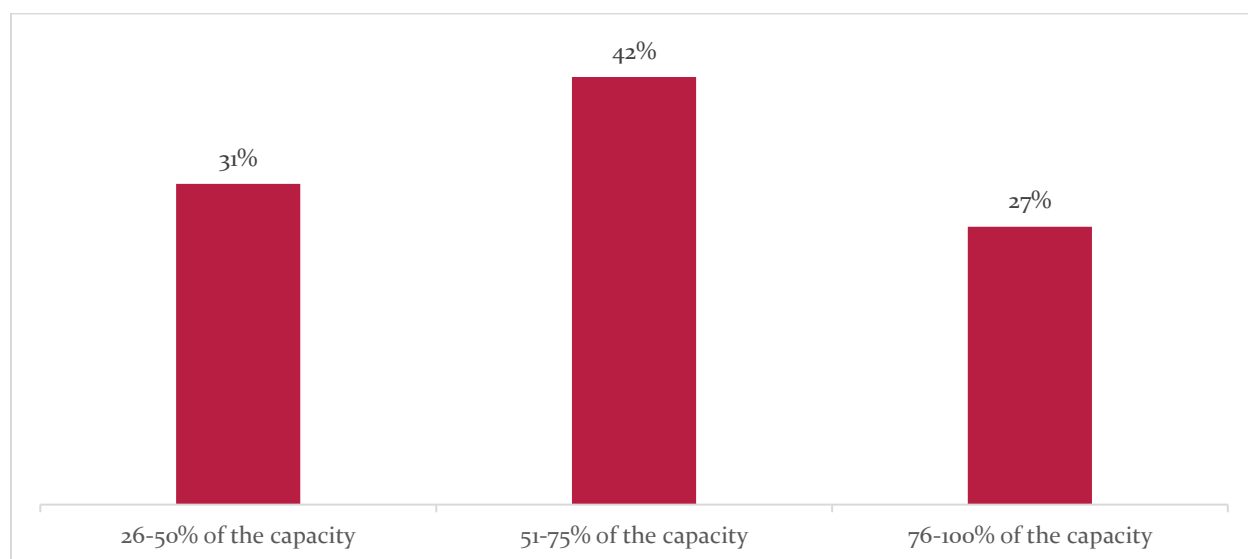
*Figure 6. Measures taken by kindergartens, to manage the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic*

Given that the pandemic has affected the cessation of many activities, respondents were also asked about the ways in which their kindergartens were currently operating. Most of them (66%) stated that they were operating with limited capacities (respecting the anti-COVID-19 measures), while 27 percent of the kindergartens' representatives declared to have been operating at full capacity, without any restrictions. The number of kindergartens which operated with minimum capacities, only for certain / necessary cases (6%), or were not operating at all (1%) was very small.



*Figure 7. The way the kindergartens operate*

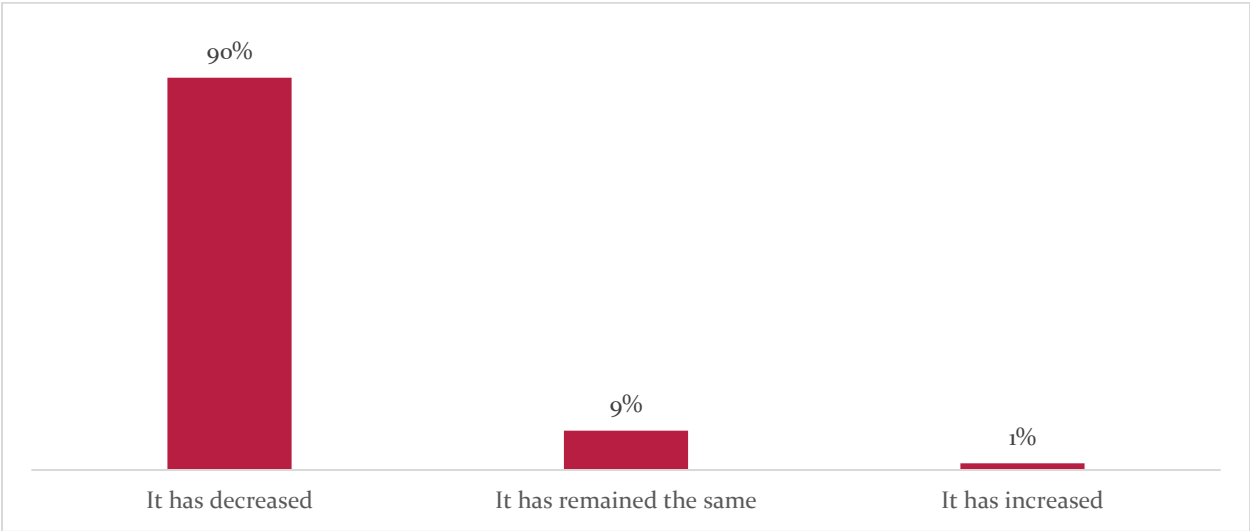
In addition, respondents who stated that they were operating at limited / minimum capacity were further asked about the percentage of capacities they were currently operating with. Less than half of respondents (42%) reported to have been operating at 51-73% of their capacities, followed by 31 percent who declared to have been using only 26-50% of their capacities. A portion of 27 percent of respondents reported that they were operating at 76-100% of their capacity.



*Figure 8. The percentage of the capacity that kindergartens are currently operating with*

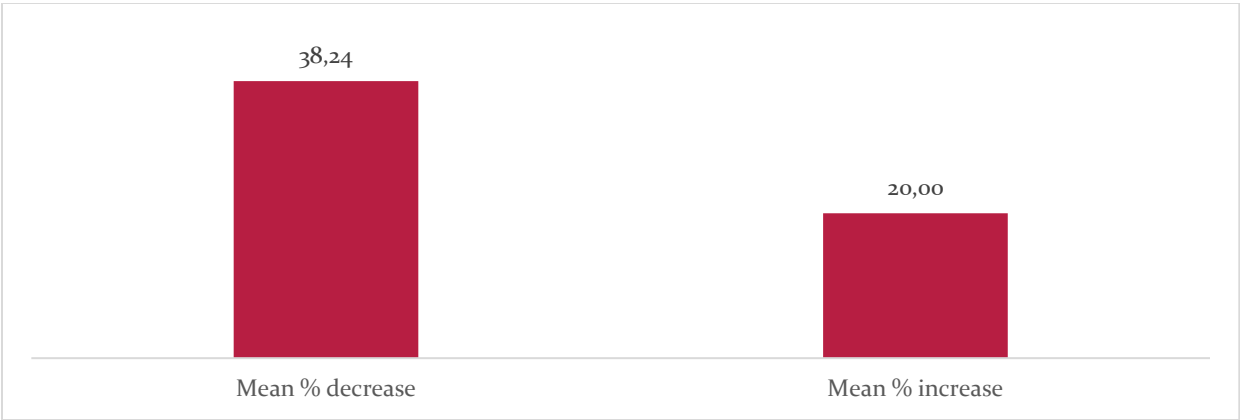
The impact of COVID-19 on the number of enrolled children in kindergartens was an important objective of this survey. Accordingly, kindergartens' representatives were asked to provide information in this aspect. As shown in the figure below, the vast majority of respondents (90%) declared to have experienced a decrease on the number of children

enrolled in their kindergartens, as many parents have stopped sending their children to kindergartens during this period. This negative impact has not been present among nine (9) percent of the interviewed kindergartens.



*Figure 9. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the number of children enrolled in kindergartens*

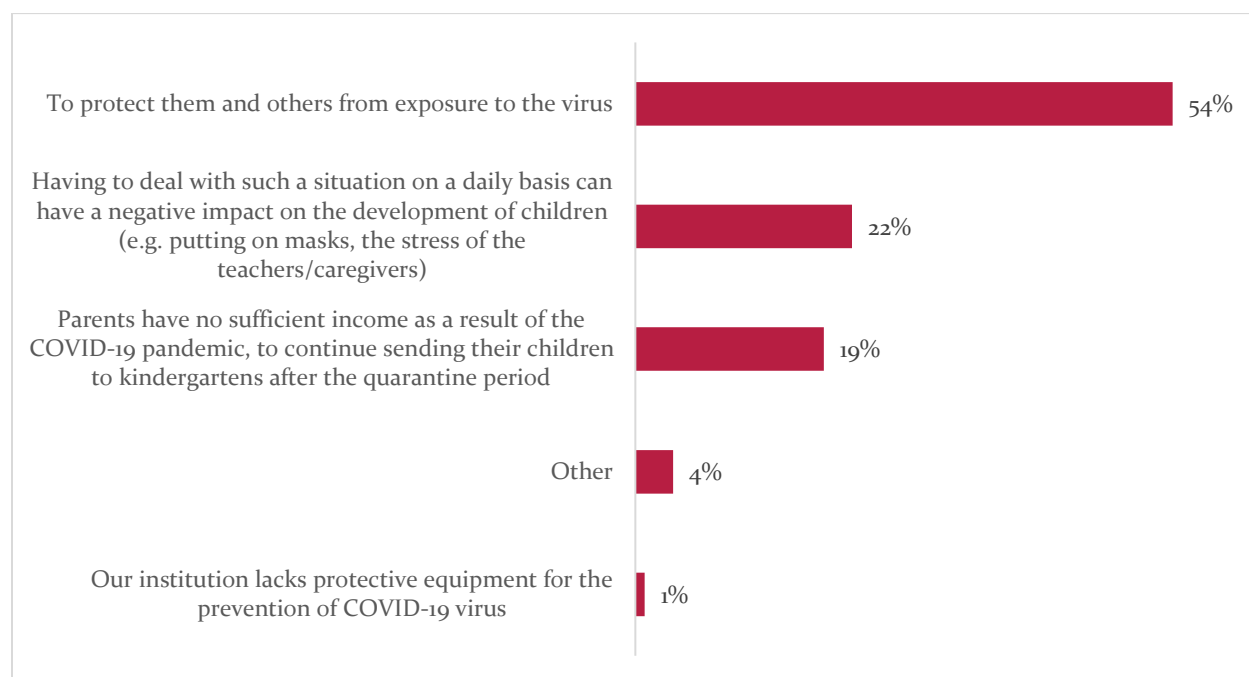
Further, when asked about the specific percentage of decrease on the number of children enrolled in these institutions, the survey results indicated an average of 38.24 percent decrease, out of the total number of enrolled children in the respective kindergartens (3754), due to the pandemic.



*Figure 10. The percentage of the increase/decrease of the number of children enrolled in 2020*

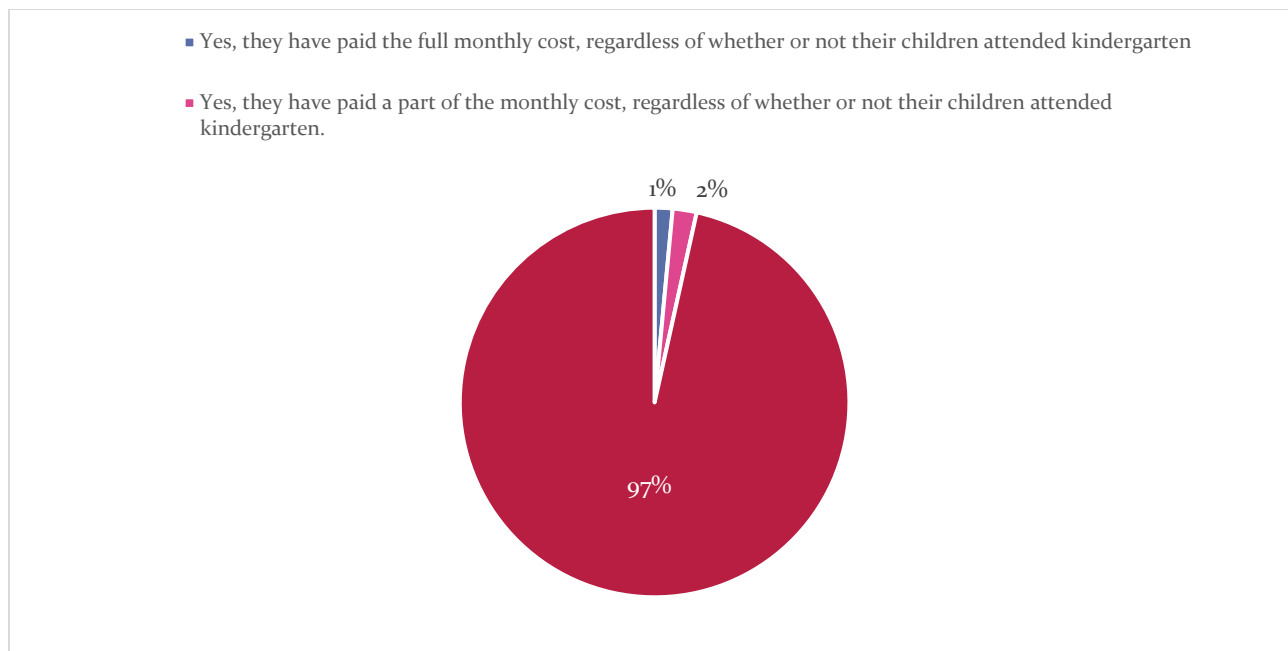
When considering the reasons why parents stopped sending their children to kindergarten after the quarantine period, the kindergarten representatives alluded different reasons on why the parents may have stopped sending their children to kindergarten. Slightly more than half of respondents (54%) stated that one of the reasons was to protect them and

others from exposure to the virus. Other reasons in this regard included: having to deal with such a situation on a daily basis could have a negative impact on the development of children (e.g. putting on masks, the stress of the teachers/caregivers) (22%) and that parents had no sufficient income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, to continue sending their children to kindergartens after the quarantine period (19%).



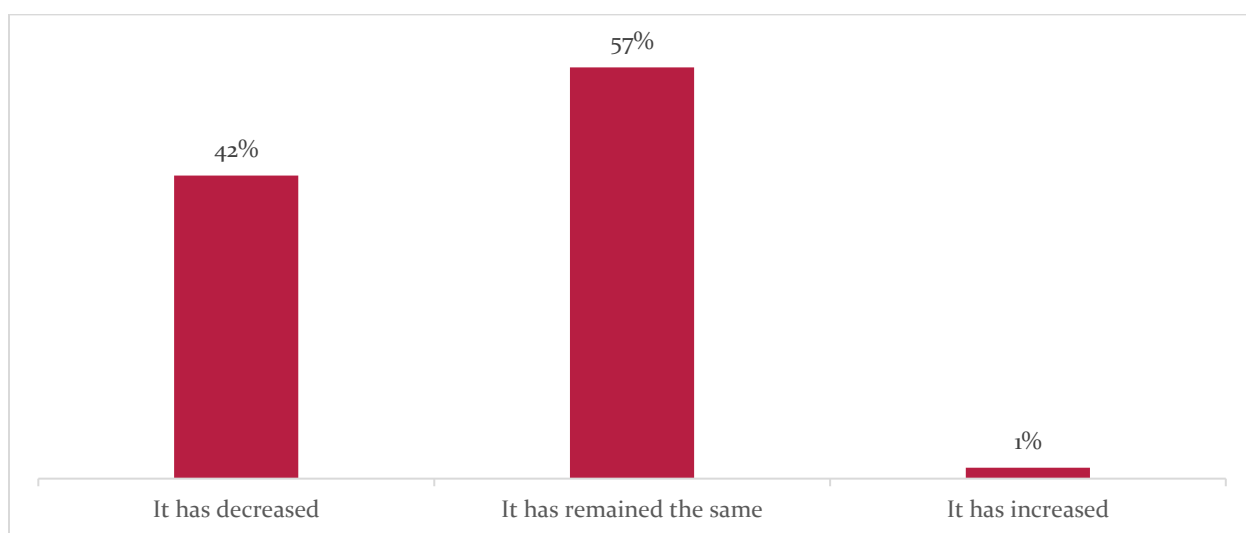
*Figure 11. The reasons that parents stopped sending their children to kindergartens after the quarantine period*

In addition to the attendance of kindergartens by children, survey respondents were also asked whether parents were obliged to pay the monthly fees of registering their children, even if they stopped sending their children to kindergartens (while the kindergartens were closed). Almost all of them (97%) declared that parents were not obliged to pay the monthly fee at all, if their children did not attend kindergartens.



*Figure 12. Parents obligations towards monthly costs of registering their children (while the kindergartens were closed)*

As indicated by the study objectives, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the numbers of employees in childcare sector was of a crucial importance. Therefore, kindergartens' representatives were asked on the increase/decrease of the number of employees, as a result of COVID-19. As implied by the figure, below there has been a decrease on the total number of employees (250), among 42 percent of the interviewed kindergartens. On the other hand, by 57 percent of respondents stated that the number of employees has remained the same, despite of the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Figure 13. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the number of employees in kindergartens*

Forty-two percent of respondents who reported a decrease on the number of employees, declared that out of 250 employees, this number has decreased during 2020 with an average decrease of 33.23 percent. Out of this number (250), the vast majority of them were female employees (244).

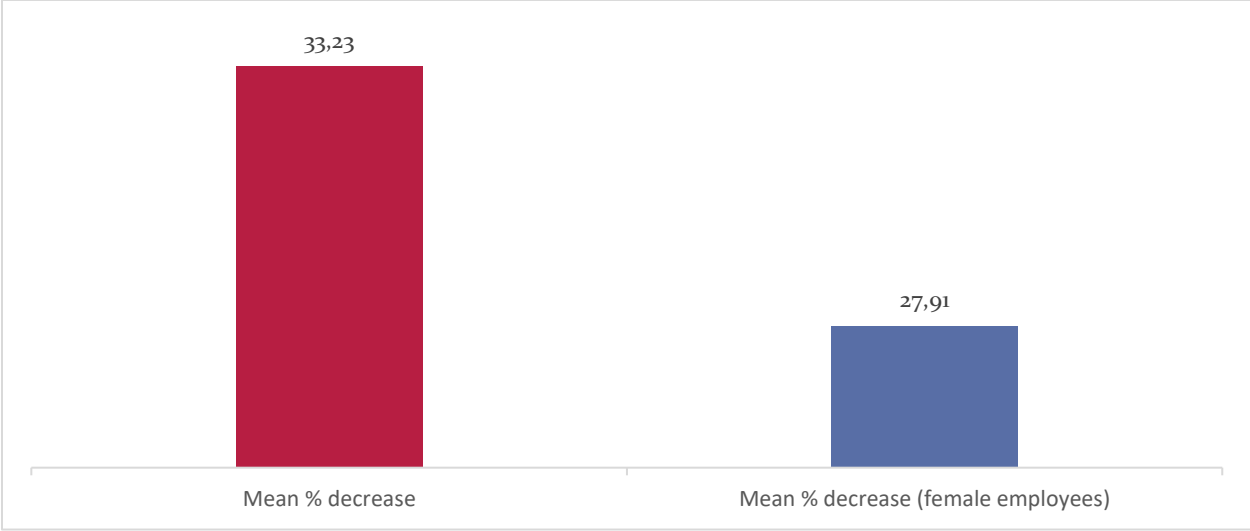


Figure 14. The percentage of the increase/decrease in the number of employees

With the purpose of exploring deeper on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the number of employees, respondents were asked if they had laid off or fired any employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While half of the respondents (53%) stated that they have not laid off or fired any employees, 32 percent of them declared that they had to take such actions, namely lay off employees, due to the pandemic. However, only a few kindergartens (12%) had to fire their employees, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

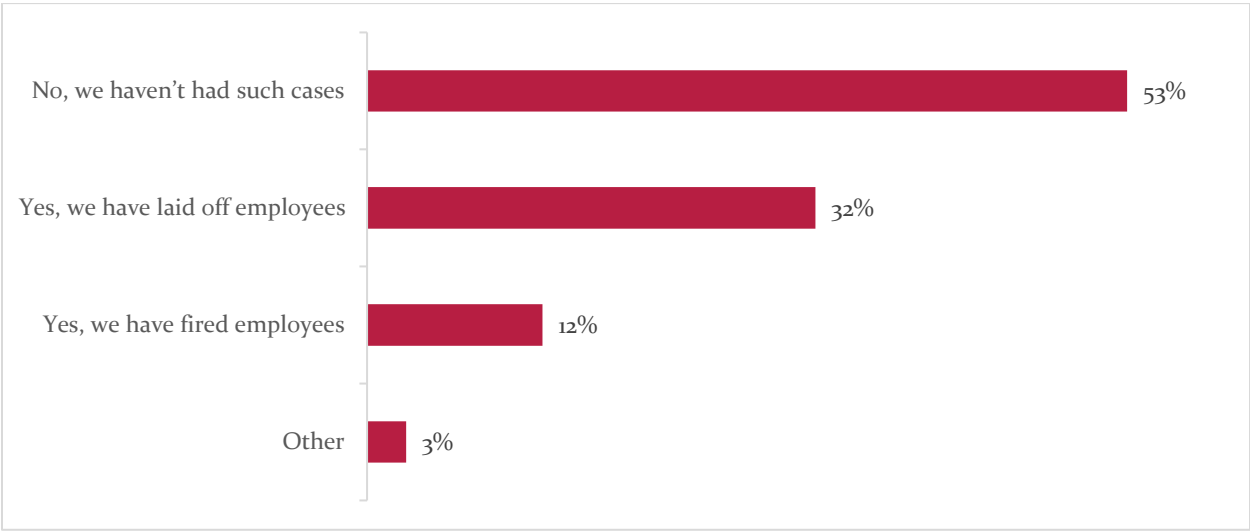


Figure 15. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the layoff/firing of employees

In addition, kindergartens’ representatives were asked to report the number of male and female employees that were laid off / fired from work. In this case, the latter had to lay off a total number of 144 female employees, while there were only three (3) laid off male employees. Further, the number of female employees fired from work was 20, while only one (1) male employee was fired, due to the pandemic.

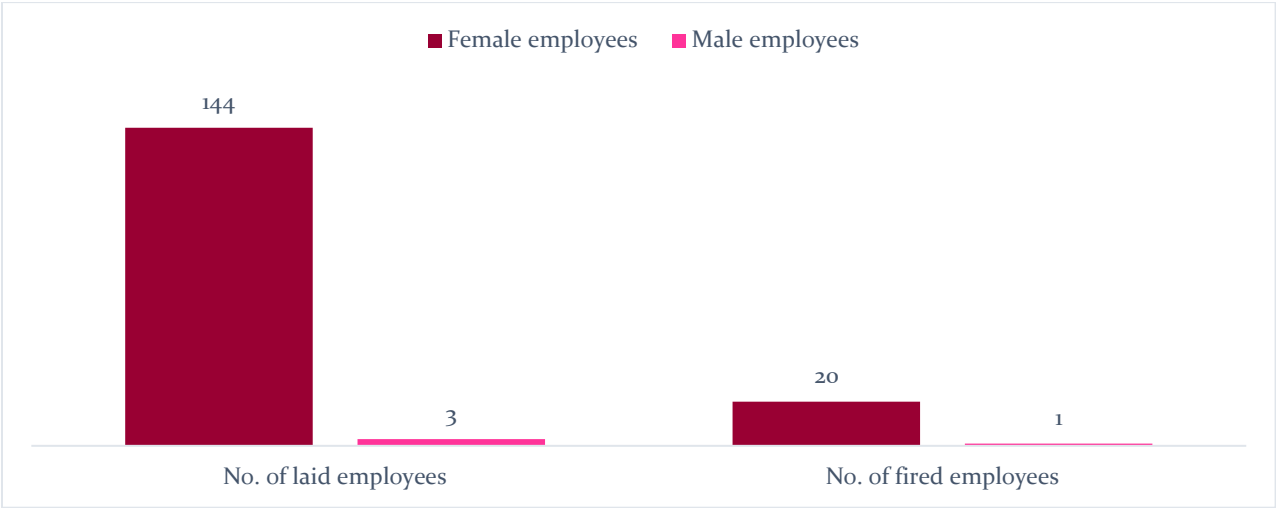


Figure 16. The number of MALE/FEMALE employees laid off/fired from work

Moreover, the data summarized in the chart below unveils the time span that the kindergartens laid off their employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, 48 percent of the respondents claimed to have laid off their employees until the complete functionalization of the kindergarten. Further, 30 percent of the respondents declared that they had taken that action for a period of 3-months, while the number of kindergartens which laid off their employees for a longer period of time (4 to 6 months) was smaller (13%).

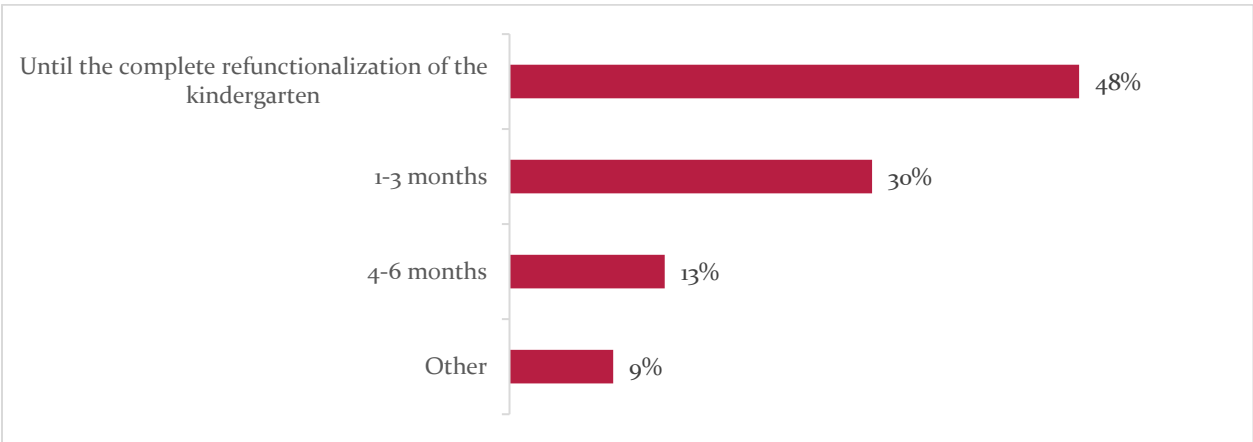
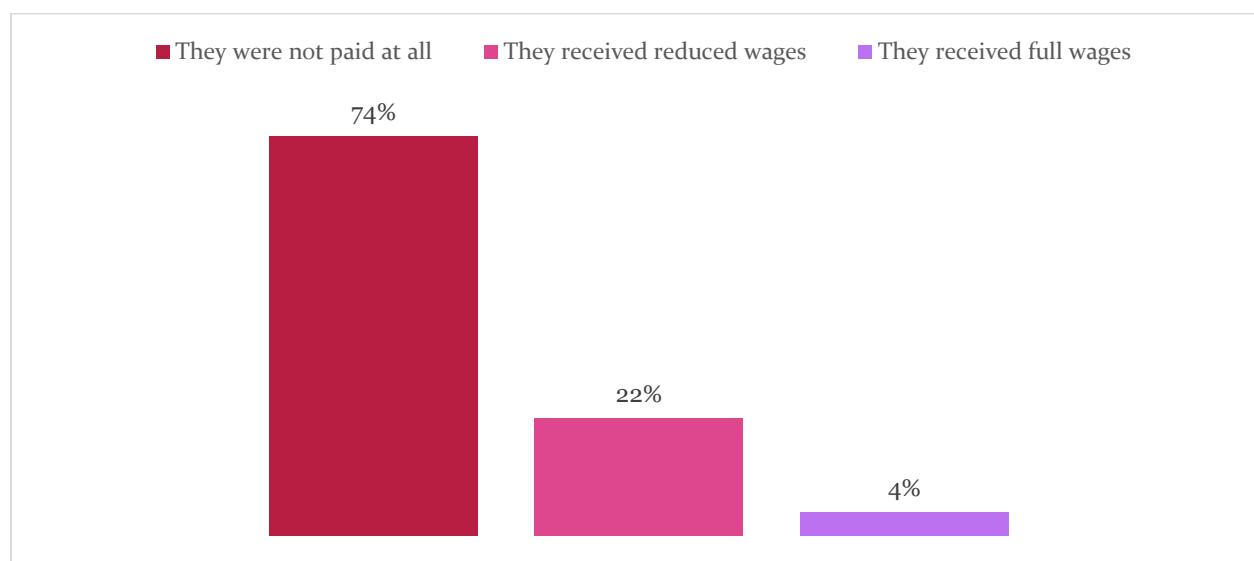


Figure 17. The length of time for which laid off employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were laid off

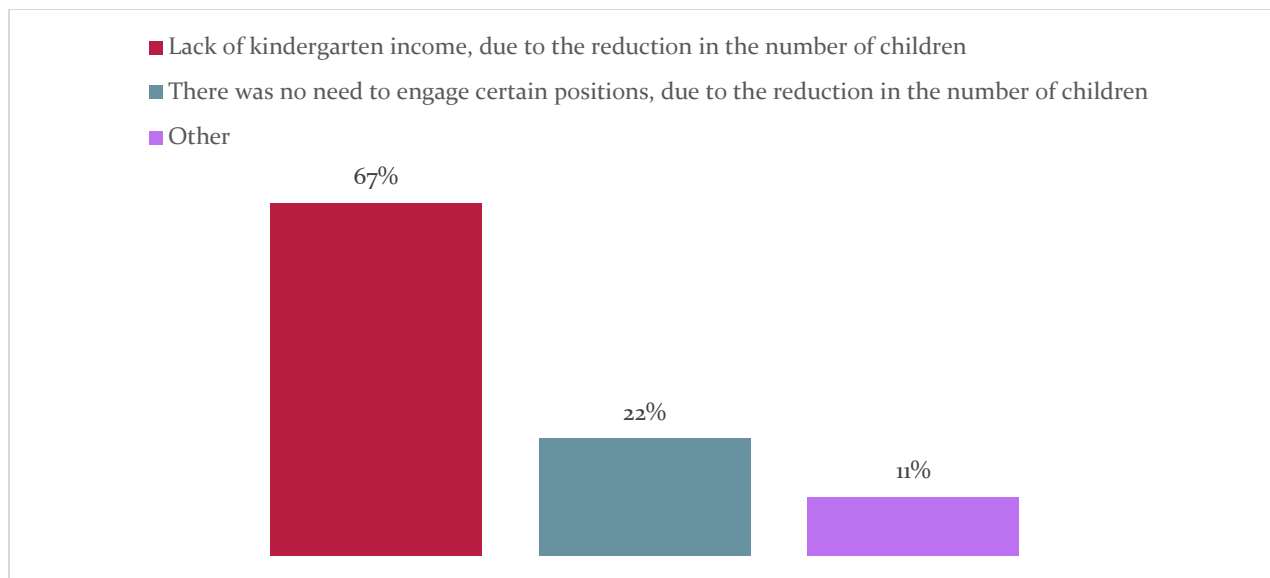


Moreover, as the chart below depicts, the respondents were asked regarding the payment method they performed for the laid off employees, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the results indicated that 74 percent of kindergartens' representatives were not able to pay at all this group of employees, whereas, 22 percent of these institutions declared that their employees, laid off for a certain period, received reduced wages. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of respondents (4%) were capable of providing their laid off employees with uncut wages.



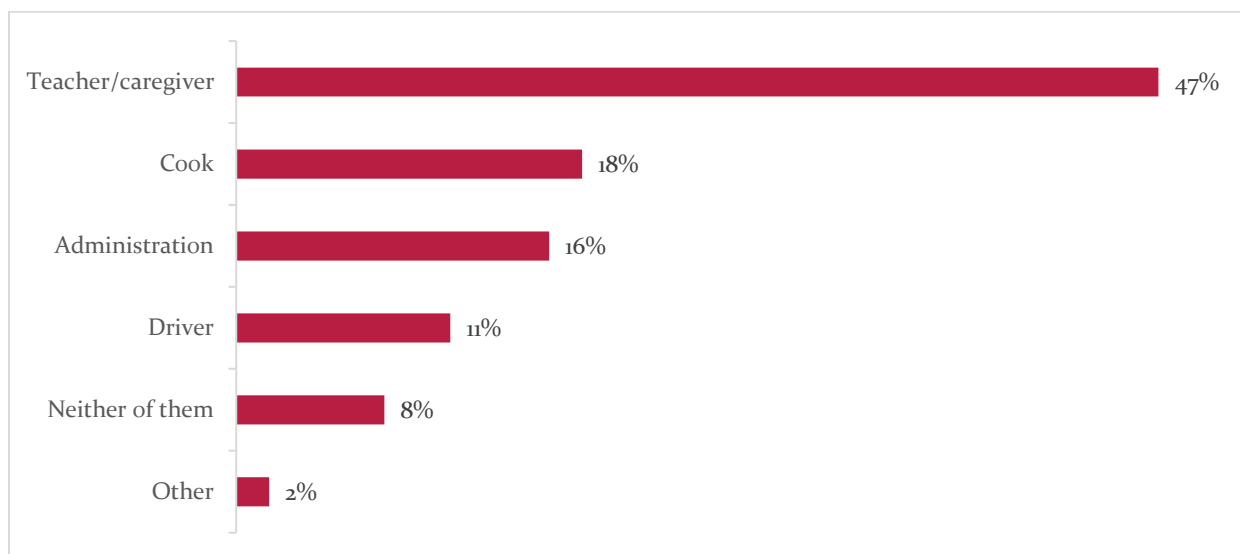
*Figure 18. The method of payment for the have laid off employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic*

In order to achieve a better understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic causes that led to the dismissal of child-care employees, the respondents were probed to state the reason behind assuming the employee-dismissal action. The majority of respondents (67%) declared that this action was undertaken as a direct result of the decrease in income; this decrease ensued as a result of reduction in the number of children attending the kindergartens. Moreover, 22 percent of the respondents claimed that due to the reduction in the number of children, certain positions of employees were no longer called for.



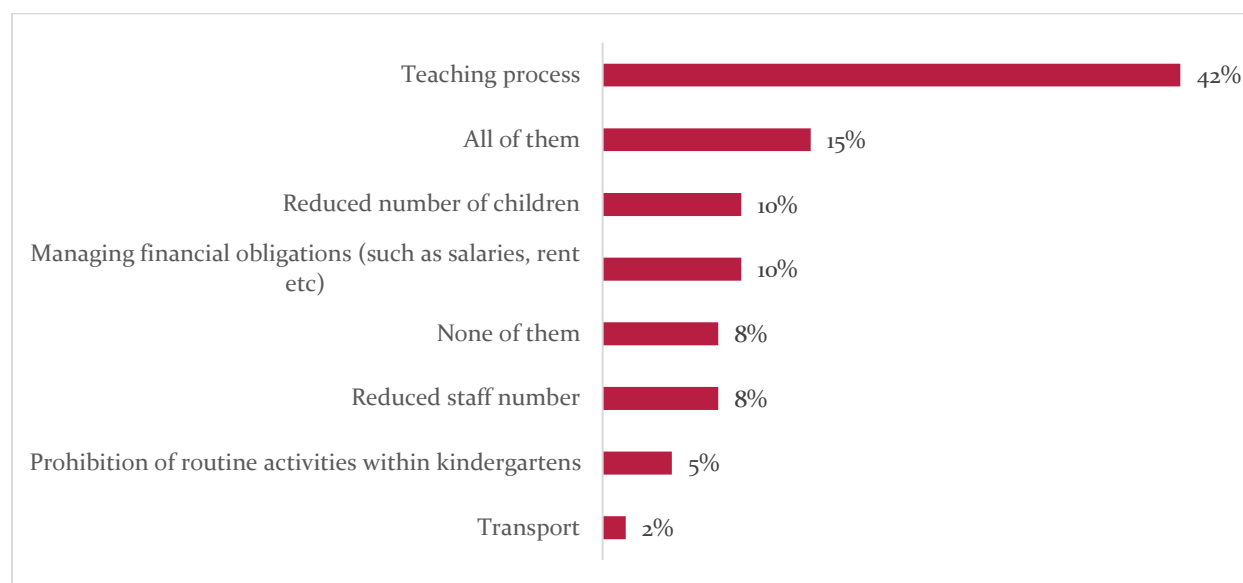
*Figure 19. The main reason for dismissal during the COVID-19 pandemic*

With respect to the work positions within the childcare sector that were the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, data revealed that Teacher/ Caregiver positions underwent the most difficulties generated by the COVID-19 pandemic (47%). Further, the respondents gave insight on other work positions that were a target of influence by the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic; respectively, cook positions (18%), administration positions (16%), and driver positions (11%). Nevertheless, a small portion of respondents (8%) declared that neither of the suggested work positions was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic within their kindergartens.



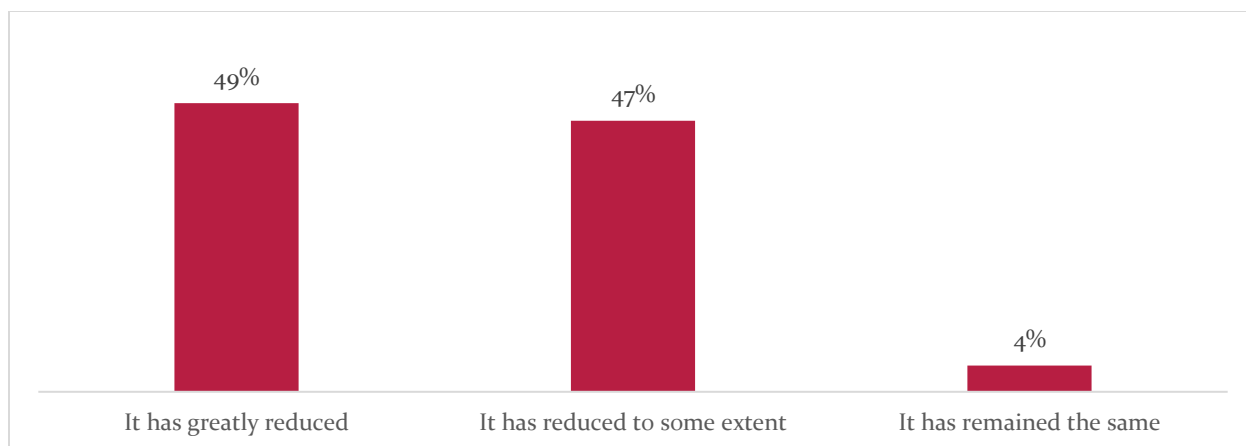
*Figure 20. The most affected work positions within kindergartens by the COVID-19 pandemic*

When respondents were asked about the impact of the pandemic on the services provided by kindergartens, the answers varied. More of them (42%) said that the greatest impact of the pandemic could be seen in the teaching process. Others (respectively 10% and 8%) reported a significant impact on the number of children enrolled, financial management, and number of staff. While some of them reported that the pandemic had affected all of their services, there was a small number of respondents (8%) who also reported that the pandemic has had no impact at all on the provided services.



*Figure 21. The most affected kindergarten services by the COVID-19 pandemic?*

While on the topic of the pandemic's impact, respondents also had the opportunity to comment on the impact it had on kindergartens' income. A cursory glance at the figure below shows that 49 percent of the respondents declared that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly reduced the kindergartens' income these last six months, especially when comparing them to the previous year. Whereas, a similar portion of kindergartens (47%) claimed that the pandemic was responsible for a reduce in income only to a certain extent. Lastly, only a small number of respondents (4%) said that the kindergartens' income has remained intact when comparing to the same period of the previous year, despite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

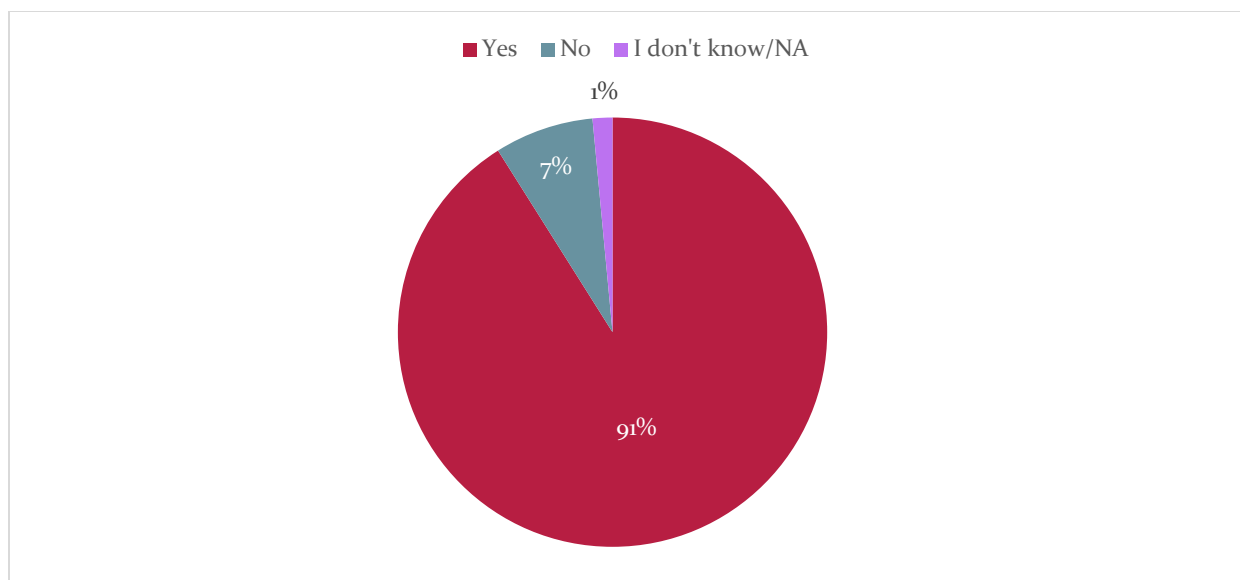


*Figure 22. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the income of kindergartens in the last six months, compared to the same period with the previous year*

#### 4.3. The contribution of stakeholders in mitigating the COVID-19 crisis in Childcare sector

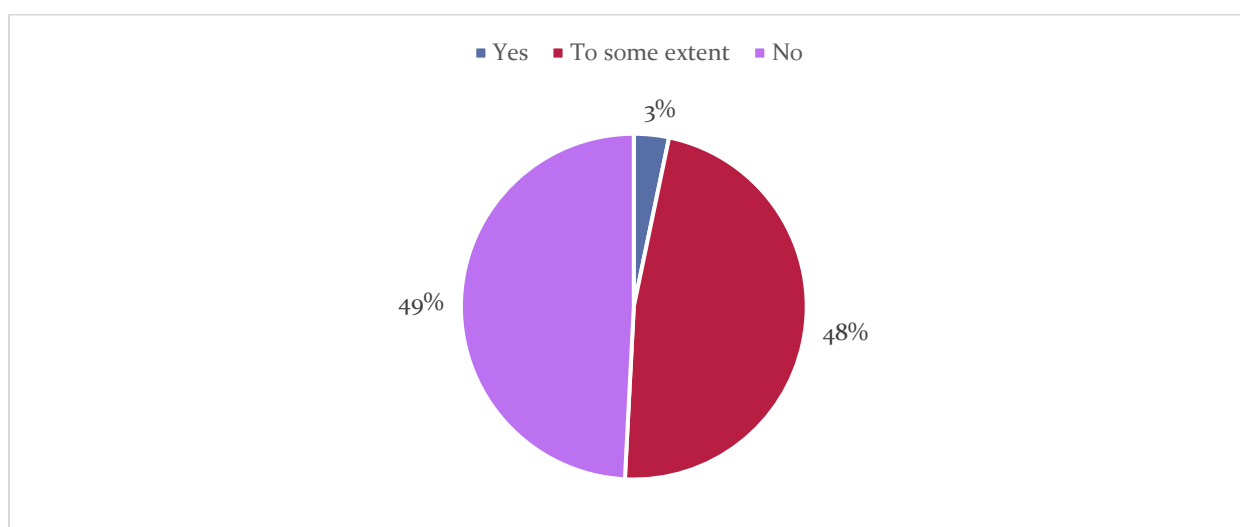
In 2020, COVID-19 pandemic affected almost all countries and more than 50 million people around the world. It has governments operating in a context of radical uncertainty, and faced with difficult trade-offs given the health, economic and social challenges it raises. A foremost interest of the present study was allocated on the recognition of the support and contribution provided by stakeholders to the private childcare sector in attempt to effectively mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

Relating to the matter in hand, the respondents were asked whether their kindergarten had received any financial support from the Government of Kosovo, donor organizations or other relevant stakeholders, since the emerge of the COVID-19 pandemic. As presented in the figure below, the vast majority of the kindergartens' representatives (91%) declared that they had received financial aid from the Kosovo Government, as compared to seven (7%) percent of the respondents who declared that they were not recipients of any financial support since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.



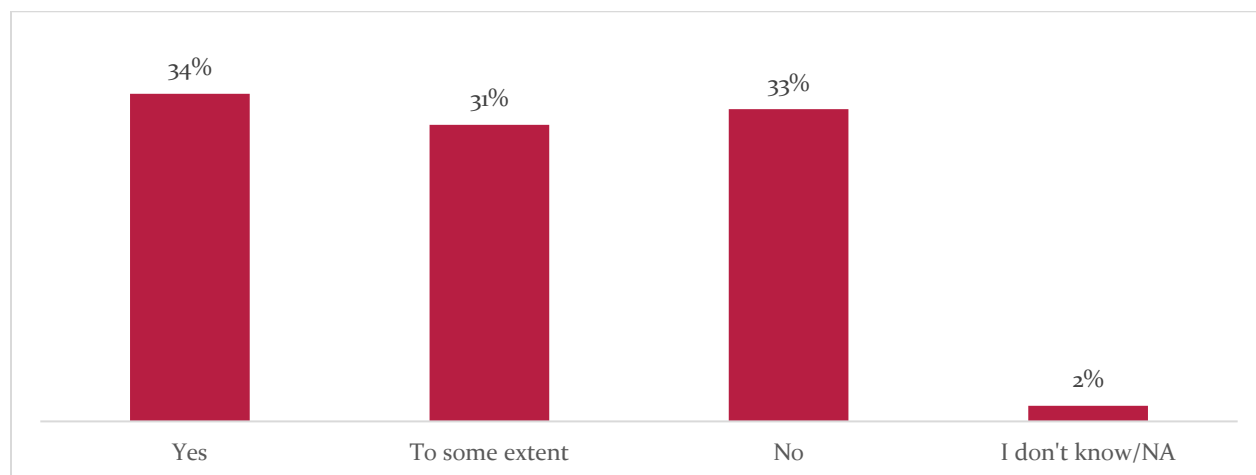
*Figure 23. Financial support kindergartens have received from the Government of Kosovo, donor organizations or other relevant stakeholders, since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic*

Following the previous question, the respondents were queried on the sufficiency of the support provided by the Kosovo Government, within the realm of mitigating the consequences generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost half of the respondents (49%) declared that the provided support did not serve as sufficient in battling the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas an almost equal share of respondents (48%) alluded that the given support has proved sufficiency only to a certain extent.



*Figure 24. The efficiency of the provided support*

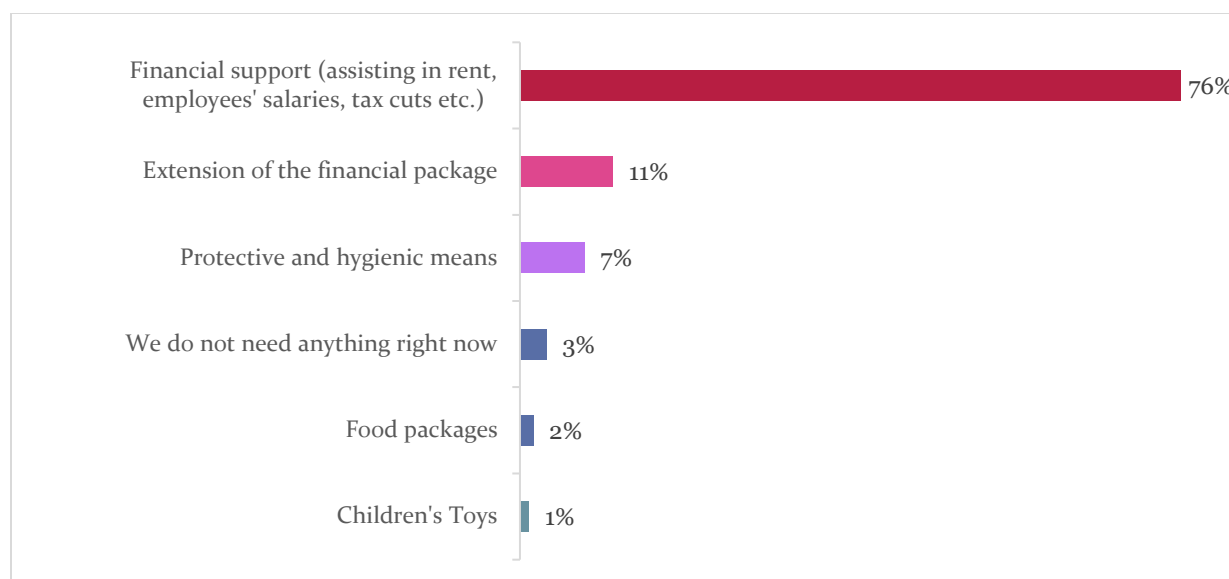
As illustrated in the chart below, the kindergartens' representatives that were beneficiaries of financial support by a relevant stakeholder, were probed by being asked whether the financial support had arrived on time. The gathered data suggested quite a variability in the responses provided. With that said, 65 percent declared that the support was timely appropriate to a certain extent/ had arrived on time, while others claimed that the financial support had not arrived on time (33%).



*Figure 25. Achieving support in a timely manner*

#### 4.4. The main needs of Childcare sector towards mitigating the COVID-19 crisis

Finally, this study provided an opportunity to elaborate on the main and urgent needs of kindergartens, in order for the latter to mitigate the consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, at the end of the interview, respondents were given the opportunity to note their main needs/requests. As depicted in Figure 27., the majority of them (76%) stated that they need grants and wage subsidies for their employees. Other needs in this regard included: extension of the financial package (11%), protective and hygienic means (7%), food packages (2%) and children's toys (1%). A very small number of them (3%) stated that they had no emergency need at the moment.



*Figure 26. The main needs of Childcare sector towards mitigating the COVID-19 crisis*

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study, in addition to identifying the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the sectors dominated by women, specifically childcare sector, provide a guideline for the Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) and Association of Private Pre-School Institutions (APPI), in the efficient implementation of different programs in order to help reduce this impact in the childcare sector. By designing and implementing these programs, the efforts towards mitigating the consequences of COVID-19 crisis in childcare sector, especially women's employment, would be more efficient and effective.

To start with, COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the positive trend towards the increase of the number of children enrolled in kindergartens, as well as the number of women, employed in these institutions, during the last three years, excluding 2020. Namely, there is a significant decrease the number of children enrolled, as a result of the parents' decision to protect their children from exposure to the virus. In addition, while many of the interviewed kindergartens operate with limited capacities, and their incomes have been greatly reduced this year, it has been inevitable to lay off / dismiss some of the employees. Being mindful of the fact, the latter were hardly paid while laid off. With that said, it can be concluded that teacher/caregiver positions underwent the most difficulties generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, these institutions were cautious, when it comes to applying anti-COVID measures. The majority of them have monitored regularly the teachers and staff, while also offering support for their mental health and psychosocial needs, managed the cases when people had shown symptoms while in kindergarten, and practiced other measures of protection such as wearing masks and keeping a physical distance. However, reduction of the number of children, kindergarten shutdown, reduction of counter-staff, and reduction of service hours were inevitable, while attempting to comply with anti-COVID measures.

All things considered, financial support remains the main and the most effective mitigation strategy, in response to COVID-19 crisis. Despite of some support provided by the Government of Kosovo the emergency needs for the childcare sector remain unfulfilled. Consequently, financial support through grants, wage subsidies, and free psychological care services, present the main emergency needs of the participating kindergartens, in order for the latter to overcome the consequences caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, addressing the emergency needs of childcare sector in Kosovo, through the design of programs, activities or other forms of interventions should be put among the priorities of relevant local and central level institutions, as well as other stakeholders. These actions would improve the general situation of these institutions, not only in terms of the increase of revenues and number of employees, but also their input on children's wellbeing and women's engagement in labor market.