With **80% of all learning occurring visually**, children with uncorrected poor vision are at a major disadvantage at school. Good vision is essential for a child’s education, socio-emotional development, wellbeing and long-term health.

From a broader perspective, good vision contributes to **unlocking a child’s full potential** and achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**: reducing poverty and inequalities, enabling work and economic growth of the country.

In the wake of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, lock downs and virtual classrooms have increased the use of screens, **affecting children’s eyes and exacerbating visual risks such as myopia progression**.

Addressing vision problems in children must now, more than ever, be a priority for governments and all stakeholders.

**WHY GOOD VISION IN CHILDREN MATTERS**

**80%** of classroom learning occurs visually.

**PARTNERS ADDRESSING GAPS IN KOSOVO**

To address vision care and research gaps in Kosovo, a school eye health screening program and an impact study were funded by **ESSILOR’s Vision for Life™** social impact fund and implemented by **EdGuard Institute**.

The research was completed, jointly with EdGuard, by the **Vision Impact Institute**, a global non-profit organization committed to making the case for good vision through evidence.

**THE RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose of the research was to assess the **impact poor vision has on children before the provision of optical correction** (baseline study) and measure the **improvements post-intervention** (end-line).

Findings aim to raise **awareness**, advance **advocacy** and **empower the government’s policy roadmap** toward adequate planning for eye care services.

**METHOD**

The baseline study **included 1091 children, aged 5-16 years**, enrolled in four **primary and lower secondary schools** benefiting from Essilor’s Vision for Life program. The research sample compared Group A [**TEST GROUP**] of 494 (45%) children presenting uncorrected poor vision (VA<8/10 ) and Group B [**CONTROL GROUP**] of 597 (55%) children presenting good visual acuity (VA≥8/10).

The analytical observational study design allowed for in-depth investigation of the two groups under an anonymized and quality controlled data assessment.
The study provides evidence on the presence of vision-related issues among children and demonstrates that children with poor vision [Test Group] present higher risk of developing incapacitating symptoms than children with good vision [Control Group].

Findings show that children with poor vision more often have to adjust their gestures and postures to overcome difficulties in the classroom and/or at home: squinting, rubbing their eyes, getting closer to the book, resting on the wrist/paper, getting closer to the board, sitting in the first desk.

The study provides evidence that children with poor vision have their learning capacities affected more often than children with good vision, and they encounter more difficulties when playing or participating in sports.

Overall, children feel well at school and are happy when socializing. But 1 in 3 children feels uncomfortable when playing with others, and 1 in 4 feels frustrated when poor eyesight hinders completion of homework.

The baseline findings show the need for developing a sustainable roadmap and introducing adequate policies to ensure every child in Kosovo has access to universal eye care services.