

RESEARCH ANALYSIS



INTER-ETHNIC COOPERATION OF YOUTH IN KOSOVO

CHALLENGES, PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



Project: Promoting Interethnic Cooperation Among Youth in Kosovo

Research Analysis: Inter-ethnic cooperation of youth in Kosovo – Challenges, perspectives and recommendations for improvement

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Table of Contents

ABOUT THE PROJECT	4
LEGAL FRAMEWORK	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
METHODOLOGY	8
DEMOGRAPHICS	9
RESEARCH SUMMARY – PERCEPTION OF KEY ISSUES	11
CONCLUSION	28
RECOMMENDATIONS	29



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project "Promoting Interethnic Cooperation Among Youth in Kosovo" represents a comprehensive strategy aimed at overcoming ethnic divisions and creating a platform for inclusivity and understanding among young members of different ethnic groups in Kosovo. Through diverse activities and programs, this project seeks to empower younger generations, facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives, and build a solid foundation for a future based on mutual respect and collaboration.

The central goal of the project is to encourage dialogue, build trust, and promote interethnic solidarity. Understanding that cooperation between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, especially in the region of northern Kosovo, is a key step in supporting the reconciliation process and building trust among divided communities, is the basic premise of this project.

It is important to emphasize that Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs attend different educational systems, which further complicates collaboration. Therefore, the project aims to build bridges between these two communities, enabling the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and opportunities for development, especially for Kosovo Serbs who often have fewer opportunities for practical education and study programs abroad.

This initiative has the long-term goal of creating a tolerant society in Kosovo, thereby contributing to the establishment of lasting peace and stability. Collaboration among youth from different ethnic groups will not only break down prejudices and stereotypes but also create the basis for long-term, sustainable relationships among different communities, thus paving the way for a more harmonious and prosperous Kosovo.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of the youth situation in Kosovo is based on the foundations set forth in the "State Youth Strategy 2024-2032" by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, which represents the most relevant legal basis for this topic. This strategy provides a framework for understanding the key challenges and perspectives of youth in Kosovo.¹

Education, as one of the key priorities of this strategy, is explored through the lens of the quality of the education system and access to education for youth from marginalized groups. Data on PISA test results, as well as an analysis of access to education, emphasize the need to improve educational policies and practices to ensure quality education for all youth in Kosovo.

Regarding the economic prospects of youth, the strategy sets goals for reducing the unemployment rate and improving access to banking services. An analysis of the labor market highlights the need to support young people in gaining work experience and access to formal employment to strengthen the economic security of younger generations.

In the realm of political engagement, the strategy promotes youth participation in the political life of Kosovo. However, a lack of trust in political institutions and a low level of activism among youth are challenges that require further research and interventions to encourage greater political engagement among young people.

The health challenges of youth, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and mental disorders, are also a focus of the strategy. Resources need to be directed towards educating youth about health, especially reproductive health, to improve their well-being and prevent health problems.

In terms of security, the strategy recognizes the importance of creating a safe environment for youth. Measures to prevent violence in schools, access to weapons, and the improvement of cyber security are key elements of the strategy aimed at protecting young people from various forms of violence and threats.

In summary, the analysis of the youth situation in Kosovo, with a focus on the "State Youth Strategy 2024-2032" by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, highlights the key challenges and perspectives of the younger generations in Kosovo. This

¹ https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_SHTETERORE_PER_RINI_2024-2032_SRB.pdf



strategy provides a foundation for further understanding and interventions aimed at improving the lives of youth and creating a sustainable future for the entire society.

INTRODUCTION

Quelling ethnic tensions and establishing stable political security in the Western Balkans and the broader region requires a deep understanding of both institutional connections and interpersonal relationships among citizens. Recent political and social changes in the region have elicited various individual and collective emotions, which have become burdensome for connecting people. The fragility of social ties among Balkan peoples poses a challenge to regional security, while strengthening these ties is crucial for achieving stability.

The Kosovo "Gordian knot" has been cut, but not untangled, making it difficult to rebuild and establish social connections between members of the Albanian and Serbian communities. Particularly notable are latent and overt ethnic tensions between Albanians and Serbs. The situation in Kosovo presents a complex problem because while for Albanians, the "issue" of Kosovo represents an expression of national liberation, for the majority of the Serbian population, it is a severing of ties with a territory that is historically, ethnically, and symbolically significant to national identity. The conflict between historical and ethnic principles in Kosovo, as well as the lack of a political solution that would satisfy all national interests, contributes to the lack of common values among present generations.

Contemporary circumstances do not support intensified civic collaboration, as there are different perceptions regarding territorial-political organization and the status of Kosovo. In this regard, Kosovo faces challenges that particularly affect young people, including a high unemployment rate, limited access to quality education, restricted opportunities for participation in social and political life, and a lack of adequate support services. Additional pressure on young people comes from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exacerbated the economic situation and job market in Kosovo.²

Reports from the World Bank, the European Commission, and the OECD highlight high youth unemployment rates in Kosovo, as well as challenges facing the country's education system. The lack of steps taken by Kosovo institutions to address these issues further deepens dissatisfaction and frustration among young people.

² https://kosovoteam.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/YouthChallengesandPerspectivesinKosovoSRB_5.pdf



Furthermore, youth emigration due to a lack of prospects in the country further contributes to the reduction of the workforce and potential talent loss. Deep-rooted prejudices and a lack of common language between young Kosovo Albanians and Serbs further hinder the building of interethnic relations and collaboration.

Studies among youth in Kosovo show significant distance and non-acceptance, resulting from past events, lack of information about the cultural and social values of communities, and the influence of a patriarchal and conservative environment. A high degree of rejection exacerbates the processes of integration and the establishment of stable interethnic relations.

Moreover, controversies regarding the concept of integration are not unfamiliar in the fields of culture and artistic creation. The issue of integration and unity is subject to various interpretations and political constructions, and a negative perception of integration can have serious consequences for interethnic relations and regional stability.

It is important to emphasize that culture encompasses not only institutional aspects but also the processes of socialization of individuals, which are crucial for understanding interethnic relations. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that includes education, media, and social interactions is necessary to promote understanding and cooperation among young people in multiethnic environments like Kosovo.



METHODOLOGY

This mixed-method research is based on a representative survey conducted in Kosovo with a total of 506 respondents aged between 18 and 45+ years, combined with qualitative data obtained from four focus groups with a total of 80 participants and eight individual interviews. For the survey, the sample included 58% women and 42% men. Both the survey respondents and focus group participants represented two regions of Kosovo, namely the Southern and Northern regions. The measurement instrument was designed in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 22 questions. Post-stratification: Age, nationality, level of education, and gender. It is important to note that, given the fact that there are no official statistical data on the demographic structure of the target population, i.e., the Serbian population in Kosovo, we can only conditionally speak about the representativeness of the sample.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Focus Groups

- Time: The research was conducted from January 2024 to March 2024.
- Research instrument: Discussion guide with 10 thematic areas.
- Number of focus groups: 4 groups
- Total number of participants: 80

Selection criteria for participants: gender, age, place of residence, level of education, occupation.

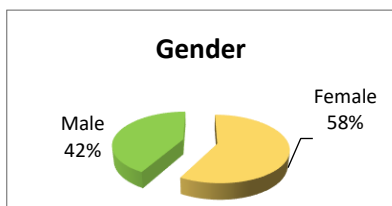
- 100% with secondary education or higher
- 52.5% female participants
- 47.5% male participants
- 18 years old and above

Interviews

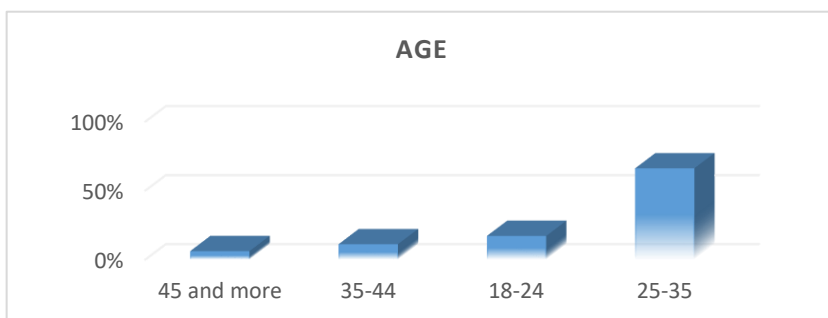
- Time: The research was conducted from January 2024 to March 2024.
- Research instrument: Discussion guide with 10 areas.
- Total number of interviewees: 6.
- Selection criteria for interviewees: Residents of Northern and Southern Mitrovica aged between 18 and 45+ years.



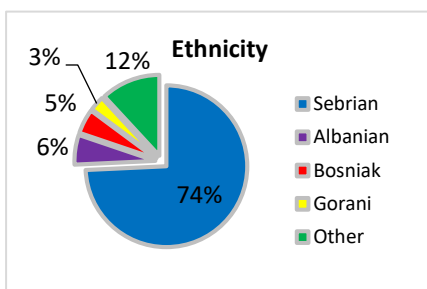
DEMOGRAPHICS



The analysis of demographic data indicates significant participation of youth in the research, with a focus on young women. Women constitute the majority of respondents at 58%, while men make up the remaining 42%.



When it comes to age structure, it has been observed that young people aged between 25 and 34 are represented in a larger percentage, making up 66% of the total sample. Less represented are young people aged between 18 and 24, constituting 17% of the population, while individuals aged between 35 and 44 make up 11% of the total sample.



The ethnic composition of the respondents is also diverse. The majority of the sample consists of young Serbs, comprising 74% of the total, while Bosniaks, Albanians, and Gorani are also represented, with percentages of 5%, 6%, and 3%. These data on ethnic diversity emphasize the need to understand the specific needs and challenges faced by young people

from different communities.

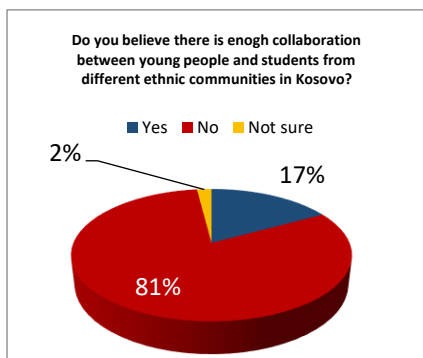




RESEARCH SUMMARY: PERCEPTION OF KEY ISSUES



RESEARCH SUMMARY – PERCEPTION OF KEY ISSUES



At the outset of conducting both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research, we examined the collaboration and initiatives among youth and students from different ethnic communities in Kosovo. Based on the research results, which indicate that the majority of youth in Kosovo believe there is insufficient collaboration among youth and students from different communities, we can conclude that there is a deeply rooted lack of interethnic interaction.

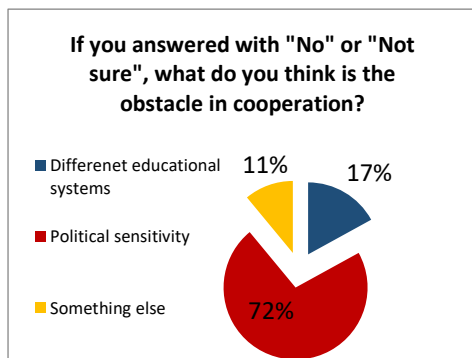
The fact that even 80.4% of respondents do not perceive enough collaboration points to a serious problem of segregation and lack of trust among youth from different ethnic groups.

Statements from participants in the qualitative part of the research also emphasize that prejudices and events from the past are still present as obstacles to youth collaboration. This shows that deep ethnic divisions and mistrust among youth are still dominant factors hindering the building of a sustainable and inclusive community. Additionally, there is ambivalence among youth towards active participation in civic and political life, further complicating collaboration and change processes. To overcome current challenges and foster collaboration among youth, it is crucial to work on strengthening interethnic trust, reducing prejudices, and building a comprehensive social environment. This may include education programs, interactive workshops, and joint projects that promote interethnic understanding, tolerance, and respect for human rights.

It is also important to work on creating opportunities for vertical social mobility for youth, enabling them to influence changes based on the positions they hold in society. This could involve providing support to youth in acquiring skills, education, and access to resources that enable them to actively participate in social, economic, and political life.

Through these measures and programs, it is possible to gradually overcome barriers to collaboration among youth and students from different ethnic communities in

Kosovo, laying the groundwork for a sustainable future based on understanding and cooperation.



According to research findings, young people identify political sensitivity as the main obstacle to cooperation among youth (even 72% of respondents). This obstacle points to deeply rooted political tensions and conflicts that shape the social environment and often hinder open dialogue and collaboration among young people from different ethnic communities.

The lack of political will and a comprehensive approach to normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina, as well as the absence of concrete steps towards mutual recognition of diplomas, is also perceived as a serious obstacle to cooperation (around 17% of respondents). This highlights the importance of political engagement and support to create a conducive environment for interethnic cooperation. Additionally, insufficient involvement of the academic community in reconciliation programs and the analysis of controversial textbook contents further complicates youth cooperation. This obstacle underscores the need for greater engagement and support for scientists and researchers to build a unifying educational environment and overcome prejudices stemming from educational systems.

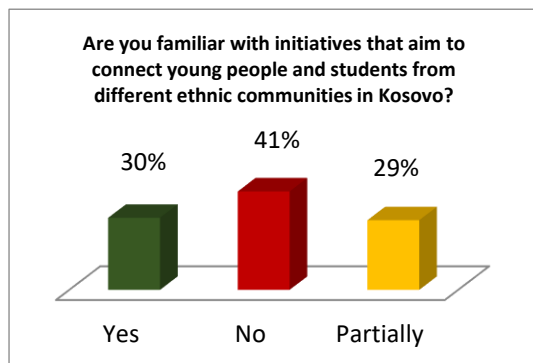
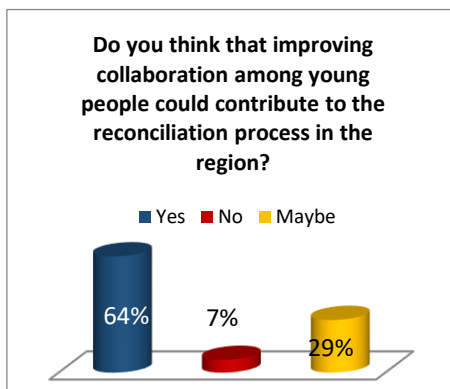
Overall, the obstacles to cooperation among youth include political tensions, lack of political will, insufficient involvement of the academic community in the reconciliation process, as well as the lack of mutual recognition of diplomas and support for interethnic cooperation. Overcoming these obstacles requires a comprehensive approach involving the engagement of political leaders, academics, and youth in building a more accessible and open society based on mutual respect and understanding.

Research participants express the belief that improving cooperation among youth would have a positive impact on the reconciliation process in the region. This belief stems from recognizing the importance of a shared understanding of the past and building a comprehensive, objective perception of historical events. Current education models often fail to adequately address controversial historical topics and

promote partial truths, which can contribute to the preservation of prejudices and animosities among youth.

Through enhancing cooperation among youth, space is created for the exchange of different perspectives and experiences, which can contribute to the creation of a comprehensive social environment. This process involves accepting the subjectivity of truth and understanding that each individual has their own version of events. Through dialogue and mutual respect, young people can overcome prejudices and build trust among themselves, which are key steps towards reconciliation in the region.

Furthermore, improving cooperation among youth can contribute to strengthening civil society and promoting democratic values. Young people who are actively involved in various collaborative initiatives can become agents of positive social change, supporting the construction of a fair society. Therefore, investing in programs that encourage collaboration and understanding among youth can be crucial for long-term stability and prosperity in the region.



This belief is confirmed by research results, where 64% of respondents expressed the opinion that improving cooperation among youth could contribute to the reconciliation process in the region, while a very small portion, only 7%, expressed an opposing view.

According to research data, nearly one-third of young respondents, specifically 30%, stated that they are familiar with initiatives aimed at connecting youth and students from different ethnic

communities in Kosovo. This indicates a certain level of awareness and information among young people about existing programs and activities focused on interethnic cooperation and integration.

However, a significant number of respondents, precisely 29%, expressed uncertainty or lack of information about these initiatives. This uncertainty suggests the need to improve the availability of information and communication about programs that promote interethnic cooperation among youth. Another percentage of 41% of respondents answered negatively to this question, meaning they are not familiar with initiatives aimed at connecting youth from different ethnic communities in Kosovo. This result may also indicate a lack of visibility of such initiatives or limited access to information in certain communities.

These findings emphasize the need for further promotion and strengthening of programs and initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for interaction and cooperation among youth from different ethnic groups in Kosovo. Improving the availability of information and raising awareness about the importance of interethnic cooperation could significantly contribute to building a peaceful society in Kosovo.

With further emphasis on this topic, respondents' answers to the question about their awareness of initiatives aiming to connect young people and students from different ethnic communities in Kosovo provide valuable insights into the existence of various programs and activities directed toward this purpose. It's important to note that this question directly follows the previous one, where nearly one-third of respondents confirmed their familiarity with such initiatives.

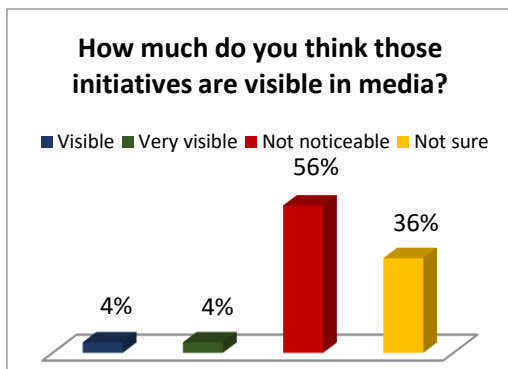
From the responses, it is evident that young people are aware of various programs and seminars that require collaboration and group work, as well as other initiatives such as the Conflict Transformation Program, RCT, initiatives by non-governmental organizations, camps, trainings, and programs like the Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Kosovo.

This wide range of identified initiatives attests to the diversity and activity aimed at promoting interethnic tolerance and cooperation among youth in Kosovo. Some of the programs focus on educating and training young people about conflict transformation, while others aim to promote active civic participation and human rights.

Furthermore, awareness of these initiatives indicates the existence of significant community efforts to promote interethnic cooperation among youth. This can serve as a basis for further research into the effectiveness of these programs and their impact on peacebuilding and reconciliation in Kosovo.



In today's modern trends, the increasing importance of media as a public good highlight the need to consider media and information literacy, especially among youth. It's important to understand that these aspects are not only the responsibility of media professionals and their owners but also contribute to the common good and social progress. This topic becomes even more relevant in the context of new media and digital technologies that deeply influence young people.



In the context of analyzing initiatives that connect youth, it is important to highlight the level of their visibility in the media. According to research results, only 8% of respondents believe that initiatives promoting youth cooperation are visible in the media. This suggests a lack of recognition of these initiatives and insufficient media coverage of their activities.

On the other hand, a staggering 56% of respondents believe that their visibility is not noticeable at all in the media. This high rate of invisibility indicates the need for stronger engagement in promoting initiatives that connect youth across media platforms. The lack of visibility of these initiatives may limit their ability to attract the attention of young people and encourage them to participate in collaboration and exchange programs.

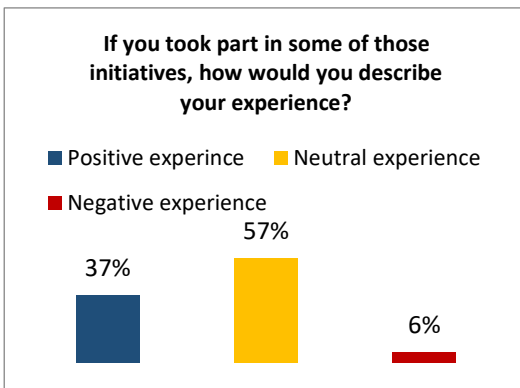
In this regard, young people often face the challenge of finding relevant information about initiatives that connect them. The lack of media and information literacy can hinder their ability to properly understand and evaluate these initiatives. Therefore, it is important to make efforts to educate young people on how to critically think about the information they receive through the media, as well as how to find reliable sources of information about initiatives that interest them.

Firstly, it's evident that organizers of initiatives aren't sufficiently active in promoting their programs. It's possible they aren't using adequate marketing and communication strategies to inform the public about their activities. The lack of visibility could result from underutilization of social media, inadequate planning of media campaigns, or a lack of resources for promotion.



Secondly, media platforms don't give enough attention to initiatives that connect youth. This could be due to a lack of interest from media outlets in this topic or prioritization of other news and events. The lack of support from media platforms can hinder the promotion of initiatives and limit their visibility among the wider audience.

Lastly, the lack of public interest in these initiatives can also contribute to insufficient media coverage. If the audience isn't interested in topics related to interethnic youth cooperation, media outlets won't invest in reporting on those activities. The lack of public interest may also stem from inadequate education about the importance of interethnic cooperation and a lack of awareness about the needs of youth for such programs.

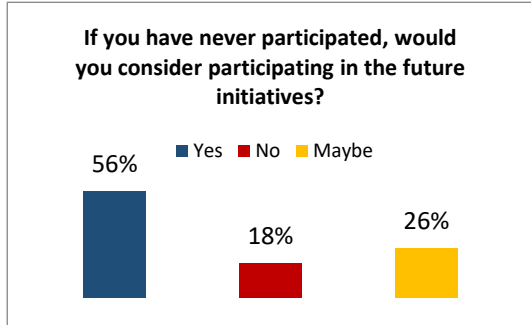


Analysis of responses to the question "If you have participated in any of the initiatives, how would you describe your experience?" reveals significant insights into young people's perception of these initiatives. Out of the total number of participants, 57% stated that they have a neutral experience, while 37% reported having a positive experience.

Neutral experiences indicate that respondents had ambivalent or average experiences during their participation in initiatives. Reasons for such experiences can vary, including insufficient engagement from organizers, lack of engaging activities, or inadequate interaction among participants.

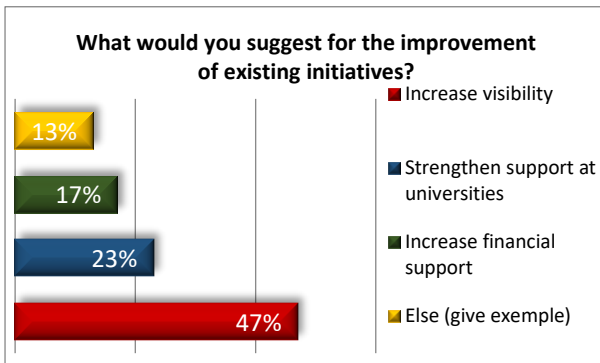
On the other hand, positive experiences suggest that respondents had satisfactory or inspiring experiences during their participation in initiatives, such as acquiring new skills, meeting new people, exchanging ideas, or contributing to the community. Positive experiences can further motivate young people to engage in similar activities in the future and promote the positive impact of initiatives that connect youth.

Building upon the previous question, and analyzing responses to the question "If you have not participated, would you consider participating in future initiatives?" we see that 56% of respondents positively consider participating in future initiatives.



This high positive interest indicates potential for growth and development of initiatives that connect youth in the future. It's crucial to ensure that future initiatives are well-promoted and tailored to the needs and interests of young people to maintain this positive trend and encourage their further engagement.

These results suggest that there is room for improvement in initiatives to increase the rate of positive experiences among participants. Organizers should pay attention to factors that contribute to positive experiences, such as interactive activities, participant support, and clear communication about the goals of the initiatives. It's also important to work on reducing neutral experiences through better program planning to ensure that initiatives realize their full potential in motivating and empowering young people.



Analyzing responses to the question about how to improve existing initiatives, 47% of respondents suggest that increasing the visibility of initiatives would be crucial for improving the situation. This indicates the need to strengthen

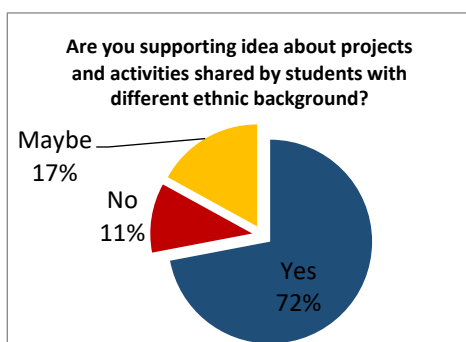
marketing strategies and promotion to effectively convey information about the initiatives to the target audience, thereby attracting more participants and support.



Additionally, 23% of respondents highlight the importance of strengthening support at universities. This could involve establishing clubs or organizations at universities dedicated to supporting initiatives that connect youth, organizing events, workshops, or lectures at the university level, or integrating themes of interethnic cooperation into existing curricula.

Financial support is also mentioned as an important factor, with 17% of respondents believing that increasing financial resources could improve existing initiatives. Lastly, 11% of respondents mention "other" as a possibility for improving initiatives. This indicates that there are various aspects that could be considered, such as improving communication with the target audience, expanding the network of partners and collaborators, or developing new programs that better cater to the needs of youth.

In the context of social support for youth, it's important to consider broader societal factors that impact their life trajectory. Organizing support programs that are accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic or other differences, can be key to creating equal opportunities for all young people.



Supporting the idea of joint projects and activities among students from different ethnic communities can be a step towards building an inclusive society. Considering that 72% of respondents have expressed support for this idea, it indicates a willingness to bridge ethnic differences and work together on projects that contribute to the development of all young people, regardless of their ethnic

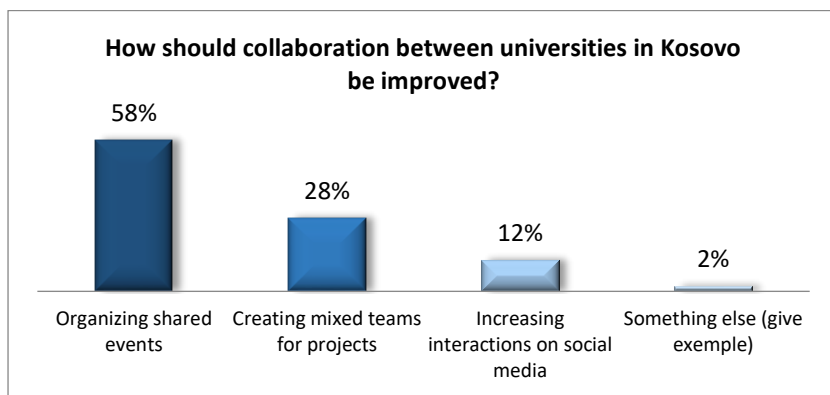
background. This can contribute to building better understanding and connectivity among different ethnic communities and contribute to the construction of a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Diverse activities can be crucial for building trust among young people from different ethnic communities. Cultural exchanges, supported by 44% of votes, provide young people with the opportunity to share their cultural heritage, traditions, and values, which can contribute to better understanding and respect among them. Workshops and training sessions also play an important role, supported by a similar percentage, 41%. These activities provide space for collaborative learning, cooperation, and skill-

building, which can strengthen interpersonal bonds and increase trust among young people from different ethnic groups.

Although less represented at 12%, joint courses can also be beneficial as they enable young people to work towards common goals and interests, which can contribute to better understanding and connection among them.

Overall, the combination of these activities will contribute to creating a universal environment that promotes interethnic understanding, trust, and collaboration among youth.



Supporting the idea of joint projects and activities among students from different ethnic communities can be a step towards creating a more inclusive society. Considering that 58% of young people support this initiative, it indicates a willingness to overcome ethnic differences and work together on projects that contribute to the development of all youth, regardless of their ethnic background. This can serve as a foundation for enhancing interethnic harmony and prosperity in society.

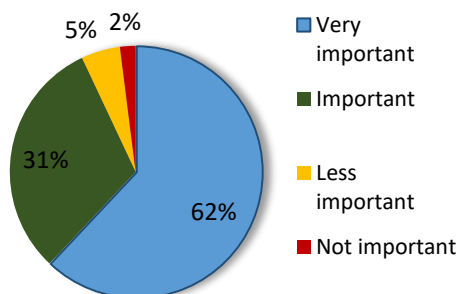
Additionally, creating mixed teams for projects, supported by 28% of votes, can be another useful step in enhancing collaboration. Such teams enable students to work together on concrete projects, which foster mutual learning, understanding, and cooperation. Moreover, the development of empowering programs that promote interethnic collaboration and exchange of ideas among students and professors is crucial for creating an open and supportive environment. These programs can include various forms of academic exchanges, as well as joint research projects that would contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and understanding the complexity of interethnic relations in Kosovo.

Through promoting dialogue and open communication between universities in Kosovo, Belgrade, and other institutions, significant progress can be made towards building interethnic understanding and cooperation. This openness and willingness to dialogue are crucial for overcoming obstacles and building sustainable peace and reconciliation in the Balkans.

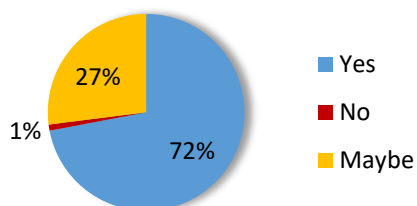
Considering the role of youth collaboration and its contribution to reconciliation among communities in Kosovo, it becomes evident that it plays a crucial role in reducing tensions and strengthening interethnic cohesion. Research results show that the majority of respondents (around 62%) emphasize the importance of this collaboration, while almost a third stress that it is of paramount importance. These data indicate broad support for the idea of joint projects and activities among youth from different ethnic groups as a key tool for overcoming ethnic divides and building a society that includes all its members.

Through such collaboration, young people can build trust, understanding, and mutual respect, which are crucial for preserving peace and stability in Kosovo. Therefore, support for such initiatives and programs is of paramount importance for the long-term construction of a more harmonious society in the region

How would you rate an importance of collaboration between young people and students for reconciliation proces and decreasing tensions in Kosovo?



Do you believe that this collaboration could have positive impact on future?



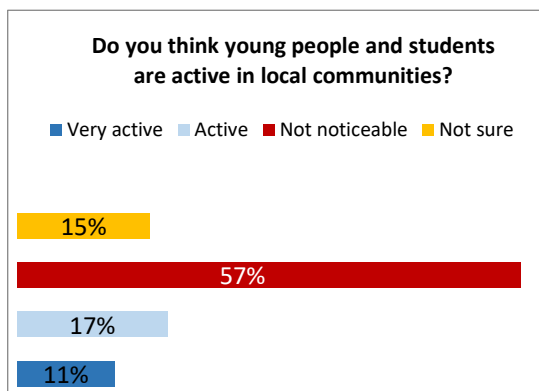
Building on the previous response, it is important to emphasize that support for collaboration among youth and students in Kosovo can have a significant positive impact on the future of the region for several key reasons. First, the high percentage of respondents (72%) who believe in the positive impact

of this collaboration indicates a widely held belief in the potential of such initiatives. This is not only an optimistic sign for the present but also for the future, as it suggests that there is a critical mass of young people willing to engage in activities that promote unity, understanding, and cooperation among different ethnic groups.

Furthermore, collaboration among youth can serve as a strong foundation for building sustainable peace and stability. Through joint projects and activities, young people can learn to understand and respect different perspectives, overcome prejudices, and build trust among themselves. Such a process is not only beneficial for individual young people but also for society as a whole, as it contributes to the creation of a more universal, tolerant, and stable society.

Moreover, supporting collaboration among youth can have long-term benefits for the region by laying the groundwork for the development of new leaders and change-makers. Young people involved in these initiatives acquire communication, teamwork, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills, which are crucial for building peace and prosperity in the future. Additionally, this collaboration can encourage young people to become more actively engaged in public life, politics, and social processes, potentially leading to the creation of more productive political and social institutions.

In summary, supporting collaboration among youth and students in Kosovo is not only a moral obligation but also a strategic investment in the future of the region. Through the joint efforts of young people from different ethnic groups, it is possible to build a society that is more open and resilient to conflicts, which is essential for long-term stability and prosperity.



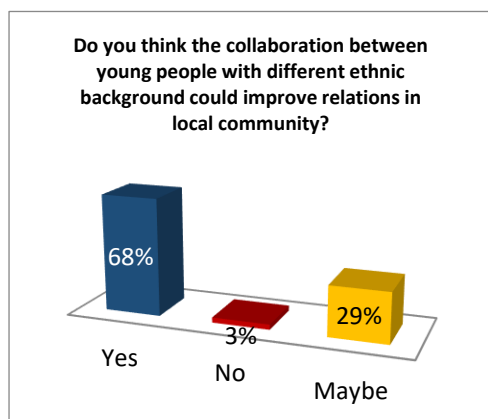
According to the survey results, as many as 57% of respondents express the view that young people and students are not noticeably active in local communities. This result indicates a potential lack of involvement of youth in local initiatives and activities contributing to community development. There are several reasons for such a perception.

The quantitative part of the research is also supporting this, where our interviewees also highlighted the evident lack of opportunities for active youth participation in various initiatives, which can be one of the key factors. Young people do not have enough opportunities or resources to get involved in local projects or activities. This is a direct consequence of the lack of support from local and central authorities, which should provide platforms and resources for young people to express their ideas and contribute to the community.

Secondly, a lack of motivation or interest can also be a factor. Young people may be uninterested in local initiatives due to a lack of visibility of results or insufficient information about how their contribution can impact the local community. This can result in passivity and a lack of initiative to participate in local projects.

Moreover, a lack of awareness of existing opportunities for engagement is also a problem. Young people are not aware of organizations or programs that support their active participation in the local community. The lack of communication and promotion of these initiatives can lead to insufficient youth participation.

These findings indicate the need to strengthen support for young people and students in local communities. Local authorities, civil society organizations, and educational institutions should recognize the importance of active youth participation and provide them with adequate resources, opportunities, and support to ensure that their voices and contributions are better heard and seen. Such initiatives can improve youth engagement and contribute to the development of sustainable local communities.

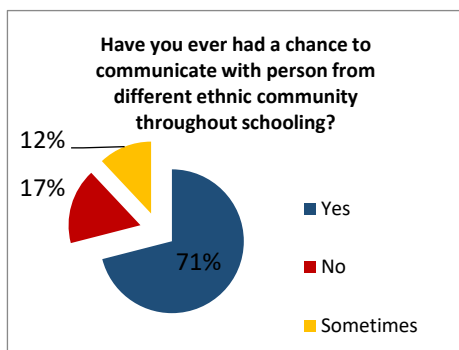


According to the results, the majority of respondents, specifically 68%, expressed the belief that collaboration among youth from different ethnic communities could improve relations in the local community. This data indicates a widely held belief that inclusive cooperation among youth from diverse ethnic groups can positively influence the development of better interethnic relations at the local level.



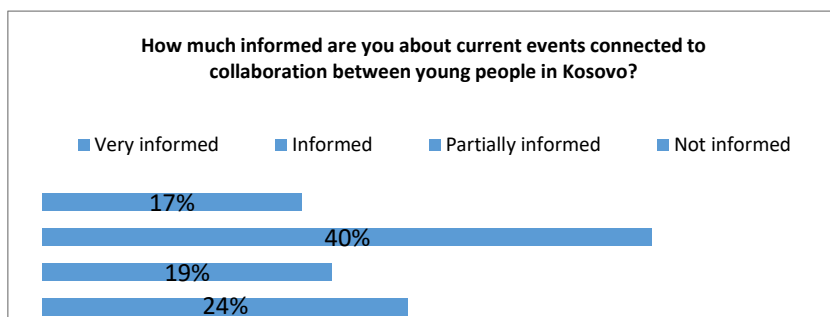
Such a stance is a result of awareness regarding the importance of diversity and fairness in society, as well as the recognition of young people's potential to bridge ethnic divides through joint activities and projects. Collaboration among youth from different ethnic communities can contribute to building trust, understanding, and solidarity among various groups, which is crucial for strengthening bonds among individuals. Activities that promote interethnic cooperation, such as joint initiatives, educational programs, or cultural events, can be instrumental in enhancing mutual understanding and fostering positive relationships within the local community.

The qualitative part of the research supports these quantitative results, demonstrating that respondents recognize the importance of collaboration among young people from different ethnic groups in creating an integrative society. This further confirms the significance and broader support for the idea of consistent cooperation among young people in the local community.



The diversity of participants, where the majority, actually even 71%, had experience communicating with individuals from other ethnic communities during their schooling, highlights an important aspect of interethnic interaction among youth in Kosovo. This data is encouraging because it shows that most young people have the opportunity for dialogue and activities with their peers from

different ethnic groups. Such interethnic communication can positively impact the reduction of stereotypes, the building of trust, and the overcoming of prejudices among youth from different ethnic identities. Through these interactions, young people can develop a deeper understanding of each other, which can contribute to



strengthening connectivity and collaboration in the future.

However, despite the majority of youth having had the opportunity for interethnic communication during their schooling, it is important to continue working on improving this interaction. It is necessary to create an educational environment that supports diversity and dialogue among young people. Additionally, support and resources should be provided for programs and initiatives that promote interethnic interaction and understanding. Only through continuous efforts in this field can we build a society where interethnic relations are positive and integrative.

Building on the previous question, when asked to evaluate their experience of communicating with individuals from other ethnic communities, respondents highlighted that it was very positive regardless of the cultural, religious, or ideological affiliation of the interlocutor. They described it as a pleasant experience that brought them interesting insights and new knowledge. They emphasized that this type of interaction is important for understanding and respecting diversity among people. They believe that openness to communication with individuals of different ethnic backgrounds is crucial for building harmonious interpersonal relationships and preserving peace in the community.

In addition to the previously mentioned results, this research has shown us that there is a significant number of young people who feel partially informed or even completely uninformed about current events related to youth collaboration in Kosovo. Therefore, it is important to consider the implications of these findings.

The lack of information can limit the potential of young people to actively engage in collaboration processes and build interethnic relations. This can contribute to insufficient involvement of youth in initiatives promoting interethnic cooperation and contributing to the establishment of sustainable peace in Kosovo. Furthermore, the lack of information can make it difficult for young people to recognize opportunities for personal and professional development through participation in projects and activities that promote collaboration among youth from different communities.

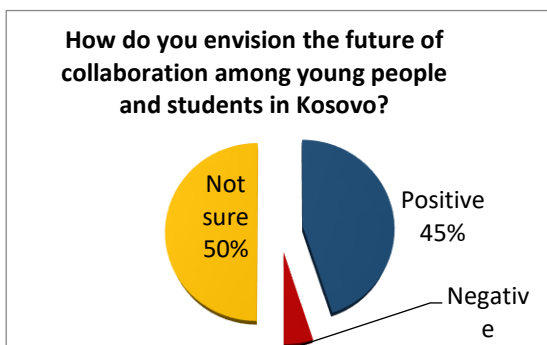
Therefore, concrete steps need to be taken to improve youth awareness of these issues. This may involve the development of educational programs and resources tailored to the needs of young people, providing relevant information about current projects, programs, and events taking place in Kosovo. Additionally, it is important to devise effective communication channels, such as social media, websites, and local media, to facilitate young people's access to information and encourage their active participation in collaboration initiatives.



Furthermore, it is important to continuously evaluate the effects of these efforts to ensure that youth information activities are effective and relevant. Through all these efforts, an environment can be created in which young people have access to necessary information and incentives to actively engage in collaboration processes and contribute to building sustainable interethnic relations in Kosovo. In this regard, according to research findings, even 40% of young people feel partially informed, while 17% state that they are not informed at all about current events.

Responding to the question of where they most commonly seek and find information about current initiatives concerning youth, respondents answered differently. However, it is evident that the majority of respondents, up to 78%, stated that they most frequently seek information on these topics on social media. This highlights the importance of having information about youth collaboration in Kosovo on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and similar ones. Social media provides quick and easy access to information, as well as the opportunity for interaction and sharing with other users, which can contribute to raising awareness and engaging youth in activities related to collaboration and interethnic relations. This trend demonstrates the increasing importance of digital communication channels in informing and mobilizing youth in social and political activities.

The future of collaboration among youth and students in Kosovo presents complex challenges and opportunities for progress. According to the research, half of the respondents, approximately 50%, express uncertainty about the future of youth and student collaboration in Kosovo. This suggests that there is a need for a deeper understanding of the current circumstances and the opportunities available.



Interethnic cooperation represents a crucial factor in this context. Research indicates that youth and students in Kosovo show willingness to discuss the issues they face together, although such examples are mainly present among activists. However, there is clear potential to expand such initiatives to strengthen interethnic cooperation and understanding.

a wider population, which would contribute to strengthening interethnic cooperation and understanding.

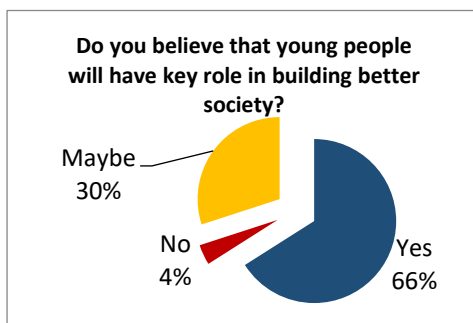


Education is another key issue. Youth face challenges regarding access to education, school dropout rates, and the relevance of higher education for employment. This requires systemic changes and support to ensure fair opportunities for education and professional development for young people in Kosovo.

Migration is also an important factor to consider. Respondents are considering the possibility of migration in the next three years, with reasons for emigration varying. This indicates the need to create a more stimulating environment for young people to retain and attract talent and resources to Kosovo.

It is crucial to support initiatives that promote dialogue, understanding, and joint building. Through youth activism and engagement, positive changes can be made and Kosovo's future can be improved.

According to the research, approximately 66% of respondents expressed a positive view on the role of youth in building a better society. This indicates a widespread acceptance of the idea that young people have a crucial role in shaping the future. This attitude is supported by the fact that youth are seen as agents of



positive change and drivers of future innovation. They are recognized as activists for social change and future leaders who will guide society towards progress. This support for youth in building a better society reflects optimism and faith in their ability to improve the community and create a sustainable future.

Additionally, it's important to highlight that this positive attitude can serve as a driving force for youth, inspiring them to engage in various activities for social change. Support from older generations and institutions also plays a crucial role in encouraging young people to take an active role in society. Furthermore, youth are increasingly empowered through education, volunteering, and activism, enabling them to develop the skills necessary for constructive contributions to social change





CONCLUSION

Based on a thorough analysis of the research on youth in Kosovo, it is evident that young people face diverse and deeply rooted challenges that significantly affect various aspects of their lives. While some improvements have been noted compared to previous years, most of the key issues remain unresolved, and some have even become more complex.

The lack of employment opportunities, poor economic situation, corruption, and nepotism continue to be the main challenges young people face in Kosovo. This situation creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and pessimism about the future among youth. Of particular concern is that these problems seem to be worsening, while the lack of prospects for employment remains a dominant motive for considering emigration.³

In addition to economic difficulties, young people also face many challenges in interethnic relations. Many young people perceive these relations as tense, and problems mainly arise from memories of past conflicts and the influence of older generations. However, some improvement has been noticed in the perception of relations compared to previous years, indicating potential for progress in this area.

It is significant to emphasize the concern about mental health issues among young people, as well as the lack of financial support for further education. The current political situation in Kosovo further complicates matters, creating an atmosphere of insecurity and unpredictability.

The immediate and long-term impact of political instability needs to be carefully considered, as it can deepen existing societal divisions and provoke new conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary for political leaders to take responsibility and work on building an open society that provides equal opportunities for all young people in Kosovo.

Overall, the research results indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems of youth in Kosovo. Politicians should focus on strengthening the economy, combating corruption, and promoting interethnic dialogue to create better conditions for youth and enable the sustainable future of

³<https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/media/4011/file/Godi%C5%A1nji%20Izve%C5%A1taj%202022.pdf>



Kosovo. This requires long-term engagement from all relevant stakeholders, supported by the international community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the analysis of the challenges and needs of youth in Kosovo, key recommendations have been highlighted to serve as the basis for forming a comprehensive approach to addressing their issues and creating better prospects for the future. These recommendations stem from a detailed analysis of the current situation and reflect the need for coordinated action by all relevant stakeholders to improve conditions and opportunities for young people. Given the multiple challenges facing youth, these recommendations offer concrete guidelines for political, institutional, and societal interventions aimed at contributing to the building of a sustainable and comprehensive future for youth in Kosovo.

- ✓ Promote economic development and fight against corruption and nepotism to create opportunities for youth employment.
- ✓ Provide financial support to young people in their education and career advancement.
- ✓ Improve the quality of educational programs and support vocational education and training for young people.
- ✓ Encourage joint activities and events among youth of different ethnic backgrounds to foster a diverse society.
- ✓ Provide support from international actors through advice, expertise, and organization of youth activities that promote interethnic cooperation.
- ✓ Establish mechanisms for cooperation between universities to encourage knowledge and idea exchange among youth.
- ✓ Engage all relevant stakeholders, including government, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the international community, to ensure support for youth and enable their full potential.
- ✓ Enable youth participation in decision-making and activities that directly affect them to empower them as active citizens.
- ✓ Organize conferences, workshops, and symposiums where youth can discuss current issues and find solutions to common challenges.
- ✓ Promote language learning and cultural diversity among youth to enhance communication and mutual understanding.
- ✓ Establish a student exchange program between universities to promote international collaboration and understanding.



- ✓ Support training and mentoring programs for young people to develop skills necessary for success in the labor market.
- ✓ Develop strategies to support youth in legal and circular migration processes to improve their living conditions.
- ✓ Encourage youth engagement in civil society activities and political life to promote their interests and values.
- ✓ Build partnerships between universities, local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders to create sustainable youth support programs.
- ✓ Establish mechanisms for cross-border cooperation and joint youth projects with neighboring countries to exchange experiences and strengthen regional stability.
- ✓ Promote comprehensive education that considers the diverse needs and abilities of youth, including those with disabilities.
- ✓ Support mentorship and career guidance programs to provide guidance and support to youth in career choices.
- ✓ Develop support programs for young women to overcome gender inequalities and empower women in society and the economy.
- ✓ Implement effective awareness campaigns on the importance of mental health and provide accessible counseling and support services to youth.



