

YOUTH POLICY PAPER

BACKGROUND

Analyzing the overall socio-economic and political situation, the Civil Society Organizations' ("CSOs") sector in the north of Kosovo, particularly the CSOs dealing with Youth and Culture have been left aside from many of the ongoing processes. Young people present a significant percentage of the population in the Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Region which is 40% of the population who are less than 30 years of age; this category is affected by unemployment and lack of support and funding from local institutions for youth activities/activism, sports and cultural activities. The CSOs dealing with issues of the young people and youth as the group are more neglected, maybe even detached from the local community and unable to effectively address community needs while at the same time they are far from decision making processes at the local and national level due to lack of transparency and support from local institutions in the first place. To be sure in proper support and proper representation of youth, adequate conditions must be created, to provide for proper study, play and overall personal development. Of equal measure, is the need to create conditions and opportunities that encourage and facilitate youth's active participation in the broader social, cultural and economic life of their country.

National organizations like the National Youth Associations, the Municipal Youth Departments, and the Local Youth Action Councils, have been involved with varying degrees of success in promoting the participation of youth in the process of national development. This Youth Policy paper, therefore, gives substance and recommendations to the local efforts especially. The policy paper provides guiding principles in accordance with requirements to harness the opinions, talents, initiatives, resources and experiences of youth living in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë region, all in the noble cause of building a better Mitrovica/Mitrovicë as multiethnic community.

Investments in the youth of country are investments for the future. Thus, it is felt that effective and genuine implementation of the recommendations proposed in the Policy document will benefit Mitrovica/Mitrovicë town (both north and south Mitrovica/Mitrovicë) in the medium to long run which is the only sustainable solution for this fragile region.



INTRODUCTION

This document and efforts made in preparing the document aimed at taking away the debate on youth issues from the political debate, and to identify common challenges and interests among young people and try to achieve solutions, independently from ethnic lines. This document and its findings and recommendations come at a crucial moment for the two communities; Serbian and Albanian. During the debates the youth used the opportunity to come forward and help local and central institutions and EU Office to reach out to young people, to listen to their opinions and needs which are:

- (i) To monitor, review and advise Local Government on matters pertaining to youth and youth development;
- (ii) To advise on the setting up and maintenance of a referral and information systems and transparency of local institutions especially in youth activities;
- (iii) To recommend a practical, suitable and appropriate form of National and Local Services for youth initiatives and activities;
- (iv) To assure funding guaranteed by the law for the LYAC offices, youth CSOs, youth groups, youth departments within the local authorities and extend this support as per the activities and initiatives
- (v) Strengthening the cooperation between civil society organizations from north and south but also between civil society organizations and local institution through a structured dialogue.
- (vi) Increasing and supporting the networking activities as efficient method of cooperation.
- (vii) Suggest that the coordinator for civil society to be part of the Mayors cabinet,
- (viii) To undertake a concrete step to improve the situation linked to the cooperation between civil society organization and local institution.
- (ix) the usage of EU funds in order to improve the situation (one of the biggest issue is the lack of budget to offer to the youth to rise the youth/students activism)
- (x) To support non politicized student's councils and parliaments, including the local youth action councils in their respective youth activities.
- (xi) Offering the institutional cooperation in benefit for the youth and students.

The Youth Policy document is the result of efforts made by number of Consultations which involved the active, uninhibited and committed participation of a wide cross-section of young people and adults who participated throughout four debates and conferences held in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë north and south in a process that began in Early June 2018. Emerging from the interaction and exchange of experiences, ideas and concepts was the notion that a Youth Policy document should be developed for the benefit of this, and future generations of youth in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë.





SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Recognition is here given the CSOs, youth organizations, student's organizations, youth groups, LYAC representatives and Local Government Departments that agreed to participate to the debate panels as well as to all individuals who actively participated in the debates, for their contributions to the Youth Policy Document. Those organizations/Departments include:

- NGO Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture (ACDC)
- NGO Centre for Society Orientation
- NGO Sinergija
- NGO Aktiv
- IBCM College Mitrovica
- Municipal Youth Departments
- Local Youth Action Councils (LYAC)
- EU office in Kosovo
- NGO COD
- NGO Kosova ARS
- NGO Human Centre Mitrovica
- DKRS Mitrovica
- NGO Mundesia
- Caritas Kosova, Mitrovica Office
- NGO PRAM
- Youth assembly Kosovo
- Students parliament from "Isa Boletini" university of Mitrovica
- NGO Open Hand initiative

Special thanks are also extended to other individuals who contributed consistently and unselfishly to the framing of the Youth Policy Document. They are:

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CHAPTER 1

DEFINITON

For the purpose of this Youth Policy, youth is defined as that category of the population in the age range between fifteen (15) and twenty four (24) years inclusive.

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH POLICY GOAL

The purpose of this Youth Policy is to act as guide to policy makers, policy implementing agencies and potential donors as to the role that youth should play in decision making process in local communities, and the position they should occupy in the society. The document recognizes youth views, recognizes their current positive efforts and suggests strategies, activities, initiatives, and long term programs that will enhance their contribution to society as a whole especially in reconciliation process between different ethnic communities.

CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIVES

The National Youth Policy document will:

- 1.1 Provide a framework that seeks to remove any constraints of a social, cultural, economic, political, religious or administration nature, that inhibit the effective growth and development of youth;
- 1.2 Recommends facilitation and enhance the work of local youth CSOs and other organizations working to promote the interest of youth;
- 1.3 Provide guidance for collaboration with regional and international organizations, in pursuance of fulfilling the purpose/mission of the policy;
- 1.4 Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines and structures to assist in the implementation of the principles and programs set out in the policy.





CHAPTER 4

EMPLOYMENT

Employment is a fundamental human right. It follows therefore, that the provision of jobs and equal opportunities for employment that utilize the human resources of a nation must remain the principal objective of any National Development Plan and as such is also recommendation of this Youth policy paper.

Meaningful employment of our youth would not only sustain but also improve productivity. At the same time employment would prevent the tendencies toward social misconduct, it will prevent departures from the country of young and successful students, it will reduce the social misconducts (eg. Drug use, crime, delinquency) which are consequence of the long term unemployment of youth.

Toward achievements of the national goal of ensuring or providing long term employment plan for our youth, the following action is proposed:

1.0 **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

- 1.1 That ongoing assessments (through manpower surveys) of employment needs be instituted so as to provide a basis for meaningful policy development and preparation and placement of youth for the job market;
- 1.2 That the existing Youth Department, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, be upgraded so it can function as an effective agency of job placement for youths, as well as being equipped to offer guidance on preparation for and availability of jobs for youths;
- 1.3 Prepare long term strategy with local companies for the internship programs that will be support by government and incentives for the companies and youth that are participating in the programs.

2.0 **CREATING OPPORTUNITIES**

2.1 That, given the dominance of IT sector, potentials in food processing and agriculture in the productive sector of our economy, incentives be created so that more youths are encouraged to become involved in mentioned endeavors with leading stakeholders in these fields:





- (i) The National employment strategy to be modified to allow for an equitable distribution of jobs to youth, reflecting the demographic composition of areas under consideration; with special attention given to multiethnic areas of Mitrovica North and South to become the leaders in reconciliation process.
- (ii) Increase, organized efforts should be directed towards locating and securing markets and better conditions for newly established multiethnic companies, with multiethnic staff employed.
- (iii) Serious exploration of IT services for different industries/productions in the country and abroad.
- 2.2 Conditions to be created for the growth and development of the cooperative/networking sector and self-employment initiatives among youth:
- (i) credit facilities must be established with consideration given to lowering interest rates below prime commercial levels;
- (ii) Consideration be given to the provision of subsidies (eg. For inputs, raw materials, tools, machinery, IT equipment);
- (iii) free trainings in appropriate management must be provided or encouraged within the existing successful companies and also within the local institutions departments;
- 2.3 That a sustained effort be undertaken to encourage local private sector investment in manufacturing, and service industries so as to widen the employment base, thus providing increased opportunity for youth;

TRAINING

- 2.4 That a structural National Youth Service (program), spanning two years at least, be introduced as a means of teaching skills and creating a pool of expertise, while at the same time promoting healthy attitudes to work, productivity and nation building in general. The national youth service (N.Y.S) (program) will strengthen existing skills training program and create new ones where none exist especially in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North and south communities.
- 2.5 That an in- service system be introduced in the work place, so that young workers especially, can be exposed to relevant advanced technology, consequently improving their capacity, productivity and confidence.





CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION

Education is the preparation of the human resource as an integral part of the National Development process. Faith in the education of our youth is a fundamental part of our democratic tradition of preparing our youth for the world of work and for life in general, the latter including how to live as good citizens who can promote the welfare of all.

Acceptance of the afore-mentioned must lead to action guided by the fact that there exists an inter relationship between the education system and the existing and potential jobs markets. Action so motivated will ensure that a genuine basis is created, at the school level, for the preparation of youth for their place in the sphere of production and service to their country. Activity within the education system will then respond to the reality of national development, which requires the output of rounded professional and technical personnel attendant on corresponding growth in the productive sectors (IT sector, agriculture, manufacturing, servicing industries) defined role for the University of Mitrovica, IBCM college, Secondary schools in both Mitrovica/Mitrovicë South and North of continuing studies in consultation/deliberation with the relevant Ministries (Ministry of economy, Ministry of Aquaculture, Ministry of trade and industry, Ministry of Regional development) and respective departments within municipalities:

ATTENDANT SERVICES/OBLIGATIONS

- 4.1 Establish a proper decentralized library service to complement the studies of students and encourage their general and personal development;
- 4.2 Create within the mainstream system, opportunities for disabled, to prepare them for pursuit of useful and productive lives:
- 4.3 Provide outreach programs to those who have dropped out (of school), especially adolescent girls and boys who might have different problems while attending school:
- 4.4 Collaborate (i.e Government) with non-government organizations, youth councils and youth associations to develop and improve programs to address the real needs and its benefits in the future.
- 4.5 Make greater use of the media (particularly Internet, television and radio) in the promotion of programs that seek to support and advance education as a tool used in the process of attaining broader personal and national goals.





CHAPTER 6

SCHOOL - CURRICULUM/ACTIVITY

- 2.1 Expanding the career guidance and counseling programs to students at the Primary, Secondary and post-secondary levels, using the expertise of trained professionals:
- 2.2 Facilitating the equipping of schools for proper and meaningful education in sciences and languages;
- 2.3 Including moral and spiritual education in the schools curricula
- 2.4 Including studies in Civics, Family Life and Human Sexuality and Environmental Issues in the schools curricula:
- 2.5 Linking schools with community groups, youth initiatives, and youth CSOs:
- 2.6 Creating favorable conditions for the growth of students bodies/institutions as instruments for enhancing the participation of students in the decision making process of education in the country:

LINKAGES

- 2.1 Defining and enforcing the link between the different levels of educational institutions (i.e Pre-primary, primary, secondary, and post-secondary) and ensuring proper preparation for the transition through the different levels of activities especially between secondary education and university:
- 2.2 Providing secondary education opportunities through: the establishment of a Local Youth Initiatives programs and increase training aboard and a greater involvement of secondary school students in all community activities.

CHAPTER 7

CULTURE

Culture is the forces that connects and gather people together as they grapple with the challenges of adaptation and development. It is the single and strongest force that promotes and sustains a people's identity and purpose. Political leadership without genuine cultural leadership will not create an honest understanding of our place of pride among the people of the global village.

The acceptance and promotion of its culture diversities is valuable to any nation or country. Investment in such endeavors must be given priority status, but this investment must not be evaluated in purely materialistic terms: the results are better measured in attitudinal and aesthetic terms, through already established programs from youth activists and youth CSOs. Support and





promotion of these activities is essential for greater impact and promotion of cultural diversities which can bring youth from North and South together in mutual initiatives and wider population involvement.

Promotion and support of culture by local institutions will result in the creation and sustainability of numerous initiatives/ activities on behalf of youth CSOs and young people in this country. This would provide the youth with an opportunity to gain knowledge and insight in different cultural values and they will learn to appreciate those values, and be more familiarized with diversities in their neighborhood which can serve as an inspiration for better understanding and tolerance.

Measures toward achievements of these ends, inclusive of encouraging youth's recognition of the positive contribution of the culture, arts (i.e local music, customs) are:

TRAINING AND FACILITIES

- 1.1 The training and support of persons to conduct research and prepare various presentations on diversities of culture in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë region;
- 1.2 Exposing young artistes to advanced training and cultural exchanges so as to improve their quality of performance and appreciation of cultural expressions;
- 1.3 Supporting centers, projects and initiatives that already had success in Performing Arts and Music to facilitate and gather youth of different ethnic background in staging and performing in local level;
- 1.4 Provision for relevant joint training facilities distributed throughout the State according to population clusters; and
- 1.5 The guarantee of certification for training so that same can be recognized both in north and south of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë so as to facilitate further informal training programs through universities (IBCM College).

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

- 2.1 The development of linkages between culture and other sectors of life, especially the tourism industry;
- 2.2 Encourage and promote the preservation of all articles, artifacts and other relevant aspects of our diverse culture and history and organize joint exhibitions and presentations;





2.3 Encourage the promotion of music and art in the everyday life of young people, as music and art has no language barriers.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

- 2.4 Formalize cultural and artistic programs in schools through the teaching of different art and art forms in schools, so as to encourage an attitude of striving for excellence and appreciation of beauty and the aesthetics in every culture
- 2.5 Provision for participation of disabled persons in all aspects of cultural life;
- 2.6 Expanding the use of Popular Theatre as a means of community education and entertainment.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 2.7 Provision/increase of Government's ongoing financial and material support on local level through joint initiatives and platforms prepared by youth CSOs
- 2.8 Encouraging greater financial support by the private sector
- 2.9 Vigorously accessing resources from relevant international stakeholders(EU Office in Kosovo, USAID, etc) and organizations with a view to maximizing the benefits to youth.

POLICY/ LEGISLATION

- 1.1 Free services of the youth centers be made available to all children and youth from elementary school to the end of formal school system, as well as to unemployed youth and those within the low-income bracket;
- 1.2 To promote legal and other measures to be used to fight the production and use of drugs; narcotics, alcohol and other harmful substances that hamper the growth of a young people. Action in this regard should include the vigorous enforcement of the laws, campaigns in governing the sale of alcohol and drugs to minors.



SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- 1.3 Continuous upgrading of health facilities and services throughout the state with constant education and campaigns, with urgent attention being paid to rural areas and the implementation of a sustained Health Care Program;
- 1.4 Government and related Agencies to ensure that there are trained personnel and adequate institutions, including counseling and rehabilitation centers, to address the problems of mental health, drug abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, minor delinquency, and all other forms of abuse;

THE ENVIRONMENT

- 1.5 Government both local and central to ensure that environmental conditions and ecology initiatives are supported through the passage and enforcement of appropriate legislation and action plans in cooperation with CSOs dealing with these issues.
- 1.6 Encouraging proper attitudes to the environment protection through mass/popular education programs and campaigns.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

1.7 Specific Health and Environment protection Programs dedicated to youth, with special attention being paid to ecology and awareness campaigns and education targeting youth groups between 12-20 years.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1.8 Encourage the involvement of community-based organizations, and local institutions especially youth organizations that are dealing and are leaders in the planning and delivery of Health and ecology initiatives.



CHAPTER 8

SPORTS, RECREATION AND LEISURE

The development of a proper sporting, recreational and leisure program is critical to the overall development (physical, social, mental and spiritual) of our youth. A program of such intent will foster the realization of their true potential. At the same time, it offers a positive outlet for the natural enthusiasm, energies and creativity of youth, acting thus as a deterrent to non-productive, anti-social activities, such as drug abuse, minor delinquency and crime.

Once the appropriate support structures and multiethnic opportunities are put in place, the youth as a target group will benefit from the contributions of the infrastructural improvements of the sports facilities and programs. In this respect the following are essential:

TRAINING AND FACILITIES

- 1.1 Implementation of mechanisms that will ensure the upgrading of current facilities especially in the north of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë;
- 1.2 Providing additional suitable recreational facilities (playground, picnic sites, parks etc.) and sporting facilities with emphasis on aquatic sports in primary school, secondary school and university campuses.
- 1.3 Encouraging the active involvement of youth in the development and maintenance of these facilities;
- 1.4 Providing/encouraging multiethnic trainings at all levels for and include sports personnel-players, teachers, coaches, administrators, etc.

CONCESSION AND REWARDS

- 1.5 Granting duty free or partial concessions to recreational, leisure and sporting bodies, on gear appropriate to their activity or discipline;
- 1.6 Offering tangible rewards (financial support, scholarships, etc.) and due recognition to outstanding sportsmen and women and sports personnel especially in multiethnic competitions.





POLICY-MAKING AND ADMINISTRATION

- 1.7 Encouraging the active involvement of youth in the planning process through representation on policy-making and influencing bodies;
- 1.8 Making it obligatory that Administrations of sporting facilities provide and publicize comprehensive sports.

SPECIAL AREAS OF ATTENTION

- 1.9 Fostering closer collaboration between north and south Youth Sport organizations, Government Sports Department both national and local and national sporting organizations in all sports;
- 1.10Facilitating participation in local and regional sporting events;
- 1.11Providing for the special needs of disabled youths and encouraging their involvement in the following areas:
- (i) Mobility/Access- At Planning Division all new plans for public buildings should provide for access of the disabled.
- (ii) Education- To extend the school life of the disabled beyond the normal school-age, depending on the nature of the disability;
- (iii) To provide sufficient facilities for the disabled, Kosovo wide;
- (iv) Sports- Adequate provision for the disabled in reference to coaching and sporting facilities to aid their full participation in special events.
- (v) Employment- To provide concessionary measures to businesses operated by the disabled.
- (vi) Organization- To make provision for a National Association which will act as an advisory body to ensure the implementation of the policy guidelines in relation to the youth disabled.





- 1.12Facilitating the participation of youths in healthy outdoor activities, through their membership in appropriate community organizations;
- 1.13 Using the media to educate the youth about the importance of fitness and sports in everyday life and in reconciliation process.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION & REPRESENTATION

Youth constitute the largest single chronological group or cluster of our population. The Population and Housing Census Report reveal that young person's below 30 years constitute 40% of our population. It is reasonable to expect therefore, that the youth would be involved in and consulted on issues of national concern. This can be achieved in following:

PARTICIPATION

- 1.1 Making available to young citizens appropriate decision-making for a, that encourage active, meaningful and sustained participation at local community, and national levels;
- 1.2 Re-introduction of Local Government or the putting in place of some other comparable and appropriate local administration arrangements that are emphasizing the multiethnic component and supports these differences.

REPRESENTATION

2.1 Consultation between Local Government and the Local Youth Action Councils, to decide on the National Boards and Bodies upon which youth should be heard and represented.



CHAPTER 9

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

While the ultimate responsibility for coordination and implementation of the National Youth Policy rests with the Government an integrated, intersectional, approach must be utilized in order to make optimum use of available human and material resources and to maintain a common (national) focus.

ROLE/FUNCTION OF IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

- 1.1 To review, assess and report on issue related to and affecting youth;
- 1.2 To monitor and advise Government on the processes of implementation, especially where such processes are pursued by/through Local Government Departments;
- 1.3 To promote, all levels, the aspirations of youths, to include active participation in international programming, policy formulation and implementation;
- 1.4 To create, facilitate, strengthen the networking between the Youth Departments and between Local Youth Action Councils (LYAC) and regional and international organizations.
- 1.5 To create, facilitate, strengthen the networking between the Youth CSOs from North and South of river Ibar through joint support by the both Local and central institutions

YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS /NETWORK

2.1 To be comprised of representation from:

National Student Council National Youth Council Youth CSOs Regional youth Associations National Sports Council
Local Youth Action Councils (LYAC)
Municipal Youth Department
International Youth Associations

2.2 Each organization represented on the network must have the right/privilege to access information on, assistance for and speak on behalf of their (youth) membership.



NATIONAL POLICY AND PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The Youth Policy provides the frame-work for the signing of international treaties and conventions that relate to the development and welfare of youth,
- 3.2 The policy should be subject to a mandatory review every three (3) years;
- 3.3 Financial and material support must be guaranteed for the effective implementation of programs, aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the Policy.

REFERENCES

- 1. LAW ON EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH (Assembly of Republic of Kosovo)
- 2. KOSOVO STRATEGY FOR YOUTH
- 3. Kosovo Roadmap on Youth, Peace and Security (UN Kosovo)

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The content of this Youth Policy Paper does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union Office in Kosovo (EUOiK).

<u>Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the Youth Policy Paper lies entirely</u> with the authors of this document.

