

# THE IMPACT OF UNCORRECTED POOR VISION ON SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN KOSOVO: CALL FOR ACTION

Baseline study 2020-2021

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## WHY GOOD VISION IN CHILDREN MATTERS

# 80%

of classroom  
learning occurs  
visually

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**, lockdowns 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.

## 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 ( $VA \geq 8/10$ ).

The analytical observational study design allowed for in-depth investigation of the two groups under an anonymized and quality controlled data assessment.

# 1,000+

children enrolled  
in the baseline  
research

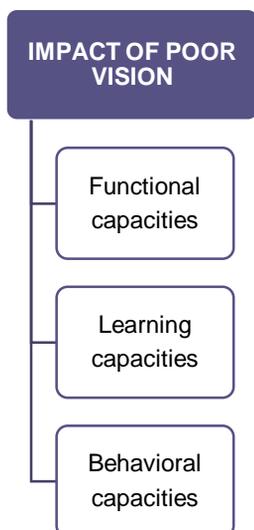
# THE IMPACT OF UNCORRECTED POOR VISION ON SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN KOSOVO: CALL FOR ACTION

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## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE BASELINE STUDY

The baseline study evidenced significant correlation between uncorrected poor vision and children's **functional, learning and behavioral capacities**.



### 1. FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES

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].

Issues reported by children	Number of children
• Tired eyes at homework >1h	1 in 2
• Headaches	1 in 3
• Itching eyes	1 in 4
• Tearing eyes	1 in 4
• Eye pain	1 in 4
• Burning eyes	1 in 5

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.

### 2. LEARNING CAPACITIES

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**.

Issues reported by children	Number of children
• Difficulty in reading from the board	1 in 3
• Difficulty in reading a book	1 in 3
• Difficulty in writing and drawing	1 in 4
• Difficulty in doing homework	1 in 4
• Giving up on homework	1 in 4
• Difficulty in practicing sport	1 in 4
• Avoiding sport	1 in 5

### 3. BEHAVIORAL CAPACITIES

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.



# 1 in 3

children reports  
difficulties to see  
the board

## CALL FOR ACTION

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. **All stakeholders, parents, teachers, and eye care professionals have a role to play** to guarantee Kosovo's children enjoy a good vision.