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REVIEWS ON
YOUTH POLICIES AND YOUTH WORK
IN THE COUNTRIES OF
SOUTH EAST EUROPE,
EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS
- KOSOVO -



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1. Introduction

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, has been recognized by 74 countries, gained membership to the IMF and World Bank Group, and faces significant post conflict challenges. Kosovo's population is estimated at 2.1 million, comprising 88% Kosovo Albanians, 7% Kosovo Serbs, and 5% non-Serb minorities (Bosniaks and Gorans 2%, Turks 1%, Roma 1%). Since December 2008, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) has been gradually taking over some core responsibilities from UNMIK for police, judiciary, and customs duties. This context of crowded institutional players and complex social and political realities has made it an even greater challenge for the newly established Kosovo Government to gain footing and build its presence and credibility across Kosovo as a whole.

While economic growth has been good in recent years, significant challenges remain in terms of the development of a stable, well-functioning multi-ethnic society, a free market economy, and an impartial judiciary. Kosovo's economy remains heavily dependent on remittances, and the poverty rate is 45%, with 17% of the population living in extreme poverty. The development of Kosovo's infrastructure and economy were systematically neglected over decades by the authorities in Belgrade, and long neglected social services, such as schools, health facilities, water, and waste treatment, require massive rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Over 70% of population is under 30 years, and unemployment and social exclusion is highest among this cohort. While the unemployment rate of Kosovo is very high at 47.5% (in 2008) it is estimated to be even higher (about 60%) for Kosovars between the ages of 15 – 24, and is the highest youth unemployment rate in South-east Europe (SEE). In addition, Kosovars have experienced a long history of ethnic discrimination and violence. A high degree of mistrust and bitterness still exists among the different ethnic and religious groups, especially between Serbs and Albanians. Community members are struggling to find ways of reducing inter-ethnic tensions and reintegrating ethnic minorities, while trying to develop the fledgling local economy.

However, today, Kosovo has a stable currency (Euro), liberal industrial laws, young population and the level of violent crimes is low.¹ There is very little obvious damage left over from the war. Kosovo is now a much safer place than it was ten years ago but the perceptions of war in 1999 are still form the image most people have of Kosovo.² Country has its beautiful landscapes, and there is monumental reconstruction and development that has happened in the years following NATO's intervention in 1999.

¹ OXAB Kosovo Exploration Trip Report, A report on OXAB's potential expansion to Kosovo to the OXAB Committee January 2009
Oxford Aid to the Balkans William Breame – Project Manager Luke Baghdadi – Project Co-ordinator Mark Brough – Project Co-ordinator

² OXAB Kosovo Exploration Trip Report, A report on OXAB's potential expansion to Kosovo to the OXAB Committee January 2009
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This study aims to assess position of young people and youth policies in Republic of Kosovo taking into account different sources of information that are not limited to official sources. It also aims to evaluate the impact of these policies on young people themselves.

All quantitative data used in this study are compiled from already existing and available sources provided by different international and national agencies that operate in Kosovo. Also, very valuable sources of information's were empirical researches on youth, with relevant samples and national coverage, conducted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and other relevant actors in youth policy. Sources for qualitative data were used from different reports, evaluations, and documents. There have been no real difficulties in finding the necessary data to compile this report. This report was shared with significant number of key stakeholders in youth sector in Kosovo to make sure that this work achieves its goal of enhancing the dialogue between various stakeholders and actors in the youth field in the country, in order to provide the chance to create a better network between them and foster the existing infrastructures. The stakeholders included representatives of government, civil society organizations, youth centers, representatives from international organizations and agencies as well as independent experts in the field.

2. Executive summary

This study aims to assess position of young people and youth policies in Republic of Kosovo taking into account different sources of information that are not limited to official sources. It also aims to evaluate the impact of these policies on young people themselves.

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008, has been recognized by 74 countries, gained membership to the IMF and World Bank Group, and faces significant post conflict challenges. Over 70% of population is under 30 years, and unemployment and social exclusion is highest among this cohort. While the unemployment rate of Kosovo is very high at 47.5% (in 2008) it is estimated to be even higher (about 60%) for Kosovars between the ages of 15 – 24, and is the highest youth unemployment rate in South-east Europe (SEE). In addition, Kosovars have experienced a long history of ethnic discrimination and violence. A high degree of mistrust and bitterness still exists among the different ethnic and religious groups, especially between Serbs and Albanians. Community members are struggling to find ways of reducing inter-ethnic tensions and reintegrating ethnic minorities, while trying to develop the fledgling local economy.

The youth of Kosovo as the most vital segment of society, with the most potential, will play the most important part in building the future of Kosovo. Kosovo society is determined to create the most convenient social, educational, cultural, material and political conditions for the permanent welfare of young people, regardless of any ethnic, national, racial, gender, religious, social or cultural background. The youth of Kosovo share this determination and is willing to take over its responsibilities for making this vision possible. Kosovo youth are expecting to see quality improvements in the life and social status for all young people, in compliance with their requirements and interests, in accordance with European standards and best international practices. Young people should be trained and prepared for life within the community, for complete social and political independence, as a precondition for creating family life, for their full, active and accountable participation in the process of reviewing and deciding on the issues important to their life, as equal partners of the government institutions.

The roots of youth work and policy as we understand it today have roots in mid eighties and afterwards. After the war there have been number of programs in support of youth sector implemented by different agencies and financed by number of serious international donors. There have been many good practices in this work.

Major accomplishments in youth policy that are result of the above highlighted history have been the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan and the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth. The Law on Youth Strengthening and Participation plans to address the basic idea of participation and the importance of youth involvement in government. Finally, as of June 2010, the

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has also drafted the “Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012, which will address youth participation, education, employment, healthcare, safety, culture, and sport and recreation” matters among young people. This plan would also establish the National Youth Action Council, as well as a co-managing council called the Interministerial Council.

Youth work in Kosovo on the other hand has been undergoing change. Youth work has gained a profile that is has never had before. Youth workers are sought by the media as the experts on a variety of youth related issues. The government is increasingly recognizing that youth worker workers are best placed to deal with young people across a number of contexts. Despite this increased profile – there is still no agreement or single definition of what youth work is in Kosovo. While most youth workers would probably agree that it is work carried out with young people – that is where the agreement ends.

The Government of Kosovo has maintained its commitments to the Stabilisation and Association Process and has been building its capacity to address EU matters and has accepted a major role for the EU in Kosovo after the declaration of Independence. EU integration challenges are often common to all countries participating in the stabilisation and association process and are best tackled at regional level. The development in youth sector have been touched by these elements of overall direction of the country.

3. Situation of Youth

3.1 Definition of youth

According to Law on Participation and Empowerment of Youth that was enacted in 2010 “Youth” means the age group of young people between 15 and 24 Years old. For operational purposes different actors have used other classifications (i.e. 18 – 35 and other).

3.2 Key figures on young people

Kosovo's population is estimated at 2.1 million, comprising 88% Kosovo Albanians, 7% Kosovo Serbs, and 5% non-Serb minorities (Bosniaks and Gorans 2%, Turks 1%, Roma 1%). Over 70% of population is under 30 years, and unemployment and social exclusion is highest among this cohort. While the unemployment rate of Kosovo is very high at 47.5% (in 2008) it is estimated to be even higher (about 60%) for Kosovars between the ages of 15 – 24, and is the highest youth unemployment rate in South-east Europe (SEE).

3.3 Living conditions and situation of young people

3.3.1 Participation

The qualitative poverty study of Kosovo points to a very limited influence of youth on the institutions that affect their lives, whether in the family, at school or in the community³. Councils, or students organizations in some Kosovo schools and universities exist, have played some role in social life. There is a low level of participation of students in such bodies⁴ and while the position of young people within political parties has improved and there is a fairly small number of young politicians who are in actual leading positions⁵. Local institutions have a significant lack of young people represented on staff, thus preventing true youth representation. Young people in Kosovo demonstrate a lack of faith in the Kosovo institutions⁶. Laws and regulations that are supposed to represent the interests of youth but there is some limitation to what extent they achieve to do so.

³ Kosovo Poverty Assessment, Promoting Opportunity, Security and Participation for All. World Bank 2005, page 47

⁴ Research “Conditions of youth in Kosovo” prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

⁵ Report from discussion with the focus group Politicians and Political Activists for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

⁶ However, a majority of Kosovo-Albanian respondents reported a positive attitude towards the Kosovo Protection Corps and Kosovo Police Service (on the contrary only 2,7% of Serbian community in Kosovo strongly believe in these institutions)

There have been good examples of cooperation between youth NGOs and the government of Kosovo but there seems to be space for improvements in this direction too.

Kosovo used to have a much better volunteering culture before the war; however this has now diminished significantly. People expect to be paid for work. It is difficult to get students to take on voluntary work, even though this will greatly benefit their CVs. Many students simply want to leave Kosovo and move to another place in Europe. Most people in Kosovo do not see the benefits of doing voluntary work themselves and agree that there has been a decline in voluntary work since 1999 reasoning from poverty, ethnic and social divisions. Among those who volunteer data shows that the main interest of youth in voluntary work appears to be in sport clubs, youth centres, cultural and humanitarian organisations, but there is a lack of interest of voluntary work in non-formal groups, education or religious associations. There is lack of a regional network and insufficient legal regulation as well as an insufficient pro-volunteer approach in Kosovo institutions. This has had tendency to change past few years and there have been some good examples of networking and encouragement of volunteer work.

It is estimated that approximately 15,000 – 20,000 young people are provided annually with direct services or participate in different programs, which contribute to their development. Majority of youth NGOs are located in urban areas. Young people living in rural areas must be considered as under-served. UNMIK Regulation “On the Registration and Operation of Non-Governmental organizations in Kosovo” and the Law on Access to Official Documents frame the legal background in the area of youth participation.

3.3.2 Education

Young people in Kosovo complain both about their access to education, and the quality of education (low standard of educational facilities and the difficulty of gaining access to those that do exist). In urban areas both primary and secondary schools are overcrowded and working in two or three shifts. Laboratories, equipment, didactic materials and textbooks are insufficient and of low quality. Past two years significant investments have been made to improve this situation. The education sector has been one of priorities of government. Data on the costs that households have to bear for basic education can only be estimated: textbooks and learning materials are around 40 – 80 euros per student / year, to which the costs of transport and meals have to be added. These costs are perceived to seriously hamper access to basic education for children of poor households. Total education expenditures for 2005 amount to 97.9 million euros (13% of the whole budget), 76.4% of which granted to municipalities for primary and secondary education. Government funds

mainly cover teachers' salaries (87 % of primary and secondary education), while only 1.7% of the education budget is allocated to curricula development and teacher training, (respectively 1.26 million and 0.4 million euros).

Another critical challenge of formal education system in Kosovo is the high level of drop out and early school leaving, with around half of young people leaving school before they are 18 years old. Only one third of the age cohort enrolled in the 1st grade attains upper secondary vocational qualification or a higher education diploma. It is estimated that dropout rate in compulsory education is about 12-13 percent, in secondary education about 28 percent and in higher education more than 50 percent.

Past 10 years there have been tendencies to establish counselling systems that would guide young people through education system, inform them about non-formal educational opportunities and setting the career path for prospective employment. So far young people get information about the opportunities for further education usually in high school (38.2%). Youth Centres do not provide enough such guidance nor do the media⁷.

Quite a high number of young people in Kosovo attend courses outside of the formal school system. Language and computer courses are among those most requested by youth. The need for non-formal education in Kosovo seems particularly acute in rural areas. There are few projects undertaken by local NGOs, which offer well established courses in farming, food processing, etc. since the scope of such activities is still limited⁸. Compared to other countries in region non formal education has played major role in shaping the skills and personal development of young people in the country and there has been very positive receptive attitude among parents and community in general.

3.3.3 Employment

Unemployment continues to be generally considered Kosovo's biggest problem. Various studies confirm this observation.⁹ The Statistical Office of Kosovo estimates a decrease in the overall unemployment rate of 10 percentage points between 2003 and 2004 (from 49.7 to 39.7 per cent). However, such a decrease is due to a move from unemployment to inactivity, a signal that discouragement among jobseekers – especially among youth – is rising¹⁰.

⁷ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS

⁸ A Strategy for Education for Rural People in Kosovo, p. 71

⁹ See for example Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS also UNDP Early Warning System, Report no.11, July-September 2005, p. 22.

¹⁰ this disturbing trend is observed in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe. See "Young People in Changing Societies", UNICEF, 2000

Young people who have been unemployed for extended periods of time are at high levels (42.6%) and this indicator rises up to 88.6 among the Serbian minority. According to the Labour Force Survey of 2004, 87.9 percent of the unemployed have been unemployed for more than one year, a situation prevailing also prior to the conflict¹¹. In Kosovo, 42.6 per cent of unemployed youth have been job searching for more than one year, and 19.4 per cent for 6 months to one year. The situation appears to be extremely serious for all minority groups, but especially for RAE (72.2 per cent looking for over one year), and for Kosovo Serbs (88.6 per cent). Long term unemployment, e.g. over twelve months, is predominantly a male phenomenon (47.1 per cent for men as compared to 37.0 per cent for women)¹². Unemployment is pervasive among women, experiencing unemployment rates double that of men. It is obviously higher in the group 15-19 and accounts for 60.1% and decreases to 45.0% in the group of 20-24¹³. This general unemployment rate is higher in the Serbian minority group (63.0) than in the Kosovo Albanian group (48.4%). Also one group that faces specific difficulties in several SEE economies is Roma youth¹⁴.

Limited economic opportunities are leading to variety of negative consequences. Some youth are turning to the grey economy, crime or they become victims of violence or other deviant behavior. Also limited employment opportunities force young people to look for a job abroad. For Kosovo Albanians, remittances are estimated at 43 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The negative aspects of labor migration are a brain drain in the sub-region and lost investment in education in the home country¹⁵.

According to the survey conducted by the World Bank, about half of employment in Kosovo is informal. Of the total employed, more than 49 per cent were informally employed in 2003 according to the following ILO criteria: (i) whether they had a signed contract; and (ii) whether the enterprise was registered¹⁶.

The method of informal relations seems to be the main key for a successful job search as 59.0% respondents identify it as a good method by which to find a job. This is in comparison to 2.9% of respondents identifying public employment services as being a method by which to find work. About ten percent of young people consulted believe that it is possible to get a job by responding only to media advertisements. Young people complain about the lack of a suitable information system on job vacancies. This is more acute in rural areas, where information and services

¹¹ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

¹² Ibid.

¹³ ILO study conducted in 2005

¹⁴ G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – “Young People in South Eastern Europe; From Risk to Empowerment”, 2005, p. 65

¹⁵ Albania, for example, lost one-third of its qualified workforce in the decade after the fall of communism. 40 percent of lecturers and researchers from universities and scientific institutions left the country; see: “Migrations: Albania”, Osservatorio Balcani, 2002. The number of Romanians abroad has been estimated at between eight and ten million; see: “Youth Policy in Romania, report by an international group of experts”, Strasbourg, 2001, p. 29-30 . See also: G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – “Young People in South Eastern Europe; From Risk to Empowerment”, 2005, p. 16 and 79, B. Rhode – “Brain drain, brain grain, brain waste: reflections on the emigration of highly educated and scientific personnel from Eastern Europe”, in: R. King – “The New Geography of European Migrations”, London 1993, pp. 228-245

provision is lower.¹⁷. Although many young people visit public employment offices in search for information about job vacancies they consider them as not capable enough to assist a young person in finding a job.

Generally speaking young people find education attained as being relevant for getting a decent job (78.4%) Therefore the aim of many young Kosovo Albanians (and especially women) is to achieve university education in the belief that it will improve their employment opportunities. This trend seems to be stable¹⁸. However, it appears that many young people in Kosovo post-pone their entry into the labour market for lack of present job opportunities, more than for a reasoned career choice. A belief that university education will ensure employment are unfortunately unfounded: when recruiting young workers Kosovo employers look first at work experience¹⁹. More and more young people are conscious about the fact that education without experience is not enough to successfully compete in the labour market²⁰. There is a common feeling that not enough training throughout the studying period and additional ones after graduation are offered to students by both government and private institutions to help them putting into practice their ideas²¹.

According to the data available, only 15.7 per cent of Kosovo youth between 15 and 24 years of age have completed the transition from school to work - e.g. are employed in a career or regular job with no immediate plan to change or to return to education. More than a third (37.5 per cent) have not started their transition, e.g. are still in education or are inactive and not in school, with no intention to work. As much as 46.6 per cent are still in transition, e.g. are either unemployed, or employed in a non-career or temporary job or inactive, but planning to work later²².

Research shows that the causes for unemployment to be mainly of an objective nature (no job available: 54.5%). When consulted, young people often admit there is not much support for young entrepreneurs. Also people who have already started their businesses list obstacles for the establishment of a business activity such as complicated procedures, corruption in the public administration, low levels of information available and high start up capital necessary due to limited infrastructure²³. Additionally, the tax system is considered by the respondents as unfavorable both as to the rates and as to its complicated documentation procedures²⁴.

¹⁶ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

¹⁷ Situational analyses of education in Kosovo, 2004

¹⁸ Two-thirds of young men and women aged 15 to 24 interviewed in 2002 said that, given the chance, they would continue with their studies rather than look for a job. The other third would have chosen employment; and approximately 10 percent would have continued with their current employment, especially if they were male. See: H. Ilazi – "Research on Youth in Kosovo". Pristina, Kosovo: PRONI/SIDA/Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sport and NRA; Department of Youth. 2002, p. 10

¹⁹ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

²⁰ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

²¹ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 6

²² Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

²³ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

²⁴ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

To address employment in past 3 -4 years there have been initiated many projects financed by government and international agencies. In general they aimed to improve the employability of young people through acquisition of skills as well as through support of entrepreneurship activity among young people.

3.3.4 Health

At present in Kosovo there are not enough health services, which may be described as “Youth Friendly”. Such services would be expected to have trained medical personnel who are accustomed to dealing sensitively with youth and adolescent on their unique health issues. Problems related to the provision of appropriate health services for young people seem to be of financial, participatory and educational nature. A low budget allocated for health care exacerbates the problem as even existing health services in Kosovo are unable to address young people’s needs.

Generally there is lack of health education and a low level of health awareness throughout all sectors of Kosovo society. These factors are accompanied by a domination of the “young people are healthy” assumption, a reluctance to discuss “taboo” themes such as adolescent sexuality and social stigma. There is lack of health courses / subjects taught in the schools, lack of medical services in schools, little information about reproductive health, and few consultancy services available for young people²⁵. On the other hand there are number of youth NGOs implement health programs but not necessarily in sustained cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

Despite this, since after the war number of good practices have focused in empowering adolescents and youth with the skills to protect their health, increase awareness and take on leadership roles in the future. They have also provided increased opportunities for access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, commodities and services. Specific engagements have included: Adolescent and Youth Peer education on STIs/HIV/reproductive health; Establishment of Pilot Youth-Friendly Health Services; Establishment and support of Youth Peer Education Network; Advocacy programs and behavior change campaigns on S/RH, HIV/AIDS, and STI□s. In this direction have worked many international and national stakeholders mainly from civil society. In the future these successful practices should be developed further.

²⁵ Conference "Kosovo Youth Action Plan and Youth Participation in the drafting process, Pristina, 28 December 2005 - Conference Report

3.3.5 Human Security

Young people consulted during the KYAP process identified problems in relation to human security at the local level and named sectors, which need improvements to secure decent life conditions for young people in Kosovo. Among them the most important are: violence, assistance for young people with special needs (“passive” items) and the need for increased youth mobility, environment protection attitudes and enhanced inter-ethnic co-operation (“active” items).

The conducted survey shows a contradiction between a general fear of violence (which is a concern for high percentage of respondents) and the actual violence experienced. Within the last three months preceding the survey, violence was not experienced by 90 % of youth. According to 53.5% of the respondents, a lack of family education and domestic violence (often not reported) is the main reason for youth aggression. Other reasons cited included the lack of legal response for such activities, which should be strengthened²⁶.

Problems related to youth mobility represent one of the most limiting factors to the successful integration of Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo’s society²⁷. It is of serious concern that most young people, regardless if coming from Albanian majority or minorities, considers that youth mobility is not guaranteed²⁸. Also this situation affects young people with special needs, creating obstacles for their decent life.

The inter-ethnic situation in Kosovo is much better compared to the past. The negative influence continues to come from direct and indirect pressures from a society and politics in which many family members, friends and community members instill a sense of fear and opposition that prevents both freedom of movement and association. Minority communities are to some extent still hesitant to be integrated into society. This situation has changed substantially after the declaration of independence. More troublesome area remains North of Kosovo that is still heavily influenced by parallel structures that are supported from Serbia.

Young people in Kosovo are aware that exploitation of natural resources have a negative effect on future prosperity of people in Kosovo. There is an expressed need for raising awareness on the protection of natural environment through public initiatives in co-operation with youth organization in Kosovo.

3.3.6. Culture, Sports and Recreation

The KYAP consultation process gave an overall picture of the needs of the Kosovo youth in regard to culture, sports and recreation. Most young people would like to actively participate in sports

²⁶ Research “Conditions of youth in Kosovo’ prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Research “Conditions of youth in Kosovo’ prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS

activities, generally as amateurs, but there is also a percentage of prospective professional sportsmen. The infrastructure for sport activities is limited. Young people feel there should be better physical education provided at schools. As far as the culture is concerned in Kosovo there is a number of young artists, both musicians and visual artists who do not enjoy enough support.

4. Youth policies and youth work ---

4.1 Institutions, actors and structures

4.1.1 Department of Youth

The Department of Youth (DoY) is responsible for the following policy sub-areas within youth policy:

- a. Youth participation and empowerment
- b. Youth employment
- c. Informal education for youth
- d. Health risks prevention among youth
- e. Youth integration: crime risks prevention and minority participation

The DoY performs policy development and policy coordination and implementation functions for all of the above policy sub-areas. In youth policy area MCYS is cooperating closely with other government ministries (Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) etc.) whereby MCYS is responsible for policy development and co-ordination while the other ministries are responsible for the actual service delivery to the youth groups.

The key functions of the DoY in serving the above-mentioned youth policy sub-areas are:

- a. Developing policy and strategy for youth sector;
- b. Developing legal framework for the youth sector and its sub-sectors;
- c. Supervision and monitoring of implementation of policies and legislation governing the sector;
- d. Administration of policy implementation – financial and administrative supervision of subordinate bodies and projects (including running project proposal competitions);
- e. Providing support for development and coordination of civil society groups and organisations in the youth sector;
- f. Providing information support and services on youth issues.

These functions could further be broken down in detail by specific policy objectives, priorities and tasks within youth policy sub-areas. Experts' opinion is that the DoY is the most advanced among the MCYS departments in terms of actual focus on core activities of a government ministry – namely developing policy within its mandate, and coordinating and monitoring its delivery through a wide network of partners – both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Part of the reason is probably extensive co-operation with international organisations, numerous capacity building projects and involvement of stakeholders in policy development and implementation.

The internal structure of the DoC consists of three divisions:

- 1) Division of Development and Support of Youth;
- 2) Division for Development of Integrated Policies;
- 3) Division for Protection and Integration of Youth.

Division of Development and Support of Youth focuses on policy development and implementation of projects and programs on informal education and youth employment. This entails extensive work with various international organisations, youth organisations, NGO's and central and local government bodies.

Division for Development of Integrated Policies focuses on policy development and implementation of projects and programs on informal education and youth employment, but it seems that compared to Division of Development and Support of Youth it has more policy focus.

Division for Protection and Integration of Youth focuses on policy development and coordination of health risks prevention, protection of youth and minority participation. Interestingly this division also provides information services on youth sector.

4.1.2 Central Youth Action Council

Central Youth Action Council is a voluntary organization of youth organizations operating in Kosovo. Central Youth Council's action is advisory structure for youth, which represents the interests of the youth organizations at the central government institutions and mechanisms of international youth. Responsibilities of the Central Council of Youth Action based on the principle of equality and equal participation for all and regulated by secondary legislation.

4.1.3 Local Youth Action Councils

Local Youth Action Council is the local formation Advisory youth organizations, which operate at local level and representing the interests of youth and youth organizations to the institutions of local government. Responsibilities of the Council on local youth action based on the principle of equality and equal participation for all, and are regulated by secondary legislation.

4.1.4 Youth Centers

Youth centers provide space programs and activities of young people based on their status, and are open to all youth, regardless of race, color, ethnic origin, language and faith, gender and sexual orientation, by respect basic human rights. Youth Centers are licensed by the municipal directorate responsible for youth, according to the type and nature of it, taking into account structure, programs and opportunities for fulfillment of tasks related to developing physical, mental, social and spiritual of the youngsters, offering space, resources and opportunities for the

development of informal educational activities, and other activities planned by young people. There are about 25 active youth centers Kosovo wide.

Youth Centers in Kosovo are usually in physical venues provided by the local municipality. Legislation requires that each Youth Center be run by an NGO. In order to generate income most are primarily offering programs that are educative in nature; classes that teach Computer Skills, English, German and Math. Participating youth pay for these classes with a large percentage of the fee going to the instructor and the rest to the youth center. Most Youth Centers organize a variety of other more creative and cultural programs in the summer. They link their youth into a school or municipal environmental program, take them to a job fair or community event. However, most facilities could be better utilized if there was more funding and a broader range of activities and services available. Some centers have long term donor support and are able to be innovative, creative and offer a greater variety of programs. The World Bank Kosovo Youth Development Program is improving the quality, database control and management capacity of 12 youth centers.

Youth Centers are open to all youth, but it is usually in-school youth who use the facility. The two-shift school system means that some youth come in the morning and some in the afternoon. It appears as if most come in the afternoons. Some Youth Centers offer programs for adults as well, filling the role of a community center.

4.1.5 Kosovo Youth Network

The Kosovo Youth Network (KYN) is an independent body representing 127 youth organizations and youth centers throughout Kosovo. Its mission is to develop the capacity of youth to address their needs and to become effective actors for a free, open, democratic society in Kosova. The goals of the KYN are to increase the capacity of youth groups in Kosovo; to strengthen cooperation, coordination and the exchange of ideas between youth groups and organizations, both within and outside Kosovo; to do activities which address priority needs of youth such as: youth participation, youth empowerment, human security, volunteerism, public health and unemployment. KYN is registered as Non Profit and nongovernmental NGO under the existing Law on civil society and other regulations of Republic of Kosovo. KYN has specific departments which are engaged in processes that are crucial for youth: department for information and Public Relations, department of capacity building / training institute, department for European Integration and international relations, department of policy development, department for cultural promotion and department for social Inclusion and volunteerism. KYN has been active in design, adoption, implementation and evaluation processes of- Law for Empowerment and Participation of Youth, Kosovo Youth Action Plan, Kosovo Youth Action Council and other decision making processes in local and central level.

4.1.6 Youth NGO-s

Although there are more than 5000 NGO's registered in Kosovo, in reality only 500 are actually functional. Other NGOs ceased to function due to lack of funding, changes in personnel etc. Many youth organizations in Kosovo have developed some institutional capacity, which involves elements that help an organization to accomplish its mission in an effective and efficient manner. An organization should be transparently governed, publicly accountable, capably managed and should exhibit essential organizational skills. Most importantly an organization must have a mission, as this provides staff with a framework, within which to work and makes the possibility of achieving goals more likely. Youth organizations in Kosovo have been getting closer toward these concepts. Still there are some NGOs in Kosovo that have been accused of being a 'one man show', totally dependent on one person. This inevitably affects the NGO's financial stability, low-income generation strategies, management skills, etc. There are several youth organizations in Kosovo do enjoy proper support from the central and local administration bodies. They receive usually in kind support (space, payment of utilities and similar) but not a lot of sustainable funding or resources that can be utilized in their work.

Despite a large international presence in Kosovo, international cooperation is still limited for many youth NGOs. International organizations are generally donors and there are few joint projects done in a partnership between Kosovo-based and foreign youth organizations. One of the explanations of this situation may be the strict visa regime hampering free participation of youth NGO representatives in various events in Europe and beyond. However, according to some there are possibilities for communication, integration and exchange of experiences, but are simply not sufficiently used¹³. While there is a number of young Kosovars studying or working abroad a smaller number of them participate in youth exchange programs that would increase the capacity of youth organizations they work for, as it is essential for the future development of Kosovo and its civil society to have a number of powerful youth NGOs with the potential to act in the long term. In this aspect more should be done to enhance their capacity by enabling them international cooperation, providing institutional support and appropriate services.

Many of the organizations that promote youth participation in Kosovo are CSOs that implement the government's Youth Department's programs and receive funding through the Kosovo Consolidated Budget. An estimated 70.8% of organizations for young people in Kosovo are CSOs, compared to just 25.8% of governmental organizations.

4.1.7 Kosovo Youth Council

The Kosovar Youth Council came into being when, in the aftermath of the war, the Albanian Youth Council helped mobilize and organize Kosovar youth, both in refugee camps and in towns. Some twenty thousand of these youth, in six Albanian refugee camps, got together and formed their own

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youth councils to improve conditions in these camps by organizing sports and music events, improving safety and cleanliness, distributing landmine-awareness information, and providing psychosocial counseling for younger children. Many continued their community development work when they were repatriated to their home villages and maintained a youth network that promoted local peace building efforts. These efforts sometimes even stretched across ethnic lines, a rare thing in those days. The councils functioned as outlets for youth voices. The young activists were valuable to the reconstruction of Kosovo because they promoted issues such as self-organized education, developed entertainment for other young people, and became actively involved in the creation and development of meaningful youth policies.

The KYC became one of the first organizations of young people to push its way onto the radar screens of international bodies and nowadays could be seen as a model of how international agencies can engage with youth groups in post conflict situations. It was effective in getting youth issues onto the agendas of decision makers of all levels that were involved in Kosovo, a necessity in a country where almost half of the population constitutes youth. One reason for its success was that it embraced different ethnic groups, and therefore was viewed as neutral. This helped the group focus on issues concerning young people without regard for their ethnic background. Children, adolescents and young adults were particularly exposed to problems caused by the conflict. Many young people in Kosovo lacked confidence and a feeling of self-worth and had very little hope for the future. With social, educational, and economic networks for young people in disarray because of the conflict, young people needed help to find appropriate responses to their situation.

4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work

4.2.1 Youth policy

The roots of youth work and policy as we understand it today have roots in mid eighties and afterwards. The Post-Pessimists of Prishtina was established in 1995 by two 15-year olds, a Kosovo Serb and a Kosovo Albanian. The organization targeted young people between the ages of 8-16 years old, to demonstrate youth engagement across ethnic boundaries. The Post-Pessimists of Prishtina's projects focused on inter-ethnic cooperation and nonviolent communication. The Kosovar Youth Council (KYC) emerged in 1999 in order to empower young people in the region during a tumultuous time. With the help of the Albanian Youth Council, the KYC emerged from a group of young people in refugee camps who came together to improve camp conditions, organize sporting and music events, distribute landmine-awareness information and provide psychological counseling. The Youth of Prizren program was established in 1999 by the International Rescue

Committee, with the goal of providing a safe environment for learning, vocalizing ideas and youth participation within communities.

After the war there have been number of programs in support of youth sector implemented by different agencies and financed by number of serious international donors. There have been many good practices in this work. The problem represents the fact that the exit strategies have been not that well planned and have made difficult the survival of many youth NGO-s today.

In the second half of year 2003, Division for Development of Youth Policies within Department of Youth (DoY), Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, have developed Youth Policies for Kosovo. The result from the first stage was the elaboration of seven policy papers covering basic activity areas of the Youth Department. In 2003-2004, Department of Youth, supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the German Development Cooperation Agency (GTZ), in cooperation with the International Council on National Youth Policy (ICNYP) and a team of local lawyers in Prishtina, started working in the first draft of the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation. Based on the results from both these processes, the Department of Youth suggested the development of a Kosovo Youth Policy and Action Plan (KYAP) in order to meet the needs of young generations. Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan is initiated by the efforts of many activists in the field of youth during recent years, leaded by Youth Department.

The process of drafting KYAP started in November 2005 in a donor's conference, with representatives from ministries and youth organizations, where the objectives of the process were introduced and the idea was supported. That conference brought together all stakeholders for establishing the ground for an effective work in developing the plan. The main objective of this conference was the structure and development process of the KYSAP. The second objective was to ensure the commitment of all the stakeholders to the process. The third objective of the conference was to carry out roundtable discussions on the most important parts of the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan. In 2007, the draft document was presented to Provisional Institutions of Self Government in Kosovo at the central level, and after the Government analyzed and reviewed it returned the draft for review upon justification that it has high budget implications and the budget of the country cannot meet the request. Taking into account this fact, the Department evaluated the possibilities for finding a solution and decided in 2008 to start the reviewing process of Draft Strategy and Action Plan.

The drafting stage involved many project stakeholders. MCYS was responsible for drafting the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan, and the Department of Youth established the KYSAP Secretariat for the same purpose. Other stakeholders in the process were: GTZ, OSCE, UNDP/UNV, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNIFEM.

The drafting stage included a number of events, conferences and roundtables. In particular, there were continuous consultations with youth and youth organizations. Special meetings were held to work on the vision of youth and to agree on the mission of the Kosovo Youth Strategy.

The inter-ministerial committee for development of Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan was established at the early stage of the drafting process. This committee reviewed relevant chapters of this document and presented their perspective. During the drafting stage of the Kosovo Youth Policy and Action Plan there were also consultations with the members of the Kosovo Assembly and the process was also presented to the Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports. There were also meetings with representatives from different political parties in Kosovo and with youth forums of political parties in Kosovo.

Major accomplishments in youth policy that are result of the above highlighted history have been the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan and the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth. The Law on Youth Strengthening and Participation plans to address the basic idea of participation and the importance of youth involvement in government. This law states that the government is responsible for maintaining youth organization regulations, which includes their funding. Overall, the goal is to increase the dialogue between decision-makers and young people in Kosovo, thus promoting youth participation and the implementation of youth organizations. As follow up to this in 2009, the Local Youth Action Council was adopted by the Assembly in Kosovo and created the grounds for a National Youth Action Council to represent youth non-profits centrally. This would increase the ability of young people to be a part of decision-making within the country, and allow for more youth centers. There is currently a Youth Assembly that consists of 20-30 young people, and aims to promote youth participation in Kosovo. They are located within 10 different municipalities within the country and usually meet usually twice a month.

Finally, as of June 2010, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has also drafted the “Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012, which will address youth participation, education, employment, healthcare, safety, culture, and sport and recreation” matters among young people. This plan would also establish the National Youth Action Council, as well as a co-managing council called the Interministerial Council. The plan also accounts for the financial commitment to young people in Kosovo during the 2010-2012 period of €1,047,000 (2010), €1,230,500 (2011) and €1,245,700 (2012).[13]

Since the KYSAP is a cross-sectoral document, the Government of Kosovo will establish Inter-ministerial Council, in order to advise the KYSAP implementation body on the best ways of implementing the plan. This Council will be composed of representatives from relevant ministries related to the youth (especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, and others) and will meet periodically to give

advice and supervise the KYSAP implementation phase. After the creation of the Kosovo Youth Action Council the Interministerial Council will be transformed into Co-management Council where the Kosovo Youth Action Council representatives will sit together with ministries' representatives.

The Co-management Council will be established on the grounds of best practices of the Council of Europe and of a number of countries that have successfully developed this type of government - civil society consultations.

KYSAP Steering Committee composed of donor representatives and senior officers from the Department of Youth that was functioning very well during the drafting stage of the KYSAP, will continue its duties in the future. The Group will meet on regular basis (monthly or quarterly basis) to take decisions and give recommendations to the DoY and the KYSAP Implementation Unit on the steps undertaken for implementing the Kosovo Youth Action Plan. The existence of such Committee will ensure active involvement of the international donor community in the implementation and evaluation phase of the KYSAP and is a tool through which international organisations related to this subject, will be able to monitor the progress achieved by the Kosovo institutions, especially the Department of Youth.

Once the Draft Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation is implemented, Kosovo Youth Action Council (KYAC) and Municipal Youth Action Councils will appoint representative bodies for Kosovo. The Institutions will co-operate with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and provide their inputs and support to the implementation and evaluation of the KYSAP. A representative of the KYAC will participate in the meetings of the KYSAP Steering Committee. There will be also annual conferences on youth policies organised by KYAC in co-operation with the MCYS to discuss the current state of development in the youth sector, every year. Annual reports will be presented during these conferences.

The KYSAP Implementation Unit will prepare annual reports on the status of implementation of the Kosovo youth action plan and present them to the MCYS and other stakeholders involved. These reports will be also presented at annual conferences on youth policies for comments and discussions.

4.2.2 Youth work

Youth work in Kosovo is undergoing change. Youth work has gained a profile that it has never had before. Youth workers are sought by the media as the experts on a variety of youth related issues. The government is increasingly recognizing that youth workers are best placed to deal with young people across a number of contexts. Despite this increased profile – there is still no agreement or single definition of what youth work is in Kosovo. While most youth workers would probably agree that it is work carried out with young people – that is where the agreement ends.

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Youth workers themselves, and others who have an interest in youth work are asking for a definition of youth work that can be agreed on across all the different types of youth work that takes place across Kosovo.

In a research conducted by NGO Fisniket in 2009 the differences became apparent. According to Youth Center Fisniket in Kosovo work is defined as: “Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, other and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. Youth workers work primarily with young people aged between 13 and 19, but may in some cases extend this to those aged 11 to 13 and 19 to 25. Their work seeks to promote young people’s personal and social development and enable them to have to have voice, influence and place in their communities and society as a whole”

Quality standards for youth have been outlined in policy instruments that have been drafted by Kosovo government primarily. In section on youth policy these instruments are described in detail. There are no statistics on exact number of youth workers as well as their mobility cross country. General observation is that there are hundreds of youth workers that have been engaged in the work with different organizations. More than 500 of them have provided services within YC-s that were supported as part of Kosovo Youth Development Project. UNFPA had its large network of peer educators that continues to provide health education services to youth country wide.

4.2.3 Youth research

The youth research has been primarily conducted by civil society organizations and international agencies active in Kosovo. There are hundreds of reports and documents that have assessed and analyzed the youth sector. This work has served well to government and other actors to shape youth policy and work.

4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work

4.3.1 Law on Youth Participation and Empowerment

With a purpose of constantly advancing and reaffirming youth participation in the decision-making process, without any difference or exception, in the development of a democratic society, in order to improve quality of life of young people and of their social status, in accordance with youth demands and interests in compliance with European standards and best International practices, the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo has adopted the law. The law sets out basic responsibilities for empowering youth sector in Kosovo by supporting youth participation in the decision –making processes; responsibilities of central and local government institutions towards the youth and youth

organizations in relevant fields as defined in the present Law; establishes voluntary work and informal education for young people and provides guideline in establishment of instructions on licensing youth centers.

4.3.2 Administrative Instruction on Non Formal Education of Youth (No. 12/2010)

The purpose of this instruction is to regulate, fields, the course plan for non-formal education of youths, the certification, criteria's for providers of in-formal education for youths, as well as the work of the Committee for the implementation of in-formal education of youths.

This instruction defines the fact that Department of Youth will support the development of non-formal education of youths in the following areas:

- Democracy, tolerance and humanity,
- Protection the environment,
- Historical identity
- Cultural development
- Intercultural changes and social and political dialogue
- Protection of health and physical education,
- Employment
- Promotion of youths.

The instruction also sets up some criteria's for providers of non-formal education for Youths. Whereby for the realization of their program, providers of non-formal education for youths should accomplish the following conditions:

1. To have the methodology and curriculum / plan of courses for the development of non-formal education of youths.
2. To have an evidence on the professional qualification of teachers from relevant fields.
3. To have space and necessary tools that enables the execution of non-formal education for youths, depending on the field of education.
4. To have evidence ensuring that programs for non-formal education for youths, will be carried out in at least 4 modules and will present the forms of evaluation for courses in particular.

The instruction also defines the certification of participants of non-formal education for youths. The Department of youth in cooperation with the relevant authorities of municipal assemblies will issue certificates for participants of non-formal education for youths for the first level "Certificate for inter disciplinary training" and for the second level with "Certificate for advanced inter disciplinary training". In order to get certified in the first level, participants should attend at least four courses of non-formal education for youths, whereas for the second level at least seven 7 courses of non-

formal education for youths as well as they have to pass the organized assessment by the provider of non-formal education for youth.

Finally the instruction defines the establishment of Permanent Commission for non-formal Youth Education. The Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports establishes a permanent committee for non-formal education of youths, responsible for the implementation of this administrative instruction.

4.3.3 Administrative Instruction on Youth Councils (No. 9/2010)

With this Administrative Instruction are defined responsibilities, procedures for the establishment, functioning and the form of registration of Youth Action Councils in Kosovo.

It defines the establishment and the work of Central Council of Youth Action of Kosovo (CCYA) and Council for Local Youth Action for the relevant municipalities.

Main duties of CCYA are: To represent Kosovo youth organizations to the government institutions; To address youth issues of Kosovo to the government institutions and to other public and private persons; To provide opinions and advices to governmental bodies and institutions on the actions that they have to undertake in regard to youths in Kosovo; To present views on legal documents and other documents related to the youth issues in Kosovo; To take part in drafting, implementation, evaluation and directing of policies that relate with youth issues; To participate and contribute in drafting of the Kosovo Youth Action Plan and the in drafting of petitions and resolutions for Youth; In cooperation with the Ministry organizes the Annual Conference for Youth of Kosovo; To Participate and contribute in drafting of the annual central budget proposal for Youth and to make the planning of activities of youth voluntary service and other activities for youths. CCYA ensures equal representation for all youths of youth organizations by applying the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

Councils of Local Youth Action are responsible: To strengthen youth organizations of the municipality wherever they operate in order to build a common vision for youths; To undertake appropriate actions and to prepare the action plan to achieve such a vision; To promote, coordinate and exchange good experiences with other youth organizations; To cooperate in relation with matters that affect youth interests with other public and private, local and international institutions. The main duties of CLYA are: To represent the youth organizations of the municipality wherever they operate to the relevant local institutions; To address youth issues of municipality to the municipal institutions and to other public and private persons but also in meetings with CLYA when they are part of it; To provide opinions and advices to the bodies and municipal institutions for actions that they have to undertake in relation to the youths in Municipality; To present views on

legal documents and other documents in relation to youth issues in Municipality; To take part in drafting, implementation, evaluation and directing of policies that relate with youth issues; To participate and contribute to the development of Youth Action Plan of the Municipalities of Kosovo and in the drafting of petitions and resolutions for Youth; In cooperation with the municipality organizes the Annual Conference for Youth in Kosovo. To participate and contribute in drafting of the annual municipal budget proposal for Youth; To make the planning of activities for youth voluntary service and other activities for youths.

4.3.4 Administrative Instruction on Licensing of Youth Centers (No. 11/2010)

This Administrative Instruction determines licensing procedures of Youth Centers throughout Municipalities.

The right to request for licensing as a Youth Centre have all of the NGOs which are registered with the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) on the basis of law for the registration of associations and NGOs and which realize their main activities in the youth sector. Each municipality can license and fund at least one public youth center. The municipality based on the request and on the needs can license other youth centers as well, but is not obliged to take over their sustainability. Public Youth Centers in municipalities with a wide geographic area, which prevent access to the existing public centers, may also have subordinate branches which are licensed together with main center.

In order to get licensed by the relevant municipality, a Centre must fulfill the following conditions: Must have enough space for activities, at least 80 m² working space to be used as a appropriate room for meetings, activities and recreation; Youth Centers should have access to sanitary places, preferable to be separated for males, females and people with persons with special needs with the possibility of heat during the months of winter; Agreement on the use of Space/land/building for the period that requests to be licensed; Organizational structure / Assembly of Members as per the model by adapting the needs and specifications of the center; Management, maintenance, educational staff; Services and Specified activities; Voluntary structure; Operating time (schedule); Domestic Order; A considerable number of youths that takes part in activities

4.3.5 Administrative Instruction on Volunteerism (No. 10/2010)

This administrative instruction has the purpose of the regulation of the rights, obligations and procedures related to voluntary work of youths, as well as the work of the Committee for the implementation of voluntary work of youths.

4.4 Strategies, Programs, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning

4.4.1 The Kosovo Youth Action Plan

The Kosovo Youth Policy and Action Plan (KYAP) aims at improving the situation of young people by involving all relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions, organizations and service providers in exploring and meeting the needs of young people and by finding ways and mechanisms for youth participation in the decision making process in Kosovo. It promotes cooperation between youth organizations and the Government, between all the concerned youth-related Ministries of the Government, and between Central and Municipal bodies to strengthen youth policies and programs. The Youth Action Plan describes steps for preparing the vision's strategies and implementation as well as identifying relevant actors and responsible bodies and necessary funds.

The Kosovo Youth Policy and Action Plan for the years 2007-2010 (KYAP) is the comprehensive strategy of the government of Kosovo on and for youth. It aims at improving the situation of young people from 15-24 years of age by involving governmental and non-governmental institutions in exploring and meeting the needs of youth and by finding ways and mechanisms for youth participation in the decision making process in Kosovo. The KYAP promotes cooperation between youth organizations and the Government, between all the concerned youth-related Ministries and between Central and Municipal bodies in the area of youth policies and programs.

The Kosovo Youth Policy adopts an integrated approach to the social, economic and political participation of young people in society. Specifically, young people need both formal and non-formal education appropriate for participation in the job market, youth friendly health services, leisure time activities and – foremost - in decision-making .

While youth participation is a value in itself it is predominantly a tool to develop other thematic areas, like education, employment, health, etc. Among other things it is through active youth participation, better infrastructure and proper information that Kosovo can achieve progress in other sectorial policies enumerated below. Meanwhile youth participation holds its own integrity. Therefore the current situation of youth participation and policy objectives in that field are presented here among other thematic areas of education, employment, health, human / social security and culture, sports and leisure time activities.

Youth participation

1. To promote and ensure institutional mechanisms for youth participation in decision making processes. The KYAP sees the youth participation as a process by which young people develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources. The

major activity in realization of this objective will be the creation of legal framework for youth participation and establishment of consultative and representative youth bodies in Kosovo. There will be also building capacities of public administration to enable good co-operation with young people and their representation in the development of sectorial policies in Kosovo.

2. To ensure access to information and transparency of the public institutions on youth issues. Activities undertaken under this policy objective will focus on information policies of public institutions in Kosovo as well as on capacity building for youth organisation on the other hand so that they will be able to search for information they need.

3. To ensure support for youth sector on the local level. This objective will be addressed through the drafting and then implementation of local youth policies and action plans on municipal levels with active participation of youth organisations.

4. To support Kosovo youth networking and cooperation in regional and European Youth Work. Sustainable co-operation of youth networks with their counterparts in the region, in Europe and beyond will be promoted by the organisation of study visits, exchange of best practices and the participation of selected young people in Kosovo in major youth events in Europe and worldwide.

5. To build the capacity of youth NGO's and youth networks. Standards for youth trainings will be developed and applicable and most qualitative programs will be encouraged together with the provision of counseling services for youth NGOs.

6. To promote and recognize youth voluntary work. The Law on Voluntary Work for youth will be drafted and the Kosovo Program for Volunteers should be established and functional. Voluntary values and activities will be promoted in schools, youth centers and in communities.

7. To ensure the inclusion of youth of all communities and youth marginalized groups. Under this policy objectives it is planned to engage youth from all communities and marginalised groups in advocating activities. Information campaigns and capacity building of local youth officers will be continued.

Education

1. To strengthen cooperation among governmental institutions, civil society and the private sector to create better opportunities in the field of education formal, non-formal and informal. The objective will be implemented through co-operation of various stakeholders, especially the municipalities and youth and student organisations. Identified will be opportunities for joint awareness raising campaigns, sharing of existing facilities and effective allocation of funding.

2. To establish an adequate qualification system in Kosovo and to increase the quality of education. The objective seeks to establish the Kosovo Qualifications Framework as well as the

Law on Qualifications according to best European practices. In implementation of it there recognition of non-formal education will also increase and the quality of formal and non-formal education will be monitored and new courses offered (for example a professional university course for youth workers).

3. To create a flexible and accessible education system in accordance with the concept of lifelong learning. This is an answer to the problem of high drop out rates in the education system in Kosovo and the activities implemented under this objective will be an offer to young adults, who, for whatever reason, were unable to complete their education. Such courses, both formal and non-formal will gain support through tailored promotion tools and allocation of special fund.

4. To offer career guidance and counselling services for youth through specialised programs and centers. There will be career counseling services introduced as from low secondary school to the universities and there will be career office established at the University of Pristina.

5. To align a demand-driven education to the labour market needs in the current socio-economic context. Based on identification of market needs through relevant research education strategies will be modified (for example entrepreneur skills will be introduced to the curricula). There will be also public information point established on the existing job opportunities.

Employment

1. To support youth employment through a favorable tax relief system and allocation of funds for employability training. There will be assessment carried out on the influence of existing tax system on youth unemployment in Kosovo based on which further planning will be based. The Employment and Training fund will be introduced and new legal framework discussed.

2. To increase capacities of the public employment services. Public employment services will be decentralised and much more open for co-operation with the private sector. The public employment officers will offer career counseling services and programs for subsidizing youth work will be reviewed.

3. To increase awareness and prevent exploitation of youth workers. Two major elements of constitute this objective: the awareness section, under which beneficiaries will be informed on their rights and the procedure of their realisation, and the prevention section, composed mainly by the creation, implementation and monitoring of labour law.

4. To establish an information system on labour market and job opportunities. There will be periodical information distributed in all Kosovo with analysis on the current situation on workforce market. Various channels of communication will be used, both printed and electronic.

5. To facilitate youth transition from school to work. Internships at public institutions for young people will be supported and youth will have priority for participation in public programmes for qualification and re-qualification.

6. To promote youth entrepreneurship and self-employment. Under this policy objective the prospective young entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to be trained on business plan writing and legal framework of conducting business in Kosovo. They will have access to best practices of self employment and the government will analyse the possibility of subsidising / guaranteeing bank loans for the best business plans, especially in rural areas.

Health

1. To ensure inter-sectoral cooperation on health youth related issues. Possible governmental strategies on health as well as governmental plans to modify the existing legal framework on health will be consulted with youth and their organisations. There will be health services functioning at public institutions and programmes will be developed to raise awareness of youth on various health diseases and promoting healthy lifestyle. Capacities of teachers and health workers will also increase.

2. To address specific needs of youth through a youth friendly health system. There will be stronger co-operation between public and private as well as the NGO sector on health issues in the form of periodical consultations and joint campaigns.

3. To promote youth healthy lifestyles. There will be media and awareness raising campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles and nutrition. NGOs will be implementing projects involving young people in these processes.

Human Security

1. To raise awareness and responsibility of young people on environmental issues. This policy objective seeks to increase the level of environment education both formal and non-formal through integration of the subject into school curricula, capacity building of youth NGOs and the promotion of voluntary activities in the area of environment.

2. To increase interethnic cooperation among youth. There will be support for inter-cultural activities and municipalities will pay greater attention to the needs and aspiration of young people coming from different community groups. Introduced will be joint community projects based on the needs of young people with different ethnic backgrounds.

3. To facilitate youth mobility. The government will advocate for the betterment of the transportation system, especially for young people with special needs.

4. To create an inclusive environment for youth with special needs. There will be assessment of existing legal instruments in that regard. Activities for young people with special needs will be promoted as well as support will be extended to youth centres and youth NGOs to actively involve youth with special needs into their activities.

5. To raise awareness on domestic and sexual violence among youth. General awareness raising campaigns will correspond to this policy objective. Also counselling services, like the SOS lines, will be launched to help victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Culture, Sports and Leisure Time Activities

1. To support and promote youth cultural values and activities. Municipalities will be supported in ensuring enough spaces for youth cultural activities and such projects will be supported financially. There will be popularisation of culture projects at schools, youth centres and the community. The most talented youth will benefit from the government support and their achievements will be promoted in the media.

2. To improve infrastructure for youth amateur and professional sport and recreation activities. Sustainable programme for maintenance of sports infrastructure will be ensured using capital of youth voluntary service. There will be better access for young people to sport premises and new sport facilities will be created according to the budget availability.

3. To promote and cultivate physical education and all youth sports. There will be events promoting the idea of "sports for all". Funding will increase to support best sports talents in Kosovo. Physical education will increase at schools and there will be capacity building of teachers to increase their performance in that field.

4.4.2 Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010 - 2012

KYSAP represents somewhat the revision and slight reduction of amount of activities from Kosovo Youth Action Plan. It was revised to take into account the developments in sector as well as financial limitations. The Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012 (KYSAP) is a comprehensive strategy of the Kosovo Government dedicated to the youth. It aims at improving the situation of young people from 15-24 years of age by involving all relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions in exploring and meeting the needs of youth and by finding ways and mechanisms for youth participation in the decision making process in Kosovo. Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012 (KYSAP) will encourage the cooperation between youth organizations and the Government, between all the Ministries dealing with youth related activities and between Central and Municipal bodies to strengthen youth policies and programs.

Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan (KYSAP) is composed of two components: one is the actual Policy or Strategy document and the second is the Action Plan, attached to this document as annex. The latter one contains a plan of activities to be accomplished within the period according to the areas presented below. Kosovo Youth Policy starts with a detailed specifications of the situation of youth in Kosovo, starting from statement of youth approach in “calling for changes”, youth participation, education, employment, health and ends with culture, sports and leisure time activities and to enlist as part of each subject area Strategy objectives in six subject areas that affect young person’s life: youth participation, education, employment, health, human security and culture, sports and leisure time activities.

The common goal of all these subject areas is the idea of bringing closer Kosovo youth to the best European practices and principles. It is a pragmatic approach that Kosovo youth are also youth of Europe; therefore, they need to aspire to have equal rights as elsewhere in Europe, in the area of education, human security, employment or culture etc. KYSAP objectives, activities, responsibilities, budget implications are processed in more details in the Youth Action Plan Module, where concrete activities are related to measurable results, responsible institutions and necessary funding have been identified.

4.5 Strategies in cross-sectorial policies

Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan (KYEAP) - the main national strategy on youth employment. The KYEAP (2007-2010) is the flagship document for youth labor policy in Kosovo. The plan is the comprehensive strategy of the Kosovo Government that aims at improving the situation of young people of age 15-24 by involving governmental and non-governmental institutions in exploring and meeting the needs of youth and by finding ways and mechanisms for youth participation in the decision-making process in Kosovo. The KYEAP has 3 main objectives, each with its own budget allocation: 1) to promote employment among young people (€4.4 million per year); 2) to increase decent work opportunities for young people (€1.7 million per year); and 3) to prevent social exclusion of youth through targeted labor market measures (€0.4 million per year). Each objective has a set of outcomes and activities based on a policy mix that envisages both preventive and curative approaches to address labor demand and supply constraints to youth employment. Note that the first objective (Le. promote employment among youth), which is heavily focused on investment in education, training, and skills; is the one where the largest share of the budget is allocated. The regional PES are the main institutions that will bring these set of policies to beneficiaries through job mediation, training, and support to young entrepreneurs.

There are strategies developed in the area of formal education, namely the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Kosovo for the years 2005-2015, the Strategy for Education for Rural People in Kosovo (2004 – 2009), The adult learning strategy for Kosovo (2005 – 2015), Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Kosovo (2003-2008). There co-operation between institutions to link separate activities and programs with each other tends to be lose but there have been good examples of joint initiatives.

In addition to this there are several strategic documents that are produced by other line Ministries (Health, Spatial Planning, etc.) that address youth related issues in their margins. Kosovo National Development Strategy although developed somewhat it never has been completed.

4.6 European and International dimension

The Government of Kosovo has maintained its commitments to the Stabilisation and Association Process and has been building its capacity to address EU matters and has accepted a major role for the EU in Kosovo after the declaration of Independence. The Progress Report of November 2008 continued the review of Kosovo's ability to implement European standards. The progress report commented on the following issues of significance to this application. The report recognised an ongoing weakness of civil society and social dialogue and the government's lack of a strategic approach to address civil society organisations. High rates of youth unemployment, in particular among young women continues to threaten development while limited progress in improving standards in education and promoting lifelong learning was noted.

As a basis for the structure of Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan may serve legal acts and youth policies related to youth, whether international or regional. In the regional level, KYSAP is drafted based on a review of a number of other youth related policy documents and action plans. In the European level, KYSAP follows the best practices and recommendations of the European Council (EC), European Union (EU) and European Youth Forum (EYF).

Within EC structure, regular conferences are held by European Council of Ministers responsible for youth, to review the policies, for trainings and work sessions. Regarding EU, the work on youth policies has started in the eighties '80. However the actual beginning occurred with the approval of the White Paper "A new incentive for European Youth" in November 2001. The European Commission approved it and this symbolizes an important step in developing youth policies at EU level. EU Constitutional Treaty for developing legal basis in the youth field was rejected in the referendums that were organized. Also, European Framework for Cooperation in the field of youth⁴

makes an appeal to introduce an “Open way of Coordination” (OWC) for the priorities set in the youth related areas and to take more into account youth dimensions within other policies.

Another EU major success in the field of youth is the Open Way of Coordination, which means that all activists involved are mobilized to have dialogue and cooperation with each other and that European priorities are a reference point for national priorities. A good example of the interlink of youth policies with other policies and with the overall development policy is the European Youth Pact, approved by EC in Brussels on 22 and 23 March 2005. This Pact places youth as the main part of updated EU strategy on development and Employment (Lisbon) and suggests taking measures for youth in the areas of employment, social integration and development, education and training, mobility and coordination of family and professional life.

Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan derive from EC and EU experiences. KYSAP takes into consideration 11 so called indicators of youth policies, elaborated by the EC and European Youth Forum.

Salto Youth activities sponsored by Youth in Action Program has had some small activities in the country that in the past few years have been more intensive somewhat. This has resulted with accreditation of couple of Youth Centers and NGO-s in the program and participation in some of activities.

4.7 Budget/Funding

Department of Youth budget has been growing steadily over past 4 years. Reaching 600, 000 Euros in 2010. Different donors are supporting projects in youth sector. These include:

- Lux DEV is providing support to increase the capacities of Vocational Training Centers to provide qualified workers to respond to local market demand;
- The World Bank is funding capacity building of Youth Centers through its Youth Development Program;
- Forum SYD has an active program supporting youth work development;
- GTZ is funding activity at the Vocational Education Centers level to increase the employability of students of VEC schools;
- The Employment Promotion Agency Kosovo runs programs for adults and youth on a small scale to better prepare them to find a job and generating income;
- Mercy Corps is developing (under USAID sponsorship) youth development programs that build leadership as well as provide work experience;
- DANIDA focuses on employment awareness and preparation in Agriculture in the VET Education sector;

- SPARK (a Dutch NGO) focuses on entrepreneurship training;
- Swiss Contact focuses on Vocational Education and Training (VET).

5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations

Government policies to support youth usually focus on improving education access and standards; increasing employment opportunities; and helping develop conditions for greater participation in society as a whole. The Government of Kosovo's youth priorities are summarised in youth strategy. The document was prepared through a process of consultation and broad participation of youth and local levels. This document focuses in six issues: (i) youth participation in decision-making; (ii) education; (iii) employment; (iv) health; (v) human safety; and (vi) culture, sports and recreation.

The largest portion of funds is expected to be spent on stimulating youth employment and participation in decision-making. This trend has been promoted by government and agencies that are active in Kosovo.

Kosovo has significant needs. Some of these are related to the fact that it is a relatively poor and developing place, with very high unemployment and a very young population. Employment is a big worry for the young people of Kosovo. Even those with a university education struggle to find jobs so there is a need for business development and English Language teaching (with a particular business focus). There is also a need to change the perceptions of Kosovo and attitudes towards Kosovans outside of the country. Therefore there is a need to enhance Kosovo's ability to promote itself to the outside world. The country itself and the institutions which govern it are young and Kosovo has received substantial assistance from international institutions and European governments. However, there is still a need for civil society to develop alongside these governmental changes.

The youth of Kosovo as the most vital segment of society, with the most potential, will play the most important part in building the future of Kosovo. Kosovo society is determined to create the most convenient social, educational, cultural, material and political conditions for the permanent welfare of young people, regardless of any ethnic, national, racial, gender, religious, social or cultural background. The youth of Kosovo share this determination and is willing to take over its responsibilities for making this vision possible. Kosovo youth are expecting to see quality improvements in the life and social status for all young people, in compliance with their requirements and interests, in accordance with European standards and best international practices. Young people should be trained and prepared for life within the community, for complete social and political independence, as a precondition for creating family life, for their full, active and accountable participation in the process of reviewing and deciding on the issues important to their life, as equal partners of the government institutions.

Unemployment and its impact on young people are serious issues that affect the development and well being of Kosovo youth. In a region where there is high youth unemployment, young people

must be recognized as a resource for progressive economic development; therefore, the Government should create mechanisms to ensure that young people are involved in the economic development strategies, and that youth issues are considered as a priority.

Youth organizations are positive towards the Youth Department, and that the Youth Department “really listens”. However, they many acknowledge the limits in what the Youth Department achieves – for example the lagging adoption and implementation of KYAP. In general a low level of trust in institutions (especially in their abilities to create change) was expressed through statements that they are not professional, not functional and not getting things done. Some representatives from youth centers and youth organizations expressed disappointment with the inability to have the KYAP adopted and implemented.

Reflecting on the risk for Kosovo Youth Network losing their independence when they transform into the National Youth Council: There is some dilemma in being a “compulsory” body proscribed by law and at the same time an independent organization, for example they could not be independent about the way they are organized or about their working relationships with the official structures.

General impression is that there are a number of strong actors working on developing the institutional framework, that there is a lot of knowledge and experience also among youth centers and organizations, that it is quite an unpredictable institutional environment (regarding adoption of plans and laws), that implementation is even more problematic than the adoption of formal frameworks and that the national level is quite well covered while the municipal levels are not. In addition, there is the problem of how the Kosovo Serb youth could participate in and benefit from any developments in the institutional framework, without /being perceived as/ accepting or promoting Kosovo independence.

Expressed needs for youth include institutional changes, donor action and priorities, networking and exchanges, improved outreach and improved capacity regarding internal organizational development as well as particular skills and activities. Institutionally, needs were expressed for standards for youth centers and youth work as well as recognition of non formal education and the Laws for voluntary work and youth participation and empowerment. The two most commonly expressed needs of organizations are long term funding and possibilities for networking and exchanges. There seem to be the beginning of a new generation of organizations with a strong value base (Cohu, Inpo) that are ready to take a public stand on difficult issues such as corruption. They are skeptical about funding, proud to be working with only or almost only volunteers, and they are really passionate about what they are doing, especially about the role of civil society and the connection between corruption and other issues: “There are no human rights in a state run by the mafia”.

Kosovo has its long way to meet the standards of developed countries that are EU members. Having seen progress over the years this seems to be a possible mission. Many instruments (financial and political) are bringing the region closer to EU despite set backs and problems. It may take time but the driving force for developments in this direction will be positive attitude of population toward EU integration in the country as well as entrepreneurship spirit that is strong among population.

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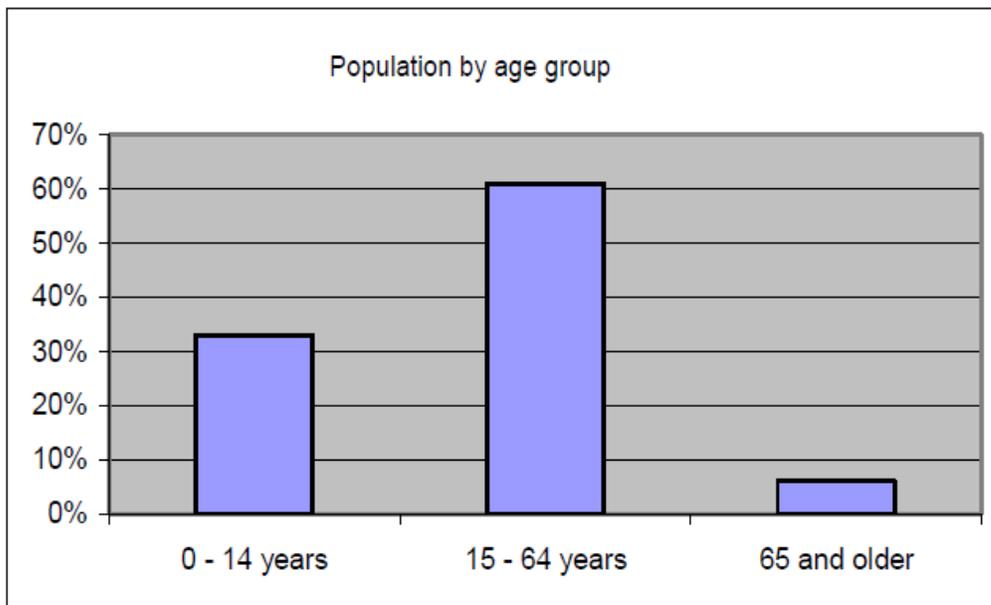
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Annex 1 - Population of Kosovo by age



Source:

Statistical Office of Kosovo

Annex 2 – Number of beneficiaries in education system

Level	Education	Total	Female	Male
0	Pre elementary	23.826	11.365	12.461
1+2	Elementary and lower secondary	319.154	153.081	166.073
3	Upper secondary	96.765	43.327	53.438
1+2	Elementary and lower secondary, special	752	280	472
3	Lower secondary, special	83	32	51
5	University	29.051	14.261	14.790
Total		469.631	222.346	247.285

Source: Statistical Office of Kosovo